

Fall/Winter OUTDOOR HUNTING GUIDE



Young hunters harvest 15,608 deer during early portion of 2021 hunt

JILL PRITCHARD
MISSOURI DEPT. OF CONSERVATION

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – Preliminary data from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) shows that young hunters ages 6 through 15 harvested 15,608 deer during Missouri's early youth portion of the 2021 deer hunting season, Oct. 30-31. Top counties were Osage with youth hunters harvesting 359 deer, Franklin with 329, and Howell with 310. Youth hunters harvested 15,854 deer during last year's early youth portion.

View additional harvest numbers for the 2021 early youth portion at Telecheck Harvest Numbers (mo.gov).

"Weather can have a big impact on harvest totals during our shorter season portions," said MDC Cervid Program Supervisor Jason Isabelle. "Thankfully, the rain we experienced across much of the state late last week moved out just in time for our youth hunters to have some great conditions over the weekend."

Missouri's deer archery season continues through Nov. 12 and resumes Nov. 24 through Jan. 15, 2022. The November portion of firearms deer season runs Nov. 13-23 followed by the late youth portion Nov. 26-28. The antlerless portion of firearms deer season runs Dec. 4-12 followed by the alternative methods portion Dec. 25 through Jan. 4, 2022.

Read more information on deer hunting from MDC's 2021 Fall Deer & Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information booklet, available where hunting permits are sold and online at <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/Zyy>.

Tree-stand safety

Every year many hunters go to the field with anticipation on harvesting that big buck they have been watching for months. With all the excitement involved in pre-season preparation, many hunters forget to wear their tree stand safety harness come opening day. This can be a major problem in the event of a fall. Tree stands provide many advantages when it comes to hunting, but they also carry a high-risk factor. Falling from 20 ft up in the air is the equivalent of being in a 30-mph car crash. I would also encourage hunters who hunt from tree stands to inspect all their tree stand equipment (straps, stirrups, welds...etc.) for defects or excessive wear. These failure points are often the cause of tree stand falls. Be safe this season and wear your tree stand harness. Bag that big buck and not a hospital bill.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

PRELIMINARY DATA shows youth hunters harvested 15,608 deer during the early youth deer season Oct. 30-31. Pictured is Henry Jones of Belle, who harvested this doe at his grandfather's farm at Paydown. His parents are Gary and Georgia Jones.

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OUTDOORS IN THE OZARKS

The Canada Goose — in Canada



by **LARRY DABLEMONT**

When I was in Northwest Ontario in October, I stayed about ten days, and besides fishing by myself, I spent some time with Tinker Helseth's son-in-law Dallas Mosbeck, who, like Tinker, is a bush pilot and Lake of the Woods hunting and fishing guide. One morning I got up at 4:30 and went goose hunting with him only about an hour north of the Canada border and an hour south of Nestor Falls.

I have hunted geese for many years in Manitoba crop fields, but that country is a different world altogether. Most of northwest Ontario is heavy forest, but in the south part of that province there are quite a few fields interspersed amongst the expanse of trees and lakes, where permanent pasture and a few cropfields are found. And with them, lots of geese.

To hunt Canada geese there, Dallas purchased blinds that lie flat on the ground, well camouflaged, with decoys all around them. I figure with those two blinds and likely two- dozen of the most realistic goose decoys I have ever seen, he likely has 500 dollars or so invested in goose hunting.

But it was a morning to remember, as every ten

minutes or so a flock of 10 to 20 geese came gliding in over us, honking away, sometimes only 15 or 20 feet above us. Let me say right here that those coffin-like blinds are much better for sleeping than they are for shooting out of. I napped a little in the warm summer-like sunshine.

I also missed my share of easy shots because the geese can get the heck out of there in a hurry when you fling the lid on that blind open. But the limit is five geese and in three hours and twenty shells, Dallas and I brought down 8 geese that morning and it was a hunt to remember.

