

2025 Indiana White-Tailed Deer Report

DNR

Indiana Department
of Natural Resources

*Fish, Wildlife
& Nature Preserves*



2025 Indiana White-Tailed Deer Report



Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program

This program supports state fish and wildlife agencies to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, their habitats, and the hunting, sport fishing and recreational boating opportunities they provide. This program was initiated in 1937 as the Federal Aid in Wildlife Act and created a system where by taxes are paid on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment by the public who hunts. Today this excise tax generates over a hundred million dollars each year that are dedicated to state wildlife restoration and management projects across the United States.

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Cover Photo

White-tailed deer fawn at Hoosier Prairie Nature Preserve. Photo by Brent Drinkut, DNR.

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Chapter 1. 2025-2026 DEER REPORT OVERVIEW

JOE CAUDELL, INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Welcome to the 2025 Indiana White-tailed Deer Report. Every year, Indiana DNR publishes a comprehensive report of the state's deer herd and deer management research. The report includes deer hunting season results, use of depredation permits, deer-vehicle collision reports, disease monitoring efforts, survey results, and internal and external deer research projects. Historical reports are available at on.IN.gov/INdeerreport.

2025-2026 Deer Hunting Season

The 2025-2026 deer hunting season was composed of four statewide seasons: Youth (Sept. 27 and 28), Archery (Oct. 1 to Jan. 4), Firearms (Nov. 15 to Nov. 30), and Muzzleloader (Dec. 6-21). Most resident deer licenses could be purchased for \$39 and nonresident licenses for \$240. A deer license bundle was available for purchase at \$91 for residents and \$550 for nonresidents. The deer license bundle, which is valid in all deer seasons except the Deer Reduction Zone season, allows hunters to take up to three deer (one antlered and two antlerless only) while attempting to satisfy statewide bag limits for the Archery, Firearms, and Muzzleloader seasons. A hunter may take only one antlered deer during all statewide seasons combined (Archery, Firearms, Muzzleloader, and Youth seasons). Resident landowners and lessees who own and/or lease Indiana farmland are exempt from needing deer licenses when hunting on their land. Hunters were required to register all harvested deer through the online CheckIN Game system within 48 hours of the kill of their deer.

Licensed youth, age 17 or younger, were eligible to participate in a youth-only season if accompanied by an adult at least 18 years old. Youth could take multiple deer during this special season: one antlered deer and the number of antlerless



deer allowed per county bag limit, up to six antlerless statewide.

Bag limits for Archery and Muzzleloader seasons are now part of the total county antlerless bag limit (i.e., there is no separate bag limit for archery starting in 2025). Hunters are now allowed to use crossbows throughout the Archery season by using an archery license instead of needing a separate crossbow license. The bag limit during Firearms season was one antlered deer. A single firearms license was required to hunt with any combination of shotgun, muzzleloader, rifle, or handgun during Firearms season. A muzzleloader license (separate from the firearms license) was required to hunt during Muzzleloader season.

Hunters could harvest additional deer beyond the statewide bag limits in designated Deer Reduction Zones. Beginning with an antlerless deer, hunters were allowed to harvest up to 10 additional deer under the Deer Reduction Zone bag limit, for a total of either 10 antlerless or one antlered (“earn-a-buck”) and nine antlerless deer. Harvest of these additional deer required the possession of a Deer Reduction Zone license for each deer harvested. An antlered deer harvested under the Deer Reduction Zone license did not count toward a hunter’s statewide bag limit of one antlered deer. However, deer harvested in designated Deer Reduction Zones with other license types (e.g., archery, multi-season antlerless, and license bundle) counted toward statewide bag limits. The Deer Reduction Zone season opened Sept. 15, two weeks prior to the beginning of Archery season, and continued through Jan. 31.

Multiple reserved draw hunts were open to hunters with a valid deer hunting license. Reserved draw hunt locations change annually. In 2025, reserved draw locations included Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge, Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge, and Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center, among others. There were no state park hunts in 2025. For a complete list of reserved draw deer hunts, please visit on.IN.gov/reservedhunt.

Deer Control Permits and Deer-Vehicle Collisions

Deer control permits were issued to Indiana residents experiencing an economic loss of \$500 or more because of property damage caused by deer or where there was an identified disease risk to humans or domestic livestock. Each depredation permit specified the number of deer a landowner was authorized to take under the permit. Permits were only valid on the permit holder’s property, and the permit holder was allowed to designate assistants to remove deer in place of themselves. Depredation permits for deer are typically only issued outside of the deer hunting season.

Vehicle collisions involving deer and resulting in property damage of at least \$2,500 or injury to any person were reported to the Indiana State Police and Indiana Department of Transportation by local and state law enforcement agencies. Information collected included location of collision (e.g., county, coordinates, intersection, etc.) and road type (e.g., county road, state road, interstate, etc.). The number of deer-vehicle collisions and the number of deer taken with depredation permits are factors that influence the bonus antlerless quotas for the hunting season and locations of deer reduction zones.

Deer Health

Indiana DNR monitors deer health for major outbreaks of diseases such as epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD), bovine tuberculosis (bTB), and chronic wasting disease (CWD). In 2025, DNR received a significant number of reports

from several southern Indiana counties regarding EHD, triggering a reduction in seven southern Indiana counties. Three additional CWD positive deer were identified in Noble, Rush, and Franklin counties. After a positive deer was detected in Posey County during the 2024 season, no additional CWD positive deer were detected in that area.

Surveys and Volunteer Monitoring

Surveys of hunters, landowners, and other people are tools Indiana DNR uses to manage the state's deer herd. Before 2017, paper surveys were mailed to a subset of Indiana hunters and landowners every three or four years to ask questions about harvest, deer damage, and opinions on the size and management of deer in Indiana. In 2025, hunters had the opportunity to complete an online survey immediately after checking in their deer, and to participate in the Deer Management Survey to share their opinions of Indiana deer management. These surveys gather specific information about the deer that were harvested (e.g., sex, age, approximate size, etc.), the hunting experience associated with those deer (e.g., number of does or bucks seen, and happiness with the hunt), how hunters feel about the state's deer population, and how they would like deer to be managed. In the most recent survey, Indiana DNR asked hunters about EHD and if they agree with the current approach to EHD management.

Deer Research

Indiana DNR conducts research within its deer program and works with universities to conduct research on various topics related to deer management. In 2025, the deer program continued its work on improving deer population estimation methods, researching the impact of EHD, examining the economics of deer management, and exploring a new method to estimate the age of deer using genetic markers. Internally, scientists in the deer program began estimating deer population densities on state lands and examined the distribution of hunting pressure.

Chapter 2. IMPROVEMENTS IN DEER MANAGEMENT

Joe N. Caudell, *Indiana Department of Natural Resources*

Deer Density Measurements

During the past seven years, Indiana DNR has worked with Purdue University to develop a method of estimating deer densities that would be useful at a small scale and cost effective for the DNR to use statewide to estimate deer abundance. That data is published in Chapter 9 of this report. To create these population estimates, DNR uses a combination of aircraft over private land and unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) and game cameras on public lands. Aircraft has been shown to be cost effective at recording images of deer in undeveloped areas on private land because it can cover large portions of the state in a relatively short amount of time. Drones and game cameras may be most cost-effective on public land, where a higher level of precision is needed. DNR has used these methods to measure changes in deer density in Franklin County and northern Indiana during the three most recent epizootic hemorrhagic disease events and will use these methods to measure the recovery of the deer population. Each year DNR will estimate a portion of the state's deer population and report it in this annual report.

New Deer Hunting Rules and Laws Implemented During the 2025-2026 Deer Season

Senate Bill 280 was introduced to remove the rules requiring different centerfire rifle types on public and private land and to decrease the minimum bullet caliber requirement. The bill was signed into law and became active on July 1, 2025. Under the new law, rifles must fire a centerfire cartridge with a bullet diameter of .219 inches (5.56 mm) or larger. Additionally, a hunter may not possess more than 10 such cartridges for each of these rifles while hunting deer on both public and private land.

The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) adopted several new permanent hunting rules. Currently, there is confusion around the privileges allowed under each deer license, both among the public and the DNR employees responsible for interpreting and enforcing the deer hunting rules found in 312 IAC 9-3-2. Much of the confusion is a result of the multiple license types available for deer hunting, each having different limits of take and season bag limits. For example, redefining the bonus antlerless license as a multiple season antlerless license will simplify the privileges of a license holder and make it easy to determine what privileges a license holder has. Simplified regulations can also make hunting more accessible to individuals who are new to hunting deer and who may find license confusion to be a barrier of entry. Less confusing regulations will also lead to less staff time spent answering questions about license privileges from confused individuals. Below is a summary and brief justification:

Changes to 312 IAC 9-3

312 IAC 9-3-18.2: Creating a single license for archery and crossbow equipment

The NRC adopted the rule to eliminate the crossbow license by allowing individuals who use either a bow and arrow or a crossbow and bolt to purchase an archery license and use either equipment. The hope is this change will help reduce confusion among individual deer hunters and give a person an additional equipment option with the one license.

A recent survey of hunters found they were supportive of this change, although

some do not consider crossbows to be “traditional” archery equipment. The change should not impact revenue for the DNR because an individual is still required to purchase a license, and most individuals use either a bow and an arrow or a crossbow to hunt, but not both. Since legalizing the use of a crossbow in 2012, less than 1% of resident and nonresident hunters have purchased both a crossbow and an archery license or used both equipment types in the same license year. As for hunters who use the deer license bundle, since 2016 there has never been more than 93 individuals check in a deer under both equipment types in a given year. Given these metrics, it is unlikely that eliminating the crossbow license and allowing crossbow use under an archery license would contribute to a significant revenue effect either from a decrease in archery or crossbow license sales or disincentivizing deer license bundle purchases. It is also unlikely to result in a change in harvest. Currently, individuals who hunt using archery equipment can take an antlered or antlerless deer with an archery or a crossbow license, if they do not take more than one antlered deer in the regular deer seasons combined. However, the small percentage of individuals who purchase both an archery and a crossbow license could potentially save the cost of one license because a license holder could use either type of equipment with that one license.

A question in the 2022 Deer Management Survey asked about combining the archery and crossbow licenses into one license. DNR received 16,462 responses to this question. Of those, 73% supported this rule proposal (61% strongly supporting; 12% somewhat supporting), 12% were neutral, and 19% opposed (11% strongly opposing; 7% somewhat opposing).

In a 2021 survey, there were 894 archery-only respondents out of 16,462 total respondents (5.4%). Of those, 44% supported this proposal (31% strongly supporting; 13% somewhat supporting), 18% were neutral, and 38% opposed (30% strongly opposing; 8% somewhat opposing).

The DNR recognizes the desire of hunters to keep seasons specific to a type of equipment and to place certain limitations on others who hunt that season. However, one of the deer program’s goals is to simplify the rules that govern deer hunting so that hunters desiring to enter the sport are less confused by the regulations. The adopted rule change will simplify what license is needed for hunting during archery season and increase the value of the archery license.

312 IAC 9-3-2: Change the deer license bundle to a buck and two does

The NRC adopted the rule to change the deer license bundle to allow hunters to take one buck and two antlerless deer and removed the option of harvesting three antlerless deer. This was proposed to further simplify regulations for hunters. Landowners and tenants of farmland who are exempt from needing a license to hunt deer on their own farmland would not be affected by this change, nor would resident youth license holders or lifetime license holders. This will also reflect how most hunters use this license because only a small fraction of hunters uses the license bundle to harvest three antlerless deer.

The DNR asked a question about changing the license bundle to allow hunters to only harvest one buck and two does in the 2022 Deer Management Survey. There were 16,374 responses to this question. Of those, 62% of hunters supported the proposed rule (40% strongly supporting), 19% were neutral, 18% opposed (11% strongly opposing). This change would align with current harvest quotas (i.e., one buck and two does per county).

312 IAC 9-3-2: Creation of the multiple season antlerless deer license

The NRC adopted this license terminology to replace the bonus antlerless deer hunting license and allow an individual to take one antlerless deer per license using equipment authorized during the season in which they are hunting.

312 IAC 9-3-2: Creation of a statewide antlerless bag limit

The NRC adopted the change to permanent rule to create a statewide antlerless bag limit to go along with the current statewide antlered bag limit. The reason for this proposed change was that the current county bonus antlerless quota (CBAQ) system allows individuals to shoot socially unacceptable numbers of antlerless deer across multiple counties, if individuals in each county take the maximum number of bonus antlerless deer available in each county. The new rules governing deer hunting will allow an individual to still take no more than one antlered deer during the regular deer seasons combined, as is allowed now, but it will also allow them to purchase up to six additional multiple season licenses to take antlerless deer in any of the regular deer seasons (e.g., archery, firearms, and muzzleloader). This is not expected to create a significant change in revenue for the DNR because there are fewer than 70 individuals who currently take more than seven deer during a regular deer season each year. There are very few if any individuals who take the permitted six antlerless deer under the current rules. There is a maximum number of antlerless deer allowed to be taken per county and a limit to the number of antlerless deer taken on certain DNR properties to help provide quality deer hunting opportunities. By implementing a statewide bag limit of six antlerless deer, the DNR will reduce the number of deer an individual may take, therefore reducing concerns about the unlimited number in the current CBAQ structure. The statewide antlerless limit will improve the perception of deer management by the DNR among residents who are concerned with high antlerless take allocations under current regulations. In the past, an emergency rule was enacted each year to establish the bonus antlerless deer bag limits per county and other limitations on properties where a bonus antlerless deer may not be taken. The change does not affect military hunts, deer reduction zones, or other special licenses, so hunters can still harvest additional deer if they desire.

The DNR asked a question about limiting the total number of antlerless deer that each hunter can harvest in Indiana to six antlerless deer in the 2022 Deer Management Survey, and there were 17,195 responses. Of those, 74% supported this to some degree (48% of those strongly supporting), 12% were neutral, and 14% opposed (7% opposing; 7% strongly opposing) this proposal.

312 IAC 9-3-2: Clarifying that the deer firearms license is buck-only

The NRC adopted the rule change to confirm in the language that the firearms license is “buck-only.” Hunters have been confused about the firearms license because it is “buck-only” compared to the archery, crossbow, and firearms licenses, which are “either-sex.” Hunters can harvest a doe with a firearm, but this currently must be done using a bonus antlerless license (will be the multiple season antlerless deer license with the proposed changes). Therefore, the NRC adopted a rule change to clarify the rules so that it explicitly states that hunters using a firearms license can only take one antlered deer. This is consistent with the current firearms seasonal limit of one antlered deer in 312 IAC 9-3-4(c) and does not represent an actual change to what hunters can do. One antlered deer may be taken during the Firearms season (312 IAC 9-3-4(f)), which is the one antlered deer that can be taken statewide in the regular deer seasons combined (312 IAC 9-3-2(t)).

312 IAC 9-3-2: Changing to the County Bonus Antlerless Quota to a County Antlerless Bag Limit

There are many hunters who dislike the current bonus antlerless quota (CBAQ) structure because it is confusing. The CBAQ is additive to the number of antlerless deer that can be taken using archery and crossbow equipment and muzzleloading firearms during Muzzleloader season. Because there are also individual bag limits for these two seasons, hunters often struggle to determine how many antlerless deer they can harvest. Mistakes are frequently made when checking in deer, causing staff to spend time in the CheckIN Game system making corrections for hunters. Mistakes are also made when purchasing licenses because hunters may be unaware of the bag limits for archery season and Firearms season. Therefore, the NRC adopted a rule to change the CBAQ to a County Antlerless Bag Limit, which will provide a single number for the number of antlerless deer that can be harvested in that county, regardless of the equipment used to harvest antlerless deer.

The DNR asked a question about removing the “bonus” deer designation from rules in the 2022 Deer Management Survey, and there were 16,691 responses to this question. Of those, 64% of hunters supported this rule proposal (37% strongly supporting; 27% somewhat supporting), 24% were neutral, and 12% were opposed (6% opposing; 6% strongly opposing).

312 IAC 9-3-2: Prohibit hunters from harvesting antlerless deer on certain DNR properties with a firearm

The NRC has adopted a rule that will prevent hunters from harvesting an antlerless deer on Fish & Wildlife areas (FWAs), as well as a few other properties (Mississinewa Lake, Salamonie Lake, and Patoka Lake), using a firearm during Firearms season. This is similar to the past emergency rule restricting the use of bonus antlerless licenses on FWAs. In a survey of deer hunters in 2022, hunters were asked their opinion of not allowing antlerless deer to be taken on FWAs with a firearm. There were 16,478 responses to this question, with 54% of hunters supporting this rule proposal (33% strongly supporting; 21% somewhat supporting), 29% were neutral, and 17% opposed this rule (9% strongly opposing; 8% somewhat opposing).

312 IAC 9-3-2: Replacement deer for deer harvested and determined to be unfit for consumption

The NRC has adopted a rule to allow a replacement deer to be taken for a deer that was legally harvested and found to have meat that is unfit for human consumption under 312 IAC 9-3-2(bb). An individual taking a deer that is unfit for human consumption is a common occurrence during deer season, with a peak during Firearms season as this is when most individuals take their deer. Currently, DNR staff examine photographs, evaluate the condition based upon observations by biologists and conservation officers, or both. A decision is made whether to allow a person to take another deer if the staff determines the deer is inedible based on internal guidelines. If an individual calls with concern over the fitness of an antlerless deer, and there is evidence of systemic infection, DNR staff allow the individual to take another antlerless deer on the current license used to hunt deer. The process for determining the fitness of an antlerless deer for human consumption is simple and uniform because the only issue determined by the DNR is the usability of the meat to the individual.

When an individual calls regarding the fitness of a buck (antlered deer), there is often an issue regarding the desirability of the antlers to that individual. DNR

staff found that some individuals who are dissatisfied with the antlers on their buck who can find something wrong with the carcass will call asking to be able to take another buck on their license. Additionally, some individuals see this as another opportunity to take a second buck in addition to the first buck if the meat of the first buck is not edible, and the individual believes they will get two sets of antlers for the year. If DNR staff decide that a buck is unfit for human consumption, DNR staff are required to make arrangements to collect the antlers. The process is lengthened because the individual must decide if they are willing to live with the antlers but not have meat from the deer. The willingness of an individual to give up antlers often helps DNR staff determine whether the individual is trying to get another opportunity to shoot a second buck, or whether the individual has a real concern about the condition of the meat. Currently, DNR does not allow individuals who have taken a deer that cannot be eaten to keep the antlers to memorialize a hunt. The change would make the response to these calls more uniform for the individual. DNR staff would then offer to replace the meat with an antlerless deer privilege. This approach would be more consistent for the individual and would replace the meat portion of the deer without needing to take away the antlers on the buck that was taken. This is different from the process in which if the DNR suspects a disease, such as bovine tuberculosis, DNR staff confiscate the whole deer and allow the individual to take another deer on that same license. The current process will remain in place for a deer that the DNR confiscates for disease reasons.

312 IAC 9-3-3: Allowing .40 caliber muzzleloaders during muzzleloader season

The NRC has adopted a rule to allow the use of a .40 caliber muzzleloader, which will allow more individuals to use equipment currently unable to be used to hunt deer. A resident requested the use of this equipment previously. DNR examined the muzzle velocity and energy and found that an example of a .40 caliber muzzleloader (CVA Paramount HTR) loaded to the recommended powder specifications with a 225 grain bullet is capable of a muzzle velocity of greater than 2,600 feet per second with an energy of greater than 3,500 ft. lbs. At 200 yards, the velocity is still greater than 2,200 feet per second with approximately 2,300 ft. lbs. of kinetic energy remaining. This is more than enough velocity and energy to kill a deer effectively at more than 200 yards with an expanding bullet.

312 IAC 9-3-3: Clarifying two pistol calibers for deer hunting

The NRC has adopted a rule to change the language in 312 IAC 9-3-3 to correct the terminology for a .25-20 Winchester and a .32-20 Winchester. This ammunition is currently allowed, but the terms need to accurately reflect the names of the cartridges used by the manufacturers.

312 IAC 9-3-3: Changing the dates for tree stands on public land in Deer Reduction Zones

The NRC has adopted a rule to allow portable tree stands and ground blinds to be placed on DNR properties between noon on Sept. 1 and Feb. 8 within a deer reduction zone. Allowing an individual to set up a stand on Sept. 1 gives the individual time to set up the deer stand prior to the start of the reduction zone season (Sept. 15) and allows the individual to leave it in place on the property until after the season ends. Therefore, these additional dates are proposed to be added in subsection (g) for properties that are in a deer reduction zone because the reduction zone season begins Sept. 15 and ends Jan. 31.

312 IAC 9-3-3: Allow hunters to retrieve deer using thermal or infrared detectors for retrieving deer

During the past several years, hunters have asked if DNR would allow the use of thermal and infrared detectors to locate and retrieve dead deer. DNR examined this issue and found the current language is inconsistent in that it is the only state law or rule that places a prohibition on equipment or methods used to retrieve a dead deer. 312 IAC 9-3-3 allows methods such as dogs and horses to be used to track or trail a dead deer. This change would also be consistent with IC 14-22-6-16, which prohibits the use of unmanned aerial vehicles to aid in hunting but allows their use to retrieve a dead wild animal. Therefore, the Natural Resources Commission has adopted a rule to allow the use of this equipment to retrieve legally harvested deer (but not when hunting deer).

312 IAC 9-3-4: Allow youth hunters to take no more than one deer on specific public land

The NRC has adopted a rule change to 312 IAC 9-3-4 that will limit youth hunters from taking more than one antlerless deer on certain DNR properties. This is currently the status quo and will not represent a change to current deer hunting regulations. In past years, this rule language has been established by emergency rule, but a new Indiana law prohibits the use of emergency rules for the purposes of establishing deer hunting regulations except under certain conditions (see HEA 1623-2023).

312 IAC 9-3-4: Removal of the ‘A’ designation for County Bonus Antlerless Quotas

The ‘A’ designation was historically used in counties to limit the harvest of bonus antlerless deer to the last half of firearms season. Recent data on the deer population has shown this is not necessary, especially with the switch from the County Bonus Antlerless Quota system to using a total antlerless bag limit for each county. All counties have a normal antlerless bag limit of at least one deer, and this is not expected to change soon.

312 IAC 9-3-4: Adding the Deer Reduction Zones to rule language

Regarding the changes in subsection (e), Deer Reduction Zones (DRZs) target areas that have high deer populations and high human density or use, resulting in concerns about deer and vehicle collisions and personal property damage. A DRZ has traditionally been established by an emergency rule to allow for changes as needed annually, but because of HEA 1623-2023 the DNR may no longer use emergency rules for this purpose. The DNR designates an area as a DRZ to manage deer conflicts through sport hunting. A DRZ provides individuals with additional opportunities to take a deer in that area. The goal is to reduce conflict between deer and humans, not to eliminate the deer population. Incorporating or increasing hunting helps manage deer populations and increases deer wariness of humans, which can also reduce conflicts.

The smallest deer management unit in the state has traditionally been the county; however, a DRZ allows the DNR to target areas within a county for management. This should allow deer in one part of a county to remain stable or increase while decreasing populations in another part of the same county. The approach coincides with the state’s current deer management plan, which is to strategically manage the state’s deer herd. Therefore, in some areas of the state, there should be a larger deer population, while in others the population should be maintained or reduced. A DRZ allows managers to target such areas without reducing deer populations throughout an entire county.

Researchers identified potential areas with high conflict between humans and deer or high use by mapping areas with high human density and high rates of deer and vehicle collisions. Other conflicts may include reports of deer damage by landowners, requests for deer damage permits, requests by community leaders, or calls for assistance through DNR's district and urban biologists. The designation process results in two types of DRZs: (1) traditional; and (2) corridors. Traditional DRZs are established near or around urban areas and encompass a community. Alternatively, DRZ corridors are created along portions of major roadways to specifically address high rates of deer and vehicle collisions.

The increased allowable antlerless take and lengthened DRZ season mean that the individuals who hunt deer can help address problem areas and potentially reduce the need for other measures, such as the use of deer damage permits. DRZs can increase opportunities to hunt deer in urban environments and help alleviate conflicts between humans and deer. The deer program staff recently conducted an analysis to determine the effectiveness of DRZs in reducing deer and vehicle collisions. DNR staff found a decrease in deer and vehicle collisions within DRZs of approximately 15% after allowing individuals to take additional deer within DRZs. These results demonstrate the effectiveness of using targeted recreational hunting as a management tool to reduce deer and vehicle collisions.

312 IAC 9-3-4: Removing the bag limits for archery and muzzleloader licenses

The NRC has adopted a rule that would remove the season bag limits for deer taken with muzzleloader and archery licenses. Individuals will be able to take the number of antlerless deer allowed per county within the proposed new statewide bag limit using archery and muzzleloader licenses. Allowing an individual to take more than two antlerless deer on archery licenses and more than one antlerless deer on a muzzleloader license will reduce confusion about which license an individual is required to purchase and how to check in a deer that is taken during a hunt. DNR staff time is wasted trying to explain the requirements of a license to an individual and correcting an accidental mistake an individual makes when checking in a deer. Therefore, this change will result in improved individual service, reduced staff time, and ease of understanding the rules without making a change to the harvest.

312 IAC 9-3-2 and 312 IAC 9-3-4: Switching to an Antlerless Bag Limit for each county

Since 2017, county bonus antlerless bag limits have been set on an annual basis by emergency rule to allow for changes each year. However, that is no longer an option under HEA 1623-2023; therefore, the county bag limits have been added to this rule. These county bag limits are established using the following: information on individual's desires for the deer population to change from the annual Deer Management Survey, trends in various deer population indices including deer-vehicle collisions, the Archer's Index, changes in effort to take deer, deer damage permits, and others; professional opinions of wildlife biologists and conservation officers; the effects of disease; and the effects of changes on individuals and the deer population. Most recently, the DNR has added data about deer density from the Northeastern, East Central, and Southern Deer Management Units (DMUs) from the Purdue Integrated Deer Management Project. Because the county antlerless bag limit will now be a combination of the various equipment bag limits and the county bonus bag limit, DNR staff used the following method to create the proposed antlerless bag limit for inclusion in the rule:

Because prior county bonus antlerless quota decisions were based on the data gathered each year, using data from the county data available at [IN.gov/dnr/fish-and-wildlife/wildlife-resources/animals/white-tailed-deer/county-data/](https://in.gov/dnr/fish-and-wildlife/wildlife-resources/animals/white-tailed-deer/county-data/).

DNR staff selected “normal” years (i.e., not a COVID year and not an epizootic hemorrhagic disease [EHD] recovery year). Most often, data from 2022 was selected unless a county was still in a recovery period from EHD. In those cases, 2018 was selected as the next best alternative.

DNR staff examined the number of affected individuals and the number of deer that would not be taken at a proposed county bag limit (or the increase in take at a proposed county bag limit).

DNR staff selected a bag limit at which very few hunters (fewer than 10) would be affected by this new bag limit and a number at which individuals were using the available bag limit. For example, Steuben County could have a higher bag limit based on population data, but DNR staff have observed from experience that individuals will not use an additional antlerless deer bag limit even if it is available. The DNR has seen cases in which individuals will decrease their personal take if they believe the county bag limit is too high. Therefore, the DNR will keep a designated county bag limit of three for Steuben rather than a four or five, even though the population would support a higher bag limit.

