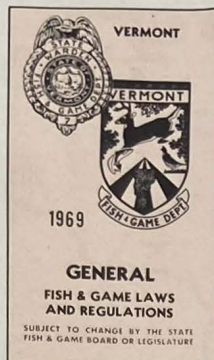


**PICK UP A LAW BOOKLET,** where you buy your license or get one from a warden or from the Montpelier Office.



**FISH AND GAME** is more than the name implies, it is ecology. One species cannot be managed successfully without giving full consideration to the habitat that must support it and other interdependent species. The wildlife community thrives only when **all** of our natural resources are managed well. Law enforcement backs up good fish and game management to provide equal benefits for everyone. Obey the law.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The **Vermont Guide to Fishing**, a companion brochure to the Hunting Guide, is designed to serve Vermont fishermen. **Professional Guides** are neither licensed nor listed by the state. Local arrangements for guiding services usually can be made in most areas. It is a good idea to plan for your hunting accommodations well in advance of the season by visiting the area, or writing to the Chamber of Commerce in the area you wish to hunt. If no Chamber is organized in that particular area, your letter is generally forwarded to proper local services. Put the words, "Hunting Accommodations" prominently on the envelope.

The **Vermont Development Department** has additional detailed information for hikers, skiers and tourists including lodging and resort information, vacation rentals, etc.

**VERMONT INFORMATION CENTERS** are located in Montreal, Laurentian Hotel, Quebec, Canada; New York City, 1268 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York, 10020; Vermont Welcome Centers at Interstate 91, Brattleboro—05302 and Interstate 89, Highgate Springs—05460.

**Time is saved by addressing specific requests to the proper agencies. NOT by grouping varied requests in one letter to a single agency.**

## LICENSE INFORMATION

The license year is a calendar year—January 1, through December 31, inclusive. Resident licenses can be purchased from any town or city clerk's office. Non-resident licenses can be purchased, directly or by mail, from any town or city clerk's office as well as from the Vermont Fish & Game Department, Montpelier 05602.

**RESIDENT RATES FOR 1969:** Hunting, \$3.50; Combination hunting and fishing, \$5.00; Bow and arrow, \$2.00. A person must have a hunting or combination hunting and fishing license in order to obtain a bow and arrow license for the archery deer season.

**NONRESIDENT RATES FOR 1969:** Hunting, \$30.50; Combination hunting and fishing, \$32.50; Small game (All except deer and bear) \$10.50; Bow and arrow (deer) \$5.00. Again, hunting or combination license needed before purchase of bow and arrow license.

Persons of **all ages** must have a license to hunt. When a person under the age of sixteen desires a hunting license, it can be secured only with the consent of his parent or guardian, **written in the presence of the clerk** issuing the license.

Permanent combination hunting and fishing licenses are available for residents 70 years of age or older at a cost of \$1.75. Write or visit the Vermont Fish & Game Department, Montpelier 05602, for application.

A **serviceman** on active duty and stationed in this state may secure a license at resident rate. Active duty orders must be verified.

A **college student** currently enrolled at a college or university within the state and at which he has **successfully completed two successive semesters** may obtain hunting and fishing licenses at resident rates from the town or city clerk where the school is located.

If a **license is lost**, a duplicate license may be obtained from the agent who issued the original license—fee, fifty cents.

Secure a copy of the General Fish and Game Laws and Regulations where you buy your license. New road hunting laws and other firearm information should be studied. The 1969 firearm laws in Vermont are about as liberal as they come, but pressure to legislate against **all** guns instead of singling out the criminal use of them continues. Check each year.

**SPORTSMEN ARE NOT BORN, THEY ARE SELF-MADE MEN. THEIR FIELD MANNERS DETERMINE THE DEGREE OF THEIR SUCCESS.**

# Vermont

## GUIDE TO HUNTING



**SPARE THE CUBS**





**A PARADOX:** "Don't the deer look good this spring! I don't care what they say the herd situation is, I'm opposed to any form of doe hunting. So the deer **are** getting smaller. Now when I was a lad..."

