



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# Hunting News

Conservation and Recreation

Nov. 22, 2023

## Iowa's shotgun deer seasons are almost here

State deer biologist Jace Elliott, previews the deer hunting season



First of Iowa's popular gun deer hunting seasons opens Dec. 2



Iowa's most popular hunting seasons are less than two weeks away when more than 100,000 blaze orange clad hunters will be walking, posting, sitting and standing in Iowa's timber and field edges hoping to tag an Iowa deer. The first deer gun season is Dec. 2-6; the second deer gun season is Dec. 9-17.

The good news is, that Iowa's deer population is stable to slightly increasing across much of the state, with the exception of certain parts of northwest, west central and southwest Iowa.

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## **Safety first, during the gun deer seasons**

The long wait is almost over. For an expected 100,000-plus deer hunters, the gun deer seasons are right around the corner and before they head to the timber, it's important that everyone go through their gear to make sure everything still fits and still works and takes time to review their hunting safety plan.

“Hunting continues to be a safe activity enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of Iowans,” said Jamie Cook, hunter education coordinator with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). “And part of making hunting safe is creating a plan for each hunt.”

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## Main beam antler length added to harvest reporting requirement

### Main Beam Length



Beginning this year, Iowa deer hunters who harvest a buck will have a quick, additional piece of information to report as part of the harvest reporting requirement – the length of the main antler beam. Specifically, hunters will be asked if the main beam length is below or above 14 inches, but will not be required to provide the exact length.

This information will provide buck age structure to the DNR’s harvest data, producing a better overall picture of Iowa’s deer herd from year to year.

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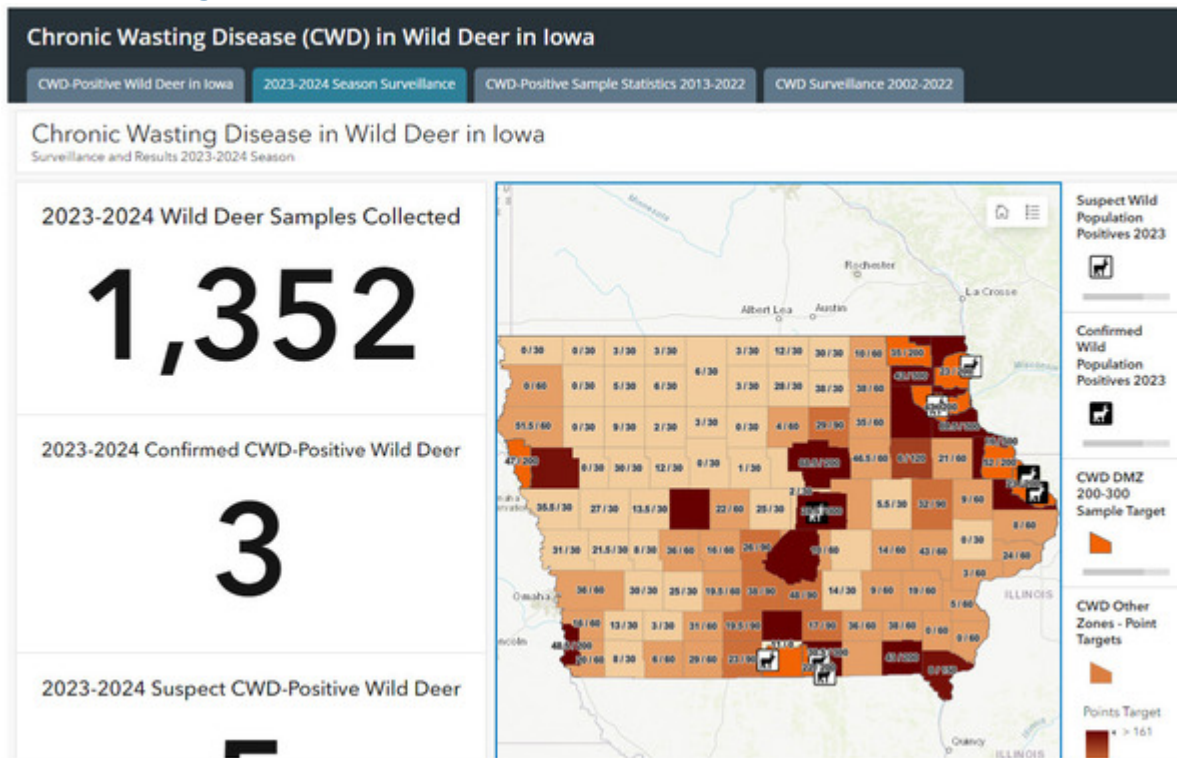
## Donated deer hides benefit disabled veterans