Minor changes were made to try to keep the counties similar within Deer Management Units.

312 IAC 9-3-2 (h): Removing the Late Antlerless Firearms Season

Indiana currently has a firearms season for antlerless deer from Dec. 26 through the first Sunday in January of the next year in counties with a bonus antlerless quota of four or more deer. This rule was initially enacted to try to significantly increase harvest of antlerless deer, but research on that season found that hunters just harvest antlerless deer later in the season in counties where that season is in place (see the 2020 Deer Report). DNR also surveyed hunters on their opinion about that season in 2021 and found that only 24% of hunters used the season in the previous year, and 38% of hunters reported hunting that season in the previous five-year period (see the 2020 Deer Report). When DNR asked what the general level of opposition or support was for that season, it found that 43% were supportive to some degree, and 27% were opposed to some degree. Because of the change in the bonus antlerless quota system, if this season were to be retained, DNR would need to either anchor this season to the new antlerless bag limit system or create a new method for enacting it. Therefore, because of the split interest by hunters for having this season, the low use by hunters, and the ineffectiveness at changing deer harvest, the NRC has repealed this rule.

Chapter 3. 2025-2026 DEER HUNTING SEASON

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Errors in Reporting

The online check-in system, CheckIN Game, was initiated in 2012 as an option for hunters and was made the primary game-checking system in 2015. Hunters who check in their game online occasionally make errors in reporting their harvest. Errors include checking in deer with the wrong sex indicated, incorrect licenses, or multiple entries of the same deer. Indiana DNR is constantly working throughout deer season to correct these errors so that harvest numbers are as accurate as possible. In many cases, this involves contacting hunters by telephone or email to determine what type of error has been made before a correction can be issued.

For this reason, the data in this document should be considered to have a certain amount of reporting error. Hunters or others who use these data should expect that the numbers reported in future Indiana White-tailed Deer Reports may change slightly based on corrections of errors. This is also true for the Deer Counter on the DNR Deer webpage (deer.dnr.IN.gov). Some hunters have observed the reported total harvest decreasing as the corrections to the data were made and have contacted the DNR to ask why.

Two error rates were calculated for this issue: an unreconciled error rate and a total error rate, which includes both reconciled errors and unreconciled errors (Table 3-1). Typically, the numbers reported in this document will only fluctuate by the unreconciled error rate as the reconciled errors have already been voided and are not included in the data. However, occasionally a statistic might have been calculated without removing the voided transactions. Because error rates are relatively low, they have no effect on management decisions.

Harvest totals for the 2025 deer hunting season are current as of April 7, 2026. Additionally, harvest totals for the 2016-2024 seasons have been updated since previously reported. In this report, the updated totals are used in analyses and comparisons between years.

TABLE 3-1. Error rates of hunter-reported deer harvests, 2016-2025. Total error includes reconciled and unreconciled errors. Reconciled errors have already been removed from the dataset.

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
% total error	1.3	0.57	0.23	0.21	0.2	0.19	0.24	0.23	0.19
% unreconciled error	0.17	0.13	0.13	0.15	0.13	0.14	0.17	0.15	0.17

Harvest by Season

Harvest summary reports prior to 2016 did not include harvest numbers from Indiana State Park Management Hunts because those deer were checked in at the properties and reported separately by the Division of State Parks. Now that the deer check-in process is online for all hunters and hunts, deer harvested during State Park Management Hunts are included in the check-in database and can be reported with statewide totals. No State Park Management Hunts were held in 2025.

Shed bucks are checked in as antlerless deer in the CheckIN Game system and do not count against a hunter's buck limit. However, for the purpose of analyzing the harvest data, antlered bucks and shed bucks are grouped as antlered deer, while does and button bucks are grouped as antlerless deer, unless specified.

A total of 131,226 harvested deer were reported in Indiana during the 2025 season (Figures 3-1 and 3-2). This harvest was 4.0% higher than the 126,169 deer taken during the 2024 season. The antlered deer harvest of 62,876 was 5.4% higher than the 59,643 reported in 2024. The antlerless harvest of 68,350 was 2.7% higher than the 66,526 harvested in 2024. In 2025, the reported harvest for total deer ranks 4th highest all-time, while the total antlerless deer harvest ranks as the 16th highest all-time in Indiana history. The antlered harvest ranks the highest since reporting began in 1951. Approximately 4.70 million deer have been reported harvested during the past 75 deer-hunting seasons in Indiana.

The hunting season began with the Deer Reduction Zone on Sept. 15, followed by a youth-only weekend (Sept. 27-28). The number of deer harvested with archery equipment during the Deer Reduction Zone season was incorporated into Archery season totals, while deer harvested with firearms during Deer Reduction Zone season were incorporated into Firearms season totals.

Youth season was created in 2006 and allowed youth 15 years old and younger to harvest one antlerless deer. It changed in 2009 to include all youth 17 years old and younger. Youth hunters may harvest an antlered deer, which counts toward the statewide bag limit of one antlered deer and the number of antlerless deer determined by antlerless bag limits in each county. A total of 3,163 deer were reportedly harvested in 2025 during this season, 17.4% higher than the 2,694 deer harvested in 2024. This season resulted in 2.4% of the total harvest (Table 3-2). Approximately 41.5% of the Youth season harvest was antlered bucks (Figure 3-3).

There were 38,655 deer harvested during Archery season, which represented 29.5% of the overall harvest and was 4.2% higher than the 37,110 deer harvested in 2024 (Table 3-2). Antlered deer ($n=17,455$) made up 45.2% of the total Archery season harvest (Figure 3-3).

The Firearms season harvest of 80,557 was 5.1% higher than the 76,644 deer harvested in 2024 and represented 61.4% of the total harvest (Table 3-2). The antlerless harvest of 38,769 was 2.0% higher than the 2024 antlerless harvest of 38,015. The antlered harvest exceeded the antlerless harvest on the first six days of the season. The antlerless deer harvest outnumbered antlered deer harvested during the other 10 days of the season (Table 3-3). Opening weekend contributed 22.1% of the statewide total harvest for all 2025 seasons, compared to 24.4% in 2024. Antlered deer accounted for 51.9% of the total Firearms season harvest (Figure 3-3).

At 8,851 deer, the Muzzleloader season harvest accounted for 6.7% of the total 2025 harvest (Table 3-2). The Muzzleloader season harvest was down 8.9% from the harvest of 9,721 in 2024. As in years past, a large percentage of the deer harvested during Muzzleloader season were antlerless deer and button bucks (73.8%, Figure 3-3).

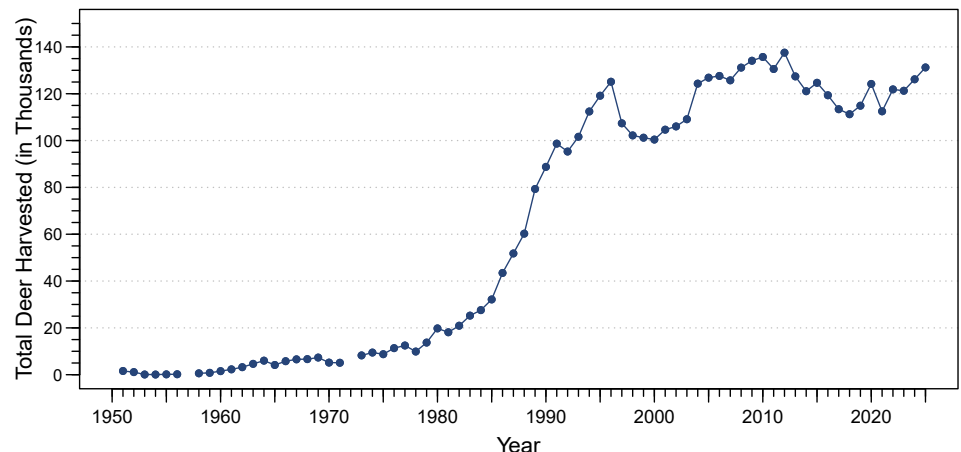


FIGURE 3-1. The total number of deer harvested in each Indiana deer season, 1951-2025. Totals include deer harvested in State Park Management Hunts, 1993-2025. Reporting error rates: $\pm 0.19\%$ (2025), $\pm 0.23\%$ (2024), $\pm 0.24\%$ (2023), $\pm 0.19\%$ (2022), $\pm 0.20\%$ (2021), $\pm 0.21\%$ (2020), $\pm 0.23\%$ (2019), $\pm 0.57\%$ (2018), $\pm 1.30\%$ (2017), and $\pm 0.67\%$ (2016).

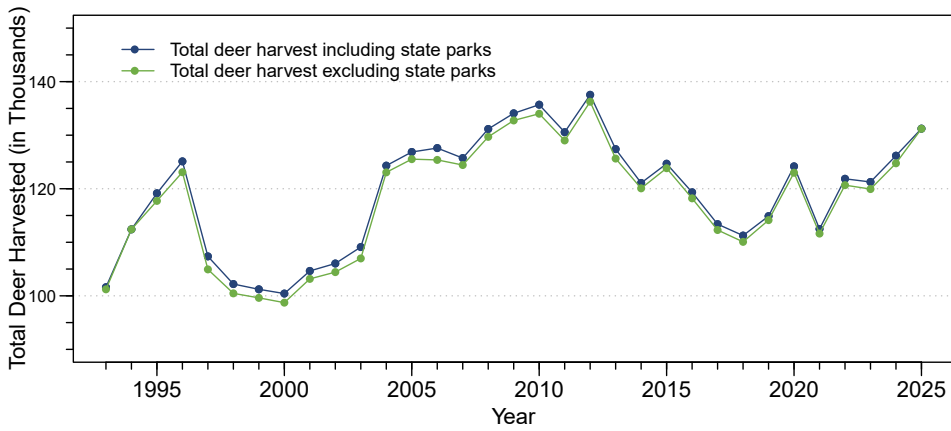


FIGURE 3-2. A comparison of the total number of deer harvested in each Indiana deer season, including and excluding deer harvested during State Park Management Hunts, 1993–2024. Reporting error rates: $\pm 0.23\%$ (2024), $\pm 0.24\%$ (2023), $\pm 0.19\%$ (2022), $\pm 0.20\%$ (2021), $\pm 0.21\%$ (2020), $\pm 0.23\%$ (2019), $\pm 0.57\%$ (2018), $\pm 1.30\%$ (2017), and $\pm 0.67\%$ (2016). No State Park Management Hunts were held in 2025.

TABLE 3-2. Number of deer harvested by season during the 2025 Indiana deer hunting season. Total harvest and percent of total harvest are labeled by each season. Values may not total 100 due to rounding. Reporting error rate: $\pm 0.19\%$ (2025).

Archery (1 Oct - 4 Jan)	17,455 (13.3%)	21,200 (16.2%)	38,655 (29.5%)
Muzzleloader (6 - 21 Dec)	2,320 (1.8%)	6,531 (5%)	8,851 (6.7%)

FIGURE 3-3. Composition of individual season harvests during the 2025 Indiana deer season. Reporting error rates: $\pm 0.19\%$ (2025).

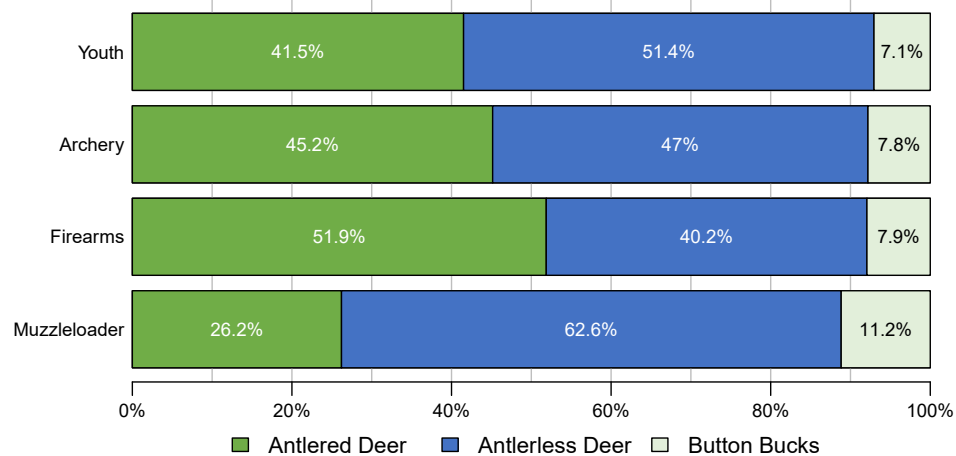


TABLE 3-3. Antlered and antlerless daily harvest and percent of harvest by season and total harvest from the start of Firearms season through the end of Firearms season, Nov. 15–30. Reporting error rate: $\pm 0.19\%$ (2025).

Date	Day	Antlered Deer	Antlered % of Daily Total	Antlerless Deer	Antlerless % of Daily Total	Total Deer	% of Season Total	% of Total Harvest
15-Nov	Sat	10,479	65.4%	5,552	34.6%	16,031	20.7%	12.2%
16-Nov	Sun	8,281	63.7%	4,712	36.3%	12,993	16.8%	9.9%
17-Nov	Mon	3,829	60.0%	2,554	40.0%	6,383	8.3%	4.9%
18-Nov	Tue	1,336	56.6%	1,026	43.4%	2,362	3.1%	1.8%
19-Nov	Wed	1,610	54.1%	1,367	45.9%	2,977	3.9%	2.3%
20-Nov	Thu	1,364	53.7%	1,174	46.3%	2,538	3.3%	1.9%
21-Nov	Fri	1,061	49.8%	1,070	50.2%	2,131	2.8%	1.6%
22-Nov	Sat	3,655	48.9%	3,823	51.1%	7,478	9.7%	5.7%
23-Nov	Sun	2,400	47.3%	2,671	52.7%	5,071	6.6%	3.9%
24-Nov	Mon	1,057	42.9%	1,405	57.1%	2,462	3.2%	1.9%
25-Nov	Tue	579	40.1%	864	59.9%	1,443	1.9%	1.1%
26-Nov	Wed	509	40.5%	749	59.5%	1,258	1.6%	1.0%
27-Nov	Thu	849	36.1%	1,503	63.9%	2,352	3.0%	1.8%
28-Nov	Fri	1,667	34.4%	3,183	65.6%	4,850	6.3%	3.7%
29-Nov	Sat	1,306	30.9%	2,919	69.1%	4,225	5.5%	3.2%
30-Nov	Sun	887	32.1%	1,877	67.9%	2,764	3.6%	2.1%
Total	NA	40,869	NA	36,449	NA	77,318	NA	58.9%

Harvest by County

The number of deer harvested in individual counties ranged from 183 in Benton County to 3,571 in Steuben County (Table 3-4). Harvest exceeded 1,000 deer in 63 counties and 2,000 deer in 21 counties. Antlered buck harvest exceeded 1,000 in 17 counties in 2025 compared to 14 in 2024, while antlerless harvest exceeded 1,000 deer in 22 counties, compared to 18 the previous year.

Antlerless deer accounted for at least 50% of the total harvest in 59 of the state's 92 counties in 2025. The 10 counties with the highest harvests were, in descending order, Steuben, Harrison, LaGrange, Dekalb, Noble, Putnam, Kosciusko, Marshall, Washington, and Parke. The 10 counties with the lowest harvests, beginning with the lowest, were Benton, Tipton, Marion, Hancock, Rush, Ohio, Scott, Boone, Clinton, and Shelby.

TABLE 3-4. Deer harvest by county during the 2025 Indiana deer hunting season. Reporting error rate: $\pm 0.19\%$ (2025). Deer habitat for each county has been updated using a new model where lightly urbanized or developed areas are included as deer habitat (see Chapter 9 for an explanation of the new method for calculating deer habitat within a county).

County	Antlered Harvest	Antlerless Harvest	Total Harvest	Square miles in county	Percent of deer habitat in County	Square miles of deer habitat	Antlered harvest per square mile of deer habitat	Doe Harvest per square mile of deer habitat	Total harvest per square mile of deer habitat
Adams	514	593	1,107	340	42%	143.4	3.6	4.1	7.7
Allen	934	998	1,932	660	61%	403.5	2.3	2.5	4.8
Bartholomew	415	435	850	409	68%	278.4	1.5	1.6	3.1
Benton	113	70	183	406	14%	57.9	2.0	1.2	3.2
Blackford	268	334	602	166	49%	80.9	3.3	4.1	7.4
Boone	305	247	552	423	41%	175.4	1.7	1.4	3.1
Brown	648	752	1,400	316	99%	314.1	2.1	2.4	4.5
Carroll	614	667	1,281	375	41%	155.5	3.9	4.3	8.2
Cass	850	757	1,607	415	49%	201.4	4.2	3.8	8.0
Clark	605	633	1,238	376	87%	328.9	1.8	1.9	3.8
Clay	700	649	1,349	360	68%	244.8	2.9	2.7	5.5
Clinton	297	260	557	405	32%	127.8	2.3	2.0	4.4
Crawford	1,052	1,066	2,118	309	97%	298.6	3.5	3.6	7.1
Daviess	552	833	1,385	436	56%	244.9	2.3	3.4	5.7
Dearborn	844	1,061	1,905	307	95%	291.4	2.9	3.6	6.5
Decatur	271	322	593	373	56%	208.7	1.3	1.5	2.8
Dekalb	1,359	1,648	3,007	364	65%	235.1	5.8	7.0	12.8
Delaware	542	507	1,049	396	54%	213.0	2.5	2.4	4.9
Dubois	865	1,153	2,018	435	80%	346.9	2.5	3.3	5.8
Elkhart	925	1,253	2,178	468	68%	320.5	2.9	3.9	6.8
Fayette	447	384	831	215	69%	147.9	3.0	2.6	5.6
Floyd	347	379	726	149	94%	140.3	2.5	2.7	5.2
Fountain	771	762	1,533	398	51%	202.8	3.8	3.8	7.6
Franklin	1,038	1,070	2,108	391	82%	319.6	3.2	3.3	6.6
Fulton	790	875	1,665	371	47%	174.8	4.5	5.0	9.5
Gibson	667	606	1,273	499	51%	255.4	2.6	2.4	5.0
Grant	643	577	1,220	415	46%	192.0	3.3	3.0	6.4
Greene	1,053	1,105	2,158	546	80%	436.5	2.4	2.5	4.9
Hamilton	290	336	626	402	64%	258.9	1.1	1.3	2.4
Hancock	205	217	422	307	48%	147.4	1.4	1.5	2.9
Harrison	1,472	1,677	3,149	486	89%	430.4	3.4	3.9	7.3
Hendricks	429	373	802	409	61%	250.1	1.7	1.5	3.2
Henry	422	363	785	395	52%	204.9	2.1	1.8	3.8
Howard	313	277	590	294	41%	121.6	2.6	2.3	4.9
Huntington	645	627	1,272	388	50%	192.2	3.4	3.3	6.6
Jackson	592	640	1,232	513	75%	382.9	1.5	1.7	3.2
Jasper	801	718	1,519	561	42%	233.4	3.4	3.1	6.5
Jay	686	851	1,537	384	50%	191.4	3.6	4.4	8.0
Jefferson	566	653	1,219	363	89%	321.4	1.8	2.0	3.8
Jennings	370	460	830	378	86%	324.7	1.1	1.4	2.6
Johnson	306	344	650	322	65%	207.9	1.5	1.7	3.1
Knox	550	496	1,046	524	46%	239.6	2.3	2.1	4.4
Kosciusko	1,233	1,485	2,718	554	59%	328.4	3.8	4.5	8.3
Lagrange	1,162	1,917	3,079	387	62%	240.2	4.8	8.0	12.8
Lake	630	893	1,523	626	56%	350.9	1.8	2.5	4.3

TABLE 3-4. Cont.

County	Antlered Harvest	Antlerless Harvest	Total Harvest	Square miles in county	Percent of deer habitat in County	Square miles of deer habitat	Antlered harvest per square mile of deer habitat	Doe Harvest per square mile of deer habitat	Total harvest per square mile of deer habitat
Laporte	1,001	1,203	2,204	613	60%	369.1	2.7	3.3	6.0
Lawrence	1,062	1,319	2,381	452	88%	399.7	2.7	3.3	6.0
Madison	377	338	715	453	48%	216.3	1.7	1.6	3.3
Marion	166	252	418	403	93%	372.8	0.4	0.7	1.1
Marshall	1,266	1,399	2,665	449	60%	268.6	4.7	5.2	9.9
Martin	426	565	991	340	94%	320.1	1.3	1.8	3.1
Miami	866	884	1,750	377	52%	197.5	4.4	4.5	8.9
Monroe	780	872	1,652	411	94%	388.4	2.0	2.2	4.3
Montgomery	598	617	1,215	505	44%	220.2	2.7	2.8	5.5
Morgan	815	886	1,701	409	78%	321.0	2.5	2.8	5.3
Newton	584	582	1,166	403	40%	161.0	3.6	3.6	7.2
Noble	1,287	1,596	2,883	417	67%	280.7	4.6	5.7	10.3
Ohio	236	266	502	87	91%	78.8	3.0	3.4	6.4
Orange	959	1,051	2,010	408	86%	352.2	2.7	3.0	5.7
Owen	1,120	1,157	2,277	387	93%	358.6	3.1	3.2	6.4
Parke	1,228	1,329	2,557	450	76%	344.2	3.6	3.9	7.4
Perry	837	934	1,771	386	94%	363.1	2.3	2.6	4.9
Pike	719	763	1,482	341	83%	282.4	2.5	2.7	5.2
Porter	423	371	794	522	54%	281.8	1.5	1.3	2.8
Posey	629	644	1,273	419	52%	219.4	2.9	2.9	5.8
Pulaski	1,091	1,182	2,273	434	45%	194.7	5.6	6.1	11.7
Putnam	1,470	1,251	2,721	483	75%	362.4	4.1	3.5	7.5
Randolph	482	459	941	453	43%	194.2	2.5	2.4	4.8
Ripley	570	706	1,276	448	84%	377.1	1.5	1.9	3.4
Rush	196	230	426	408	35%	144.2	1.4	1.6	3.0
Saint Joseph	670	778	1,448	461	70%	324.1	2.1	2.4	4.5
Scott	220	319	539	193	88%	170.4	1.3	1.9	3.2
Shelby	300	267	567	412	41%	170.5	1.8	1.6	3.3
Spencer	613	604	1,217	401	70%	282.1	2.2	2.1	4.3
Starke	952	1,061	2,013	312	70%	217.8	4.4	4.9	9.2
Steuben	1,603	1,968	3,571	322	75%	241.5	6.6	8.2	14.8
Sullivan	996	956	1,952	454	68%	306.6	3.2	3.1	6.4
Switzerland	636	600	1,236	224	91%	204.7	3.1	2.9	6.0
Tippecanoe	654	670	1,324	503	51%	256.0	2.6	2.6	5.2
Tipton	115	98	213	260	26%	68.6	1.7	1.4	3.1
Union	315	361	676	165	56%	92.9	3.4	3.9	7.3
Vanderburgh	307	429	736	236	68%	161.3	1.9	2.7	4.6
Vermillion	529	471	1,000	260	64%	166.7	3.2	2.8	6.0
Vigo	931	754	1,685	410	75%	306.6	3.0	2.5	5.5
Wabash	823	815	1,638	421	52%	219.9	3.7	3.7	7.4
Warren	665	590	1,255	366	42%	153.9	4.3	3.8	8.2
Warrick	659	595	1,254	391	81%	316.1	2.1	1.9	4.0
Washington	1,211	1,405	2,616	516	83%	426.1	2.8	3.3	6.1
Wayne	621	689	1,310	404	65%	264.2	2.4	2.6	5.0
Wells	463	453	916	370	39%	143.3	3.2	3.2	6.4
White	613	662	1,275	508	30%	150.1	4.1	4.4	8.5
Whitley	691	626	1,317	338	56%	189.1	3.7	3.3	7.0

TABLE 3-5. Deer harvested by residents and nonresidents per square mile of private land deer habitat in each county, 2021-2025.

