

Fall/Winter OUTDOOR HUNTING GUIDE



Young hunters harvest 11,118 deer during early youth portion of firearms deer season

BY Joe Jerek
Missouri Department of Conservation

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — Preliminary data from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) shows that young hunters ages 6 through 15 harvested 11,118 deer during Missouri's early youth portion of the 2023 deer hunting season, Oct. 28 and 29. Top counties were Franklin with

258 deer harvested, Osage with 224, and Texas with 209. Of the deer harvested, 6,857 were antlered bucks, 3,410 were does, and 851 were button bucks.

Get more harvest information on the 2023 early youth portion at extra.mdc.mo.gov/widgets/harvest_table/.

Youth hunters harvested 13,877 during last year's early youth portion. Get more information on past seasons at mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/species/deer/

deer-reports/deer-harvest-summaries.

"Although the rain this past weekend was desperately needed given how dry it's been this year throughout much of the state, it did put a damper on the early youth portion," said MDC's Cervid Program Supervisor Jason Isabelle.

Isabelle noted that the below average temperatures were conducive to good deer movement, but the combination of cooler temperatures and rainy conditions that

persisted throughout much of the weekend likely reduced the amount of time many young hunters were able to spend afield.

Archery deer hunting continues through Nov. 10 and resumes Nov. 22 through Jan. 15, 2024. The November portion of firearms deer season runs Nov. 11-21 followed by the CWD portion, which is open in CWD Management Zone counties, Nov. 22-26. The late youth portion runs Nov. 24-26. The late antlerless portion

of firearms deer season runs Dec. 2-10 in open counties and the alternative methods portion will occur Dec. 23 through Jan. 2, 2024.

Get more information on Missouri deer hunting from MDC's 2023 Fall Deer and Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information booklet, available where hunting permits are sold and online at mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/species/deer/.

Youth enter Belle contest despite rainy weather

Poor weather on Saturday made it hard for youth on the first day of the youth deer rifle season. Belle's Annual Youth Big Buck and Turkey contest had 182 kids sign up this year — a record. Of those entries, 40 deer were checked, 34 bucks and 6 does. Cody Ham, of Belle, entered the winning buck which scored 142 with 11 points. Pictured with Cody is his uncle, Frank Butler who took him hunting. Cody is the son of Greg and Sheila Ham. All participants in the contest received a prize.



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VIVIAN THOMPSON with her doe.



BAILEY RIDENHOUR with her 8 point buck.



HADLEY POE with her 9 point buck.



EASTON SCHROEDER with his 8 point buck.



ZOEY WELSCHMEYER with her button buck.



DRAKE HELMIG with his 9 point buck.

Youth Deer Hunting

NO CHARGE: Email photos of youth deer hunters to dwarden@wardpub.com. Include child's name, age, address, parent's names and address, doe or buck, number of points, if this is first deer killed, date killed, location killed, and phone number (for reference, not to be included in story).

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OUTDOORS IN THE OZARKS

'Hunt no ducks over water!'

A couple of weeks ago I was talking with guide in Ontario who got a good laugh out of the bear hunting which forbids using bait. He said that without bait, few bears would ever be killed anywhere. In Canada, if you go through an outfitter you are guaranteed to get a shot or several shots, at a bear the first day. But they are always killed over bait.



by **LARRY DABLEMONT**

Lee Arch, a full-blooded Ojibway guide, says no one kills one to eat, as bear that are eating garbage or fish entrails from bait sites are not fit to eat. They are killed only for their pelt, and the making of bear rugs. Bush Pilot and guide Tinker Helseth said that his dad told him when he was a boy, "eat deer, grouse, moose, ducks and geese and fish, then you won't have to eat bear unless you are starving."

Twelve-year old Wiley Williams got himself a bear last year, sitting high in a deer stand at the edge of the National Forestland in Christian County. He said his family had land there and had found a 'marker tree' which are used by bears which claw the tree as high as they can and use it as a scent post as well. Wiley watched the tree all day and his bear came to it at 3 o'clock. He said he had to shoot it three times to kill it. His mother says they kept the hide and want to have it mounted but that expense is great. Wiley said they

didn't eat any of it. He told me it smelled really bad.

Old-time bear hunter Mike Dodson from Valley Springs Arkansas has killed seven bears, all of them over bait in September in Arkansas' National Forest; all of them

with a bow. He says if there are bears killed in Missouri, they are killed over

bait, whether the hunters admit it or not. "Without bait, there is no chance of killing one," he told me, "I found out that piles of popcorn beats anything else."

