



Office of Information Technology Services

Innovation That Matters... For All New Yorkers



HuntFishNY Mobile App

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Category:
Category: Digital Government / Government to Citizen

Nomination Submitted by:
Robert H. Samson, Chief Information Officer
New York State

Contact:
Giovanna Joseph, ITS Recognition Coordinator
NYS Office of Information Technology Services
Giovanna.Joseph@its.ny.gov
(518) 427-9750



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New York State e-license/harvest report mobile app, known as **HuntFishNY**, is a free mobile application that provides up-to-date individualized licensing information and services to New York's hunters, trappers and anglers.

This effort builds on New York State Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's strong support for the Open NY for Fishing and Hunting Initiative aimed at improving recreational opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts and boosting tourism activities throughout the state.

The **HuntFishNY mobile app**, developed by the New York State Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) in partnership with the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), is a concrete example of how technology is working to improve accessibility to hunting and fishing resources.

Once downloaded and connected to the DEC Automated Licensing System (DECALS), the **HuntFishNY mobile app** removes the need for hunters, trappers, and anglers to carry paper licenses; facilitates the ability to quickly and easily report the harvest of deer, bear, and turkey; and puts critical tools and information into the hands of those who need them the most. Since the app can be used with or without mobile connectivity, there is no barrier to where, and when, a user can access the robust app features including:

- Personalized license information for users to display license credentials;
- Essential information for hunters, trappers, and anglers, including sunset maps and season dates;
- Remote reporting of deer, bear, or turkey harvest while afield;
- Usability with or without mobile connectivity;
- DEC contact information, including the DEC Hotline;
- Direct interfacing with New York's official hunting, fishing and wildlife app, designed by Pocket Ranger;
- A social media sharing feature to connect users to the DEC social media accounts or allow users to share information about their recreational experiences;
- The ability to incorporate geo-fencing for specialized push notifications targeted to users in specific regions in case an emergency notification is necessary.

Looking ahead, ITS and DEC will continue to explore the addition of new features to the **HuntFishNY mobile app**. As the demographics of hunters, trappers, and anglers evolve with the passage of time, future enhancements to this user-friendly app will build on Governor Cuomo's efforts to connect New Yorkers and visitors to world-class resources. The e-license/harvest report app, **HuntFishNY**, is available in the Apple app store or Google Play store as a free download for Android and iOS devices.

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CONCEPT

Tourism is a major industry in New York State, and drawing more visitors to our upstate communities to enjoy the outdoors means new jobs and revenue for local communities. This user-friendly app builds on our efforts to help connect New Yorkers and visitors to opportunities to enjoy our world-class fishing, wildlife and outdoor recreation resources.

To accomplish this goal, DEC worked with ITS to explore potential avenues for hunters, trappers, and anglers to display their license(s) and report harvests in a user-friendly manner. Through a collaborative development process, the concept of an e-license/reporting app was solidified and the two agencies began working closely together to develop **HuntFishNY** in August 2016.

Displaying Licenses



Hunters, trappers, and anglers are required to carry evidence of their up to date license(s) at all times. Presentation of credentials can be requested by an environmental conservation officer (ECO), police officer, peace officer, owner, lessee, or person in control of the lands or waters or the designees of the owner, at any time they are afield. If the hunter, trapper, or angler is unable to show their credentials, an ECO can issue a ticket or a warning. Tickets can be accompanied by a fine up to \$250, or up to 15 days in jail. By providing sporting license holders an effortless way to carry their licenses anytime they are carrying their cell phones, citizens are better equipped to comply with State regulations and avoid forgot or lost their license.

HuntFishNY connects to DECALS and allows for the display of a user's license(s). This license display is an acceptable form of 'proof of license' by an ECO or other authorized requester. By providing hunters, anglers and

fisherman an easy, convenient way to display their license(s), they can easily interact with government officials.

DEC receives thousands of requests to replace lost licenses annually. Retrieving a digital license on a cell phone relieves the demand on DEC to assist those who have lost their paper licenses.

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Reporting a Harvest



When conceptualizing the app, a critical need to build in the capability to report a harvest of a deer, bear, or turkey while afield was identified. Understanding that often hunters are not able to obtain mobile connectivity in remote areas of the state, this element of the app needed to function without mobile connectivity.

ITS identified a way to utilize a middle layer to allow users to report their harvest without mobile connectivity. Once connectivity is restored, the report is automatically logged and reported in the DECALS system.

Previously, hunters could only report online through the DEC website or by calling an automated voice response system (IVR). While the online application works very well, the website is not compatible with many mobile devices.