County	Estimate deer cover on private land (sq. mi)	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024		2024-2025		2025-202	
		Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident
Adams	143.4	0.1	5.1	0.1	4.3	0.0	5.4	0.1	5.7	0.0	5.4	0.1	7.6
Allen	403.5	0.1	4.9	0.1	4.0	0.1	4.9	0.1	4.9	0.1	3.9	0.1	4.7
Bartholomew	278.2	0.1	3.0	0.1	2.8	0.1	2.8	0.1	3.2	0.1	3.0	0.1	2.5
Benton	57.9	0.1	2.0	0.2	1.8	0.1	2.4	0.2	2.9	0.1	2.7	0.1	2.9
Blackford	80.9	0.1	5.9	0.1	4.7	0.1	6.1	0.1	6.1	0.2	7.0	0.2	7.2
Boone	175.4	0.0	2.6	0.0	2.6	0.0	2.8	0.0	2.6	0.0	3.0	0.1	3.1
Brown	236.5	0.1	4.6	0.2	4.1	0.1	4.3	0.1	4.3	0.1	4.1	0.1	4.4
Carroll	155.2	0.2	6.1	0.2	5.4	0.2	6.3	0.2	6.7	0.3	7.2	0.3	7.8
Cass	201.4	0.2	6.3	0.3	5.5	0.3	6.6	0.4	6.6	0.3	7.3	0.4	7.6
Clark	306.8	0.2	3.6	0.2	3.4	0.2	3.6	0.1	3.2	0.2	3.7	0.1	3.5
Clay	241.4	0.2	4.5	0.2	4.6	0.2	4.8	0.2	4.7	0.2	5.2	0.2	5.3
Clinton	127.8	0.1	3.8	0.0	3.0	0.1	4.1	0.1	3.5	0.1	4.3	0.1	4.2
Crawford	239.1	0.4	5.3	0.3	5.2	0.3	5.8	0.3	5.5	0.3	6.3	0.3	6.5
Daviess	230.6	0.1	4.6	0.1	4.1	0.1	4.6	0.1	4.8	0.1	5.3	0.1	5.2
Dearborn	291.4	1.1	7.4	1.0	6.5	0.8	6.0	0.7	5.2	0.7	5.3	0.7	5.8
Decatur	208.5	0.1	4.1	0.1	3.8	0.1	3.2	0.0	3.5	0.1	3.1	0.1	2.8
Dekalb	235.1	0.3	9.9	0.3	7.7	0.2	9.4	0.2	10.0	0.3	10.2	0.3	12.4
Delaware	213.0	0.1	3.8	0.1	3.4	0.1	4.0	0.1	4.1	0.1	4.5	0.1	4.8
Dubois	329.9	0.1	5.4	0.1	5.0	0.1	5.3	0.1	5.1	0.1	5.7	0.2	5.5
Elkhart	320.5	0.1	5.4	0.1	4.5	0.1	5.8	0.1	5.8	0.2	5.9	0.2	6.6
Fayette	147.9	0.3	6.1	0.3	5.7	0.1	3.7	0.1	2.6	0.2	4.2	0.2	5.4
Floyd	140.3	0.1	4.6	0.1	3.9	0.1	4.6	0.1	4.5	0.1	4.3	0.2	4.9
Fountain	202.8	0.6	6.0	0.7	5.8	0.4	6.3	0.4	5.9	0.5	6.7	0.5	6.9
Franklin	305.6	1.0	6.5	1.0	6.7	0.5	3.7	0.4	2.9	0.6	4.5	0.6	5.8
Fulton	173.6	0.4	8.3	0.4	7.2	0.4	8.4	0.3	8.2	0.3	7.9	0.4	9.1
Gibson	250.7	0.1	4.6	0.2	4.2	0.2	4.7	0.2	4.5	0.3	4.7	0.1	4.7
Grant	189.6	0.1	4.8	0.1	3.7	0.1	5.2	0.1	4.8	0.1	5.2	0.1	5.9
Greene	407.8	0.1	4.4	0.2	4.3	0.2	4.5	0.1	4.4	0.2	4.7	0.1	4.7
Hamilton	258.9	0.0	1.9	0.0	1.8	0.0	2.1	0.0	2.2	0.0	2.2	0.0	2.4
Hancock	147.4	0.0	2.0	0.0	1.7	0.0	2.1	0.0	2.2	0.0	2.6	0.0	2.8
Harrison	406.9	0.3	5.2	0.3	5.0	0.2	5.2	0.2	5.3	0.2	5.7	0.3	7.1
Hendricks	250.1	0.0	2.8	0.0	2.4	0.0	2.8	0.0	2.8	0.0	3.0	0.0	3.2
Henry	202.9	0.0	3.2	0.0	2.6	0.0	3.0	0.0	3.1	0.0	3.4	0.1	3.7
Howard	121.6	0.0	4.0	0.1	3.2	0.0	4.1	0.0	4.0	0.0	3.9	0.1	4.8
Huntington	168.1	0.1	4.9	0.1	4.3	0.1	5.3	0.1	5.5	0.1	5.1	0.1	5.7
Jackson	324.1	0.2	3.7	0.2	3.8	0.2	3.9	0.2	4.1	0.2	4.3	0.1	3.0
Jasper	224.8	0.4	5.8	0.4	4.7	0.4	5.4	0.4	5.1	0.4	5.5	0.4	5.9
Jay	191.4	0.9	5.1	0.8	4.3	0.8	5.3	0.8	5.1	0.9	6.1	1.1	6.9
Jefferson	294.0	0.5	4.6	0.5	4.8	0.3	4.3	0.4	4.2	0.4	4.6	0.3	3.7
Jennings	299.7	0.2	4.6	0.2	4.8	0.3	4.4	0.2	4.4	0.2	4.3	0.1	2.5
Johnson	200.9	0.0	2.5	0.0	2.1	0.0	2.2	0.0	2.4	0.0	2.2	0.0	2.5
Knox	239.2	0.1	3.9	0.1	3.4	0.1	4.0	0.1	3.7	0.1	4.3	0.1	4.2
Kosciusko	322.5	0.2	7.6	0.2	6.5	0.3	7.5	0.3	7.6	0.3	7.3	0.3	7.8
Lagrange	225.7	0.2	9.2	0.2	8.6	0.2	10.4	0.2	11.1	0.2	10.8	0.3	11.8
Lake	348.6	0.2	4.1	0.1	3.2	0.1	3.7	0.1	3.8	0.1	3.6	0.1	4.0
Laporte	355.3	0.2	5.1	0.2	4.2	0.2	4.9	0.2	4.9	0.2	5.0	0.3	5.3
Lawrence	374.4	0.3	5.4	0.3	5.2	0.3	5.2	0.3	5.2	0.3	5.4	0.3	5.7

TABLE 3-5. Cont.

County	Estimate deer cover on private land (sq. mi)	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024		2024-2025		2025-202	
		Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident
Madison	216.3	0.0	2.7	0.1	2.4	0.1	2.8	0.0	2.8	0.1	3.3	0.0	3.2
Marion	372.8	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.1
Marshall	268.4	0.3	7.6	0.4	6.4	0.3	7.5	0.3	8.0	0.4	8.4	0.4	9.3
Martin	293.6	0.1	3.9	0.2	3.9	0.1	4.0	0.1	4.0	0.1	4.2	0.0	2.5
Miami	195.8	0.3	6.4	0.3	5.5	0.2	7.3	0.3	7.5	0.3	7.2	0.3	7.9
Monroe	310.0	0.1	3.6	0.1	3.5	0.1	3.4	0.1	3.5	0.1	3.4	0.1	4.1
Montgomery	220.2	0.2	4.4	0.2	3.9	0.2	4.4	0.2	4.3	0.3	4.8	0.3	5.2
Morgan	310.9	0.1	4.0	0.1	4.3	0.1	4.2	0.0	4.2	0.1	4.4	0.1	5.0
Newton	129.0	0.4	4.9	0.4	4.9	0.4	5.1	0.4	5.0	0.6	6.2	0.5	6.5
Noble	277.2	0.1	10.4	0.2	7.9	0.1	9.3	0.1	10.0	0.2	8.9	0.2	10.0
Ohio	78.8	1.5	6.6	1.5	6.5	1.1	6.0	0.9	5.0	1.1	4.6	1.0	5.4
Orange	278.0	0.3	5.2	0.4	5.5	0.3	5.0	0.3	5.0	0.3	5.4	0.4	5.3
Owen	342.7	0.1	4.2	0.2	4.1	0.2	4.3	0.1	4.3	0.2	5.1	0.2	6.2
Parke	341.4	0.6	5.4	0.6	5.4	0.6	5.7	0.4	5.3	0.5	6.2	0.5	6.8
Perry	263.1	0.2	4.2	0.2	4.1	0.1	4.0	0.2	4.2	0.2	4.6	0.2	4.2
Pike	251.3	0.3	5.9	0.3	5.6	0.3	5.6	0.2	5.4	0.2	5.1	0.2	5.1
Porter	281.8	0.2	5.6	0.2	5.0	0.2	5.2	0.2	5.4	0.1	3.1	0.1	2.7
Posey	205.7	0.2	5.2	0.2	4.3	0.2	4.9	0.2	4.7	0.4	5.2	0.2	5.3
Pulaski	182.8	0.8	9.0	0.8	7.1	0.7	8.1	0.7	8.0	0.9	9.3	0.9	10.2
Putnam	354.3	0.2	5.2	0.2	5.2	0.2	5.7	0.2	5.8	0.2	6.3	0.3	7.1
Randolph	193.0	0.2	3.2	0.2	2.9	0.1	3.7	0.1	4.0	0.2	4.4	0.2	4.5
Ripley	336.8	0.3	3.9	0.3	4.0	0.2	3.3	0.2	2.8	0.2	2.9	0.3	3.3
Rush	144.2	0.1	2.7	0.0	2.6	0.0	2.9	0.0	3.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	2.9
Saint Joseph	324.1	0.1	2.0	0.1	2.0	0.1	2.0	0.1	2.1	0.1	2.1	0.0	1.5
Scott	153.5	0.0	3.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	3.4	0.0	3.5	0.0	3.6	0.0	3.7
Shelby	170.5	0.2	7.0	0.2	6.3	0.2	6.8	0.2	6.3	0.2	6.7	0.3	6.8
Spencer	280.9	0.1	4.5	0.1	3.6	0.2	4.5	0.1	4.5	0.2	4.7	0.2	4.9
Starke	211.6	0.6	7.2	0.5	5.5	0.4	6.8	0.5	6.9	0.6	7.8	0.7	8.6
Steuben	235.0	0.6	12.0	0.6	10.4	0.6	12.7	0.6	13.7	0.7	12.6	0.7	14.0
Sullivan	284.2	0.5	6.1	0.5	5.4	0.4	5.3	0.4	5.2	0.4	5.9	0.5	5.8
Switzerland	202.3	1.7	7.0	1.5	6.5	1.1	6.2	1.1	5.8	1.3	6.2	1.2	4.9
Tippecanoe	256.0	0.1	4.2	0.1	3.7	0.2	4.2	0.1	4.1	0.2	4.9	0.2	4.9
Tipton	68.6	0.0	2.1	0.0	1.9	0.0	2.6	0.0	2.8	0.0	3.1	0.0	3.1
Union	81.3	0.7	5.3	0.9	5.5	0.4	4.0	0.5	4.1	0.6	4.4	0.9	5.3
Vanderburgh	161.3	0.1	4.7	0.1	4.0	0.1	4.5	0.1	4.5	0.1	4.6	0.1	4.3
Vermillion	164.9	1.4	5.6	1.2	5.3	1.0	5.6	1.0	4.8	1.0	4.9	1.0	4.8
Vigo	294.2	0.3	4.7	0.4	4.1	0.3	4.4	0.3	4.3	0.4	4.7	0.5	4.8
Wabash	196.5	0.2	6.8	0.2	5.5	0.2	6.8	0.3	7.2	0.2	5.1	0.2	6.4
Warren	153.9	0.8	7.5	0.6	5.7	0.7	6.9	0.7	6.2	0.8	7.7	0.7	7.4
Warrick	303.6	0.1	4.2	0.1	4.0	0.1	4.2	0.1	4.0	0.1	3.6	0.1	3.8
Washington	399.4	0.3	4.6	0.5	4.3	0.4	4.9	0.4	5.0	0.4	5.3	0.5	5.8
Wayne	264.2	0.2	4.5	0.3	4.3	0.2	3.3	0.3	3.5	0.3	4.0	0.2	4.7
Wells	141.3	0.1	5.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	4.9	0.1	5.0	0.1	4.9	0.1	6.1
White	150.1	0.4	5.9	0.6	5.3	0.6	6.4	0.6	6.6	0.6	7.0	0.7	7.6
Whitley	188.6	0.1	5.8	0.1	4.7	0.1	6.3	0.1	6.6	0.1	6.3	0.1	6.8

Harvest per Hunter

The majority of hunters (69.2%, n=63,494) in Indiana harvested one deer during the 2025 deer season (Table 3-6). Only 0.67% (n=618) of hunters statewide harvested more than four deer in 2025, which is similar to the number (n=588) that harvested more than four deer in 2024.

TABLE 3-6. Number and percent of individual successful hunters and the number of deer they harvested during the 2024 and 2025 Indiana deer seasons. Reporting error rates: $\pm 0.19\%$ (2025) and $\pm 0.23\%$ (2024).

Number of Deer	2024 Hunters	2024 % of Total	2025 Hunters	2025 % of Total
1	63,447	70.7%	63,494	69.2%
2	18,818	21.0%	19,969	21.8%
3	5,604	6.2%	6,240	6.8%
4	1,237	1.4%	1,409	1.5%
5	384	0.4%	403	0.4%
6	122	0.1%	133	0.1%
7	43	0.0%	58	0.1%
8	21	0.0%	10	0.0%
9	9	0.0%	5	0.0%
10	5	0.0%	3	0.0%
11	0	0.0%	2	0.0%
12	1	0.0%	0	0.0%
13	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
14	1	0.0%	1	0.0%
15	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
16	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
17	1	0.0%	0	0.0%
18	0	0.0%	1	0.0%

Harvest by Equipment Type

Six types of equipment were legal for hunting deer during 2025 (Figure 3-4; Table 3-8): archery (traditional and compound bows), crossbows, handguns, muzzleloaders, rifles, and shotguns. Harvest increased relative to 2024 for equipment types including crossbow (0.3%) and rifle (1.7%) (Table 3-7). The percentage of total harvest relative to 2024 decreased for bow and arrow (-0.2%), muzzleloader (-0.4%), and shotgun (-1.4%).

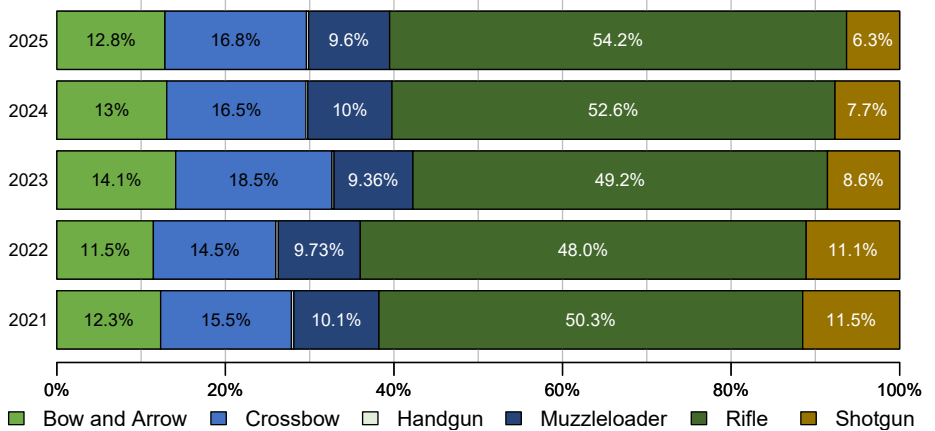


FIGURE 3-4. Percent harvest by equipment type, 2021-2025. Reporting error rates: $\pm 0.19\%$ (2025), $\pm 0.23\%$ (2024), $\pm 0.24\%$ (2023), $\pm 0.19\%$ (2022), and $\pm 0.20\%$ (2021).

TABLE 3-7. Number of deer harvested by type of legal hunting equipment across seasons, 2021-2025. Values within this table do not exactly equal those tallied by season (Figure 3-4) because multiple equipment types can be used during the Firearms season. Reporting error rates: $\pm 0.19\%$ (2025), $\pm 0.23\%$ (2024), $\pm 0.24\%$ (2023), $\pm 0.19\%$ (2022), and $\pm 0.20\%$ (2021).

Equipment	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Bow and Arrow	13,851 (12.3%)	13,957 (11.5%)	17,098 (14.1%)	16,452 (13.0%)	16,834 (12.8%)
Crossbow	17,462 (15.5%)	17,710 (14.5%)	22,490 (18.5%)	20,817 (16.5%)	22,036 (16.8%)
Handgun	322 (0.3%)	357 (0.3%)	298 (0.2%)	301 (0.2%)	340 (0.3%)
Muzzleloader	11,354 (10.1%)	11,853 (9.7%)	11,350 (9.4%)	12,601 (10.0%)	12,604 (9.6%)
Rifle	56,557 (50.3%)	64,471 (52.9%)	59,646 (49.2%)	66,329 (52.6%)	71,155 (54.2%)
Shotgun	12,935 (11.5%)	13,506 (11.1%)	10,381 (8.6%)	9,669 (7.7%)	8,257 (6.3%)
Total	112,481	121,854	121,263	126,169	131,226

TABLE 3-8. Harvest by license type and equipment type for residents and nonresidents, 2025-2026. An error rate of 1.7% was identified in the check-in records.

Deer Hunting License	Bow and Arrow	Crossbow	Handgun	Muzzleloader	Rifle	Shotgun
Deer Archery	2030	2466				
Deer Bonus or Multiseason Antlerless	280	283	23	647	1766	230
Deer Bundle	8660	9981	131	6190	32206	3659
Deer Firearm			30	186	6288	1031
Deer Military/Refuge	60	41	1	8	131	14
Deer Muzzleloader				566		
Deer Reduction Zone	883	746	13	90	1146	101
Landowner Exemption	1173	2340	47	1150	8740	1096
Lifetime License	1673	3431	76	2561	8073	1098
Military Exempt - IC 14-22-11-11	10	8		9	35	4
Youth Free Hunt Days	6	11		6	127	23
Youth Hunt/Trap	873	1927	11	750	8901	681
NR Deer Archery	690	447				
NR Deer Bonus or Multiseason Antlerless	22	15	1	11	135	4
NR Deer Bundle	255	299	1	213	1205	91
NR Deer Firearm	3	1	1	20	1711	137
NR Deer Military/Refuge	2	1	1		11	2
NR Deer Muzzleloader				84		
NR Deer Reduction Zone	6	8		1	27	3
NR Landowner Exemption	39	70	3	54	279	47
NR Lifetime License	38	45		34	153	21
NR Youth Free Hunt Days					1	
NR Youth Deer Hunting Licenses	6	26		15	175	13

Harvest Age and Sex Structure

The age and sex structure of the 2025 deer harvest was 48% adult males, 44% adult females, and 8% male fawns (button bucks) (Table 3-9). Antlerless deer (does and button bucks) represent the highest proportion of the total deer harvest at 52.0% but dropped from an all-time high of 66.0% in 2012.

During opening weekend of Firearms season, DNR biologists have traditionally manned check stations throughout the state to collect age-structure data and tissue samples for disease testing. Before the 2012 deer season, all deer had to be brought to a check station; therefore, age data collected during the opening weekend of Firearms season provided an unbiased method for determining the age structure of the harvest. All hunters had to check in deer online during the 2025 season; therefore, age estimates of adult deer, such as the proportion of yearling bucks in the harvest, became unreliable. Evaluation of the online check-in data for the opening weekend of Firearms season historically showed that hunters were more likely to report antlered bucks at check stations than online but were more likely to report button bucks online than at check stations, thus biasing estimates toward an older age structure than the actual harvest. Therefore, age class estimates of adult deer are unavailable until a valid, scientific method for correcting this bias is obtained.

TABLE 3-9. Number of deer harvested, and percentage of total harvested by age and sex during the Indiana deer seasons from 1987-2025. Reporting error rate: $\pm 0.19\%$ (2025).

Year	Adult Males (%)	Adult Females (%)	Fawn Males (%)	Fawn Females (%)	Total
1987	29,530 (57%)	11,139 (21%)	6,164 (12%)	4,945 (10%)	51,778
1988	34,358 (57%)	13,170 (22%)	7,050 (12%)	5,656 (10%)	60,234
1989	40,503 (51%)	19,464 (24%)	10,737 (14%)	8,614 (11%)	79,318
1990	43,080 (48%)	23,680 (27%)	12,373 (14%)	9,630 (11%)	88,763
1991	41,593 (42%)	31,211 (32%)	14,626 (15%)	11,253 (11%)	98,683
1992	43,508 (46%)	25,387 (27%)	14,262 (15%)	12,157 (13%)	95,314
1993	44,424 (44%)	27,704 (27%)	14,751 (15%)	14,335 (14%)	101,214
1994	50,812 (45%)	32,466 (29%)	15,487 (14%)	13,651 (12%)	112,416
1995	47,098 (40%)	40,946 (35%)	16,398 (14%)	13,287 (11%)	117,729
1996	47,315 (38%)	39,913 (32%)	17,307 (14%)	18,551 (15%)	123,086
1997	42,537 (41%)	35,163 (34%)	14,039 (13%)	13,198 (12%)	104,937
1998	44,955 (45%)	30,711 (31%)	12,257 (12%)	12,538 (12%)	100,461
1999	46,371 (46%)	30,474 (31%)	11,645 (12%)	11,129 (11%)	99,618
2000	44,621 (45%)	31,986 (32%)	11,072 (11%)	11,046 (11%)	98,725
2001	48,357 (47%)	31,806 (31%)	11,230 (11%)	11,770 (11%)	103,163
2002	47,177 (45%)	35,357 (34%)	11,291 (11%)	10,603 (10%)	104,428
2003	49,533 (46%)	36,303 (34%)	10,262 (10%)	10,887 (10%)	106,986
2004	54,743 (44%)	41,749 (34%)	12,501 (10%)	14,065 (11%)	123,058
2005	52,488 (42%)	44,286 (35%)	13,030 (10%)	15,722 (13%)	125,526
2006	49,097 (39%)	45,257 (36%)	13,688 (11%)	17,339 (14%)	125,381
2007	49,375 (40%)	44,514 (36%)	13,313 (11%)	17,225 (14%)	124,427
2008	50,845 (39%)	46,666 (36%)	13,083 (11%)	19,154 (15%)	129,748
2009	52,878 (40%)	48,222 (36%)	13,040 (10%)	18,291 (14%)	132,431
2010	53,007 (40%)	49,911 (37%)	13,367 (10%)	17,719 (13%)	134,004
2011	50,717 (39%)	45,931 (36%)	13,058 (10%)	19,312 (15%)	129,018
2012	45,936 (34%)	54,983 (40%)	15,911 (12%)	19,418 (14%)	136,248
2013	46,240 (37%)	46,229 (37%)	14,100 (11%)	19,066 (15%)	125,635
2014	45,686 (38%)	46,760 (39%)	12,694 (11%)	14,933 (12%)	120,073
2015	51,075 (41%)	60,828 (49%)	12,765 (10%)	Not Reported	124,668
2016	51,646 (43%)	55,922 (47%)	11,774 (10%)	Not Reported	119,342
2017	44,884 (40%)	56,335 (50%)	12,167 (11%)	Not Reported	113,386
2018	47,256 (42%)	52,513 (47%)	11,483 (10%)	Not Reported	111,252
2019	51,646 (45%)	52,128 (45%)	11,108 (10%)	Not Reported	114,882
2020	55,446 (45%)	57,073 (46%)	11,661 (9%)	Not Reported	124,180
2021	53,751 (48%)	48,789 (43%)	9,941 (9%)	Not Reported	112,481
2022	58,552 (48%)	52,942 (43%)	10,360 (9%)	Not Reported	121,854
2023	58,220 (48%)	53,404 (44%)	9,639 (8%)	Not Reported	121,263
2024	59,643 (47%)	55,826 (44%)	10,700 (8%)	Not Reported	126,169
2025	62,876 (48%)	57,729 (44%)	10,621 (8%)	Not Reported	131,226

Public Lands Harvest

A total of 8,705 deer were harvested on public lands in Indiana during the 2024-2025 season or 6.6% of the total harvest. This was a 13.2% decrease of the 10,026 deer harvested on public lands during the 2024-2025 season. Public lands included state Fish & Wildlife areas (FWAs), state nature preserves, state forests, national wildlife refuges, national forests, conservation areas, and military lands (Tables 3-10, 3-11, and 3-12). Normally, public lands include state parks, but state park deer management hunts were not held during the 2025-2026 season, likely resulting in the overall decrease in harvest on public lands. Approximately 20.0% of the deer harvested on public lands were taken from 25 FWAs. Pigeon River FWA had the largest harvest of 249 deer. State forest lands contributed to 12.1% of the public lands harvest. Hoosier National Forest accounted for 18.4% of the public lands harvest, while military lands including Atterbury JMTTC and Crane NSA accounted for 3.9%. A total of 2,149 (24.7%) deer were harvested on public lands, but the specific property was not reported. The percentage of antlered (44.1%) and antlerless (55.9 %) deer harvested on public lands was similar to the composition of the total harvest (47.9% antlered, 52.1% antlerless).

TABLE 3-10. Deer harvested during the 2025-2026 deer hunting season on public lands managed by Indiana DNR Division of Fish, Wildlife & Nature Preserves. Reporting error rate: $\pm 0.19\%$ (2025).

Lands Managed by the Division of Fish & Wildlife	Antlered Deer Harvested	Button Bucks Harvested	Antlerless Deer Harvested	Total Deer Harvested	Square Miles of Property	Antlered Deer Harvested per Sq. Mile	Button Bucks Harvested per Sq. Mile	Antlerless Deer Harvested per Sq. Mile	Total Deer Harvested per Sq. Mile
FISH & WILDLIFE AREA	775	203	763	1741	224.74	3.4	0.9	3.4	7.7
Atterbury	15	8	22	45	7.73	1.9	1.0	2.8	5.8
Blue Grass	6	2	7	15	3.98	1.5	0.5	1.8	3.8
Busseron Creek	20	3	13	36	6.17	3.2	0.5	2.1	5.8
Chinook	3	1	4	8	3.41	0.9	0.3	1.2	2.3
Crosley	7	0	6	13	6.70	1.0	0.0	0.9	1.9
Deer Creek	11	4	16	31	3.36	3.3	1.2	4.8	9.2
Fairbanks Landing	54	1	17	72	12.15	4.4	0.1	1.4	5.9
Glendale	34	17	55	106	12.90	2.6	1.3	4.3	8.2
Goose Pond	19	1	10	30	14.11	1.3	0.1	0.7	2.1
Hillenbrand	16	5	13	34	5.65	2.8	0.9	2.3	6.0
Hovey Lake	22	7	35	64	11.57	1.9	0.6	3.0	5.5
J.E. Roush Lake	54	24	75	153	13.43	4.0	1.8	5.6	11.4
Jasper Pulaski	59	10	44	113	12.78	4.6	0.8	3.4	8.8
Kankakee	23	4	14	41	6.99	3.3	0.6	2.0	5.9
Kankakee Sands (TNC)	20	0	12	32	13.13	1.5	0.0	0.9	2.4
Kingsbury	64	20	74	158	11.69	5.5	1.7	6.3	13.5
Lasalle	35	5	36	76	7.05	5.0	0.7	5.1	10.8
Pigeon River	85	46	118	249	18.42	4.6	2.5	6.4	13.5
Splinter Ridge	8	4	2	14	4.66	1.7	0.9	0.4	3.0
Sugar Ridge	23	3	22	48	12.98	1.8	0.2	1.7	3.7
Tri-County	24	12	28	64	5.58	4.3	2.2	5.0	11.5
Wabashiki	33	4	23	60	5.47	6.0	0.7	4.2	11.0
Wilbur Wright	10	1	10	21	1.69	5.9	0.6	5.9	12.4
Willow Slough	71	4	45	120	15.56	4.6	0.3	2.9	7.7
Winamac	59	17	62	138	7.58	7.8	2.2	8.2	18.2

TABLE 3-10. Cont.

Lands Managed by the Division of Fish & Wildlife	Antlered Deer Harvested	Button Bucks Harvested	Antlerless Deer Harvested	Total Deer Harvested	Square Miles of Property	Antlered Deer Harvested per Sq. Mile	Button Bucks Harvested per Sq. Mile	Antlerless Deer Harvested per Sq. Mile	Total Deer Harvested per Sq. Mile
CONSERVATION AREA	31	3	26	60	6.16	5.0	0.5	4.2	9.7
Sugar Creek	13	1	8	22	1.77	7.3	0.6	4.5	12.4
Wabash River	18	2	18	38	4.39	4.1	0.5	4.1	8.6
GAMEBIRD HABITAT AREA	17	6	16	39	7.47	2.3	0.8	2.1	5.2
Cartmell	1	0	1	2	2.08	0.5	0.0	0.5	1.0
Hufford	5	3	6	14	0.21				
Jefvert	1	0	0	1	0.09				
Lyons	0	0	1	1	0.19				
Mud Pine	1	1	0	2	0.23				
Pine Creek	3	0	0	3	1.09	2.8	0.0	0.0	2.8
Place Trail	0	1	2	3	0.55				
Prudential	1	0	1	2	0.12				
Reynolds Creek	1	0	3	4	2.08	0.5	0.0	1.4	1.9
Roger McClellan	1	1	1	3	0.20				
Sandy Ridge	1	0	0	1	0.13				
Triplett	1	0	0	1	0.19				
Vinegar Hill	1	0	0	1	0.17				
Vinyard	0	0	1	1	0.15				
PUBLIC FISHING AREA	3	0	4	7	0.63				
Driftwood	2	0	0	2	0.40				
Green Valley	1	0	4	5	0.23				
WETLAND CONSERVATION AREA	72	17	91	180	53.74	1.3	0.3	1.7	3.3
Aukiki	4	0	3	7	0.67				
Austin Bottoms	5	0	1	6	40.63	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
Badal	1	0	1	2	0.05				
Barnes-Seng	0	0	1	1	0.28				
Bittern Bog	1	0	3	4	0.12				
Cedar Swamp	10	5	20	35	1.43	7.0	3.5	14.0	24.5
Dick Blythe	2	1	2	5	0.32				
Durham Lake	3	0	8	11	0.82				
Fish Lake	2	0	2	4	0.38				
Galena	2	0	1	3	0.26				
Jimmerson Lake Nevada Mills	1	0	0	1	0.13				
Lake Maxinkuckee	2	0	0	2	0.12				
Little Pigeon Creek	8	0	2	10	1.62	4.9	0.0	1.2	6.2
Lost Hill	1	0	0	1	0.56				
Mallard Roost	5	3	10	18	1.19	4.2	2.5	8.4	15.2
Manitou Lake Islands	0	0	1	1	0.32				
Marsh Lake	6	3	8	17	1.20	5.0	2.5	6.7	14.2
Maxincukee	2	0	2	4	0.12				
Menominee	9	2	4	15	1.50	6.0	1.3	2.7	10.0

TABLE 3-10. Cont.

