

Hunting and Trapping Newsletter

Successful First BOW in the SNOW Workshop

Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) programs teach women a wide range of outdoor skills and foster community at each of the workshops. The first BOW in the SNOW Workshop was held Feb 7-9, 2020 at Allegany State Park. Fifty-five participants traveled through wintry conditions to join their peers in the woods for hands-on classes such as trapping, reading the woods, wild game cuts and cooking, hunting blinds and tree stands, firearm safety and handling, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, fat-tire biking, and more. Five women received their trapper education certification during the workshop. All participants were able to try something new and discover many ways to have outdoor fun during the winter.

For more information on BOW in New York and upcoming workshops, [visit DEC's website](#).

Bears Already?

It's not too early for New York homeowners to think about bear-proofing their properties. While most of our [bears](#) are still in their dens, the mild winter weather has allowed some of them to stay on foot searching for food. This is especially true in southeastern New York where wildlife biologists say reports of active bears have been coming in weekly. The abundant natural food resources from the fall of 2019 have left ample pickings for these bears, but some will seek other easy meals from [bird feeders or unsecured garbage](#). In most years, we see bears leaving their dens beginning around mid-March. Folks who feed birds in bear country should begin emptying feeders and cleaning up dropped seeds before then, or anytime you observe signs of bear activity. It's also a good time to make sure garbage cans are secured and stored in a sturdy building. If the month of March follows this year's mild trend, homeowners may want to start these tasks earlier than normal.

Trappers Assist Ongoing Fisher Research

Harvest data suggests a decline in fisher populations in certain wildlife management units within the Adirondack Park. To get a better idea of what could be driving these apparent declines, DEC initiated a study on fisher demographic rates in 2019. DEC biologists hope to get an idea of reproductive rates and survival of fisher in the central Adirondacks and compare them to demographic rates from the more robust population in the Tug Hill area. Thanks to some dedicated trappers providing expertise and trapping assistance, this field season has been a great success thus far! Biologists have captured over 30 fisher this winter, including seven females that have been outfitted with GPS collars. Blood tests done by Cornell University suggest that several of these females are pregnant. In the spring, DEC biologists will attempt to successfully track these females to dens. By monitoring these dens using game cameras, DEC can get a better idea of the number of kits each female has and monitor their survival and movements throughout the year.

Plastic Bag Ban Starts March 1: #BYOBagNY

Starting this **Sunday, March 1, 2020**, a new [plastic bag waste reduction law](#) will take effect in New York State, and your reusable bag should be in hand when going shopping. Whether you're going to the grocery store, clothes shopping, or to a home improvement store, make sure to bring your reusable bags. You don't need to wait until March 1st to take action! Start bringing your reusable bags to the store ahead of the ban to build a new habit. Remember, your reusable bag means conserving natural resources, creating less litter, and keeping New York beautiful for future generations.

Additionally, stores covered under the NYS Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Act will still be required to collect plastic bags and other [film plastics](#) from consumers for recycling. Film plastics include items such as bread bags and plastic wraps that come over cases of water, paper towels and other similar items. Consumers can help by continuing to recycle these items at participating retailers.

Questions on the upcoming plastic bag ban? E-mail plasticbags@dec.ny.gov.