

Wisconsin

**Department of
Natural Resources**

NEWS

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**Special Edition
2007 Opening Day Gun Deer Season Report**

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Early opening of season finds white-tail deer near peak of mating season

MADISON – A fairly early opening for Wisconsin’s regular nine-day gun deer season that found white-tailed deer near the peak of their mating season, combined with a deer herd above population goals across much of the state, made for what state wildlife officials say appears to be a generally successful opening of the 2007 gun deer season.

Department of Natural Resources wildlife biologists aging deer at registration stations across Wisconsin said one often reported theme was that buck deer were actively in rut – or in their mating season – and were often oblivious to anything other than the does they were pursuing.

Hunting conditions ranged from good to ideal in the north, with cool temperatures and some snow on the ground in certain areas, to much less than ideal in areas of the south and southeast with a steady drizzle that fell much of the day. Temperatures started out near freezing early throughout most of the state, and never warmed much past the mid-30s in the north, but reached the mid-40s in the south.

It was windy throughout much of the state, which DNR Deer Ecologist Keith Warnke noted, can make deer jumpy. As the rut was still going strong throughout the state, it didn’t seem to be as much a factor this year and bucks were actively moving.

“It wasn’t too cold to chase people out of the woods, but not too warm to keep deer from moving,” reported DNR Wildlife Biologist Pat Beringer in Park Falls.

“We haven’t seen a lot of activity at our registration station,” Beringer said, “but it’s cold enough that hunters can hang the deer they shot at camp and keep hunting. There’s no rush to bring them in because it’s not too warm.”

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As expected, wildlife biologists working in Earn-a-Buck units – areas where hunters were required to shoot an antlerless deer before shooting a buck -- reported good numbers of antlerless deer being registered, as many as 3-to-1 antlerless to bucks at some stations. However, in herd control and regular units the buck to antlerless ratio was generally much higher.

Wildlife officials are urging hunters to shoot antlerless deer in an effort to bring down the deer population. It was estimated at 1.6 to 1.8 million animals and well above population goals in almost the entire state this year.

“If hunters didn’t get a deer today, they need to stay at it,” Warnke said. “There are a lot of deer out there; they just have to locate where the deer are. If you think about it, there are probably more deer out there after opening day this year than there were going into opening day 20 years ago.”

2007 License Sales

Waiting until the last minute to buy a gun license continues to be as much of a tradition as the hunt itself. License sales locations were very busy on Friday, particularly in the late afternoon when sales peaked at 213 transactions per minute around 3:30 p.m. One in every seven hunters pocketed a license still warm from the printer on the Friday before the opener. Nearly 47 percent of all deer hunters purchased a license in the eight days preceding the deer gun opener.

A total of 629,752 hunters hit the woods on opening morning to participate in the 2007 nine-day gun deer season. Of these hunters:

- 594,293 (94 percent) were residents and 35,459 were nonresidents.
- When more than 200,000 bow deer license sales are added to deer gun totals, deer hunting participation is showing a slight increase over 2006.
- Hunters throughout the U.S. and several foreign countries purchased a Wisconsin gun deer license. The highest number of nonresident hunters came from Minnesota (16,281), Illinois (8,830), Michigan (1,085), Florida (973), and Iowa (799).
- Female hunters represent 7.9 percent of the total number of deer hunters, and 13.26 percent of hunters age 12-25. This year, 20.6 percent of the first year 12-year-old hunters were girls.
- The most deer licenses were sold in Dane County (28,096), with Brown, Washington, Waukesha, and Marathon counties following.
- All ages participate in the hunt. More than 3,100 hunters were age 80 or older. Nearly 112,000 were aged 12 to 21. And the ages most represented were 46 and 47.
- More than 129,000 antlerless deer tags have been sold this year.
- Nearly 16,000 hunters got to preview the next generation of DNR’s licensing system when they purchased their license. In addition to the touch screen devices used to issue the license, hunters notice their bright green back tag; different from the yellow tags used for the past several years. About 70 locations are testing the new licensing system that will be used statewide next year. Deer license and permit sales will continue through the hunting seasons.

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DNR Call Center hears from tree stands

DNR recently announced expanded customer call center hours, with operators and computer chat service people available seven days a week. And hunters are taking advantage of the service. Operators began receiving calls at 7 a.m. Saturday morning from tree stands, deer camps and hunters afield.

One caller's reaction was, "Wow, you're there. This is great. This is the best thing DNR ever did for hunters," and he went on to ask his question. Most common questions heard were, "I just shot a deer, which tag should I use," and "I shot a deer with 2-inch nub antlers, is that considered a buck?" Operators also helped hunters find the nearest registration station, and fielded calls from hunters on Earn-a-Buck stickers, including one hunter wondering what to do about his sticker burning up in a car fire.

