

Good forecast predicted for deer hunting season

Monday is a day that many individuals don't look forward to.

After all it is the start of another week of work and there's still another four days before another the arrival of another weekend.

But for those who are deer hunting enthusiasts, Monday is a day long awaited as it signals the start to this year's five-day controlled hunt in neighbouring Wildlife Management Units 78A and 78B.

Based on reports from the Ministry of Natural Resources' Aurora District Office, this year's hunt holds plenty of



Outdoors

Mike Hayakawa

promise as deer herds remain stable.

"The chances this year (of getting a deer) are as good as any other year. There's every indication that the deer population is as high as its ever been. It's in good shape and we expect a successful hunt this year," said ministry spokesman Glen Price.

The latest statistics available from WMU 78 that were taken in 1995, revealed a total of 1,480 hunters took to the fields in the controlled hunt that year. A total of 533 deer were harvested that year. The ministry revealed this represented a fairly high success rate of 44.3 per cent.

About the only factor that could play havoc with this year's hunt is if adverse weather prevails next week, which could alter a deer's movements and feeding patterns, warns Price.

"If we get any snow they could hold up in areas like cedar

swamps but once it stops there's a proliferation of trends the following morning where they could go nocturnal if they're forced to interrupt their normal feeding patterns. If it stops snowing overnight they'll be out at midnight feeding up."

Needless to say when this happens, success rates also decline.

"We've noted in other years that success rates were down with the correlation with poor weather during the week rather than preceding weeks (prior to the hunt)," cited Price.

The arrival of cold weather and snow in recent weeks has induced the annual rut. With the rites of fall under way, Price adds this won't change their pattern in terms of deer yarding up just yet.

"Even with some snow on the ground it will be an important time for them to put on some fat to feed them through the

winter months."

Apple orchards, alfalfa, clover or residue crops adjacent to wooded areas that offer some form of protection to deer are places to focus in on. The successful hunter is one that has done some advance scouting for these potential feeding areas along with tracks well before the start of Monday.

SAFETY A PRIORITY

For those venturing out on the fields Monday, safety must be given top priority. This year it is mandatory for participants to don blaze- or hunter-orange outer wear. A minimum of 400 square inches of blaze orange material is required to don.

"We encourage people to wear more than just a hat and full vest (that is hunter orange)," suggests Price.

On the subject of clothing, with weather conditions being volatile it doesn't hurt to bring more than enough paraphernalia including sweaters, shirts and pants made of wool, which will keep you warm and make less noise when you're out in the field. Another advantage of wool clothing is that under wet conditions they will keep you warm on the inside.

Because the amount of crown land is diminishing each year, more hunting activity is taking place on private property. Those having access to private lands must have written permission from landowners. Sure as death and taxes, Price notes every year the ministry fields trespassing complaints from landowners.

When trying to obtain permission, give assurances that you will do no harm to any property or livestock that might be present or leave any unwanted litter. As well, do not bring more than the allotted number of hunters you originally promised that would be hunting with you.

A good gesture would also be to offer the land owner any game that you harvest on their property.

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CYNTHIA LEUNG

Cynthia Leung, 9, won the first place on the Pre-preliminary Elements Event at the Hamilton Invitational Skating Competition 1997 held October 17-19. This is her first attempt at a skating competition. She is a grade 4 student at the Sport Seneca Program.

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