

NEW YORK STATE

# CONSERVATIONIST

DECEMBER 2023/JANUARY 2024

## A BIRD'S EYE VIEW: ADIRONDACK MOOSE

**ALSO:**

Inside 2024 Calendar

Highlights From Across New York State

Mom Knows Best







Dear Readers,

Last winter's historic blizzard in Buffalo and this summer's torrential rainfall that damaged homes and infrastructure from the Adirondacks to the Hudson Valley and to Long Island demonstrate how severe weather continues to impact the lives of millions of New Yorkers. To

better prepare for these extreme weather events and help prevent climate change's impacts, DEC is prioritizing necessary projects and initiatives that will build stronger, healthier, and more resilient communities statewide.

In this issue of the *Conservationist*, we highlight some of the accomplishments DEC's regional offices are making to safeguard New York's environment (pg. 2). Ecologically significant parcels of open space are being conserved, protecting important natural resources and critical drinking water sources. Wildlife enhancement projects include the removal of two dams, reestablishing salmon runs in the largest New York State tributary of Lake Champlain, and spruce grouse released in the Adirondacks to restore low populations.

DEC's regional staff are also busy working on projects to enhance recreation, including construction on the Adirondack Rail Trail between Lake Placid and Saranac Lake, and replacements of several bridges at Chateaugay State Forest. Additionally, we are continuing efforts to address environmental quality concerns by hosting meetings for the statewide Community Air Monitoring Initiative, as part of our enhanced focus on environmental justice.

This issue of the *Conservationist* also contains our popular annual calendar (pg. 5), which has become a reader favorite. It includes spectacular images captured by talented photographers and highlights special days that celebrate our environment. We hope the calendar will inspire you to take advantage of our beautiful lands and waters and encourage strong and sensible stewardship of our natural resources. I'm sure you'll enjoy the photos for each month, which showcase some of the many reasons millions of outdoor enthusiasts flock to New York State each year.

This issue also includes the regular features that readers have come to enjoy, including Briefly, On Patrol, Letters, and Back Trails.

Have a wonderful and active winter season and a happy New Year.

Sincerely,

Basil Seggos, Commissioner

**ON THE COVER:**  
 DEC and Cornell University conduct a moose research project; by Native Range Capture Services. For more information, scan the QR code.



NEW YORK STATE  
**CONSERVATIONIST**

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Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York State

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**FROM DEC ARCHIVES**

Skate sailing on Lake George, 1918; rarely practiced today, skate sailing is an outdoor activity that was popular from the late 1800s through the 1940s.



# In this issue

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Around New York State

BY DEC STAFF

**5** New York State  
Conservationist 2024 Calendar

**WHAT IS IT?**

Go to page 5  
to find out!



**IN THE NEXT ISSUE**

A deeper look into moose  
conservation efforts



**In every issue**

**30** BRIEFLY

**32** ON PATROL

**34** LETTERS

**36** BACK TRAILS

# HIGHLIGHTS

..... ➔ from around ➔ .....

# NEW YORK STATE



The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has a headquarters at our Central Office in Albany. The state is also divided into nine regions, each with its own headquarters and staff. The following are a few highlights of each region's projects and initiatives conducted during the past year:

## REGION 1 LONG ISLAND

- ↓ Completed a marsh restoration project at Fireplace Neck Tidal Wetland Area in the town of Brookhaven, Suffolk County: [on.ny.gov/tidalwetlands](https://on.ny.gov/tidalwetlands)
- Coordinated the successful first-ever spring wild turkey hunting season on Long Island: [on.ny.gov/longislandturkey](https://on.ny.gov/longislandturkey)
- Preserved 15.7 acres of land in the town of Brookhaven to protect Long Island's sole source aquifer, the drinking water source for millions of residents: [on.ny.gov/longislandaquifer](https://on.ny.gov/longislandaquifer)

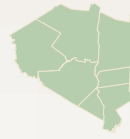


## REGION 2 NEW YORK CITY

- Hosted four communities selected for the statewide Community Air Monitoring Initiative: [on.ny.gov/airmonitor](https://on.ny.gov/airmonitor)
- ↓ Launched Operation ECO-Quality, removing thousands of illegal pesticide products from Washington Heights and Inwood: [on.ny.gov/ecoquality](https://on.ny.gov/ecoquality)
- Convened a community availability session that provided an update on New York State's oversight of the investigation and cleanup of the Gowanus Canal Area sites in Brooklyn: [on.ny.gov/gowanus](https://on.ny.gov/gowanus)