Lands Managed by the Division of Fish & Wildlife	Antlered Deer Harvested	Button Bucks Harvested	Antlerless Deer Harvested	Total Deer Harvested	Square Miles of Property	Antlered Deer Harvested per Sq. Mile	Button Bucks Harvested per Sq. Mile	Antlerless Deer Harvested per Sq. Mile	Total Deer Harvested per Sq. Mile
Province Pond	1	0	1	2	0.33				
Rome City	1	0	0	1	0.08				
Tern Bar Slough	3	1	17	21	1.31	2.3	0.8	13.0	16.0
Turkey Creek	0	0	2	2	0.01				
Turkey Foot	2	1	1	4	0.24				
Whirledge	1	1	1	3	0.08				
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA	42	6	30	78	4.54	9.2	1.3	6.6	17.2
Ashcraft	1	0	0	1	0.10				
Elk Creek	1	0	0	1	0.00				
Grouse Ridge	2	0	0	2	0.25				
Hindostan	0	1	0	1	0.19				
Horseshoe Bend	4	0	1	5	0.02				
Howat 80	2	0	1	3	0.13				
Huston Ditch	2	0	3	5	0.30				
Modoc	0	1	0	1	0.26				
Morgan Bluff	4	0	7	11	0.70				
Oak Grove	0	0	4	4	0.11				
Randolph County	11	3	5	19	0.92				
Straight Line Slough	5	0	1	6	0.28				
White Oak	1	0	2	3	0.19				
White River Bend	9	1	6	16	1.11	8.1	0.9	5.4	14.4
RESOURCE AREA	8	0	5	13	0.57				
Deniston	8	0	5	13	0.57				
NATURE PRESERVE	48	7	32	87	9.95	4.8	0.7	3.2	8.7
Beaver Lake	2	0	1	3	0.32				
Big Walnut	6	1	3	10	4.06	1.5	0.2	0.7	2.5
Bluffs Of Beaver Bend	2	1	2	5	0.64				
Bob Kern	2	1	1	4	0.47				
Conrad Savanna	7	0	0	7	0.63				
Hoosier Prairie	2	0	4	6	0.67				
Judy Burton	1	1	2	4	0.20				
Portland Arch	1	1	3	5	0.68				
Section Six Southern Flatwoods	9	2	10	21	0.63				
Twin Swamps	9	0	6	15	0.96				
Wabash Lowlands	7	0	0	7	0.67				

TABLE 3-11. Deer harvested during the 2025-2026 deer hunting season on public lands managed by Indiana DNR divisions of State Parks and Forestry. Reporting error rate: $\pm 0.19\%$ (2025).

Lands Managed by the DNR Forestry and State Parks	Antlered Deer Harvested	Button Bucks Harvested	Antlerless Deer Harvested	Total Deer Harvested	Square Miles of Property	Antlered Deer Harvested per Sq. Mile	Button Bucks Harvested per Sq. Mile	Antlerless Deer Harvested per Sq. Mile	Total Deer Harvested per Sq. Mile
STATE FOREST	481	101	471	1,053	238.92	2.0	0.4	2.0	4.4
Clark	51	7	37	95	40.00	1.3	0.2	0.9	2.4
Ferdinand	15	3	16	34	11.96	1.3	0.3	1.3	2.8
Frances Slocum	11	2	6	19	0.80	13.7	2.5	7.5	23.6
Greene-Sullivan	46	2	44	92	14.06	3.3	0.1	3.1	6.5
Harrison-Crawford	104	15	75	194	37.50	2.8	0.4	2.0	5.2
Jackson-Washington	42	18	49	109	28.13	1.5	0.6	1.7	3.9
Martin	18	7	33	58	10.97	1.6	0.6	3.0	5.3
Morgan-Monroe	67	15	75	157	38.30	1.7	0.4	2.0	4.1
Owen-Putnam	20	4	23	47	10.44	1.9	0.4	2.2	4.5
Pike	15	4	13	32	6.94	2.2	0.6	1.9	4.6
Salamonie River	11	5	14	30	1.49	7.4	3.3	9.4	20.1
Selmier	2	1	0	3	0.55	3.6	1.8	0.0	5.4
Yellowwood	79	18	86	183	37.75	2.1	0.5	2.3	4.8
STATE RECREATION AREA	51	6	35	92	26.98	1.9	0.2	1.3	3.4
Deam Lake	3	2	1	6	2.03	1.5	1.0	0.5	3.0
Interlake	18	1	10	29	5.55	3.2	0.2	1.8	5.2
Lieber (Cagles Mill Lake)	20	3	19	42	12.62	1.6	0.2	1.5	3.3
Raccoon Lake	9	0	3	12	6.35	1.4	0.0	0.5	1.9
Starve Hollow	1	0	2	3	0.44	2.3	0.0	4.6	6.9
STATE RESERVOIR	409	122	470	1,001	88.60	4.6	1.4	5.3	11.3
Brookville Lake	70	34	140	244	9.00	7.8	3.8	15.6	27.1
Mississinewa Lake	126	46	166	338	17.50	7.2	2.6	9.5	19.3
Monroe Lake	32	7	43	82	20.60	1.6	0.3	2.1	4.0
Patoka Lake	109	14	58	181	26.90	4.1	0.5	2.2	6.7
Salamonie Lake	72	21	63	156	14.60	4.9	1.4	4.3	10.7

TABLE 3-12. Deer harvested during the 2025-2026 deer hunting season on public lands managed by federal agencies. Special draw hunts were held on the military lands and national wildlife refuge properties. Reporting error rate: $\pm 0.19\%$ (2025).

Lands Managed by the Federal Government	Antlered Deer Harvested	Button Bucks Harvested	Antlerless Deer Harvested	Total Deer Harvested	Square Miles of Property	Antlered Deer Harvested per Sq. Mile	Button Bucks Harvested per Sq. Mile	Antlerless Deer Harvested per Sq. Mile	Total Deer Harvested per Sq. Mile
MILITARY LANDS	135	41	163	339	153.04	0.9	0.3	1.1	2.2
Atterbury JMTC	69	33	114	216	52.32	1.3	0.6	2.2	4.1
Crane NSA	66	8	49	123	100.72	0.7	0.1	0.5	1.2
NATIONAL FORESTS	718	196	692	1,606	319.22	2.2	0.6	2.2	5.0
Hooiser	718	196	692	1,606	319.22	2.2	0.6	2.2	5.0
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE	97	18	70	185	127.63	0.8	0.1	0.5	1.4
Big Oaks	70	11	35	116	78.13	0.9	0.1	0.4	1.5
Muscatatuck	2	3	5	10	12.07	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.8
Patoka River	25	4	30	59	37.44	0.7	0.1	0.8	1.6

TABLE 3-13. Deer harvested per square mile of public land by resident and nonresident hunters from 2020-2025 in each county. The public land was advertised as available for hunting in the where-to-hunt web application (on.IN.gov/Where2Hunt). Counties with public land totaling <5 square miles were not included.

County	Total Sq. Miles of Public Hunting Land	2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024		2024-2025		2025-2026	
		Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident
Brown	77.7	0.1	6.2	0.1	3.9	0.2	7.0	0.2	3.8	0.2	6.1	0.2	4.0
Clark	22.1	0.2	6.7	0.1	3.9	0.2	8.1	0.3	4.4	0.2	8.5	0.2	4.8
Crawford	59.4	0.9	4.6	1.0	4.3	0.7	4.6	0.9	5.5	1.1	6.0	1.5	6.5
Daviess	14.3	0.5	8.8	0.3	8.9	0.1	8.4	0.4	11.2	0.5	12.1	0.6	11.9
Dubois	17.0	1.0	8.6	0.8	6.6	1.4	6.1	1.1	6.5	1.4	6.7	1.7	6.5
Franklin	14.0	1.3	11.7	1.5	7.5	0.8	7.5	0.4	5.4	0.4	8.0	0.9	9.7
Greene	28.7	0.3	4.6	0.5	5.4	0.2	5.6	0.3	5.7	0.3	5.6	0.7	5.7
Harrison	23.5	0.6	6.3	0.9	5.4	0.7	6.4	0.8	9.7	1.0	8.0	0.7	5.9
Huntington	24.0	0.2	7.9	0.1	7.3	0.2	9.9	0.3	9.9	0.5	9.9	0.1	12.1
Jackson	58.8	0.6	4.3	0.3	3.7	0.4	4.5	0.2	4.4	0.3	4.1	0.1	3.5
Jasper	8.6	0.7	12.1	0.6	8.9	0.8	10.7	0.5	12.5	0.8	13.7	0.6	12.1
Jefferson	27.4	0.3	2.6	0.2	4.0	0.2	3.7	0.3	4.9	0.2	4.1	0.1	1.2
Jennings	25.1	0.2	5.2	0.3	6.5	0.2	7.2	0.1	7.3	0.3	7.4	0.0	2.3
Johnson	7.0	0.9	16.4	0.7	12.1	0.6	17.4	0.6	19.1	0.0	22.8	0.6	18.8
Kosciusko	5.9	0.2	17.2	0.5	17.0	0.5	19.4	0.5	17.0	0.3	11.9	0.5	18.9
LaGrange	14.5	1.2	22.0	0.4	22.6	0.3	30.4	0.6	27.2	0.4	26.8	0.6	23.9
LaPorte	13.8	0.7	10.9	0.7	10.0	0.6	11.9	0.5	10.4	0.7	14.0	1.0	16.4
Lawrence	25.3	0.2	7.4	0.4	4.3	0.2	4.1	0.2	6.1	0.2	6.9	0.3	4.7
Martin	26.4	0.9	12.6	0.6	13.3	0.6	16.5	0.4	16.6	0.6	17.7	0.6	8.9
Monroe	78.4	0.2	4.6	0.2	3.8	0.1	4.1	0.1	4.0	0.2	3.5	0.2	4.1
Morgan	10.1	0.1	10.3	0.0	8.3	0.0	10.5	0.1	6.2	0.3	6.8	0.2	10.9
Newton	32.0	0.8	7.1	1.1	5.8	1.1	6.7	0.8	6.8	1.3	7.1	1.1	7.1
Orange	74.2	0.6	4.3	1.1	4.0	1.0	4.5	0.8	4.3	1.1	3.8	1.2	4.7
Owen	15.8	0.2	7.5	0.2	2.8	0.1	7.8	0.1	5.1	0.1	7.6	0.3	5.4
Perry	100.0	0.4	3.9	0.5	3.5	0.7	4.4	0.8	4.5	1.1	4.5	1.3	4.8
Pike	31.1	0.4	6.1	0.7	5.1	0.6	5.5	0.5	5.2	0.5	4.4	0.8	4.1
Posey	13.7	0.6	12.1	0.7	5.8	0.7	17.0	1.4	19.3	0.8	16.1	0.3	10.7
Pulaski	11.9	1.2	13.3	1.5	24.1	2.2	30.2	1.1	25.8	1.6	26.0	2.0	17.2
Putnam	8.0	0.1	9.3	0.6	9.1	0.2	9.7	0.1	9.1	0.2	8.6	0.5	13.2
Ripley	40.3	0.1	6.8	0.1	6.1	0.1	4.1	0.1	10.7	0.0	7.0	0.0	1.7
Scott	16.9	0.3	3.2	0.3	3.4	0.4	3.2	0.2	3.5	0.2	2.9	0.1	3.1
Starke	6.2	0.0	3.7	0.0	3.7	0.0	3.5	0.2	4.0	0.2	4.3	0.0	6.9
Steuben	6.4	0.6	18.7	0.8	18.7	0.8	16.4	0.6	13.0	0.3	21.5	0.6	17.8
Sullivan	22.3	0.9	4.4	1.4	3.8	0.9	3.9	1.3	4.1	1.8	3.8	1.7	6.2
Union	11.7	0.6	15.6	1.0	15.8	0.7	13.0	0.5	18.3	0.7	14.8	0.5	14.5
Vigo	12.5	2.3	5.5	2.6	3.8	2.6	7.1	1.8	6.1	2.7	7.1	3.4	7.5
Wabash	23.4	0.2	7.7	0.4	8.2	0.4	10.0	0.3	9.5	0.1	11.8	0.4	14.6
Warrick	12.5	0.2	7.2	0.1	7.0	0.2	7.4	0.0	7.0	0.3	6.1	0.4	5.9
Washington	26.7	0.4	2.2	0.4	2.9	0.8	3.6	0.6	3.9	1.1	4.5	0.5	3.7

Deer Reduction Zones Harvest

Indiana Deer Reduction Zones (DRZs) are designated to target areas within the state that have high deer populations coupled with high human density, where the cultural carrying capacity has been exceeded due to concerns over local ecology, deer-vehicle collisions, or the amount of damage to personal property. DRZs aim to reduce deer-human conflict in these areas rather than to eliminate the deer population. Hunters may harvest up to 10 deer in the DRZs, 10 antlerless deer or nine antlerless deer, and one antlered deer after first harvesting an antlerless deer (earn-a-buck). An interactive map of the current DRZs along with information and a video about how DRZs are developed can be found online at <https://www.in.gov/dnr/fish-and-wildlife/wildlife-resources/animals/white-tailed-deer/deer-reduction-zones/>.

Approximately 4,814 deer were harvested in DRZs in 2025 (Table 3-14), a 3.7% increase from 2024. These deer were harvested within a DRZ county using a valid license type for DRZs (DRZ license, lifetime license, youth license, landowner exemption, or military exemption) and were marked that they applied to the “zone bag limit” in the CheckIN Game system. Deer harvested on any other license type within the boundaries of a DRZ counted toward the statewide bag limit.

In 2025, antlerless deer made up 80.4% of the DRZ harvest. The percentage of the statewide antlerless harvest that was taken in a DRZ was similar in 2025 (3.7%) compared to 2024 (3.8%). A total of 942 antlered deer were taken in DRZs in 2025, which accounted for 1.5% of the statewide antlered harvest. Deer taken within a DRZ accounted for between 1.8% and 60.5% of each DRZ county's total harvest (Table 3-15).

County	2023 Antlered	2023 Antlerless	2023 Total	2024 Antlered	2024 Antlerless	2024 Total	2025 Antlered	2025 Antlerless	2025 Total
Allen	121	441	562	65	307	372	96	357	453
Boone	5	18	23	2	15	17	6	19	25
Brown	15	101	116	12	89	101	24	92	116
Dearborn	20	157	177	24	168	192	34	147	181
Dekalb	24	101	125	30	112	142	26	127	153
Delaware	12	48	60	14	66	80	16	59	75
Elkhart	25	125	150	32	139	171	36	143	179
Fulton	6	40	46	6	31	37	10	47	57
Hamilton	43	131	174	36	140	176	37	130	167
Hendricks	20	43	63	17	54	71	20	51	71
Johnson	11	30	41	10	37	47	10	38	48
Kosciusko	39	198	237	45	196	241	40	221	261
Lagrange	39	210	249	38	244	282	64	286	350
Lake	142	537	679	102	480	582	120	551	671
Laporte	54	255	309	54	261	315	69	295	364
Madison	3	21	24	4	24	28	9	27	36
Marion	62	217	279	58	214	272	49	204	253
Monroe	13	46	59	13	38	51	14	48	62
Morgan	34	136	170	30	169	199	37	159	196
Porter	139	624	763	51	302	353	4	10	14
St Joseph	37	140	177	39	162	201	34	145	179
Steuben	49	253	302	37	197	234	62	249	311
Tippecanoe	20	58	78	22	82	104	24	72	96
Vanderburgh	71	322	393	67	299	366	64	288	352
Wabash	16	40	56	6	38	44	14	49	63
Warrick	16	69	85	6	50	56	23	58	81
Total Deer Harvested	1,036	4,361	5,397	820	3,914	4,734	942	3,872	4,814
% Of Statewide Harvest Totals	2%	7%	4%	1%	6%	4%	1%	6%	4%

TABLE 3-14. Number of antlered, antlerless, and total deer harvested within Deer Reduction Zones in 2023, 2024, and 2025. Reporting error rates: $\pm 0.19\%$ (2025), $\pm 0.23\%$ (2024), and $\pm 0.24\%$ (2023)

TABLE 3-15. Percentage of each Deer Reduction Zone (DRZ) county's total deer harvest that was counted as deer harvested in the DRZ in 2025. DRZ deer were defined as deer harvested within a DRZ county using a valid license type (DRZ license, lifetime license, youth license, landowner exemption, or military exemptions) and indicated as counting toward the zone bag limit in the CheckIN Game system. Reporting error rate: $\pm 0.19\%$ (2025).

County	2025 Total DRZ Deer Harvest	2025 DRZ Antlered Harvest	2025 DRZ Antlerless Harvest	2025 Total County Harvest	% of total county harvest from DRZ	% of County Antlered Harvest from DRZ	% of County Antlerless Harvest from DRZ	DRZ size (sq. mile)	Total DRZ Harvest per square mile
Allen	453	96	357	1,932	23.4%	10.3%	35.8%	258.4	1.8
Boone	25	6	19	552	4.5%	2.0%	7.7%	24.4	1.0
Brown	116	24	92	1,400	8.3%	3.7%	12.2%	21.6	5.4
Dearborn	181	34	147	1,905	9.5%	4.0%	13.9%	32.1	5.6
Dekalb	153	26	127	3,007	5.1%	1.9%	7.7%	18.7	8.2
Delaware	75	16	59	1,049	7.1%	3.0%	11.6%	61.5	1.2
Elkhart	179	36	143	2,178	8.2%	3.9%	11.4%	74.9	2.4
Fulton	57	10	47	1,665	3.4%	1.3%	5.4%	8.3	6.9
Hamilton	167	37	130	626	26.7%	12.8%	38.7%	202.4	0.8
Hendricks	71	20	51	802	8.9%	4.7%	13.7%	70.1	1.0
Johnson	48	10	38	650	7.4%	3.3%	11.0%	57.7	0.8
Kosciusko	261	40	221	2,718	9.6%	3.2%	14.9%	57.4	4.5
Lagrange	350	64	286	3,079	11.4%	5.5%	14.9%	28.5	12.3
Lake	671	120	551	1,523	44.1%	19.0%	61.7%	360.4	1.9
Laporte	364	69	295	2,204	16.5%	6.9%	24.5%	99.6	3.7
Madison	36	9	27	715	5.0%	2.4%	8.0%	18.2	2.0
Marion	253	49	204	418	60.5%	29.5%	81.0%	402.6	0.6
Monroe	62	14	48	1,652	3.8%	1.8%	5.5%	10.9	5.7
Morgan	196	37	159	1,701	11.5%	4.5%	17.9%	77.8	2.5
Porter	14	4	10	794	1.8%	0.9%	2.7%	254.1	0.1
Saint Joseph	179	34	145	1,448	12.4%	5.1%	18.6%	131.1	1.4
Steuben	311	62	249	3,571	8.7%	3.9%	12.7%	35.4	8.8
Tippecanoe	96	24	72	1,324	7.3%	3.7%	10.7%	73.9	1.3
Vanderburgh	352	64	288	736	47.8%	20.8%	67.1%	135.5	2.6
Wabash	63	14	49	1,638	3.8%	1.7%	6.0%	8.1	7.8
Warrick	81	23	58	1,254	6.5%	3.5%	9.7%	49.2	1.6

Harvest by License Status

In 2025, a total of 129,992 individual hunters purchased an annual deer hunting license of some kind. This was slightly higher than the 128,732 individuals who purchased an annual deer hunting license in 2024. Resident hunters harvested 95.1% of the total deer harvested in Indiana in 2025, while nonresidents harvested 4.9% of the total (Table 3-16). Annual license holders (license types purchased every year) harvested 75.2% of the total deer. Lifetime license holders harvested 13.1%, and landowner-exempt hunters (landowners and lessees who hunted on their own land without a license) harvested 11.5% of deer in 2025. A large proportion of deer were harvested using a deer bundle license (46.4% resident deer bundle, 1.7% nonresident deer bundle).

TABLE 3-16. Number of deer harvested by resident and nonresident license types during the 2025 deer hunting season. Reporting error rate: $\pm 0.19\%$ (2025). In 2025 due to the change in the license system, there is an additional 1.7% error rate in the check-in data related to the license type used.

License Type	Resident Harvest	Non-Resident Harvest	Total	% Resident Harvest	% Non-Resident Harvest
Deer Archery	3,677	1,040	4,717	2.8%	0.8%
Deer Bundle	60,851	2,168	63,019	46.4%	1.7%
Deer Crossbow	894	116	1,010	0.7%	0.1%
Deer Firearms	7,565	1,930	9,495	5.8%	1.5%
Deer Military/Refuge	255	17	272	0.2%	0.0%
Deer Multiseason Antlerless	3,234	192	3,426	2.5%	0.2%
Deer Muzzleloader	581	88	669	0.4%	0.1%
Deer Reduction Zone	2,980	45	3,025	2.3%	0.0%
Early State Park Reduction	6	1	7	0.0%	0.0%
Landowner Exemption	14,545	491	15,036	11.1%	0.4%
Late State Park Reduction	5	0	5	0.0%	0.0%
Lifetime License	16,912	291	17,203	12.9%	0.2%
Military Exempt - IC 14-22-11-11	66	0	66	0.1%	0.0%
Youth Free Hunt Days	173	1	174	0.1%	0.0%
Youth Hunt/Trap	13,051	51	13,102	10.0%	0.0%
Total	124,795	6,431	131,226	95.1%	4.9%

Deer License Sales

The number of deer licenses sold in 2025 increased by less than 1% from 2024 (Table 3-17). The number of privileges (number of deer legally allowed to be harvested, excluding those harvested by youth) was 2.1% greater than in 2024. Each deer license bundle included three deer privileges.

TABLE 3-17. Deer license sales in Indiana by license type, 2016-2025. Total license sale numbers are subject to change slightly as refunds or voids are made.

License Type	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Resident Archery	21,301	21,291	20,075	19,450	18,722	16,618	18,152	19,442	18,258	16,919
Resident Firearm	40,577	37,254	34,575	29,627	26,671	24,265	26,177	26,279	25,269	23,461
Resident License Bundle	68,997	67,731	67,963	69,683	79,881	80,974	73,330	76,449	77,595	81,745
Resident Military/Refuge	1,343	1,355	1,611	1,613	1,081	1,504	1,514	1,757	1,751	1,743
Resident Multiseason Antlerless	18,065	16,188	13,866	15,149	14,378	11,267	10,053	9,972	9,987	7,510
Resident Muzzleloader	4,669	4,376	3,898	3,607	3,715	2,902	2,759	2,608	2,503	1,928
Resident Reduction Zone	3,495	3,753	4,719	5,062	6,658	6,183	5,982	6,491	5,984	6,002
Nonresident Archery	2,585	2,989	3,168	3,291	3,449	3,316	3,523	4,126	4,081	4,455
Nonresident Firearm	4,155	4,032	3,854	3,829	3,783	4,098	4,371	4,286	4,732	4,422
Nonresident License Bundle	2,960	2,948	2,874	3,050	3,674	4,014	1,806	1,689	1,814	1,932
Nonresident Military/Refuge	23	26	98	33	24	28	26	40	43	53
Nonresident Multiseason Antlerless	366	331	311	359	386	321	462	438	547	479
Nonresident Muzzleloader	363	439	398	369	390	440	372	336	354	320
Nonresident Reduction Zone	41	31	70	58	107	131	92	92	92	76
Nonresident Youth Archery	109	121	94	94	112	120	123	129	121	109
Nonresident Youth Firearm	360	339	343	264	251	248	269	347	334	291
Nonresident Youth License Bundle	302	311	253	305	374	431	343	338	359	386
Nonresident Youth Military/Refuge	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	4	2	0
Nonresident Youth Multiseason Antlerless	87	73	47	97	97	76	66	79	73	82
Nonresident Youth Muzzleloader	29	24	23	26	12	23	18	17	13	11
Nonresident Youth Reduction Zone	6	7	6	4	4	8	8	15	6	4
Total Licenses (Excluding Resident Youth)	169,833	163,619	158,247	155,970	163,769	156,968	149,447	154,934	153,918	151,928
Total Privileges (Excluding Resident Youth)	314,351	305,599	300,427	302,046	331,627	327,806	300,405	311,886	313,454	320,054

County Antlerless Bag Limit

In 2025, the Indiana Natural Resources Commission (NRC) adopted a new rule converting the County Bonus Antlerless Quota (CBAQ) system to a County Antlerless Bag Limit (CABL). The CABL is the total number of antlerless deer that can be harvested in a given county during Youth, Firearms (only with the use of a multi-season antlerless license), Archery, and Muzzleloader seasons combined. Additional antlerless deer can be harvested if there is a Deer Reduction Zone present or if there are special organized hunts occurring in that county such as state park management hunts, reserved hunts on public land, and military lands. The County Antlerless Bag Limit can be filled using archery licenses, muzzleloader licenses, multi-season antlerless licenses, license bundle, lifetime license, youth license or license exemption. The multi-season antlerless license can be used in Youth, Archery, Firearms, and Muzzleloader seasons only.

Previously, in a county with a CBAQ of three, hunters could take up to six antlerless deer. This occasionally led to a misunderstanding that the number posted for the CBAQ map was the total number of antlerless deer that could be harvested. In response, Indiana DNR worked to clarify the antlerless harvest system so that a single number was provided stating the number of antlerless deer that could be harvested with any legal equipment within that county, now called the CABL. The final CABQ for 2019 until 2024 and CABL for 2025 can be found in Table 3-18.

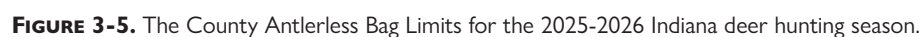
Deer Population Indices

Since 2012, CBAQs (now CABL) have been gradually lowered across the state as the deer-management goals of Indiana DNR have shifted from that of herd reduction to population maintenance. This approach integrated with strategic harvest in Deer Reduction Zones (DRZ) has been adopted to provide a healthy deer population across the state while addressing human safety concerns along roadways that have historically experienced high levels of deer-vehicle collisions (DVC). CABL should be maintained at current levels if harvest remains steady, unless population indices indicate that adjustments are necessary to increase or reduce local deer harvest in a county.

