



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Meridian Township's Deer Management Program Begins October 1
More Than 40,000 Pounds of Venison Donated to Local Food Banks Since 2020

MERIDIAN TOWNSHIP, Mich. – Meridian Township will begin its 16th annual Deer Management Program on **Thursday, October 1**, coinciding with the first day of Michigan's 2026 archery season.

The program is conducted in partnership with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and uses trained volunteer hunters to help manage the local deer population. The goal is to improve public safety, reduce deer-related impacts, and support a healthy deer herd. All volunteers must complete yearly training and safety requirements before participating.

Since the program began in 2010, Meridian Township has worked to balance wildlife management, public safety, and community needs. Venison harvested through the program is donated to **14** local food banks. During the 2025-2026 season, **5,482 pounds of venison** were donated. Since 2020, more than **40,000 pounds of venison** have been provided to local families in need.

The 2026 Deer Management Plan includes the following key measures:

- The program will run from **October 1 through January 1**.
- This year's program will be conducted on **42** Township-owned properties and **27** approved private properties.
- The program is **NOT** open to the public. Only registered volunteer hunters approved by the Township may participate.
 - A total of **58** experienced volunteer hunters have been selected. All participants are familiar with the area and must complete annual safety testing and training. Hunters are assigned to specific properties by Township staff.
- Hunting is limited to **archery equipment only**.
- Entrances to designated hunting properties are posted to inform visitors that deer management activities are taking place.
- Hunting is permitted seven days per week, from one-half hour before sunrise until one-half hour after sunset, in accordance with MDNR regulations

"We are working closely with the MDNR to promote a safer community and a healthier deer herd," said Land Stewardship Coordinator Emma Campbell. "This program not only helps reduce deer-related safety concerns, but it also provides a valuable source of protein for local families through our venison donation partnership. Thanks to MDNR's Hunters Feeding Michigan program, venison donations to local food banks will continue, as they cover the cost of processing and testing for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)."

Neighbors of Township properties included in the program have received advance notification about deer management activities. All parks and land preserves remain open to the public during this time, with signage indicating that the Deer Management Program is in effect.

To see reports and statistics from previous years, visit meridian.mi.us/DeerManagement. For questions, please call the Meridian Township Parks and Recreation Department at 517.853.4600.

The community of Meridian Township is in close proximity to the Michigan State Capitol and Michigan State University. The Township serves the community through exceptional services, beneficial amenities and an outstanding quality of life. It is a welcoming community that celebrates quality education, recreation and lifestyles.



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