Too often, this sort of selfish, unconsidered talk is indicative of why we have deer problems. The Vermont deer problem is plainly a "people problem." But the basic situation here is no different than that found in Pennsylvania, Michigan or Florida—or anywhere else that has deer. Most natural resource problems are people problems.

The bank president doesn't try to tell his plumber how to put pipes together. And the plumber doesn't counsel the president on making investments. Yet, people in all walks of life are quick to tell wildlife managers how to run their very precise business, a business spawned from wasted assets and nurtured by public demand.

Deer hunters have enjoyed outstanding success in Vermont during the past twenty years, but it was not always that way. From colonial times until about 1930,

white-tailed deer were quite scarce here, due largely to excessive hunting pressure, often year-around.

In time, hunting regulations were made and enforced and game protection became a way of life. Heavy cutting of timber, to satisfy demands of war and expansion, and the shifting of agricultural land use resulted in abundant new forest growth providing a **surplus of quality deer food**. The deer herd grew rapidly under these conditions. The 40 years of bucks-only hunting regulations guaranteed the steady growth of the herd... well beyond the point of practical management. Today, there are more deer per square mile in Vermont than in any other state—more than the land in many areas can adequately support during the winter. Small game populations, dependent on much of the same habitat, suffer along with the deer.

No species can be stockpiled, this is basic, and deer are no exception. Serious waste exists where deer are heavily concentrated. Refer to the map on the reverse side which shows distribution of deer and also reflects

**THIS FAMILY NEEDS AN INSURANCE PROGRAM.** Full consideration should be given to every member of this family now without emotion and sentiment shading the demands. We can afford it.

hunting pressure. While the waste is most acute in the southern half of the state, it is rapidly becoming apparent in other sections as well. Posted land and the out-moded bucks-only-law **without** the balance of meaningful antlerless seasons, drastically compound the problem for such an extremely large deer herd.

Deer on winter range use only about one tenth of the area that makes up the summer range. This fact is due to their tendency to collect in "deer yards," usually located on a southern slope for warmth with mature softwoods giving shelter, and hardwood sprouts, when available, supplying food. All of these components are needed, but shelter rather than food goes a long way in their selection of the yard. Homing instinctively to the same yard year after year further complicates things. Too often, there are more deer to winter over than there is food to go around. Competition for available food is severe. The larger animals able to reach higher for browse fare best, and sometimes the "best" is not very good. Does compete with their own fawns.

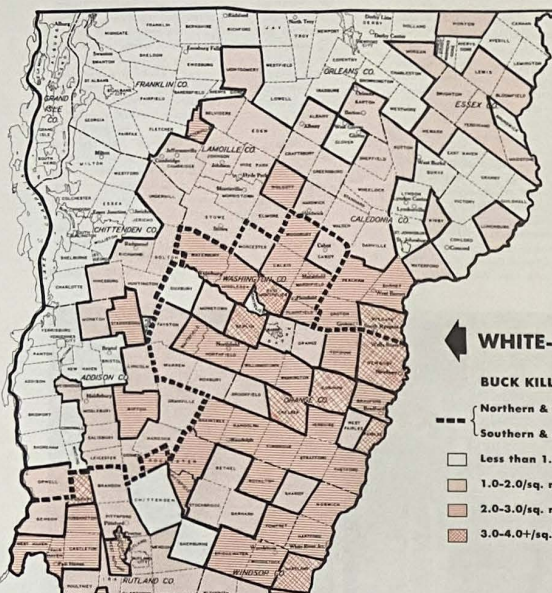
There is no doubt that deer dying of starvation or suffering from malnutrition in the yards represent a considerable loss to the hunter. He never gets a chance to take the substantial numbers of winter die-offs. Bucks on poor winter rations do not produce legal antlers the following year, a further loss to legal hunting.

Many hunters find no objection to the gradual but steady decline in the physical size and weight of deer on poor winter feed, but few of them want great numbers of mature bucks not showing legal antlers.

