



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
Week of October 10, 2005**

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A Fall Tradition

JEFFERSON CITY – If you’ve ever sat perched in a tree stand in the early morning hours, nursing a hot cup of coffee while waiting for a glimpse of that ten-point buck you saw near the corn crib a couple of times this summer, then you understand why so many look forward to the fall hunting season in Missouri. Friends get together at checkpoint stations and coffee shops to swap stories about the one that got away, while fathers introduce their sons and daughters to the timeless joys of hunting.

Missouri is blessed with an abundance of deer and turkey. In the 28th Senatorial District last year, hunters harvested 29,980 deer during the archery and firearms season. Benton County led the way with 5,293 deer harvested, followed by St. Clair County with 4,817, and Henry County with 3,781 deer harvested last year.

Missouri also is blessed with public lands, from state conservation areas to national forests, and most of them allow hunting. Hunters are also allowed to hunt on some federal land, including parts of the Mark Twain National Forest, the Ozarks National Scenic Riverways and the Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Reserve.

Hunting is not allowed in state parks, and it’s important to note that 93-percent of Missouri’s lands are privately held by individuals, businesses and municipalities. Hunters must be respectful of property owners’ rights and should not hunt on private lands without permission from the owner.

If you are a Missouri resident and own five acres or more, you do not need a permit to fish or hunt small game on your own land. However, if you want to hunt deer or turkey on your property, you will need to get a no-cost resident landowner permit. Farm tags are no longer valid.

Many hunters in Missouri now donate to the Share the Harvest program, which provides an easy way for hunters to donate venison to Missourians in need of red meat. Hunters take their venison to an approved processing plant and tell the processor how much they wish to donate. Families or individuals simply have to contact a participating charitable organization to receive the venison. The Share the Harvest program is a valuable tool in the fight against hunger in Missouri.

If you were born on or after January 1, 1967 and plan to hunt with a firearm, you will need to take a hunter education class before you can buy a permit, unless you have already completed a hunter safety course. Those permits can then be purchased on-line, over the phone, at any Department of Conservation office or any of the thousands of vendors across the state. Hunters also should familiarize themselves with the Missouri Wildlife Code, which outlines regulations for hunting, trapping and fishing in Missouri, before venturing out.

There are a few new rules hunters this year. For example, all deer and turkey must be checked by telephone or on the internet by 10 p.m. on the day they are harvested. For a complete list of new regulations for the 2005 season, visit the Department of Conservation website at <http://www.mdc.mo.gov/>.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: delbertscott@senate.state.mo.us

Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.