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Tractor Supply expands Field & Stream lineup

Retailer celebrates life outdoors with new gear and apparel additions

Tractor Supply Company, the largest rural lifestyle retailer in the United States, announced today that its assortment of exclusive Field & Stream products has arrived. Tractor Supply and Field & Stream first announced a multi-year, strategic licensing partnership in January, bringing together two brands that share the same authenticity, quality and passion for the outdoors.

A full lineup of hunting gear and equipment, premium dog products and apparel and accessories is now available in stores and online.

"Just in time for hunting season, Tractor Supply is excited to introduce an expanded Field & Stream lineup that celebrates our shared heritage and passion for the outdoors," said Seth Estep, Executive Vice President, Chief Merchandising Officer. "The time spent in the outdoors isn't just a pastime—it's a tradition that connects generations. For more than 85 years, Tractor Supply has been outfitting those who live for crisp mornings in the woods and the thrill of the hunt. Partnering with Field & Stream, one of the most trusted names in the outdoors, strengthens our commitment to offering quality gear at a great value."

See TRACTOR SUPPLY, Page 4



A full lineup of hunting gear and equipment, premium dog products and apparel and accessories is now available in stores and online.







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► Tractor Supply

Continued from Page 2

"This partnership with Tractor Supply enables us to bring the spirit of Field & Stream to life," said Doug McNamee, President, Field & Stream. "We are proud to have inspired, entertained and informed our readers for generations and are thrilled to be able to take that a step further. With these collections, outdoor enthusiasts can show their passion for Field & Stream and use products designed with our expertise to help make each outdoor experience a memorable one."

Hunting collection

In June, Tractor Supply stores introduced a small range of Field & Stream hunting equipment. Customers have loved the quality, design and value of these products, generating strong momentum for the brand. The expanded collection features a wider range of blinds, feed and feeders, safes and trail cameras, all designed with the rugged reliability outdoor enthusiasts expect from such a legendary brand.

Maryann Boettner, a Tractor Supply District Manager in Southwest Louisiana who started hunting with her dad as a child, has been using the 350 lb. Steel Deer Corn Feeder and can't say enough good things about it.



"The amount of corn it holds is amazing," she said. "With a 350-pound holding capacity, I rarely have to go out and refill it or worry that levels are low. It's also really durable, which is helpful with Louisiana weather this time of year."

Pet collection

The Field & Stream Pet Collection is built for dogs that love the outdoors, just like their owners. It includes durable beds, hunting-inspired toys, a heavy-duty travel kennel and even a cozy camo dog coat for excursions into the field. The

collection also features Field & Stream's Pack Provisions line of nutritious food and tasty treats formulated with energy-providing nutrients and rich in protein to fuel active dogs. Pack Provisions is a family of products designed to work together for optimal pet health, including food, supplements and treats.

Apparel & accessories

The Field & Stream apparel line is all about authentic lifestyle wear. Each timeless piece is crafted for comfort and durability. The Field & Stream apparel collection features t-shirts, hoodies and ball caps that blend Field & Stream's vintage outdoor style with Tractor Supply's Life Out Here spirit. The lineup also includes tote bags, blankets and insulated stainless-steel tumblers in both solid colors and vintage Field & Stream designs.

About Tractor Supply Company

For more than 85 years, Tractor Supply Company has been passionate about serving the needs of recreational farmers, ranchers, homeowners, gardeners, pet enthusiasts and all those who enjoy living Life Out Here. Tractor Supply is the largest rural lifestyle retailer in the U.S., ranking 296 on the Fortune 500. The Company's more than 52,000 Team

Members are known for delivering legendary service and helping customers pursue their passions, whether that means being closer to the land, taking care of animals or living a hands-on, DIY lifestyle. In store and online, Tractor Supply provides what customers need – anytime, anywhere, any way they choose at the low prices they deserve.

As part of the Company's commitment to caring for animals of all kinds, Tractor Supply is proud to include Petsense by Tractor Supply, a pet specialty retailer, and Allivet, a leading online pet pharmacy, in its family of brands. Together, Tractor Supply is able to provide comprehensive solutions for pet care, livestock wellness and rural living, ensuring customers and their animals thrive. From its stores to the customer's doorstep, Tractor Supply is here to serve and support Life Out Here.

As of September 27, 2025, the Company operated 2,364 Tractor Supply stores in 49 states and 206 Petsense by Tractor Supply stores in 23 states.

