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MassWildlife News

Commonwealth of Massachusetts – Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
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COME FISH WITH US (FOR FREE)

Fishing is a great way to spend some quality time with family or friends outdoors. If you are a beginner who wants to try this wonderful pastime, bring family and friends to a free Family Fishing Festival near you! The Division of Fisheries & Wildlife's (DFW) Angler Education Program has teamed up with a variety of groups and organizations to provide free fishing opportunities and loaner equipment for beginning anglers of all ages. At many events, DFW Volunteer instructors will be available to lend assistance. Fishing events for the month of May are below. No license is needed by participants at these events. Don't forget that the statewide Free Fishing Weekend will be June 1-2, 2013! Recreational anglers may fish on both fresh and salt water in Massachusetts for free during these two days in June.

- **May 4 – Needham Recreation Family Fishing Derby, Needham** -- This event will be held at Needham Reservoir from 9:00am – Noon. Cast a line; learn about fish in our waters, safety, ethics, and fishing equipment. If you have fishing equipment, bring it along. A limited quantity of loaner fishing equipment and bait will be available. DFW is participating in this festival in cooperation with the Needham Recreation Department. Contact: Needham Recreation Department, Karen Pierce (781) 455-7521.
- **May 4 -- Snows Pond Family Fishing Festival, Charlton** -- This event will be held at Snows Pond, located at Fay Mountain Farm off Cemetery Road from 10:00am - 2:00pm, cast a line, learn about fish

in our waters, safety, ethics, and fishing equipment. If you have fishing equipment, bring it along. A limited quantity of loaner fishing equipment and bait will be available. DFW is participating in this festival in cooperation with the [Charlton Conservation Commission](#). Contact: Charlton Conservation Commission, Todd Girard (508) 248-2247 or email: todd.girard@townofcharlton.net

- **May 4 -- Westborough Spring Fishing Challenge, Westborough --** On Sandra Pond at Minuteman Park in Westborough from 9:00am - 1:00pm, cast a line, learn about fish in our waters, safety, ethics, and fishing equipment. If you have fishing equipment, bring it along. DFW's [Angler Education Program](#) is loaning a limited quantity of fishing equipment at this event. Contact Jim Lagacy at (508) 389-6309 or email jim.lagacy@state.ma.us.
- **May 5 -- Brookline Reservoir Family Fishing Festival, Brookline --** From 9:00am - Noon at the Brookline Reservoir, cast a line, learn about fish in our waters, safety, ethics, and fishing equipment. If you have fishing equipment, bring it along. A limited quantity of loaner fishing equipment and bait will be available. DFW's [Angler Education Program](#) is participating in this festival in cooperation with the [Brookline Recreation Department](#). Contact Stephanie Springer at sspringer@brooklinema.gov.
- **May 11 -- US Fish & Wildlife Service Kids Fishing Event, Hadley --** Bring your kids to the US Fish and Wildlife Service Regional HQ off Rtes. 9 and 116 on 300 Westgate Center Drive, Hadley. DFW's Angler Education Program is providing a limited quantity of loaner fishing equipment for this event. For more information, contact Sam Parker at samual_parker@fws.gov or call (413) 253-8517.
- **May 11 -- Coes Pond Fishing Derby, Worcester --** On the shores of Coes Pond, from 8:00am - 11:00am, cast a line, learn about fish in our waters, safety, ethics, and fishing equipment. If you have fishing equipment, bring it along. A limited quantity of loaner fishing equipment and bait will be available. DFW's [Angler Education Program](#) is participating in this festival in cooperation with the Worcester Fish & Game Association. Contact Jim Lagacy at (508) 389-6309 or email jim.lagacy@state.ma.us.
- **May 18 -- Disabled American Veterans Fishing Festival, Marlborough --**This special festival is open to disabled veterans only at the [Marlboro Fish and Game Club](#), 10:00 - 2:00pm. DFW's [Angler Education Program](#) is partnering with the Marlboro Fish and Game Club. Contact Jim Lagacy at (508) 389-6309 or jim.lagacy@state.ma.us.
- **May 18 – Burlington Recreation Department Family Fishing Festival, Burlington --** On the shores of Burlington Reservoir, from 9:00 am – Noon, cast a line, learn about fish in our waters, safety, ethics, and fishing equipment. If you have fishing equipment, bring it along. A limited quantity of loaner fishing equipment and bait will be available. DFW's [Angler Education Program](#) is participating in this festival in cooperation with the Burlington Recreation Department. Contact the Burlington Recreation Department at (781) 270-1695 for more details.
- **May 19 – Whitman’s Pond Family Fishing Festival, Weymouth --** On the shores of Whitman Pond, from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm, cast a line, learn about fish in our waters, safety, ethics, and fishing equipment. If you have fishing equipment, bring it along. A limited quantity of fishing equipment and bait will be available. DFW's [Angler Education Program](#) is participating in this festival in cooperation with the Whitman's Pond Association and Weymouth Youth and Family Services. Contact Marie Feely at (781) 340-6976 for more details.

