

# Deer hunters ready for start of firearm season

## OUTDOOR INSIGHTS



BILL PARKER

The forests and fields of Michigan are bursting with blaze orange on Sunday morning as the 1998 firearms deer season gets underway one-half hour before sunrise.

Upwards of 750,000 hunters are expected to hunt during the 1998 season and expectations are running high for another exceptional season.

There were an estimated 1.8 million deer in Michigan as of Oct. 1, which is about the same last year. During the 1997 season combined (firearms, muzzleloading and archery) hunters took a total of 478,725 deer. Gun hunters took 159,148 bucks and 110,025 does. Bow hunters took 62,311 bucks and 64,202 does, and muzzleloaders took 8,973 bucks and 14,579 does (the remainder were taken with late antlerless season and through crop damage and block permits).

Estimates for this year's harvest are similar, with gun hunters expected to take 139,000 bucks and 119,000 does.

Here are 10 tips to help increase your success during the upcoming firearms deer season.

1. Dress for the weather. Nothing I send you packing for camp faster than cold fingers or toes or a chill that won't go away. If you have a long hike to your blind, carry some of the extra clothes you'll need or tie your outer jacket around your waist. Dress in layers so you can shed a layer and still remain comfortable.

2. Be sure your gun is sighted-in. Just because it was hitting dead-on last time doesn't mean it is still hitting where you want. Take the time to run a few shots through your gun to be sure your sights and/or scope is on.

3. Don't take ill-advised shots. Be absolutely sure of your target and what's beyond it and don't take a shot if you can't see the vital. Forget about trying to "bust through the brush" and wait until your quarry clears any

obstacles that might send your bullet astray.

4. Be quiet. Don't slam car doors and talk loudly when you get to your parking spot or you'll undoubtedly alert any animal within several hundred yards of your presence. Go out of your way to be quiet when you enter and leave the woods and while you're on stand. If you have to cough or sneeze do it into your arm or clothing to dampen the sound. Clear the ground in your mind of any sticks or dead leaves that may give your position away if accidentally stepped on. One of the white-tailed deer's main senses of defense is its superior hearing. You'll have to work at it if you want to fool these radar cars.

5. Be cautious of your scent. The deer's main defense is its sense of smell. A mature deer (buck or doe) can detect unnatural smells - cigarettes, shampoo or soap, deodorant, smoke on your clothing from a campfire, or even the gas or oil on your boots from a stop at the gas station etc. - from great distances. Remove your hunting clothes (outer coat, pants, boots) when you leave the woods and store them in a plastic bag. It helps to add grass and leaves from the area to the bag to keep the natural smell of the woods on your clothing. There are many items on the market that help eliminate human body odor such as Scent-Shield, odorless hunter body and clothes soap, and Scent-Loc suits. Most of these items will certainly help eliminate your odor, but you'll have to take the necessary precautions to eliminate it completely. Remember, if you can smell it, a deer can smell it from 100 yards away.

6. Position your blind downwind from where you expect to encounter a whitetail. This will also help you fool a whitetail's nose as any breeze will carry your scent away from the trail the deer will be using.

7. Keep motion to a minimum. One of the biggest mistakes hunters make is to move around or fidget too much while on their stand. Deer, especially mature bucks, move slowly and deliberately through the woods. Their eyes, ears and nose are working overtime in an effort to detect

danger. Make a concerted effort to remain as motionless as possible. When you do turn, turn your head only, not your entire body and remember to always move slowly.

8. Hunt with your eyes and ears. This goes hand-in-hand with tip No. 7. Continually scan the area you're hunting with your eyes. Turn your head slowly and look through the brush. Watch for slight movements or for parts of a deer. You may always see an entire deer, but you may be able to pick out a twitching ear or a moving leg. If you see something that catches your attention watch it intently for several minutes. Deer will often stand motionless for several minutes at a time while scanning an area before it passes through.

9. Pass the does if you want the buck. If you have an antlerless permit and want to fill it fine, but if you have your sights on a buck, let the does walk by early in the season and fill that antlerless tag later. The rut is in full swing early in the season and bucks are chasing does. If a doe comes through your neck of the woods be ready because a buck may be hot on her trail and just moments behind.

10. Stay out all day. This tip is especially important on opening day. Opening day provides hunters with the best chance of killing a buck. Once they have been hunted hard for a day or two a buck's habits will change and encountering him during daylight hours will be much tougher. Pack a lunch on Nov. 15 and stay in the woods all day. When other hunters leave for the woods leaving for lunch. If you can stay out and hunt during the entire day you'll undoubtedly increase your chance for success.