About Field & Stream

For more than a century, Field & Stream has been the most-trusted voice of the outdoors. With origins dating back to 1871, F&S has taught a nation to hunt and fish, to camp and explore, to survive and thrive in the outdoors—all while leading the charge to conserve and fight for wildlife and wild places. The secret to our longevity is simple: Hunters and anglers love a great story—and nobody tells one better than Field & Stream. Acclaimed singer-songwriters Eric Church and Morgan Wallen, along with a group of experienced brand builders, acquired and relaunched Field & Stream in 2024, unifying this legacy brand for the first time in its history. Now embarking on a new chapter, the next generation of Field & Stream includes a best-in-class, outdoor-lifestyle media platform, a return to a print publication, a membership community, a wide variety of co-branded and licensed product lines, plus experiential brand extensions including a modern and affordable lifestyle lodge concept.



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Safety tips for bowhunters

Make sure someone knows where you're hunting and when you expect to return home. Leave a note or topographic map with your family or a friend. Pack a cellphone for emergencies.

before the opening day of the season, especially if you'll be climbing in the dark. Consider placing non-slip material on the deck of your tree stand if it's not already there.

Always use a fall-restraint device - preferably a full-body harness when hunting from a tree stand. Wear the device from the moment you leave the ground until you return. Don't climb dead, wet or icy trees, and consider staying on the ground on blusterv days.

Use a hoist rope to lift your bow and backpack to your tree stand. Trying to climb with either will place you at unnecessary risk.

Don't sleep in a tree stand. If you can't stay awake, return to the ground.

Keep yourself in good physical condition. Fatigue can impact judgment, coordination and reaction time, as well as accuracy.

Always carry broadhead-tipped ar-Practice climbing with your tree stand rows in a protective quiver, especially when moving. Cocked crossbows should always be pointed in a safe direction. Know how to uncock a crossbow safely, too. If you use a mechanical release with a vertical bow, always keep your index finger away from the trigger when draw-

In all cases, check your equipment before every outing and follow the manufacturer's recommendations for using it.

Always carry a whistle to signal passersby in the event you become immobile. A compass or GPS unit and map, matches or lighter and tinder also are essential survival gear items to have along. A flashlight with extra bulbs and/or a portable charger for the light and your phone also can be helpful.



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Pa. bear hunters set for another strong season

HARRISBURG — In many situations when you ask how things are going, the answer is "same old, same old" - not bad perhaps, but not overly exciting either.

When it comes to bear hunting in Pennsylvania, however, the "same old, same old" is something special.

Pennsylvania's earliest 2025 bear hunting seasons got underway in late September. Additional seasons are still to follow. These offerings are the latest in a long line dating back more than a century to the state's first bear season in 1905.

Yet, the 25 largest bear harvests in Pennsylvania history all have come since 1998. Last year's take was 2,642. The traditional statewide firearms season contributed 823 bears to that. while the archery season added 756, the extended season 425, and the muzzleloader and special firearms season 634 combined. Hunters got another four bears in the early archery season in select Wildlife Management Units (WMUs).

As in past years, too, the overall bear harvest was spread across the state. Fifty-six of 67 counties gave up at least one bear, as did 21 of 22 WMUs.

that in terms of harvest and distribution and there's no reason to think they won't — it will be pretty good.

More of the "same old, same old?" Yes, please.

"The sustainability of bears and bear hunting in Pennsylvania is tied to the early breeding success and large litter sizes of bears in this state," said Game Commission bear biologist Brandon Snavely. "Plus, even with 13 million people living in the state, we've still got lots of great bear habitat. Bears make great use of it,

"So with a healthy bear population, spread out from our wildest places to the suburbs, and a wide array of bear seasons coming up, I would expect another good season this fall," Snavely

The archery bear season in WMUs 2B, 5C and 5D – the units closest to Pittsburgh and Philadelphia – runs from Sept. 20-Nov. 28. It goes from Oct. 4-Nov. 21 in WMU 5B, and from Oct. 18-25 in the rest of the state – WMUs 1A, 1B, 2A, 2C, 2D, 2E, 2F, 2G, 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E and 5A.

The statewide regular firearms bear season runs Nov. 22-25, while the ex-

So if the 2025 bear seasons approach tended bear season goes from Nov. 29-Dec. 6 in WMUs 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 4C, 4E and 5A and from Nov. 29-Dec. 13 in WMUs 2B, 5B, 5C and 5D.