During the week prior to the opener, the center was receiving more than 1,500 calls per day, peaking at more than 2,200 on Friday before the opener.

Call center staff are available to serve customers from 7 a.m. through 10 p.m., seven days a week by calling 1-888-WDNR INFO (1-888-936-7463) or online at [dnr.wi.gov]. Spanish and Hmong service is available.

DNR call center staff manning the poacher hotline was also kept busy Saturday, with hunters calling in and reporting violations they had observed ranging from road shooting and baiting violations to finding permanent stands erected on public lands. Hunters wishing to report a violation can call 24 hours a day and seven days a week at 1(800)TIP-WDNR [800-847-9367] or cell #367 .

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DNR Northern Region

Ashland County - Marie Erickson-Pilch aging deer at the Feed Mill in Butternut reported very good hunting conditions. The station had already registered 13 bucks and six antlerless deer by 1 p.m. "We're seeing a lot of happy hunters with some very nice deer, including a couple of 10-pointers and a gorgeous 11-pointer. The weather was cool and breezy, with light flurries. There was a little dusting of snow cover. Temperatures were in the low 30s. She had aged several 4- to 5-year old deer and some a 2- to 3-year-olds. Even the younger deer had nice racks indicating excellent antler growth this year.

Baron County – DNR Wildlife Biologist Kevin Morgan was registering deer at Wild Bill's Outpost in Cameron. He reported temperatures in the low to mid 30s, moderate wind and cloudy skies. No snow cover. Deer were coming in steady, similar to last year, but no rushes as of 1:30 p.m. "It's so nice hunters are likely staying in the field and are in no rush to register their deer. We're right next to Earn-a-Buck units, so we're registering 2-to-1 antlerless to bucks," he said. He did register one very nice 2-year-old with a 10-point, 16-inch rack. Morgan's 14-year-old daughter shot her first deer, a spiked buck, that morning hunting with her father. "Every dad is proud of that first deer for their child, so that was an exciting time," he said.

Bayfield County – Dave Lindsley, DNR wildlife technician aging deer at the Holiday Station Store at Washburn said there had been light snow over night so there was a little contrast in the woods. "It was a little cold and windy, but not too hard for hunters to sit in their stands this morning." The station had been relatively slow through the morning. He started aging at 11 a.m. and hadn't seen quite 30 deer by 1:30 p.m. Most deer coming in were yearling to two-and-half year bucks with average antler development. He had aged one 4- to 5-year old with a very nice, thick rack.

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Douglas County – At Solon Springs, there were windy, moderate temperatures 28 to 30. No snow on the ground. Conditions were tolerable but not ideal as if it had been calm. Bucks are still responding to grunts, but they were not really pursuing does, so it appears we might be a bit past the peak of rut. Registrations were on track with registrations last year, but certainly not going gang busters. Nineteen does and 25 bucks were registered early Saturday. Opening day generally runs about 30 percent more bucks opening day, and then it switches Sunday afternoon. A lot of nice deer but nothing really spectacular.

Florence County - Patty at Florence Sport and Bait said hunting conditions were cool, with light flurries. It was windy and temperature seemed to be dropping through the day. "Yesterday we sold a lot of licenses and caught up to license sales last year." By noon last year 50 deer had been registered at Florence and this year it was 47 by noon. They were seeing quite a few does, even though the station is surrounded by regular units where hunters needed to purchase antlerless tags. Patty had a couple of hunters who were registering their very first deer. DNR Wildlife Biologist Jeremy Holtz who was aging deer at the station said he was seeing primarily 1-and-half year old bucks and does, but one 5-and-a half-year old with 10 point rack. "The biggest thing we're hearing from hunters is that the big bucks are actively pursuing does and are not aware of hunters at all. So we are probably hitting about the peak of the rut with opening day this year."

Langlade County – Mike Zeckmeister, DNR wildlife biologist working in Langlade reported hunting conditions were excellent, and registrations were running ahead of last year, with 62 deer registered as of 3 p.m. compared to 90 all day last year. Temperatures were in the 40s, with just a few specks of snow. The most common theme he was hearing from hunters was bucks were actively chasing does. That was his own experience as well: he saw a buck at 10 minutes to 7 a.m. and used his grunt call and the buck charged right at him. A lot of hunters were hunting the tornado damage areas. One hunter reported a buck chasing does right underneath his tree stand and a lot of hunters are reporting that if they see a doe and they wait, and a buck comes following along within a few minutes.

