

Outlook is good for archery deer season, especially close by

The big doe grazed her way along the ridge top on a course that would take her right through my main shooting lane. I'd already decided to harvest a doe. My reasoning was twofold — first, to do my part in helping to reduce the white-tail herd size in Oakland County, and more importantly, to put some fresh, nutritious venison in the freezer.



Outdoor Insights

Bill Parker

When she stepped into the opening luck was on my side as she stopped to nibble on an acorn. She paused in a position that was slightly quivering away — perfect for a quick, lethal shot.

That scenario unfolded in early October of last year. By the time the firearms season rolled around many whitetails had all but disappeared, according to hunter reports from across the state.

Unseasonably warm weather throughout most of the 2001 deer hunting seasons put a damper on hunter success.

Warm weather enabled deer to lay low for longer periods of time, moving more at night than during the day. It also allowed hunters to remain on their stands longer as they, too, were content to sit it out rather than walk a little to warm up — which also helps keep the deer on the move.

The result was a 14-percent decline in the overall deer harvest across the state last year compared to the season of 2000.

Many factors

That lower than usual harvest, combined with a mild winter, even in the Upper Peninsula, and mild, favorable weather during the spring fawning season should add up to a pretty good deer hunting season this year, which kicked off with opening day of bow season on Oct. 1.

For the past few years, hunters in southern Michigan have killed more deer than their colleagues in the northern Lower

Peninsula and the Upper Peninsula. That trend should continue this fall as the herd in southern Michigan remains large and healthy. According to Tim Payne, wildlife biologist at the Department of Natural Resources's Livonia office, hunters in southeastern Michigan should enjoy another "pretty good season."

"We're getting closer to achieving our overall goal of reducing deer numbers in certain areas," Payne said, "but we still have a lot of deer."

Payne says hunters in Oakland County should see plenty of deer.

Although the herd is down slightly from past years because of abundant antlerless tags that have been issued over the last five or six years, there are still lots of deer in most areas.

"Up to last year, no matter what we did the car/deer accidents kept going up, up, up," Payne said. "For the first time, we're seeing that start to level off."

At Bald

The Bald Mountain Recreation Area in Lake Orion remains one of the

better public land hunting areas in Oakland County.

"Bald Mountain, especially the north and northeast areas always offer some pretty good hunting," Payne said. "The terrain is hilly and swampy and there are lots of areas that hold deer."

State-managed crops planted on the west side of Bald Mountain attract a fair number of deer, and a large number of hunters. To avoid the crowds, concentrate on lands east of M-24.

Hunting should also be good at the Holly and Ortonville state game areas.

"All the reports I've heard about Holly have been good," Payne says. "The same for Ortonville. A lot will depend on the crops surrounding these areas. If the crops are marginal and the farmers don't pick them, hunting will be a little tougher because the deer will stay in the crops. If the crops are down, the deer will be moving more and will head for the woods."

Hunting pressure is traditionally pretty high at Highland and Pontiac Lake state game areas, and deer numbers there

are fair, at best. Further north at the Lapeer SGA, hunting should be good with plenty of deer and quality habitat. To the west, the same holds true for the Pinckney and Waterloo state recreation areas.

Hunters are always encouraged to bring their deer to a DNR check station, but that call is being amplified this year. Chronic Wasting Disease, an always fatal brain disorder that affects deer and elk, has been found recently in wild deer in Wisconsin and a captive elk in Minnesota.

The disease has been present in wild and cervid herds west of the Mississippi for years, but the findings in Wisconsin and Minnesota are the first east of the Mississippi.

To date, there is no evidence that CWD, a relative of Mad Cow Disease, can be transmitted from deer or elk to humans.

Other states

Deer densities in both Wisconsin and Minnesota, much like in Michigan, are much higher than in the western states where the disease has been found.

That fact has raised concern among Midwest wildlife managers who fear the disease could spread quickly through wild populations here.

Michigan has initiated a CWD surveillance program which includes the testing of hundreds of hunter-killed deer for the presence of CWD.

"We're increasing our surveillance, especially in counties with a high percent of captive cervid (herds), and in counties bordering other states," Payne said. "If it does come into the state we think it will likely come in through a cervid operation rather than a deer that's taken across Lake Michigan."

A complete list of DNR deer check stations is available at www.michigan.gov/dnr on the Internet.