Reproduction is inefficient at best for does on poor winter feed, and yearlings annually make up an average of  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the legal kill, not a very good combination. Read a copy of a recent "Big Game and Waterfowl Seasons in Review" for more detailed information.

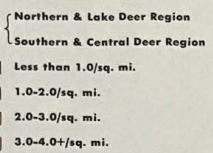
Controlled, balanced hunting aimed at efficient maintenance of the herd is the simple solution to Vermont's deer problems. The Vermont Fish and Game Department will always give top priority to the welfare of the deer herd. It has no other choice, for in truth, the deer provides the bulk of department funds for all operations. Yet, the department must annually jeopardize its major source of income, for to date, it has not been permitted to work toward insuring its greatest asset—the white-tailed deer.





## WHITE-TAILED DEER

BUCK KILL DENSITY '68



**DEER** The white-tail is Vermont's most abundant big game animal. Deer are found in all counties from border to border. In general, deer are more numerous in the South and Central Regions but except for those found in the rugged back-country, they tend to be lighter in weight and somewhat smaller than those of the Northern and Lake Region. Bucks in the south average smaller racks, fewer points, and there are more with sub-legal racks. This latter point leads many hunters to believe that they are seeing more does than they should for the number of deer observed.

Northern and Lake Region deer, on the other hand, as a rule are more widely scattered, racks tend to be larger as are the deer themselves. Trophy deer usually come from this region. They are more difficult to take but the reward is proportionately greater.

Antlerless seasons, as this goes to press, are still sorely needed for sound deer management, but the Legislature still holds the reins for this species. If, after all the hearings are held, and the Fish and Game Board with the Interim Committee decide to hold such a season, it will be announced just prior to the fall hunting seasons through the news media.

It is always a good idea to explore the area you wish to hunt before the season. Perhaps during bird season you can accomplish many things, take a few birds and look for deer signs, well-used trails and crossings and visit with the landowner, as well as make reservations if needed for the deer season later.

Vermont offers wide choice to the varying demands of different type hunters, easier-to-get deer or hard-to-get trophy deer, relatively flat country or rugged mountain country. A point worth remembering is that it takes hunters in the woods to move deer more deer than deer taken, more deer moving, more deer seen, more deer taken. Deer naturally gravitate to the lower elevations even in mountainous country, below 2500 feet. At least the does do, and the bucks are looking for the does at hunting time. Exception to this is found in the back-country when hunting pressure in the valleys pushes deer onto the ridges.

**BLACK BEAR.** This bear is another fine big game animal sought by hunters in Vermont. Although many hunters make special effort to take these animals, the majority of bear taken are shot by deer hunters. The mixed big game opportunity in Vermont, covered by one hunting license, is a real attraction and doubly challenging.

Most bears are taken in mountainous areas, but occasionally, bear will be found on the lowlands. This appears to be particularly true during excessively dry years or when there is a poor nut producing year. Hunters of any game would do well to study the habits and preferred foods of the species hunted. Depending on the time of the year, and Vermont offers a three-month bear season, bruin may be found in ripe choke cherries, on the beechnut ridges, in the apple orchard, or cruising the lower country looking for the carrion left by the minority of unsophisticated deer hunters who neither know how nor take the time to trail a wounded deer. Wild most (nuts) and fruit crop success according to earlier weather during the year will change the bear's actions, and the woodsman hunter will read the changes and revise his plans according to the country.

Hunting methods vary. A few hunters use hounds and others, including deer hunters, take stands on well-defined trails while still others wander quietly through the woods hoping to chance upon a big brute. Tracking a bear, without dogs, on an early snow is a lot of fun even though it often involves a long hike.

In 1969, the Department initiated a 5-year bear study. Hunter cooperation the first year was excellent, and it is hoped that this extra effort will continue. Successful bear hunters are urged to contact a game biologist through a local warden or deputy. Your bear will then be accurately weighed, sexed and later you will be told the exact age of your trophy. Whenever possible, the biologist will take the reproduction tracts from the sows. Eventually, and only with the hunter's help, we should have a good picture of the age and sex composition of the bear population. This knowledge is critical for security of the sport in the future.

