Friends and neighbors,

Fall is an exciting time of year for many men and women as Michigan’s abundant natural resources provide a top destination for hunting. Outdoor enthusiasts take pride in our forests, lakes and rivers honoring the legacy of many Michigan families.

Outdoor sporting in Michigan attracts roughly 750,000 hunters each year, resulting in an estimated $1.3 billion more per year for Michigan’s economy. This is not only a great activity for Michiganders to enjoy, but a great way to strengthen Michigan’s economy. We must do all we can to continue these traditions and the Pure Michigan industries they support.

Within this newsletter you will find information on Michigan’s most recent legislation as it relates to hunting, tips and other useful information. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

JASON SHEPPARD
State Representative, House District 56

For more information on Michigan hunting, download the DNR’s 2015 Hunting Digests at michigan.gov/dnrdigests

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2015-16 HUNTING SEASONS*

Cottontail Rabbit & Snowshoe Hare: Sept. 15, 2015 - March 31, 2016

Coyote: July 15, 2015 - April 15, 2016


Squirrel – Fox & Gray (black phase included): Sept. 15, 2015 - March 1, 2016

Woodcock: Sept. 19 - Nov. 2

2015-16 DEER HUNTING SEASONS*

Independence Hunt: Oct. 15 - 18


Regular Firearm: Nov. 15 - 30

Muzzleloading: Zone 1 & 2: Dec. 4 - 13 Zone 3: Dec. 4 - 20

Late Antlerless Firearm: Dec. 21, 2015 - Jan. 1, 2016

*Please review hunting digests for all specific rules and regulations available at: www.michigan.gov/dnrdigests
Reminder: DNR changes deer license structure

Hunters should be mindful that the Department of Natural Resources made recent changes to the state’s hunting license structure.

The new license structure — authorized by the Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Rick Snyder in 2013 — took effect March 1, 2014. Among the most significant changes affecting deer hunters, a base license is now required for all hunters. The base license provides critical funding for habitat and conservation work on both public and private land and supports the work of conservation officers and field staff to ensure safe, legal hunting practices are followed.

The purchase of a base license includes small game hunting. Whether they choose to hunt small game or not, hunters’ base license dollars will be used to enhance and expand hunting opportunities, which benefit hunters of all species. Deer licenses available include a single deer license that covers archery, firearm and muzzleloader seasons; deer combo license, including two kill tags; and an antlerless deer license.

Visit www.michigan.gov/dnr for more information.

LIMITED LICENSE HUNTS
APPLICATION PERIODS:

Spring Wild Turkey
January 1 - February 1

Elk
May 1 - June 1

Bear
May 1 - June 1

Fall Wild Turkey
July 1 - August 1

Antlerless Deer
July 15 - August 15
(youth licenses available over-the-counter)

Reserved Waterfowl
August 1 - August 28

Pure Michigan Hunt
March 1 - December 31

Michigan Hunting Tradition Continues
Licenses sold between March 1, 2014 and January 31, 2015

- Deer & Deer Combo Licenses 1,007,559
- Small Game (Base) Licenses 734,116
- Antlerless Deer Licenses 353,851
- Spring Turkey Licenses 89,179
- Waterfowl Licenses 59,935
- Fur Harvester Licenses 40,623
- Fall Turkey Licenses 31,614
- Bear Hunting Licenses 6,082

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DEFENDING OUR RIGHTS. PROTECTING OUR FREEDOM.
Play a role in conserving Michigan wildlife!

Biologists need your help in understanding the cycles of production of wild fruit, or mast, produced by trees and shrubs. Recently a team of biologists have created the program MI-MAST, a wildlife food tracker which allows you to track your plants and record the amount of mast right on your smartphone. Since these types of plants directly affect wildlife productivity and survival, keeping track of the plants can help biologists make better management decisions. Biologists need to collect mast information from across the entire state to fully understand their cycles and some of these places might be right in your backyard! With just a few minutes each year, your participation can make a big difference for Michigan wildlife. You can learn which type of plants to track and how to get started by visiting www.mimast.org.

Third chronic wasting disease case confirmed in Ingham County

The Michigan departments of Natural Resources (DNR) and Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) this summer confirmed a third free-ranging deer in Meridian Township has tested positive for chronic wasting disease (CWD). CWD is a fatal neurological disease that affects white-tailed deer, elk and moose.

Aggressive surveillance by the DNR will continue throughout the fall and with the assistance of hunters they hope to determine the distribution of the disease. Although only three have tested positive for CWD in the Core CWD area, mandatory checking of deer will be required in this area during hunting seasons and restrictions will apply to the movement of carcasses and parts of deer taken in this area.

Although there is no evidence that chronic wasting disease presents any risk to non-cervids, including humans, either through contact with an infected animal or from handling contaminated venison, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization recommend that infected animals not be consumed as food by either humans or domestic animals.

The public and hunters are asked to continue reporting deer that are unusually thin and exhibiting unusual behavior (for example, acting tame around humans and allowing someone to approach).

To report a suspicious-looking deer, please call the DNR Wildlife Disease Lab at 517-336-5030 or fill out and submit the online observation report which can be found on the DNR website.

Poaching penalties to increase under legislation

The House is considering legislation that would increase restitution and penalties for individuals convicted of the illegal killing, possessing, purchasing or selling of the following game or protected animals — elk, bear, moose, turkey, waterfowl and eagle.

Poaching continues to be aggressively practiced in key parts of the state and increasing fines and penalties can help deter these crimes. Independent studies have demonstrated significant deterrent impact of increased penalties on poaching of game.

Senate Bills 244 through 246 are being considered by the House.

Did you know?

Deer hunting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.