Sundays from Sept. 14-Dec. 7 that fall within the established opening and closing dates of any bear season are open to bear hunting in 2025. That's every Sunday from Sept. 21-Nov. 23 in the archery bear season in WMUs 2B, 5C and 5D; every Sunday from Oct. 5-Nov. 16 in the archery season in WMU 5B; Oct. 19 in the statewide archery season; Nov. 23 in the statewide regular firearms season; Nov. 30 in the extended season in WMUs 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 4C, 4E and 5A; and Nov. 30 and Dec. 7 in the extended season in WMUs 2B, 5B, 5C and 5D.

Hunters should also note that, in state parks, Sunday hunting is open only on Nov. 16, Nov. 23 and Nov. 30

Only one bear may be taken during the license year.

But some of the bears harvested will almost assuredly be among the largest anywhere in the world. That, too, is the norm.

The average bear harvested in Pennsylvania is about 3 years old. Males that age typically weigh about 200 pounds, while females generally go 160. But bears, especially males, can get significantly larger.

Last season, Scott Price, of Madison Township, Lackawanna County, took a bear in Monroe County that weighed 774 pounds. That was the largest of 2024. The next nine heaviest hunter-harvested bears included two others exceeding 700 pounds, six exceeding 600 and one that

"You could travel to any place in

North America that has black bears and it would be hard to find bears that top those like we have here in Pennsylvania," said Game Commission Executive Director Steve Smith. "Our bear hunting tradition here is like none other, too, with more than 200,000 hunters buying their bear licenses and hunting bears annually. It's a special opportunity you won't find just anywhere.

Pennsylvania bear hunters take to the woods knowing they face long odds in taking a bear.

Fewer than 2% of bear hunters harvest a bear in any given year. Those looking to join that small group would be wise to hunt where food is plentiful, Snavely said. Bears eat ravenously in fall to pack on weight before going into their winter dens. So, finding them means finding where they want to be based on the potential to maximize their caloric intake.

"Getting near rich fall food resources for bears like acorns, beechnuts, and the like is the best strategy for hunters," Snavely said. "Bears are searching for food, so if you can locate that, you up the odds that you'll encounter a bear or

Final 2024 county harvests by region (with 2023 figures in parentheses) are:

Northwest – 385 (357): Venango, 74 (64); Warren, 67 (65); Jefferson, 60 (50); Clarion, 57 (44); Forest, 48 (68); Butler, 38 (29); Crawford, 20 (24); Mercer, 11 (5); and Erie, 10 (8).

Southwest – 174 (141): Armstrong, 40 (41); Somerset, 34 (32); Indiana, 32 (24); Fayette, 30 (23); Westmoreland, 18 (13); Cambria, 18 (5); Greene, 2 (1); Beaver, 0 (1); and Allegheny, 0 (1).

See **BEAR HUNTING**, Page 7





Bear Hunting

Continued from Page 6

Northcentral - 918 (1,034): Tioga, 163 (176); Clinton, 157 (108); Lycoming, 148 (170); Potter, 109 (155); McKean, 78 (90); Clearfield, 67 (72); Centre, 64 (71); Cameron, 56 (85); Elk, 44 (90); and Union, 32 (17).

Southcentral - 193 (162): Huntingdon, 49 (25); Bedford, 40 (34); Blair, 18 (11); Fulton, 16 (4); Mifflin, 14 (28); Juniata, 13 (19); Perry, 12 (14); Cumberland 11 (6); Franklin, 9 (9); Adams, 7 (10); and Snyder, 4 (2).

Northeast – 805 (1067): Bradford, 133 (138); Luzerne, 95 (135); Monroe, 93 (127); Pike, 85 (142); Sullivan, 75 (75); Wayne, 63 (124); Carbon, 62 (101); Wyoming, 62 (62); Susquehanna, 47 (67); Columbia, 45 (27); Lackawanna, 31 (57); Northumberland, 13 (10); and Montour, 1 (2).

Southeast - 167 (159): Schuylkill, 64 (65); Dauphin, 45 (42); Northampton, 28 (21); Berks, 18 (16); Lebanon, 9 (10); and Lehigh, 3 (5).

