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Forest Preserve District of Will County

Deer Management Program 2023-2024 Report

**Summary Report for IDNR Deer Population Control Permit Numbers
TSP026-23, TSP027-23, TSP028-23, TSP029-23, TSP030-23, TSP031-23,
TSP032-23, TSP033-23, and TSP034-23.**

The Forest Preserve District of Will County removed a total of 250 white-tailed deer from nine preserve areas permitted for deer management (Lockport Prairie Complex, Romeoville Prairie Nature Preserve, Messenger Woods Complex, Hickory Creek Preserve, Goodenow Grove Nature Preserve, Thorn Creek Woods Nature Preserve, Raccoon Grove Complex, McKinley Woods Preserve, and the Kankakee Sands Complex) between November 27, 2023 and February 5, 2024.

Freedom Sausage, of Earlville, Illinois, processed 247 deer producing 9,446 pounds of ground venison. Northern Illinois Food Bank, in St. Charles, Illinois received the ground venison for distribution to needy families in northeastern Illinois. Internal organs and waste materials were collected for rendering by Kaluzny Brothers of Joliet, Illinois.

As directed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, samples were taken from certain deer to test for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) before they were processed. The 154 samples collected were shipped to the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Three samples tested positive for CWD: two from McKinley Woods and one from the Kankakee Sands Complex. The meat from the three positive deer was collected by IDNR for disposition.

Brief analysis of the data indicates that, of the deer removed, 48% were female and 52% were male; 58% of all deer removed this season were adults, and 53% of all females were visibly pregnant. Across all preserves, the 119 females averaged 122 lbs., and the 131 males averaged 136 lbs.

Table 1. Age and sex distributions of all deer removed in the 2023-2024 season per site

Preserve	Male	Female	Adult	Yearling	Fawn	Total
Lockport Prairie Complex	13	17	18	7	5	30
Romeoville Prairie Complex	14	6	16	2	2	20
Messenger Woods Complex	15	15	19	2	9	30
Hickory Creek	29	21	31	9	10	50
Goodenow Grove	22	18	18	10	12	40
Thorn Creek Woods	12	8	11	2	7	20
Raccoon Grove Complex	4	6	6	1	3	10
McKinley Woods	12	8	13	3	4	20
Sands Complex	10	20	13	7	10	30
Total	131	119	145	43	62	250
Percent	52%	48%	58%	17%	25%	

Table 2. Average weights in pounds of male and female deer removed in the 2023-2024 season per site

Preserve	Male	Female
Lockport Prairie Complex	150	120
Romeoville Prairie Complex	150	124
Messenger Woods Complex	149	122
Hickory Creek	139	120
Goodenow Grove	123	124
Thorn Creek Woods	132	119
Raccoon Grove Complex	107	142
McKinley Woods	144	127
Sands Complex	109	115
Overall Average	136	121