Be safe and hunt hard. And don't forget to report your success at the number or address listed below.

Readers are encouraged to fax information to (248) 644-1314 or call Bill Parker evenings at (248) 901-2573.

## DNR's 1998 Deer Season Expectation

Hunting Season*	Hunters	Hunter Days	Harvest		Totals
			Antlered	Antlerless	
Archery	400,000	7,000,000	54,000	67,000	121,000
Regular Firearms	750,000	6,000,000	139,000	119,000	258,000
Muzzleloading	200,000	1,000,000	7,000	16,000	23,000
Early and late antlerless and block permits	NA	NA	NA	48,000	48,000
Totals	800,000**	14,000,000	200,000	250,000	450,000

\* Archery deer season runs Oct. 1-Nov. 14 and Dec. 1-Jan. 3. Firearms season is Nov. 15-30. Muzzleloading season is Dec. 4-13 in the Upper Peninsula and Dec. 11-20 in the Lower Peninsula. The late antlerless season is Dec. 19-Jan. 3 on private land in some areas of the state.

\*\* In Deer Management Unit 452 the early antlerless season was Oct. 17-26 and the late antlerless season is Dec. 11-Jan. 3. Many deer hunters participate in more than one season. Approximately 800,000 individuals are expected to hunt deer in 1998.

## HUNTING INFORMATION

### Deer Information Centers

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has set the dates for its annual firearm deer season information centers. At the information centers DNR conservation officers, state park and recreation area staff, wildlife biologists and field staff will be available to provide hunters with printed information on deer hunting and answer questions on deer concentrations, hunting prospects, regulations and places to hunt and camp.

Information centers will be open 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Nov. 13-14, at the St. Ignace Welcome Center (1-75 on the north side of the Mackinac Bridge) and at the Clare Welcome Center (on US 27 at Clare).

### TB Surveillance Stations

As part of the DNR's program to monitor bovine tuberculosis in white-tailed deer hunters taking deer in Alpena, Montmorency, Oscoda, Alcona or Presque Isle counties are asked to bring their deer heads to a check station for examination and testing. The head is examined because lymph nodes located in the head and at the top of the neck are used to determine if the deer has TB.

When removing the head leave a few of the neck bones (vertebrae) intact so the lymph nodes will not be damaged. Antlers, skull cap and cape may be removed and will not affect testing. Tissue samples will be sent to the DNR Rose Lake Wildlife Disease Laboratory and hunters should receive the test results by mail within about two weeks.

Following is a list of dates and times TB surveillance stations

will be open.

■ Curran - 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Nov. 15-30 except Thanksgiving Day, at the BP gas station at the junction of M-65 and M-72 one mile north of Curran.

■ Posen - 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Nov. 15-30 except Thanksgiving Day, behind the Huron Oil building.

■ Onaway - 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Nov. 15-30 except Thanksgiving Day, at the County Garage Building, east of M-65.

■ Alpena - 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Nov. 15-30 except Thanksgiving Day at the DNR Alpena Field Office.

■ Mio - 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Nov. 15-30 except Thanksgiving Day at the DNR Mio Field Office.

■ Maybury State Park - 8 a.m.-noon and 1-4:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Call (248) 349-8390.

■ Mt. Clemens Field Office - 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call (810) 465-4771.

■ Pte. Mouillee State Game Area - 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Call (734) 379-9692.

■ Port Huron State Game Area - By appointment only through Oct. 31. Nov. 1-Dec 31 - 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday; 8-8:30 a.m. and 4-4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Call (810) 987-5398.

■ Southeast Michigan DNR District Office, Livonia - 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call (734) 953-0241.

■ Lapeer State Game Area - 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday; 8-8:30 a.m. and 4-4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Call (810) 664-2837.

■ The Waterford Field Office is closed this year for renovations.

■ Birch Run - 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 16-18 and Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 21-22, at the weigh station on I-75, 2.5 miles north of Birch Run.

■ Algonquin State Park - 8 a.m.-noon and 1-4 p.m. seven days a week. Call (810) 765-5605.

■ Bald Mountain Recreation Area - 8 a.m.-noon and 1-4 p.m. seven days a week. Call (248) 693-0767.

■ Harsens Island Wildlife Area - 8 a.m.-5 p.m. seven days a week. Call (810) 748-9504.

■ Holly Recreation Area - 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Tuesday; 8-8:30 a.m. and 4-4:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Call (810) 987-5398.

■ Port Huron State Game Area - By appointment only through Oct. 31. Nov. 1-Dec 31 - 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday; 8-8:30 a.m. and 4-4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Call (810) 987-5398.

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