The final bear harvests by Wildlife Management Unit (with final 2023 figures in parentheses) were:

WMU 1A, 26 (19); WMU 1B, 67 (53); WMU 2A, 6 (3); WMU 2B, 2 (3); WMU 2C, 102 (87); WMU 2D, 173 (146); WMU 2E, 53 (41); WMU 2F, 213 (247); WMU 2G, 476 (565); WMU 3A, 203 (203); WMU 3B, 303 (343); WMU 3C, 145 (221): WMU 3D, 287 (451): WMU 4A, 71 (42); WMU 4B, 50 (47); WMU 4C, 197 (220); WMU 4D, 143 (124); WMU 4E, 96 (72); WMU 5A, 10 (18); WMU 5B, 2 (0); WMU 5C, 17 (15); and WMU 5D, 0 (0).

Bear check stations

Hunters who harvest bears must have them checked by the Game Commission within 24 hours. How to do that varies, depending on when the bear is taken.

"You could travel to any place in North America that has black bears and it would be hard to find bears that top those like we have here in Pennsylvania. Our bear hunting tradition here is like none other, too, with more than 200,000 hunters buying their bear licenses and hunting bears annually. It's a special opportunity you won't find just anywhere."

Steve Smith

Game Commission Executive Director

Check stations are open on select dates within the October bear seasons, the regular firearms bear season and the extended season. A list of check station locations and their dates and hours of operation is available in the 2024-25 Pennsylvania Hunting & Trapping Digest; see pages 40-42.

Hunters who need to check a bear on any date when check stations aren't open, must contact the Game Commission's Centralized Dispatch Center at 1-833-PGC-HUNT or 1-833-PGC-WILD for details on how to have their bear checked.

Bears should be field-dressed before being brought to a check station, with the fully completed harvest tag attached to the bear's ear, as required by law. It's also acceptable to bring only the tagged head and hide to the check station.

Hunters are encouraged to use a stick to prop open their bear's mouth soon after harvest and before the jaw stiffens. That allows agency staff to remove a tooth, used to determine the bear's age.

License and orange requirements

Hunters who want to pursue bears in Pennsylvania need a general hunting license or mentored hunting permit. Bear hunters ages 7 and older also need a bear license in addition to their general license or mentored permit. Mentored hunters younger than 7 must receive a valid bear

harvest tag from their adult mentor.

Licenses and permits can be purchased online at https://huntfish.pa.gov or from issuing agents located in every county. A map showing issuing agent locations also is available is available on HuntFishPA under the "Hunting" tab.

Bear licenses purchased online cannot be used until they are received through the mail because they contain harvest tags that must be attached to the bear's ear after harvest and before the bear is moved. For that reason, it's recommended hunters go to an issuing agent if they'll need their licenses soon after buying them. When buying licenses from an issuing agent, hunters leave with their licenses in hand.

Bear hunters must wear a minimum of 250 square inches of fluorescent orange material on the head, chest and back combined at all times during the fourday general firearms season, or when participating in the muzzleloader, special firearms or extended bear seasons. The orange must be visible from 360 degrees. No fluorescent orange is required when hunting in the archery bear season.

All seasons offer opportunity to make memories that last a lifetime, Executive Director Smith said.

"Ask any bear hunter who has so much as seen a bear in the woods during bear season, and they'll tell you few things in the outdoors are more exciting,' Smith said. "Countless hunters this year will experience their first in-season bear encounters, and many will make good on the opportunities they're presented. Maybe your turn is coming in the seasons ahead; your chance to share in the 'same old, same old.' But if not, bear hunting in Pennsylvania will probably be just as good next year, too.'



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There is no such thing as a nocturnal buck

By Cole Gander

National Deer Association

We've all heard it before and some of us may have even said it ourselves at some point: "That buck has gone nocturnal." After capturing countless daylight trail-camera photos all summer long, those same cameras now reveal your target buck showing up in front of your treestand just after dark or right before daybreak. Those blackand-white infrared images can be disheartening, and it's easy to assume the deer has

completely changed his routine and is now moving only under the cover of night.

I am here to share some good news: There's no such thing as a nocturnal buck! However, there are a lot of good explanations for why we believe a buck has gone nocturnal, and there are science-based strategies for finding him in daylight again. I even used them last season to catch my own "nocturnal" buck walking around under the sun.

Deer are crepuscular, not nocturnal. This

means that whitetails are most active during the twilight hours of dawn and dusk, which is when most deer hunters, including myself, are out in the woods trying to fill their deer tag. We hunt then because it's the time of day when the odds are most in our favor.

That's not to say deer aren't up and walking around in the middle of the night. They certainly are. But research has consistently shown they are most active around dawn and dusk, and this is when they tend to cover the greatest distance in a given day. Countless deer movement studies have shown this widespread, behavioral trait, from North to South.

