

Top  
Ice-Fishing  
Gear for  
2024-25

See Page 22 for details

Turn In Poachers  
1-800-TIP-WDNR  
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Inside News


► Third Jackson County Bull Elk a Dandy 6-by-7

Paul Finch, of Tomah, almost didn't apply for a Wisconsin elk hunting tag in the Central Forest Region this spring. A customer convinced him to give it a try. Good thing he did. Not only was he drawn, he shot a big bull. **See Page 4**



► Asian Carp eDNA Confirmed in Lower Chippewa, Lower Black

Fish jumping like Asian carp seen in both rivers. **See Page 8**



► 7 National Wildlife Refuges Offering Non-Toxic Ammo Program

Wisconsin's Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge is one of seven refuges that is offering a voluntary "rebate" type of program for hunters willing to try non-toxic ammunition this fall. **See Page 11**



THE SPORTSMAN'S CHOICE FOR NEWS AND INFORMATION

WISCONSIN

Outdoor News

16

DNR Rolling Out Comment Period on New Deer Units

18

Yes, Margins More Slim, But It Does Pay to Reload Varmint Rounds

19

Air Rifle, Shotgun Revolution Starting to Catch On in Wisconsin

20

BHA Members Introduce Kids, Adults to Tradition of Hound Dogs, Coons

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NOVEMBER 15, 2024

# Early deer bow kills lag after 8 weekends

**By Kevin Naze**  
Contributing Writer

Madison — Wisconsin's combined bow, crossbow, and youth gun deer harvest of 62,842 whitetails is down about 10% through the first eight weekends of the season.

There were 36,301 bucks tallied between Sept. 14 and Nov. 4, a drop from more than 41,000 bucks – and 70,027 total deer – electronically tagged between Sept. 16 and Nov. 6 last year.

Department of Natural Resources Deer Program Specialist Jeff Pritzl said the downturn surprised him after a second straight mild winter and a sub-par November gun hunt last fall.

"This is purely anecdotal, but we often hear how a lot of hunters are getting choosier about what they're willing to shoot," Pritzl said.

By hunting tool type, the crossbow kill dropped from 37,027 in 2023 to 33,355 this year; the archery harvest from 25,143 to 21,753; and the youth hunt from 7,857 to 7,309. The totals don't include tribal harvest, ag damage or car-killed deer.

There were 19,840 bucks shot with crossbows, 12,484 with bows, and youth gun hunters tallied 3,789. The remaining difference in the bucks and overall season count is likely deer registered during the disabled firearm hunt, Pritzl said.

Last year's gun deer season kill

(See **Early Deer Season** Page 24)



WISCONSIN GUN DEER SEASON: The 2024 nine-day gun deer season will open with legal shooting hours on Saturday, Nov. 23, to a weather forecast calling for above average temperatures across much of the state. Good luck to all hunters from the *WON* crew.

Adobe Stock Photo

# Musky Clubs Alliance offers up to \$75K to boost DNR annual stocking numbers

**Alliance also bans live sonar during its annual tournament**

**By Steve Heiting**  
Contributing Writer

Stevens Point, Wis. — The Musky Clubs Alliance of Wisconsin will offer the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) a substantial cash "gift" to mitigate proposed cutbacks in muskellunge stocking in 2025.

During their annual meeting in Stevens Point on Nov. 2, the alliance's directors authorized Bob Munsen, its liaison to the DNR's muskellunge management team, to negotiate with the DNR to provide the agency with up to \$75,000 for rearing muskies for stocking in Wisconsin waters.

The action was taken after the directors heard DNR Bureau of Fisheries Management Chief Justine Hasz and DNR District Fisheries Supervisor Tim Simonson explain the budget challenges the agency is facing and how those challenges will affect muskie stocking in coming years. The DNR's overall budget shortfall is projected to be around \$16 million in 2025, with the fisheries shortfall expected to be about \$2.5 million.

In July, Hasz had emailed the alliance, as well as representatives of its two dozen member clubs, to let them know of proposed cutbacks

(See **Musky Clubs Alliance** Page 27)

# Best Buck Weekly Winner 3 misdemeanors filed against woman in deer poaching case



**BEST BUCK WEEKLY WINNER.** Brent Servais, of La Crosse, arrowed this 9-point buck in La Crosse County Oct. 22. The rack had a 23 $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch inside spread.

Best Buck Contest info page 31

**By Dean Bortz**  
Editor

West Bend, Wis. — A Brownsville woman allegedly involved in a southeastern Wisconsin deer poaching case faces three misdemeanor charges that could potentially result in \$22,000 in fines and two years in jail if found guilty and maximum penalties applied.

Jessica Jill Kroening, 36, of Brownsville, was charged Oct. 23 in Washington County Circuit Court with contributing to the delinquency of a child, the illegal shining of deer or bear, and obstruction of a conservation warden, according to the criminal complaint.

The charges stem from statements of three juvenile witnesses, who were also involved in the deer poaching incidents, and one adult witness. The witnesses related stories of alleged deer poaching in July and August to sheriff's department deputies, local police officers, and DNR conservation wardens.

Kroening and three 16-year-old males are alleged to have taken part in an ongoing deer poaching case over the course of roughly a year – from July 2023 through August over almost 200 square

(See **Poaching Case** Page 27)

CURRENT EVENTS	CONTENTS
<b>Upcoming Events</b> Nov. 15: Full Beaver Moon. Nov. 19: Northern duck zone closes. Nov. 23: Gun deer season opens. Nov. 29: Mourning dove season closes. Dec. 2: Muzzleloader deer season opens. Dec. 10: Bear, turkey applications due.	<b>News..... Pages 4-11</b> <b>Columns..... Pages 12-17</b> <b>Cuffs &amp; Collars..... Page 25</b> <b>Fishing Report ..... Page 28</b> <b>Nature Page ..... Page 32</b>