

2025 Illinois Youth Deer Hunting Information

SEASON DATES: OCTOBER 11-13, 2025

SHOOTING HOURS: ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset

OPEN COUNTIES/PUBLIC SITES: All counties EXCEPT Cook, DuPage and Lake Counties, and that portion of Kane County east of State Route 47. A statewide-issued youth deer hunt permit will authorize the holder to hunt in *any* of the open counties of the State, on property where permission to hunt has been obtained from the property owner, or at any of the public land sites listed on pages 3-4.

AGE RESTRICTIONS: The Youth Deer Season is open only to hunters who have not reached their 18th birthday prior to the opening date of the season.

RESIDENCY: The same youth deer hunt permit is available to eligible resident and nonresident youths regardless of residency.

PERMIT INFORMATION:

Purchase Dates: August 5 – October 13, 2025

Method of Purchase: Must purchase in-person at a [DNR License Vendor](#).

Fee: \$10.00 (additional charges apply)

Permit Limit: One either-sex youth deer hunt permit.

Valid Dates to Use Permit: October 11-13, 2025. An unfilled youth deer permit is also valid to use on private land during the first firearm deer season (November 21-23, 2025); but, on public land, the permit may only be used on sites that allow unrestricted hunting. Unfilled permits are not valid on public land sites that limit the number of hunters during the firearm season via the use of a site permit quota.

LICENSE REQUIREMENTS: In addition to a current, valid youth deer hunt permit, all eligible youth hunters must have an apprentice or youth hunting license, or they must have completed a State-approved Hunter Education course and have a hunting license, unless exempt.

SUPERVISOR REQUIREMENTS: Each hunter participating in the Youth Deer Hunting Season while using an Apprentice Hunter License or a Youth Hunting License must be accompanied by a non-hunting, validly licensed (Illinois hunting license) adult who is 21 years of age or older. Additionally, hunters participating in the Youth Deer Hunting Season on **public property** must be supervised by a validly licensed resident or nonresident who is 21 years of age or older *and has a hunter education certificate*. All other hunters (using other types of hunting licenses or license-exempt) participating in the Youth Deer Hunting Season must each be accompanied by a non-hunting supervisor (parent, guardian or responsible adult). A nonresident supervisor must have a valid Illinois hunting license. The non-hunting supervisor must wear the solid blaze orange/pink garments required of gun deer hunters and must remain with the hunting youth so as to have the youth under immediate control. Youths participating in the first firearm deer season using only an unfilled youth deer hunt permit (i.e., youths without a firearm deer season permit for that county) must be accompanied by a supervisor as described in this section; but, during the firearm deer season, that supervisor may also hunt so long as he/she has the appropriate licenses and permits. Each supervisor may only accompany a single youth at any given time during the hunt. The supervising adult shall be criminally liable for the actions of the youth in the hunting party and be subject to the criminal penalties provided by law.

BAG LIMITS: The bag limit is one (1) deer per legally authorized permit. All either-sex permits are subject to the following restrictions: no hunter, regardless of the quantity or type of permits in his/her possession, may harvest more

than two (2) antlered deer during a year, including the youth, archery, muzzleloader and firearm seasons. Deer seasons are considered to be in the same year if their opening dates fall within the same 12-month period that begins on July 1.

LEGAL HUNTING DEVICES:

1. Shotgun, loaded with slugs only, of not larger than 10 nor smaller than 20 gauge, not capable of firing more than 3 consecutive slugs; or
2. A single or double-barreled muzzleloading rifle of at least .45 caliber shooting a single projectile through a barrel of at least sixteen inches in length. A muzzleloading firearm is defined as a firearm into which the projectile is incapable of being inserted from the breech end. Allowable ignition systems are limited to percussion (cap or primer), wheellock, matchlock, flintlock, or electronic ignition. Only black powder or a black powder substitute such as Pyrodex may be used. Modern smokeless powders (nitrocellulose-based) are an approved black powder substitute only in muzzleloading firearms that are specifically designed for their use.
3. Centerfire revolvers, centerfire single-shot handguns, and centerfire single-shot rifles as specified in 520 ILCS 5/2.25
4. On private land only, archery equipment as defined by 17 Ill. Adm. Code 670.30 may be used during the Youth Deer Season while hunting with a valid youth deer permit.