The main takeaway? Every deer, even those elusive mature bucks, still move in daylight within legal shooting hours. The catch? They simply do so in places where we as hunters or our trusty trail-cameras aren't watching. Let's look at the three most likely reasons hunters believe in nocturnal bucks.

1. Deceptive Trail Cameras

Don't get me wrong, trail cameras are an amazing tool, and provide a great way to survey deer populations, identify bucks and scout deer movement throughout the hunting season. With the right placement, cameras can reveal key patterns, and for many hunters, including myself, checking those SD cards or cell-camera updates has become almost as exciting as the hunt

itself. However, as valuable as they are, they may not tell the whole story.

Just because your target buck showed up on your camera at midnight does not mean that he was not on his feet and moving for hours before that. It just means he was likely moving somewhere else outside your camera's detection range. Hunting pressure, a new food source (more on these in a minute), or a doe in estrous all could easily steer the buck in a different direction away from your trail cameras or tree stands and off your radar. It's important to remember that your cameras can't see around every acre of your hunting property or capture what happens in the thick bedding cover where many deer often spend a majority of their time. In other words, trail cameras only capture a small picture of what's truly happening in the woods.

2. Hunting Pressure Problems

It's easy to fall into a routine and keep hunting the same stand over and over, especially if it has produced in the past or if you have trial-camera pictures of your target buck in the area. It's easy to think, "If I just keep sitting here, eventually he'll show up." However, numerous research studies on deer movement and hunting pressure have shown the exact opposite to be true.

See **NOCTURNAL**, Page 12



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Hunting Season & Bag Limits

SMALL GAME

Squirrel (gray, red, fox, black): Sept 13–Nov 28; Dec 15–24; Dec 26–Feb 28, 2026 *Daily limit:* 6 / *Possession:* 18

Ruffed Grouse: Oct 18–Nov 28; Dec 15–24 *Daily: 2 | Possession: 6*

Rabbit (Cottontail): Oct 18–Nov 28; Dec 15–24; Dec 26–Feb 28, 2026 *Daily: 4 | Possession: 12*

Bobwhite Quail (propagated only): Sept 1–Nov 28; Dec 15–24; Dec 26–Mar 31, 2026 *No limit*

Snowshoe / Varying Hare: Dec 26–Jan 1, 2026 *Daily: 1 | Season limit: 3*

BIG GAME

Deer (Archery):

WMUs 2B, 5C, 5D – Sept 20–Nov 15; Nov 17–22; Dec 26–Jan 24, 2026

(Other WMUs vary slightly)

Limit: One antlered deer per license year; antlerless with permit

Deer (Regular Firearms):

Statewide – Nov 29; Sunday Nov 30; Dec 1–13, 2025 One antlered deer per license year; antlerless with license/permit

Deer (Extended Firearms – Antlerless):

WMUs 2B, 5C, 5D + all DMAP properties – Dec 26–Jan 24, 2026 WMU 4C – Jan 2–Jan 19, 2026 An antlerless with proper license/permit

Turkey (Fall – male or female):

Varies by WMU (e.g., WMUs 1A, 2G, 3A, 4A, 4B, 4D – Nov 1–Nov 15)

Limit: 1 per license year

Turkey (Spring Gobbler – bearded birds only):

May 2-May 16, 2026; May 18-May 30, 2026 Daily: 1 | Season: 2 (with special license)

Bear (Firearms):

Statewide – Nov 22–25, 2025 Extended seasons in certain WMUs Limit: 1 per license year

Bear (Archery):

WMUs 2B, 5C, 5D – Sept 20–Nov 28 Limit: 1 per license year

Elk:

Late – Dec 27–Jan 3, 2026 Limit: 1 elk with valid permit

FURBEARERS & OTHER WILDLIFE

Coyote: No closed season, no limit

Fox (red & gray): Oct 25–Feb 21, 2026 – No limit *Sunday hunting permitted.*

Raccoon: Oct 25–Feb 21, 2026 – No limit

Porcupine: Oct 11–Nov 28; Dec 15–24; Dec 26–Jan 31, 2026 *Daily: 3 | Season: 10*







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Nocturnal

Continued from Page 8

After just one hunt, deer begin to pick up on the clues of human intrusion, such as ground scent, noise, or visual disturbances. While they may not completely abandon the area, they reduced their overall movements, shifted toward areas of less pressure, and used those smaller areas more intensively. Hunting pressure also tends to shift daylight movements toward heavier cover and away from open areas.

