Numbers down for early youth portion

MDC experts say harvest total still ‘on par’ with previous seasons

By Robert Cox

Fall firearms season got off to a good start with a successful youth weekend that saw young hunters check nearly 16,000 deer across the state.

In Perry County, hunters aged 6-15 brought down 150 deer, including 62 antlered bucks, 12 button bucks and 74 does, down a bit from last year’s total of 180 deer in the fall portion.

Statewide, MDC reported that young hunters checked 15,600 deer during the two-day event, and that total was down from the past five years.

According to Doran, in a situation like that, MDC agents usually call in and say, ‘Hey, you know, little Johnny shot two deer with one shot.’ Doran said, ‘It’s usually when the deer are kind of crowded around and it’s just a lucky shot. We handled a couple of those this year where partridges had called in and said, “Hey, you know, little Johnny shot two deer with one shot.” What do we do and we handle it from there.’

According to Doran, in a situation like that, MDC agents usually let the hunter pick which deer they want, then take the other and donate it to Share the Harvest or directly to a needy family.

The November portion of the fall deer season begins Saturday, Nov. 14, and runs through Tuesday, Nov. 24, followed by the late youth portion from Nov. 27-29.
Weekly temperatures and a low of 38.

This weekend is not shaping up to be that way. Saturday’s low is expected to be 40 degrees with a high of 62. Sunday is expected to have a high of 65 degrees and a low of 38.

Bennett Kassel, 11; Braxton Kassel, 8; and Oliver Kassel, 9, grandsons of Danny and Peggy Leible of Perry County.

Richardet of Perryville, killed this deer in Perry County.

Isabelle added that deer harvests in the state have also been on an increasing trend since 2013 and MDC expects this trend to continue this year.

“Increased hunter participation as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is also likely to contribute to a high or deer harvest this fall,” Isabelle said.

We saw a significant increase in the number of hunters that pursued turkeys this past spring. If we see a similar increase in hunter participation this fall, it would be an outstanding year for the highest deer harvest in many counties. In addition, MDC has closely monitored deer harvest opportunities in many counties over the last several years in response to increasing deer numbers.


As in previous years, MDC will be hosting its annual Share the Harvest Program, in which hunters may donate their venison to needy families. Deer taken in a CWD Management Zone — like Perry County — must be tested for Chronic Wasting Disease, and may only be donated to an approved processor that is participating in the Share the Harvest CWD-Test Program.

“Warm weather should have no effect on hunters,” Doran said. “It helps that the deer population in the state has been growing.

“Deer populations in much of southern Missouri have been increasing steadily over time and deer numbers in much of central and northern Missouri have rebounded from the severe hemorrhagic disease outbreak in 2012 that caused a significant decline in deer numbers in many counties,” said MDC Cervid Program Supervisor Jason Isabelle.

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CWD makes CWD sampling voluntary this year

By Robert Cox
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As in previous years, Perry County is one of 30 counties across the state making up the Missouri Department of Conservation’s management zone for chronic wasting disease (CWD).

As usual, deer in the CWD management zone will be tested for the disease, but unlike previous years, sampling during opening weekend will be voluntary.

“The Department of Conservation, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, decided to change it from mandatory to voluntary,” said Perry County Conservation Agent Chris Doran. “We still have our two stations here in Perry County, one at the Perryville Forestry Office, and the other at the Cape Girardeau Conservation Club there [in Heavy, Ar.]. It’ll be made by appointment, but there will still be those open during opening weekend and folks that want to come by and get their deer sample done. CWD, there will be department personnel that can do that. It’ll be the same process as last year. They’ll give you a card and a number and then you can come and check in a couple of weeks, later, to see if it’s positive.

CWD is a fatal transmissible neurological disease of deers and elk that produces small lesions in brains of infected animals, caused by abnormal proteins called prions. The disease was first detected in Perry County in 2015.

“CWD represents a great threat to the health of Missouri’s deer and elk herds and to our hunting culture,” said CWD Mandatory Sampling Coordinator Kervin Welkoshen. “Sampling deer for CWD allows early detection of the disease and allows for rapid management inter-vention to slow its spread. Hunters play a critical role in helping MDC first and manage CWD by having their deer sampled.”

Doran said the decision to change to voluntary testing simply came down to safety. “It’s certainly voluntary and we will still have those stations open, but to lessen the number of people that would have to be in close proximity to one another,” Doran said. “We did pretty well with getting the hunters out in a timely manner, but we wanted to be safe.”

After opening weekend, hunters will still be able to get their deer tested for the disease. In addition to testing done at participating road stations, the MDC has provided a number of drop-off locations around the state.

“The department set three drop-off freezers in Perry, St. Genevieve and Frances counties – we’ve actually got one out here at the Perryville Forestry Office,” Doran said. “It’s an actual freezer that the department has placed in those three counties. It’s in a secured location, and when you open it up, there’ll be instructions on what to do. Generally, folks will have the head cut off and six inches of the neck and bring it in there and drop it off at one of the freezers, anytime of the day, any time during the season,” Doran said.

As for testing through meat processors, Doran said Perry County residents have two options.

Here in Perryville, [Esten’s Sausage Shop] and [Et-sold Packing] are still our voluntary sampling stations, so you can bring them in by there,” Doran said.

The 30 counties that make up the CWD Management Zone are Adair, Barry, Biddle, Butler, Christian, Clark, Crawford, Franklin, Gasconade, Hickory, Howell, Jefferson, Knox, Linn, Macon, Mercer, Oregon, Ozark, Perry, Polk, Putnam, St. Charles, St. Clair, St. Francois, St. Genevieve, Stone, Sullivan, Taney, Warren, and Washington.

Welkoshen added, “Although sampling is voluntary this year, to help us de- tect CWD as early as possible and protect the state’s deer herd, we strongly encourage hunters in CWD Management Zone counties to have their deer sampled at one of our stations on opening weekend, or at other locations throughout the duration of deer season.”

In addition, MDC staffers will be following pandemic protocols at sampling sta-tions, including social dis-tancing, gloves and face masks at all times. Hunters and those with them will be asked to remain in their vehicles while their deer is being sampled. Hunters will only be asked to provide county of harvest and will not be asked to identify harvest lo-cation on a map.

The person who harvest-ed the deer must be present.

The hunter’s consen-sus number will be required, along with county of harvest.

Using a paper permit, have it detached from the deer for easy access.

If using the MDC Hunting App, have permit and Telcheck account information available.

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OBERLE MEATS
21529 Highway 32, Ste. Genevieve, MO
Hours: Monday-Saturday 6:30 am-5:30 pm
573-883-5656 or Toll Free: 877-483-5656

Deer meat will be processed now until 2 weeks before Christmas. Deer meat will be accepted again for processing in January. At that time, snack sticks will also be available.

Oberle Meats is now accepting BONELESS DEER MEAT

Legs and ground deer meat. Boneless deer shake meat, deer trim meat in strips, deer场d meat, strips, and ground moose meat also ground and ground beef. Deer meat should be placed on the legs. Deer trim meat, not too thick, with meals of moose in small bags for easy handling and later thawing.

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