



EarthWatch Rhode Island



Topic: Safe Hunting

Date: August 29, 2008

Location: Arcadia State Management Area, Hunter Check Station, Exeter

Hunting is a popular recreation activity for many Rhode Islanders and as the 2008 hunting season begins, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management is encouraging hunters to be aware of regulation changes and to hunt safely.

Know and Follow State Hunting Laws and Regulations

Each year, DEM's Division of Fish and Wildlife establishes carefully designed regulations to keep wildlife populations at sustainable levels. The regulations specify the hunting dates and quotas for wildlife such as small game, waterfowl, turkey and deer. The regulations are published annually in the Hunting and Trapping Abstract and are available on DEM's website. DEM's Division of Law Enforcement is responsible for enforcing the hunting and trapping regulations.

Obtain Proper Hunting Licenses

State law requires that all hunters obtain a hunting license and requires the hunters who have never held a hunting license take a minimum 10-hour Hunter Education Course. The courses are offered statewide free of charge, but require pre-registration. The courses include topics such as hunter responsibility, firearm safety, wildlife laws, game care, and outdoor emergencies and survival. People who are serving in or have been honorably discharged from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps or Coast Guard are exempt from the hunter education requirement. Licenses are issued at DEM Headquarters, most city and town clerks offices and most sporting goods stores. Applications and fees vary depending on the type of wildlife hunted.

Wear Fluorescent Orange Safety Clothing

All hunters are required to wear fluorescent orange safety clothing. Safety clothing must be solid daylight fluorescent orange, be worn above the waist and be visible in all directions. Regulations require a minimum of 200 square inches of fluorescent orange during the small game hunting season; the minimum increases to 500 square inches during the shotgun deer hunting season. Examples that meet the orange requirements are a hat that covers 200 square inches or a combination of a hat and a vest covering 500 square inches. **Important Safety Reminder!** These requirements apply to **all users** of state management areas, including bikers, hikers, and horseback riders during hunting season.

Follow Firearm Safety Practices

DEM encourages hunters to become experts on the *Ten Commands of Firearm Safety*. The *Commandments* cover safe shooting practices such as controlling the direction of the firearm to knowing your target and what's beyond to avoiding the use of alcoholic beverages while shooting.

More detailed information about hunting laws and regulations and safe hunting practices can be found on DEM's website at <http://www.dem.ri.gov/topics/wltopics.htm>

Interviews:

Michael Sullivan, Director, DEM discussed efforts to manage sustainable wildlife populations through hunting regulations and the license requirements for hunting

Michael DiPietro, Environmental Police Officer, DEM Division of Enforcement demonstrated safe clothing requirements and firearm safety.