

Hunting Season

Firearm deer season kicks off once again on Nov. 15 across Michigan and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources is reminding hunters of 10 best practices ahead of hunting.

Below are the 10 tips from the DNR.

Properly tag your deer

The DNR said that kill tags must be filled out – including the month and date the deer was taken, it's gender and number of antler points – before field dressing it. It also must be properly placed on the deer.

According to the DNR, conservation officers often see the wrong kill tag on game, such as fish or turkey licenses, a mistake they say is often made in the dark.

Also, the DNR said to report your deer within 72 hours of harvest.

Know your firearm and how it functions

The DNR is reminding hunters to familiarize themselves with their firearm and make sure it's functioning properly. They encourage hunters to consider a local shooting range to practice.

Know your target and what's beyond it

You can't hunt within 450 feet of an occupied structure, the DNR said. Those include buildings, dwellings, homes, residences, cabins, barns or structures used for farm operations – unless you have permission from the land owner.

So, the DNR said to know the area you'll be hunting, including nearby buildings.

Respect landowner rights

The DNR says to respect trespassing signs and property boundaries. If a deer runs onto private property, you must get permission before retrieving it.

Share public land

According to the DNR, state-managed land is a popular place to hunt, so research and scout it before opening day. They say conservation officers often respond to confrontations over hunting spots, blocking rocks, illegally posted signs and more.

"Brush, constructed blinds and tree stands on public land are just that – public. Regardless of who constructed, purchased or tends to these blinds, when they're on state-managed public land, they are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Public land cannot be posted or reserved," they said"

Leave the land better than you found it

Remember the "leave no trace" ethic and don't litter. Whatever you bring it, take back out. Leaving propane bottles, hand-warmer wrappers, food wrappers, bottles and other trash is illegal and may result in a fine.

Wear hunter orange

The law requires that hunters wear orange as the outermost layer of clothing at all times. Garments must be at least 50% hunter orange and visible from all directions. Options include a cap, hat, vest, jacket or raincoat, and they must remain on, even if you're hunting in a blind.

Know and follow baiting regulations

There is a baiting and feeding ban in the entire Lower Peninsula. In the Upper Peninsula, it's allowed from Sept. 15 through Jan. 1.

"Bait volume at any hunting site cannot exceed 2 gallons. Bait must be spread on the ground and in an area that measures a minimum of 10 feet by 10 feet or its equivalent. Mechanical spin-cast feeders are legal to use provided the spin-cast feeder does not distribute more than the maximum volume allowed. On commercial forest land, bait must be brought in each night, unless the landowner has given permission. Use bait sparingly to help curb the spread of diseases like bovine tuberculosis and chronic wasting disease."

Hunt in-season, during legal hours

A hunter may legally shoot game starting 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.

Be respectful to other hunters

People can't obstruct or interfere with lawful taking of animals. Hunter harassment is a misdemeanor offense, and examples include spraying repellent around a blind, creating loud noises or barriers, destroying equipment and more.

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