Bill Parker writes an outdoor column for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. Hunters and anglers are urged to report their success. Questions and comments are also welcomed. Send information to: Outdoors c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009.

OUTDOORS CALENDAR

ACTIVITIES

of the B.A.S.S. National Federation.

FISH BUDDIES FISHING CLUB
The Fish Buddies Fishing Club meets the third Tuesday of each month in Rochester. Meetings are open to all anglers, boaters and non-boaters. Call Harold Leider at (248) 656-0556 for more information.

OAKLAND COUNTY SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION
The Oakland County Sportfishing Association meets at 7:30 p.m. the third Wednesday of every month at the Drayton Plains Nature Center, 2125 Derby, Drayton Plains. Call (248) 693-4389 or visit the club's web site at <http://gotoloca.com> for more information.

DOWNRIVER BASS ASSOCIATION
The Downriver Bass Association, a non-tournament bass club, meets at 6:30 p.m. the fourth Tuesday of every month at the Gander Mountain (14100 Pardee Road) in Taylor. For more information, call Ron Fodor at (734) 676-2863 or send an e-mail to river122@com.com.

METRO-WEST STEELHEADERS
Metro-West Steelheaders meets at 7:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month in the cafeteria at Garden City High School. Call Dominic Liparuto at (481) 476-5027 for more information.

MICHIGAN FLY FISHING
The Michigan Fly Fishing Club meets at 7:30 p.m. the first and third Wednesdays of each month at Livonia Clarenceville Middle School, located on Middlebell Road between Seven and Eight Mile roads. Visit www.mffc.org on the Internet for more information.

FOUR SEASONS
The Four Seasons Fishing Club meets 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month at the Livonia Civic Park Senior Center, 15218 Farmington Road. Visitors are welcome. For more information, please call Jim Kudej at (734) 591-0843 or send him an e-mail at judej@aol.com.

HURON VALLEY STEELHEADERS
The Huron Valley Steelheaders meets the third Thursday of each month at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 27600 Hall Road, Flat Rock. Call Carroll White at (734) 285-0843 for more information.

CLINTON RIVER BASS 'N' RATS
The recently organized Clinton River Bass 'N' Rats meets the first Monday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at the Gander Mountain Lodge. Call (810) 241-9900 for direction and additional information. The club is an affiliated chapter

METROPARKS

METROPARK REQUIREMENTS
Most Metropark programs are free while some require a nominal fee. Advanced registration and a motor vehicle permit are required for all programs. Call the respective parks toll free at the following numbers: Stony Creek, 1-800-477-7756; Indian Springs, 1-800-477-3192; Kensington, 1-800-477-3178; Hudson Mills, 1-800-477-3191.

OAKLAND COUNTY PARKS

COUNTY PARK REQUIREMENTS
Advanced registration and a motor vehicle permit are required for all nature programs at Oakland County Parks. Call (248) 625-6473 to register or for more information.

MOTOCROSS
The 28th season of bicycle motocross at Waterford Oaks County Park is underway. Riders provide the power for BMX racing on a track featuring jumps, berms and more challenges. Races are timed to determined finishes. National Bicycle League sanctioned racing is offered Wednesdays (June-August) and Saturdays (May-September). The sanctioned race dates include Sept. 21 and Sept. 28.

STATE PARKS

STATE PARK REQUIREMENTS
Maybury State Park, Proud Lake Recreation Area, Bald Mountain Recreation Area, Highland Recreation Area, and Island Lake Recreation Area offer nature interpretive programs throughout the year. A state park motor vehicle permit is required for entry into all state parks and state recreation areas. For registration and additional information on the programs at Maybury call (248) 349-8390. For programs at Bald Mountain call (248) 659-6787. For programs at Proud Lake and Highland call (248) 685-2187. For programs at Island Lake call (248) 229-7067.

(To submit items for consideration in the Observer & Eccentric's Outdoor Calendar send information to: Outdoors, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009; fax information to 248-644-1314.)

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Beverly Hills 248-646-6558	Detroit 313-832-7971	Madison Heights 248-588-6777 248-543-1817	Troy 248-312-5400 248-288-6559 248-435-0059
Bloomfield Hills 248-988-8613	Farmington Hills 248-324-0013	Pontiac 248-475-0696	Waterford 248-674-1380
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