NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY | Department of Environmental Conservation

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DEC Announces Extension of Online Hunter Education Course Through August

Offerings Now Include Online Bowhunter Course

24,000 Hunters Have Completed Online Course since April; New York State Sporting License Sales Up Nearly 10 Percent

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos today announced that DEC's online hunter education course will continue to be available through Aug. 31, 2020. All hunters must complete a mandatory hunter education course before purchasing a hunting license. In addition, DEC is making an online bowhunter education course option available beginning July 15. Since mid-April, more than 24,000 hunters have successfully completed the online hunter education course, about 20 percent more than typically take it. Of those completing the online course about 40 percent were women, compared to 27 percent female participants in the traditional in-person course. In addition, almost half of the people taking the online course were 30 years of age or older, compared to 30 percent for the in-person course.

"Many new hunters went afield for this year's turkey season and we look forward to continuing to welcome new hunters with this online safety course," **Commissioner Seggos said.** "Hunter safety is our top priority, and expanding the availability of these online courses will help us engage more New Yorkers who are ready to be a part of our state's proud hunting tradition."

All hunters who wish to hunt big game with a bow must complete a mandatory bowhunter education course in addition to the required hunter education course. The online hunter education course was first made available in April after in-person hunter education courses were cancelled to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. The online course provided an opportunity for first-time hunters who wanted to go afield during New York's spring turkey season to receive their hunter education certificate before the season started in May. Extending the availability of the online course and adding the bowhunter course option will allow first-time hunters and new archery hunters the opportunity to get their required hunter education and bowhunter education certificates prior to the start of the fall hunting seasons.

DEC's Hunter Education Program (HEP) is partnering with Kalkomey Enterprises, a company that specializes in hunter education, to offer the online courses that can be completed in six to eight hours. The online courses cover all the topics of traditional in-person courses including firearm and bow safety, tree stand safety, hunting ethics, wildlife conservation, and New York State hunting laws and regulations.

Students who successfully complete the online courses and pass the final exam will receive their hunter education certificate or bowhunter education certificate. The courses are available to individuals 11 and older, but only those 12 or older may purchase a hunting license. Students can complete the courses from a computer, tablet, or smart phone at any time. Visit DEC's Hunter Education Program page to learn more or to sign up.

To take and receive a hunter education certificate or bowhunter education certificate through the online course, participants must be New York State residents. The cost of the hunter education course is $19.95 and the cost for the bowhunter education course is $30. Both courses can be accessed at DEC's website. The online courses will be available through Aug. 31, 2020.

Sporting License Sales Increase Nearly 10 Percent in 2020

As New Yorkers continue to recreate locally to prevent the spread of COVID-19, DEC has seen a nearly 10 percent increase in sporting license sales overall. For the period that roughly coincides with New York State on PAUSE, resident turkey permits increased 49 percent, junior hunting licenses increased by 60 percent or more, and resident hunting licenses increased by 130 percent. Certain types of lifetime licenses also increased by as much as 146 percent. A combination of factors, including the availability of online hunter education for new hunters and time available to participate in the spring turkey season, likely contributed to the increase.

Tens of thousands of additional resident fishing licenses were also sold compared to the same time last year, with increases of 30 percent for annual and one-day fishing licenses. Non-resident and senior fishing license sales decreased as anticipated following the COVID-19-related guidance issued by New York and other states.

For more information on recreational opportunities available in New York State visit DEC's website. New Yorkers are encouraged to engage in responsible recreation close to home during the State's ongoing response to COVID-19. DEC recommendations incorporate guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the New York State Department of Health for reducing the spread of infectious diseases and encourage New Yorkers to recreate locally, practice physical distancing, show respect, and use common sense to protect themselves and others. For more information, go to DEC's website.