

August 2014

A Message from Director Marc Miller

With squirrel season open as of August 1, dove and early Canada goose seasons opening September 1, and teal season opening September 6, the busy fall hunting seasons in Illinois are just beginning. Deer, fall turkey, upland game, and the regular duck and goose seasons will be here soon. If you're a hunter, novice or experienced, as you plan your time afield this fall, please make hunting safety part of your plan.

Hunting is one of our safest forms of outdoor recreation, but last year there were 27 hunting incidents reported in Illinois. The most frequent incidents involved elevated tree stands. Hunters were injured in 16 tree stand incidents last year, with 11 of them resulting in serious injuries. Broken ankles, broken legs, broken backs, broken wrists, broken ribs, concussions, liver and kidney lacerations, and a torn aorta were among the injuries sustained by hunters ranging in age from 23 to 75, all involving getting into, out of, or using tree stands.

When using a tree stand, hunters should make sure they are using a full body safety harness, also known as a Fall Arrest System or FAS. When hunting with a firearm, hunters should follow some basic rules:

- Handle your firearm safely, and never assume it is unloaded. Last year, a turkey hunter in Calhoun Co. leaned his firearm against a truck, the gun slipped, discharged, and the hunter was wounded in the thigh.
- Know your target. Last year in Brown Co., a man was carrying a turkey decoy when another hunter thought he saw a turkey through the brush, fired, and shot and wounded the other man.
- Be aware of others hunting nearby. Last year in Will Co., a pheasant hunter was struck by pellets when another hunter in his group swung his firearm in his direction.

The IDNR provides Hunter Safety Education courses throughout the state, providing instruction on hunter responsibility, wildlife conservation and identification, firearms and ammunition, field safety, tree stand safety, first aid, archery, muzzleloading, and state regulations. Find course schedules and more information at <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/safety/Pages/HunterSafety.aspx>

Hunters are our valued partners in their support of conservation, wildlife management, and Illinois' hunting heritage. The fees hunters pay for licenses and permits, and the excise taxes they pay when they purchase hunting equipment, provide the funding needed for science-based conservation programs and wildlife management.

Thanks again to Illinois hunters for the important role you play in wildlife management efforts – and play it safe while hunting in Illinois this fall.

Yours in Conservation,

Marc Miller