Every year, the Indiana DNR deer program, private lands biologists, and conservation officers work collectively to analyze trends in deer population and public opinion indices to determine whether CABLs should be adjusted. The following population and public opinion indices are gathered through the Deer Management Survey (see Chapter 7), harvest reports, and public comment and are used in CABL evaluations: annual deer harvest, hunter success rate, hunter effort, Archer's Index deer observations, DVC rates, public opinion on deer population size, and public desire for changes in populations. Because these data sources are not true measurements but rather indices of the deer population, trends in these data over time are weighed and collectively inform the final decision of Indiana DNR when setting CABLs for the fall deer season.

County Bonus Antlerless Bag Limits 2025-2026. After reviewing deer population and public opinion indices, no changes were made to county antlerless bag limits for the 2025-2026 deer hunting season; however, changes were made just prior to the hunting season because of a significant epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) outbreak that affected Bartholomew, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Martin, Scott and Switzerland counties. As a result, Jennings County's antlerless bag limit was reduced from four antlerless deer to two antlerless deer for the upcoming hunting season. Jackson, Scott, and Jefferson counties' antlerless bag limits were reduced from four antlerless deer to three antlerless deer per county for the

Adjusted for EHD in Bartholomew, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings,
Martin, Scott, and Switzerland Counties



Deer Management Unit Summaries

Indiana DNR analyzes deer data on a regional scale based on Deer Management Units (DMUs; Figure 3-6). DMUs are defined groupings of counties based on similar characteristics such as habitat, hunter density, and urban development. Trends in a DMU's indices influence the CABLs for the counties within it. DMU-specific data is available in Appendix A: DMU Deer Data Sheets 2025. County-specific data referenced below is available on the Indiana DNR Deer Data Dashboard at www.in.gov/dnr/fish-and-wildlife/wildlife-resources/animals/white-tailed-deer/county-data/.

TABLE 3-18. Indiana County Bonus Antlerless Quotas (CBAQ), 2019-2024 and County Antlerless Bag Limit for 2025. These are the final quotas and bag limits used during the regular hunting seasons after last minute adjustments were made due to epizootic hemorrhagic disease outbreaks in the summer months.

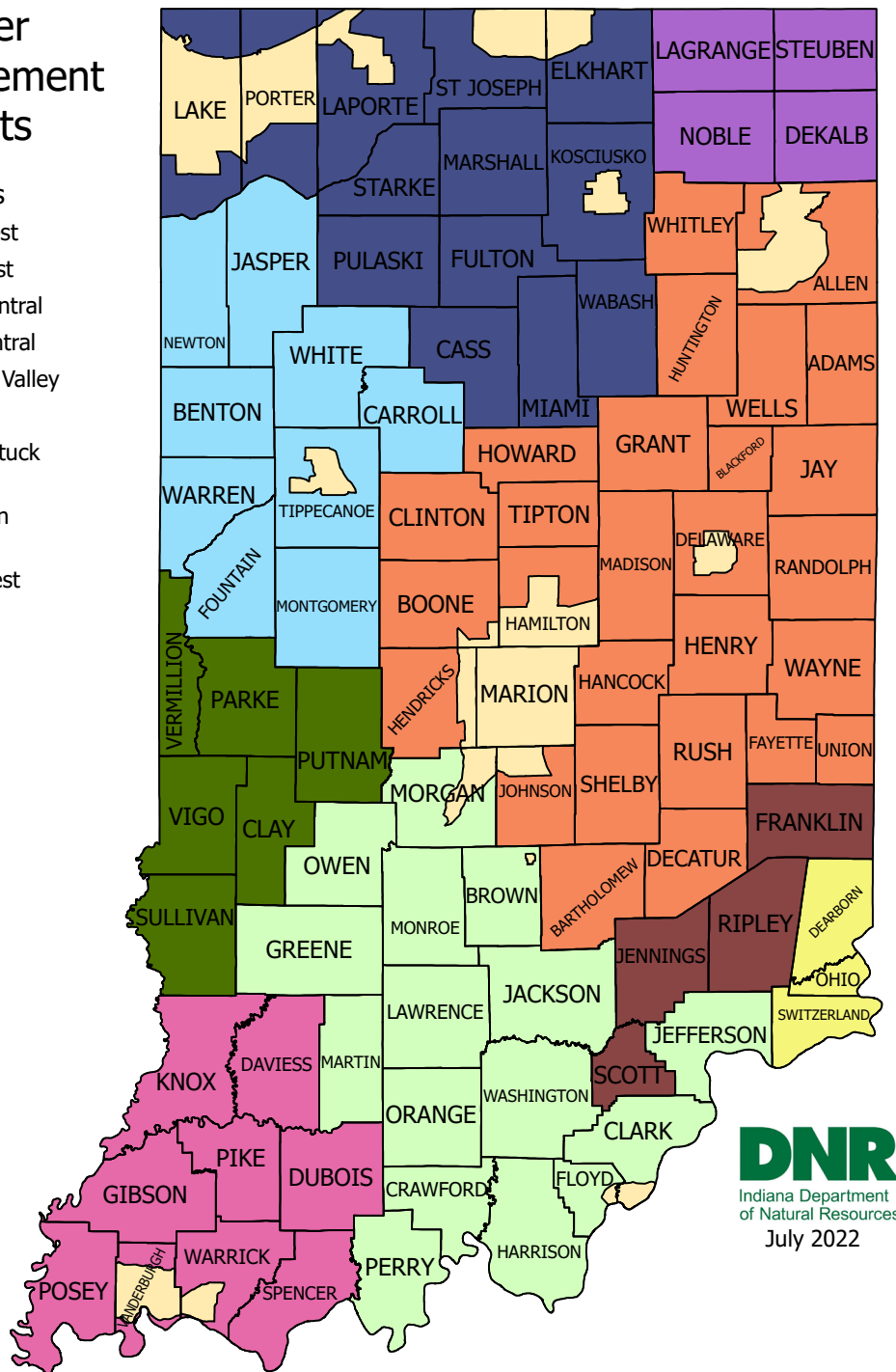
County	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Adams	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Allen	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
Bartholomew	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Benton	A	A	A	1	1	1	2
Blackford	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Boone	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Brown	2	3	3	2	3	3	4
Carroll	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Cass	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Clark	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
Clay	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
Clinton	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Crawford	2	2	2	2	3	3	4
Daviess	1	2	2	2	2	2	3
Dearborn	2	2	2	2	1	1	4
Decatur	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Dekalb	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Delaware	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Dubois	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Elkhart	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Fayette	2	2	2	1	0	1	2
Floyd	2	2	2	2	3	3	4
Fountain	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Franklin	2	3	2	1	0	1	2
Fulton	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Gibson	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Grant	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Greene	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
Hamilton	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Hancock	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Harrison	2	2	2	2	3	3	4
Hendricks	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Henry	2	2	2	2	1	1	3
Howard	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Huntington	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Jackson	2	3	3	2	3	3	3
Jasper	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Jay	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Jefferson	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
Jennings	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Johnson	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Knox	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Kosciusko	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Lagrange	1	1	2	2	3	3	3
Lake	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
LaPorte	2	2	2	2	2	2	3

County	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Lawrence	2	3	3	2	3	3	4
Madison	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Marion	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Marshall	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Martin	2	3	3	2	3	3	2
Miami	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Monroe	2	3	3	2	3	3	4
Montgomery	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Morgan	2	3	3	2	3	3	4
Newton	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Noble	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
Ohio	2	2	2	2	1	1	3
Orange	2	3	3	2	3	3	4
Owen	2	2	2	2	3	3	4
Parke	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
Perry	2	2	2	2	3	3	4
Pike	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Porter	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
Posey	1	2	2	2	2	2	3
Pulaski	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Putnam	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
Randolph	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Ripley	2	3	2	2	1	1	4
Rush	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Saint Joseph	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
Scott	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Shelby	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Spencer	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Starke	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Steuben	1	1	2	2	3	3	2
Sullivan	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
Switzerland	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Tippecanoe	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Tipton	A	A	A	1	1	1	2
Union	2	2	2	1	1	1	3
Vanderburgh	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Vermillion	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
Vigo	2	2	2	2	3	3	3
Wabash	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
Warren	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Warrick	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Washington	2	2	2	2	3	3	4
Wayne	2	2	2	1	1	1	3
Wells	A	1	1	1	1	1	2
White	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
Whitley	1	1	1	2	2	2	3

Deer Management Units

DMU Regions

- 1 - Northwest
- 2 - Northeast
- 3 - West Central
- 4 - East Central
- 5 - Wabash Valley
- 6 - South
- 7 - Muscatatuck Plateau
- 8 - Dearborn Upland
- 9 - Southwest
- 10 - Urban



DNR
Indiana Department
of Natural Resources
July 2022

FIGURE 3-6. Indiana deer management units (DMUs) created by Indiana DNR and Purdue University to better understand survey data trends regionally.

Hunter Success and Hunters Afield

The number of Indiana deer hunting licenses sold each year represents the number of licensed hunters afield during the hunting season, but that number does not include all hunters attempting to harvest a deer in a given year. A portion of Indiana hunters have a lifetime license, which requires no annual purchase. These hunters are not tracked in yearly license sales data, and a hunter with a lifetime license is not necessarily still an active hunter. Indiana also allows for license exemptions for landowners and active military members who are not tracked in the license sales data. Lifetime license holders accounted for 13.1% of the deer harvest in 2025. More than 11.5% of deer were harvested by landowners or military-exempt hunters in 2025. Estimating the total number of hunters afield sheds light on how many hunters are using the resource and how they are using it (i.e., license or exemption type).

Indiana DNR defines a successful hunter as an individual who harvests at least one deer during hunting season, regardless of how many deer the hunter attempted to harvest. Hunter success can be calculated using license sales and harvest data: hunters who attempted to harvest a deer (i.e., hunters who purchased a license) compared to hunters who actually harvested a deer (i.e., hunters who bought a license and checked in a deer on that license). However, not every hunter is required to purchase an annual hunting license (e.g., lifetime license holders and landowner and military-exempt hunters), so with this method, success rates for lifetime and exempt license holders are assumed to be the same as those for annual licensed hunters. This calculation is not applicable at the county level because deer are not always harvested in the same county where a license was purchased.

Hunter success can also be calculated from hunter survey responses. During multiple years of the annual Deer Management Survey (DMS), hunters were asked to report the number of deer they wanted to harvest, the number of deer they harvested, and the license or exemption used to harvest the deer. This information allows us to calculate hunter success in a similar way to using license sales and harvest data: the number of hunters who attempted to harvest a deer compared to the number of those hunters who harvested a deer. Since the DMS was available for all hunters with a valid email address in the Indiana DNR system, this calculation captures all hunters regardless of license type or exemption, providing an accounting of success rates for lifetime license holders, landowners, and military-exempt hunters.

Hunter success rates themselves are an index that may indicate the relative herd size in an area (Roseberry and Woolf 1991). For example, a comparably high hunter success rate over time may mean it is becoming easier to harvest a deer because the deer population is increasing, while a low hunter success rate over time may mean it is becoming more difficult to harvest a deer because the deer population is decreasing in that area. These comparisons are useful for determining how the deer population is fluctuating over time in an area, which then helps set hunting quotas and regulations.

Methods

For the 2025-2026 hunting season, license sales, the deer management survey, and harvest data were used to estimate hunter success. We estimated success rates for all non-youth resident and nonresident annual license holders in our database for each deer season from 2015 to 2025. It was not possible to calculate youth success rates using the same methodology because youth licenses are not specific to deer. Success was defined as harvesting and checking in at

least one deer during the 2025-2026 deer season using the same customer ID number that was used to purchase an annual deer license. To calculate success rate, we divided the number of successful hunters in each category by the total number of hunters in that category.

Resident License Success Rate (SRL_R)=The number of non-youth hunters who purchased a resident annual deer license and checked in a deer using the same CID number/the total number of non-youth hunters who purchased a resident annual deer license

Nonresident License Success Rate (SRL_{NR})= The number of non-youth hunters who purchased a nonresident annual deer license and checked in a deer using the same CID number/The total number of non-youth hunters who purchased a nonresident annual deer license

Using the deer management survey, we estimated success rates for all non-youth resident and nonresident annual license holders, lifetime license holders, and license-exempt hunters who participated in the annual deer management survey for each deer season from 2017 to 2024. Although hunters can hunt using multiple license types per season, we categorized them into a single category to avoid double counting. Any hunter who purchased an annual license was categorized as an annual license holder. Any hunter who hunted using a lifetime license and did not buy an annual license was categorized as a lifetime license holder. Any hunter who hunted using a license exemption and did not purchase an annual license or hunt on a lifetime license was categorized as license exempt. Like the license success rate, the survey success rate was calculated as the number of successful hunters in each category divided by the total number of hunters in that category.

Resident Survey Success Rate (SRS_R)= The number of non-youth hunters who reported purchasing a resident annual deer license and checked in a deer under the resident annual license category/the total number of non-youth hunters who reported purchasing a resident annual deer license

Nonresident Survey Success Rate (SRS_{NR})= The number of non-youth hunters who reported purchasing a nonresident annual deer license and checked in a deer under the nonresident annual license category/the total number of non-youth hunters who reported purchasing a nonresident annual deer license

Lifetime Survey Success Rate (SRS_L)= The number of non-youth hunters who reported hunting using a lifetime license and checked in a deer under the lifetime license category/the total number of non-youth hunters who reported hunting using a lifetime license

Exemption Survey Success Rate (SRS_E)= The number of non-youth hunters who reported hunting using a license exemption and checked in a deer under a license exemption category/the total number of non-youth hunters who reported hunting using a license exemption

We used harvest data and license success rates to calculate the number of hunters afield for each deer season from 2015 to 2025. For each year we queried the number of unique hunters who checked in a deer under the following categories: resident annual license, nonresident annual license, lifetime license, landowner exemption, and military exemption. As with the deer management survey success rate calculation, hunters were exclusively assigned to a single category to avoid overestimating the number of hunters afield. To calculate the number of hunters afield, we divided the number of unique hunters in each category by the license success rate and summed the category estimates.

We used the license success rates to estimate hunters afield, because survey responses appear to be biased toward successful hunters.

$$\text{Hunters Afield} = (HCD_{RAL}/SRL_R) + (HCD_{NAL}/SRL_N) + (HCD_{LL}/SRL_R) + (HCD_{LO}/SRL_R) + (HCD_{LO}/SRL_R) + (HCD_{ME}/SRL_R) + (HCD_Y/SRL_R)$$

Where,

HCD_{RAL} = Adult hunters who checked in a deer and purchased a resident annual deer hunting license

HCD_{NAL} = Adult hunters who checked in a deer and purchased a nonresident annual deer hunting license

HCD_{LL} = Hunters who checked in a deer using a lifetime license

HCD_{LO} = Hunters who checked in a deer using a landowner exemption

HCD_{ME} = Hunters who checked in a deer using a military exemption

HCD_Y = Youth hunters who checked in a deer and purchased a youth license

Results

The resident license success rate rose steadily from a low of 0.31 ($CI_{95}=0.003$) in 2015 to 0.39 ($CI_{95}=0.003$) in 2019 (Figure 3-7). The 2020 success rate was similar to 2019 at 0.40 ($CI_{95}=0.003$), but it decreased slightly in 2021 to 0.39 ($CI_{95}=0.003$). In 2022, the resident success rate reached a new high at 0.43 ($CI_{95}=0.003$). It fell slightly again in 2023 to 0.42 ($CI_{95}=0.003$) but rose again in 2024 to high of 0.43 ($CI_{95}=0.003$) and rose again in 2025 to a new high of 0.44 ($CI_{95}=0.003$). The nonresident license success rate was higher than the resident success rate in 2015 and 2016 (Figure 3-7). From 2018 to 2024, the nonresident license success rate followed a similar pattern as the resident license success rate but was consistently lower, with an annual success rate of 0.38 ($CI_{95} = 0.009$) in 2025.

Survey success rates increased for all types of deer hunters in 2025 (Figure 3-8). Resident annual success rates were 0.62 ($CI_{95}=0.008$) in 2025 compared to 0.60 ($CI_{95}=0.010$) in 2024. The success rate for nonresident hunters rose to 0.55 ($CI_{95}=0.032$) from 0.51 ($CI_{95}=0.036$) in 2024. Lifetime license success rates increased from 0.60 ($CI_{95}=0.016$) in 2024 to 0.65 ($CI_{95}=0.014$) in 2025. The success rate for exempt hunters was 0.51 ($CI_{95}=0.024$) in 2024 compared to 0.60 ($CI_{95}=0.021$) in 2025.

Survey success rates were consistently higher than license success rates, with a mean difference of 0.15 ($CI_{95}=0.02$) for resident annual hunters and 0.14 ($CI_{95}=0.02$) for nonresident annual hunters. The two measures of success have both been increasing over time. For most years, nonresident success rates have been equal to or lower than resident success rates.

The number of hunters afield compared to 2024 varied by license category in 2025 (Figure 3-9). The number of annual hunters, both resident and nonresident, rose in 2025 relative to 2024. The number of lifetime license hunters, exempt hunters, and youth annual hunters fell in 2025 relative to 2024.

The total estimated number of hunters afield fell steadily from 2015 until 2019

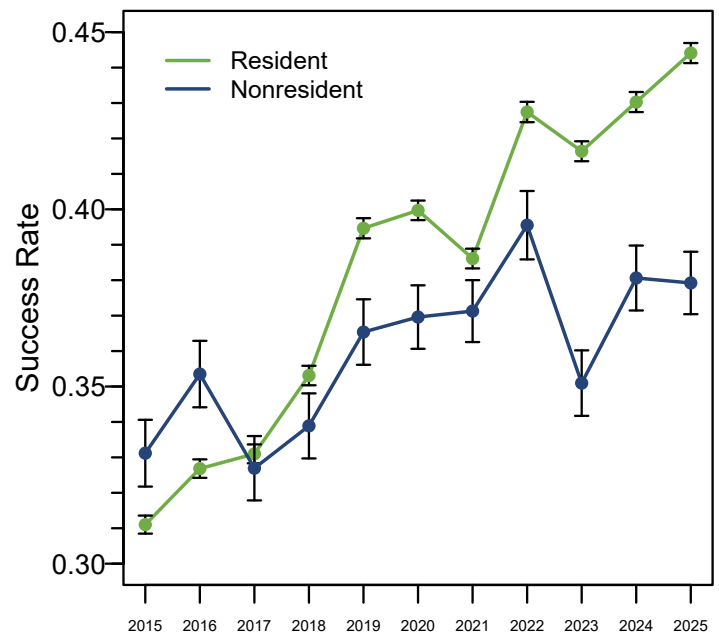


FIGURE 3-7. Calculated annual success rates of non-youth licensed resident and nonresident deer hunters who purchased an annual deer license and checked in at least one deer using the same Customer ID number.

(Figure 3-10; Table 3-21). There was a slight bump in 2020, but the downward trend continued until 2022. This increased again slightly in 2023 and decreased slightly in 2024 and 2025 with an estimated 201,802 total hunters afield during the 2025-2026 deer season.

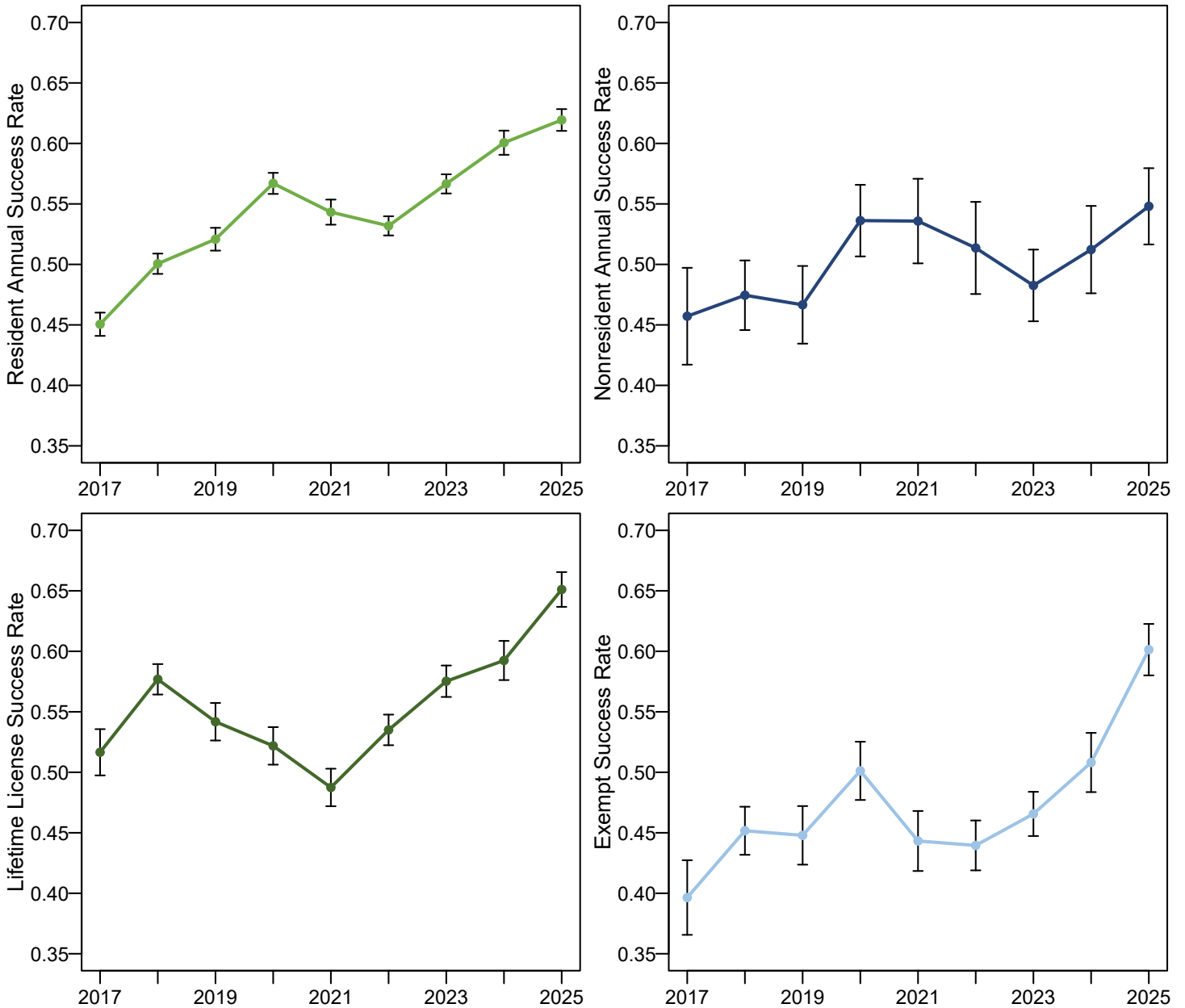


FIGURE 3-8. Calculated annual success rates of non-youth deer hunters who hunted using resident and nonresident annual licenses, lifetime licenses, and military and landowner exemptions, and participated in the annual Deer Management Survey.

Discussion

The large mean difference in success rates between the license data and the survey data is likely because of systematic biases in both data sets. The license data calculation is based on the success rate of only non-youth hunters who purchased a license and assumes that everyone who purchased a license took advantage of the hunting opportunity. Furthermore, a hunter is only counted as successful if they checked in a deer with the same Customer ID they used to purchase an annual license. These underlying assumptions likely result in an underestimate of success rate and thus an underestimate in the number of hunters afield. However, we use the license success rate for the hunters-afield calculation because we believe it is a more accurate estimate of success than the deer management survey estimates, which are calculated from a nonrandom sample of deer hunters.

Based on the survey success estimates, we know that the success rate of hunters who purchased an annual license may not be the same for other hunters. For example, lifetime license holder success rates were generally higher than other groups', and exempt success rates were generally lower. One of the goals of the DMS was to estimate success rates for different groups based on license category to help us more precisely estimate the number of hunters afield (Caudell and Vaught 2018); however, given the survey bias toward successful hunters, this is infeasible without a correction factor to adjust between hunter success based on license sales data and hunter success calculated from the DMS.

There are several practical applications for estimating hunter success and hunters afield. Hunter success may act as an index of deer populations (Roseberry and Woolf 1991) and a predictor of hunter satisfaction (Gigliotti 2000). Estimating the number of hunters afield using a standardized method of calculation provides a repeatable index for hunter trends in Indiana. Because the proportion of the population actively participating in hunting has been declining over time (U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service 2018), it is important to have an accurate index of these trends. As Indiana DNR puts forth efforts to recruit new hunters, retain current hunters, and reactivate hunters who have stopped hunting, having an estimate of the number of hunters participating in the hunting season will aid in evaluation of the success of these programs. Ultimately, the most accurate measure of hunter success and hunters afield requires documenting every hunter who attempts to harvest a deer through license sales, registration, or some other record.

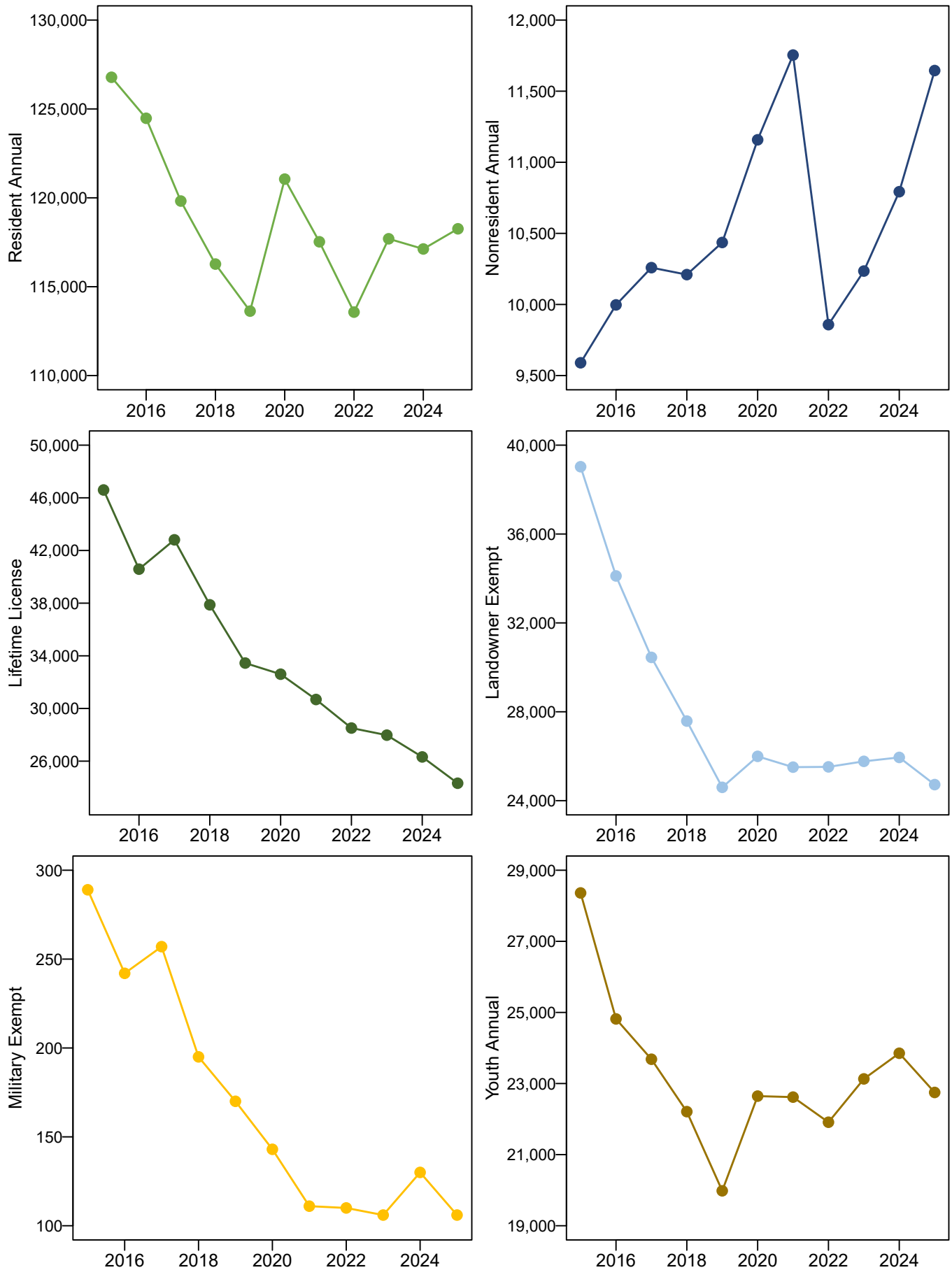


FIGURE 3-9. Estimated hunters afield in each license category, including resident annual license holders, nonresident annual license holders, lifetime license holders, landowner exemptions, military exemptions, and youth annual license holders.

