

Important information for deer hunters in Linn and Macon counties

News

Posted by : John

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At its October 19th meeting in Springfield, the Missouri Conservation Commission approved issuing special no-cost "CWD Management Seals" to landowners in the core area where Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) has been detected in Linn and Macon counties. The seals are a special harvest provision that is part of the Missouri Department of Conservation's (MDC) proactive management plan to limit the spread of CWD.

CWD is a disease fatal to white-tailed deer. It is spread from deer to deer by physical contact, or through contact with soil that contains urine or feces from infected deer. The disease spreads across the landscape through the natural movement and dispersal of infected deer. CWD is not transmissible to domestic livestock or people.

The special harvest provision will help minimize the spread of CWD in the area, and contribute to MDC's ongoing CWD sampling and testing of harvested deer. With the help of hunters, MDC has tested more than 35,000 free-ranging deer for CWD from all parts of the state since 2002.

According to the Department's CWD management plan, the seals are limited to the 80 landowners with five acres or more in and around a one-mile radius of where CWD has been detected. Each landowner will be offered five seals. Each seal would allow the landowners, or hunters they authorize to hunt their lands, to harvest one deer of either sex. Each seal may only be used on the specific property for which it was issued.

Each seal can be used by any properly-licensed hunter who is hunting the specific property. Each seal can be used during any open deer season by any method legal at the time of use. The special seals are in addition to the no-cost resident landowner permits already offered by MDC. All deer harvested using a seal must be checked using the Telecheck system, and a tissue sample must be submitted to MDC for CWD testing. MDC is contacting eligible landowners and will host an information meeting with them in early November.

Other actions MDC has taken to identify and limit the spread of CWD in Missouri include a regulation that bans the feeding of deer and other activities that are likely to unnaturally concentrate white-tailed deer and promote the spread of CWD. The ban is limited to the six-county CWD Containment Zone, which consists of Adair, Chariton, Linn, Macon, Randolph and Sullivan Counties. MDC has also rescinded the antler-point restriction (four-point rule) in the CWD Containment Zone. The Department has also issued recommendations on the processing and transportation of deer harvested in the Containment Zone. MDC continues statewide and regional sampling of harvested deer to test for CWD. MDC has held numerous public open houses to share information and get feedback on the issue of CWD and Department actions to contain the disease.

According to MDC, Missouri has more than 507,000 deer hunters who spend about \$690 million in the state each year on deer hunting and related activities. This has an overall economic impact of \$1.1 billion in Missouri each year and supports almost 12,000 jobs.

Many Missourians also enjoy viewing deer. A 2009 Gallup survey found that about 91% of Missourians are somewhat or very interested in observing deer in the outdoors.

The Department continues to work with landowners, deer hunters, members of the captive cervid industry and others on the issue of CWD and welcomes related comments at www.mdc.mo.gov.