KEEP WILDLIFE WILD, LEAVE YOUNG WILDLIFE ALONE

The arrival of spring means the arrival of newborn and just-hatched wildlife. These youngsters soon venture into the world on shaky legs or fragile wings and are discovered by people living, playing or working nearby. Every year, the lives of many young wild creatures are disturbed by people who take young wildlife from the wild in a well-intentioned attempt to "save" them.

These well-meant acts of kindness tend to have the opposite result. Instead of being left to learn their place in the world, young wildlife removed from the wild are denied important natural learning experiences which help them survive on their own. Most people quickly find that they can't really care for young wildlife, and many of the animals soon die in the hands of well-meaning people. Young wildlife that does survive human "assistance" misses experiences that teach them to fend for themselves. If these animals are released back into the wild, their chances of survival are reduced. Often, the care given to young wildlife results in some attachment to humans and the animals may return to places where people live, only to be attacked by domestic animals or hit by cars. Some animals become nuisances and people have even been injured by once-tamed wildlife.

Avoid these problems by following one simple rule when coming upon young wildlife: If You Care, Leave Them There! It may be difficult to do, but this is a real act of compassion. Generally young mammals are visited only a few times a day to avoid leaving traces that attract predators. For instance, a nest of bunnies will only be visited by the adult female twice per day. The young wildlife are quite safe when left alone because their color patterns and lack of scent help them remain undetected. Avoid nest and den areas of young wildlife and restrain all pets. What if you find a young bird that has fallen from a nest? Adult wildlife are not disturbed by human scent. Baby birds found on the ground may be safely picked up and placed in a nearby bush or tree.

Leave fawns (young deer) where they are found. Fawns are safest when left alone because their camouflaging color helps them remain undetected until the doe returns. If sympathetic people repeatedly visit a fawn, it can prolong the separation from the doe and delay important feeding. Unlike deer, newborn moose calves remain in close proximity to their mothers who, in contrast to a white-tailed doe, will actively defend calves against danger. An adult cow moose weighing over 600 pounds will chase, kick, stomp potential predators, people included.

Only when young wildlife are found injured or with their dead mother may the young be assisted, but must then be delivered immediately to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Due to the difficulty in properly caring for them there are no rehabilitators licensed to care of fawns. It is illegal to possess most wildlife in Massachusetts.

Information on young wildlife and a list of wildlife rehabilitators is posted at www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/wildlife/wildlife_home.htm.