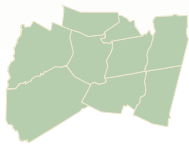






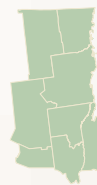
## REGION 3 LOWER HUDSON VALLEY

- ← Released the final Recovery Plan for Hudson River American Shad: [on.ny.gov/shadplan](https://on.ny.gov/shadplan)
- Revised the Shawangunk Ridge Unit Management Plan, encompassing approximately 6,810 acres of public lands within Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster counties: [on.ny.gov/shawangunk](https://on.ny.gov/shawangunk)
- Protected 261 acres adjacent to the Catskill Forest Preserve's Sundown Wild Forest, preserving open space and protecting critical drinking water sources: [on.ny.gov/sundown](https://on.ny.gov/sundown)



## REGION 4 CAPITAL REGION/ NORTHERN CATSKILLS

- Sponsored the 12th annual Great Hudson River Estuary Fish Count at multiple sites along the banks and piers of the Hudson River Estuary: [on.ny.gov/fish-count](https://on.ny.gov/fish-count)
- → Connected the Taconic Ridge and Berlin State forests by protecting 1,300 acres of forest and grasslands in the Taconic Mountains in the town of Berlin, Rensselaer County: [on.ny.gov/46Fb4sn](https://on.ny.gov/46Fb4sn)
- Hosted a free fishing clinic at the North-South Lake Campground in Haines Falls, where participants learned about fish identification, fishing equipment and techniques: [on.ny.gov/46SVfyJ](https://on.ny.gov/46SVfyJ)



## REGION 5 EASTERN ADIRONDACKS/ LAKE CHAMPLAIN

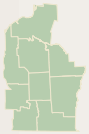
- Updated a cooperative moose research project with Cornell University: [on.ny.gov/3tCQkD7](https://on.ny.gov/3tCQkD7)
- ← Continued construction on the Adirondack Rail Trail between Lake Placid and Saranac Lake: [on.ny.gov/3S7SiWr](https://on.ny.gov/3S7SiWr)
- Removed two dams through a diverse public-private partnership, reestablishing salmon runs in the largest New York State tributary of Lake Champlain: [on.ny.gov/3tO5eGz](https://on.ny.gov/3tO5eGz)





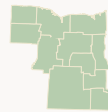
## REGION 6 WESTERN ADIRONDACKS/ EASTERN LAKE ONTARIO

- Identified opportunities for public use and recreation in the draft Adirondack Foothills Unit Management Plan, which includes six state forests: [on.ny.gov/3S2C7cQ](https://on.ny.gov/3S2C7cQ)
- Completed a new boat launch on the Barge Canal at Cove Road in the town of Verona, Oneida County: [on.ny.gov/45zSmBn](https://on.ny.gov/45zSmBn)
- ← Released spruce grouse into the Adirondacks as part of DEC’s Spruce Grouse Recovery Plan and efforts to restore populations to levels at which the species can be self-sustaining: [on.ny.gov/495fQkS](https://on.ny.gov/495fQkS)



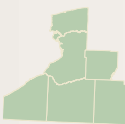
## REGION 7 CENTRAL NEW YORK

- Drafted updates to the Chenango Trail Unit Management Plan, which includes Bobell Hill, Beaver Flow, Bumps Creek, Coventry, and Oak Ridge state forests, in Chenango County: [on.ny.gov/46yGh0q](https://on.ny.gov/46yGh0q)
- Protected 43 acres of the Cayuga Lake Watershed in the town of Newfield, Tompkins County: [on.ny.gov/406kA5r](https://on.ny.gov/406kA5r)
- → With the Student Conservation Association, completed replacements of three bridges at Chateaugay State Forest in the town of Orwell, Oswego County: [on.ny.gov/48ZhynJ](https://on.ny.gov/48ZhynJ)



## REGION 8 WESTERN FINGER LAKES

- ← Held a family-friendly introduction to accessible fishing at the Birdseye Hollow State Forest in Steuben County: [on.ny.gov/3Q7IR6w](https://on.ny.gov/3Q7IR6w)
- Released the habitat management plan for Galen Wildlife Management Area, located in the town of Galen, Wayne County: [on.ny.gov/48U76Oa](https://on.ny.gov/48U76Oa)
- Hosted an inclusive, family-friendly birding event at Braddock Bay Park in Rochester: [on.ny.gov/3Q7ITva](https://on.ny.gov/3Q7ITva)



## REGION 9 WESTERN NEW YORK:

- → Created the East Buffalo Environmental Forum, a monthly community meeting to enhance environmental justice outreach efforts for stakeholders on Buffalo’s East Side: [on.ny.gov/3s52292](https://on.ny.gov/3s52292)
- Continued work to improve public safety and enhance visitor experience at Zoar Valley Multiple Use and Unique Area in Erie County: [on.ny.gov/3Q7IXeo](https://on.ny.gov/3Q7IXeo)
- Made encouraging progress towards the goal of creating a self-sustaining sauger population in the Allegheny River Watershed through stocking and monitoring efforts: [on.ny.gov/402ZEMy](https://on.ny.gov/402ZEMy)





**YOU FOUND IT!**  
Ruffed grouse  
(*Bonasa  
umbellus*) males  
make drumming  
sounds with their  
wings to attract  
females and  
warn off males.

