



TOP

MDC Expands Pheasant Hunting to Statewide

APRIL 03RD 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has expanded pheasant hunting in Missouri from only the northern half of the state and a portion of the southeast to statewide starting with this year's fall hunting season.

The new regulations are listed in the Department's recently released 2015 Summary of Missouri Hunting and Trapping Regulations booklet available at MDC offices, nature centers, other places where permits are sold, and online at mdc.mo.gov/node/3657.

Pheasant hunting starts with a youth-only weekend on Oct. 24-25 followed by the regular season of Nov. 1 through Jan. 15, 2016. Hunting remains limited to male pheasants only. The daily bag limit is two male birds and the possession limit is four. Valid permits are Daily Small Game Hunting, Small Game Hunting and Fishing, or Small Game Hunting.

Pheasant hunting in Missouri was previously limited to a North Zone consisting of all counties north of Interstate 70 and a portion of St. Charles County south of I70, and a Southeast Zone consisting of Dunklin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, and Stoddard counties.

According to MDC Resource Scientist Beth Emmerich, the expansion of pheasant hunting to statewide will simplify harvest rules for hunters across the state with minimal impact to the overall pheasant population.

“Hens are protected from harvest and one rooster often mates with multiple hens. Our rooster-only hunting season has very little impact on overall population size and growth,”

Emmerich said. “Habitat is what’s key for developing and maintaining wildlife numbers, including game birds such as pheasants and quail. Pheasant populations improve with ample nesting and brood-rearing habitat, including open grassy and agricultural fields.”

She noted that not all areas of the state have pheasants.

“There is noticeable variation in pheasant populations around the state with northwest Missouri and portions of the northeast holding the most birds,” said Emmerich. “Many parts of the state do not have the type of habitat required to hold pheasants. Expansion of pheasant hunting to statewide does not imply that birds can be harvested or even observed in all areas of the state.”

She added that other game species also have statewide hunting seasons regardless of not having significant populations in all parts of the state, including quail, swamp rabbit, and woodcock.”

Visit the MDC website at mdc.mo.gov for more information on hunting pheasants and other game.

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