NESTING EAGLE SURVEY RESULTS

On April 5, 2013, the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) conducted its first Spring Eagle Survey. Agency staff, volunteers and interested citizens checked known eagle territories and explored areas with potential eagle habitat to verify continued use of "old" and try to locate "new" eagle nests. The preliminary results of these efforts yielded a total of 30 active eagle nests throughout the Commonwealth with the highest concentrations of birds along the Connecticut River (8 nests) and Quabbin Reservoir (6 nests). At the Quabbin Reservoir, a hardy boat crew of DFW, Department of Conservation & Recreation staff, and Fisheries and Wildlife Board member Dr. Brandi Van Roo reported 6 active nests. The highest number of active nests (8) were seen along the Massachusetts stretch of the Connecticut River. Four nests were documented along the Merrimack River. A single nest was observed on the Wachusett Reservoir and another was reported in Framingham, where Department of Fish & Game Commissioner Mary Griffin, DFW State Ornithologist

Andrew Vitz and other DFW wildlife biologists observed an active nest on DCR's Foss Reservoir. In southeastern Massachusetts, active eagle nests were found in Middleborough, Fall River, and Plymouth. One nest failure was reported at Assawompsett Pond where a nest and 2 eggs were blown out of the nest tree in the first week of April. Additional eagle sightings or "housekeeping" activities were reported in Arlington, Carver, Lunenburg, Pittsfield, Russell, Sandisfield, Webster and along the Housatonic River.

Bald Eagles have increased in numbers in the state ever since they were reintroduced to the Quabbin Reservoir in the 1980s, and Andrew Vitz, DFW State Ornithologist expects final results will surpass last year's record high numbers of breeding eagles in Massachusetts. "With higher numbers of eagles establishing nesting territories throughout their range, we can't possibly cover the entire state." said Vitz. "Citizen spotters play an increasingly important role in our survey efforts. We had 35 volunteers actively participate in the count on April 5th and have received dozens of e-mails this spring reporting eagle sightings. Several of these reports are of new eagle nests, including one in Stoneham, that are in the process of being verified by DFW staff.

Vitz thanks everyone who participated in this count, especially to DCR (Department of Conservation and Recreation) for providing boat access to the Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs and all of the volunteers who dedicated their time to looking for eagles. He encourages anyone to submit eagle sightings throughout the year by email to natural.heritage@state.ma.us or by postal service to "Eagle Survey", DFW, Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, 100 Hartwell Street, Suite 230, West Boylston, MA 01583.

DFW STAFF HONORED

Recently, several Division of Fisheries and Wildlife staff members were honored by regional sporting and conservation organizations. The Worcester County League of Sportsmen's Clubs Words of Wisdom award recipient was Marion Larson, Chief of Information & Education for her service in providing information to sportsmen and women and for her assistance on the WCL newsletter publication. Julie Delaney-English, recently retired Administrative Assistant to the Director was recognized for her years of service by the Massachusetts Sportsmen's Council. Peter Mirick, DFW's Massachusetts Wildlife magazine editor received two Excellence in Writing Awards from the New England Outdoor Writers Association for articles he wrote for Massachusetts Wildlife. In the Best Magazine category, Mirick was awarded 1st Place for "Rivermaster" an article about striper fishing on the Connecticut River with one of the top anglers in the state and 3rd place for "Wildlife CSI", an article about a bear poaching case in northern Worcester County investigated by the Environmental Police. Finally, Dr. Tom French, Assistant Director of Natural Heritage and Endangered Species, was awarded a Professional Achievement Award from the New England Chapter of The Wildlife Society. French's service within scientific societies, conservation organizations, and regional endangered species recovery teams as well as his scholarship and work with the media were recognized.

WINTER WATERFOWL SURVEY RESULTS

This past winter the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife conducted a "Park Waterfowl" survey. The survey, which ran between January 6 and 26, 2013, has been conducted every 5 years since 1973. Park waterfowl are wild ducks and geese that spend part of the day during a given time of year, at sites where they have access to human provided food. These birds may be regularly fed by one or more people, rely on occasional handouts, or feed under or at a bird feeder. Sites may be in urban, suburban, or rural settings on fresh, brackish, or salt water and include both municipal parks and private properties.

