

Antlerless deer are out and a'bounding this year

By LEM MESEE
Outdoors writer

Lots of deer — but not many young bucks.

That forecast of Michigan's Nov. 15-30 firearm deer season comes from Glenn Dudderar, extension wildlife specialist at Michigan State University.

And once again, hunting will be better in southern lower Michigan than in the northern lower peninsula or the UP.

Here's how Dudderar figures it:

"The total number of deer in Michigan is about the same this fall as in recent years. The composition of the herd has changed, however, particularly among the younger bucks.

"The mild to moderate winter of 1979-80 gave us a good crop of fawns last spring. Pregnant does were able to forage freely in many areas last winter, enabling them to produce many strong, healthy fawns. The result: a lot of antlerless deer around."

So hunters will see many deer they can't shoot at.

outdoors

The state Department of Natural Resources predicts 80,000 bucks will be taken during the 15-day season. That's a success rate of less than 12 percent, if you measure success by legal bucks brought down.

The severe winter of 1978-79 resulted in a small crop of fawns in 1979. Thus, Dudderar says, "there are relatively few two- to four-point bucks for harvest this year."

There are still many older bucks, but hunters rarely see the smart old fellows. If you do see them, however, they'll have big racks of antlers, thanks to the mild winter and wet summer.

Dudderar says the lush vegetation meant plenty of food and good racks.

Even some of the younger bucks will have six- to eight-point racks.

Here is the outlook by area:

- Southern lower peninsula — a normal or better harvest, especially if you have an antlerless deer permit.
- Northern lower peninsula — a mixed bag. Hunters on state land, where pressure is heavy, may come back empty-handed.
- Upper peninsula — the number of deer taken has been declining, and legal targets may be hard to find, except in Menominee County.

NORTHBOUND traffic Nov. 15 will

be the heaviest in five years because this is the first season since 1975 that deer hunting season has opened on a Saturday.

"Despite rising gasoline costs and a trend toward increased pressure in southern Michigan, most of the state's 700,000-plus 'orange army' will be heading for the northern two-thirds of the state," said Joseph Ratke, touring manager of the Automobile Club of Michigan.

Auto Club predicts northbound traffic will be heaviest between 2 p.m. and midnight Friday, Nov. 14, and from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 15.

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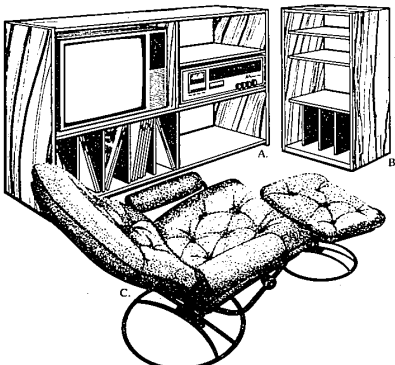
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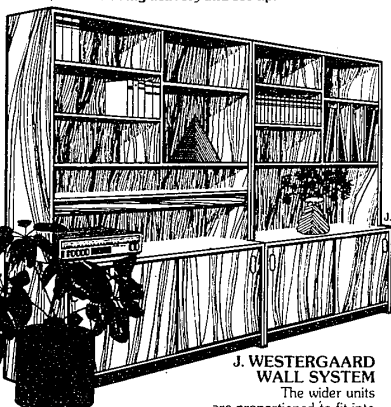
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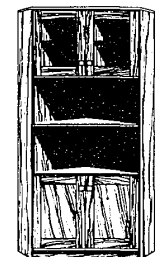
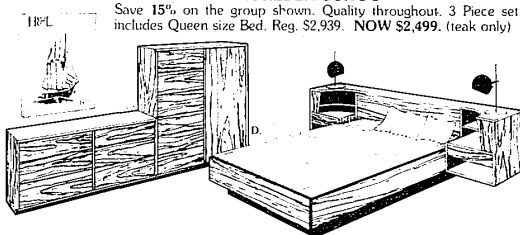


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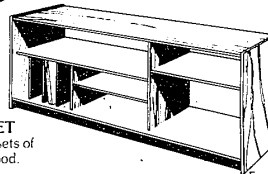
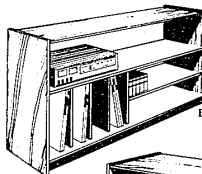
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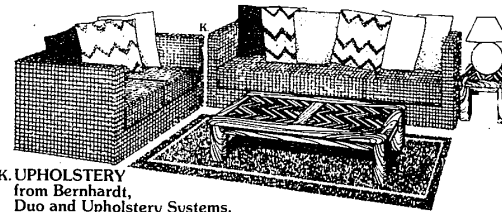
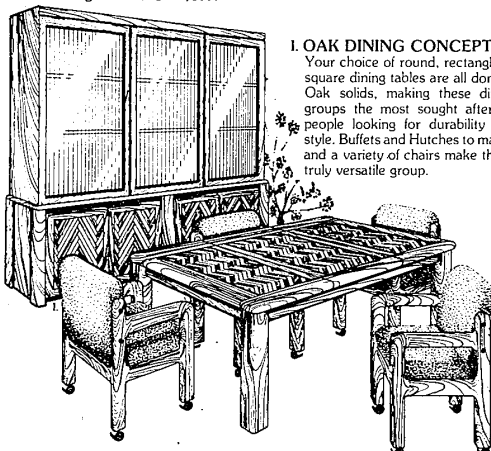


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