Deer Hunt 2014– What's new this year?

The rules have changed, but the tradition remains.

What will changes in 2014 mean for MY deer season?

- **New unit and zone boundaries will encourage stakeholder and public input on a local level, provide a local level of responsibility for actions, provide consistency in deer seasons from year to year, and retain the ability to manage most units between habitat types.**
- **New seasons, licenses and tag options will offer new opportunities for hunters while improving the consistency of licensing and tagging across the state and between user groups; offer seasons that uphold the tradition of deer hunting while fulfilling biological management needs.**
- **New methods for deer registration will provide additional convenience to hunters and efficient harvest data access to DNR scientists and law enforcement, while saving money, beginning in 2015. This year, please register deer as you have in the past.**
- **New methods of setting quotas will give the public in each county (through County Deer Advisory Councils) an opportunity for hands-on deer management based on the issues that most affect local people and ecosystems.**

What is the Deer Trustee Report?

- **A review of Wisconsin's deer management program with over 60 recommendations for improving deer management in the state.**
- **The foundation for the extensive rule changes that will begin in 2014, based on collaboration between the public and the DNR. These include:**
    - **Changes in management zone and DMU boundaries**
    - **Changes to the methods used for herd size estimation and monitoring**

- **Changes to deer season structure and license and tag options**
- **Changes in how deer are registered and how harvest data is collected**
- **New programs such as the Deer Management Assistance Program, County Deer Advisory Councils**

Process for implementation:

- **Five public Action Teams were organized to review recommendations. Action Teams developed implementation proposals for most of the DTR recommendations.**
- **DNR staff wrote rules based on these proposals and presented them at public hearings in October 2013.**
- **After another round of public input, the revised rules were sent to the Natural Resources Board for final approval.**

<u>Four Deer Management Zones have been established:</u>

- **Northern Forest Zone**
- **Central Forest Zone**
- **Central Farmland Zone**
- **Southern Farmland Zone**
- **In 2014, deer seasons are generally standardized within each zone (with some exceptions).**

<u>Important changes in 2014:</u>

- **The Deer Management Unit (DMU) boundaries have been changed and are now based on county or tribal boundaries. Previously, they were delineated by road and river features – 130+ DMUs have been consolidated into 76 DMUs.**
- **The Chronic Wasting Disease Management Zone has been dissolved. Areas where CWD is present are now referred to as CWD-affected areas.**
- **All Metro Subunits have been maintained in order to allow added opportunity.**

- **Previously, population estimates described the estimated total number of deer in each DMU.**
- **<u>Population goals have been replaced with population objectives</u>, which indicate stakeholder desire to increase, decrease or stabilize the deer herd.**
- **Wisconsin is managing CWD to prevent its spread rather than to eradicate the disease.**
- **In the future, County Deer Advisory Councils (CDACs) will have a direct stake in deer herd management. Councils will make recommendations to the department regarding population objectives, quota-setting and management strategies in each county.**
- **The cost of bonus antlerless tags has been standardized across the state; there are no longer reduced price Herd Control and CWD Management Zone tags.**
- **Antlerless permit availability will differ between public and private lands. This is intended to reduce hunting pressure on public lands to provide a better experience for those who hunt public lands.**

<u>County Deer Advisory Councils (CDACs):</u>

- **Help gather public opinion on deer population objectives, antlerless quotas and season structure options.**
- **Review and consider deer herd metrics regarding deer herd trends, impacts and human interactions.**
- **Use information gathered from meetings and public comment in order to provide DNR with recommendations on deer population objectives, antlerless quotas and season structure options.**
- **Make deer herd population recommendations (every third year, beginning Fall 2014) to the department for the next three-year cycle (during Oct. – Dec.).**
- **Councils are currently in the process of developing recommendations regarding deer population objectives that will influence herd management in their county over the next three years. Recommendations will be sent to the Natural Resources Board for approval in February 2015.**

- **After three meetings in fall 2014, each council will reconvene in spring 2015 to develop antlerless deer harvest quotas for deer hunting seasons and consider various strategies to meet population objectives.**

CDAC Membership:

- **While 3 members of each council must have deer hunting credentials, the department has reached out to a number of stakeholder groups for membership nominations.**
- **Those currently enrolled in the Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) are encouraged to become involved in their county's CDAC.**

<u>Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP):</u>

- **DMAP is a cooperative effort between the DNR, landowners, and hunters to provide habitat and deer herd management assistance to those interested in managing their property for wildlife.**
- **DMAP will help create and maintain healthy habitat for deer and other wildlife on private and public land.**
- **Three levels of enrollment are offered; Level 1 has no minimum acreage requirement, Level 2 requires at least 160 acres and Level 3 requires at least 640 acres for enrollment. Benefits increase from Level 1 to Level 3.**
- **Multiple landowners with similar property goals can form a group cooperative to achieve the minimum acreage requirement for a higher level of enrollment and additional benefits.**
- **DMAP benefits include collaboration with local biologists and foresters on deer and habitat management, networking with landowners with common goals, written management plans for Levels 2 and 3, and reduced price antlerless tags when recommended.**
- **DMAP cooperators who purchase antlerless tags in 2014 may transfer these tags to others wishing to hunt on the enrolled property. It is important to note that these tags may only be used within the enrolled**

DMAP property. Antlerless tags may not be transferred to hunters for more than the $6 face-value price.

<u>New Opportunities in 2014:</u>

- **A crossbow deer hunting license is available for any qualified hunter to purchase – this will be the first time many Wisconsin deer hunters will have the opportunity to hunt with a crossbow. Previously, only holders of permits for hunters with disabilities and hunters age 65 or older could use a crossbow under the authority of an archer license.**
- **All hunters with an appropriate license can now hunt with a crossbow during the new crossbow season, which runs concurrently with the archery season.**
- **Electronic registration will be available for a group of randomly selected hunters in 2014 as a pilot program, and is expected to be available to all hunters starting in 2015.**

<u>Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management:</u>

- **As of 2014, CWD has been detected in wild deer in 18 Wisconsin counties.**
- **DNR currently tests about 8,000 wild deer annually for CWD.**
- **The department intends to continue testing for CWD to monitor its spread.**
- **Restrictions on baiting and feeding remain confined to CWD-affected areas. Baiting and feeding are allowed in other non-affected counties.**
- **Similar hunting seasons will be offered in CWD-affected areas as elsewhere in the state, and additional antlerless-only seasons may be held in CWD-affected areas as needed to reduce the spread of CWD.**
- **Future CWD research will focus on detecting and preventing spread of the disease.**

Deer Research:

- **DTR research recommendations include expanding predator and predation studies to monitor sources of predation on deer.**

- **The public can get involved in research efforts through citizen science opportunities, including trail camera studies and other surveys.**
- **Research on Chronic Wasting Disease will continue in CWD-affected areas, but will also be expanded to new areas to detect outbreaks and set the stage for early response.**
- **Hunter satisfaction, public perception of deer populations and predators and other forms of human dimensions research will aim to anticipate and address social problems relating to deer.**
- **Applied research will directly relate to managing deer and habitat.**