NEW YORK STATE  
**CONSERVATIONIST**  
**2024 CALENDAR**

The *Conservationist* proudly presents our fifth annual calendar, which includes awe-inspiring photographs that reflect the beauty of nature, a variety of wildlife, and reasons to get out and enjoy the outdoors.

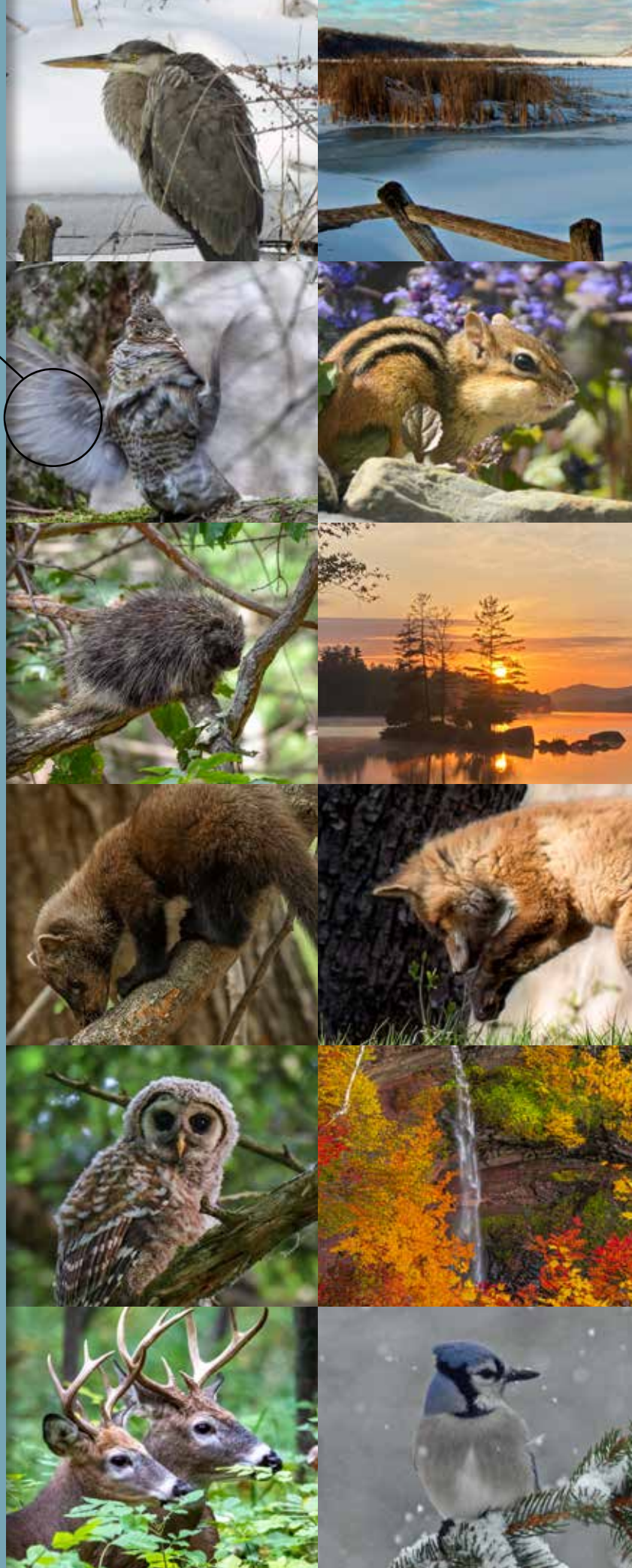
This year's photos come from regular contributors to the *Conservationist*, and we greatly appreciate their sharing such wonderful photos. We hope you will enjoy this calendar—and the magazine—all year long.

As you know, the hallmark of the *Conservationist* has always been a combination of words and pictures that inform, entertain, and sometimes amaze or inspire our readers. We are thankful to all the writers and photographers who help us create the magazine. Together, you and our contributors are the heart of the *Conservationist*, and we greatly appreciate your support.

And remember, we love receiving photographs and story ideas, so feel free to share them with us throughout the year. Just send them to [magazine@dec.ny.gov](mailto:magazine@dec.ny.gov).