**OTHER SPORTING SPECIES.** In order to legally take any kind of bird or animal, a hunting license is required for persons of all ages.

**RED FOX (GRAY FOX,** few in number). Fox hunting, as a sport, has declined severely. Disease has made serious inroads into populations of former years but healthy red foxes are still a relatively common sight on the Vermont landscape in spite of year around hunting. "Varmint" hunters should check the new road laws and seek permission from landowners. Shooting from a car has been outlawed.

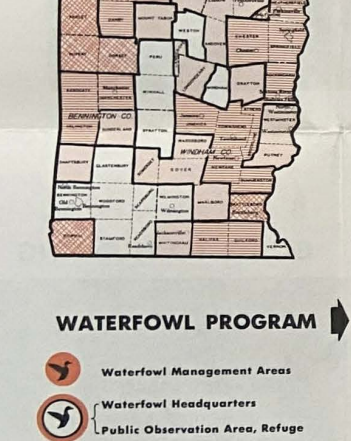
**RACCOONS.** These merry, masked forerunners have a long hunting season and are found nearly everywhere. Many farmers raising corn for silage are happy to have hunters reduce local populations of raccoons. But talk things over with the farmer first.

**WOODCHUCKS.** These natives are still prime targets of the souped-up rifle group. Careful shooting of this sort does little damage to the fine table qualities of this animal. Again, farmers like to have the shooter check in before he shoots.

**CROWS.** Old Ebony provides a fine off-season target for sharpening up wing-shooting. Successful crow hunters may help to reduce an overabundance of this species but few farmers like to see their fences draped with rotting crows—or "chucks" for that matter. Leave them where they won't be offensive and where carrion eaters will find them.

Many of today's hunters have never called crows to the gun. Electronic devices are illegal in Vermont but mouth-blown or hand operated calls work fine, with or without decoys. Drop them as they come in or you'll soon find you have spooked them all.

**BOBCAT.** These cats are much sought after by a certain hardy breed of houndmen. Unfortunately, the bobcat is not recognized by the Legislature as a game animal yet. The bounty still continues, although it has proved nothing over the years. Given any kind of a break, and they are given none now, bobcats will continue to be interesting and beneficial residents of this state, even as the red foxes are in reality.



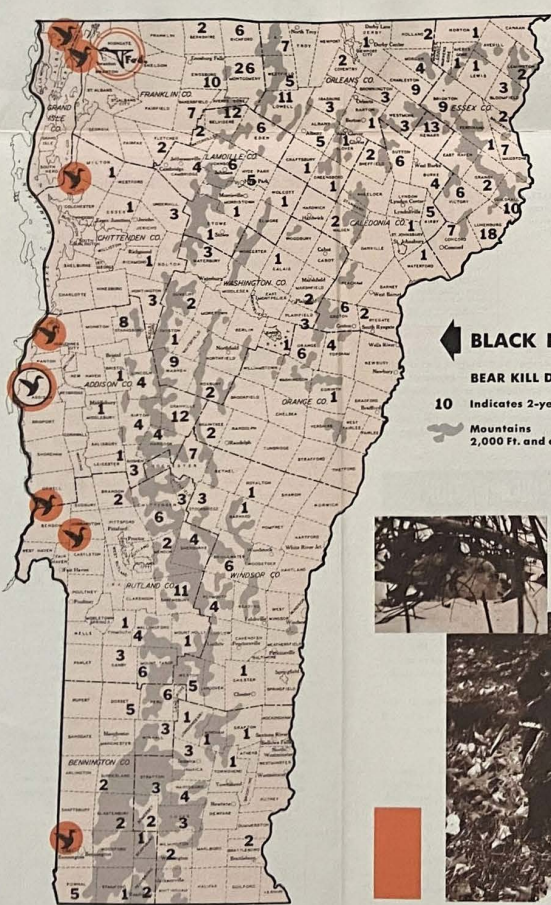
Waterfowl have traditionally provided an important hunting opportunity in Vermont. Lake Champlain and its adjoining marshes form an important migration route along the western side of the state, while the Connecticut River Valley is a secondary migration route along the eastern side. Wetland areas scattered throughout central Vermont also attract ducks and geese to a lesser degree.

