



DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

Southeast District Report July - September 2022

- Four new members appointed to the Fisheries and Wildlife Board including John Organ (USFWS, Wildlife Biologist), Sasha Dyer (Central District, Aquaculture), Emma Ellsworth (CV District & Agriculture, MT Grace Land Trust) and Matt Sisk (NHESP). Steve Sears is the new Acting Chair, Ernie Foster new Secretary and Bob Durand Vice Chair.
- The agency has been giving a series of presentations to the F&W Board to give them a better understanding of all aspects of our agency operations, which is particularly useful to the newly appointed members. Each District and Section will be giving presentations between now and January.
- Important information on small game regulation changes approved by the F&W Board in June. These will not go into effect until the 2023 season as they have not been officially promulgated. As a reminder, the reg changes will be as follows:
 - Extend the pheasant and quail season to Dec 31 annually to provide additional hunting opportunity on any remaining stocked birds. No new stocking will occur for the late season.
 - Eliminate sunrise to sunset and hunting implement restrictions on other game species on WMAs stocked with pheasant and quail.
 - Make hunting hours for pheasant and quail consistent as sunrise to sunset statewide, regardless of whether you are hunting on WMAs or private lands.
 - Simplify and expand the rabbit and gray squirrel hunting seasons.
- Staff completed all of our typical summer surveys including pond and stream surveys, waterfowl breeding plots and coastal waterbird nesting surveys.
- Canada goose banding and summer mallard banding was completed in Bristol, Plymouth and Barnstable County
- Staff continued to assist the Buzzards Bay Tern Project through our NHESP program, doing habitat maintenance and improvement projects on Penikese, Ram and Bird Islands, assisting with boat maintenance and transport and assisting with bird nesting surveys.

- The upland phase of the Mill Brook Bogs WMA restoration project was completed. You will notice large stockpiles of trees on the WMA. They are only there temporarily, as they will be utilized as woody debris in the wetland restoration portion of the project.
- Fall trout stocking will be completed the week of September 26th.
- Speaking of trout, we also completed our annual surveys and monitoring of salter brook trout populations in the District. We are particularly happy to report that we have documented significant benefits to the trout population and habitat conditions in the Childs River that are the result of the restoration project spearheaded by the Falmouth Rod and Gun Club.
- Club bird pheasants were delivered to the two participating clubs in the SE (Samoset, Shawme). Youth hunt birds are being delivered to Carver and Falmouth on Friday September 23 for their hunts on Saturday September 24.
- The Youth Deer Hunt is just around the corner on October 1st. Remember that all youth participating need a free youth deer permit.
- The September black bear season is nearing its end. As of September 22, there were over 134 bears harvested. This is on track to be a good season. Last year there were 112 bears harvested during the September season and we have only had 5 years with a September harvest over 150, two of which were 1501 & 152). With a decent day on Saturday we could easily end up over 150.
- The Camp Edwards Deer hunting dates are set, with one minor change to the archery dates (Scouting moved to Nov 14-15, Hunting moved to Nov 17-19). Also, we are allowing scouting for the youth day on Friday September 30 from 8AM-12PM (check in at range control similar to archery scouting). The military hunt on Friday December 2 will be expanded this year to allow first responders to participate. This came in as a request from a few individual hunters and was brought forward to Camp Edwards and MassWildlife senior staff and was approved. Lastly, online maps will be available several days prior to each hunt on the base in a format that can be downloaded to smart phones and used in google earth, as well as pdf images that can also be saved to smart phones and opened in a free smartphone app called Avenza. Both options will give hunters the ability to see exactly where they are on the base in relation to open/closed areas, roads, etc.
- MassWildlife has applied for an America the Beautiful Grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Federation which, if awarded, would completely fund the Red Brook WMA restoration project, as well as habitat improvement projects on coastal plain ponds and pine barrens habitats through southeastern Massachusetts.
- MassWildlife is working with the Army Corps of Engineers Section 206 program to study potential restoration and wetland habitat improvement projects at the Burrage Pond WMA.
- Routine monitoring of our Wildlife Conservation Easement properties was conducted.

