



Deer Management Program

08/28/2021

Why is deer hunting necessary?

White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are an important component of healthy forest ecosystems, however, deer populations out of balance with their habitat create ecological problems. For example, studies have found that forest regeneration is not occurring in Pennsylvania forests that are over-populated by deer. This is because deer consume saplings and young forest growth.

As part of our deer management program, controlled archery hunting is permitted on the majority of our preserves. We take the safety of the public using our trails very seriously. The Delaware Valley Wildlife Management hunters that participate in our deer management program are limited in number, thoroughly vetted, participate in yearly safety training, and follow all Pennsylvania Game Commission laws and regulations. Each year, we notify townships and local police to inform them of our program.

What You Need to Know When Visiting Preserves

Visitor safety is our top priority. With the protocols we have in place, visitors and hunters are able to safely spend time on the same land together. Archery season in Pennsylvania begins in October and ends in January, with intermittent breaks during that time (*see below*). Hunters are most active during the hours near dawn and dusk. Hunting takes place at Armentrout Preserve, Briar Hill Preserve, Camp Woods, Crossways Preserve, Dodsworth Run Preserve, Four Mills Nature Reserve, Penllyn Natural Area, Piszek Preserve, Timoney Preserve, Willow Lake Farm, and along the Green Ribbon Trail from Route 202 to Gwynedd Valley Train Station. While they may use trails when accessing the preserve, they avoid hunting near trails. Hunters are required to hunt from a tree stand and only discharge their bow directly below them. Some visitors wear bright colors during this time, as recommended when hiking anywhere in the state during hunting season. As always, follow our [trail rules](#) and keep your dogs on leash and stay on designated trails.

Public hunting, carrying firearms, and trapping are not permitted on our preserves.

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Deer are primarily browse feeders - leaves, buds, and woody vegetation make up a large component of a white-tailed deer's diet. The average deer consumes 6-8% of its body weight per day, which for a mature 150-lb deer is roughly 9-12 pounds of forage daily.

Heavy deer browsing leads to serious impacts on healthy forest regeneration over time. Deer commonly over-browse beneficial native understory species and leave behind poor-tasting invasive plants, which then take over. Animals ranging from insects to songbirds to small mammals can all be negatively impacted by this loss of suitable places to feed, nest, and hide. If deer over-browsing continues unchecked, it will impact future forest health for decades.

In addition to ecological concerns, Pennsylvania has the second highest rate of deer-related accidents in the country. Residents have a one in 70 chance of being involved in an accident caused by deer. And PA Insurance Department data from 2016 shows that Montgomery County had one of the highest rates of deer-related accidents in the state.

Research conducted on our preserves concluded that our deer population could not be supported by the land, and a community-based, controlled archery deer management program was necessary for the health and biodiversity of our preserves.

Hunting has been found to be the most effective way to manage deer populations - research has demonstrated that alternatives, including sterilization and contraception, are less effective for managing free-ranging herds, while being prohibitively expensive.

For more information, visit PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources website.

2021-2022 Pennsylvania Statewide Archery Season

Oct. 2-Nov. 13; Sun., Nov. 14; Nov. 15-19; and Dec. 27-Jan. 17, 2022

With the exception of Nov. 14, there is no statewide hunting on Sundays.

2021-2022 Southeast Pennsylvania Special Regulation Zone Archery Season

Wildlife Management Unit 5D - Learn More

Sept. 18-Dec. 11; and Dec. 27-Jan. 17, 2022

With the exception of Nov. 14, Nov. 21, and Nov. 28, there is no hunting on Sundays.



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Donate



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