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Hunters Check 594 Deer in Urban Hunt

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Jefferson City, Missouri - Hunters checked 594 deer during the urban portion of Missouri's firearms deer season. Officials with the Missouri Department of Conservation attribute the lower-than-average harvest in part to warm, rainy, windy weather.

County harvest totals during the urban portion were: Greene, 122; St. Charles, 88; Boone, 84; Franklin, 55; Jefferson, 54; St. Louis, 47; Cole, 40; Clay, 36; Cass, 33; Jackson, 24; Platte, 11.

Hunters are only allowed to shoot antlerless deer during the urban portion. This focus on harvesting female deer is designed to control deer numbers in urban and suburban areas, where hunting pressure is lighter and the potential for deer-vehicle accidents and property damage is greater.

This year's harvest was below average for the urban portion, which became part of the firearms deer season in 2003. Over the past 11 years, the urban portion harvest averaged 961 deer. However, the harvest has been between 500 and 700 deer in four of the past six years.

Warm temperatures have been associated with lower urban portion harvests in the past. Temperature does not appear to have been a factor this year, since daytime highs ranged from the mid-50s to high 60s. Conservation Department Resource Scientist Jason Sumners says gusty wind and rain during the four-day hunt likely played a role in holding down this year's urban harvest.

“No one likes to hunt in the rain, and windy weather makes it harder to detect deer movement,” says Summers. “Considering the widespread rains we had during the urban hunt, this harvest is pretty good.”

Summers said expanded archery hunting opportunities in many of Missouri’s urban communities, plus the hemorrhagic disease outbreak in 2012, have helped reduce deer numbers in some urban areas, and likely played a role in keeping the urban-portion harvest down.

Missouri’s firearms deer season consists of six portions, totaling 42 days. The remaining portions of Missouri’s firearms deer season are: early youth (Nov. 1-2), November (Nov. 15-25), antlerless (Nov. 26-Dec. 7), alternative methods (Dec. 20-30), and late youth (Jan. 3-4).

For more information about Missouri’s 2014-15 deer harvest, visit mdc.mo.gov/node/2613.

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