

Outdoor briefs

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Outdoor

The Hour

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Moose expand population in region

By MICHAEL VIRTANEN
Associated Press

LAKE DESOLATION, N.Y. — Mark Sharer hiked a few hundred yards through forest to marshland and a pond at the southeastern edge of the Adirondacks, using binoculars to scan the rim of trees for moose.

"There's just a lot of animals missing from our ecosystem. It's too bad," he said. Like wolves and cougars, moose were hunted out of New York more than a century ago. But the big herbivores are back, having wandered into New York's northern forests from Canada and New England over the past 30 years.

State conservation officials say the Adirondacks are on the verge of a moose boom, just like New Hampshire and Vermont, evidenced in part by a recent spate of collisions with cars. That doesn't mean you can just tromp to a likely spot to see Bullwinkle yet, though you may find a calling card underfoot.

Sharer, a wildlife painter, hiked around the edge of the marsh and found a pile of scat, similar to but larger than deer droppings, near a stream. "We have evidence," he said.

"Lake Desolation and the Lake George area are two of the southernmost areas where we have little focal points of moose," said Ken Kogut, wildlife manager for the state Department of Environmental Conservation Region 5.

Other areas farther west are the Perkins Clearing north of Wells, the old Forge area and the forest north of Saranac Lake, as well as the old Domtar paper company tract in the northeastern Adirondacks. "They're spread pretty much all over the park," he said.

At least six moose have been hit and killed by cars, trucks and even a train



Photo by CHRIS BOSAK

A female moose works her way through the woods in northern New Hampshire. Moose are expanding their population in northern New York.

this summer and fall. Two others were found dead. Another moose died when it was removed from Watertown for relocation to Cranberry Lake, according to the DEC.

"What it reflects is we have a big enough population now we're seeing this kind of accident rate," Kogut said. The Department of Transportation may be asked for some highway signs to warn drivers, since the 600 to 1,200 pound animals can be deadly crashing through windshields, and they're hard to see at night.

But it's too soon to crank up the buses for moose-peeping tours. There are only an estimated 200 to 400 of the animals statewide, Kogut said.

"We do believe we're right on the cusp of a major population expansion of moose in the Adirondacks," he said. "We're paralleling a similar population expansion that was seen in New Hampshire, followed by Vermont about 15 years ago."

The North American Moose Foundation, in Mackay, Idaho, estimates there are 1 million in the northern forests across North America and up to 3 million worldwide, many in Scandinavia and Russia.

New Hampshire had about 15 moose by the mid-1800s because of unregulated hunting and forest clear-cutting. There are about 7,000 now and a limited hunt

after the fall rutting season to help manage the numbers, said Jane Vachon, spokeswoman for the state's Fish and Game Department.

"We didn't ship them in. It's not like the turkeys. We brought in 25 turkeys in the 1970s and now we have 30,000," Vachon said, citing another wildlife restoration success story. "Needless to say, we're expanding the turkey hunt."

New Hampshire records about 250 moose collisions with one human fatality annually. A recent state study found crashes accounted for 26 percent of moose killed, hunting 18 percent and winter ticks 41 percent, she said. "We've got some public safety issues."

In New York, the repopulation began in the 1980s with wandering bulls so lonely that they sometimes associated with cattle and even pigs, Kogut said. Between reproduction and ongoing immigration, conservation officials believe they are approaching critical mass.

The DEC endorsed a policy in 1993 to support the return of moose to New York's 14 northern counties, without shipping them in to speed the process. Hunting is illegal here, where the adults have no known predators.

Vermont, estimated to have about 5,000 moose, and Maine, with about 29,000, both have limited hunting seasons.

Benefits of hydrogen outweigh concerns

Dear EarthTalk: I'm concerned about all the talk of using hydrogen for fuel. Isn't hydrogen what caused the Hindenburg blimp to explode back in the 1930s?
Doug, via e-mail

The explosion of the Hindenburg blimp in Lakehurst, New Jersey in 1937 killed 36 people and was one of the worst air disasters of the period, but hydrogen was probably not the culprit.

