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2019 DHS Tennis Camp Quite a Success

AUGUST 12TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

2019 DHS Tennis Camp Quite a Success

Dexter, Missouri - Dexter High School Tennis camp took place over the summer.

Grades 5-12 were represented.

Former coach Kurt Lovelady and Booster Club President Chris Brannon were the instructors.

"We covered all aspects of tennis. Younger Students learned the basics of forehand/backhand/serve aspects of the game," commented coach Eric Boles. "More experienced students worked on improving game strategy, forehand/backhand play, and the use of the volley. We ended the sessions with small group competitions where students had the opportunity to win tennis-related award packets."

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MO Dept of Conservation Annual Duck Banding Event to be Held Saturday

JULY 30TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

MO Dept of Conservation Annual Duck Banding Event to be Held Saturday

Stoddard County, Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation and Ducks Unlimited will host their annual Duck Banding Event at Otter Slough Conservation Area on Saturday, August 3, 2019 beginning at 7 a.m.

An electrofishing demonstration will also take place during the event.

Kids will have the opportunity to assist conservation agents placing bands on the legs of ducks and doves.

The public is encouraged to attend and there is no charge to attend this event.

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Menley Headed to the World Series with 10u Softball All-Star Team

JULY 24TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Menley Headed to the World Series with 10u Softball All-Star Team

Dexter, Missouri - Mauriona Menley (back row 3rd from left), a student at Dexter Central Elementary School is a member of the 10u Softball All-Star team out of Sikeston.

She is a pitcher on the team.

They recently won the Babe Ruth 10u Softball State Championship in Mt. Vernon, MO on June 23, 2019.

They went on to win the Midwest Plains Regional Championship held in Girard, KS on July 17.

They are now headed to the World Series in Jansen Beach, FL on July 25th.

She is the daughter of Mark and Aaron Menley.

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Governor signs bill that increases fines on poachers and MDC increases penalty points.

JULY 16TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

Governor signs bill that increases fines on poachers and MDC increases penalty points.

MDC and State of Missouri increase penalties for poaching

New fine amounts include \$10,000-\$15,000 for each elk or black bear killed illegally, \$1,000-\$5,000 for each whitetailed buck.

Governor signs bill that increases fines on poachers and MDC increases penalty points.

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and the Missouri legislature and governor have taken actions to increase penalties for those caught poaching Missouri game animals and other native wildlife species.

Missouri Governor Michael Parson signed HB260 into law July 11. Called the Poaching Bill, it significantly raises fines for those convicted of illegally taking Missouri game species and other native wildlife. HB260 was sponsored by Representative Jered Taylor (Republic) and Senator Mike Bernskoetter (Jefferson City).

New fine amounts include \$10,000-\$15,000 for each elk or black bear killed illegally, \$1,000-\$5,000 for each whitetailed buck, \$500-\$1,000 for each wild turkey, and \$500-\$1,000 for each paddlefish.

The fines are considered restitution payments for poaching game animals and are ordered by a judge. Monies from the fines go to the state's school moneys fund. The restitution payments are in addition to other fines and penalties for violating the Wildlife Code of Missouri. The new fines will go into effect Aug. 28.

Supporters of the bill said that previous fines for poaching were too low in Missouri. The bill also gained support in part from five Missouri elk that were illegally killed by poachers in the past few years. None of the cases has yet been solved.

Earlier this year, MDC and the Missouri Conservation Commission increased the penalty points they give to individuals convicted of violating the Wildlife Code of Missouri for illegal activities, including poaching.

According to MDC records, 547 wild turkeys, 58 paddlefish, and 4,731 deer were illegally taken, or poached, in 2017 and 2018. MDC is also investigating the poaching of five elk over the past several years. Black bear poaching incidents are a growing concern as well.

"In addition to doing what we can by increasing penalty points for Wildlife Code violations, conservation agents are also working with county prosecutors and judges to help reduce incidents of poaching and other violations by increasing penalties such as fines and jail time," said MDC Protection Division Chief Randy Doman.

Doman explained how penalties are determined.

"The state legislature has the authority to establish penalty classifications related to poaching and other wildlife violations," Doman said. "MDC and the Missouri Conservation Commission set the regulations of the Wildlife Code of Missouri and conservation agents issue tickets for violations, such as for poaching. Agents then submit those tickets to the appropriate county courts. County prosecutors then determine how to proceed with the violations. If the person is convicted of the violations by the county court, the judge then determines fines, jail time, and/or other penalties. Monies from fines are kept in the county and do not go to MDC."

Doman added that depending on the violation, MDC staff can then assign persons convicted of Code violations anywhere from zero to 16 points per violation.

“Once a person accumulates 16 points, MDC staff will review the circumstances surrounding the violations and may recommend that the Conservation Commission consider revoking or suspending the person’s permit privileges for up to one year,” Doman explained. “If a person accumulates more than 16 points, the recommendation to the Commission may be for a suspension of more than one year. Staff consider the person’s accumulated points for the past five years in making recommendations to the Commission.”