Lincoln County – DNR Public Affairs Manager Jim Bishop hunting in Lincoln County reported excellent hunting conditions opening morning. There was a dusting of snow on the ground and temperatures were in the 30s. Visibility was excellent. It was very easy to see the deer. The snow began just south of Winter. No heavy snow but flurries through the morning – not enough to reduce visibility. A lot of shots from 7 to 8 a.m. and then sporadic after that. A member of his hunting party shot a beautiful eight-pointer this morning at 7:15 a.m. All they had seen that morning were bucks, no antlerless deer.

Oneida County – Christy at Island Sports in Minocqua said there was up to 2 inches of snow on the ground north of there, which was helping hunters up there, but nothing on the ground in Minocqua. The rut seems to be going full swing. By 4 p.m. they had registered 50 bucks and 12 does. Last year they registered 150 all day, but the majority of deer come in between 5 and 8 p.m.

Polk County – DNR Wildlife Biologist Michelle Carlisle aging deer at Gen's Bait and Sports in Amery reported there were light flurries in the early morning. Those tapered off and the wind picked up. Registrations had been steady all morning, with mostly bucks coming in. "We just had a 3-year-old with a really nice rack," she said. One hunter reported that he dozed off in his stand and woke up and there were four deer – two bucks and two does -- right next to his stand. They ran off before he could get a shot off but another buck came by about five minutes later and he shot that one. "Hunters are in good spirits. No one has complained so that means they are seeing deer," Carlisle said.

Price County – DNR Wildlife Biologist Pat Beringer in Park Falls reported conditions have been pretty good, not too cold to chase people out of the woods, but not too warm to keep deer from moving. There's an inch of snow on the ground, which is far better than nothing at all. There was somewhat of a northeast breeze. Hunters were satisfied with conditions. It's cold enough that hunters can leave their deer hanging in the woods. Bucks are still in the rut. They had registered a couple 4 to 5-year-old 10 pointers. Beringer said one young hunter who came in had shot his first deer. "He was very excited. I taught him how we age deer and it was a year-and-a-half old five point buck. He came in with his grandpa and I'm not sure who was more excited the kid or the grandpa."

Rusk County – It was a little chilly but a lot of people were bringing in deer. They had more at 2:30 p.m. than in previous years. About even bucks to does. One guy came in and registered an antlerless deer and got a green buck authorization sticker and was back in about two hours with his buck. A couple of real nice does were registered. A couple guys brought in a couple of big bucks, but most are six point, not real big, according to Mellissa at the Holiday Store in Ladysmith. DNR Wildlife Biologist Mark Schmidt aging deer in Glen Flora said hunters seem to be staying out in the woods, but that those who were coming in are seeing quite a few deer. Hunters are bringing in a buck and maybe two or three does at the same time. They were seeing some really big bucks come in. Hunters were saying the bigger bucks were chasing does. The bucks still smell pretty musky. One 197-pound, 11-pointer and one 205-pound, 12-pointer, four to five years old. One person saw a pied bald doe. They didn't shoot it.

Sawyer County –DNR Wildlife Biologist Ken Jonas at Hayward said conditions were less than ideal, with over cast skies and strong winds out of the northeast with temperatures right around freezing. "Wind was a factor and deer didn't seem to be moving all that well," he noted. Bucks were past the peak of the rut, but there was still a fair amount of rutting activity," based on the number of big bucks that are coming in. We're seeing some beautiful deer." A number of 4 to 5-year olds were registered, including one that weighed 208 pounds with an 8-point rack that was very thick. "Were seeing a lot of very good antler development, probably reflecting the mild winter." So far not too many antlerless deer were being brought in. Pretty much 3-to-1 buck to antlerless ratio, "but that is pretty average for opening day up here."

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Vilas County – Connie St. Germain Sport and Marine said conditions were cold with flurries and about an inch of snow on the ground. It has been kind of slow today, with just 63 deer registered by 3:30 p.m., with slightly more does than bucks. Hunters were saying it's pretty quiet out there and so far none had brought in any real big bucks come in.

DNR Southeast Region

Kenosha County– John at Gander Mountain in Kenosha reported a nice 11-point buck had been registered by early afternoon, along with three other deer, on pace with other years. He noted that the weather was dry and deer were moving at opening, but by noon a drizzle was falling. Nonetheless, he said, hunters he had talked to were happy and reported the deer were very intent on rutting, with one hunter saying two deer were so distracted they didn't notice him at all. He said he expected registrations to pick up as the day went on.