But he and I saw something amazing that morning when a young mallard flew past and from out of nowhere a peregrine falcon nailed him from above and drove him into the ground. There was high grass there and somehow the falcon lost the duck in the grass. He soared around diving and sweeping over the area, and eventually winged away. An hour later I walked over to see if the duck was dead and could not find him. But suddenly, from underneath a green clump of high pasture grass, the young drake, not even close to having his winter plumage sprang to flight as if he hadn't been hurt.

I'd like to think he will soar over my decoys here

on some Ozarks water, in full winter color, and I will have him for dinner, just like that peregrine falcon meant to do. The way I was shooting in Canada he might cost me two or three shells.

I ate one of those geese last week... grilled breasts cut into small steaks with bacon, green peppers and onions on long wooden skewers... unbelievably good for supper. And let me assure you, if I didn't like geese for supper I would never raise a gun barrel again to bring one down.

I will only write one more column about my October trip to Canada, next week, writing about hunting ruffed grouse. But there was so much more from that stretch of time. My great grandfather was a French trapper from Ontario, and my great grandmother a Cree Indian woman. Maybe that's why it draws me like it does. I love the place, so few people and so few problems. And because I love using a camera, I got some great photos of the wildlife, fish, birds and wild country. I have put many of those photos on my website, www.larrydablemontoutdoors.blogspot.com A pair of trumpeter swans put on a show for me. Take a look at their antics in my photos.

I have written before about the lateness of the four seasons now as compared to what I saw in the sixties, as a boy. I wonder why biologists do not recognize this and change hunting seasons because of it. Maybe they aren't told enough, or have not spent enough time outdoors. Most of them grew up in cities today and are way to young to know what happened before they were born. Duck seasons should begin

here in the Midwest 10 days to two weeks later, and to have successful mating, turkey seasons should be delayed by at least 10 days. Dove season now is just too early, as there are still young doves in nests the first of September. That did not happen 40 or 50 years ago. Waterfowl seasons are being delayed a little, changed in past years, as a result of what federal biologists who study their migration habits have taken note of.

Yesterday I heard a television station announce the Conservation Department people declared the weekend the peak of the fall color season! I just shook my head in disbelief. The news media believes anything those people tell them. Here on Lightnin' Ridge, the foliage is at least 85 percent green. If some extreme weather changes do not take place, the peak of the fall colors in my area may not even be next weekend. But for the media, made up of folks who live in cities and seldom get into the woods, if some state conservation agency tells you something about the outdoors, you consider it the gospel. Never question... never disagree!

On Saturday, Nov. 6, I am going to be at an outdoor and tackle show in Mt. Home, Arkansas at the Ramada inn, going on from 8:00 until noon. There are tables available for anyone selling outdoor gear. To reserve a table, call Jerry McCoy at 870-450-9238. If you can get there, come by and see me and I will give you the fall magazines free. Normally they are \$6 each. I will also have all 11 of my outdoor books there for sale for \$10 each.

Missouri hunters took 12 black bears during first season

JOE JEREK
MISSOURI DEPT. OF CONSERVATION

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reports that Missouri hunters harvested 12 black bears during the state's inaugural bear-hunting season, which ran Oct. 18–27. More than 6,330 hunters applied for 400 permits for the season with the maximum total harvest for the season being 40 bears.

"This was an incredibly successful first bear hunting season for Missouri given that we have a highly regulated season, that bears in the state are widely distributed throughout some pretty rugged wilderness, and that many hunters had never hunted bears before," said MDC State Furbearer and Black Bear Biologist Laura Conlee. "A harvest of 12 bears in our first season is testament to the hunters. Bear hunting is an extremely challenging endeavor, especially under the framework that we established. This was a new experience for many hunters, and they put in the work to be successful and take advantage of this new hunting opportunity."

Conlee added that MDC took a conservative approach in developing its bear-hunting regulations.

"Our highly regulated and limited season included a sustainable maximum harvest of 40 bears, which is about 5% of our total bear population," Conlee said. "We also prohibited baiting and the use of dogs, limited hunting to 10 days, and restricted the number of hunters who could participate. With any new season, it is difficult to predict hunter success, so we took a conservative approach to limiting the number of hunters and length of the hunting season. This was to ensure we didn't overharvest the bear population in any one zone."