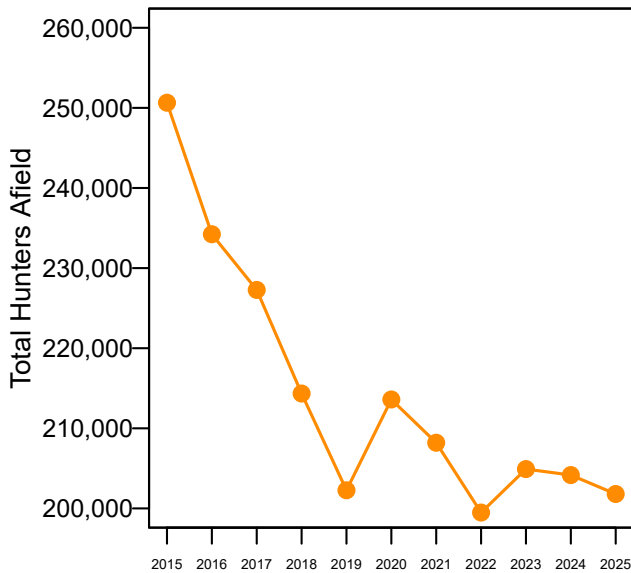


FIGURE 3-10. Total estimated hunters afield during Indiana deer hunting seasons, 2015-2016 through 2025-2026.

TABLE 3-19. Calculated annual success rates and 95% confidence intervals of non-youth licensed resident and nonresident deer hunters who purchased an annual deer license and checked in at least one deer using the same Customer ID number.

Season	All Resident Hunter Success Rate	All Resident Hunter Success Rate +/-95% CI	Nonresident Success Rate	Nonresident Success Rate +/-95% CI
2015-2016	0.31	0.003	0.33	0.009
2016-2017	0.33	0.003	0.35	0.009
2017-2018	0.33	0.003	0.33	0.009
2018-2019	0.35	0.003	0.34	0.009
2019-2020	0.39	0.003	0.37	0.009
2020-2021	0.40	0.003	0.37	0.009
2021-2022	0.39	0.003	0.37	0.009
2022-2023	0.43	0.003	0.40	0.010
2023-2024	0.42	0.003	0.35	0.009
2024-2025	0.43	0.003	0.38	0.009
2025-2026	0.44	0.003	0.38	0.009

TABLE 3-20. Calculated annual success rates and 95% confidence intervals of non-youth licensed resident (separated by resident annual license purchasers, lifetime license holders, and exempt landowners) and nonresident deer hunters who purchased an annual deer license and checked in at least one deer using the same Customer ID number.

Season	Annual Resident Success Rate	Annual Resident Success Rate Confidence Interval (+/- 95 %)	Nonresident Success Rate	Nonresident Success Rate Confidence Interval (+/- 95 %)	Lifetime License Success Rate	Lifetime License Success Rate Confidence Interval (+/- 95 %)	Exempt Landowner Success Rate	Exempt Landowner Success Rate Confidence Interval (+/- 95 %)
2017-2018	0.45	0.01	0.46	0.04	0.52	0.02	0.40	0.03
2018-2019	0.50	0.01	0.47	0.03	0.58	0.01	0.45	0.02
2019-2020	0.52	0.01	0.47	0.03	0.54	0.02	0.45	0.02
2020-2021	0.57	0.01	0.54	0.03	0.52	0.02	0.50	0.02
2021-2022	0.54	0.01	0.54	0.04	0.49	0.02	0.44	0.02
2022-2023	0.53	0.01	0.51	0.04	0.54	0.01	0.44	0.02
2023-2024	0.57	0.01	0.48	0.03	0.58	0.01	0.47	0.02
2024-2025	0.60	0.01	0.51	0.04	0.59	0.02	0.51	0.02
2025-2026	0.62	0.01	0.55	0.03	0.65	0.01	0.60	0.02

TABLE 3-21. Calculated estimated hunters afield during Indiana deer hunting seasons, 2015-2016 through 2025-2026.

Year	Resident Hunters Using Annual License	Nonresident Hunters Using Annual License	Estimated Hunters Using Lifetime License	Estimated Hunters Using Landowner Exemption	Military Exempt Hunters	Youth Hunters	Estimated Total Hunters Afield
2015	126,782	9,590	46,595	39,029	289	28,361	250,646
2016	124,475	9,997	40,581	34,113	242	24,817	234,225
2017	119,818	10,259	42,810	30,448	257	23,683	227,275
2018	116,272	10,210	37,874	27,582	195	22,209	214,342
2019	113,626	10,436	33,450	24,599	170	19,982	202,263
2020	121,053	11,158	32,604	25,994	143	22,646	213,598
2021	117,526	11,754	30,683	25,508	111	22,618	208,200
2022	113,570	9,858	28,515	25,520	110	21,911	199,484
2023	117,696	10,235	27,974	25,769	106	23,130	204,910
2024	117,122	10,793	26,320	25,946	130	23,852	204,163
2025	118,257	11,645	24,323	24,722	106	22,749	201,802

Literature Cited

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- Gigliotti, L. M. 2000. A Classification Scheme to Better Understand Satisfaction of Black Hills Deer Hunters: The Role of Harvest Success. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife: An International Journal* 5: 32-51.
- Roseberry, J. L. and A. Woolf. 1991. A Comparative Evaluation of Techniques for Analyzing White-tailed Deer Harvest Data. *Wildlife Monographs* 117: 3-59.
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Chapter 4. DEER CONTROL PERMITS

JOE CAUDELL AND LINNEA PETERCHEFF, *INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES*

Deer control permits grant special permission to take deer outside of the deer hunting season and are issued when farmers and other landowners experience problems with deer. These permits reduce damage and other conflicts with landowners and help alleviate future property damage from deer in localized areas. Deer control permits are not issued for large scale population control, and the number of deer taken on control permits is lower than the number of deer harvested during the hunting season in each county (Table 4-1). An exception is Marion County, where few deer were harvested by hunters because of limited access, and a comparatively large number of deer were removed using control permits. Typical problems in Indiana resulting from deer include browsing damage to crops, orchards, nurseries, vineyards, tree farms, and plants used for landscaping (Table 4-2). Deer control permits are issued to landowners who demonstrate economic damage in excess of \$500, to address disease concerns from imminent threat (i.e., chronic wasting disease where it is in greater than 5% of the local population and bovine tuberculosis), to protect endangered species (e.g., Porter County), and for the safety of the public.

When permits expire, permit holders are required to report to the Indiana DNR the number of deer taken on the permit, the sex of the deer, the equipment used, and the disposal method for each deer taken. In 2025, prior to this report, DNR received reports from 387 of the 427 deer control permits issued statewide (90.6% compliance). A total of 2,482 deer were reported taken statewide on deer control permits, representing 2.0% of the cumulative deer taken, which is the total number of hunter-harvested deer and deer taken on control permits in the current year (Table 4-3). The breakdown by county of the sex of the deer taken and how they were used or disposed of can be found in Table 4-1. Some errors exist in the total number and the individual numbers of bucks, does, and button bucks reported taken on deer control permits due to permit-holder reporting error or due to the total take being split between counties for permits that cover multiple counties.

TABLE 4-1. Deer control permits issued by county in 2025, including the number of deer authorized to be taken and the number of deer taken per permit. Cumulative deer is the number of hunter-harvested deer plus the number of deer taken on control permits. The sum of permits per county is greater than the total number of permits issued because some permits were issued for multiple counties and are counted for each county. The number of deer taken per permit was divided among multiple counties on a single permit.

County	Permits Issued	Authorized Take	Deer Taken	Avg Deer Taken per Permit	% Deer Taken in County on Permits	Bucks Taken	Button Bucks Taken	Does Taken	Deer Consumed or Donated	% Deer Utilized
Allen	4	58	20	5.0	1.0%	6	2	12	10	50%
Bartholomew	8	89	14	1.8	1.6%	2	0	11	12	86%
Benton	1	15	7	7.0	3.7%	0	0	7	7	100%
Brown	14	286	151	10.8	9.7%	46	9	95	140	93%
Carroll	2	22	15	7.5	1.2%	3	0	12	5	33%
Cass	4	25	6	1.5	0.4%	2	1	3	1	17%
Clark	8	100	29	3.6	2.3%	8	0	23	24	83%
Clinton	2	22	4	2.0	0.7%	4	0	0	4	100%
Crawford	9	94	39	4.3	1.8%	1	3	38	28	72%
Daviess	5	51	21	4.2	1.5%	5	3	13	21	100%
Dearborn	9	87	32	3.6	1.7%	8	1	27	27	84%
Decatur	1	13	3	3.0	0.5%	0	0	3	3	100%
DeKalb	16	243	72	4.5	2.3%	28	5	38	60	83%
Delaware	5	46	7	1.4	0.7%	2	1	4	3	43%
Dubois	8	90	31	3.9	1.5%	1	0	29	25	81%
Elkhart	7	69	20	2.9	0.9%	12	0	8	18	90%
Floyd	12	123	47	3.9	6.1%	3	5	40	41	87%
Fountain	3	58	11	3.7	0.7%	1	0	10	9	82%
Franklin	11	92	50	4.5	2.3%	10	3	35	31	62%
Fulton	5	90	58	11.6	3.4%	10	4	44	34	59%
Gibson	2	40	6	3.0	0.5%	0	1	5	0	0%
Grant	1	5	0	0.0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0%
Greene	2	20	2	1.0	0.1%	0	0	2	2	100%
Hamilton	1	5	0	0.0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0%
Hancock	1	10	2	2.0	0.5%	0	0	2	2	100%
Harrison	18	295	107	5.9	3.3%	1	4	108	48	45%
Henry	2	14	2	1.0	0.3%	0	0	2	0	0%
Howard	1	6	1	1.0	0.2%	0	0	1	1	100%
Huntington	1	5	0	0.0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0%
Jackson	13	262	95	7.3	7.2%	3	12	80	26	27%
Jasper	3	23	3	1.0	0.2%	3	0	0	3	100%
Jefferson	5	47	15	3.0	1.2%	0	4	11	2	13%
Jennings	5	84	18	3.6	2.1%	3	5	10	12	67%
Johnson	3	26	0	0.0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0%
Kosciusko	2	33	4	2.0	0.1%	1	0	3	4	100%
LaGrange	11	159	47	4.3	1.5%	15	6	26	45	96%
Lake	6	89	25	4.2	1.6%	3	1	21	25	100%
LaPorte	6	138	111	18.5	4.8%	42	17	52	90	81%
Lawrence	12	161	127	10.6	5.1%	1	16	110	12	9%

TABLE 4-1. Cont.

County	Permits Issued	Authorized Take	Deer Taken	Avg Deer Taken per Permit	% Deer Taken in County on Permits	Bucks Taken	Button Bucks Taken	Does Taken	Deer Consumed or Donated	% Deer Utilized
Madison	2	24	19	9.5	2.6%	9	3	7	4	21%
Marion	1	120	65	65.0	13.5%	27	5	33	65	100%
Marshall	22	232	63	2.9	2.3%	11	9	36	35	56%
Martin	1	12	2	2.0	0.2%	0	1	2	0	0%
Miami	5	56	12	2.4	0.7%	3	1	8	11	92%
Monroe	5	96	42	8.4	2.5%	3	4	36	9	21%
Montgomery	5	60	27	5.4	2.2%	3	3	20	10	37%
Morgan	1	5	0	0.0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0%
Newton	3	27	12	4.0	1.0%	0	0	11	6	50%
Noble	9	122	59	6.6	2.0%	7	10	40	49	83%
Ohio	1	15	6	6.0	1.2%	0	0	6	6	100%
Orange	8	143	46	5.8	2.2%	2	3	40	7	15%
Owen	4	85	14	3.5	0.6%	4	0	10	13	93%
Parke	5	74	32	6.4	1.2%	3	1	26	23	72%
Perry	5	78	59	11.8	3.2%	2	5	52	42	71%
Pike	3	36	1	0.3	0.1%	0	0	1	1	100%
Porter	6	140	105	17.5	11.7%	34	13	57	92	88%
Posey	8	111	51	6.4	3.8%	12	1	37	41	80%
Pulaski	10	174	118	11.8	4.9%	10	21	87	70	59%
Putnam	4	42	18	4.5	0.7%	3	2	13	15	83%
Ripley	2	43	17	8.5	1.3%	4	0	19	17	100%
Saint Joseph	4	51	22	5.5	1.5%	9	1	12	22	100%
Scott	2	22	0	0.0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0%
Spencer	5	79	69	13.8	5.4%	4	8	57	60	87%
Starke	10	142	79	7.9	3.8%	8	14	53	66	84%
Steuben	14	212	76	5.4	2.1%	14	6	54	50	66%
Sullivan	7	128	53	7.6	2.6%	3	5	42	8	15%
Switzerland	8	65	13	1.6	1.0%	6	0	7	13	100%
Tippecanoe	5	61	18	3.6	1.3%	2	1	15	16	89%
Tipton	1	8	3	3.0	1.4%	0	0	3	2	67%
Vanderburgh	5	54	0	0.0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0%
Vigo	1	5	0	0.0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0%
Wabash	3	37	10	3.3	0.6%	0	0	10	7	70%
Warren	1	25	8	8.0	0.6%	0	0	8	8	100%
Warrick	3	60	12	4.0	0.9%	3	1	6	12	100%
Washington	16	327	133	8.3	4.8%	10	14	108	124	93%
Wayne	3	14	2	0.7	0.2%	0	0	2	1	50%
Wells	1	7	0	0.0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0%
White	3	35	10	3.3	0.8%	0	1	9	5	50%
Whitley	2	25	4	2.0	0.3%	0	0	4	4	100%

TABLE 4-2. Number of damage reports for each crop type or other reason for 2025 deer control permits. Some individuals reported multiple crops or reasons.

Crop or Reason for Permit	Number of Reports
Alfalfa	29
Beans	1
Blueberries	2
Cantaloupe	3
Christmas Trees	2
Corn	368
Cut Flowers	1
Fruit	1
Garden	1
Grapes	9
Grass	1
Hay	31
Human Safety	1
Landscaping	8
Mellow	1
Milo	3
Nursery Stock	1
Oats	1
Orchard	26
Other	2
Popcorn	1
Public Property	2
Pumpkins	8
Seed Corn	1
Soybean	371
Strawberries	1
Sunflowers	1
Sweet Corn	10
Tomatoes	1
Trees	30
Truck Crops	11
Vegetables	1
Vehicle Testing Facility	1
Watermelons	5
Wheat	12
Wildflowers	1
Winter Wheat	3

TABLE 4-3. Running total of the number of permits issued, number of deer taken, and the percentage of the cumulative take (which is the number of deer taken on deer control permits divided by number of deer harvested plus the number of deer taken on deer control permits). Prior to 2016, permits were issued in a different manner; therefore, the number of permits prior to 2016 are not reported.

Year	Permits Issued	Deer Taken	% Cumulative Take
2012	-	2,359	1.7%
2013	-	2,428	1.9%
2014	-	1,797	1.5%
2015	-	1,826	1.4%
2016	311	1,556	1.3%
2017	301	1,862	1.6%
2018	277	1,737	1.6%
2019	279	1,625	1.4%
2020	231	1,156	0.9%
2021	282	1,349	1.2%
2022	265	1,533	1.3%
2023	317	1,616	1.3%
2024	372	2,294	1.8%
2025	433	2,482	2.0%

Chapter 5. DEER-VEHICLE COLLISIONS

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Deer-vehicle collisions are reported by state and local police to the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) anytime an accident report is completed for insurance purposes. These reports include information on the direction the vehicle was moving, location of the accident, type of road (e.g., county road, state road, interstate, etc.), road conditions, estimated cost of damage, and other data used in road safety analyses. INDOT provides data on deer-vehicle collisions to DNR each year for this report and for deer population analysis. This data set is especially valuable to the DNR because it is an independent data set that has been collected in a consistent way over a long period of time. Deer-vehicle collisions are also standardized across years and counties by using INDOT's statistics on Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled. Analyzing collisions per billion miles traveled accounts for changes in traffic volume among counties and allows for unbiased comparison of counties and years.

The total number of deer-vehicle collisions reported across the state increased from 16,337 in 2024 to 17,835 in 2025 (Figure 5-1; Figure 5-2; Table 5-1; note these numbers may differ slightly from prior reports as data is continually cleaned and/or verified). Most deer-vehicle collisions in 2025 occurred on state roads (35.1%) and county roads (31.4%; Table 5-2). U.S. routes had the highest number of deer-vehicle collisions (86 DVC) per 100 miles of road in 2025 (Table 5-2).

Deer-Vehicle Collisions, 2025

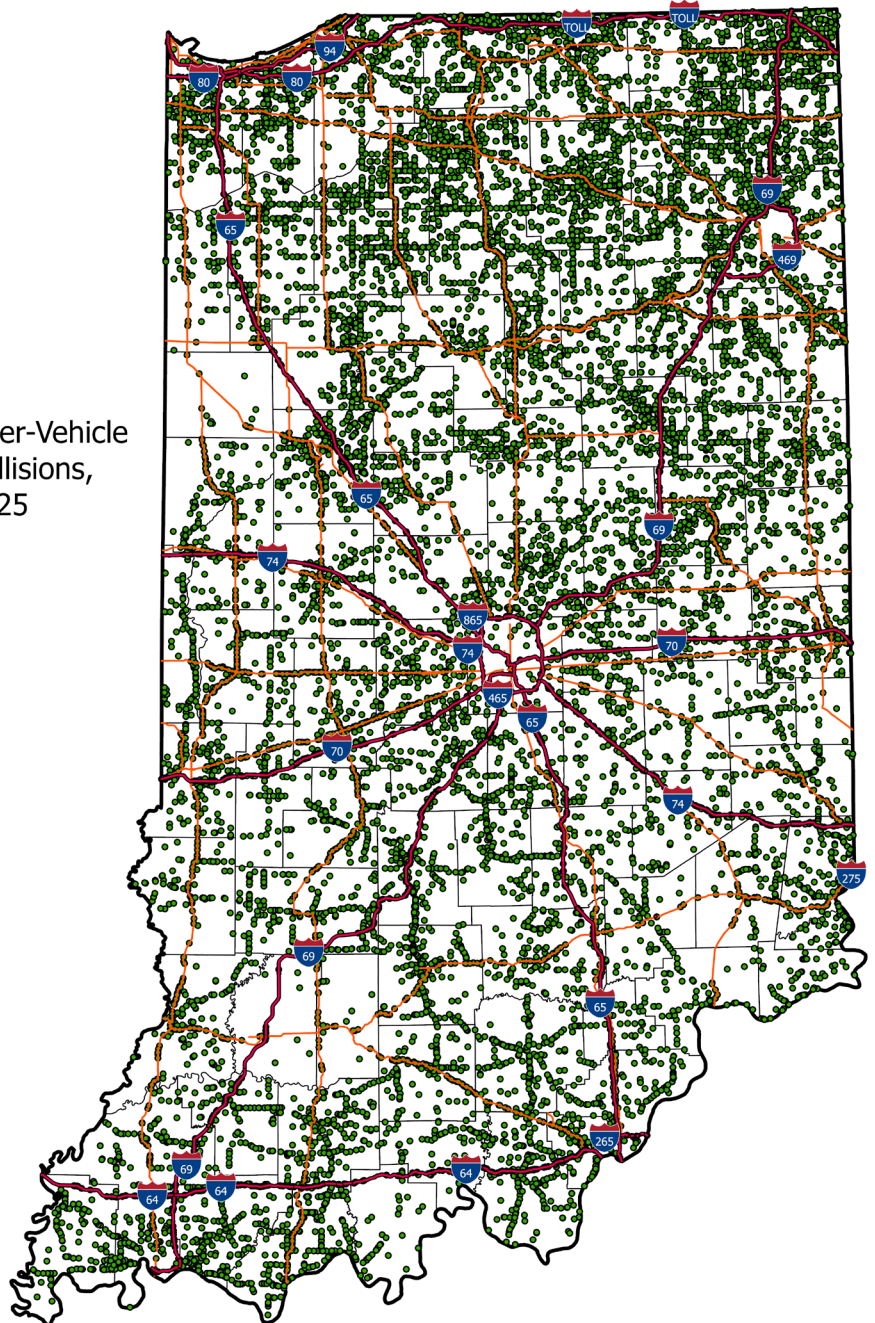


FIGURE 5-1. Locations of deer-vehicle collisions in Indiana in 2025. Almost all (99.9%) of the 17,835 deer-vehicle collisions reported to INDOT included GPS location data to map.

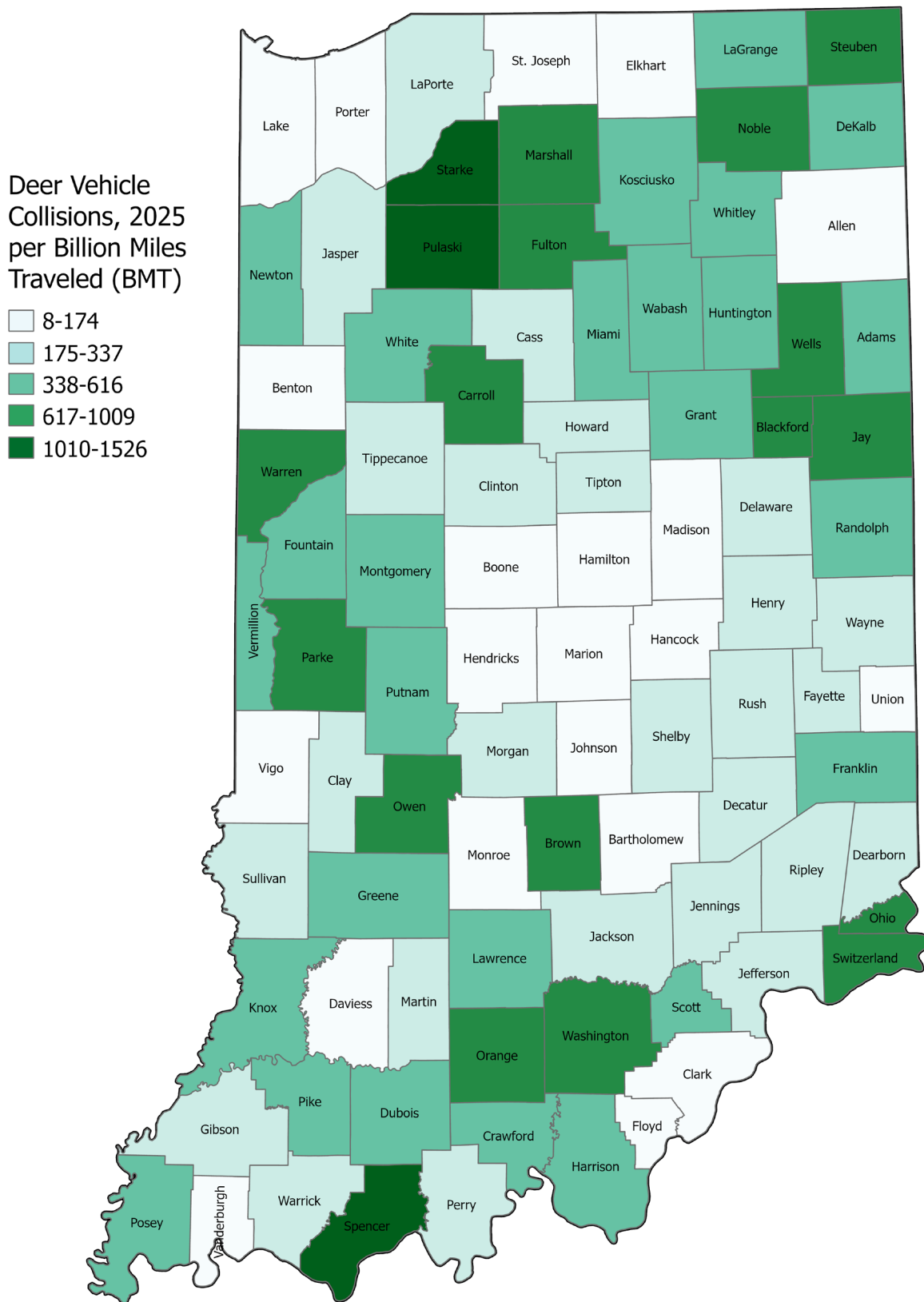


FIGURE 5-2. The number of deer-vehicle collisions per billion miles traveled (DVC/BMT) by county in Indiana in 2025.

TABLE 5-1. Number of deer-vehicle collisions and collisions per billion miles traveled (BMT) by county in Indiana, 2023, 2024, and 2025. DVC/BMT provides a relative rate of deer-vehicle collisions given the number of miles driven in that county per year. Counties with high DVC/BMT have proportionally more deer-vehicle collisions per mile traveled than counties with lower DVC/BMT. Counties with low DVC/BMT may have a high number of deer-vehicle collisions that are offset by a high number of miles traveled (e.g., Lake County).