Addison Bain, a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) researcher, investigated the Hindenburg crash in 1997. He concluded that, while the Hindenburg did use hydrogen for buoyancy, the cause of the accident was an electrostatic charge that ignited the blimp's highly flammable waterproof skin, made from a mixture of lacquer and metal-based paints that Bain likened to rocket fuel.

Others argue that a spark ignited hydrogen that was leaking from the ship. But witnesses described the fire as very colorful, whereas hydrogen burns without much of a visible flame. But whether or not hydrogen caused or simply contributed to the ensuing blaze, hydrogen is indeed flammable, and can burst into flames when it comes into contact with fire or another ignition source.

But gasoline, by far the most common automotive fuel in the world, is much more flammable than hydrogen. According to hydrogen proponent Daniel Emmett of Energy Independence Now, hydrogen is 14 times lighter than air and when it catches fire it disperses and extinguishes quickly. Gasoline, on the other hand, is heavier than air and stays flammable much longer. Many people don't realize, Emmett adds, that hydrogen has been used safely for decades in many industrial and aerospace applications.

Besides being less flammable than gasoline, hydrogen has many other benefits. It is nontoxic, which is more than can be said for any petroleum-based fuel. Furthermore, the processing (not combustion) of hydrogen in fuel cells produces no harmful pollutants and emits only pure, potable water as well as heat that can be recaptured for other uses. In contrast, the combustion of gasoline and other automotive

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fuels leads to acid rain, smog and global warming, among other environmental problems.

Despite its benefits, the widespread adoption of hydrogen as an automotive fuel is not yet close at hand. Techniques for producing, storing and transporting hydrogen have to be standardized, and costs reduced substantially. Some hydrogen proponents see a future where hydrogen will fuel vehicles at service stations, as is now done with gasoline; others see a future in which people fuel their cars at home from appliances that make hydrogen from electricity or, further down the road, from solar energy.

In 2003 the Bush administration committed \$1.2 billion to a hydrogen initiative in order to "reverse" America's growing dependence on foreign oil by accelerating the commercialization of hydrogen-powered fuel cells to power cars, trucks, homes and businesses with no pollution or greenhouse gases." Under the initiative, says the White House's "Hydrogen Economy Fact Sheet," "the first car driven by a child born today could be powered by fuel cells."

CONTACTS: National Hydrogen Association News, "Hydrogen Exonerated in Hindenburg Disaster"; www.hydrogenassociation.org/newsletter/ad22zepp.htm; Energy Independence Now, www.energyindependencenow.org; White House "Hydrogen Economy Fact Sheet," www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/06/20030625-6.html.

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Are you ready?

Snow guns blast onto Lower Coniter trail at Wachusett Mountain in Princeton, Mass. on Tuesday. With the dip in temperatures below freezing, the ski resort is hoping to continue making snow around the clock with hopes of opening this weekend.

AP photo

OUTDOOR BRIEFS

TU meeting will

feature Joworowski

BRIDGEPORT — Ed Joworowski will speak on "The Education of a Fly Fisher" at Trout Unlimited Nutmeg Chapter's Annual Holiday Meeting at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 19, at Fayerweather Yacht Club at 51 Brewster St. in the Black Rock section of Bridgeport.

Joworowski is an international fly fishing authority. He has authored three books, with two more in the works, and has been editorial consultant on others. His angling travels and lectures cover much of the western hemisphere and his articles appear in more than 20 different periodicals.

The meeting is the occasion of Nutmeg Chapter's annual holiday meeting. In addition to the speaker, a special holiday raffle will be held with a Winston Rod and an Orvis Battenkill Reel among the prizes. Tickets are available at the door, and a buffet of holiday refreshments will be served.

The meeting is free of charge and open to the public. For more information call 203-856-2004 or email prosit67@hotmail.com.

Seal cruises starting at Maritime Aquarium

NORWALK — The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk is once

again holding its Winter Creature Cruises this winter. Join educators aboard the Aquarium's research vessel *Oceanic* on a 2 1/2 hour cruise into Norwalk Harbor and Long Island Sound to search for seals and birds.

Seals can often be seen at low tide when they "haul out" to rest on exposed rocks.

The cruises run through April.

Participants should bring binoculars and dress warmly. Cost is \$20 (\$17.50 for members). Boat capacity is limited and reservations are encouraged. Walk-up tickets will be sold, space permitting. All passengers must be at least 42 inches tall.

