

Dept. of Natural Resources: Announces 2021 preliminary nine-day gun deer hunt harvest totals and license sales now available

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2021 Preliminary nine-day gun deer hunt harvest totals and license sales are now available. / Photo Credit: iStock.com/ricardoreitmeyer

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources today announced the preliminary deer harvest and license sale totals for the opening weekend of the state's 170th gun deer season.

The regular gun deer season continues through Nov. 28, followed by the statewide muzzleloader season (Nov. 29 – Dec. 8), the statewide antlerless-only four-day season (Dec. 9-12) and antlerless holiday hunts [in 36 counties](#).

Wisconsin continues to be a destination location for hunting white-tailed deer. People of all ages, genders and races search out the great public and private land hunting opportunities across the state to pursue deer, make memories and to put a sustainable protein source on their table.

Be sure to follow the DNR on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) to share your experiences and for more updates, photos and stories throughout the gun deer season.

Preliminary License Sales Data

Preliminary figures indicate that the number of deer hunters in Wisconsin decreased compared to 2020.

As of midnight Sunday, Nov. 21, sales for gun, bow, crossbow, sports and patron licenses reached 795,039. Of that total, 551,809 were for gun privileges only, including gun, patron and sports licenses. The year-to-date sales for all deer licenses are down 1.5% from the same time last year.

The number of non-resident licenses increased this year.

Of the total licenses sold, 60% were sold online, and 40% were sold by DNR license agents, which includes private businesses across the state.

Final license sales figures will be available in January, at which time DNR staff will perform a thorough analysis and interpretation.

Preliminary Registration Totals And Future Outlook

In total, 85,860 deer were harvested by gun and registered statewide during the opening weekend of the 2021 nine-day gun deer hunt, compared to the 99,832 registered for the same period in 2020. A total of 47,529 bucks were registered on opening weekend, compared to 51,241 in 2020.

A detailed summary of preliminary registration totals is [available here](#).

While hunter reports of deer activity varied around the state, most regions experienced excellent hunting weather conditions with cool temperatures and low wind on opening day. Visibility was lower due to a lack of snow cover.

By late Sunday morning, wind speeds increased, and the north saw an accumulation of sleet and snow. Hunting effort likely decreased on Sunday as a result.

However, light snow cover in the north will make for excellent hunting conditions going into the rest of the nine-day season.

Registration Of Deer Required With GameReg

As a reminder, hunters are required to register their deer by 5 p.m. the day after harvest through GameReg, the game registration system. All deer harvests must be reported [online](#) (fastest and easiest method) or by phone at 1-844-426-3734.

Opening Weekend Hunting Incidents

At the publication time of this news release, the DNR reports three firearm-involved hunting incidents during the opening weekend of the 2021 nine-day gun deer season, Nov. 20-21.

• **Door County, Brussel Township:** On Nov. 20, 2021, at approximately 6:45 a.m., a 40-year-old male suffered a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the hand. The victim had placed his hand on the muzzle after pulling the hammer back on his firearm. The victim believed he pulled the trigger, and the bullet struck his left pinky. He sought medical attention, was treated and released.

• **Door County, Sturgeon Bay:** On Nov. 21, 2021, at approximately 7:00 a.m., a 10-year-old male was the victim of a gunshot wound. A 45-year-old male shooter was hunting from his residence when he shot at a deer. The shooter attempted to unload his firearm, at which time it discharged inside of the house and struck the victim. The victim was transported to a hospital and treated.

• **Waukesha County, Ottawa Township:** On Nov. 21, 2021, at approximately 6:21 a.m., a 30-year-old male suffered a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the leg. The victim was in a tree stand when he tried to hang the gun on a hanger. The gun discharged, striking him in the right leg. The victim was transported to a hospital and treated.

Wisconsin's 10-year average is approximately six hunting incidents for the nine-day gun deer hunt. The decline in incidents is the direct result of hunter safety education given by Wisconsin's volunteer instructors and conservation wardens.

Wardens remind 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 safe to shoot.

To learn more about safe hunting in Wisconsin, visit the DNR website [here](#).

DNR VIOLATION HOTLINE: Anyone with information regarding natural resource violations may confidentially report by calling or texting: VIOLATION HOTLINE: 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](#).