Mike said he wouldn't waste a dollar on a bear tag if dogs and baiting were prohibited. He said it was like passing a law prohibiting duck hunting over water.

I have done some bear hunting in Canada with my camera but there is always a community dump in the background or fish entrail buckets close by. One night I arrived at Tinker Helseth's lodge in Nestor Falls Canada after midnight, so to keep from waking anyone I just slept behind the front seat of my crew-cab pickup, in a very comfortable bed I keep there when I travel. My Labrador was sleeping in the front seat, and his growls awakened

me. I felt the pick-up lurch, sat up and opened the frost-covered back window. A black bear was looking back at me, only inches from my face. He stood up tall, clutching a 10-pound bag of dog food in his arms, then jumped over the tailgate and disappeared.

There isn't room here to tell about the bear attack that occurred in North Arkansas a few years back. You can read about that on my website. I often write 2 or 3 columns per week, not just this one, and you can read all of them on your computer at... larrydablemontoutdoors.blogspot.com. I urge readers to find it on the Internet and read it each week. On that site you can find out how the Missouri Department of Conservation used the idea of a bear season and the elk season

to garner nearly 200 thousand dollars in funds from Missouri hunters who never got to hunt either.

Only five elk and eight bears were killed to gain that money. It was paid by about 20,000 Missourians. Of those who pay that in the future, 98 percent of them will never get to hunt either. That fact has not, and can not, be printed in any Missouri newspaper, so find the details on that Internet site.

This year, almost 9 thousand applicants have sent in 10 dollars each to have a chance at 4 elk tags. A fifth elk tag is given to a 'local landowner' who is not named. Guess who that unnamed landowner is!! Read the website at www.larrydablemont.com.

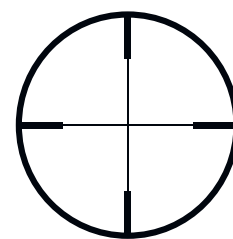
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MDC reports Missouri hunters harvested 12 black bears this season

BY JOE JEREK
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reports that Missouri hunters harvested 12 black bears during the state's third bear-hunting season, Oct. 16–25.

More than 5,370 hunters applied during May for 400 permits for the season with the maximum total harvest being 40 bears. Of the 400 hunters selected through a random drawing of all applicants, 342 hunters purchased permits for the season.

Bear hunting in Missouri is limited to Missouri residents and restricted to three designated areas of southern Missouri called Bear Management Zones (BMZ). Each permit issued is for a specific BMZ and hunting is limited to public or private property within the BMZ.

Nine bears were harvested in BMZ 1 out of a maximum of 20 with 173 hunters purchasing permits to hunt the zone. Three bears were harvested in BMZ 2 out of a maximum of 15 with 125 hunters purchasing permits to hunt the zone. No bears were harvested in BMZ 3 out of a maximum of 5 with 44 hunters purchasing permits to hunt the zone.

All bears were harvested using firearms methods. Of the 12 bears harvested, three were boars (males) and nine were sows (female).
"We had another successful black bear hunting season this year and saw bears harvested in four new counties where bears had not been previously harvested," said MDC Bear Biologist Nate Bowersock. "Conditions this season couldn't have been much better for hunters, and we look forward to hearing from hunters about their experiences through our annual post-season survey."

Learn more about Missouri black bears and bear hunting in Missouri at mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/species/bear.

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DRIFTWOOD OUTDOORS

November is the month for hunting the Midwest

November is the month we are reminded to be thankful for all of our blessings. And as sportsmen in the Midwest, we have a long list. Firearms deer seasons are open across the region, with arguably the best white-tailed deer hunting in the country happening in the Midwest during November. Duck hunters are spreading out decoy sets this time of year, and upland bird hunters are burning boot leather all over the plains. Fishing is still hot on open water in the lower reaches of the region, while ice anglers are chomping at the bit to get out on the ice up north. When it comes to being blessed with outdoor opportunity, November is a special month to be thankful for.



by **BRANDON BUTLER**

Iowa — Quail

The rush of the flush speeds up a hunter's heartbeat like few other outdoor experiences. It's true, bobwhite quail

numbers are far from what they used to be across much of the Midwest, but that doesn't mean good hunting is gone. There are pockets of healthy quail populations in Iowa, especially in the southwest part of the state. A good bird dog helps locate coveys, but a simply walking field edge and brushy fence rows can produce excellent wing-shooting for the upland hunter without a canine companion. Quail season is open the entire month of November. Hunters may harvest 8 birds per day with a possession limit of 16.

