

DNR: Nine-day deer hunt harvest totals and license sales now available

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MADISON, Wis. – Wisconsin’s hunting legacy runs deep. As hunters put another gun deer season in the books, preliminary license sale, harvest registration and hunting incident numbers for the 169th nine-day gun season are now available.

Preliminary License Sales Totals

Preliminary figures continue to indicate that the number of deer hunters in Wisconsin increased compared to the same period for both 2019 and 2018.

As of midnight, Sunday, Nov. 29, sales for gun, bow, crossbow, sports and patron licenses reached 820,299. Of that total, 569,203 were for gun privileges, including gun, patron and sports licenses. The year-to-date sales for all deer licenses are up 3.5% from the same time last year.

Female hunters remain the largest growing demographic in 2020, with the number of female hunters reaching nearly 92,312, up 12% from last year. The number of non-resident licenses decreased this year, likely due to COVID-19.

Of the licenses sold to date, 42% were sold in person through transactions at DNR license agents. The remaining 58% of licenses were purchased online. Deer hunting license and harvest authorization sales will continue throughout the remaining deer hunting seasons.

Final license sales figures will be available in January, at which time DNR staff will

perform a thorough analysis and interpretation.

Preliminary Registration Totals

Preliminary figures show that hunters registered 188,712 deer during the nine-day gun deer hunt, including 85,340 antlered and 103,372 antlerless deer. Since archery season opened Sept. 12, hunters have registered 305,171 deer statewide, showing the growing impact of earlier seasons on cumulative harvest.

Deer harvest trends since the beginning of the archery season were above 2019 levels, and this trend continued through the gun deer season. Compared to 2019, the total nine-day gun deer harvest was up 15.8% statewide, with buck harvest up 12.2% and antlerless harvest up 19%. All management zones showed harvest increases from 2019.

Current deer harvest totals have surpassed the total deer harvested in 2019, but harvest trends lag behind 2018, which had the highest total deer harvest since 2013. While many southern farmland zone counties saw double-digit increases in the buck harvest, the harvest was not evenly distributed across the state.

A number of units in the northern forest zone including Ashland, Florence, Forest, Iron, Lincoln, Marinette and Price counties, experienced another year of declining buck harvest during the nine-day gun deer season. However, total buck harvest in those counties appears to be similar compared to 2019 harvest for the same period.

While opening weekend saw mild temperatures throughout the state with some snow in the northwest, DNR staff across the state reported excellent hunting conditions and weather throughout the season except for a day or two of rain and wind midweek.

Harvest numbers will climb as hunters enjoy [additional hunting opportunities](#):

- **Nov. 30-Dec. 9:** Statewide muzzleloader hunt
- **Dec. 10-13:** Statewide four-day antlerless-only hunt;
- **Dec. 24-Jan. 1, 2021:** Nine-day antlerless-only holiday hunt in select Farmland Zone counties;
- **Now until Jan. 3, 2021:** Remaining archery and crossbow seasons; and
- **Jan. 4-31, 2021:** Extended archery and crossbow seasons in select Farmland Zone counties.

Hunters may use any unfilled antlerless harvest authorization during any of these hunts, but they must be used in the zone, county and land type designated on the harvest authorization. For more information regarding hunts offered in each county, check [out our interactive deer map here](#).

For the nine-day gun deer hunt, the 2020 regional harvest breakdown by deer management zone included:

Preliminary 2019 Nine-Day Season Harvest Totals		
Deer Management Zone	2020 Nine-Day Deer Harvested	Percent Change from 2019
Northern Forest Zone	16,936 antlered	4.7%
	12,260 antlerless	15.9%
Central Forest Zone	3,349 antlered	12.1%
	2,562 antlerless	23.9%
Central Farmland Zone	45,060 antlered	12.9%
	63,077 antlerless	17.4%
Southern Farmland Zone	19,995 antlered	17.5%
	25,473 antlerless	24.3%
Total Preliminary Harvest Registrations	85,340 antlered	12.2%
	103,372 antlerless	19.0%
	188,712 total	15.8%

Hunters are required to register harvested deer before 5 p.m. the day after recovery at gamereg.wi.gov or by calling 1-844-426-3734. Any hunter who failed to follow mandatory registration rules should do so now, despite having missed the deadline.

More information regarding preliminary registration totals, including county-level numbers, is [available here](#). A 2010-20 comparison of preliminary nine-day gun deer season registration totals is [also available online](#).

Nine-day Season Hunting Incidents

At the time of this news release, the DNR Bureau of Law Enforcement reports nine firearm-involved injuries and one fatality for the entire 2020 nine-day gun deer season.