Thank you again and best wishes for a happy and healthy new year. 🐾

*Conservationist staff and the entire  
DEC family*









SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
7	1 New Year's Day First Day Hikes	2	3 Last Quarter	4	5	6
14	15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	9	10	11 New Moon	12	13
21	22	23	24	25 Full Moon	26	27
28	29	30	31			

DECEMBER 2023							FEBRUARY 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2					1	2	3
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	25	26	27	28	29		
31													

# January







**SUNDAY**      **MONDAY**      **TUESDAY**      **WEDNESDAY**      **THURSDAY**      **FRIDAY**      **SATURDAY**

<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Valentine's Day	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> NYS Free Fishing Weekend
<b>18</b> NYS Free Fishing Weekend	<b>19</b> Presidents' Day	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>2</b> Groundhog Day	<b>3</b>
<b>1</b>						

**JANUARY 2024**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**MARCH 2024**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
						31

# February





**SUNDAY      MONDAY      TUESDAY      WEDNESDAY      THURSDAY      FRIDAY      SATURDAY**

**1      2**

**3      4      5      6      7      8      9**

**10      11      12      13      14      15      16**

**10**  
Daylight Saving Starts  
Ramadan Begins

**17      18      19      20      21      22      23**

**17**  
Saint Patrick's Day

**19**  
Vernal Equinox

**24      25      26      27      28      29      30**

**31**  
Easter

FEBRUARY 2024							APRIL 2024							
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	
			1	2	3				1	2	3	4	5	6
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
25	26	27	28	29			28	29	30					

# March





SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
7	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	8	9 Ramadan Ends	10	11	12	13
21	15	16	17	18	19	20
28	22 Earth Day Passover Begins	23	24	25	26 Arbor Day	27
	29	30 Passover Ends				

MARCH 2024							MAY 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
							29	30					

# April







SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			<b>1</b> Spring Turkey Season Opens	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> I Love My Park Day
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> Mother's Day	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Most DEC Campgrounds Open	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Adirondack Park Established 1892	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Memorial Day	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	

APRIL 2024							JUNE 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
28	29	30					23	24	25	26	27	28	29
													30

# May





**SUNDAY      MONDAY      TUESDAY      WEDNESDAY      THURSDAY      FRIDAY      SATURDAY**

<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b> National Trails Day
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Flag Day	<b>8</b> Get Outdoors and Get Together Day
<b>16</b> Father's Day	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Juneteenth	<b>20</b> Summer Solstice	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> NYS Free Fishing Weekend

<b>30</b> NYS Free Fishing Weekend
---------------------------------------

MAY 2024							JULY 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
26	27	28	29	30	31		28	29	30	31			

# June





**SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY**

<b>1</b> DEC Opened its Doors in 1970	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Independence Day	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> NYS Conservation Commission Established 1911	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>

# July

AUGUST 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JUNE 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						





**SUNDAY      MONDAY      TUESDAY      WEDNESDAY      THURSDAY      FRIDAY      SATURDAY**

<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Smokey Bear's Birthday	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>

**JULY 2024**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**SEPTEMBER 2024**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

# August





SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 Labor Day	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Patriot Day	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 Autumnal Equinox	23	24	25	26	27	28 NYS Free Fishing Day
29	30					

AUGUST 2024							OCTOBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	27	28	29	30	31		

# September







**SUNDAY**      **MONDAY**      **TUESDAY**      **WEDNESDAY**      **THURSDAY**      **FRIDAY**      **SATURDAY**

<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Rosh Hashanah Begins	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Rosh Hashanah Ends	<b>5</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Indigenous Peoples' Day Columbus Day	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Yom Kippur Begins	<b>12</b> Yom Kippur Ends
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Regular Northern Zone Big Game Season Opens
	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Halloween			

**SEPTEMBER 2024**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

**NOVEMBER 2024**

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8
	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30		

# October





SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>3</b> Daylight Saving Ends	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Election Day	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Veterans Day Free Fishing Day	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> America Recycles Day	<b>16</b> Regular Southern Zone Big Game Season Opens
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Thanksgiving	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>

OCTOBER 2024							DECEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
							1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
27	28	29	30	31			29	30	31				

# November





SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 Winter Solstice
22	23	24	25 Christmas Hanukkah Begins	26 Kwanzaa Begins	27	28
29	30	31				

NOVEMBER 2024							JANUARY 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	26	27	28	29	30	31	

# December



# Briefly

By Central New York Land Trust



## ↑ SAFEGUARDING DRINKING WATER

DEC and the Central New York Land Trust, Inc. recently protected 144 acres of land near Skaneateles Lake, a critical drinking water source for 190,000 Central New Yorkers. The acquisition was funded through the State's Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) program, which funds projects that improve water quality or aquatic habitat, promote flood risk reduction, restoration, or enhanced flood or climate resiliency, or protect a drinking water source. This grant program has awarded more than \$65 million for 51 land acquisition projects to date. For more information about the WQIP program, visit: [www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/4774.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/4774.html).