County	DVC 2023	DVC per BMT 2023	DVC 2024	DVC per BMT 2024	DVC 2025	DVC per BMT 2025
Adams	131	439.8	138	457.9	163	542.4
Allen	572	125.6	462	99.3	522	110.4
Bartholomew	123	111.3	96	85.8	96	85.9
Benton	17	105.8	24	145.6	15	87.6
Blackford	63	484.7	67	523.2	95	718.5
Boone	157	125.3	147	114.6	197	149.7
Brown	132	961.3	104	753.3	109	786.4
Carroll	149	546	166	599.5	209	771.7
Cass	164	383.8	199	463.4	135	306.3
Clark	191	126.5	192	126	159	103.9
Clay	68	161.2	65	151.2	88	206.2
Clinton	122	240.2	120	229.9	133	257.9
Crawford	114	497.8	81	349.3	89	375.4
Daviess	32	87	24	65.2	20	51.7
Dearborn	177	282.9	128	203.2	178	282.9
Decatur	89	192	63	135.3	101	215.4
Dekalb	315	472.9	286	428.3	304	457.2
Delaware	271	212.8	276	216.3	259	199.7
Dubois	199	421	187	390.6	202	419.5
Elkhart	341	164.1	369	173.9	368	173.2
Fayette	36	198.4	25	137.2	53	284.0
Floyd	134	150.2	120	133.2	118	132.5
Fountain	64	236.6	88	322	123	440.6
Franklin	112	489.7	134	590.6	141	613.5
Fulton	207	773.6	225	816.1	256	924.6
Gibson	137	231.8	137	230.4	158	265.4
Grant	266	330.2	244	300.4	311	377.4
Greene	250	669.4	230	612.2	229	588.8
Hamilton	262	73.3	251	68.5	267	71.8
Hancock	129	115.7	127	110.8	136	116.7
Harrison	224	490.3	210	450.7	228	494.1
Hendricks	236	120.6	207	103.4	250	119.8
Henry	128	185.6	141	202.3	148	212.5
Howard	152	198.2	169	222.2	185	239.4
Huntington	290	457	285	442.1	309	463.7
Jackson	188	272.9	202	289.4	189	268.3
Jasper	233	273.5	282	327.2	287	333.8
Jay	179	765.4	178	767.4	205	869.0
Jefferson	88	288.5	90	296.5	63	201.9
Jennings	124	378.8	105	324.9	80	245.1
Johnson	154	90.1	162	92.2	149	81.7
Knox	122	244.2	117	233.5	170	342.9
Kosciusko	546	670.4	442	531.9	469	568.7
Lagrange	251	486.6	265	507.2	257	497.6
Lake	287	45.3	285	44.8	319	50.1
LaPorte	359	216.5	339	201.4	395	228.4
Lawrence	252	577	219	490	232	515.2
Madison	216	152	194	135.8	203	141.9

TABLE 5-1. Cont.

County	DVC 2023	DVC per BMT 2023	DVC 2024	DVC per BMT 2024	DVC 2025	DVC per BMT 2025
Marion	134	11.4	145	12.1	99	8.1
Marshall	419	685.6	469	755.5	508	824.7
Martin	41	315.6	56	433.8	32	242.1
Miami	284	589.1	285	577.3	304	610.3
Monroe	154	140.2	169	149.3	185	161.7
Montgomery	178	357.5	178	351.8	205	397.9
Morgan	193	201.8	203	207.7	202	202.8
Newton	129	498.8	121	457.9	105	397.2
Noble	385	867	370	819.5	416	937.8
Ohio	49	1,112.40	37	848.4	44	994.0
Orange	142	763.7	112	603.2	169	915.3
Owen	116	543.9	104	479.6	158	735.3
Parke	125	634.8	158	815.2	180	912.6
Perry	78	317.3	77	313.5	61	237.1
Pike	31	159	19	97.9	107	525.5
Porter	442	184.6	323	133.5	344	140.8
Posey	145	393.7	101	270.9	139	365.1
Pulaski	237	1,223.20	225	1,159.30	297	1,488.2
Putnam	173	295.6	152	254.7	218	368.0
Randolph	105	397.4	123	470.9	111	419.4
Ripley	120	328.9	130	352	122	330.5
Rush	64	280.5	57	249	75	325.7
Saint Joseph	395	131.7	377	126.5	405	142.1
Scott	55	160.9	61	176.1	53	151.7
Shelby	120	157.6	119	153.1	134	171.5
Spencer	228	637.1	231	648.3	257	712.2
Starke	191	750.7	243	916.4	317	1210.9
Steuben	524	777	522	762.6	578	813.8
Sullivan	89	309	59	202.4	91	319.1
Switzerland	57	571.1	69	694.1	70	695.8
Tippecanoe	446	263.7	389	227.4	379	220.9
Tipton	59	199.7	62	201.6	64	214.3
Union	3	39.8	8	106.8	12	156.6
Vanderburgh	127	61	122	57.4	117	54.2
Vermillion	79	309.7	87	337.9	110	418.3
Vigo	196	159.6	209	169.9	193	155.8
Wabash	246	720.1	200	574.6	181	514.7
Warren	85	532.1	77	479.3	107	653.5
Warrick	274	350.8	236	294.2	242	291.4
Washington	214	771.5	203	741.2	219	782.1
Wayne	199	243.7	212	257.3	202	244.3
Wells	160	558.1	151	524.1	208	713.7
White	204	366.4	209	369.7	221	394.5
Whitley	198	430.3	210	453.5	222	489.3

Nearly 50% of deer-vehicle collisions in 2025 occurred between September and December (Figure 5-3). Additionally, deer-vehicle collisions occurred most often during dawn and dusk, which varied by month as daylight length changed (Figure 5-4).

TABLE 5-2. The number of deer-vehicle collisions in 2025 by road type and the number of deer-vehicle collisions per 100 miles of road. Collisions on unknown road types (n = 1,922), other (n = 6), and private driveways (n = 8) were excluded from the calculations.

Road Type	2025	% of total DVCs	Estimated Road Length (mi)	DVCs per 100mi of Road
County Road	4,991	31.4%	64,923.25	8
Interstate	1,214	7.6%	1,896.85	64
Local/City Road	1,672	10.5%	20,850.05	8
State Road	5,579	35.1%	7,149.49	78
US Route	2,455	15.4%	2,862.13	86

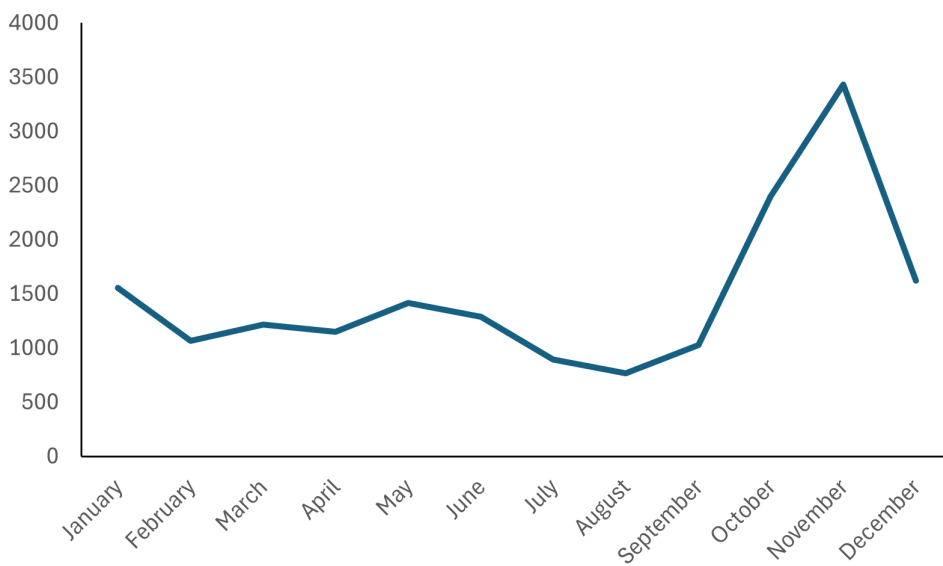


FIGURE 5-3. Number of deer-vehicle collisions by month in Indiana in 2025.

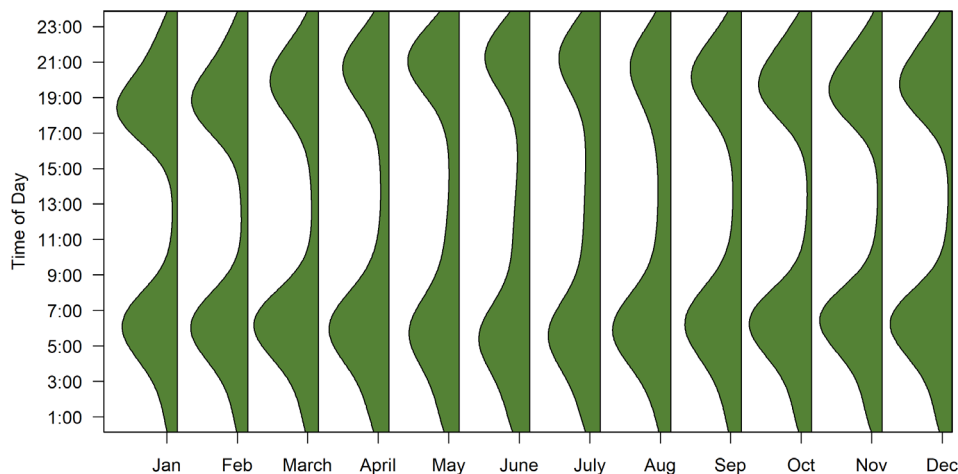


FIGURE 5-4. The proportion of deer-vehicle collisions by time of day in Indiana from 2023-2025.

The estimated economic cost of deer-vehicle collisions from damage to vehicles in 2025 was \$104.5 million, based on the average estimated cost per collision in each category using the midpoint of each category. For the category “Over \$100,000,” a cost of \$100,000 was used for each collision (Table 5-3). From 2020 to 2025, deer-vehicle collisions in Indiana cost drivers a total of more than \$539.9 million (Table 5-3).

TABLE 5-3. Reported economic loss due to deer-vehicle collisions in Indiana from 2020-2025. Collisions with an unknown estimate or an estimate of \$1,000 or less (n = 328) were not included. Total Damage Estimate 2020-2025 is calculated by multiplying the total number of collisions for that damage estimate range by the average value of damage.

Damage Estimate Range	2025 Total DVCs and % of Total		2024 Total DVCs and % of Total		2023 Total DVCs and % of Total		2022 Total DVCs and % of Total		2021 Total DVCs and % of Total		2020 Total DVCs and % of Total		Total Damage Estimate 2020-2025
\$1,001 to \$2,500	2,623	15.0%	2,547	15.9%	3,103	18.8%	3,721	26.1%	4,477	30.3%	4,503	32.6%	\$36,714,987
\$2,501 to \$5,000	7,227	41.3%	6,743	42.0%	6,907	41.8%	5,833	40.8%	5,949	40.3%	5,615	40.7%	\$143,546,637
\$5,001 to \$10,000	5,679	32.4%	4,988	31.1%	4,910	29.7%	3,697	25.9%	3,485	23.6%	3,015	21.9%	\$193,317,887
\$10,001 to \$25,000	1,698	9.7%	1,539	9.6%	1,386	8.4%	913	6.4%	749	5.1%	606	4.4%	\$120,595,946
\$25,001 to \$50,000	241	1.4%	183	1.1%	189	1.1%	101	0.7%	70	0.5%	47	0.3%	\$31,162,916
\$50,001 to \$100,000	43	0.2%	36	0.2%	32	0.2%	16	0.1%	11	0.1%	9	0.1%	\$11,025,074
Over \$100,000	7	0.0%	8	0.0%	13	0.1%	6	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	\$3,500,000
Total Reports > \$1,000	17,518		16,044		16,540		14,287		14,742		13,795		\$539,863,445.50

Chapter 6. DEER HEALTH

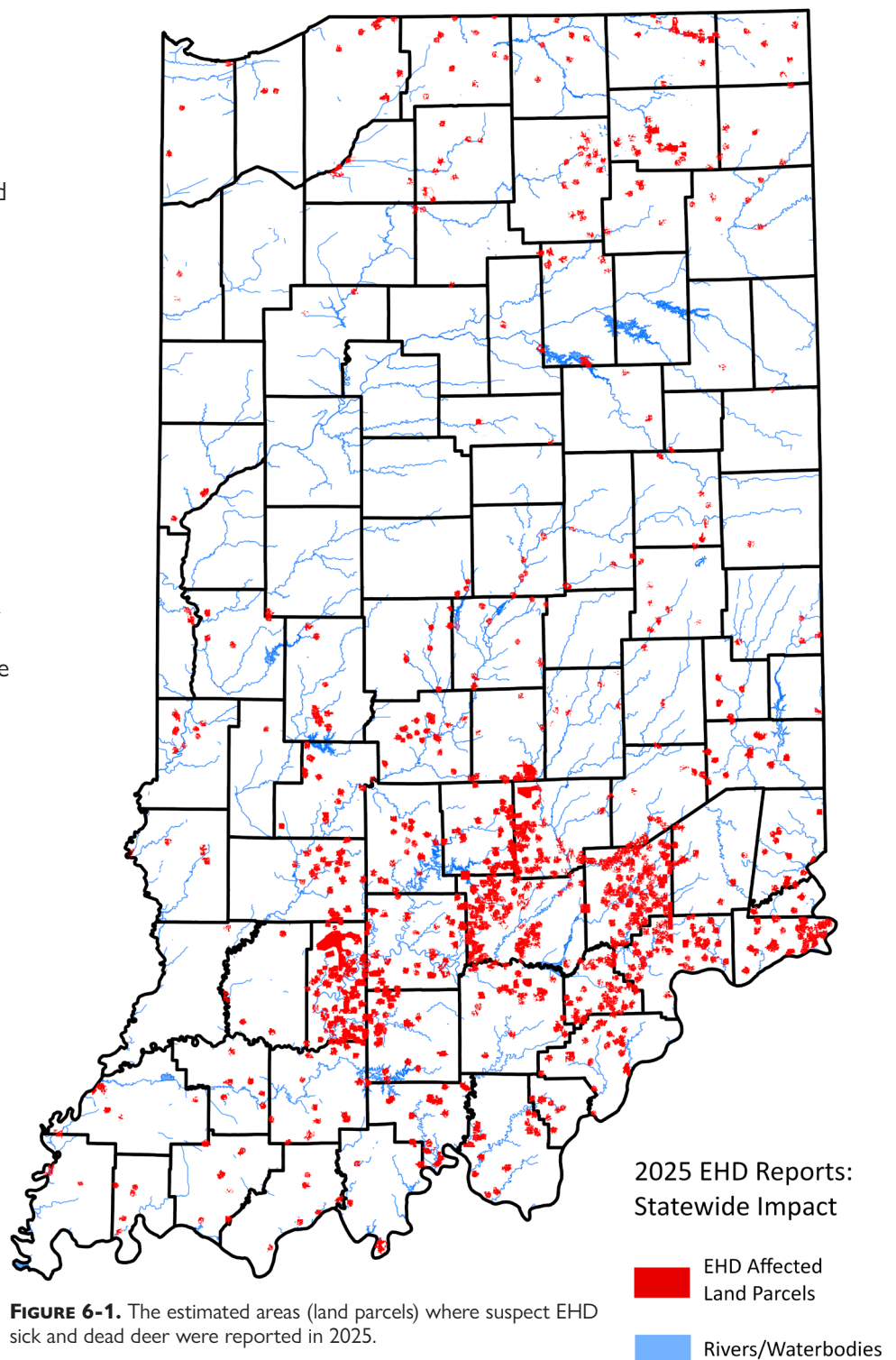
JANETTA KELLY, JOE CAUDELL, EMILY MCCALLEN AND CARSTEN WHITE, INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease

Epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) is a virus spread between white-tailed deer by a biting midge (*Culicoides variipennis*). Often worse in drought years, severe outbreaks of EHD tend to occur in five- to 10-year cycles in Indiana. Deer can be reported as sick, dead, or in a group with a sick or dead animal via the Indiana DNR's online Sick or Dead Wildlife Report form (on.IN.gov/sickwildlife) and by calls directly to DNR offices.

In late August 2025, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources began receiving a significant number of reports about deer dying in Jennings and Martin counties. Initial testing attributed this mortality to EHD. Over time, reports of dead deer expanded to other counties in the southern third of the state (Figure 6-1). As of mid-September it appeared that a significant EHD event was affecting Jennings, Jackson, Martin, Bartholomew, Switzerland, Jefferson, Scott, and Brown counties. The number of reports from Martin and Jennings indicated that it might be as impactful as the 2022 outbreak in Franklin and Fayette counties and the 2024 outbreak in Porter County. Therefore, DNR lowered the antlerless bag limits in those counties to two antlerless deer.

To assess the effects of EHD on deer population sizes, we did the following: (1) reviewed the harvest and opinion data from the other similarly affected counties; and (2) conducted aerial surveys for deer within areas experiencing the highest mortality.



Methods

In January 2026, we reviewed the number of reported dead deer from the Sick and Dead Wildlife reporting system and recorded the number of reports per square mile for each county. As a correction factor, we multiplied the number of reports by 10 to provide an estimate of the amount of mortality for each county (because not every dead deer is reported). This correction factor is based on a report by Hoff et al. (1973) that stated during an EHD event in North Dakota they believed that the number of deer discovered represented less than 10% of the deer that had died. We also analyzed the reported mortality by balancing it by the estimated number of people who lived in that area by ZIP code to account for the disproportional number of people who live in urban areas. In a densely populated area, we expect that more individuals will see a greater proportion of the deer and, as a result, a greater proportion of deer will be reported to the Sick and Dead Wildlife reporting system making it appear that a disease outbreak in an urban area will be much greater than an outbreak in a rural area.

Raw reports (i.e., those received through the sick and dead wildlife reporting tool) are examined for clinical signs of disease related to EHD, location that may indicate a deer died from EHD (i.e., next to water), and indicators of mortality not related to EHD (i.e., severe injuries). The reports that appear to be EHD are also further evaluated for duplicates or false reporting and are plotted on a map to look for indicators of other mortality. The remaining cases are considered verified EHD reports. A subsample is also tested for EHD to verify the presence of the disease in the county.

The area impacted was determined by creating a 1 sq mi circular buffer around each case of suspected EHD and overlaying these on a statewide parcel boundary map. This buffer estimates the average home range between a buck and doe white-tailed deer (buck = 1.4 sq mi [Nielsen and Stroud-Settles 2018]; doe = 0.8 sq mi [Magle 2015]) and may provide insight on where the deer had traveled upon encountering the midge and estimate locations of other non-reported deer. The entirety of each parcel that the buffer intersected was factored into the calculations. We then calculated the amount of deer habitat present within the impacted parcels and compared that to what is available within the entire county.

In February 2026, we mailed the annual Deer Management Survey to hunters and non-hunters for whom we had an email address. We asked each group about their opinions of the deer population size, their hunting effort, and their hunting experience for the 2025-2026 hunting season. Results from the Deer Management Survey are posted on the DNR website for each county at <https://www.in.gov/dnr/fish-and-wildlife/wildlife-resources/animals/white-tailed-deer/deer-management-survey-results/>.

In March 2026, researchers from Purdue University flew a series of transects, and DNR captured deer on infrared cameras to estimate the deer density in areas of the state most heavily impacted by the EHD outbreak. Because of the high volume of footage recorded, this data has not yet been processed. This report will be updated when that footage is available.

Results, Discussion, and Harvest Recommendations

In 2025, DNR received 1,132 reports from 81 counties of potential EHD cases involving 2,564 sick or dead deer observed. Testing for EHD requires fresh samples of the spleen, liver, kidney, or blood. DNR tested 25 deer from 23

counties. The EHD virus identified included two serotypes – EHDV-6 and EHDV-2. Maps of deer reported, tested, and confirmed to have EHD are available at on.IN.gov/EHD and updated daily as reports are received. Reports of EHD were spread throughout the state, but the largest concentration was in its southern portion (Figures 6-1 and 6-2).

We expect counties to have a number of EHD reports each year. Reports can be spread across the county or can be limited to small areas where an intense but localized outbreak has occurred. While we had reports in 81 counties, only 20 counties had greater than 20 reports. In general, we expect to see some dead deer in most counties each year, and this indicates the background level of EHD or a severe, but very localized outbreak. Counties with a significant number of deer reported, reports spread over a wide area, or that had total mortality greater than 40% (where population data is available) are addressed below.

Summary

Jennings, Martin, Jackson, and Switzerland counties received the highest number of EHD reports in 2025 and experienced events that affected a substantial portion of their deer habitat (Table 6-1). Jennings and Martin counties in particular showed large numbers of sick and dead deer reported to the DNR (334 and 280 reported deer, respectively), and both counties had widespread outbreaks affecting 34% and 55% of their deer habitat. Harvests in Jennings and Martin declined sharply (-46% and -43%, respectively), placing them well below their typical 10-year harvest levels and indicating strong EHD-related impacts.

Scott, Jackson, Jefferson, Bartholomew, and Switzerland counties experienced moderate EHD events, with each showing reductions in harvest ranging from -19% to -30%, coupled with notable habitat impacts (20–25%). Switzerland and Jackson also exhibited relatively high dead-deer densities (5.4 and 5.8 deer per square mile of habitat, respectively), suggesting local concentrations of mortality despite being categorized as moderate events.

Orange County experienced a smaller-scale event compared with other affected counties, with only 9% of its deer habitat impacted and a harvest that increased 2% from the prior year. This suggests that EHD-related mortality was not substantial enough to influence the countywide population trajectory.

Porter County received only two reports and showed minimal EHD activity (1% of habitat impacted); however, due to the 2024 EHD outbreak in this county, harvest declined 12%. Although the scale of reported mortality was extremely small, an antlerless bag limit of two (2) should be maintained and the Deer Reduction Zone suspended for one more year.

Based on the scale of EHD mortality, habitat affected, and changes in harvest, reductions in antlerless bag limits for the 2026 season are recommended as follows:

- Jennings and Martin: reduce antlerless bag limit to one (1)
- Scott, Jackson, Jefferson, Bartholomew, and Switzerland: reduce antlerless bag limit to two (2), consistent with moderate effects
- Porter: maintain a bag limit of two (2) and no Deer Reduction Zone because of the lingering EHD effects from 2024

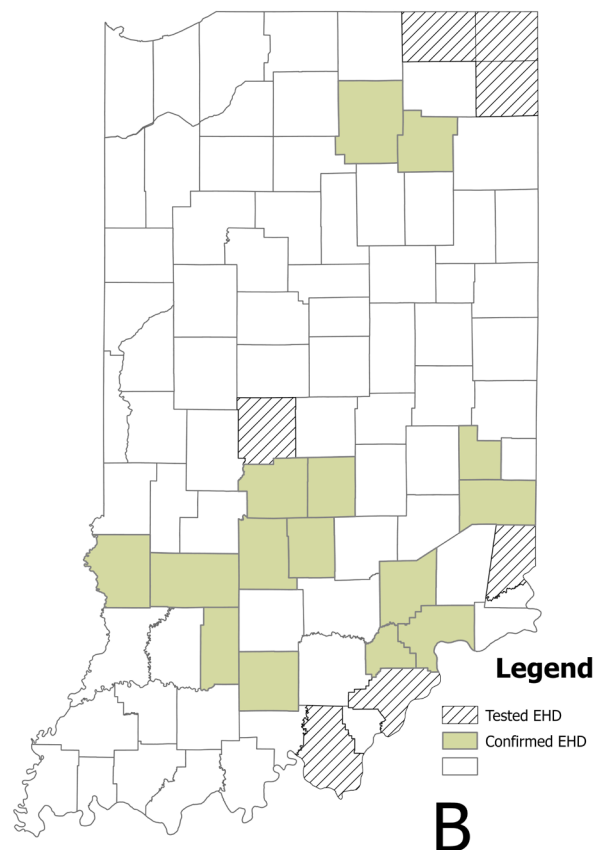
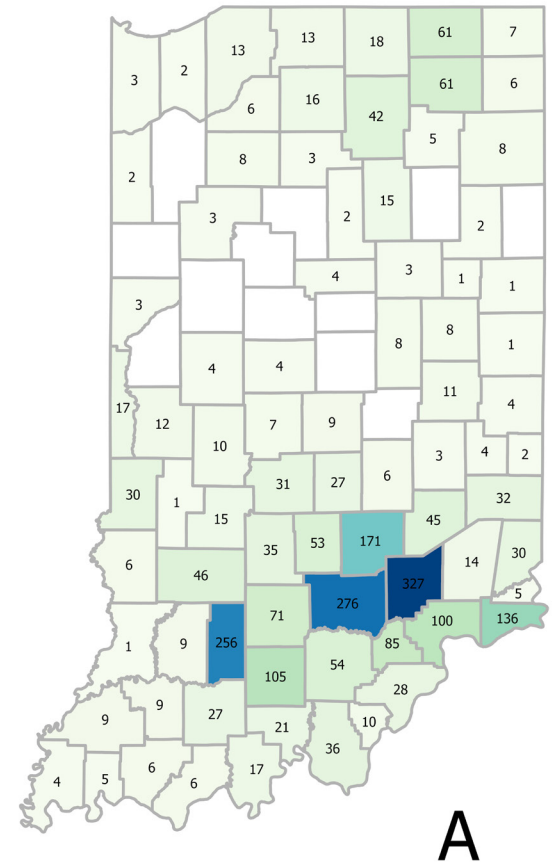


FIGURE 6-2. A. Counties where suspected EHD sick and dead deer were reported with total number of sick/dead deer reported. B. Counties where EHD samples were collected and confirmed as EHD.

- Orange: maintain a bag limit of four (4) because significant population effects were not observed

These recommendations reflect the severity and distribution of observed EHD mortality and the potential for cumulative impacts from harvest and other mortality sources. Counties with severe or widespread events (Jennings and Martin) warrant conservative management approaches for at least one year, while moderate-impact counties can be stabilized with modest adjustments to harvest pressure.

Individual County Assessments (arranged greatest impact to least)

Jennings County

We verified 143 separate reports of EHD ($n = 334$ sick and dead deer) from Jennings County, which equates to 5.1 reports per 1,000 residents in the county. With the correction factor of 10, the estimated number of dead deer from EHD was 3,340, or 8.9 deer per sq mi of deer habitat. The affected area was widespread, covering approximately 128.7 sq mi (34%) of the 373.5 sq mi of deer habitat in the county (Figure 6-1). The harvest (831 deer; 2.2 deer per sq mi habitat) was substantially lower than the previous year (1,545; 4.1 deer per sq mi habitat), down 46%, and below the 10-year average harvest ($1,760 \pm 11$). Given the severity and breadth of the event, we recommend lowering the antlerless bag limit to one (1) for 2026 to support herd recovery.

Martin County

We verified 121 reports ($n = 280$ sick and dead deer), equating to 12.1 reports per 1,000 residents, among the highest reporting rates observed. Applying the $\times 10$ correction, the estimated EHD mortality was 2,800, or 8.3 deer per sq mi of deer habitat. Approximately 185.2 sq mi (55%) of the county's 339.2 sq mi of deer habitat was impacted (Figure 6-1). The 2025–26 harvest (991; 2.9 per sq mi) declined from the previous season (1,735; 5.1 per sq mi), a 43% drop, and is below the 10-year average ($1,624 \pm 4$). Due to the severe outbreak and pronounced harvest decline, an antlerless bag limit of one (1) is recommended for 2026.

Scott County

We verified 40 reports ($n = 83$ sick and dead), equating to 1.6 reports per 1,000 residents.