Ozaukee County– Cianan at MacCarthy's in Saukville noted two huge 10-point bucks came in early. "One was like a horse with horns," he said. It was taken by a hunter "that could have been no more than 14 or 15. He was giving his dad a hard time about it," he said. He noted 19 deer – including two does -- had been registered by early afternoon, but hunting conditions had been "wet and warm all day." He said hunters were happy but one commented he wasn't hearing a lot of shooting.

Racine County– DNR Wildlife Biologist Marty Johnson, aging deer at Ron's Service Station in Tichigan near West Bend, said hunting conditions at opening were windy with drizzle, but rain had stopped by mid-afternoon leaving conditions overcast. By 3 p.m., he had registered 10 deer, one of which was a large, healthy 10-point buck. Seven were antlerless. He said hunters were happy and personable, but noted they hadn't seen a lot of pressure. Johnson said he was glad that the folks he had talked to seemed to be enjoying this year's hunt, and he said his advice to hunters was, "Take more deer and have a good time."

Sheboygan County– DNR Wildlife Biologist Missy Sparrow said most of the deer she was aging at Fleet Farm in Plymouth were 1-and-a-half-year-olds. But she said she also aged a 4 to 5-year-old buck with 10 points and a large 4 to 5-year-old doe – both older deer unusual for the area. By mid afternoon, Sparrow had registered 67 deer, evenly split between bucks and antlerless, and on track for that station. She noted that hunting conditions on opening were wet, with rain and slush snow. Hunters coming in were wet and cold, with some noting they were hanging it up for the day and planned to go out again on Sunday. Two women registered bucks at the station, one of them registering her first deer. She was part of a large hunting party and the only one in that party to get a deer. Sparrow noted her husband was as excited as she was about her buck.

Walworth County – DNR Wildlife Biologist Davin Lopez, aging deer at Bingham's Rental and Sporting Goods in Whitewater, said he had registered 11 deer by lunch. He noted a good mix of ages, with two bucks and two does aging out a 3-and-a-half. He said he had seen a very nice 10-point buck, and said bucks were very much in the rut and active. Some, he said, seemed to be just entering the rut. He said hunting conditions were cool, in the mid 30s with a light drizzle since 8:30 a.m., completely unexpected and not predicted. "It's really fun getting out and interacting with the public aging deer," he said. He cautioned hunters to be sure to watch what zone they're in.

Waukesha County– DNR Wildlife Biologist Tom Isaac, who was aging deer at Ox and Cats in Monches, said hunting conditions were pleasant in the area until 8:30 a.m., when drizzle started. Rain persisted after that. He noted that registrations were running a little slower at that station than last year, and by mid-afternoon 50 deer had been registered. One hunting party brought in five deer, three of them nice bucks. Monches is primarily an Earn-a-Buck area, and registrations were coming in two antlerless for each buck. Isaac noted that he had aged several nice deer, including a 3-year-old buck and two 4 to 5-year-old does. He said bucks were still in the rut. Isaac reminded hunters that there's no snow on the ground to silhouette deer, and that means hunters really need to be sure of their target and what's beyond.

Washington County – DNR Wildlife Technician Bob Zinkgraf was out hunting on his property for an hour before heading to work to age deer at the Rapid Mart in Hartford. He said hunting conditions were good until about 8 a.m., when rain started with a 5 to 10 MPH wind. He called hunting conditions after that, "less than ideal" noting that most of the 33 deer he had registered so far had likely been shot in the first hour. Once the rain started, "the deer quit rutting and bedded down." Two-thirds of the deer coming in were does. One hunting group came in with four does and one buck. By mid-afternoon, rain had changed to light snow and sleet, and he thought hunters had gone back out. "There'll be more deer coming in yet today," he said.

South Central Region

Columbia County - Pardeeville Sport Marine reported snow and a busy registration station at 1:15 p.m. Forty or 50 deer had been registered by that time, including a nice 15-pointer. At the Mobil Express Travel Plaza registration station in Portage, Scott Koch reported slower action than in past years as of 1:25 p.m. "I don't know if the weather is helping. We've got flurries and it's chilly. We've had about 120 deer so far, usually we're close to 250 to 350. Nothing really big -- an eight-pointer if we're lucky. Everyone's pretty much happy."

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Crawford County

Jennifer Grimsled of Ferryville Cheese LLC in Ferryville reported they had registered 37 deer by 1:30 p.m., not as busy as last year, but she expected that the action would pick up later in the afternoon, same as last year. "We've had quite a few nice looking bucks. We have eight pictures and we took pictures of the ones that were nice. We took pictures of one woman and seven guys, aged 25 to 50. They were all happy, especially the woman, Kathy Miller. She got two deer -- one buck and one doe -- and she had the nicest deer so far."