- **Washburn County, Bashaw Township:** On Nov. 21, 2020 at approximately 11:30 a.m. a 62-year-old male victim was struck in the upper arm and face by a rifle round. A 19-year-old shooter and victim were participating in a deer drive together. The victim was taken by helicopter for medical treatment.
- **Saint Croix County, Eau Galle Township:** On Nov. 21, 2020 at approximately 2:55 p.m. a 14-year-old male victim was struck in the left leg by a shotgun slug. The 27-year-old shooter and the victim were participating in a deer drive together. The victim was taken to a hospital, treated and released.
- **Adams County:** On Nov. 22, 2020 at approximately 1:00 p.m. a 40-year-old male shooter/victim was working the action of his pistol when it discharged into his left hand. The victim was treated at a local hospital.
- **Door County; Washington Island:** On Nov. 22, 2020 at approximately 4:27 p.m. a 65-year-old male victim/shooter was exiting his blind with his shotgun when he tripped and the firearm discharged into his chest. The victim was pronounced dead at the scene.
- **La Crosse County, Onalaska Township:** On Nov. 24, 2020 at approximately 8:45 a.m. a 62-year-old male victim was walking with a rifle when he slipped and fell on the snow, causing the rifle to discharge. A round entered his right foot. The victim went to a local hospital for treatment.
- **Richland County, Sylvan Township:** On Nov. 24, 2020 at approximately 5:10 p.m. a 68-year-old male victim was sitting in his vehicle when a loaded rifle discharged and the bullet grazed his forehead. The shooter placed the loaded firearm in the vehicle with it pointed at the victim. The victim pushed the muzzle away when it fired.
- **Waushara County, Coloma Township:** On Nov. 26 at approximately 4:40 p.m. a 26-year-old female victim was walking on the Ice Age trail when she was struck by a bullet in the thigh. A 51-year-old male shooter was shooting at what he thought was a deer. Victim went to local hospital for treatment.
- **Marathon County, McMillan Marsh Wildlife Area:** On Nov. 27 at approximately 9:30 a.m. a 30-year-old male victim was participating in a large deer drive. A 26-year-old male shooter was shooting at a running deer when his bullet struck the victim in the face and shoulder area. The victim was transported to a local hospital for treatment.
- **Green County, Exeter Township:** On Nov. 28, 2020 at approximately 9:50

a.m. a 15-year-old male victim was participating in a deer drive. A 45-year-old male shooter shot at a running deer and his bullet struck the victim in the leg. The victim went to a hospital in Madison for treatment.

Wisconsin's 10-year average for hunting incidents during the nine-day gun deer season is 6.8. At this time last year, the DNR Bureau of Law Enforcement reported four firearm-involved injuries and zero fatalities for the entire 2019 nine-day gun deer season. The DNR reminds all hunters to use the [four firearm safety rules](#) as a cornerstone for safe and successful outings:

- T - Treat every Firearm as if it is loaded
- A - Always Point the muzzle in a safe direction
- B - Be certain of your target, what's before it, and what's beyond it
- K - Keep your finger outside your trigger guard until you are ready to shoot

Hunters Encouraged To Submit Deer For Chronic Wasting Disease Sampling

Hunters are reminded that CWD sampling opportunities are available throughout the remaining deer hunting seasons. [Find a sampling location here.](#)

Thanks to generous contributions from numerous partners, the [Adopt-a-Kiosk](#) and [Adopt-a-Dumpster](#) programs gave hunters additional options to submit their harvested deer for CWD sampling and safely dispose of carcasses.

The cooperation of hunters and private businesses has become increasingly vital to the success of our sampling process. DNR staff would like to thank all those who continue to assist with CWD surveillance.

Deer Hunter Wildlife Survey Remains Open Through Remaining Seasons

The [Deer Hunter Wildlife Survey](#) will remain active until all deer seasons have ended, and wildlife managers ask that hunters submit a report of what they observe during their time in the field. This information provides valuable data to improve population estimates for Wisconsin's deer herd and other species.

First Harvest And First Experience Certificates Will Help Hunters Remember Time In The Outdoors For Years To Come

Hunters of all ages who head out for their first hunt are encouraged to mark the occasion with a [first harvest and first hunting experience certificate](#).

DNR VIOLATION HOTLINE: Anyone with information regarding natural resource violations may confidentially report by calling or texting: 1-800-TIP-WDNR or 1-800-847-9367. The hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Trained staff relay the information to conservation wardens. File an online report [here](#).