

OHIO

\$2.50



Outdoor News

5 ODNR Intern 'Paints' Regulations Cover with Computer Program

7 Ohio Rep. David Joyce Demands More Action on Invasive Asian Carp

9 Ohio State Trappers Association Holds Its Annual Convention

28 Pair of Reservoirs Serve Anglers in Northwest's Galion

VOL. 14, NO. 20

www.outdoornews.com/ohio

SEPTEMBER 27, 2019



Bowhunters, get it ready!

Deer archery opens on Sept. 28; ODNR expects good hunt

By Mike Moore
Editor

Athens, Ohio — You have to go all the way back to 2001 to see a lower deer kill than what Ohio hunters experienced last year.

And, that's good news for this year's hunters, who will begin their quest for this year's bucks and does when archery season begins on Sept. 28.

Mike Tonkovich, the DNR Division of Wildlife's deer program administrator in Athens, expects a tremendous deer season for Ohio hunters.

AUTUMN GLORY. Bow season for whitetails begins in Ohio on Sept. 28. Find feature stories on archery hunting for deer on Pages 18 and 25 of this issue.

Photo by Bill Marchell

(See Bowhunters Page 16)

Bowhunters

(From Page 1)

"It can't be anything but good," Tonkovich said.

There should be tremendous carryover of both bucks and does from last year, when Ohio hunters in all seasons killed just around 172,000 deer, a drop of 7% from the previous year.

"You have to go all the way back to 2001 to find a lower harvest," Tonkovich said. "That's pretty significant.

"We carried a bunch of deer forward from last year that will be underneath treestands, in the fields, and in the forests," he said.

Tonkovich said hunter surveys conducted after the last three deer seasons indicate something is going right.

"If you look at the entire sample, from 2015 to 2018, hunter satisfaction has been increasing every single year," he said. "In spite of the fact that the harvest was down last year to a level that we haven't seen in over a decade."

The hunter survey, a barometer that Ohio deer biologists lean on heavily, showed that most of the hunters who wanted to kill a deer last year did so, Tonkovich said.

"I think you're going to have

to work hard to not have a good season in Ohio this year," he said. "The only thing that could throw us a curveball is that weather component and the standing corn component."

The crop component, though, likely will be lessened in many parts of Ohio due to the poor corn crop in many areas due to late planting.

Another potential curveball is that the Division of Wildlife has confirmed epizootic hemorrhagic disease in deer in Warren County in southwest Ohio and Knox County in the north-central part of the state.

"We've had lots of pictures coming in from deer all across the state," Tonkovich said. "Unfortunately, there could be localized (herd) impact if this turns out to be a sizeable outbreak."

EHD rears its head about every five years in Ohio, according to Tonkovich. The last time it was seen in the state was in 2017, which could be good news.

"We're not in that five-year cycle right now, if you will," he said.

Sampling for EHD-positive deer in the affected areas has been intense at the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

"So, I'm hoping (EHD) might not be a factor," Tonkovich said. "I'm hoping it won't be a significant outbreak like we saw in 2017."

There are no big regulation changes this year, says Tonkovich, and that too should allow for most hunters to experience success.

"The regulations have been conservative enough to allow deer populations to grow, and that was by design," he said. "... We had some of the most conservative regulations the state has ever seen in 2015 and 2016. Those gave the deer population a means to grow."

The mast crop is still under evaluation by the Division of Wildlife, Tonkovich said, and that too could play a role in hunter success as it typically does. A poor mast crop is good for hunting and vice versa.

"You might just have to work a little bit harder," if we get a good mast crop, he said.

Overall, signs look positive, Tonkovich said.

H2Ohio

(From Page 1)

have to travel farther and farther out into the water because the Lake was so thick and green, it was almost like pea soup," he said.

"Our water problems have accumulated over many years, and it will take a dedicated, long-term commitment to achieve real solutions to protect Ohio's water."

Measuring Impacts

• Harvest

	Average 2015-17	2018	% Change
Total Harvest	16,778	10,861	-35%
Antlerless Harvest	10,425	5,867	-44%
% Antlerless	62.5%	54.0%	

ODNR DIVISION OF WILDLIFE



This graphic shows the change in deer kills on public land since new regulations were put in place.

Courtesy ODNR

"I wish I could control every aspect of the season, like access and leasing," he said. "But, the public land regs will still be in place and that's worth mentioning."

What that means is that hunters can take no more than one antlerless deer per season on public land. This regulation was

first put in place last deer season. And, after deer gun season, only antlered deer may be legally killed on public land.

Last year, those regulations amounted to a 35% reduction in the total harvest on public land from the previous year, according to Division of Wildlife statistics.

The 4R program is summed by employing the "Right Source of Nutrients at the Right Rate and Right Time in the Right Place."

That means best-management practices and precision agriculture for farmers. Funding is to be available for equipment and technology that better targets fertilizer application and reduces amounts of fertiliz-