Kansas — Ducks

With 27 species of ducks cruising through Kansas air space, hunters never know what may head for their decoys next. Mallards, northern pintails, teal, and gadwall are the most common. Duck season is open across Kansas throughout November, except in the Southeast Zone,

where duck season doesn't open until Nov. 11. Hunters can harvest six ducks, but there are limits to different species, so make sure you understand the regulations. The northeast corner of the state, along the Missouri River, offers excellent duck hunting. Cheyenne Bottoms, near Great Bend, is a famous waterfowl destination.

Minnesota — Pheasants

Minnesota may not be its neighbor to the west, but that doesn't mean the southern portion of the state doesn't have good pheasant hunting. The season is open the entire month of November, and the limit at the time is two roosters per day. Hunters must possess a Pheasant stamp and small game license. Shooting hours are 9 a.m. to sunset. Minnesota has a lot of public land and Walk-In land that holds pheasants. On the DNR website, you can search for WMAs by county and species. This tool

will help you find a few pheasant spots close to home.

Wisconsin — Firearms Deer

Wisconsin is widely recognized a national powerhouse of white-tailed bucks. The state grows bruisers with numerous Boone & Crockett caliber bucks hitting the dirt each year. Most of those are taken during gun season. This year, gun season runs November 18 – 26. Buffalo County has long been known to be a big buck producing destination. Tiffany Wildlife Area and Big Swamp Wildlife Area are two pieces of public ground in Buffalo County. Both are capable of producing a buck of a lifetime.

See you down the trail...

For more *Driftwood Outdoors*, check out the podcast on www.driftwoodoutdoors.com or anywhere podcasts are streamed.

Illinois — Firearms Deer
The Land of Lincoln has long been a top producer of trophy white-tailed bucks. The state doesn't give hunters a large quantity of days to hunt with a firearm. The split season runs Nov. 17–19 and open again Nov. 30 – Dec. 3. What the state lacks in days to hunt, it makes up for in quality of deer. Giant bucks can be found anywhere in the state, but the west-central region, which I is home to Pike and Brown counties, is a top producer of record book bucks. There are a number of public hunting opportunities at Fish and Wildlife Areas along the Mississippi River and the Illinois River that all have the potential of producing giant bucks.

MDC stresses safety for non-hunters during hunting seasons

JEFFERSON CITY – With deer and turkey hunting underway in Missouri, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reminds non-hunters to practice safety measures when afield during hunting seasons.

"Safety while hunting is ultimately the responsibility of the hunter," MDC Hunter Education Coordinator Justin McGuire said. "Hunters must clearly identify their targeted game animals before even putting their fingers on the triggers of their firearms or before drawing their bows when archery hunting. They must also be aware of what is behind their targets and should never shoot at movement or sound."

McGuire added that non-hunters out in hunting areas can also practice some safety measures. He and MDC offer these safety tips for non-hunters:

- Wear bright clothing to be more visible, such as a bright orange hat, jacket, or pack.
- Place a bright orange vest or bandana on the canines who join you and keep them leashed.
- Avoid earth-toned or animal-colored clothing such as tan and brown.
- Be aware that hunters are often most active during the early morning and late afternoon, when game animals are most active. Be especially aware of your own visibility during these times when light is dim.
- Stay on designated trails. Trails are designed to improve the safety of public users and to protect sensitive habitats. Enjoying recreational activities only on designated trails will reduce the likelihood of entering hunting areas.
- Whenever venturing into the outdoors, let someone know where you are going and when to expect your return.
- Make yourself known. If you hear shooting, raise your voice, and let hunters know you are in the area.
- Be courteous. Once a hunter is aware of your presence, don't make unnecessary noise to disturb wildlife. Avoid conflict.
- Identify hunting seasons and lands open to hunting. Learn where and when hunting is taking place. Plan your recreation activities based on this information. Find information on Missouri hunting seasons at mo.gov/hunting-trapping.
- Find conservation areas that allow hunting and those that do not by using the MDC Places to Go web feature at mo.gov/discover-nature/places.

