



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John W. Mannion

DEC encourages hunters to take more antlerless deer when big game season opens this weekend in NY

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The New York Department of Environmental Conservation says the state's 2023 fall deer harvest is keeping pace with last year's harvest as the regular big game season is set to open this weekend.

"So far we're seeing a very comparable harvest to last year," says DEC big game biologist, Brendan Quirion. "But it's a little early to tell because most of the deer harvest occurs during the regular gun season."

The regular firearms season for deer and bear in New York's Southern Zone opens Saturday, Nov. 18, and runs through Sunday, Dec. 10.

Some 555,000 hunters will hit the woods in the Southern Zone alone, most on opening weekend. That's twice the number of bowhunters (early bow season opened Oct. 1 and ends Friday, Nov. 17) statewide.

Deer taken on opening day of the regular season account for a whopping 60 percent of the total statewide deer harvest, and 30-60 percent of the bear harvest, according to DEC.

Hunters harvested an estimated 231,961 deer last year, a ten-percent increase over the previous year, DEC says.

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Rifles in Onondaga County

Big game hunters in Onondaga County will finally be able to tote a rifle into the field this season, thanks to a bill cosponsored by Assemblyman Al Stirpe (D-Cicero) and Sen. John Mannion.

Opponents of the bill cited safety concerns, but David Simmons, director of the Onondaga County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, says as more counties have converted to rifle, the number of hunting-related incidents and deaths in New York has improved.

The 2022 hunting season tied 2021 for the safest on record, according to DEC, which investigated nine hunting-related shooting incidents in 2022, including one fatality.

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