## ↓ PROTECTING THE MONTAUK POINT LIGHTHOUSE

Through a partnership between DEC and the United States Army Corps of Engineers, approximately 1,000 feet of stone revetment was rebuilt on the easternmost point of Long Island. The work restored the shoreline that was damaged by Superstorm Sandy and protected the newly-renovated historic Montauk Point Lighthouse for many generations to come. View the video on YouTube at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLCINFU0j2Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLCINFU0j2Y).



## ↙ ADIRONDACK ROAD SALT REPORT

The New York State Department of Transportation and DEC recently released a report with recommendations from the Adirondack Road Salt Reduction Task Force. The Task Force was established in 2020 to review best management practices for road salt applications within the Adirondack Park to reduce risks

to public health and the environment while maintaining public safety. The report contains recommendations for an Adirondack Park Road Salt Reduction Pilot Program and indicates the need to reduce road salt usage while still considering the safety of the traveling public. To view the full report, go to: [www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/128394.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/128394.html).





**↑ GOOGLE SUSTAINABILITY AWARD**

DEC received the 2023 Google Cloud Customer Sustainability Award for its statewide Community Air Monitoring Initiative. In 2022, DEC launched the first-of-its-kind air quality and greenhouse gas mobile monitoring initiative in 10 disadvantaged communities across the state. The ongoing initiative uses mobile mapping technology and professional analytics, run exclusively on Google Cloud, to reduce air pollution. DEC is working collaboratively with communities and organizations to prioritize environmental justice, identify sources of pollution, and improve air quality. For more information about the Community Air Monitoring Initiative, go to: [www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/125320.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/125320.html).

**↓ UPDATING THE OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PLAN**

DEC and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation have begun the process of updating the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan, relying on the recommendations of nine Regional Advisory Committees. The committees will work with the public and staff from both agencies to develop a list of priority land conservation projects. Since 1992, the Plan has served as the blueprint for the State's Open Space Program, guiding land protection investments from the Environmental Protection Fund and other state and federal funding sources. The entire update process takes approximately two years and includes a public comment period, which is anticipated to take place in the summer of 2024. For more information about the State's Open Space Conservation Program and to view the current Plan, go to: [www.dec.ny.gov/lands/317.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/317.html).



**↓ 12 SITES ADDED TO BIRDING TRAIL**

In September, DEC announced 12 new locations to the New York State Birding Trail, bringing the total number of birding trail locations across the state to 344. Birding has become one of New York's fastest-growing recreation and tourism activities. The new sites will help attract even more visitors to experience the outdoors close to home. The New York State Birding Trail webpage provides valuable information on each site and is available at: [www.dec.ny.gov/animals/109900.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/109900.html).



Photos by Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy



# On Patrol



## ↑ VEHICLE DETAIL—SENECA COUNTY

On Aug. 9, ECOs Brown, Rich, and McCabe partnered with inspectors from the New York State Department of Transportation to conduct checks of heavy duty diesel vehicles in Seneca Falls. The Officers inspected many trucks and witnessed several violations and infractions. One truck was hauling 25 cubic yards of asbestos without a permit to carry this hazardous substance. In addition, the truck was leaking oil and had many other safety violations. Officers ticketed the driver, put the truck out of service, and escorted it to a permitted facility to dispose of the asbestos.



## ↓ BOX TURTLE—SUFFOLK COUNTY

On Aug. 18, while on patrol in Suffolk County, Environmental Conservation Police Officer (ECO) DeVito received reports of a box turtle that appeared ill in the hamlet of Shirley. Box turtles are a species of Special Concern in New York State. Officer DeVito responded to the location and observed a small box turtle that appeared lethargic and had lumps on either side of its neck. The ECO determined the turtle needed special attention and brought it to a local licensed rehabilitator who explained the animal was suffering from a double ear infection, common in box turtles exposed to certain pesticides. The animal is being treated at the Turtle Foundation in the village of Jamesport and is expected to be released when it makes a full recovery.



## ← INJURED OWL—COLUMBIA COUNTY

On Aug. 4, ECO Rutherford responded to the town of Craryville for reports of an owl entangled in a net. Officer Rutherford carefully cut the net and released the owl. After observing the bird for several minutes after its release, the ECO determined the owl was suffering from injuries that needed further evaluation. He brought the bird to the Friends of the Feathered and Furry Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Hunter, where it was treated for dehydration and an injured wing. The owl was released back into the wild after making a full recovery.





**↑ WILDERNESS RESCUE—ESSEX COUNTY**

On Sept. 20, Ray Brook Dispatch alerted Forest Rangers to a hiker with an unstable leg injury on Mount Marcy. The 53-year-old from New Jersey was approximately half a mile from the summit, just below the tree line. New York State Police (NYSP) Aviation was called to assist. With Ranger Baldwin as the crew chief, NYSP Pilot Beck flew Ranger Corey to the scene. Ranger Baldwin lowered Ranger Corey to the patient, who then placed the hiker in a harness, and Ranger Baldwin hoisted her into the helicopter.



