

### **Missouri Conservation Commission Approves Regulation Changes**

#### **News**

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Posted on : 2014/4/18 9:14:14

The Missouri Conservation Commission approved regulation changes at its April 17 meeting in Jefferson City that will reduce the availability of firearm antlerless deer hunting permits from any number in most of the state to one in most of the state.



Exceptions to this regulation change allow hunters to fill two firearm antlerless deer permits in Chariton, Randolph, Macon, Linn, Sullivan, and Adair counties, which surround the area where chronic wasting disease (CWD) has been found in a small number of deer in Macon County. According to the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), continuing to maintain stable deer numbers in this CWD Containment Zone will help limit the spread of the disease to other deer and other areas.

Other areas where hunters can fill two firearm antlerless deer permits include urban zones around the state where deer numbers are typically higher than desired, and in Barton, Howell, and Oregon counties where local deer numbers are higher than deer management goals.

The regulation changes are scheduled to become effective for the 2014 fall deer hunting season. Details on these changes and other information on deer hunting will be available in the Department's 2014 Fall Deer & Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information booklet available beginning in July at locations where permits are sold, MDC offices and nature centers, and online at [mdc.mo.gov](http://mdc.mo.gov).

According to MDC Deer Biologist Jason Sumners, the regulation changes are in response to lower overall deer numbers around much of the state as a result of long-term efforts to reduce the deer population through increased doe harvest. Previous regulations allowing the harvest of any number of antlerless deer have helped to decrease and stabilize deer numbers in many areas where deer numbers were too high.

Sumners added that the planned effort to reduce deer numbers in some areas was intensified by an unanticipated, extensive outbreak of hemorrhagic disease (HD) throughout most of the state related to the record-setting drought during summer and fall of 2012. With the resulting recent decrease in deer numbers in many areas of the state, some hunters and landowners have voiced their concerns about the level of doe harvest and the continuing need to offer hunters any number of antlerless permits.

Our Regulations Committee considers the changing status of the deer herd across the state -- along with feedback from hunters, landowners, and others -- each year as it reviews recommendations for deer-hunting regulations, Sumners said.

Deer populations in Missouri vary regionally and county-by-county as habitat, hunting regulations, hunter numbers, and frequency and severity of disease outbreaks affect deer numbers, he explained. As these factors change over time, our deer management strategy is to be responsive to those changes.

He added that MDC's deer management strategy focuses on using science-based wildlife management practices, providing opportunities for all citizens to enjoy deer-related recreational

activities such as deer hunting and watching, maintaining a healthy deer population, and providing related information to the public.

The Department is planning public meetings throughout the state for this summer to share information and get public input on how and why it manages Missouri's deer.