



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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Pat Quinn, Governor
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IDNR Launches “Target Hunger Now!” Initiative

Program will provide food banks with venison and fish for families in need

AURORA – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources today announced a new initiative to provide meals for Illinois families – “Target Hunger Now! – a humanitarian effort which will provide food banks throughout the state with venison donated by Illinois hunters and fish from Illinois waterways.

The “Target Hunger Now!” program is serving protein rich venison tacos to hundreds of children, adults and families today in its unveiling at the Hesed House Aurora Soup Kitchen, 657 S. River St., Aurora during lunch (11-12:45 p.m.) and at the Maywood Multi-Purpose Building, 200 S. 5th Avenue, Maywood during the dinner hour (5-7 p.m.).

“Illinois is home to some of the best produce and game in the world, and it is important that everyone in our state has access to it, but for many people that is just not an option,” said Governor Pat Quinn. “I would like to thank Illinois sportsmen and the Department of Natural Resources for bringing fresh meat and fish to the tables in these food banks that serve some of our most vulnerable citizens.”

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is coordinating the program to encourage hunters to donate to the program whole deer for processing into ground venison. The IDNR will also be working with commercial fishing operations to provide abundant Mississippi River Asian carp for processing into high-protein, ready-to-prepare servings later this year.

“This effort to feed hungry Illinois families builds on the success of the Illinois Sportsmen Against Hunger program, which has provided hundreds of thousands of pounds of venison, donated by hunters, to Illinois food banks during the last 15 years,” said IDNR Director Marc Miller. “We want to encourage hunters to help us manage the deer herd by taking deer – and maybe an extra deer – this fall and donating them to the program. We can also make use of the abundance of Asian carp in Illinois as commercial nets haul in tens of thousands of pounds of fish for processing and distribution to food banks.”

Assistance to food banks is much needed in Illinois. Statistics from the USDA suggest nearly a half-million children in the state are in households facing food insecurity. More than 1.6 million individuals and 756,000 households participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in February 2010, an increase of 14 percent from last year. Nearly 2 million Illinois children were enrolled in the National School Lunch Program during the last school year.

The IDNR hopes thousands of pounds of fish can be processed regularly along with the distribution of 100,000 pounds of donated venison this year as part of “Target Hunger Now!”

Partners with the IDNR on “Target Hunger Now!” include Comcast, the Beta Club of Illinois, the Illinois Conservation Foundation, FeedingIllinois.org, and the Illinois Sportsmen Against Hunger program. Individuals, companies or others interested in supporting the program can contact the IDNR at 217/785-0075.