Dane County - Chris Ptaszynski, manager of Black Earth Meats, reported that by 1:45 p.m., she had registered 44 deer: six for the food pantry, 18 that stayed at the business for processing, and 20 deer that left with the hunters. "I haven't see any real big bucks -- a lot of OK bucks and a lot of does. I saw a couple of kids out there with their fathers, but none had gotten their own deer. It's been rainy and now it's snowing. A lot of the deer are wet. It's just been a really basic, regular hunt." Tim Marien, DNR wildlife technician, was working the Black Earth CWD registration station, and reported seeing a pretty steady flow of deer coming in. A lot of big bucks. I think we're a little busier earlier than we planned. I think the rain's a factor in that. Usually, when it's nighttime or when the sun is setting we'll see a big rush. But with the rain and the Badger game starting at 2:30 p.m., the numbers are up earlier this year. We're registered right around 50 to 60. Marien said the number and mix of hunters coming through seems to be looking more like the days before CWD was discovered before the 2002 season. Each passing year it seems a lot of those fears go away. And more and more the hunters are coming back. We've definitely registered a lot of bucks. Out of the 60 registered, maybe 15 that are going to be taxidermied and mounted, one or two that were really large 3-year-old deer. They were all nice. There were two that really stood out. One was 15 point buck and the other was 17 or 18 points. Most were eight- to 10-point bucks. We had a couple of 14-year-olds who got their first deer. One was a 14-year-old. That was nice to see. We don't see a lot of girls. The majority. She definitely was excited. It was a six-point buck. It was definitely one to be proud of, especially the first one. We didn't have too many complaints about Earn a Buck. People know the system, knew they had to shoot another doe if they wanted to shoot another buck. People were going along with the rules.

Dodge County - Rick Kielmann, manager of Holiday Food and Sport in Waupun, reported fewer registrations at 2 p.m. than at the same time in past years. "I think the weather has everything to do with it. It's been sleeting and snowing and windy. It's wet. It's between -- one minute it's drizzling, the next minute it's sleeting. The hunters said they were going in "We'll just wait." We've registered 60 or 70 so far. We normally do a couple hundred -- maybe they'll all come in later. We've seen a couple of nice big bucks. We're seeing a bunch of nubby bucks, a lot of does. We're in an Earn A Buck area. I don't think anybody's really happy with EAB. It's not a popular program. They are learning to live with it."

Grant County -- George Hrubes, owner of the Castle Rock Inn, said registrations as of 2 p.m. were running higher than in the past 11 years he's registered deer. "It's going good. Right now, we're probably a little over 100 total. Some nice deer. We've had quite a few eight- to 10-pointers, 16- to 18-inch spreads on them...nice deer." Despite wet weather, the hunters were pretty much staying out. He expected that closer to the evening, a lot of hunting groups would be coming in.

Green County -- At 2:15 p.m., Jack Binko, owner of Cardinal Lanes in Brodhead, reported that registration was going smooth with a lot of does and young bucks. "We've seen probably five semi-trophy deer and one trophy deer so far -- a 10-pointer, probably 21-inch spread. The horns were massive, thick, heavy beamed. A young gentleman, 16, shot the deer in Green County. He was pretty calm. I asked him if he had a nice buck, he said, "pretty nice." Of course, his dad was jumping up and down behind him." Binko said the deer was a nice one, but not the best registered at the station. An even bigger one was taken by a bow hunter. So far, probably 50 deer had been registered, not as many as in past years. He thinks the weather -- drizzling and 45 degrees -- has something to do with it. "I have had a lot of people say they could have taken big bucks but didn't have their doe yet. I had some guys kill a doe and a buck at the same time. I had one guy watch a 12-point for half-an-hour, but didn't shoot it because he didn't have his doe yet." A guy came in a with small buck covered with warts. He called the DNR, a biologist arrived to take a look at it and said the young buck had a virus that's pretty common for deer. Other than that, the day had been kind of uneventful. I know they're seeing big bucks. I think maybe the weather has something to do with it; it's not cold enough to make them crazy.

Iowa County -- According to Greg Matthews, DNR's South Central Region public affairs manager who was working the Barneveld registration station, "it's windy, damp and cold, but we've registered a lot of deer, so the weather is probably helping get the deer moving. Right now, all three registration bays are open and the cars are five deep." By 1:30 p.m. a total of 136 deer had been registered. Fifty-four were bucks and 82 were antlerless. Also, 82 samples have been collected for CWD testing.

Jefferson County -- Becky Hunt, of Perna's Premium Meats in Johnson Creek, is in her third year of registering deer. "Through both seasons this year, we've had more people come through. We've been busy -- about 30 deer so far. We've had a couple big bucks, but more does than bucks." The most unusual thing she reported seeing was a deer that came through with only three legs that most have gotten injured earlier. The weather was dreary and rainy, but didn't seem to dampen hunters' moods. "I don't think that phases them one bit -- they like the cooler temperatures.

