



White-tailed Deer: Harvest & Safe Handling

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White-tailed deer on Shelter Island may have contacted permethrin present on 4-Poster devices that are being used by Cornell as a method for tick control. Any permethrin present will likely be on the deer hide, specifically on the head and neck. Based on permethrin residue sampling from hunter harvested deer during 2008, Cornell is providing the following recommendations for handling and processing deer harvested from Shelter Island. As an informed sportsman, you will find that many of these handling suggestions are standard protective measures recommended each time you handle and process a deer. Please visit the NYSDEC's deer and bear hunting webpage to review more information regarding deer harvest throughout NYS as well as information from the NYSDOH about lead in venison (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/7857.html>).

*** ALWAYS WEAR PROTECTIVE RUBBER OR PLASTIC GLOVES WHEN HANDLING, FIELD DRESSING, AND PROCESSING YOUR DEER. CHANGE GLOVES BETWEEN EACH OF THESE STEPS.**

*** SKIN YOUR DEER STARTING FROM THE TAIL END AND MOVING TOWARD THE HEAD TO MINIMIZE CONTACT WITH THE FUR ON THE NECK.**

*** AVOID CONTACT BETWEEN THE HIDE AND THE MEAT YOU INTEND TO PROCESS FOR CONSUMPTION.**

*** DURING THE SKINNING PROCESS, REPLACE OR CLEAN YOUR KNIFE BETWEEN INITIAL INCISIONS THROUGH THE SKIN AND WHEN YOU USE THE KNIFE TO ASSIST PULLING THE SKIN DOWN.**

*** WASH YOUR HANDS THOROUGHLY AFTER FIELD DRESSING AND PROCESSING YOUR DEER.**

AS ALWAYS:

- Field dress your deer ASAP to speed the loss of body heat, especially in warm weather. This will slow bacterial growth and improve the quality of the meat.
- Clean out the body cavity with a damp cloth or paper towel to remove dirt, feces, hair, and bloodshot areas.
- Prop the body cavity open with sticks to allow for adequate air circulation.
- Minimize meat contact with the brain, spinal cord, spleen, and lymph nodes.
- You may be able to age your deer in a temperature-controlled room, set between 35 and 40°F, for up to a week.
- Wrap your venison tightly with heavily waxed paper, freezer wrap, heavy-duty aluminum foil, or plastic freezer bags before freezing or refrigerating. Take care to remove all excess air from the package. Deer venison will keep 9-12 months in a freezer when properly wrapped.
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize equipment and work areas with a 10% bleach solution (one part bleach in nine parts water) after processing.

For more information and/or interest in providing samples, please contact Cornell (631-749-0896). Also, visit our website <http://wildlifecontrol.info/TickStudy/Pages/default.aspx>.