Hunters donated more than 4,500 deer hides to Elks Lodges across Iowa last year, which was an increase of nearly 600 hides from the 2022 season. The deer hides are used by the Veterans Leather Program to make professionally-crafted leather gloves for veterans in wheelchairs and also turned into leather used for therapy programs for recovering veterans.

The Veterans Leather Program relies on the charity of hunters to donate their deer hides. Hunters willing to donate their hides are encouraged to contact the local Elks Lodge for drop off locations or visit [www.elks.org/lodges](http://www.elks.org/lodges) to find the nearest lodge. The therapeutic kits and gloves are distributed at no cost to the veterans. Contact Lisa Widick at 208-360-6294 or [ozzywidick@gmail.com](mailto:ozzywidick@gmail.com) for more information.

## Annual sampling for Chronic Wasting Disease underway



The Iowa DNR will be working with hunters again this gun season to collect deer tissue samples to test for chronic wasting disease. So far this year, tissue samples from eight individual deer are suspected positive for the always fatal disease.

Hunters interested in participating in the surveillance effort are encouraged to contact their local wildlife biologist to arrange for sample to be collected. If the sample quota has filled, the DNR will assist them in submitting their sample through the hunter submission system, in partnership with Iowa State University. Submitting a sample through the hunter submission system comes with a fee of \$25.

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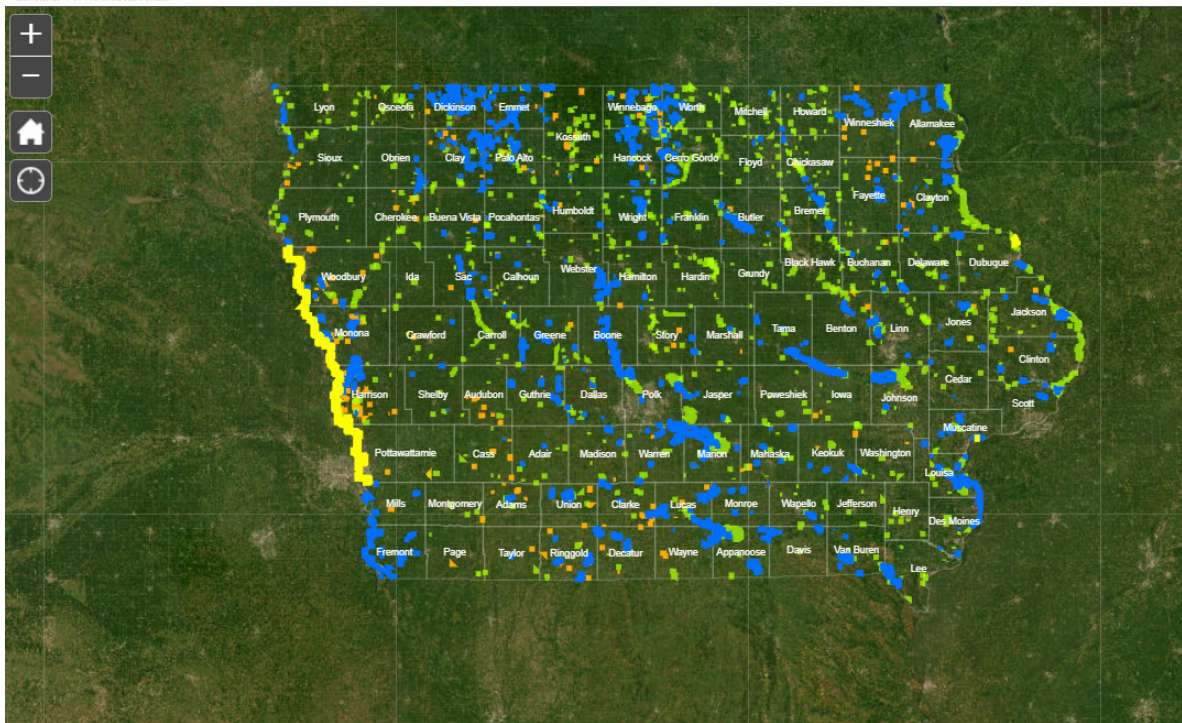
## **Learn about Chronic Wasting Disease at Nov. 29 virtual meeting**

The Iowa DNR is hosting a virtual public meeting on chronic wasting disease on Nov. 29, at 7 p.m., when staff will provide an update on the science of the disease, its status in Iowa, and current management efforts. There will be an opportunity to ask questions and staff will answer as many as time allows.

