

Deer hunters report bigger bucks, larger racks

WHITE HAVEN — In addition to record numbers of deer showing up at check stations, Pennsylvania Game Commission biologists are reporting that this year's bucks generally seem to be bigger and are sporting larger antlers.

Last year there was a good mast crop in the state, especially acorns. The 1979 natural food supply resulted

in larger antlers on bucks this year.

On the opening day of the buck season last year, hunters had to face miserable weather conditions and were not nearly as successful as on other opening days. Since about two-thirds of the buck report cards filed are from the opening day, this meant that quite a few whitetails that made it through last season were then available to hunters in the 1980 season.

Additionally, the relatively mild weather conditions from last December through March cut into normal winter deer mortality considerably, and this meant more and bigger deer available this year.

Not surprisingly, the number of spike bucks showing up at check stations was generally lower than previously. In extreme southeastern Pennsylvania, less than 10 percent of the deer had spikes.

Antler spreads of up to 22 inches were reported. There were numerous long tines, and main beams were running thicker at some stations than in the past.

The largest deer turned up at the check station in Bucks County, a 250-pounder which had been killed by a vehicle.

Two 175-pounders and one which tipped the scales at

176 pounds were reported from northwestern Pennsylvania. One of these racks sported 11 points.


The oldest deer was a nine and one-half-year-old from Columbia County. It was also a big deer, weighing 169 pounds.

The most points on a rack were checked at the White Haven station, a 16 point, 158-pound whitetail.

One unexplained development was the early shedding of antlers by bucks in extreme northeastern Pennsylvania. A number of hunters said the antlers dropped as the deer were being dragged out of the woods.

Biologists said the deer were in exceptionally healthy condition, with no evidence of disease.

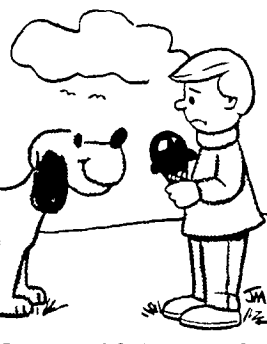
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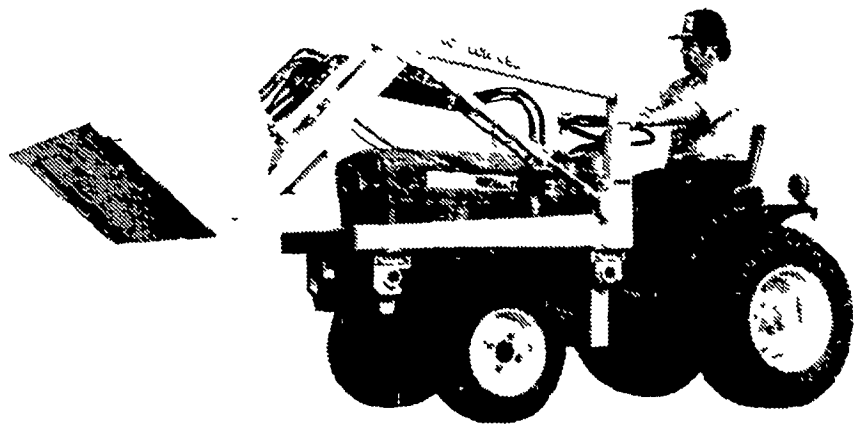
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