**↓ LAW ENFORCEMENT—FRANKLIN COUNTY**

On Sept. 6, Forest Ranger Russell observed a vehicle swerving over the center divider of State Route 11B and pulled the driver over. When the driver opened the glove compartment, Ranger Russell saw evidence that there may have been a handgun in the vehicle. Ranger Russell called Ray Brook Dispatch to request New York State Police (NYSP) assistance. The 36-year-old from New Hampshire was processed by NYSP on two felony counts of illegal possession of a firearm, and Ranger Russell issued two tickets for vehicle and traffic law violations. NYSP also issued a ticket for having an open alcohol container in the vehicle.



**← WILDERNESS RESCUE—HAMILTON COUNTY**

On Sept. 15, Forest Rangers Caswell and Scott responded to a report of a hiker with a possible hip injury on Snowy Mountain. Rangers joined Indian Lake and Speculator Fire and EMS to treat the 67-year-old from Gloversville. The hiker fell back and landed on her hip. Rescue crews stabilized the injury and loaded the subject into a wheeled litter. A Life Net helicopter met them at the trailhead and transported the patient to the hospital.



# Letters

front



back



## HUNTINGBUTTONS

My father, Jack Niemi, a lifelong resident of Van Etten, NY wanted me to send you pictures of a mount that his father had made in 1939. He was wondering when they switched from button tags to back tags and thought the magazine might find this interesting.

KRISTI WILLIAMS

*Thanks for sharing the photos with us! We did a little research, and according to an article that was published 20 years ago, the buttons were last sold in 1941 and paper back tags became required in the mid-1950s. The article appeared in the August 2003 issue of Conservationist.*

## CONTACT US:



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625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4502



magazine@dec.ny.gov



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NYSDECtheconservationist



## FUNGI FINGERS

I see these all over this time of year (*late summer and early fall*) and can't find them in a mushroom guide. I was wondering if your experts can ID them.

JACK BULMER, TROY

*Great shot! The reason you were not able to find these in a mushroom guide is because these are not actually fungi, but woodland plants called ghost plant, ghost pipe, or Indian pipe, (*Monotropa uniflora*), which lack chlorophyll. They are perennial plants found throughout much of the United States and flower from early summer to early autumn. They are generally restricted to moist, shaded forests. Lacking chlorophyll, they obtain their nutrients from tree roots through a relationship with mycorrhizal fungi.*



**↑ THE SNACK ATTACKS**

I wanted to share this photo with your readers of a loon I photographed late this summer on Great Sacandaga Lake.

**NED JOHNSON**

*Fantastic photo! A familiar bird of the north woods, the common loon (Gavia immer) is an expert angler, feeding primarily on fish. They will also eat crustaceans, snails, aquatic insect larvae, and leeches if fish are scarce or the water is too murky for fishing.*



**→ DANGER LIZARD**

While visiting one of our favorite towns (Gardiner, NY) during camping season, my sons and I came across this very bright orange lizard/salamander. As a dad of three lil' boys, I quickly assumed it may be poisonous, due to its spotted bright skin, and told the boys not to get too close. However, as one who loves nature and the great outdoors, I didn't have an answer for my sons when asked if it was



poisonous or if it was a salamander or lizard. We are all hoping to find out more about this little guy, and whether or not we can come across one again sometime?

**STEVE MAIELI, LONG ISLAND**

*Thanks for reaching out! This is a red eft, which is the juvenile form of the eastern newt (Notophthalmus viridescens). It is a type of salamander that is fully aquatic as an adult, but terrestrial as a juvenile. Although the orange coloration does signal predators that it is toxic, humans would not be poisoned by touching them. However, if ingested, there could be some medical complications. So we always recommend thoroughly washing hands if these are ever handled.*

**← ASK A BIOLOGIST**

We saw this timber rattlesnake on the side of a trail in the Tongue Mountain Range near Bolton Landing, Lake George in August. We couldn't help but notice that the piece of wood the snake was next to exhibited similar coloration. Do you think that it is pure coincidence, or do they know enough to camouflage themselves like that?