Bear hunting in Missouri is limited to Missouri residents and restricted to three designated areas of southern Missouri called Bear Management Zones (BMZ). Each permit issued is for a specific BMZ and hunting is limited to public or private property within the BMZ. Permit and harvest quotas for the 2021 bear season were:

BMZ 1: Permit quota of 200 with a harvest quota of 20 bears.

BMZ 2: Permit quota of 150 with a harvest quota of 15 bears.

BMZ 3: Permit quota of 50 with a harvest quota of 5 bears.

The more than 6,330 hunters who applied during May to hunt a specific BMZ paid a \$10 application fee. The 400 hunters selected for permits through a random drawing of all applicants then paid a permit fee of \$25.

Among those selected for permits, Kelsie Wikoff of Hume harvested a 268-pound boar (male bear) in Zone 1. She said she had spent 48 hours in a tree stand over three days since the season began Oct. 18 and harvested the bear Oct. 21.

Including Wikoff's harvest, black bears harvested during the first season were from the following BMZs:

- BMZ 1: Nine (9) bears harvested.
- BMZ 2: Three (3) bears harvested.
- BMZ 3: Zero (0) bears harvested.

According to the Wildlife Code of Missouri, the harvest limit is one bear per permit. Only lone black bears may be taken. Hunters may not take bears that are known to be in the presence of others bears, including female black bears with cubs. Bears may not be disturbed, pushed, harassed, or taken from a den. Bear hunters must wear hunter orange, make reasonable efforts to retrieve shot bears, and may not leave or abandon commonly edible portions. Learn more about bear hunting in Missouri at mdc.mo.gov/bearhunting.

Black bears were historically abundant throughout the forested areas of Missouri prior to European settlement but were nearly

eliminated by unregulated killing in the late 1800s, as well as from habitat loss when Ozark forests were logged. Over the last 50 years, bear numbers and range in Missouri have grown to around 800 black bears with most found south of the Missouri River and primarily south of Interstate 44. Missouri bear range is expanding. Bear numbers in Missouri are increasing each year by approximately 9 percent and are expected to double in less than 10 years. As bear numbers continue to increase, MDC will use a highly regulated hunting season as an essential part of population management. MDC's 2020-2030 Black Bear Management Plan will guide bear management in Missouri for the next decade. Learn more about black bears in Missouri and MDC management efforts at mdc.mo.gov/bears.



CONGRATULATIONS TO Kelsie Wikoff of Hume on her harvest of this 268-pound boar (male bear) in Zone 1 during Missouri's first bear-hunting season.

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MDC brood survey shows improvement in turkey production compared to five-year average

JILL PRITCHARD
MISSOURI DEPT. OF CONSERVATION

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — According to the Missouri Department of Conservation's (MDC) annual wild turkey brood survey for 2021, average turkey production statewide was similar to production at the statewide scale in 2020, but better than statewide production from 2016-2019.

MDC's statewide poult-to-hen ratio (PHR)—an index for turkey production—this year was 1.0, which was the same as the 2020 PHR but 11-percent greater than the average production observed during the previous five years (2016-2020). However, when comparing the statewide PHR to the average turkey production observed over the last 10 and 20-years, production in 2021 was below the long-term average.

Regionally, production was relatively consistent in 2021, with almost every Turkey Productivity Region (TPR) ending up with a PHR within the range of 1.0 to 1.3. The exceptions were the West Prairie Region, where the 0.7 PHR fell below the statewide average, and the Mississippi Lowlands Region, where the 2.4 PHR far exceeded the statewide average.

Compared to last year, production in the Ozark Border and Ozarks West Regions increased by 43-percent and 57-percent, respectively. The Lindley Breaks Region also saw a nine-percent increase in production, but the most significant improvement was in the Mississippi Lowlands Region where the PHR increased 118-percent from 2020.