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Lafayette— Scott Brugger, owner/manager of Belmont's Fresh Meats reported that as of 3 p.m., fewer deer had been registered than in past years, likely a reflection of the cool, drizzly, cloudy weather. "It's nice and cool, so they're going to keep them. I think some will come in later today. More will wait until later and show it off. He said a few nice deer had been registered, and a lot of does for Earn a Buck. One very nice one. I saw him in the back of the truck. He was exceptional. A very big rack. Brugger also reported a few younger hunters who shot their first deer and were very excited.

Richland County – At the registration station at Boaz Country Store, Kim Mast reported that more than 150 deer had been registered so far by the morning crew. "We've got some pictures up and there are some nice deer." She had only been on duty for about an hour, and had not yet heard any usual stories. "Everybody's just out doing their deer hunting thing."

Rock County – Chad Nelson of Chad's taxidermy in Clinton reports less traffic than normal as of 3:30 p.m., "but still a decent number. A lot of people are earning buck tags." He was registering mostly antlerless deer. The weather was rainy and sleety at the time, but that had started about noon so most of the hunt was done in the morning. We'll get the bucks in later in the week when they get buck tags in their pockets to be able to harvest them. We're doing several months -- typical eight points, typical size.

Sauk County – Nancy Frost, a DNR biologist working on CWD, was working the Ace Hardware Sauk City Registration Station. "It's been busy. We've been keeping steady. We're doing samples and registration. So we're getting a flow of deer coming through. We've heard some comments that when it started raining, they came in. But we've also been getting deer in, so people are still out hunting. We've seen some nice bucks but also some antlerless. We've had a couple of kids come in with their first deer. A kid came in with a buck. His second deer. He got a doe during a youth hunt, so he earned a buck sticker and was able to take a shot at when a nice one walked by. We've seen a couple of women hunters as well. Frost said that she hasn't heard many comments about CWD. The registration has taken samples for a number of years.

DNR Northeast Region

Calumet County – Mike's Bait and Gun co-owner Joanne Klaeser in Kiel reported 66 deer registered this morning with an almost even split between bucks and does. This is about the same volume as last year, when they registered a total of 139 on opening day. According to Klaeser, "several hunters have registered two deer already, with the first 16 deer to come in being harvested by only 10 hunters." Klaeser added that "the cold weather usually means hunters will hang their deer up for a day, so we'll have to wait and see if we'll be able to surpass last year's opening day total."

Door County— With temps in the mid 30s, an overcast sky and snow flurries in the air things are quite busy this morning at the S-Stop in Sturgeon Bay. DNR Wildlife Tech Kyle Christianson saw steady vehicles and about 140 deer come through in the morning, including one young hunter's first buck, which he described as "enormous!"

Fond du Lac County - "A drizzle that's been coming down all morning is just turning to snow flurries," according to DNR Wildlife Biologist Mark Randall. Registration has been slower at the PC Travel Store in Rosendale than last year with only about 20 deer registered so far, mostly bucks. Randall spoke to a conservation warden this morning who said he's observed that there are fewer hunters than usual on private land but the state forest is full of hunters.

Green Lake County – Joel Baranowski, at North Bay Sport and liquor Green Lake, said registration is about on par with last year which surprises him because as he hunted this morning he heard little shooting. According to Baranowski, "it was snowy and dreary here this morning, making it hard to see deer in the marsh, but now the sun is poking out." Baranowski reports an even mix of does and bucks coming in to the station. One young hunter harvested a 13 point buck with a 19 inch spread, and a lot of hunters report seeing bucks chasing does.

Kewaunee County – About 200 deer registered at Lee's Sporting Goods in Luxemburg by 3 p.m. Wade Oehmichen, DNR wildlife tech, expects to easily surpass last year's opening day registration total of 281 deer. With just a slight drizzle this morning turning to an overcast 40 degree afternoon, hunters in the Luxemburg area are having great opening day weather. According to Oehmichen, "we've registered a lot of first bucks today, including one 3-and-a-half year old 10-pointer with an 18-inch spread. That young hunter was very excited!"

Manitowoc County - "Registration is steady and we're at about 100 deer so far, but this morning the rain and snow mix made it pretty miserable to be in the woods. So, now that it's just a little overcast and breezy, we expect to see registrations pick up this evening," according to DNR Wildlife Supervisor Jeff Pritzl at Manitowoc. Mostly bucks were being registered, with majority of them yearlings.

