

does to go, his hunters were happy to harvest them.

Conlin adds that the evolution of outfitting and fee-based hunting has changed the entire system, providing good incentive for landowners to allow hunting.

"Hunting has turned into a good cash crop," he explains. "We just have to come to grips with the new situation and find ways to get it done."

Looking back, Conlin acknowledges that between 1994 and 2000, too few deer were harvested. "We weren't being aggressive enough, and we weren't issuing enough permits."

IDNR has moved to correct those figures, with favorable results. In 2000, 530,000 permits were issued; by 2007, nearly 700,000 were issued. In 2000, killed deer totaled 149,000; by 2007, 181,000 were harvested.

Others contend IDNR still isn't being aggressive enough. Kallal reports that the same \$400 that buys out-of-state hunters an archery permit in Illinois would buy a firearm and an archery permit in Missouri.

Conlin responds that particular permit fee went up over the course of three years, with funds going to pay for a computer-based licensing system for vendors.

"I don't think that permit price will go down," he says. "They're still buying the permits, even though the prices have gone up. We have raised the cap from 20,000 to 25,000."

What you can do about deer

HENRY Kallal acknowledges that the first solution that comes to mind for his deer population problem may not be entirely legal: "I'd like to blast away — but I won't!" Instead, the Jerseyville farmer says he sticks to the law and advises other farmers to do the same.



What's legal and effective? Get as many landowner permits and nuisance permits as you can, and remove as many deer as possible, preferably does.

Kallal would like to see landowners and outfitters offer incentives for shooting does, instead of just trophy bucks.

"A farmer could offer some financial reward for every doe killed on his land," he suggests. Landowners could also seek outfitters who will reward doe harvests, such as a free hunt if you kill a certain number of does.

In January, the Deer Population Task Force will present a set of proposals to the General Assembly. Made up of a group of 15 different stakeholders, the task force conducted a survey of 1,200 people and has as its goal a 10% reduction in deer-vehicle collisions.

Task force at work

Based on those findings and stakeholder suggestions, the task force is considering a number of options, including:

- Easier to obtain, over-the-counter permits.

- Multiple late-winter season permits per hunter, with greater numbers available in counties with greater populations.

- Extending the late-winter season from three to either seven or nine days.

- An October antlerless

(doe) season for firearms.

- Improved nuisance permit system.

Conlin believes changes will be made to the nuisance permit system, which currently allows permits to be issued to landowners only during the time in which damage occurs. Generally, that's during the summer, when processors won't handle deer and hot weather makes any sort of preservation nearly impossible.

"I'm confident we'll get something worked out there," Conlin adds.



Growing numbers

	Archery		Firearm	
	Permits Issued	Reported Harvest	Permits Issued	Reported Harvest
1991	115,521	18,155	206,151	82,130
1992	128,370	19,564	238,378	83,639
1993	151,634	23,215	248,583	92,276
1994	162,759	25,607	262,762	97,723
1995	223,028	34,493	268,921	105,067
1996	225,999	35,239	276,186	94,853
1997	230,253	36,763	271,783	93,621
1998	236,144	36,328	271,702	95,608
1999	248,835	41,310	272,638	92,196
2000	256,665	42,900	274,674	103,221
2001	268,859	47,858	279,210	101,304
2002	282,741	51,660	281,738	104,478
2003	292,654	57,802	288,730	105,873
2004	311,984	63,639	322,761	116,675
2005	321,820	66,582	329,950	114,209
2006	340,386	65,179	336,818	115,192
2007	344,279	64,217	350,030	116,708

Heading north: During the past 16 years, more permits have meant greater harvest, and bow hunters seem particularly successful.

What are the odds of hitting a deer?

ACCORDING to State Farm Insurance, the state in which you're most likely to hit a deer with your vehicle is West Virginia. Read on for a few more fast facts:

- Michigan comes in second on the list, followed by Pennsylvania and then Iowa.

- The state in which you're least likely to hit a deer: Hawaii
- In West Virginia, you're twice as likely to hit a deer as you are to get an IRS audit.

- In Illinois, you're twice as likely to get an IRS audit as you are to hit a deer.

- Illinois drivers are slightly more likely to hit a deer than to have their identity stolen.

- At 1 in 196, your odds of hitting a deer in Illinois ties for 28th in the nation.

- Illinois' odds would change significantly if Chicago vehicle registrations were pulled from the mix.

From Across the Prairie: How do other states deal with deer?

PRAIRIE Farmer asked editors of its neighboring sister publications how their states effectively manage their deer populations.

"The Ohio Department of Natural Resources has reduced the price of antlerless deer permits and is encouraging hunters to take multiple does in regions where deer are especially abundant. The state has also provided a \$100,000 grant to enable Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry to process deer taken under special out-of-season nuisance permits."



Tim White,
editor, Ohio Farmer

"Wisconsin does a fairly good job of managing our deer population, but we do have a lot of deer ... about 1.5 million white-tailed deer before the season begins. In addition to a nine-day gun deer hunting season in November, we have a four-day antlerless deer hunting weekend in October and another in December. Bow hunting is allowed for two months during the fall. By the end of December, Wisconsin is usually overwintering about 1 million deer. The deer cause a significant amount of crop damage in several areas throughout the state, particularly in northern Wisconsin."



Fran O'Leary,
editor, Wisconsin Agriculturalist

"Missouri is a deer haven. We have an estimated 1 million deer and that population has remained steady over the past 20 to 30 years. In 2006-07, nearly 500,000 hunters [firearms and archery] took to the woods and harvested a record 324,380 deer. Most crop farmers indicate that deer cause little or minor damage to their crops. Among the farmers who don a hunting cap each November, most admit that they take advantage of the no-cost antlerless deer permit [given to qualifying landowners in Missouri] or buy a hunting permit to take care of any extra deer in their fields."



Jerilyn Johnson,
editor, Missouri Ruralist