For more information or to reserve a spot, call (203) 852-0700 ext. 2206.

Earthplace to host planetarium show

WESTPORT — Steve Tomecek, an author of more than 22 science books for teachers and children, will hold a STARLAB planetarium show at Earthplace in Westport on Sunday, Dec. 10. Showings will take place every 30 minutes from 12:30 to 4 p.m. Between shows, Tomecek will sign copies of his books.

Tickets (\$5 for members, \$10 for non-members) must be purchased in advance at Earthplace or by phone (227-7253).

Connecticut joins the Surfrider team

Since 1984, the national Surfrider Foundation has been a key player in the global effort to save our oceans and waterfront properties from further deterioration. Since its' initial inception over 20 years ago, the Surfrider Foundation has grown to include well over 50,000 members throughout 60 chapters based in California, Florida, Hawaii, the Gulf of Mexico, Puerto Rico, Japan, Brazil, Australia, France, and Spain.

This year, Connecticut has been the most recent team player to join the existing prestigious lineup of Surfriders. In 2006, the Connecticut chapter was officially formed and in a short amount of time this newest acquisition has already begun to leave their footprints in the sand in a big way.

With a firm dedication to preserving the Connecticut coastline and improving the overall quality of coastal conditions, local Surfriders have been very busy as they work to establish a strong presence within the community.

With a sound support system already in place, the Connecticut chapter continues to pass on the word of coastal fitness through a variety of productive venues. One of the Surfriders most valuable tools is a series of well-designed and informative programs that are

KAREN
JEWELL

WATER VIEWS



regularly available to the public.

The "Respect The Beach" series is a perfect example of what they have to offer. As a matter of fact, it has been so influential thus far that it has been recognized and awarded as one of the better seaside educational programs out there.

What helps to make this particular attempt so successful is the winning combination of field trips, lectures, videos, flyers, and hands-on projects that encompass the complete curriculum. Focusing on the needs and concerns of area watersheds and seashore ecology, this course is geared for all age groups from kindergartners to high school seniors and on into the adult population.

In addition to the "Respect The Beach" effort, there are also a number of other sister programs that share the same philosophy and endeavors. Take for instance "Beachology", which has effectively relied on extensive teaching

resources as it presents a comprehensive learning experience.

The "Watershed Works" is another important piece of the bigger Surfrider puzzle. Employing the help of an assortment of activities, the "Watershed Works" utilizes easy-to-follow models that represent real-life land and water conditions as it explains the ins and outs and goings on along the shoreline.

Just recently, the Surfriders proudly announced a brand-new and unique project that they refer to as "Beachscape." Considered to be a forerunner in the advancement of coastal mapping technology, the early appeal has been a direct result of the multitude of talent derived from its' current membership base. Calling on the experience and expertise of everyone involved, the Surfriders have been able to create a decidedly accurate and viable picture of changing coastal situations. This information is extremely useful and significant when working with environmental activists, state governments, and federal agencies in developing practical plans for managing the future safety of our seas.

Other components of the Surfriders agenda include such ventures as beach clean-ups, public forums, political

advocacy, and revealing research papers. For example, the "State of The Beach" is an annual update that reports on the health and status of our nation's beaches. Further articles like "Alternative Energy and the Coastal Environment," "U.S. Coastal Counties Contain Over Half of U.S. Population," "USA Ranks Close to Last in Climate Change Efforts," and "Another Weakening of the Clean Water Act by the EPA" are just a few of the eye-openers that have been attracting a lot of attention lately amongst concerned citizens.

Presently comprised of an assorted collection of surfers, sailors, windsurfers, kiteboarders, kayakers, divers, and general seafaring folk, the Connecticut Surfriders are always looking to add to their volunteer list. If you would like to learn more about the Surfrider organization and what you can do to support their interests, you are more than welcome to drop in on their meeting this coming Monday, December 11th at 7 p.m. in Fairfield, or feel free to contact Andrew Krupa at ct@surfrider.org.

What better way to give back to one of our most cherished natural resources.

Karen Jewell's *Water Views* column runs Thursdays in *The Hour*