



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Good News for this Fall's Hunting Season**

Fall is in the air. The days are getting shorter, the weather is growing cooler, and our students have gone back to school. This all means one big thing for our sportsmen and women: the start of the Fall Hunting Season! The fall hunting season includes opportunities to harvest a variety of animals including duck, goose, turkey, bear, furbearers, deer, and much more. With hunters having access to almost 7 million acres of hunting land in our state, there are plenty of opportunities to hunt. The DNR's hunting forecast is out, and it gives us the following important and helpful information.

Those hunting black bears will be interested to know that our state is first in the country with more bears harvested than any other state; and the number of bear hunting applicants continues to grow. This year's harvest is intended to stabilize the black bear population, which is estimated to be over 28,000 bears, which is about 1 bear per square mile. The range of bears in our state continues to extend south. For the second year now, hunters are asked to submit by mail tooth samples from bears they have harvested. This tooth submission is required as the age data generated from the teeth help monitor our state's bear population.

New this year, hunters may now legally hunt in open water as long as part of their blind, boat, or similar device is located within 3 feet of the shoreline, including islands. This change eliminates the concealment requirement as long as the blind or boat is within 3 feet of any shoreline. The DNR says that this change will open up countless opportunities throughout the state, especially where water levels fluctuate.

Those hunting waterfowl are in luck, as the outlook for those hunting ducks, geese, and other waterfowl this fall is very promising. Over the last 10 years, Wisconsin has averaged about half a million ducks each year. According to the DNR, with any hunt, hunters can improve their odds by scouting before and during a hunting season. In fact, a recent Wisconsin duck hunter survey found that those who did not scout prior to hunting harvested an average of 4.8 ducks; those who scouted once harvested 7.1 ducks, those who scouted twice harvested 8.1, and those who scouted three or more times 14.7. As federal rules related to possession limits changed last year, it is always a good idea to check the number and types of ducks that a hunter can possess at any one time.

There is a special Youth Waterfowl Hunt held the weekend of September 17-18 during which licenses and stamp requirements are waived for eligible young duck hunters between the ages of 10-15. These young hunters do need to be HIP certified (free of charge), and any youth harvesting geese will need an Early Canada goose season permit.

Also new this year, Wisconsin's DNR switched to a GO Wild licensing system. The Go Wild system at [gowild.wi.gov](http://gowild.wi.gov) gives you everything you need to know about hunting, fishing, or enjoying the outdoors. The system offers licenses and registrations all in one place, and it gives more flexibility in buying and displaying licenses. Hunters can now even register their game online at [gamereg.wi.gov](http://gamereg.wi.gov) or by phone at 844-426-3734 (844 GAME-REG).

Whether you are a seasoned hunter or new to the sport, this hunting season is a great opportunity to get out into the field. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the DNR toll-free at 1-888-WDNRINFO (1-888-936-7463). DNR service representatives are available to answer questions 7 days a week, 7am-10pm every day. Or as always, feel free to contact my office. I wish you a safe and successful hunting season!

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