Muzzleloaders are considered “unloaded” **IF**: the percussion cap/primer is removed; **OR** prime powder has been removed from the frizzen pan with the frizzen open and hammer all the way down; **OR** prime powder has been removed from the flashpan and wheel is unwound; **OR** prime powder has been removed and match is not lit; **OR** the battery is removed from the electronic ignition.

LEGAL AMMUNITION: For shotguns and muzzleloading firearms, the minimum size of the projectile shall be .44 caliber. A wad or sleeve is not considered a projectile or part of the projectile. Non-expanding, military-style full metal jacket bullets cannot be used to harvest white-tailed deer; only soft point or expanding bullets (including copper/copper alloy rounds designed for hunting) are legal ammunition.

The only legal ammunition for a centerfire handgun or rifle is a bottleneck centerfire cartridge of .30 caliber or larger with a case length not exceeding one and two-fifths inches, or a straight-walled centerfire cartridge of .30 caliber or larger, both of which must be available as a factory load with the published ballistic tables of the manufacturer showing a capability of at least 500 foot pounds of energy at the muzzle. The barrel of a handgun shall be at least 4 inches. Full metal jacket bullets may not be used to harvest deer.

REPORTING HARVEST OF DEER: Successful hunters must register their harvest by 10:00 p.m. on the same calendar day the deer was taken by calling the toll-free telephone check-in system at 1-866-ILCHECK or by accessing the on-line check-in system at <https://www.exploremoreil.com/wildlife/harvest>.

They will be provided with a confirmation number to verify that they checked in their harvest. This number must be written by the hunter on the temporary harvest tag (leg tag). If the condition of the tag precludes writing on the tag in the appropriate space (i.e., bloody, etc.), the confirmation number shall be written elsewhere on the tag, or onto a piece of paper and attached to the deer along with the temporary harvest tag. The deer must remain whole (or field dressed) until it has been checked in. In instances where deer are checked in while the hunter is still afield, the deer may not be dismembered while afield beyond quartering the animal. If quartered, all parts of the carcass (except the entrails removed during field dressing) must be transported together and evidence of sex must remain naturally attached to one quarter. Evidence of sex is:

- 1) For a buck: head with antlers attached to carcass or attached testicle, scrotum or penis.
- 2) For a doe: head attached to carcass or attached udder (mammary) or vulva.

The harvest tag (leg tag) and confirmation number must remain attached to the deer until it is at the legal residence of the person who legally took or possessed the deer and final processing is completed. If the head/antlers are delivered to a taxidermist for processing, the confirmation number must be recorded on the "head tag" portion of the permit, and both must remain with the deer while at the taxidermist. If the carcass is taken to a meat processor, the harvest tag (leg tag)

with confirmation number must remain with the deer while it is processed and until it is at the legal residence of the person who legally took or possessed the deer. Persons delivering deer/parts of deer to a tanner for processing must supply the tanner with either their deer permit number, their confirmation number, or a written certification by the person from whom the deer was received that the specimen was legally taken or obtained.

