

Be Safe, Be Seen safety tips for trail users during hunting season



Fall is a very enjoyable season for walkers, hikers, cyclists, horseback riders, and other outdoor enthusiasts to go out on trails, into the forests, and be physically active, while taking in the beautiful fall colours and scenery.

Hunters are also enjoying time in the forest,

particularly during the next few weeks, for the deer gun season. Hunting will be taking place in most county forests, conservation areas and Crown land, as well as on private land, with the permission of the property owner.

Hunting is a safe recreational activity in Ontario, and non-hunters should feel comfortable using the woods at any time of the year. The following are some common sense **Be Safe, Be Seen** precautions for non-hunters during hunting seasons:

- **Be aware that hunting is taking place. Know the seasons, dates, locations.**
- **Avoid dawn and dusk, and anytime visibility is limited.**
- **Wear hunter orange (hat, vest, scarf, etc., also on your pet!) and avoid beige, brown, white, red or green clothing.**
- **Keep your pet on a leash.**
- **Stick to established trails (hunters typically know where the trails are).**

- **Hike in a group or with a buddy (hunters will hear you coming!) and as always, let someone know where you are going, and when to expect you back.**

Hunting season information is posted on the Ministry of Natural Resources website

<http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/FW/2ColumnSubPage/291144.html>

You will need to know which Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) you are interested in. Simcoe County is covered under WMU 76A to 76E, 77A to 77C as well as WMU 81B. The hunting seasons for each wildlife category are different, and vary by WMU. Here is a summary for the 2011 seasons for Simcoe County:

- Deer (Muzzle-loading Guns/Shotguns): November 7-November 11; December 5-December 11
- Deer (Bows Only): October 1-November 6; November 12-December 4; December 10-December 31
- Black Bear (only in northern portion of Simcoe County): September 6 - November 30
- Wild Turkey: April 25-May 31; October 11-October 23
- Ruffed Grouse: September 24 - January 15, 2012
- Hungarian Partridge: October 15 - October 21
- Squirrel: September 24 - December 15
- Rabbit and Hare: September 24 - last day of February, 2012
- Raccoon: October 15 - January 15, 2012
- Weasel: October 25 - last day of February, 2012
- Opossum: October 25 - January 15, 2012
- Wolf and Coyote; Red Fox; Skunk: all year

The seasons in geographic areas outside of Simcoe County may be different, so check the 2011 Hunting Regulations Summary for that particular WMU. Note also that municipalities may have local regulations, which may include prohibiting hunting on Sundays. Some conservation areas have posted hunting information on their website. Example: Tiny Marsh Conservation Area, north of Elmvale, where pheasant hunting is taking place Mondays through

Fridays, up to Wednesday, November 30, between the hours of 8AM and 4PM.

People planning to hike, ride, jog or bird watch in forested areas or conservation areas should take the above “Be Safe, Be Seen” steps to enjoy a safe and enjoyable experience.

Happy trails!