This year a total of 10,108 mallards, 292 American black ducks and 1,583 Canada geese were counted on 145 sites in 84 municipalities. Five hundred twenty six other types of waterfowl were counted as well, including Gadwalls, American Wigeon, Northern Pintails, Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, Hooded Mergansers, Mute Swans, American Coots, mallard-black duck hybrids, and scaup. This long term survey has revealed some interesting information, especially about mallard ducks and Canada geese. Mallard numbers have declined over

time due to a decline in the number of feeding sites and increased competition for food with Canada geese. Despite their decreased numbers, the mallard is still the most common duck found in the Northeast. Canada geese on the other hand, are not as reliant on handouts from people as mallards and are thriving in the state, particularly in eastern Massachusetts.

UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS

May 9--Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Meeting, West Boylston. The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee will be meeting on Thursday, May 9, 2013, at the DFW Field HQ Office at 100 Hartwell Street, Suite 230, West Boylston from 1:30- 4:30 P.M. Call (508) 389-6360 for directions or go to www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/facilities/westboro.htm.

May 14 -- Fisheries and Wildlife Board Meeting, Belchertown -- The May meeting of the Fisheries & Wildlife Board will be held on Tuesday, May 14, 10:00 AM at the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Connecticut Valley District Office on East Street, Belchertown MA. Call (413) 323-7632 for directions or go to www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/facilities/districts.htm.

Both meetings are open to the public and are handicapped accessible.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS—Visit www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/calendar/calendar.htm for more updated listings.

May 5 -- Growing Up WILD Workshop for Pre-School Educators, Acton -- Pre-school educators are invited to this fun, practical hands-on 6-hour workshop that focuses on wildlife, the environment and pre-school age children. The activity guide builds on a children's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them. Through a wide range of activities and experiences, it provides a foundation for developing positive impressions about nature while also building lifelong social and cognitive skills for students ages 3-7 years. Workshop participants will receive a copy of the Growing Up WILD guide and a certificate of completion. Please bring a brown bag lunch, mug or water bottle and wear comfortable clothes & shoes for outdoor activities. Pre-registration is required, fee is \$25. To register contact Eileen Sullivan at esullivan@abschools.org. [Project WILD](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/facilities/districts.htm) is sponsored by DFW and the Mass. Wildlife Federation.

May 11 -- Biodiversity Conservation Tools "Walk and Talk", Sharon -- This free public program is offered by MassAudubon's Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary. Learn about recent state level biodiversity conservation initiatives from MassWildlife's Sarah Haggerty, Natural Heritage Information Manager. She'll talk about BioMap2 town profiles, and the new way to report rare animals and plants via the Vernal Pool and Rare Species Information System (VPRS). After the presentation, head outdoors for a trail walk, enjoying the birds and other signs of spring, and a demonstration of the new VPRS system and smart phone app. The program will run from 9-11. Registration Required—Each participant will be provided with a BioMap2 Community Profile specific to their municipality. For more information: go to www.massaudubon.org/shapingthefuture. Questions and RSVP: Stephanie Elson, selson@massaudubon.org, 781/259-2146.

Make a wild investment in Massachusetts by buying a license or making a donation to the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Fund or Wildlands Fund!

Sign up for MassWildlife News, a monthly e-newsletter that provides and update wildlife related events, recreation, laws and seasonal safety tips. send an e-mail to the following address: Join-MassWildlife.news@listserv.state.ma.us

Visit the Great Outdoors Blog at: <http://environment.blog.state.ma.us/>

www.mass.gov/masswildlife

MassWildlife serves your community from the following Offices:

Western District, Dalton 413/684-1646

Connecticut Valley District, Belchertown 413/323-7632

Central District, W. Boylston 508/835-3607

Northeast District, Ayer 978/772-2145

Southeast District, Buzzards Bay 508/759-3406

West Boylston Field Headquarters, 100 Hartwell St, Suite 230 508/389-6300 **(NOTE NEW HQ LOCATION!)**

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