**PAT LINDAMAN, HARPURSVILLE**

*Light and dark or yellow and black - these are the two color phases of timber rattlesnake (Crotalus horridus) in the northeast, save some weird anomalies that pop up now and again. And they do not change their pattern or color phase, although with extreme stress, they can darken in coloration - but that is only to a trained and observant eye. We have no evidence to suggest that they choose places to coil based on their own coloration/pattern. I suspect that such behavior is unlikely. Based on the theory of natural selection, the species survived with coloration that became more and more like logs and leaves, etc., and over time, only snakes that had such patterning were the survivors.*

**—William Hoffman, Fish and Wildlife Technician, Division of Fish and Wildlife**



# It's Up to Everyone to Do Our Part

BY LUCY LANG



**Inspector General Lucy Lang walks along the Javits Center's green roof with Alan Steel, New York Convention Center Operating Corporation CEO; by OIG staff**

**O**n the way to drop me off at college in 1999, my mom quietly and anxiously asked me to please promise her one thing. My mind raced with all the promises I couldn't (or perhaps just wouldn't) make—no beer before liquor? no older boys?—until she looked me in the eye and simply said “please, just always recycle.”

I didn't identify as an environmentalist, but her request from all those years ago has stayed with me as I grew into adulthood, established shared values with my own children, and ultimately now, as New York State's Inspector General (IG), managing a statewide agency that has oversight over many other agencies and authorities. There are agencies and leaders at the State and local level, like the Department of Environmental Conservation, whose job involves tackling this crisis, and my office is not one. However, as New Yorkers watched this summer's seemingly biblical floods while the world around us burned, I have realized that it's time for all of us to be environmentalists, regardless of our specific role, and that my mom's plea is far from enough.

Consistent with the Governor's 2022 Executive Order to agencies to “accelerate New York State's efforts to make government more sustainable and ensure we continue to lead by example on climate change,” the IG's office has begun the challenging transition of moving from a largely paper-based practice to electronic work and file maintenance, and we have been encouraging other agencies to do the same. This requires overcoming practical and cultural obstacles, and diverting budgets to do so, but it can significantly decrease the amount of paper waste. It has the added benefit of making data more accessible, easier to work with, and ultimately improving our ability to be more transparent and accountable to the public.

While encouraging the use of public transportation wherever possible, we have made a commitment to decrease the number of cars in our State fleet, and when we need to replace a car, replacing it with

an electric vehicle. We are working across our facilities around the state to develop composting capacity in our offices and to build a culture of waste minimization that our staff can take home and integrate into their families' behaviors. Our Sustainability Coordinator, as well as Deputy Chief of Staff and Finance Director, created a working group to identify best practices that we can incorporate into our work, and ultimately urge the agencies under our jurisdiction to do the same.

I don't kid myself that these changes will save the Hudson Valley from another 1,000-year flood, Buffalo from tragic blizzards, or New York City from blinding smoke. I also don't pretend to have the expertise to weigh in on how we can save our environment for the next generation. But I have the great privilege to travel across the state and experience our breathtaking natural areas, filled with mountains, rivers, and lakes, and to work closely with the people who are laboring daily to be good stewards of New York State. It's thanks to them, that as the leader of an organization and a person with a public voice, I know it is incumbent on all of us to be part of the conversation that moves the climate crisis from an afterthought to a critical part of every day for all New Yorkers.

As ever, Mom knew best. 🐾

**Lucy Lang is the New York State Inspector General.**



# A week at camp, a lifetime of memories.



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Foster a love for the natural world that lasts a lifetime

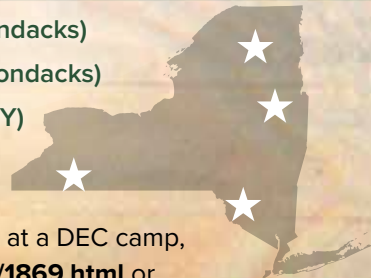
## DEC Educational Summer Camps for 11- to 17-year-olds

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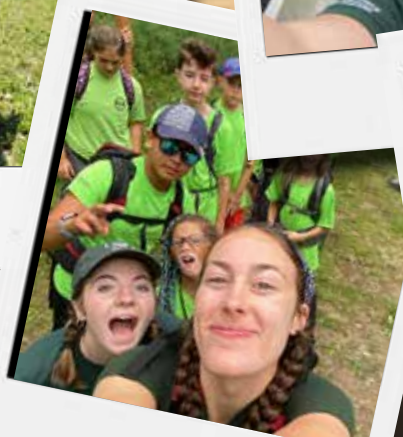
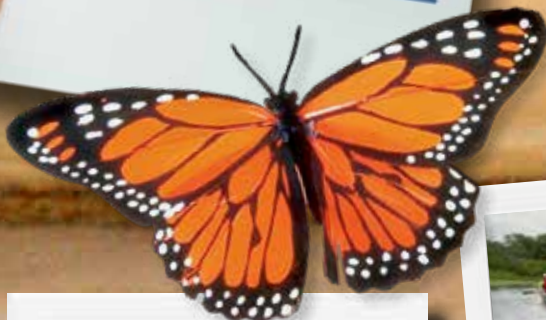


Visit [www.dec.ny.gov/education/29.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/29.html) for additional information.