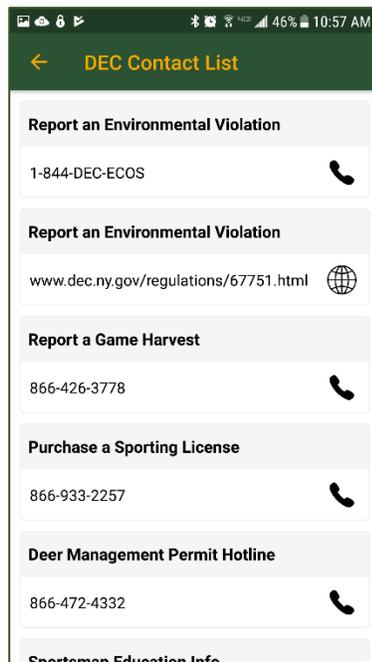
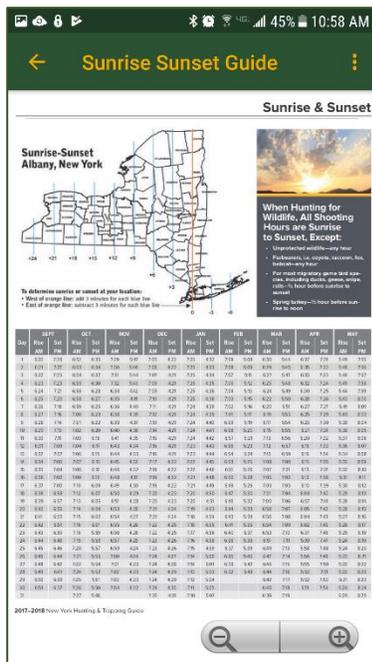
Therefore, users are often unsuccessful when attempting to report on their smartphones. Additionally, the online application requires a connection to the internet, while the mobile app can be used without a connection. The IVR phone system is outdated, overly complicated and not user-friendly, creating frustration for hunters. Now, **HuntFishNY** offers New York's hunters an extremely simple, user-friendly means to report. The app is the only method that allows a hunter to report a harvest immediately while afield, even when not in cellular service.

Creating a modern way to report harvests, regardless of available cellular service, will improve the frequency and reliability of harvest reports, as well as streamline the interaction between DEC and their constituents.

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Additional Mobile App Information and Resources



In addition to showing a license and reporting a harvest, **HuntFishNY** gives users access to information critical to their hunting, trapping or angling experience, including links to rules and regulation guides, season maps and dates, and important phone numbers.

Hunters are required to hunt during the appropriate time of day. Time-of-day is based on official sunrise and sunset times published each year. To make hunting easier for users **HuntFishNY** contains an up-to-date Sunrise and Sunset Guide.

HuntFishNY also contains critical phone numbers and contact information to assist hunters, trappers, and anglers. Like the reporting function, these phone numbers are available when the mobile app is open, regardless of mobile connectivity.

Security

In an age where information security is crucial, ITS was mindful to ensure data and transactional security for **HuntFishNY**. The app utilizes the existing DEC backend system for all security and data transactions.

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SIGNIFICANCE

New York State is revolutionizing the way citizens interact with government by investing in modern technologies to facilitate citizen-initiated transactions and gather information. Just as many people now prefer to order food in just a few taps using a mobile app, likewise hunters, trappers, and anglers in New York can now comply with state regulations using a mobile application.

Streamlining the Hunting, Trapping, and Fishing Experience for Citizens

Once downloaded and connected to the correct DECALS account, **HuntFishNY** removes the need for trappers and anglers to carry paper licenses, facilitates the ability for hunters to quickly and easily report the harvest of a deer, bear, and turkey, and puts critical information into the hands of those who need it the most. Since the app can be used with or without mobile connectivity, there is no barrier to where, and when, a user can access the transactions and resources within the app.

Harvest Reporting

Accurate and timely harvest reporting is a legal requirement for New York's hunters and critical to wildlife management. To make a report prior to the advent of **HuntFishNY**, hunters were required to report their harvests by either visiting the DEC harvest reporting website or by calling an automated reporting line (1-866-GAME-RPT). Hunters needed to have access to a device (computer, phone, or tablet) with an internet connection or access to enough cellular service to make a telephone call. Often in locations where harvests occur, there is limited internet access or telephone signal, which often causes delays in reporting or can result in forgetting to report altogether.

With the creation of **HuntFishNY**, New York State has taken a critical step in streamlining the harvest reporting process. By creating a quick and easy way to report, with or without cellular service, the mobile app will increase the frequency and accuracy of harvest reporting, thus ensuring citizen compliance with harvesting laws and providing more reliable and consistent data to manage wildlife in the State.

IMPACT

Outdoor recreation is a popular activity in New York. Each year, the State puts ample resources into ensuring citizens can enjoy the outdoors, including hunting, trapping, and fishing. **HuntFishNY** released to the public in April 2017, and has been available for one full hunting, trapping, and fishing season to date. In a single season, the app has been downloaded over 11,000 times.

Enhancements

ITS is actively works with DEC to continually refine **HuntFishNY**, and explore additional enhancements. In 2018, the team will add a push notifications and alerts feature. Future enhancements included personalized notifications for the opening of specific wildlife seasons and expiring licenses will be.

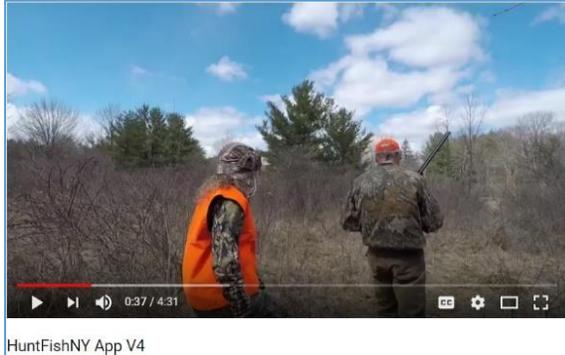
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Potential

In 2018 alone, there were over 107,000 deer harvests reported with many more harvests unreported. By continuing to enhance and promote **HuntFishNY**, DEC hopes to increase compliance with game harvest reporting laws, and improve wildlife management in the State. In addition to increasing citizen compliance, the app is expected to also decrease the amount of time and money spent by the Agency replacing lost license credentials.

Hunters Safety HuntFishNY Promotion



The **HuntFishNY** video, which is used during hunter education classes and is featured left demonstrates how the app can improve the sporting experience for hunters in New York.

Video URL:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTyZiOdjyGY&feature=youtu.be>