"Because turkey abundance is relatively low in the Mississippi Lowlands compared to other parts of the state, we usually receive the fewest observations from this region during the brood survey," says MDC Wild Turkey Biologist Reina Tyl. "Since the production index is calculated from a smaller number of observations, it's not uncommon to see large annual fluctuations in the Mississippi Lowlands' poult-to-hen ratio."

Unfortunately, several regions—Northeast, Northwest, and Union Breaks—saw slight downturns in production this year after experiencing increases in productivity during 2020. The Ozarks East and West Prairie Regions saw similar PHRs this year as in 2020.

How the poult-to-hen ratio is determined

Since 1959, MDC has conducted an annual wild turkey brood survey where MDC staff and citizen volunteers record the number of hens and recently hatched turkeys, which are called poults, they see during June, July, and August. These observations are then tallied to determine the success of the hatch, which is most often reported as a poult-to-hen ratio, or simply the average number of poults per hen observed during the survey. Tyl explained that the poult-to-hen ratio is a good measure of nesting success and poult survival.

"Each year, thousands of citizens participate in the survey, and we are grateful for their contribution," Tyl said. "This year during the three-month survey, participants reported sightings of more than 75,000 turkeys, which is a testament to the large number of dedicated volunteers that take time to record and submit their observations."

What drives long-term trends in turkey production

"Since MDC has been collecting information about turkey hatches for over 60 years, we have been able to monitor long-term trends in production," explained Tyl. "The last few decades of brood survey data indicate that PHRs have been declining, and the statewide PHR has been at or below 1.0 for the last six years."

Tyl added a lot has changed over the last several decades that could be contributing to the declining trend in productivity.

"There have been broad-scale losses of quality nesting and brood-rearing habitat, changing spring weather patterns, increasing populations of some nest and poult predators, and declining insect abundance—a critical food source for young poults," she said.

MDC and University of Missouri launch turkey research project

MDC partnered with the University of Missouri to launch a cooperative research project last year to determine how these different factors are affecting wild turkey nest success and poult survival.

"The project also aims to identify the main causes of poult mortality and determine how brood-rearing habitat selection, and the quality of those habitats, affects poult survival," Tyl noted. "The information gathered from this study will inform management of wild turkeys and turkey habitat in Missouri."

To participate in the annual wild turkey brood survey, email MDC's Wild Turkey Management Program at wildturkeymgmt@mdc.mo.gov with "Wild Turkey Brood Survey" as the subject of the email. Include complete name and mailing address.

For a more detailed report outlining the results of the 2021 Missouri Wild Turkey Brood Survey, and to read reports from previous years, visit the Turkey Reports webpage at <https://mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/species/turkey/turkey-reports>.

Five long hikes in central Missouri

COLUMBIA, Mo. — The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) encourages Missourians to discover nature this fall by seeking out remote trail hiking experiences on conservation areas in central Missouri.

Traversing longer trails on foot, forces us to slow down; to observe and appreciate elements of the natural world on a more intimate level. While bicycling, horse riding, or even a car ride can take us to remote places of natural beauty, hiking forces us to engage with the very ground on which we walk. Small, quiet interactions of tiny pollinators feeding from the fall's final flowers, field crickets rustling beneath dry grasses, or the silent flight of a watchful owl, all become harder to miss. And the splendor of trees changing color and dropping leaves, turns forests into wooded wonderlands.

Autumn offers opportunities to engage with the natural world during a season of change. Finding a remote nature trail can provide a powerful reminder of how we're all connected to these natural communities and seasonal cycles.

Many conservation areas are in remote settings, and most have no potable water onsite. Before hitting the trail, remember to make a plan, tell someone where you're going and when you'll return, and pack water, food, and any other provisions you'll need for your time on the trail.

MDC's free MO Outdoors App for mobile devices provides a convenient way to carry digital maps and other information, even outside of cellphone service range. Always pack a paper map and compass, too, as a failsafe.

Always check hunting season dates before hiking during the fall. If hiking during an open firearms season, wear hunter orange clothing to ensure you're seen and identifiable as a human hiker.