There is no cost to attend, but registration is required. Interested individuals can register through the link <https://bit.ly/IowaDNR-CWD>.

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## **Interactive online map shows places to hunt**



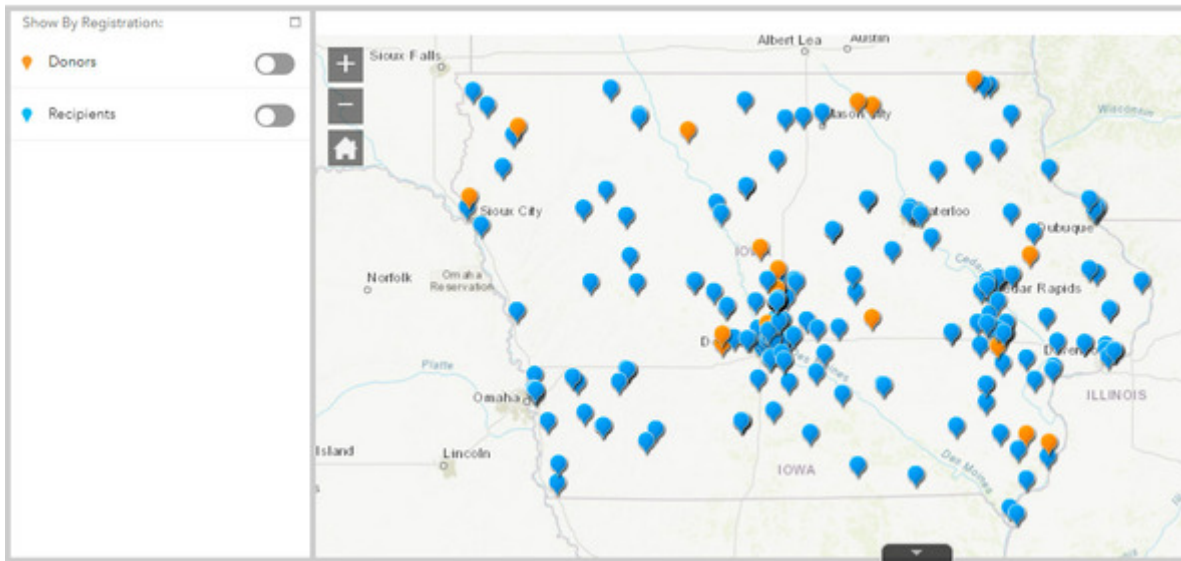
Hunters have an online tool that may improve their in-field experience, even before opening day.

The Iowa hunting atlas is an interactive map that shows all available public hunting land that is managed by the state, county or federal governments. The atlas is online at [www.iowadnr.gov/hunting](http://www.iowadnr.gov/hunting). A mobile version is also available.

A click on an area will show basic information like size, habitat type and likely species available.

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## Hunters have options to donate venison



The Iowa DNR, the Food Bank of Iowa and 34 meat lockers are participating in the Help Us Stop Hunger program for 2023. Hunters are encouraged to contact a participating locker before they harvest a deer to see if the locker has any additional drop off instructions.

Hunters may also sign up as a deer donor with the Iowa Deer Exchange at [www.iowadnr.gov/deer](http://www.iowadnr.gov/deer) then scroll down to Iowa's Deer Exchange Program link. There, donors can provide their information on what they are willing to donate. The database creates a map and table with information deer donors and deer recipients can use to get connected.

There are currently 23 hunters registered who are willing to donate deer, and 287 registered recipients wanting venison. Hunters and recipients who had previously registered for the Deer Exchange Program should review their information to make sure it is still accurate and active.

There is no cost to participate. It is illegal to sell wild fish and game in Iowa.