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So, if your target buck only appears on camera in front of your stand at night, it's not because he's become "nocturnal." It's likely because he knows when and where you're hunting him and is avoiding those areas during the times when you are in the stand.

3. Changing Food Sources

No matter the season, deer consistently seek out the best available food sources that give them the biggest bang for their

buck. In quality deer habitat with diverse forage species, they will choose nutrient-rich plants that taste good and have very high levels of digestibility, thereby maximizing intake of protein, energy and minerals with each bite. While this feeding behavior is perfectly logical from a deer's perspective, it can make things challenging for hunters.

Statistics from numerous state agencies have shown that hunter success decreases during years when acorns are abundant. When the forest floor turns into an all-you-can-eat buffet of acorns, deer no longer need to visit predictable food plots or crop fields. With so many oak trees producing, they can feed almost anywhere, spreading out across the land-scape and reducing daylight sightings.

During these bumper crop years, even the most seasoned hunters can struggle to pinpoint exactly which stand of oaks the deer are favoring. Your target buck might start showing up on camera after dark or vanish entirely from your usual hunting spots. But this doesn't mean he's gone "nocturnal." It simply means he's making the most of a plentiful mast crop, feeding where the food is the most abundant.

As a wise Missouri deer hunter once told me, "A mature buck walks past hundreds of trees and potential stand locations every single day." As a hunter, we just have to be in one of those right spots during legal shooting hours in order to kill him.

Science backs up this piece of wisdom. Every deer, even those elusive mature bucks, still move in daylight within legal shooting hours. More often than not, a so-called "nocturnal" buck is simply one whose daylight movements you aren't seeing from the stand or on your trail cameras. Whether that's because your trail cameras aren't offering the whole story, you're over hunting your favorite stand, or you're competing with a bumper acorn crop, the take home message remains the same.

There is no such thing as a nocturnal buck. Instead, it is time to adjust your hunting strategy, rethink your approach, and put yourself back in a position to fill your freezer and maybe even make that special trip to the taxidermist.





More opportunity for Pa. deer hunters

lattes are here. Corn mazes are opening and orchards across the state are offering chances to get your picture taken in sunflower fields in full bloom.

Fine enough. Those things all have their place.

But if your passion centers around white-tailed deer, the shorter days and cooler nights that hint at the coming of fall can only mean one thing: it's soon time to go hunting.

Pennsylvania's statewide archery deer season kicked off on Oct. 4 and runs through Nov. 21, then comes back in from Dec. 26 through Jan. 19, 2026. Hunters afield in Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) 2B and 5C and 5D — the former surrounding Pittsburgh, the latter two, Philadelphia — can start pursuing deer even earlier. The season there runs from Sept. 20 through Nov. 28, then again from Dec. 26 through Jan. 24, 2026.

While that's all similar to last year, this season brings something different - expanded Sunday hunting.

In 2024, Pennsylvania had just three Sundays when big game could

within the statewide archery deer season. This year, thanks to the passage of Act 36 of 2025 — legislation signed into law by Gov. Josh Shapiro that fully repeals the state's longstanding ban on Sunday hunting — more opportunity awaits.

The Game Commission in July revisited the already-established 2025-26 hunting seasons, authorizing hunting on 13 Sundays, from Sept. 14 through Dec. 7, as long as they fall within established seasons. Seven of those fall within the statewide archery deer season, nine within the archery deer season in WMUs 2B, 5C and 5D.

There are still some things hunters need to be aware of. Within Pennsylvania state parks, for example, Sunday hunting only will be allowed this year on and Nov. 16, Nov. 23 and Nov. 30 - the three Sundays initially approved. There is no Sunday hunting for any migratory game birds. And those hunting on private property on Sundays must carry with them written permission from the landowner.