To insure the future of waterfowl production and hunting in Vermont, the department is working on a statewide wetlands inventory. All wetland areas over 2 acres in size will be evaluated to determine present and potential benefits to waterfowl and other game species.

Controlled gunning will also be explored as a means to cope with increasing hunting pressures. Fairfield Swamp in Franklin County will be one of the experimental areas.

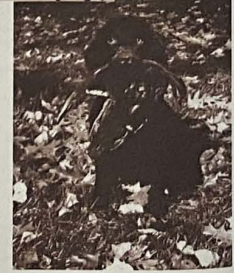
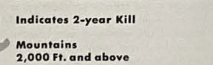
State-owned waterfowl management areas presently contain more than 9,000 acres of good habitat. Basic to the management of each area are water level manipulation, food and cover control, erection and maintenance of nesting structures, and periodic censuses to determine waterfowl production and use. Leg-banding of ducks and geese continues to provide information on migration, homing tendencies and the life spans of waterfowl when successful hunters return bands.

A breeding population of Canada geese originating from a pinioned, captive flock at the Department's Dead Creek Waterfowl Area now contributes wild geese to the flyway. Migrating geese are also attracted by the resident flock.



## BLACK BEAR

BEAR KILL DENSITY '67-'68



**UPLAND GAME.** Successful hunters take time to study the habits of the game they hunt. A good luck plays a part in all hunting, but knowing preferred cover and foods of game greatly increase the hunter's chances for success.

**RUFFED GROUSE.** The "partridge" is a native Vermont and the state's most abundant resident upland game bird. He can be found in all areas of the state where there is mixed forest with clearings to supply food, shelter and cover. Openings with berry patches, old apple orchards and edgeland along fences and stone walls are always worth checking. Abandoned farmland is usually prime partridge habitat because it usually has all of the above.

A well-trained bird dog makes partridge hunting an even more rewarding sport for this craft bird seems to know how well he blends with the forest floor. Often, an old bird will wait, confident of his camouflage until a tree comes between him and the advancing hunter. Then he will thunder off in a blur of feathers cutting behind the startled sportsman.

Today, the partridge hunter is forced to use a sportsman's approach, for the day of legal ground-slicing the king of upland game birds is over. No more can a person drive down a back road in Vermont and shoot from the car at a dusting partridge or one on the wall.

**RINGNECK PHEASANT.** Numbers of these birds are quite limited. Cold winters, deep snows, insufficient winter food, and improper habitat, all combine to give many odds against their wintering over in Vermont. No abundant cash-grain crops, so common to the pheasant producing states and needed for supplemental feed, are grown here. Clean farming methods even destroy most of the brushy or weedy pheasant cover areas in the state.

Pheasants are stocked cooperatively by the Fish & Game Department and participating Fish & Game Clubs on a strictly put-and-take basis. Look for them in agricultural lowlands and state-owned wildlife management areas. Areas stocked are publicized to benefit the gun during the open season.

**WILD TURKEYS.** Since 1850, these fine big-game birds have been non-existent in Vermont. Some fish and game clubs have stocked semi-domesticated, game-farm birds in the past, but have had little success with them wintering over. Birds often found their way to farms where they soon fell prey to predators or poachers.

The Fish & Game Department began stocking wild, live-trapped turkeys in the Spring of 1969. This project will be continued until conclusive evidence shows that turkeys either will or will not survive under present-day conditions in Vermont. Until such time, no turkey hunting will be allowed.

**WOODCOCK.** Nests of the "timber doodle" may be found in most areas of the state by the lucky and careful observer. But the period for best woodcock hunting is noticeably longer in the central and southern third of the state. There, the migrating flight birds linger to swell the numbers of resident birds working southward for the winter. Seasons are set annually within the federal framework.

Old "Big Eyes" is a challenging target and a fine species for training a bird dog, since woodcock stay put, until the dog all but nuzzles them.

