

LOCALNEWS

Northern hunters may see, harvest less deer this year

Tough winter a factor in harvest

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

Minnesota resource officials say hunters in northern Minnesota may see less deer this year because of a fairly severe winter last year.

The 16-day firearms deer hunting season in northern Minnesota starts Saturday, later than normal this year, and concludes Nov. 24

Leslie McInenly, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources big game program leader, said Borderland permit areas 103 and 119 are at the agency's population goal, with permit area 108 below the population goal, based on the DNR's modeling.

She said management strategies in those areas are more conservative this year to maintain or build populations.

McInenly said fawn production was found to be below average following the rough winter of 2012-13. Field reports indicate most adult does with one fawn and some with none, she said. The latter half of the

winter had snow depths of 30 to 40 inches in some areas, which led to increased wolf predation.

In contrast, 2012 had one of the largest fawn crops since 1998, according to McInenly. An extremely mild winter produced a bumper fawn crop, with those fawns now 1 ½-year-old yearlings, which she said will account for a large percentage of the 2013 harvest. She said those deer have been very prominent in deer observations during the summer field season.

In Borderland, McInenly said hunters are expected to harvest fewer deer than in 2012. Most areas in the north are lottery selection. In those areas, limited antlerless permits were issued through the lottery and other hunters are limited to bucks only and party hunting.

The state firearms deer hunting season starts later than usual because how the calendar is configured. By law, the state's firearms season begins the Saturday closest to Nov. 6. "This will likely result in good deer movement as that should be the peak of the annual whitetail breeding period," said McInenly. "Buck move-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Trails End Chapter of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association will collect local deer hides this season. The hides are collected, salted and sold to raise money for local habitat projects. Local Hides Chairman Tom Worth reports that brand new collection boxes have been placed at the Junction, The Loon's Nest and the Outdoorsman's Headquarters. From the left are Outdoorsman's Headquarters representative Scott MacMillan with volunteers Jim Rolando and Dan Zika.

ment should be good early in the 16-day season. Peak breeding activity will follow during mid-season as the annual rutting season transitions into the reproductive phase and deer movement slows down."

STATEWIDE

Last year, Minnesota's nearly 500,000 deer hunters harvested 186,000 deer. A similar harvest is expected

this year.

Based on the 2013 population report, the statewide population is up about 2 percent from 2012 at just more than a million deer. This is largely in part to a more conservative season in 2012, she said.

Of the permit areas with population goals, 79 percent are at goal, 19 percent are below goal, and 3 percent are above goal. In the north and

the southeast, more than 90 percent of permit areas are at goal. She said 72 percent of farmland (200-series) areas are at goal, with about 24 percent below goal.

REGISTRATION

McInenly reminded hunters that they may again register their deer on-line, by phone or at the traditional registration stations. Deer licenses include the phone number or internet address.

New this year is a requirement that hunters register their deer within 48 hours of harvest. This is a change from the previous rule that called for registration within 24 hours of the end of the season.

McInenly said compliance with the new rule should be assisted by the expanded options for registration.

The change was prompted by law enforcement concerns and to assist with research. The DNR uses harvest data to form population models and having hunters register more quickly can ensure more accurate data, she said.

She said she hoped the more wilderness hunters — those who go to the shack for the full season — can

use new technology in telephones and computers to register.

THE FUTURE

Minnesota's deer harvest has varied widely over the past half century. In a historical context, too many deer were taken during the 1960s, forcing the closure of the deer season in 1971 and a rebuilding of the deer herd from the 1970s through the 1990s, according to McInenly. The highest deer harvest occurred in 2003, when 290,000 deer were taken as part of an effort to reduce the deer herd. Today, the DNR manages the deer population based on goals established with public input.

"As the state's deer population has been reduced to meet goals, more consistent and moderate harvests are anticipated," McInenly said. "That said, population goals in some places were established nearly 10 years ago and the DNR is initiating a public process to revisit goals for permit areas statewide during the next few years."

The DNR will be working with hunters and other stakeholders this winter to evaluate deer population goals for southeastern Minnesota.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Resolute releases preliminary quarterly report

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Resolute Forest Products, which operates the mill in Fort Frances, has released its preliminary third quarter 2013 results.

The highlights of the report include a net income of \$29 million, or \$0.31 per share, excluding total special items. This compares to a net income of \$13 million,

or \$0.13 per share, excluding special items, for third quarter 2012.

"Again this quarter, our continued asset optimization efforts helped to maximize our earnings power despite challenging market conditions," Richard Garneau, president and chief executive officer, said in a statement. "Improvements in volume, transaction

price and costs led to the best quarter our pulp segment has seen in two years, which helped to offset the effects of weaker pricing for lumber and excess supply in paper grades."

The pulp segment produced an operating income of \$21 million, which is \$11 million higher than in the second quarter. Sales increased two percent to

\$269 million, on a two percent increase in shipments and a \$5 per metric ton increase in average sale price. This follows increases of five percent in shipments and \$27 per metric ton, respectively, in the second quarter.

"Building on the encour-

aging developments this quarter, we see the pulp segment maintaining its positive momentum into the fourth quarter," Garneau said. "But the timing of worldwide capacity increases makes 2014 somewhat more uncertain."

Resolute's efficient op-

erations help them succeed in a challenging market, Garneau said.

"As recent history demonstrates, our leaner and efficient operating platform is a key competitive advantage to face challenging market conditions," he said.

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