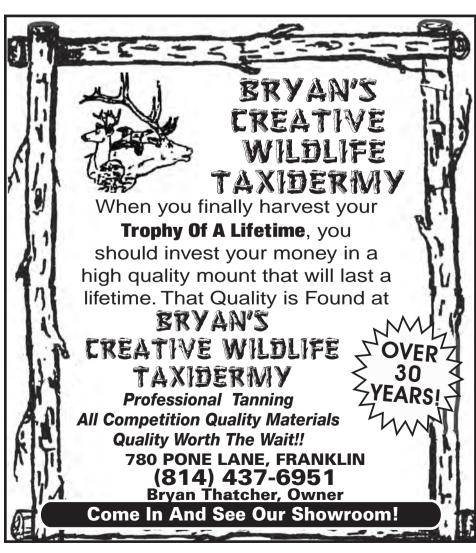
But that's lots of opportunity, and

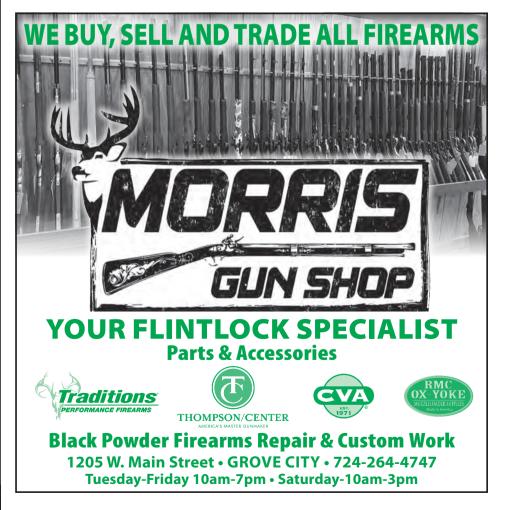
HARRISBURG — Pumpkin spice be pursued, and only one of them fell history shows hunters use it well. "It's amazing - but not surprising to In the 2024-25 season, the state's 350,000-plus bowhunters harvested an estimated 178,140 deer — 87,540 of them antlered and 90,600 antlerless - to account for about one-third of all deer taken in Pennsylvania.

"We now have as many, if not more, bowhunters than any state in the country," said Game Commission Executive Director Steve Smith.

see how archery hunting has evolved in Pennsylvania. Mild weather, readily available antlerless tags, the kind of mature bucks that previous generations of hunters might only dream of, and the excitement of the whitetail rut are huge draws. Hunters are putting food on their tables and making remarkable memories alongside family and friends."







14 — THE DERRICK. - The News-Herald - Whitetail Deer Hunting — Monday, November 10, 2025

Hunters can take one antlered deer per license year, as well as one antlerless deer for every antlerless license, Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) permit or Agricultural Deer Control Program permit.

David Stainbrook, the Game Commission's Deer and Elk Section Supervisor, said all the pieces are in place for an archery deer season much like last year.

"I would expect the upcoming seasons to be very similar to our most recent ones, but with even more antlerless licenses available," Stainbrook said. "There are certainly places with more deer than others, though, and time spent scouting can increase the odds of finding those places. If possible, look for those offering deer both food and cover in one location, then look for fresh sign to be sure deer are using it."

Then, he said, hunt as much as possible. Typically, every week of the archery season contributes at least 10% of the overall bow harvest. So there's never a bad time to be out.

And if archers successfully fill tags, they're only keeping up with their brethren across the region. According to the National Deer Association, bowhunting has grown to the point that archers typically harvest about one-third of all deer across what's considered the Northeast region, a 13-state area stretching from Maine to Virginia.

"Hunting even one more day can mean the difference between harvesting a deer and not. And who doesn't always want just one more day in the woods?"

Steve Smith

Game Commission Executive Director

play an especially important role in managing deer in areas that are more heavily urban and suburban, where firearms hunting is not always feasible.

"Hunting even one more day can mean the difference between harvesting a deer and not," Executive Director Smith added. "And who doesn't always want just one more day in the woods?"

Getting started

The Game Commission's YouTube page offers several videos to help deer hunters.

There's a two-part series on learning to hunt deer with archery gear, a video on the effective range of crossbows, one on tracking a deer after the shot in archery season, and guidance on deboning a deer in the field. There are also several videos on tree stand safety.

Search "learn to hunt" or "tree stand safety" to find the videos.

Hunters might also want to check out the in-person and online versions of Pennsylvania's "Successful Bowhunt-Here as in all those places, archers ing" course and/or its online archery

safety course. Hundreds of people completed both last season. More information is available online.

Of course, bowhunters should also practice with their equipment before the season starts, shooting from the ground and/or an elevated stand, whichever mimics how they'll hunt. Hunters should only take responsible shots — broadside or quartering-away shots at deer within their personal maximum effective shooting range — to ensure quick, clean kills.

As for equipment, archery hunters may use long, recurve or compound bows, or crossbows. Bows must have a draw weight of at least 35 pounds; crossbows must have a minimum draw weight of 125 pounds.