Marinette County— There's a steady flow of deer being registered here this morning, at the Athelstane Country Market, mostly yearling bucks. According to DNR Wildlife Tech Aaron McCullough, temperatures were in the mid 30s and the sun was shining. Many hunters were reporting that bucks were chasing does and many of the deer registered so far were harvested on public land. "One deer has provided many firsts this morning. It was the first deer harvested by a 13-year-old hunter, which also served as a first lesson in field dressing for him and his father. Then, when they brought the deer in, it was the first deer to be aged and registered by a Fox Valley Tech student on his first day working a registration station," said McCullough.

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Oconto County – With temps in the upper 20s and the wind whistling, hunters are having some good luck this opening morning and more than 75 deer were registered by noon at the Townsend Shell station. According to DNR Wildlife Tech, Tim Mella, it's the tail end of the rut and more bucks have been registered than antlerless deer. Some first time hunters have been in to register their deer as well, and overall, this station is quite a bit busier than on opening morning last year.

Shawano County – At Qualheim's True Value in Shawano they're registering more deer than last year and tipped the 100 deer mark at about 2pm today. Most of the deer have been antlerless, but a few nice bucks have been mixed in as well. Don McGowan, a member of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), reported that several DAV members were registering deer at Qualheim's today and all their proceeds will go to the DAV's transportation fund. According to McGowan, "it is cold, but we're having a good time."

Waushara County– At Mr. Ed's Place in Wild Rose, things are a little slower this opening morning than they were last year. DNR Wildlife Biologist Paul Samerdyke had taken a couple of heads for CWD sampling so far and says he's seen a pretty good mix of bucks and antlerless deer. Since about 9 a.m. there have been steady flurries and temps in the mid 30s, which might be pushing hunters out of the woods a little earlier than usual.

Winnebago County– By 3:15 p.m., only about 60 deer have been registered at the Omro Store, which is down considerably from last year, when a total of nearly 350 deer were registered on opening day. DNR Wildlife Technician Joshua Jackl said that it snowed nearly all morning and just as the snow began to stick the flurries stopped. Most hunters in the area reported seeing a lot of deer and several witnessed rut activity. "We've registered a few decent size bucks and a lot of antlerless deer today," Jackl said. He continued, "one excited young girl shot her first two deer today, a buck and a doe, and one guy brought in a nice buck that had an arrow lodged in its shoulder. The hunter didn't get to see that side of the deer until after he had shot it, so he was a little surprised by what he saw when he flipped it over to field dress it."

DNR West Central Region

Adams County

Wisconsin Dells Vicki Rybaski at the Corner Pump says hunters are reporting that cold weather and snow, which started about 9:30 – 10 a.m. seems to have slowed down deer movement. The snow isn't sticking, however deer seem to be bedded down given the blowing, snowy conditions. A few nice bucks have come in and hunters are appreciative and curious as their deer are aged at the registration station. At Nekoosa, hunting started out fine in the area. Light snow has not hampered hunting nor reduced traffic as the registration station at Pritzl's Corner Market. Glenn Davis reports nonstop, steady traffic. "Two women from the DNR are aging deer here, and several people have asked that they not slit the mouth to examine the deer's teeth wear because the deer are so nice that they want to have them mounted. I'd say the number of deer registered is a bit head of the pace we usually see at this point on opening day. We've already registered about 85 deer" [as of 1:40 p.m.]

Buffalo County – The gun deer season is off to a good start and we've had a good bow season as well, said Michelle Gensmer at the Fountain City Kwik Trip– The number of deer coming in is a little stronger than last year, and last year we were about 200-300 deer ahead of our pace from the past. The hunters and deer are really starting to pile in now," Gensmer said. We're seeing a few more does than bucks. Several hunters told us in their scouting last week that the rut seemed to start early down here and the deer were really moving early. Today we saw a really nice 11-pointer with atypical antlers.

Chippewa County– John Paradies says they are registering some nice big bucks along with the mix of does and smaller deer at the G & 64 Country Store in Gilman. Hunters are in an Earn A Buck unit here and need to get that doe before buck hunting. "The deer are moving and decent weather means the hunters are moving them, too," Paradies said. "I'm guessing that by the end of the day, we'll be up at this station by about 20-30 percent over past years for opening day. We saw one really nice 10-pointer that weighed out at 182 pounds and one group of three hunter came in with five deer." Sissy Bossany at the New Auburn Bridge Stop said the hunters coming in have been "real upbeat" – good hunting weather and they are doing well." As of 2 p.m. they had registered about 50 year, which is a typical pace at this station. "We expect a lot more does and more traffic later as hunters register that first doe they need for the Earn A Buck hunting. We saw one really big, beautiful 11-pointer this morning and one guy who got a none-pointer said he was going back out because he wanted a bigger one."