Public Land Sites Open to 2025 Youth Deer Hunt

The following sites are open to youth hunting during the Youth Deer Season. Contact the site for other special site regulations; some sites may have hunter quotas and require participation in a drawing: [Hunting Site Directory](#)

Site Name	County Location
Apple River Canyon SP (Salem/Thompson Units)	Jo Daviess
Argyle Lake SP	McDonough
Big Grand Pierre Glade SNA	Pope
Big River SF	Henderson
Burning Star SFWA	Jackson
Cache River SNA	Johnson//Massac/Pulaski
Campbell Pond SHA	Franklin/Jackson
Cape Bend SFWA	Alexander
Carlyle Lake SFWA	Clinton/Fayette
Cave-In-Rock SP (Kaegi Tract)	Hardin
Cedar Glen SNA	Hancock
Chauncey Marsh SNA	Lawrence
Clinton Lake SRA (only in area between County Hwy 14/Friends Creek Road & State Route 48 - both sides of lake)	DeWitt
Coffeen Lake SFWA (Upland Management Area only)	Montgomery
Copperhead Hollow SFWA	Jersey
Crawford County SFWA	Crawford
Cretaceous Hills SNA	Pope
Cypress Pond SNA	Johnson
Deer Pond SNA	Johnson
Devil's Island SFWA	Union/Alexander
Dixon Springs SP	Pope
Dog Island SWMA	Pope
Eldon Hazlet SP (North Allen Branch Unit only)	Clinton
Ferne Clyffe SP (Cedar/Draper Bluffs Hunting Area)	Johnson
Ferne Clyffe SP (Ferne Clyffe Hunting Area)	Johnson
Fort Massac SP	Massac
Fox Ridge SP	Coles
Giant City SP	Jackson/Union
Glass Hill SNA	Johnson
Green River SWA	Lee
Hamilton County SFWA	Hamilton
Hanover Bluff SNA	Jo Daviess
Hidden Springs SF	Shelby

Horseshoe Lake SFWA (Public Hunting Area)	Alexander
Iroquois County State Wildlife Area	Iroquois
Jim Edgar Panther Creek SFWA	Cass
Kankakee River SP	Kankakee
Kaskaskia River SFWA (except south of Hwy 154 and north of Hwy 13)	Randolph/St.Clair/Monroe
Kinkaid Lake SFWA	Jackson
Lake Shelbyville Project Lands (not including Eagle Creek and Wolf Creek State Recreation Areas)	Shelby
Lake Shelbyville Project Lands in Moultrie County including Shelbyville SFWA	Moultrie
Mackinaw SFWA	Tazewell
Marshall SFWA	Marshall/Peoria
Meeker SHA	Jasper
Mermet Lake SFWA	Massac
Mississippi River (Pool 17)	Mercer
Mississippi River (Pool 18)	Henderson
Mississippi River (Pool 24)	Pike
Mississippi River (Pools 21 and 22)	Adams
Mississippi River SFWA	Calhoun/Jersey
Newton Lake SFWA	Jasper
Oakford CA	Menard
Pere Marquette SP	Jersey
Prairie Ridge SNA	Jasper
Pyramid SP (Captain, Denmark, East Conant, Galum, and Park units)	Perry
Rall Woods SNA	Jo Daviess
Ralph Clover SNA	Jackson
Ray Norbut SFWA (including the Dutch Creek unit)	Pike
Rend Lake SFWA and COE managed areas of Rend Lake	Jefferson/Franklin
Saline County SFWA	Saline
Sand Ridge SF	Mason
Sangamon County CA	Sangamon
Seilbeck Forest SNA	Massac
Siloam Springs SP	Adams/Brown
Skinner Farm SHA	Johnson
Spoon River SF	Knox
Tapley Woods SNA	Jo Daviess
Ten Mile Creek SFWA	Jefferson/Hamilton
Trail of Tears SF	Union
Turkey Bluffs SFWA	Randolph
Union County SFWA (Firing Line Unit)	Union
Wards Grove SNP	Jo Daviess
Weinberg King SFWA (including Scripps and Spunky Bottoms units)	Schuyler/Brown
Wildcat Hollow SHA	Effingham
Winston Tunnel SNA	Jo Daviess
Wise Ridge SNA	Johnson

Please call 217-782-7305 or email DNR.Permits1@illinois.gov with any questions.