



# Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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Pat Quinn, Governor  
Marc Miller, Director

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## Hunters Head to the Field This Week for Illinois Firearm Deer Season

*Hunters urged to practice safety while afield*

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is reminding hunters to make safety a priority as they head to the field for the start of the Illinois Firearm Deer Season this week. The seven-day firearm deer season opens Friday, Nov. 22 through Sunday, Nov. 24, and will conclude on Thursday, Dec. 5 through Sunday, Dec. 8.

“The Firearm Deer Season is a great part of our hunting heritage in Illinois,” said IDNR Director Marc Miller. “Thanks to so many safety-minded hunters, hunting is one of our safest forms of outdoor recreation, and we want to remind hunters to make safety their first priority for deer season, and whenever they’re hunting.”

The legal hunting hours for the Illinois Firearm Deer Season are one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. Hunters successful in taking a deer during the firearm season in most counties must register the deer they harvest online through the IDNR website at <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/Pages/HarvestReporting.aspx> or by phoning 1-866-IL-CHECK (1-866-452-4325). Hunters using the online or phone-in system must register their harvest by 10 p.m. on the day they take the deer.

Firearm deer hunters in 10 northern Illinois counties are required to register all deer harvested during firearm season by taking them to their county check stations shown below, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Biologists will be present to take Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) samples for testing at the time of registration. Testing is voluntary, but all hunters with adult deer are encouraged to participate. The counties where hunters are required to check-in their deer at check stations are:

- Boone: Boone Co. Fairgrounds; 1/2 mi. N. of Rt. 76 and Bus. Rt. 20, Belvidere
- DeKalb: Shabbona Lake State Park; 4201 Shabbona Grove Rd., Shabbona

- Grundy: Gebhard Woods State Park/I & M Canal Trail; 401 Ottawa St., Morris
- Jo Daviess: Elizabeth Community Bldg.; 210 N. West St., Elizabeth - 1/2 mi. W. of business district on Hwy. 20, next to Highland C.C. Elizabeth campus
- Kane: Shabbona Lake S.P. (De Kalb Co.); 4201 Shabbona Grove Rd., Shabbona
- La Salle: Buffalo Rock State Park; 3 mi. W. of Ottawa on Dee Bennett Rd.
- McHenry: Moraine Hills State Park; McHenry Dam Day Use Area, E. of McHenry on River Rd., 2.2 mi. S. of Rt. 120
- Ogle: Castle Rock State Park; Rt. 2, 3 mi. S. of Oregon
- Stephenson: Stephenson County Fairgrounds; 1 mi. E. of Rt. 26 and Fairgrounds Rd., Freeport
- Winnebago: Rock Cut State Park; Loves Park, Rt. 173 entrance

Hunters who participate in the CWD sampling can check the status of their deer (listed by phone number) through the IDNR website. Hunters who provide samples from deer that test positive are notified by the IDNR. For more information on CWD in Illinois, check the IDNR website at [www.dnr.illinois.gov/Programs/CWD](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/Programs/CWD).

In addition to the seven-day Illinois Firearm Deer Season, other upcoming firearm hunting seasons in the state include the three-day Muzzleloader-only Deer Season on Dec. 13-15, and the seven-day split Late-Winter Firearm Antlerless-only Deer Season and Special CWD Deer Season on December 26-29, 2013 and January 17-19, 2014.

In 2012, there were 26 hunting incidents reported in Illinois, three of which resulted in fatalities. There have been 14 hunting incidents reported in the state so far during 2013.

Eleven of the hunting incidents reported last year involved tree stand falls. 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). Among safety reminders when hunting with a firearm:

- Treat every firearm as if it were loaded, and never assume a firearm is unloaded;
- Always point a firearm in a safe direction;
- Be sure of your target, and make sure there are no other hunters, homes, buildings, vehicles or other animals beyond your target;

- Keep your finger out of the trigger guard and off the trigger until you are ready to shoot.

Hunters successful in taking deer in Illinois are also encouraged to consider donating to the Illinois Sportsmen Against Hunger program. The program allows hunters to donate whole deer for processing into venison that is provided to food banks, food pantries and other charitable organizations in local communities throughout the state. For more information on ISAH, click on the IDNR website at [www.dnr.illinois.gov/programs/ISAH](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/programs/ISAH).

For more information on Illinois deer hunting regulations, check the IDNR website at this link:

[www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/deer](http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/deer)

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