

Dept. of Natural Resources: 2022 preliminary gun deer harvest totals and license sales now available

Posted on Tuesday, Nov 22, 2022

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced the preliminary deer harvest and license sale totals for the opening weekend of the 2022 gun deer season.

The regular gun deer season continues through Nov. 27, followed by the statewide muzzleloader season (Nov. 28 – Dec. 7), the statewide antlerless-only four-day season (Dec. 8-11) and antlerless holiday hunts in select farmland zone counties later in December.

Wisconsin continues to be a destination location for hunting white-tailed deer. People of all backgrounds search out the great public and private land hunting opportunities across the state to pursue deer, make memories and 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 2021.

As of midnight Sunday, Nov. 20, sales for gun, bow, crossbow, sports and patron licenses reached 779,123. Of that total, 421,474 were for gun privileges only. The year-to-date sales for all deer licenses are down 2% from the same time last year.

The number of conservation patron licenses sold to date in 2022 is 2.2% higher than all conservation patron licenses sold in 2021.

Of the total licenses sold, 62% were sold online, and 38% were sold in-person by DNR license agents and DNR service centers, 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, 102,347 deer were registered statewide during the opening weekend of the 2022 gun deer hunt, compared to the 85,860 registered for the same period in 2021. This is a 15% increase over 2021 and is on par with the average opening weekend harvest.

A total of 55,503 bucks were registered on opening weekend, compared to 47,529 in 2021. This is a 14% increase over 2021 and is 2% above the 5-year average.

[Review a detailed summary of preliminary registration totals.](#)

Conditions for opening weekend this year included some snow cover but were cold with high winds, particularly on Saturday, which suppressed some hunter activity. Conditions improved slightly on Sunday, but wind chill was still a factor in some parts of the state.

Despite the challenging conditions, hunters saw good deer movement overall, with some evidence of bucks still showing breeding behavior.

Throughout the state, warming temperatures during the week will likely lead to a loss of the snow cover in parts of the state. Where it doesn't melt completely, it will result in crunchy conditions from daytime melting and refreezing at night. Beyond the potential for rain on Thanksgiving Day, conditions should be great for hunting during the remainder of the gun deer season.

Registration Of Deer Required With GameReg

As a reminder, hunters are required to register their deer by 5 p.m. the day after recovery through GameReg, the game registration system. Harvested deer may be

registered in one of three ways:

- *Online:* gamereg.wi.gov (fastest and easiest method)
- *Phone:* 1-844-426-3734
 - When prompted, use your phone keypad to spell the first three letters of the county. For example, a registrant in Adams County would spell A-D-A by pressing "232."
- *In-Person:* Find a station that offers a phone or computer for registration through the [online hunting resources stations portal](#).

Reminder: When registering, you will need your unique harvest authorization number to begin the process.

Opening Weekend Hunting Incidents

At the publication time of this news release, the DNR reports six firearm-involved hunting incidents during the opening weekend of the 2022 gun deer season, Nov. 19-20.

- **Sauk County, Woodland Township:** On Nov. 19, 2022, at approximately 11:10 a.m., a 22-year-old male was the victim of a gunshot wound to the thigh. During a deer drive, a 20-year-old male shooter, who was a driver in the hunting party, shot at a running deer, striking the victim, who was a stander in the hunting party. The victim was transported to the hospital and treated.
- **Marquette County, Mekan Township:** On Nov. 19, 2022, at approximately noon, while in a ground blind in a field, a 69-year-old female was the victim of a gunshot wound to the thigh. A 16-year-old male shooter was hunting from his ground blind in an open field, separated by a pond from the victim, when he shot at a deer, striking the victim. The victim was transported to a nearby hospital and treated. The shooter and victim were members of same hunting party.
- **Oneida County, Little Rice Township:** On Nov. 19, 2022, at approximately 1:30 p.m., a 24-year-old male suffered a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the foot. The victim was repairing his rifle sling when his hand froze to the firearm. As he pulled his hand off the firearm, he hit the trigger, causing an unwanted discharge. The victim received medical treatment for injury.
- **Iowa County, Mifflin Township:** On Nov. 19, 2022, at the close of hunting hours, a 15-year-old male suffered a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the foot. The victim was unloading his firearm while sitting in the passenger seat of a

truck when the firearm discharged. The victim was transported to a local hospital and treated.

- **Green Lake County, Seneca Township:** On Nov. 20, 2022, shortly after 9 a.m., an 11-year-old male was the victim of a gunshot wound to the chest. A 41-year-old male shooter attempted to unload his firearm while the firearm was placed in the backseat of a vehicle. The firearm discharged, striking the victim. The victim was flown via Med Flight to a hospital where he died. The shooter and victim were members of same hunting party.
- **Forest County, Town of Hiles:** On Nov. 20, 2022, in the afternoon hours, a 33-year-old male suffered a self-inflicted gunshot wound to his little finger. The victim was manipulating his handgun when it discharged. The victim was treated for the injury.

Wisconsin's 10-year average is approximately six hunting incidents for the 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 always 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.

[Learn more about safe hunting in Wisconsin on the DNR website.](#)

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 a report online.](#)