Enhanced hunting opportunity and improved deer management to result from extensive public-input process.

Deer Season Changes for 2009-2010 Season

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A host of individuals, including deer hunters, landowners, biologists and deer task force members, helped shape changes to Illinois' 2009-2010 deer seasons.

We've come a long way since Illinois' first modern deer season was held in 1957, and regulation changes along the way are designed to keep up with changes in deer populations as well as public interests. In May, the Department of Natural Resources announced a host of changes to Illinois' deer hunting seasons—starting this year—giving hunters expanded opportunities while balancing the need for proper management of our legendary Illinois whitetails.

"Our deer season plans and the implementation of changes in 2009 deer regulations should enhance deer hunting opportunities and improve deer management in Illinois," said DNR Director Marc Miller. "The regulations were developed with extensive input from deer hunters and hunting organizations, landowners, wildlife management professionals, the deer task force and other citizens interested in our state's deer herd."

Over-the-counter (OTC) permit sales through DNR Direct license and permit agents should make it easier for interested deer hunters to obtain permits for youth (Oct. 10–11, 2009) and the late-winter/chronic wasting disease (Dec. 31–Jan. 3 and Jan. 15–17, 2010) firearm deer seasons.

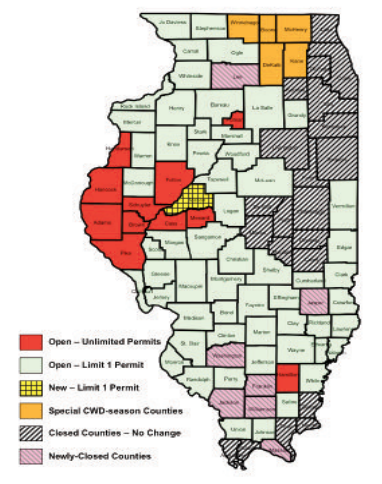
Illinois' 7-day firearm (Nov. 20–22 and Dec. 3–6, 2009), and 3-day muzzleloader (Dec. 11–13, 2009) seasons are virtually unchanged, except that permits remaining after the lotteries and random daily drawing period will be sold OTC. The firearm/muzzleloader permit lotteries are an important part of the state's deer management in that they assure equal access to permits for all Illinois deer hunters. Individual county quotas allow DNR to spread hunters out and adjust pressure in each county as needed. The random daily draw (third drawing period) will be shorter than in the past (Sept. 14-Oct. 1), after which any unsold permits will be available from license vendors. However, hunters are encouraged not to wait to purchase permits over the counter, as

Changes to the 2009-2010 late-winter deer season

One newly open county: Mason

Formerly open counties, to be closed: Franklin, Jackson, Jasper, Lee, Massac, Washington and Williamson

Counties with unlimited permits: Adams, Brown, Cass, Fulton, Hamilton, Hancock, Henderson, Menard, Pike, Putnam and Schuyler



the limited number of permits will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

The late-winter antlerless-only deer season will be expanded from three to seven days. A compromise of the nine-day recommendation from the deer task force was a result of input from interested hunters. Not all Illinois counties will offer this season (see sidebar). There will be two categories of open counties based upon deer management needs as set by the deer task force. Counties in need of significant herd reduction will have no limit on the number of permits that may be purchased, while other open counties will have a limit of one permit per hunter. All permits will be sold OTC.

The special CWD deer hunting season in select northern Illinois counties will be expanded to seven days, concurrent with the late-winter deer season. A major change to this season includes the elimination of the manned check stations. As a result, DNR will not be able to offer free replacement permits to hunters providing CWD samples, as they have in the past. However, hunters are encouraged to have their adult deer sampled for CWD testing at cooperating businesses (primarily meat lockers). A list of cooperators at which hunters may get their deer tested will be available online before the start of this season.

The archery deer season (Oct. 1, 2009–Jan. 17, 2010) will be extended by three days to close at the end of the late-winter firearm deer season. Archery season is closed during the regular firearm deer season (Nov. 20–22 and Dec. 3–6, 2009) in those counties or portions of counties open to firearm deer hunting. However, archers can hunt during other firearm deer seasons (youth, muzzleloader, late-winter and CWD seasons) but are subject to the same blaze orange requirement as firearm deer hunters.

Except as noted below, most Illinois deer hunters must register their harvest

Select counties will be open to an expanded seven-day late-winter antlerless-only deer season.

Successful deer hunters are reminded to register their harvest by 10 p.m. on the same calendar day their deer is taken.

by 10 p.m. on the same calendar day the deer is taken by calling the toll-free telephone check-in system at 1-866-452-4325 (1-866-ILCHECK) or by accessing the on-line check-in system at www.dnr.state.il.us/vcheck.

The only exceptions to electronic harvest reporting will be in the following northern Illinois counties where DNR will continue to operate mandatory deer check stations during the firearm deer season (Nov. 20–22 and Dec. 3–6, 2009): Boone, DeKalb, Grundy, Kane, LaSalle, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson and Winnebago. Hours of operation will be 8 a.m.-8 p.m. daily. Biologists will be sampling adult deer for CWD and identifying harvest locations in order to determine additional management needs in these counties.

"We hope all hunters find these changes to be beneficial to them during the coming seasons," added Miller. "The agency will continue to make a concerted effort to balance science-based decision-making with input and perspective from our constituents. Constituent input and involvement are critical to the success of this agency and its programs."

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