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Learn about backyard birds at Nov. 7 MDC virtual program

BY FRANCIS SKALICKY
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — In winter, backyards can be great places to view and to learn about birds.

People can get information about the bird-viewing opportunities that can be found in their backyards on Nov. 7 at the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) virtual program “Birds: Backyard Birds.” This online program will be from 3:30-4:15 p.m. and is being put on by the staff at MDC’s Springfield Conservation Nature Center. People can register for this program at:

<https://mdc-event-web.s3licensing.com/Event/EventDetails/195499>

At this program, MDC Naturalist Sam Grove will discuss common winter bird

species that typically can be found in backyards and how you can attract them. Grove will also talk about how backyard bird observers can provide valuable data for Project FeederWatch. Project FeederWatch is operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada. It is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other sites across North America. Participants periodically count birds they see at their feeders from November through April and send their information to Project FeederWatch. This widespread collection of data helps biologists track broad-scale movements of winter bird populations. It also provides valuable information about long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance.

Though the MDC Nov. 7 virtual program is free, registration is required to

participate. Use the link above. Registrants must provide an e-mail, so a program link can be sent to them. This program will include a chat-based question-and-answer period where participants can interact with the presenters.

MDC’s Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located at 4601 S. Nature Center Way. People wanting more information about this program or other upcoming events at the nature center can call 417-888-4237. People can also call this number to get signed up for text alerts and e-mail bulletins about upcoming programs at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center and other nearby MDC facilities.

Staff at MDC facilities across the state are holding in-person and virtual programs. A listing of these programs can be found at mdc.mo.gov/events.



PEOPLE CAN learn how to attract house finches (pictured above) and other birds to their backyard feeders at an MCD virtual program on Nov. 7.

MDC virtual program offers tips for processing deer

BY FRANCIS SKALICKY
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — Once a hunter has bagged a deer, the work is only half over. How to field dress it, skin it, process the meat and store it for future tasty meals are skills hunters need to know.

Hunters who are interested in learning how to process their own deer will have an opportunity to do so at a Missouri Department of Conservation’s (MDC) “Field to Freezer” virtual program from 6:30-8 p.m. on Nov. 2. This program is open to all ages. People can register for this online program at:

<https://mdc-event-web.s3licensing.com/Event/EventDetails/196103>

At this free event, MDC Conservation Educator Lyle Whittaker will provide tips on how to field dress, skin, and butcher a harvested deer. Field dressing is an important skill for hunters to have, even if they plan to take their deer to a processing facility. For those who want to butcher their own deer, this clinic will show how to turn a harvested deer into neat packages of lean and healthy meat. Other topics covered will be supplies needed and regulations that pertain to stored venison.



HOW TO transform parts of a harvested deer into venison jerky is one of the meat-processing tips people can learn about at a Nov. 2 MDC virtual program

Though this program is free, registration is required to participate. Use the link above. Registrants must provide an e-mail so a program link can be sent to them. This program will include a chat-based question-and-answer period where par-

ticipants can interact with the presenters. Staff at MDC facilities across the state are holding in-person and virtual programs. A listing of these programs can be found at mdc.mo.gov/events.

MDC invites landowners to a prescribed burn workshop in Owensville on Nov. 3

BY MADDIE EST
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

OWENSVILLE, Mo. — The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) invites landowners to a prescribed burn workshop Nov. 3 on a private property in Owensville. This event will begin at 10 a.m. and conclude around 3 p.m.

Prescribed burning can be a valuable tool for managing native plant diversity and controlling undesirable vegetation, but it can be dangerous and ineffective when not used properly. This workshop will provide basic information on how to plan and execute a prescribed burn for land management.

Registration for this event is required and can be done at <http://short.mdc.mo.gov/Z4v>. Upon registration, participants will be asked to complete the virtual/online portion of the prescribed burn course. This online course is a mandatory prerequisite to the workshop, and there is a \$25 fee to complete the online learning. Participants are asked to bring their certificate of completion to the workshop. To find the online learning portion, go to <http://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZoU>.

A demonstration burn will be conducted at the workshop if weather allows, so please dress accordingly with leather boots, leather gloves, and a long sleeve shirt and pants made of natural fibers such as cotton or wool. Water and snacks will be provided.

Questions about this event can be sent to Ryan Westcott at ryan.westcott@mdc.mo.gov. The address for the property is 1963 Nursing Home Road in Owensville.

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