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Mo Dept of Conservation Limits Firearm Antlerless Deer Permits

NOVEMBER 10TH 2014 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Jefferson City, Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reminds deer hunters that firearm antlerless deer hunting permits have been reduced from “any number” in most counties of the state to one in most counties of the state. The reduction applies to all portions of the firearms deer season combined.

Exceptions to this regulation change allow hunters to fill two firearm antlerless deer permits in Chariton, Randolph, Macon, Linn, Sullivan, and Adair counties, which surround the area where chronic wasting disease (CWD) has been found in a small number of deer in Macon County. According to MDC, continuing to maintain stable deer numbers in this “CWD Containment Zone” will help limit the spread of the disease to other deer and other areas.

Other areas where hunters can fill two firearm antlerless deer permits include urban zones around the state where deer numbers are typically higher than desired, and in Barton, Howell, and Oregon counties where local deer numbers are higher than deer management goals.

The regulations changes were approved by the Conservation Commission at its April meeting and MDC initially communicated the information to the public at that time.

Details on these changes and other information on deer hunting are available in the

Department's "2014 Fall Deer & Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information" booklet available at locations where permits are sold, MDC regional offices and nature centers, and online at mdc.mo.gov/sites/default/files/resources/2010/03/ftd2014.pdf.

According to MDC Deer Biologist Jason Sumners, the regulation changes are in response to lower overall deer numbers around much of the state as a result of long-term efforts to reduce the deer population through increased doe harvest. Previous regulations allowing the harvest of any number of antlerless deer have helped to decrease and stabilize deer numbers in many areas where deer numbers were too high.

Sumners added that the planned effort to reduce deer numbers in some areas was intensified by an unanticipated, extensive outbreak of hemorrhagic disease (HD) throughout most of the state related to the record-setting drought during summer and fall of 2012. With the resulting recent decrease in deer numbers in many areas of the state, some hunters and landowners have voiced their concerns about the level of doe harvest and the continuing need to offer hunters "any number" of antlerless permits.

"Our Regulations Committee considers the changing status of the deer herd across the state -- along with feedback from hunters, landowners, and others -- each year as it reviews recommendations for deer-hunting regulations," Sumners said.

"Deer populations in Missouri vary regionally and county-by-county as habitat, hunting regulations, hunter numbers, and frequency and severity of disease outbreaks affect deer numbers," he explained. "As these factors change over time, our deer management strategy is to be responsive to those changes."

He added that MDC's deer management strategy focuses on using science-based wildlife management practices, providing opportunities for all citizens to enjoy deer-related recreational activities such as deer hunting and watching, maintaining a healthy deer population, and providing related information to the public.

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