

Season brings both hunters, revenue

Hunting season begins as local hunters flock to conservation zones

Karen Schwartztrauber
for the Index

This season of cooler temperatures and brisk breezes signals a time for indoor activities for many.

For Mjr. Doug Reinsch of the Truman ROTC program, however, fall signals the beginning of archery hunting, his favorite outdoor activity.

"I have been hunting for about 24 years now," Reinsch said. "As a young boy, I used to go and help my uncle with his dairy farm. When I was there, I started off hunting small game. By the time I was in high school, I had begun archery hunting, which remains as my real passion today."

The beginning of hunting season means many important things for Kirksville. Like other rural communities, Kirksville depends on bow hunting and rifle hunting as a source of revenue during the months of slow tourism.

"Hunters generate a huge amount of money to local communities," said George Shurvington, Missouri Wildlife Management biologist. "Particularly in the last five years, hunting has been a source of revenue because so many people have come to town to hunt."

Last year in Missouri, non-resident hunters alone contributed about \$5.2 million in expenditures for fuel, food, lodging, supplies, equipment and clothing.

That statistic does not include the thousands of in-state Missouri hunters who also contribute.

Through license fees and taxes on equipment, in-state hunters and anglers contribute an average of \$3 million statewide each day to wildlife conservation.

What attracts these hunters to this area is one of the many conservation zones Adair County possesses.

Big Creek, Sugar Creek and Union Ridge conservation areas are just a few examples of the closest public grounds available for hunting.

"I hunt quite a bit of public areas such as Big Creek Conservation Area and some at Sugar Creek as well," Reinsch said. "North Missouri has a lot of really good conservation ground, and they are all great places to hunt."

Big Creek, the closest of the three, is located one mile southwest of Kirksville. The west side of Big Creek is bordered by Thousand Hills State Park. About 80 percent of the 1,199 acre land is native grassland and old-field habitats.

The remaining 20 percent is made up of timber and timbered draws. The entire area supports healthy populations of hunting game such as white-tailed deer, turkey and squirrels.

"I haven't had the chance to get out and enjoy the local areas of Adair County as much as I'd like to," junior Matt Doellman said. "Often, I end up going home to Illinois to hunt, but with such good hunting around here, I think I will try the areas here sometimes as well."

Hunters often sit in tree stands and wait until they can get a clear shot of an animal. Some regulations, however, limit how these tree stands can be used. For instance, at Big Creek, only portable tree stands may be placed or used between certain months.

Hunting Permits

Deer hunting permits may be purchased from July 1st until the end of the seasons.

- Permits can be purchased
 - over the counter at any permit vendor
 - by calling (800) 392-4115
 - Online, go to www.wildlifelicenses.com/mo
- Permits cannot be exchanged or refunded
- Permits must be carried while hunting

Source: Missouri Conservation Department



Chris Waller/Index

Mjr. Doug Reinsch Truman ROTC instructor demonstrates how to use a bow and arrow Tuesday. Reinsch said that he has been hunting for nearly 24 years and that it was one of his favorite activities.

Hunting Season Dates

Missouri has two deer hunting seasons:

Archery Season

Sept. 15th - Jan. 15th
No hunting allowed, however from Nov. 12th to Nov. 24th

Firearms Seasons

Urban: Only in Open Counties Oct. 8th to Oct. 11th
Youth: Nov. 6th to Nov. 7th
November: Nov. 13th to Nov. 23rd
Muzzleloader: Nov. 26th to Dec. 5th
Antlerless: Dec. 11th to Dec. 19th

The user needs to identify each stand with his or her name and address and it must be removed from the area by Feb. 1. These regulations are used in the Sugar Creek and Union Ridge conservation areas as well. At Big Creek, the use of nails or other materials that would damage a tree is prohibited when mounting a tree stand.

Hunting accidents, which are not very common in Missouri, happen but usually do not involve firearms. Statistics show that only one accident occurs for every 10,000 hunters, and of those accidents, only 2 percent involve firearms.

"The most common kind of accident doesn't really relate to hunting as it does to tree stands," Shurvington said. "It is very common for a hunter to fall out of a tree. We always recommend that hunters use the proper safety equipment when hunting at these areas, such as a safety harness or safety belt, to hold

them in the tree."

Hunters can avoid many of these accidents by obeying the rules and regulations set for each conservation area.

"I try and get out and hunt any weekend I can," Doellman said. "What I like most about hunting is just getting out in the woods and enjoying the calm, peaceful atmosphere. When you are out there, you don't have any worries about anything else."

Bow hunting is much more than a hobby for many Kirksville residents.

"When you hunt, you leave with the intention that you are going to kill something, but that's really just the finality of the experience," Shurvington said. "It is the experience that leads up to that, that satisfies your need of hunting or being a hunter. Sometimes to a non hunter, it's easier to focus on the kill. That is a part of the experience, but it's only a part. It's not the only thing that is important."

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