"There are so many great trails on conservation areas, it's easy to find the experience you're looking for," said MDC Recreational Use Specialist, A.J. Campbell.

Many conservation areas in central Missouri offer excellent trails for long nature hikes this fall, just a short drive from home. Some areas feature more than ten miles of designated paths, and many of these areas offer multiple loops, allowing hikers to customize their experience. Learn more about these, and other hiking opportunities at nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/places.

Canaan Conservation Area

Located west of Owensville in Gasconade County, this area offers 10 miles of multi-use trail, with three distinct loops. The natural-surface trail takes hikers, bikers, and horseback riders through forests, glades, woodlands, and prairies, and along Clear Fork and Sulphur Branch creeks. The trail is open year-round for hiking, but closed to bikes and horses during firearms hunting seasons for deer and turkey. Camping is allowed only in designated campsites near the area's parking lots, available year-round on a first-come, first-served basis.

See **Long hikes** page 20B



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MARIES COUNTY
Advocate

Local youth show off deer kills

Jance Schlottog (above left), age 13, harvested this nice 8-point buck at the Schlottog Farm in Maries County the first weekend of this year's youth hunt while hunting with his father. His parents are Kurtis and Rachel Schlottog. **Kandyn Struemp** (above right), 9-years-old, son of Britani Struemp and the late Dustin Streumph all of Belle, killed his first deer, this 8-point buck, on Saturday. He was hunting with his grandfather, Henry Struemp on the family farm in Osage County. **Ryker Bialczyk** (right), 8-years-old, killed a button buck on his great grandmother's farm in Osage County. Ryker is the son of Garret and Danica Bialczyk. Local youth deer hunt photos are published free of charge as there is room in the Maries County Advocate. Email photo, along with the hunters name, age, date of kill, approximate location of harvest, if this is their first kill, along with a description of the buck or doe to dwarden@wardpub.com.



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Long hikes • from page 19B

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Davisdale Conservation Area

Located between Rocheport and Boonville in Howard County, this area offers 18 miles of service roads. These paths are mowed periodically during summer months, but users should expect to walk through shaggy grass if paths have not been mowed recently. Service roads are open year-round to hiking and form several distinct loops through woodlands, prairies, and river hill forests, including many long, scenic views. Camping is allowed only in designated campsites near the area's parking lots, available year-round on a first-come, first-served basis.

Rudolf Bennitt Conservation Area

Located south of Moberly in Howard and Randolph counties, this area offers 13 miles of multi-use trail, with three distinct loops. The chat-surface trail takes hikers, bikers, and horseback riders through forests and woodlands, and near the area's 48-acre lake. The trail is open year-round for hiking, but closed to bikes and horses during firearms hunting seasons for deer and turkey. Primitive hike-in camping is allowed, and individual campsites with gravel parking pads are also available year-round on a first-come, first-served basis.

Scrivner Road Creek Conservation Area

Located south of Russellville in Cole County, this area offers 8.5 miles of multi-use trail with four distinct loops. The natural-surface trail takes hikers and horseback riders through prairies and woods, and offers long, scenic views. The trail is open year-round for hiking, but closed to bikes and horses during firearms hunting seasons for deer and turkey. A separate 1-mile path, periodically mowed, loops around the 9-acre Winegar Lake. Camping is allowed only in designated campsites near the area's parking lots, available year-round on a first-come, first-served basis.

Three Creeks Conservation Area

Located south of Columbia in Boone County, this area offers 8.5 miles of hiking and multi-use trail. The Turkey Creek interpretive trail is a 3-mile hiking-only trail with 1- and 2-mile cutoffs. It takes hikers along Turkey Creek and many beautiful bluffs. The remaining 5.5 miles of trail, open year-round, takes hikers, bikers, and horseback riders through forests surrounding Bass, Turkey, and Bonne Femme creeks. These

trails feature several creek crossings, so hikers should plan to walk through water, especially during wetter times of the year. Primitive hike-in camping is allowed, except during firearms hunting seasons for deer and turkey.

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