



Severe crop damage at Redden State Forest creates public deer harvest opportunities to assist local farmers

DOVER, Del. – A recent increase in severe deer damage to agricultural crops on two portions of Redden State Forest in Sussex County has created public deer harvest opportunities to assist local farmers. Through a partnership with DNREC's Division of Fish & Wildlife, the Delaware Department of Agriculture's Forest Service is opening specific portions of Redden State Forest's Jester Tract immediately to expanded antlerless deer harvest dates and methods through Monday, Sept. 30.

"We recognize that farmers are attempting to protect their crops without using lethal measures, but the steps they are taking are not keeping deer from causing crop damage. The field inspections conducted by the Department of Agriculture are showing upwards of 85 percent crop loss," said Deputy State Forester Kyle Hoyd. "We have an opportunity to assist these Delaware farmers by opening these portions of Redden State Forest earlier than normal to allow the use of firearms to harvest deer, which will provide the public additional opportunities to harvest antlerless deer."

 Under this special permit from DNREC's Division of  Fish and Wildlife, only antlerless deer can be harvested in the specified portions of the Jester Tract outlined in red on the associated maps. The harvest of antlerless deer, specifically does, has been proven to be the most effective way of reducing local deer populations and associated crop damage.

Only firearms or archery equipment that can be legally used to harvest deer in Delaware are allowed. Those using archery equipment may still harvest antlered deer on these permitted areas once the archery and crossbow deer seasons open on state forests on Monday, Sept. 2. Pursuit and harvest of deer on Sundays is prohibited in these areas.

All users of the areas, including those pursuing the harvest of deer, are required to wear and display at least 400 square inches of hunter orange in these permitted areas through Sept. 30. These areas will have signage posted, so the public knows where these expanded firearm harvest opportunities of antlerless deer are permitted.

To harvest or attempt to harvest deer, a Delaware hunting license or License Exempt Number (LEN) is required. To purchase a hunting license, either in person or online, hunters born on or after Jan. 1, 1967, must have a successfully completed a basic hunter education safety course. Delaware hunting licenses can be purchased online at [Delaware Licenses](#), at the license desk in DNREC's Dover office at 89 Kings Highway, Dover, DE 19901, or from hunting license agents statewide.

Deer must be tagged immediately after harvest, and tags must remain attached until the deer is processed. Delaware hunting licenses come with four antlerless deer tags, but additional antlerless deer tags may be purchased online or from license agents for \$20.

All harvested deer must be registered deer within 24 hours of harvest. A registration number is required before taking any deer to a butcher or taxidermist. Likewise, those who butcher their own deer must register the deer within 24 hours of harvest or before processing. Deer may be registered by visiting the Hunter and Trapper Registration (HTR) system online at <https://egov.delaware.gov/htr> using their smartphone, tablet or computer, or by calling 1-855-DEL-HUNT

(1-855-335-4868).

Harvested deer may be donated to the [Delaware Sportsmen Against Hunger Program](#) using the walk-in cooler at the Redden State Forest. All donated deer will be processed free of charge and the meat will be distributed to participating charitable groups. The Division of Fish & Wildlife requests that those donating harvested deer call the phone number posted on the cooler, so that donated deer are transported for processing in a timely manner. Any deer dropped off at a cooler must be field-dressed and registered, with the registration number written on a field tag to be attached to the deer.

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