Clark County –We've seen about the number of deer as in past years (50 thus far), said Hazel Moyer at Ernie's in Rock Dam. Hunters report it is a bit windy, but "they are still out there." A few young hunters came in with their first deer, which is always nice to see. "They are excited, of course, which is nice to see."

Dunn County - We've had steady all day at the Colfax Express Mart registration station, It's just a bit slower than in past years said Rose Sundstrom, She reports a couple of really nice 12-pointers came in and "quite a few" young hunters who got their first deer, "which is always nice to see."

Eau Claire County - At the Fall Creek Korner Store, Keith Fox said hunting conditions have been brisk, cloudy and a bit windy in the low 30s. The weather is keeping the bucks moving and most of the males registered were young, forked bucks. Four first-time hunters registered their deer and we just saw a really big 12-pointer, our biggest deer of the day.

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Jackson County - Deanna Jungkans at Raisans Refuge in City Point said they've registered a really nice 13-pointer a 10-pointer and a lot of big-bodied spike bucks. 'They are so big and full that the hunters are surprised that they are not does. One said he had scoped the deer a few times and was sure it was a doe, but it wasn't. Light snow for just a bit this morning melted as it hit the warmer ground. This afternoon registrations have been a bit slow, but those guys will be in as it starts to get dark and hunting ends for the day.

Juneau County – Dick Thiel, DNR natural resource educator working at The Bunk House registration station in New Lisbon said it's a bit quiet but "my impression is that things are going well and the hunters have a good attitude and are happy. The snow is sticking a bit and this station is at the edge of agriculture and forested country. With the cooler weather, deer seemed to have changed their behavior a bit and we've seen fewer of them near the roads than in the past few weeks. We've seen a few nice deer and a spattering of spikes come in. Time will tell as the afternoon progresses. We expect more of a rush starting about 4 p.m.

La Crosse County - Hunters are getting a bit wet and taking the brunt of really wet snow here. We expect the bulk of deer to be coming in between 5-8 p.m., so it's not surprising that the numbers are down a bit right now, said Carla Thurk at The Likelee Spot in Middle Ridge.

Marathon County – Wildlife Program Supervisor Tom Meier at the Mead Wildlife Area said it's windy with high humidity, the rut is on but in this big open space, it appears the deer are staying put and not moving much here right now. The hunters who have come in had some really large bucks that were likely chasing does, but the weather is such that we just haven't heard a lot of shooting and right at this spot this is one of the slowest starts we've had in 10 years, You can never predict what will happen when the weather changes a bit, but for right now it's a bit slow.

Monroe County– Bonnie Roscovius at Roscoe's Live Bait in Tomah was registering about two bucks to each doe. We think hunters are registering deer early because they are seeing more deer. Here the light snow is not melting in the woods and the hunters can see the deer in wooded areas much more easily. One young lady, Mya Clay, shot her first deer, a beautiful doe. Ms. Clay is from a family that recently suffered tragedy with her grandparents and another family member died from carbon monoxide poisoning while exhibiting a horse at a national Clydesdale show in Madison. Ms. Clay was hunting from her grandfather's deer stand.

Pepin County – At Third Base Bar in Pepin - Diana Schmillen said the rush is yet to come. In Pepin the weather has actually been a bit warmer and dry, so deer are moving. She has seen a few nice deer and takes pictures of those proud hunters with their deer so people can enjoy looking at those throughout the season and later.

Pierce County - Whitney Finstad at the Ellsworth Speedway said registrations have been brisk all day. "Everyone seems to be coming in, doing their business registering deer and getting right back out there again because the hunting conditions must be pretty good."

St. Croix County– Kirsten Gutting at the Deer Park Holiday Gas Station said early flurries put a little layer of snow in the woods that helped hunters until it melted by about 10 a.m. Conditions are a bit windy, but hunters are still out in the woods. Registrations seem slightly behind the pace of past years.

Trempealeau County – At The Pigstop in Galesville Terri Hale said she'd registered a lot of nice deer today. "For hunters it has been good times and no complaints. We keep a Brag Wall here where we take photos of people who got their first deer, first-time hunters and people who got really nice deer. We then compile that in a book each year after the season and keep it out where our customers can look through it. We had one funny story of a younger kid and his dad who had made a little bet on who would get the bigger deer. The dad was pretty confident he'd get it because he had been scouting this one big buck for weeks and he was pretty sure what would happen. Well guess who shot that deer? The kid... We've got the picture to prove it."



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