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## VBH BOT ePacket Planning FYI

1 message

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Mon, Mar 12, 2012 at 7:25 AM

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Keeping deer disease in check

By CHRIS CASHMAN - [ccashman@shawmedia.com](mailto:ccashman@shawmedia.com)

Created: Monday, March 12, 2012

[PHOTO] Dave Kranz of Dave's Bait Tackle & Taxidermy in Crystal Lake holds an antler from a buck that he killed during the last hunting season. According to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the McHenry County deer harvest was up during the 2011-12 hunting season. (Sarah Nader – [snader@shawmedia.com](mailto:snader@shawmedia.com))

Despite a culling program that targets deer with chronic wasting disease, the McHenry County deer harvest was up during the 2011-12 hunting season.

According to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, a total of 988 deer were harvested this year, up from 948 in 2010-11.

And the number of deer in the county appears to be on the upswing.

"We do an aerial deer count every year in January, and our numbers are up," said Brad Woodson, natural resource supervisor for the 25,000-acre McHenry County Conservation District.

Woodson said the conservation district deer count in selected areas was 841 this year, compared with 628 in 2010.

The district's 159 hunters took 153 deer in 2011-12, compared with 156 in 2010-11.

According to the IDNR, hunters in Illinois harvested 181,411 deer during all 2011-12 hunting seasons, compared with 182,270 in 2010-11

Illinois' record deer harvest occurred in the 2005-06 season, when 201,209 deer were taken.

The 2001-02 total Illinois deer harvest was 152,768, and in 1991-92 it was 101,418.

Woodson said IDNR culling is not seriously affecting the deer population.

"More of an influence on the deer population than culling is that the state lets you get multiple tags," Woodson said.

"Hunters used to be limited to two tags," Woodson said. "Now you can take multiple deer. One of our hunters took six deer."

"That's just what we want in high-density deer areas," he said.  
"Hunters are paying us to help manage deer on our own site.

"There are plenty of deer left," Woodson continued. "And they're going to increase in the next couple of years. This nice, mild winter should help the population."

IDNR spokesman Tim Schweizer said McHenry County is one of 10 northern Illinois counties considered high-risk for chronic wasting disease.

Other high-risk counties are Boone, DeKalb, Grundy, Jo Daviess, Kane, LaSalle, Ogle, Stephenson and Winnebago.

Schweizer said a total of 7,582 deer were tested for CWD statewide during 2010-11. There were 42 CWD-positive deer from the 10 counties, including three in McHenry County.

"Our sharpshooting program is an excellent source for collecting data on CWD where it has been found in the past," Schweizer said. "It reduces the density to prevent it from spreading any further."

"One of the goals of the deer culling program is to keep the deer population under control to prevent the spread of CWD," he said.

Sharpshooting is conducted January through March by IDNR wildlife biologists and IDNR conservation police officers, Schweizer said. Sharpshooters culled 910 deer in 2010-11 in CWD-affected areas. Of those, 10 positive deer were found, including one in McHenry County.

According to the IDNR, the number of CWD-positive deer has varied from 14 in 2003-04 to a high of 51 in 2005-06.

"What [IDNR] is doing is much better than doing nothing," said deer hunter Dave Kranz, owner of Dave's Bait Tackle & Taxidermy in Crystal Lake. "I think they're doing the right thing trying to contain chronic wasting," he said. "If it got into different areas of the state where the deer population and the density of the deer are much larger than what we have here, it would be devastating."

Kranz said he hunts deer in McHenry County conservation areas and downstate. He took a doe and two bucks with a bow this year. "Those [hunters] complaining we only killed 181,000 deer this year are spoiled because you go back 10 years, 10 years, 10 years, and the population is actually phenomenal." "If they never had chronic wasting, and they never started doing culling, those numbers would look pretty good."  
"Culling isn't devastating [the] deer population," he added. "Absolutely not." Kranz noted that there's a skill level for the hunters, just like there's a skill level for fishermen. "Just because these guys don't see a deer, doesn't mean they're not there," Kranz said. "Deer are not always easy to see. If the wind changes and you're still sitting there, they can smell you before you ever see them. And you're not going to see them."

#### About chronic wasting disease

Chronic wasting disease is a transmissible neurological disease of deer and elk that produces small lesions in the brains of infected animals. It is characterized by loss of body condition, behavioral

abnormalities and death. CWD is classified as a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy and is similar to mad cow disease in cattle and scrapie in sheep.

Infectious agents of CWD are neither bacteria nor viruses, but are hypothesized to be prions. Prions are infectious proteins without associated nucleic acids.

Although CWD is a contagious fatal disease among deer and elk, research suggests that humans, cattle and other domestic livestock are resistant to natural transmission. While the possibility of human infection remains a concern, it is important to note there have been no verified cases of humans contracting CWD.

Source: Chronic Wasting Disease Alliance

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