Illuminated nocks that aid in tracking or locating the arrow or bolt after being launched are legal, but transmitter-tracking arrows are not.

Tree stands and climbing devices that cause damage to trees are unlawful to use or occupy unless the user has written permission from the landowner. Tree stands or tree steps — penetrating a tree's cambium layer cause damage, and it is unlawful to build or occupy tree stands that are nailed or screwed to trees on state game lands, state forests or state parks.

Portable hunting tree stands and blinds are allowed on state game lands, starting two weeks before opening day of archery season, but must be removed no later than two weeks after the close of the flintlock and late archery deer seasons in the WMU being hunted.

In all cases, tree stands and blinds on state game lands also must be conspicuously marked with a durable and legible identification tag that identifies the stand's owner. Those tags must include the hunter's first and last name and legal home address, their nine-digit CID number, or their unique Sportsman's Equipment ID number. Hunters can find their number in their HuntFishPA online profile or on their printed license.

All hunters need a valid general hunting license or mentored permit, unless they qualify for exceptions. Some hunters are eligible to hold combination hunting licenses that include archery privileges, but most hunters also need an archery license to take part in the archery deer season.

Licenses may be purchased online at www.huntfish.pa.gov or at any license issuing agent, the locations of which are mapped online. Because licenses bought online are mailed, and deer hunters must be in possession of their deer harvest tags while hunting, those planning to hunt soon after buying their licenses might be better off getting them from an issuing agent.

A general hunting license contains an antlered deer harvest tag. A valid antlerless license, DMAP permit or Ag Tag permit is needed for each antlerless deer harvested.

Hunters who harvest deer are required by law to file a report with the Game Commission within 10 days. Harvests can be reported online at huntfish.pa.gov, by phone at 1-800-838-4431, or by sending in the postage-paid report card found within the Hunting & Trapping Digest.

Venison care

While hunting in early fall often offers pleasant days afield, the warm weather also presents challenges for successful deer hunters.

One is making sure they wind up with high-quality venison for the table.

Deer harvested when the weather is warm should be field-dressed quickly, then taken from the field and cooled down as soon as possible, preferably by refrigerating if temperatures are above 40 degrees.

Additional information warm-weather venison care, as well as instructions on deer processing and other tips, are available on the white-tailed deer page on the Game Commission's website, www.pa.gov/pgc.





Public plays important role in monitoring EHD

HARRISBURG — EHD, a viral disease that's often fatal to white-tailed deer, has hit some parts of the country extremely hard this year.

In Pennsylvania, EHD has been confirmed in a handful of counties in the north-western part of the state. But the Game Commission also has investigated reports of dead deer in southwestern and southeastern Pennsylvania, where test results are pending.

The public is encouraged to report sick or dead deer, especially if several are found dead in the same area and the cause of death is not apparent. The Pennsylvania Game Commission can be contacted, round the clock, at 1-833-PGC-WILD (1-833-742-9453).

Public reports allow the Game Commission to further investigate and track EHD outbreaks.

EHD, or epizootic hemorrhagic disease, is spread to deer when they are bitten by infected midges, small insects often called "no-see-ums." Because EHD is spread by midges, it emerges in late summer and remains a threat to deer until temperatures drop and the midges die off, usually at the first hard frost. But in local areas where EHD is present, deer mortality can be severe.

So far this year, EHD has been detected in:

• Butler County, Muddy Creek Township

- Erie County, Mill Creek Township
- Lawrence County, Slippery Rock Township
- Mercer County, Liberty and Shenango townships

EHD is one of two viruses spread by biting midges that cause hemorrhagic disease in Pennsylvania deer. The related bluetongue virus (BT), which historically has been less common in Pennsylvania, has similar impacts. Infected deer often develop clinical signs about seven days after infection and die soon after. Signs include swelling of the face or neck, loss of appetite, lethargy, weakness, lameness, respiratory distress, fever and excessive salivation. Some deer survive the initial infection and can develop chronic signs like hoof cracks or overgrowth.

There is currently no treatment for EHD or BT infections in wild deer, and for diseases spread by insects, wildlife management options are limited. However, local deer populations often rebound within two to three years following an outbreak.

Neither EHD or BT has been detected in Pennsylvania elk, and elk are considered less susceptible to infection.

Both EHD and BT virus can infect domestic livestock. Reports of sick livestock should be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture at 717-772-2852.





















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