- ★ CAMP COLBY (Northern Adirondacks)
- ★ PACK FOREST (Southern Adirondacks)
- ★ CAMP RUSHFORD (Western NY)
- ★ CAMP DEBRUCE (Catskills)

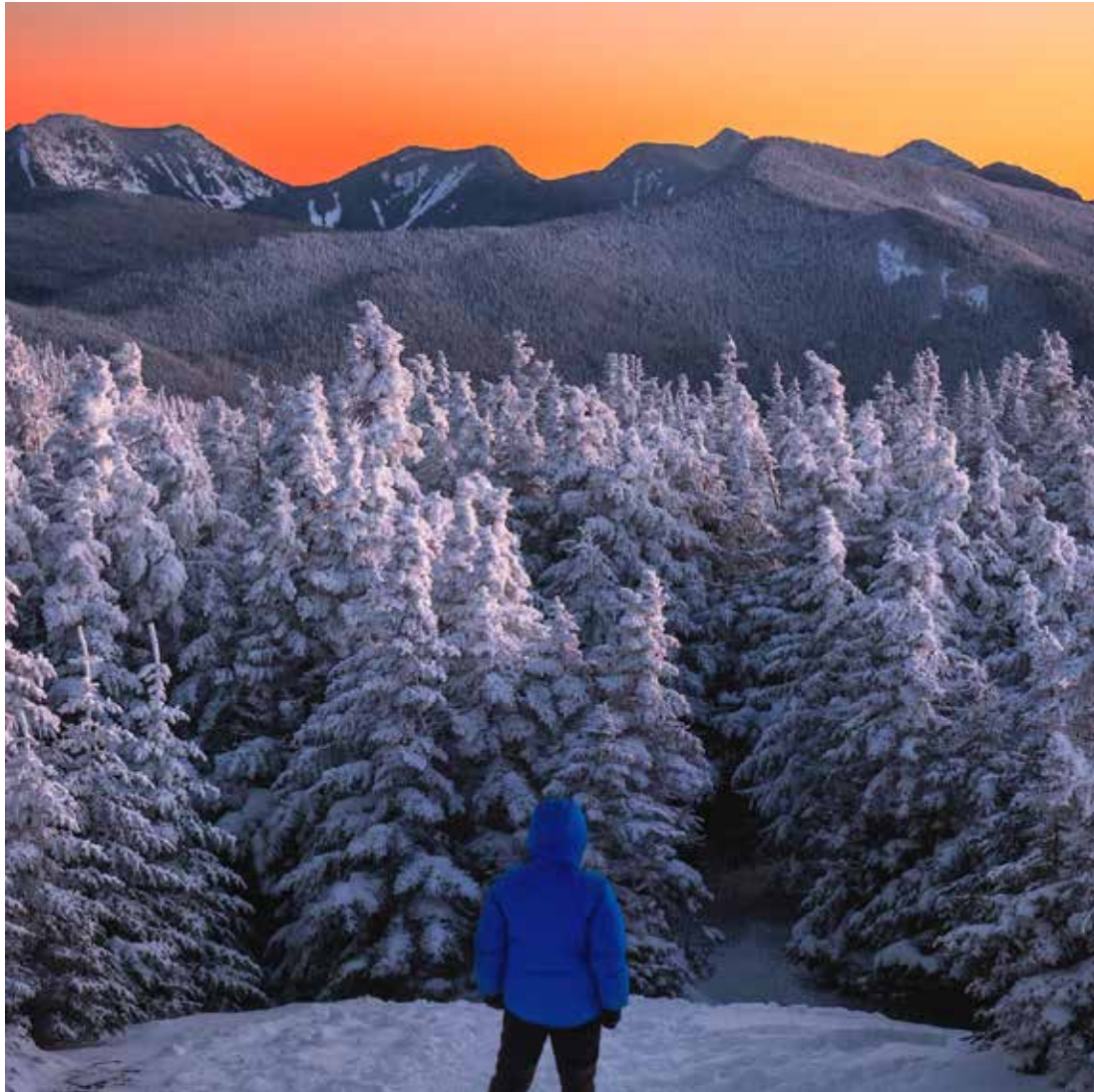


For information about employment at a DEC camp, go to: [www.dec.ny.gov/education/1869.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/1869.html) or email: [campemploy@dec.ny.gov](mailto:campemploy@dec.ny.gov).





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"There's a sunrise and a sunset every single day, and they're absolutely free. Don't miss so many of them."  
~ Jo Walton

Beautiful sunset from the summit of Cascade Mountain facing Marcy, Algonquin, and Gothics in the Adirondacks.

**Photo by Joey Priola; @priolaphotography**



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