**GRAY SQUIRRELS.** Bushy-tails do well in Vermont wherever good "mast" or nut crops grow. Oak and beech trees are plentiful in the southern half of the state and along the Champlain Valley—so are the squirrels.

Too often, gray squirrels are not even considered game animals in Vermont. Yet, in southern states they are held in high esteem—both as a challenging quarry and a delicacy. Most squirrel hunters use a small calibre rifle.

Bow hunters use blunts or "floo-floo" arrows, and while many squirrels may be shot at, few are ever hit. Nevertheless, a quiet bowman generally can be assured of a lively day afield.

**SNOWSHOE HARE.** These "eastern jacks" can be found from border to border throughout the higher elevations, and lower land too in the north. High country swamps with cedar, fir or spruce are likely places to find a snowshoe hare.

Hunters with hounds find the hare a real sporting animal because he does not seek a hole like his cottontail cousin tends to do when hard pressed.

Loose, deep snows make poor running conditions for hounds. Usually, a larger, long-legged dog with a good nose means more days for hunting hare. The beagleman has his good days too. And he can always fill-in by travelling to cottontail country elsewhere in the state. When a crust forms on the snow, the smaller hounds are back hunting hares again.

**COTTONTAIL RABBITS.** "Conies" are plentiful in Vermont, especially in the southern part of the state and all along the Champlain Valley, including the islands of Grand Isle County. They like the varied habitat found in agricultural lowlands much more than they do the high country. Fence rows, brush piles, briar thickets, edgeland and abandoned farmland are all favorite haunts of the cottontail.

Both rabbits and hare tend to be cyclic and experience periodic population declines. The hunter willing to try new cover can larger offsets the problem, however. Rarely is a decline statewide. New cover often means new opportunity while the old cover is coming back.

**WATERFOWL.** The future of waterfowl gunning depends on a great deal on the attitude of the present day waterfowler. Conservation-minded duck and goose hunters will help to preserve this fine sport for generations to come. Migratory bird hunting regulations are far from perfect but they still are the best control to date, obey them. Learn to identify waterfowl species in flight. Wait for birds to come well into range.

Use a trained retriever whenever possible. "Ducks at a Distance," a fine federal waterfowl identification booklet, is available for 25 cents from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C.

**PUDDLE DUCKS.** Black ducks, wood ducks and blue-winged teal are Vermont's most abundant "puddle ducks" (ducks frequenting shallow bodies of water). Mallards are becoming more numerous.

These ducks are found throughout the state, although migrating birds tend to follow the Champlain Valley and Connecticut River. All four species nest in Vermont.

**DIVING DUCKS.** Goldeneyes (whistlers), sculp (blue-bills), mergansers, and ring-necked ducks comprise most of Vermont's "diving duck" population. "Divers" are generally found on our larger, deeper lakes and rivers. Lake Champlain and Lake Memphremagog support most of the gunning pressure for these birds.

Since the framework for selecting seasons comes from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service late each year, after summer census work has been completed and evaluated, the individual states are always announcing seasons late too. The Fish & Game Commissioner of each state must elect the best season according to advice from the waterfowl biologists who strive to do the best by the birds and the hunters—a real challenge.

The puddle duck hunters wait the season early. The diver hunters wait it late. Under average weather conditions, the general continuous season with the larger bag option seems to be the best compromise for Vermont.

Puddle duck hunters can wade the marshes, hunt from a blind, canoe or small craft, and effectively use a small set of decoys. They find good results on lakes and ponds, beaver dams, streams and marshes.

Diving duck hunters need a boat to be safe for they hunt the big waters of Champlain and Memphremagog mostly. A large spread of decoys is the rule. Stone blinds on points, particularly during stormy weather provide fine shooting, but this type of blind is harder to come by each year unless the hunter knows someone who already controls a point.

Goose hunters are finding greater opportunities for this birds each year. Some gunners are beginning to specialize with field sets of goose decoys, and most broad lake hunters include goose decoys in their sets.

# Where to Hunt in Vermont