Examples of recent MDC penalty-point increases are:

Illegal baiting of wildlife from 4 to 8 points,

Buying, selling, having, or releasing prohibited invasive species from 4 to 16 points,

Violations related to paddlefish from 4 to 12 points,

Taking over the legal limit of deer and turkeys from 8 to 12 points,

Doubling points for other violations related to illegal taking of wildlife from 4 to 8 points, and

Releasing feral hogs into the wild from 0 to 16 points.

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MDC Announces Plan for Missouri Elk Hunting

JULY 07TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

MDC Announces Plan for Missouri Elk Hunting

MDC announces plan for Missouri elk hunting

Limited season for Missouri residents could start as soon as 2020 if plan criteria are met.

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) shared its initial plan for a limited elk-hunting season with the Missouri Conservation Commission at the Commission's public meeting June 28 at MDC headquarters in Jefferson City. The Commission gave its initial approval of the proposed plan, and MDC is asking for public comments.

According to MDC Elk and Deer Biologist Aaron Hildreth, who presented the elk-hunting plan at the meeting, MDC will begin offering a limited season for hunting elk once the herd of about 175 animals reaches a minimum of 200 with an annual herd growth rate of at least 10 percent and a herd ratio of at least four cow elk for every bull elk.

According to MDC research, the herd will likely reach 200 animals by 2020. With that in mind, MDC has designated a nine-day archery season for elk running Oct. 17-25, 2020, and a nine-day firearms season for elk running Dec. 12-20, 2020.

Hildreth noted that the number of permits for a possible 2020 hunt has yet to be determined.

"If the elk population is below desired numbers in early 2020, the Conservation Commission may choose to not open the online application process or issue any permits for a fall 2020 hunt," he explained. "We will then focus on 2021."

MDC hopes to eventually reach a target population of 500 animals and will use hunting to manage herd size and location.

Elk are a native species in Missouri but were hunted to extinction in the state through unregulated market hunting during the late 1800s. MDC worked with the Kentucky

Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources to reintroduce the native species by capturing and transporting wild elk from Kentucky to a remote area of the Missouri Ozarks. The reintroduction effort took place in 2011, 2012, and 2013 with most of the 108 relocated animals being cow elk with some calves and immature bulls. Their numbers have grown, and their range has expanded in recent years to cover portions of Carter, Reynolds, and Shannon counties. The area consists of nearly 80 percent public land interspersed with tracts of private property.

Hunting Framework

Under MDC's framework, elk hunting would be limited to Missouri residents at least 11 years of age who have their hunter-education certification or are exempt from hunter education by age (born before Jan. 1, 1967). Hunting permits would be assigned through a random lottery of all applicants. MDC will require a \$10 application fee to be eligible for the limited hunt with a \$50 permit fee for those selected through the lottery. MDC will limit the random lottery to one application per-person, per-year with a 10-year "sit-out" period for those drawn for a permit before they may apply again.

The hunting zone will be limited to Carter, Reynolds, and Shannon counties, but will exclude the special refuge portion of Peck Ranch Conservation Area where elk were initially reintroduced.

"Permits issued each year will be valid for a nine-day archery season beginning the third Saturday in October and a nine-day firearms season beginning the second Saturday in December," Hildreth explained.

He added that the timing of the seasons was designed to avoid the peak of elk breeding during late September and early October and to avoid the elk season coinciding with portions of the firearms deer season.

"The allowed hunting methods for each season will be the same as for deer hunting," Hildreth said. "The permits will allow for the harvest of one bull elk with at least one antler being greater than six inches in length. Successful hunters must Telecheck their harvested elk, like for deer."

Local Landowners Included

According to MDC, local landowners have been supportive of the reintroduction of elk to the area and local communities have benefited from an increase in tourism related to elk.

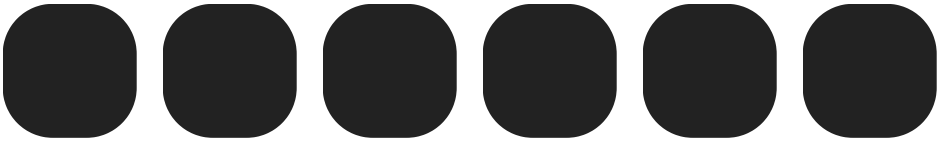
MDC will reserve at least one permit from the annual random lottery for resident landowners with at least 20 acres within a specified boundary within Carter, Reynolds, and Shannon counties. The special landowner permits will be nontransferable and may only be filled on the landowner’s property.

“Qualifying landowners will not be required to pay the \$10 application fee but will still pay a \$50 permit fee if selected,” Hildreth said. “If selected, they will not be required to wait 10 years before again applying for the landowner permit. Qualifying landowners may apply once each year for a regular hunting permit and for a special landowner permit but may receive only one permit annually.”

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