- We saw a significant uptick in illegal OHV activity and damage on a number of WMAs. Staff worked to block off illegal access points with gates and/or boulders. Additionally, we coordinated with OLE and provided information that they could use in successful enforcement efforts.
- A new gate was installed at Rocky Gutter to block off an old access road that people were accessing through private property and having parties, fires and illegally doing target practice on the WMA.
- Herbicide applications to eliminate invasive plants on our lands were conducted at Burrage Pond, Noquochoke Frances A. Crane and Erwin Wilder.
- The Taunton River WMA restoration project was finally brought to a close with our staff completing the final phase of seeding the disturbed restoration areas with native wetland and upland seed mixes.
- In collaboration with several partners, State, federal and Non-profit, a license agreement was issued for the installation of a temporary MOTUS tower at the Erwin Wilder WMA. The tower is part of an international research project and collects radiotelemetry data on a wide variety of avian species.
- Many WMA parking lots were improved or maintained over the summer including Haskell Swamp, Mill Brook Bogs, Burrage Pond, Frances A. Crane and Rocky Gutter. Roadway mowing and/or maintenance was conducted at Burrage Pond, Frances A. Crane, Rocky Gutter, Noquochoke, Mill Brook Bogs and Erwin Wilder.
- The SE District organized the agency's involvement in the first ever Huntstock Event held in August in Westminister MA. We planned out a full deer field dressing and butchering workshop, demonstrated deer aging by tooth wear and replacement, had our dermestid beetle colony on display and explained how to maintain the colony and make your own European skull mounts, demonstrated how to render bear fat into grease/lard that can be used for cooking and baking, went live on a few podcats and answered questions and provided general information about our agency. The event allowed us to reach and get some great exposure to a segment of the hunting public. Much of the event was centered around northeastern US podcasts and youtube hunting channels/personalities.
- A number of District staff helped organize and participated in three urban angler education programs, holding events at Lake Rico in Taunton, Buttonwood Park in New Bedford and DW Field Park in Brockton. The programs were a huge hit/success and introduced a lot of people to fishing in traditionally underserved communities.
- Several staff also helped plan and execute a hunter education class field day at the SE District HQ on September 18. We also have a number of staff assisting with field days being held at our Westborough Field HQ over the next couple of months.
- District staff have been working to help create online self-learning resources for a variety of hunting and fishing activities including the new online scouting basics video, online scouting for black bears video, tips and tactics for bear hunting, tips for trout

fishing and many others. The District Manager will be participating in the upcoming Learn to Deer Hunt classes, which include both an online biology and scouting class, as well as a field day to actually scout in the field on a WMA with experienced hunters and biologists.

- Surplus antlerless deer permits will go on sale next week as follows:
 - Tuesday September 27 at 9AM: Zones 10, 11, 13 & 14
 - Wednesday September 28 at 9AM: Zones 3, 9 & 12
 - NOTE: Zones 3, 9 and 12 (3 & 12 in particular) will sell out VERY FAST (likely in a matter of minutes). Your best bet to get a permit if interested is to do so online from home/work in a location where you have good wifi/cell service.
- DCR announced their 2022 Deer Management Program. As was the case last year, it will be an archery only hunt held Mondays through Thursdays between November 7th and 23rd (no hunting on Thanksgiving). The application deadline is Friday September 23. To apply, go here: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/how-to-apply-for-the-blue-hills-controlled-hunt>
- MassWildlife has been working on establishing a hunters for the hungry program for about 3 years now. I am pleased to announce that we are getting very close to being able to officially launch a pilot program for the 2022 hunting season. We just need to get through one additional small approval process, but we are very hopeful. If and when we launch it, there will be one approved processor for the first year and venison will be distributed through a Veteran Organization to help feed needy Veterans and their families.