Using the correction factor, the estimated mortality was 830 deer, or 4.3 dead deer per sq mi of deer habitat. The affected area encompassed 48.6 sq mi (25%) of the county's 191.3 sq mi of deer habitat (Figure 6-1). The 2025–26 harvest (539; 2.8 per sq mi) declined from 765; 4.0 per sq mi, a 30% reduction, and sits below the 10-year average (830 ± 9). With moderate EHD effects and a notable harvest decline, an antlerless bag limit of two (2) is appropriate for 2026.

Jackson County

We verified 113 reports ($n = 275$ sick and dead deer), equating to 2.4 reports per 1,000 residents. The estimated EHD mortality was 2,750 deer, or 5.8 dead deer per sq mi of deer habitat. Impacts were broad, affecting 114.5 sq mi (24%) of the 473.0 sq mi of deer habitat (Figure 6-1). The 2025–26 harvest (1,232; 2.6 per sq mi) was lower than the previous year (1,719; 3.6 per sq mi), a 28% decline, and below the 10-year average ($1,681 \pm 10$). Given moderate EHD impacts and reduced harvest, maintaining an antlerless bag limit of two (2) is recommended for 2026.

Jefferson County

We verified 49 reports ($n = 100$ sick and dead), equating to 1.5 reports per 1,000 residents. Using the correction factor of 10, the estimated mortality was 1,000 deer, or 2.8 dead deer per sq mi of deer habitat. The outbreak affected 71.7 sq mi (20%) of the 361.7 sq mi of deer habitat (Figure 6-1). The 2025–26 harvest (1,219; 3.4 per sq mi) decreased from 1,573; 4.3 per sq mi, a 23% decline, and is below the 10-year average ($1,792 \pm 15$). A moderate EHD event with measurable harvest impacts supports an antlerless bag limit of two (2) for 2026.

Bartholomew County

We verified 80 reports ($n = 166$ sick and dead), equating to 0.9 reports per 1,000 residents. Estimated mortality was 1,660 deer, or 4.7 dead deer per sq mi of deer habitat. Impacts covered 69.5 sq mi (20%) of the county's 354.5 sq mi of deer habitat (Figure 6-1). The 2025–26 harvest (850; 2.4 per sq mi) declined from 1,055; 3.0 per sq mi, a 19% decrease, and is slightly below the 10-year average ($1,037 \pm 6$). Consistent with a moderate event and modest harvest softening, an antlerless bag limit of two (2) is appropriate for 2026.

Switzerland County

We verified 63 reports ($n = 121$ sick and dead), equating to 6.3 reports per 1,000 residents. Applying the correction factor, estimated EHD mortality totaled 1,210 deer, or 5.4 dead deer per sq mi of deer habitat. The affected area encompassed 48.9 sq mi (22%) of the 222.6 sq mi of deer habitat (Figure 6-1). The 2025–26 harvest (1,237; 5.6 per sq mi) fell from 1,528; 6.9 per sq mi, a 19% decline, and remains below the 10-year average ($1,872 \pm 18$). Given moderate EHD mortality and reduced harvest, an antlerless bag limit of two (2) is recommended for 2026.

Porter County

We verified two reports of EHD ($n = 2$ sick and dead), equating to 0.0 reports per 1,000 residents, reflecting minimal outbreak activity. Estimated mortality was 20 deer, or 0.1 dead deer per sq mi of deer habitat. Only 2.6 sq mi (1%) of the 330.1 sq mi of deer habitat was affected (Figure 6-1). The 2025–26 harvest (794; 2.4 per sq mi) declined from 906; 2.7 per sq mi, a 12% decrease, and is below the 10-year average ($1,425 \pm 12$); the county is not within a Deer Reduction Zone. While there was no significant additional mortality from EHD in 2025, this is a case of lingering effects from the 2024 EHD outbreak in Porter County. Given the continued decline in harvest, maintaining the antlerless bag limit at two (2) and suspending the Deer Reduction Zone for one more year is appropriate for 2026.

Orange County

We verified 39 reports ($n = 100$ sick and dead), equating to 2.0 reports per 1,000 residents.

Using the correction factor, estimated mortality was 1,000 deer, or 2.5 dead deer per sq mi of deer habitat. The affected area covered 36.4 sq mi (9%) of the 400.9 sq mi of deer habitat in the county (Figure 6-1). The 2025–26 harvest (2,012; 5.0 per sq mi) increased slightly from 1,967; 4.9 per sq mi, a 2% rise, and is close to the 10-year average ($1,994 \pm 7.6$). While mortality in Orange County was high, it was limited to a very small area. Given stable harvest and limited habitat impact, no change to the antlerless bag limit of four (4) is recommended for 2026.

Other Counties

As expected, cases of EHD occurred throughout many counties in Indiana. But the majority of these were often low reported numbers, were limited to very small areas within the county, or had no significant impact on harvest (Table 6-1). Currently, population data is being processed. If population data shows significant population-level effects due to EHD, then additional recommendations will be made. Based on the available data, no further adjustments to the county antlerless bag limits are recommended.

Future Monitoring

We expect cases of EHD to be an annual occurrence. DNR uses the Sick and Dead Deer Report Form (on.IN.gov/sickwildlife) as the primary surveillance method. Reports are reviewed quickly to obtain samples, and we review the reports at the end of August to determine if any last-minute adjustments to the county antlerless bag limits need to be made.

We will continue to monitor population recovery through a combination of flights to estimate deer density. We will also use camera surveys to estimate changes in recruitment rate (i.e., the number of 6-month-old fawns that enter the hunting population in the fall). Changes in recruitment rates are important because declining recruitment rates indicate when deer population are approaching carrying capacity.

Hunters and Landowner Monitoring Assistance

Indiana DNR collects information on fawn recruitment (which is the number of fawns that survive for six months and enter the population with the other adults) using a combination of camera data on public land and archers who participate in the Archer's Index. But the data quality is limited by the relatively small number of participants in each program. Therefore, bow hunters are encouraged to sign up for the Archer's Index at on.IN.gov/archersindex.

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TABLE 6-1. Summary of EHD reports, report per 1,000 residents, estimated area affected by EHD, and changes in harvest.

County	2025 EHD reports	Number of reported sick and dead deer	Reported sick and dead deer per 1,000 county residents	Estimated dead deer per sq mi of deer habitat	EHD impacted deer habitat (sq mi)	% of county deer habitat impacted	Deer harvest % change from previous year	10-year average deer harvest	95% CI 10-year deer harvest
Adams	1	1	0.03	0.0	0.0	0%	39%	667	9.7
Allen	6	8	0.02	0.2	6.0	1%	20%	1,744	9.0
Bartholomew	80	166	1.95	4.7	69.5	20%	-19%	1,037	5.8
Benton	0	0	0.00	0.0	0.0	0%	5%	126	6.3
Blackford	1	1	0.08	0.1	1.0	1%	3%	433	8.7
Boone	3	4	0.05	0.2	3.9	2%	2%	453	4.6
Brown	34	40	2.53	1.3	50.8	16%	-6%	1,519	7.0
Carroll	0	0	0.00	0.0	0.0	0%	9%	916	10.0
Cass	0	0	0.00	0.0	0.3	0%	5%	1,228	10.2
Clark	20	28	0.22	0.8	31.9	9%	-10%	1,485	16.0
Clay	1	1	0.04	0.0	1.0	0%	2%	1,203	3.1
Clinton	0	0	0.00	0.0	0.0	0%	1%	412	9.2
Crawford	17	20	1.95	0.6	25.4	8%	6%	1,914	11.1
Daviess	6	9	0.26	0.3	7.1	2%	-3%	1,096	11.1
Dearborn	13	26	0.50	0.8	18.1	6%	9%	2,196	12.3
Decatur	21	42	1.60	1.4	18.2	6%	-10%	757	4.6
DeKalb	6	6	0.13	0.2	6.6	2%	21%	2,119	11.1
Delaware	6	8	0.07	0.3	7.1	2%	7%	798	6.8
Dubois	18	28	0.64	0.7	24.5	6%	-2%	1,874	5.8
Elkhart	6	18	0.09	0.4	7.4	2%	11%	1,573	14.6
Fayette	4	4	0.17	0.2	6.9	4%	26%	844	15.8
Floyd	9	10	0.12	0.7	10.9	7%	14%	684	5.9
Fountain	0	0	0.00	0.0	0.0	0%	4%	1,259	8.1
Franklin	15	88	3.81	2.4	18.1	5%	26%	2,228	26.0
Fulton	3	3	0.15	0.1	3.2	1%	15%	1,413	6.9
Gibson	7	8	0.24	0.2	9.2	3%	-1%	1,239	2.2
Grant	3	3	0.05	0.1	2.6	1%	14%	880	8.6
Greene	27	46	1.46	0.9	37.0	7%	-1%	2,156	6.8
Hamilton	4	5	0.01	0.2	6.4	2%	9%	507	4.6
Hancock	0	0	0.00	0.0	0.3	0%	11%	304	4.2
Harrison	21	34	0.84	0.7	26.8	6%	21%	2,656	12.1
Hendricks	9	9	0.05	0.3	7.9	3%	4%	653	5.1
Henry	8	11	0.22	0.4	7.4	2%	-2%	625	6.4
Howard	2	4	0.05	0.3	2.6	2%	21%	417	6.9
Huntington	0	0	0.00	0.0	0.0	0%	14%	964	9.9
Jackson	113	275	5.86	5.8	114.5	24%	-28%	1,681	9.6
Jasper	0	0	0.00	0.0	0.0	0%	6%	1,312	6.4
Jay	0	0	0.00	0.0	0.6	0%	15%	1,046	9.3
Jefferson	49	100	3.00	2.8	71.7	20%	-23%	1,792	14.9
Jennings	143	334	11.97	8.9	128.7	34%	-46%	1,760	10.5
Johnson	17	27	0.16	1.0	19.2	7%	6%	590	4.4
Knox	1	1	0.03	0.0	1.5	0%	-1%	916	4.5
Kosciusko	27	41	0.51	0.9	19.5	4%	9%	2,338	10.3
LaGrange	22	60	1.46	1.6	17.3	5%	7%	2,353	17.3
Lake	3	3	0.01	0.1	4.7	1%	9%	1,337	6.7
LaPorte	10	14	0.13	0.3	13.5	3%	7%	1,839	7.9

TABLE 6-1. Cont.

County	2025 EHD reports	Number of reported sick and dead deer	Reported sick and dead deer per 1,000 county residents	Estimated dead deer per sq mi of deer habitat	EHD impacted deer habitat (sq mi)	% of county deer habitat impacted	Deer harvest % change from previous year	10-year average deer harvest	95% CI 10-year deer harvest
Lawrence	37	67	1.50	1.5	56.6	13%	3%	2,289	6.3
Madison	5	8	0.06	0.3	4.5	2%	-2%	569	6.6
Marion	9	9	0.01	0.5	9.0	5%	-7%	448	2.2
Marshall	9	16	0.35	0.4	10.1	3%	10%	1,996	11.2
Martin	121	280	27.90	8.3	185.2	55%	-43%	1,624	4.4
Miami	2	2	0.06	0.1	2.7	1%	10%	1,314	13.2
Monroe	21	33	0.24	0.8	26.2	6%	18%	1,500	7.1
Montgomery	1	4	0.10	0.1	2.2	1%	5%	1,003	7.9
Morgan	23	29	0.39	0.8	25.9	7%	16%	1,340	5.3
Newton	2	2	0.14	0.1	1.3	1%	2%	877	8.9
Noble	33	64	1.34	1.7	26.1	7%	8%	2,657	10.3
Ohio	3	4	0.69	0.5	7.3	8%	11%	625	10.3
Orange	39	100	5.07	2.5	36.4	9%	2%	1,994	7.6
Owen	13	15	0.69	0.4	17.9	5%	19%	1,738	6.6
Parke	3	12	0.72	0.3	5.8	1%	5%	2,250	6.7
Perry	8	16	0.83	0.4	9.0	2%	-3%	1,738	7.9
Pike	8	9	0.75	0.3	7.7	2%	0%	1,564	5.7
Porter	2	2	0.01	0.1	2.6	1%	-12%	1,425	11.5
Posey	4	4	0.16	0.1	3.9	1%	-8%	1,195	7.1
Pulaski	4	7	0.57	0.3	0.8	0%	4%	1,868	7.5
Putnam	9	9	0.24	0.2	14.1	3%	15%	1,976	9.6
Randolph	1	1	0.04	0.0	1.1	0%	4%	693	7.8
Ripley	11	14	0.47	0.3	15.3	3%	-4%	1,723	13.2
Rush	2	3	0.17	0.1	2.8	1%	-4%	401	3.0
Saint Joseph	10	13	0.05	0.4	10.9	3%	-4%	1,272	8.4
Scott	40	83	3.32	4.3	48.6	25%	-30%	830	9.3
Shelby	5	6	0.13	0.2	4.0	1%	2%	484	4.0
Spencer	6	6	0.30	0.2	8.8	2%	-2%	1,219	4.6
Starke	5	5	0.22	0.2	5.1	2%	11%	1,501	8.3
Steuben	5	5	0.14	0.2	7.1	2%	10%	2,813	15.8
Sullivan	5	5	0.24	0.1	6.1	2%	3%	1,828	4.2
Switzerland	63	121	12.05	5.4	48.9	22%	-19%	1,872	18.4
Tippecanoe	0	0	0.00	0.0	0.0	0%	0%	1,017	11.0
Tipton	0	0	0.00	0.0	0.0	0%	0%	141	7.3
Union	1	2	0.29	0.2	1.1	1%	16%	621	4.4
Vanderburgh	5	5	0.03	0.3	5.9	3%	-4%	760	4.5
Vermillion	3	17	1.10	0.8	3.9	2%	0%	1,078	3.4
Vigo	11	30	0.28	0.8	9.7	3%	5%	1,514	3.9
Wabash	12	15	0.49	0.5	12.1	4%	24%	1,375	10.7
Warren	3	3	0.35	0.2	3.8	2%	-5%	1,077	9.8
Warrick	6	6	0.09	0.2	8.2	2%	4%	1,338	3.5
Washington	30	53	1.87	1.0	38.7	8%	7%	2,318	12.5
Wayne	4	4	0.06	0.1	5.2	1%	17%	1,120	5.6
Wells	2	2	0.07	0.1	0.6	0%	13%	630	14.1
White	2	3	0.12	0.1	1.5	1%	12%	953	7.3
Whitley	5	5	0.14	0.2	4.9	2%	9%	1,050	9.3

Chronic Wasting Disease

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a neurodegenerative disease that affects members of the cervid family, including white-tailed deer (*O. virginianus*), mule deer (*O. hemionus*), elk (*Cervis elaphus*), moose (*Alces alces*), and reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*). CWD is in a class of prion-caused diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), like mad cow disease in cattle or scrapie in sheep. Prions are misfolded proteins that cause lesions in the brains of infected animals. CWD is shed in the saliva, feces, and urine of infected deer and transmitted either by direct deer-to-deer contact or through contact with contaminated soil or other material.

Despite considerable ongoing research related to CWD, there is no effective cure or vaccine. CWD is fatal to infected cervids. CWD attacks the animal's brain and causes behavioral changes, excessive saliva production, and loss of appetite. It leads to progressive degradation of body condition and, eventually, death. CWD has a long incubation period that averages from 18 to 24 months between infection and clinical signs. Infected animals often appear healthy in the early stages of the disease. In advanced stages, however, they become abnormally thin or weak, and may lose fear of humans, stand with legs wide apart, and hold their head and ears low. Most infected individuals rarely live more than 2.5 years from the time they are infected until death (B. Richards, USGS National Wildlife Health Center, personal communication).

CWD was first detected as a clinical syndrome in 1967 in captive mule deer at a Colorado research facility. In 1978, CWD was determined to be a spongiform encephalopathy and was found in captive deer and elk in Wyoming. Three years later, the disease was observed in free-ranging elk in Colorado. By 2002, it had been detected in nine states (Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming) and two Canadian provinces. As of July 2025, CWD had been found in wild and/or captive cervid herds in 36 states, five Canadian provinces, Finland, Norway, South Korea, and Sweden (Richards 2025).

CWD has been detected in white-tailed deer in all states bordering Indiana. It has been found in wild and captive deer in Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and Kentucky (Richards 2025). Ohio confirmed its first case of CWD in a wild white-tailed deer in December 2020. The positive animal was found more than 60 miles from Indiana's eastern border (Ohio DNR 2020). In Michigan, the closest positive white-tailed deer was found approximately 30 miles from the Indiana border (Michigan DNR 2020). Illinois reported 539 new detections of CWD in wild deer during fiscal year 2025 (Jacques and McDonald 2025). The closest CWD cases in Illinois are approximately 20 miles from Indiana's western border. Kentucky confirmed its first case of CWD in a wild white-tailed deer in December 2023. The positive animal was found in Ballard County in western Kentucky, approximately 100 miles from the southern Indiana border.

Indiana's first positive case of CWD

In April 2024, Indiana DNR received confirmation of the first CWD positive sample found within the state's border. The sample was taken from a hunter-harvested deer through Indiana DNR's CWD Partner Incentive Program. The deer was an adult male harvested in LaGrange County in northern Indiana. The detection occurred in an "expected area" in the state, meaning an area of the state where Indiana's first detection was likely to occur based on its proximity to Michigan's positive detections. As a result, a permanent ban on movement of live, wild deer, particularly fawns for rehabilitation purposes, was enacted in

the CWD positive area. Additionally, all deer harvested in the CWD positive area that were intended for donation through the state funded Hunt for Hunger program were required to be tested.

Indiana's CWD Surveillance

Each year, Indiana DNR collects tissues from hunter-harvested deer throughout the state for CWD testing. Samples are collected as part of the statewide CWD surveillance program to monitor the presence of the disease in Indiana. In 2025-2026, hunter-harvested deer samples were collected using the Partner Incentive Program, DNR Staffed Check Stations, University Partnerships, and CWD drop-off coolers across the state. Sick deer reported by the public are also tested through the statewide CWD surveillance program. The public was able to report sick deer online through the Sick/Dead Wildlife Report form.

The primary method of collecting CWD samples is through the Partner Incentive Program. DNR partners with taxidermists and meat processors across the state to collect tissue samples and associated data from deer brought to their business. The partners then mail the samples back to DNR where they are processed and prepared for the laboratory. At the end of the season, partners are paid \$10 per sample collected.

DNR provides CWD drop-off coolers at 23 properties across the state. One new CWD drop-off cooler was added at a state park inside the enhanced surveillance zone this year. These coolers are checked by property staff, and samples are collected and sent to the DNR's wildlife health program in Bloomington where they are prepared for submission to the laboratory.

DNR operated four check stations during the 2025-2026 season in the enhanced surveillance zone during opening weekend of firearms season. The four check stations were located at local stores and were voluntary. The efforts yielded only 16 samples.

DNR also partners with a local university, Ball State, to collect CWD samples. Students in Ball State's The Wildlife Society (TWS) student chapter take full responsibility for organizing check stations, training, staffing, etc. in counties near their university. DNR trains participants at the beginning of the season and stocks supplies. At the end of the season, Ball State TWS is compensated for its collections. This is not only beneficial to DNR, which is able to depend on Ball State to cover a particular area of the state, but also to the students who are learning surveillance coordination and fundraising for their program. This year, Ball State collected 101 usable samples for CWD surveillance and 96 samples for SARS surveillance (Table 6-3). Both sets of samples helped DNR reach its goals.

Hunters were also able to submit the heads or lymph nodes from their harvested deer directly to the Animal Disease Diagnostic Lab (ADDL) at Purdue University to be tested, for a fee. Fifteen hunters chose to use this method.

Samples collected by staff during these surveillance efforts were submitted to Purdue University's Animal Disease and Diagnostic Lab for ELISA (if frozen) and immunohistochemical (IHC) staining (if formalin fixed) procedures. Results were posted online for hunters to access using the confirmation number for that hunter-harvested deer. Any additional positive deer would have resulted in a phone call to the hunter before the results were posted online.

Sampling Results

A total of 2,781 samples were collected between Feb. 1, 2025, and Feb. 1, 2026. Of these, 2,597 samples were hunter harvested, five were found dead, 13

were road killed, 15 were sick, nine were opportunistic, and 142 were targeted deer (Table 6-2). Targeted deer include deer culled by USDA for urban deer management and deer culled by Indiana Dunes National Park.

Of the 2,781 samples collected, 2,331 were collected from taxidermists (83.7% of samples), 101 from Ball State students, 145 from USDA/Indiana Dunes NP, 177 from properties/DNR staff, 11 from DNR staffed check stations, 15 were directly submitted to ADDL, and one of unknown source (Table 6-3).

DNR used a weighted surveillance point system instead of a per sample surveillance goal. These point distributions were developed by Jennelle et al. (2018) using Bayesian weighted surveillance approach. The point goals are broken down by sex/age class of the deer harvested and its likelihood of detecting the disease. To reach a 5% prevalence target (i.e., to be 95% certain that the true CWD prevalence falls below a 5% prevalence), 58 points need to be collected. DNR applies this point goal to each county. CWD samples were collected from 90 counties across the state, meeting the point goal so far in 42 of those counties. Additionally, the CWD detectability rates were calculated for all 92 counties based on sampling intensity (Figure 6-3). The detectability provides DNR with a calculated prevalence of CWD in free-ranging deer for which there is a 95% probability the true prevalence falls below. For example, if CWD is present in the deer population in Kosciusko County, there is a 95% chance that it occurs in less than 0.9% of the population (Jennelle et al. 2018) based on DNR's sampling efforts.

2025-2026 CWD Positives

Three new CWD positive deer were detected during the 2025-2026 season. Only one of these deer was from the designated CWD "positive area" that consists of LaGrange, Noble, Stueben, and Dekalb counties. The first positive was identified from a partner sample taken in Butler Township in Franklin County. It was an adult, male hunter-harvested deer that was not known to the area. The second positive deer was from the designated CWD Positive Area and was dropped off at a cooler at the Northeast Regional Office. It was an adult, female hunter-harvested deer from York Township in Noble County. The third positive deer was identified from a partner sample taken in Posey Township in Rush County. It was an adult, male hunter-harvested deer that was not known to the area. The Franklin County and Rush County positives sparked the creation of a new enhanced surveillance zone in the east-central portion of the state (Figure 6-4). Because of the sex and age of the positive deer and the unlikelihood that they resided where they were harvested, DNR will focus sampling efforts in this enhanced surveillance zone next year to determine the core area of the disease and the extent of its spread.

TABLE 6-2. 2025-2026 CWD Surveillance sample breakdown by collection method.

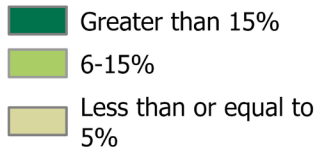
CWD sampling method	Total Samples
Found Dead	5
Hunter harvested	2,597
Opportunistic Sample	9
Road Killed	13
Sick Animal	15
Targeted Sample	142
Total Samples	2,781

TABLE 6-3. 2025-2026 CWD Surveillance sample breakdown by collector.

Collector	Total Samples
Ball State University	101
DNR staffed check stations	11
DNR properties	177
Partner program	2,331
Direct to ADDL from hunters	15
USDA	145
Unknown	1
Total Samples	2,781

CWD Detectability 2025-2026

Legend



*The detection rate provides a calculated prevalence of CWD in free-ranging deer for which there is a 95% probability the true prevalence falls below

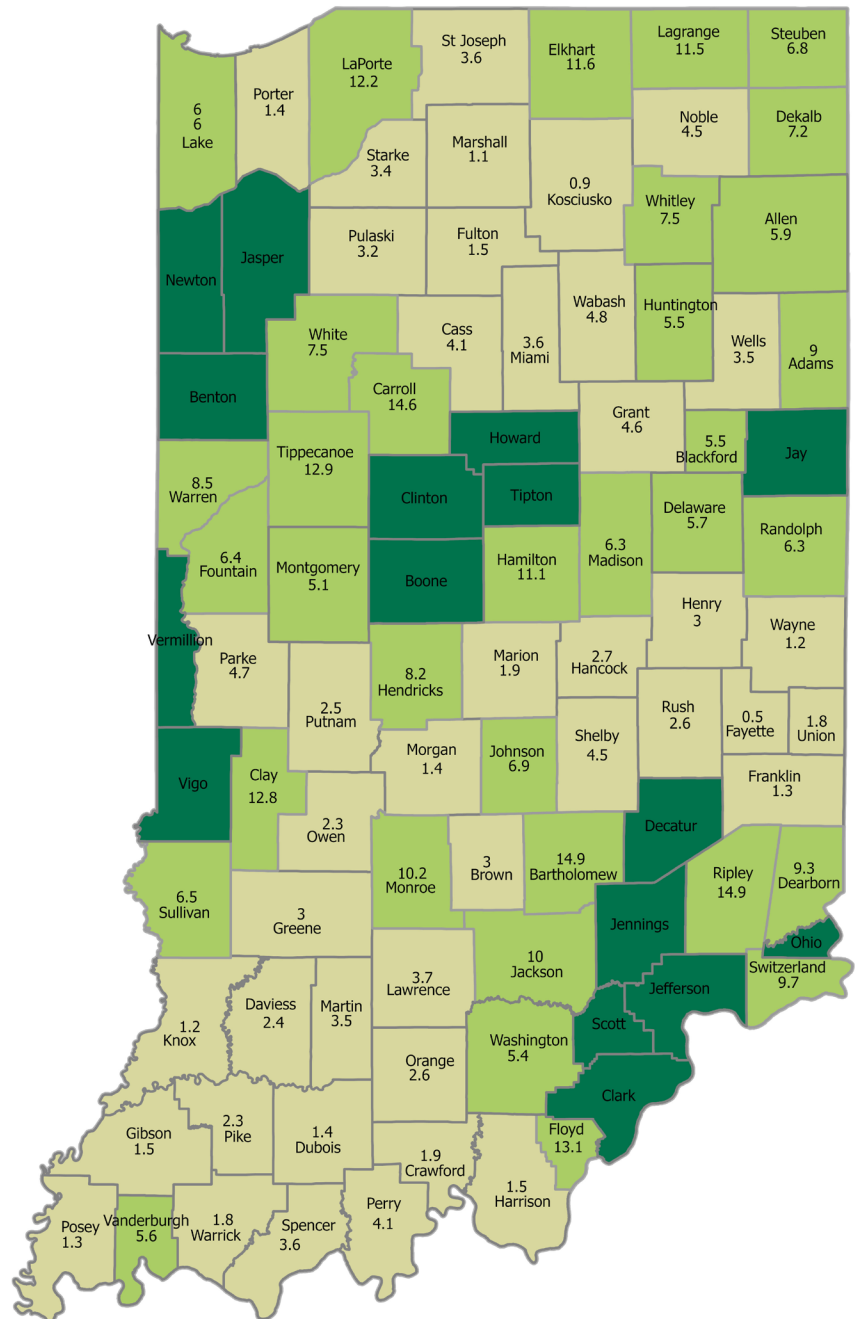


FIGURE 6-3. Statewide CWD detectability rates for the 2025-2026 deer hunting season. Detectability rate is based on sampling intensity. It is the level at which there is a 95% probability that true prevalence rate of the disease falls below that level.

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Indiana CWD Positive Area and Enhanced Surveillance Zone*

*As of Jan. 2026

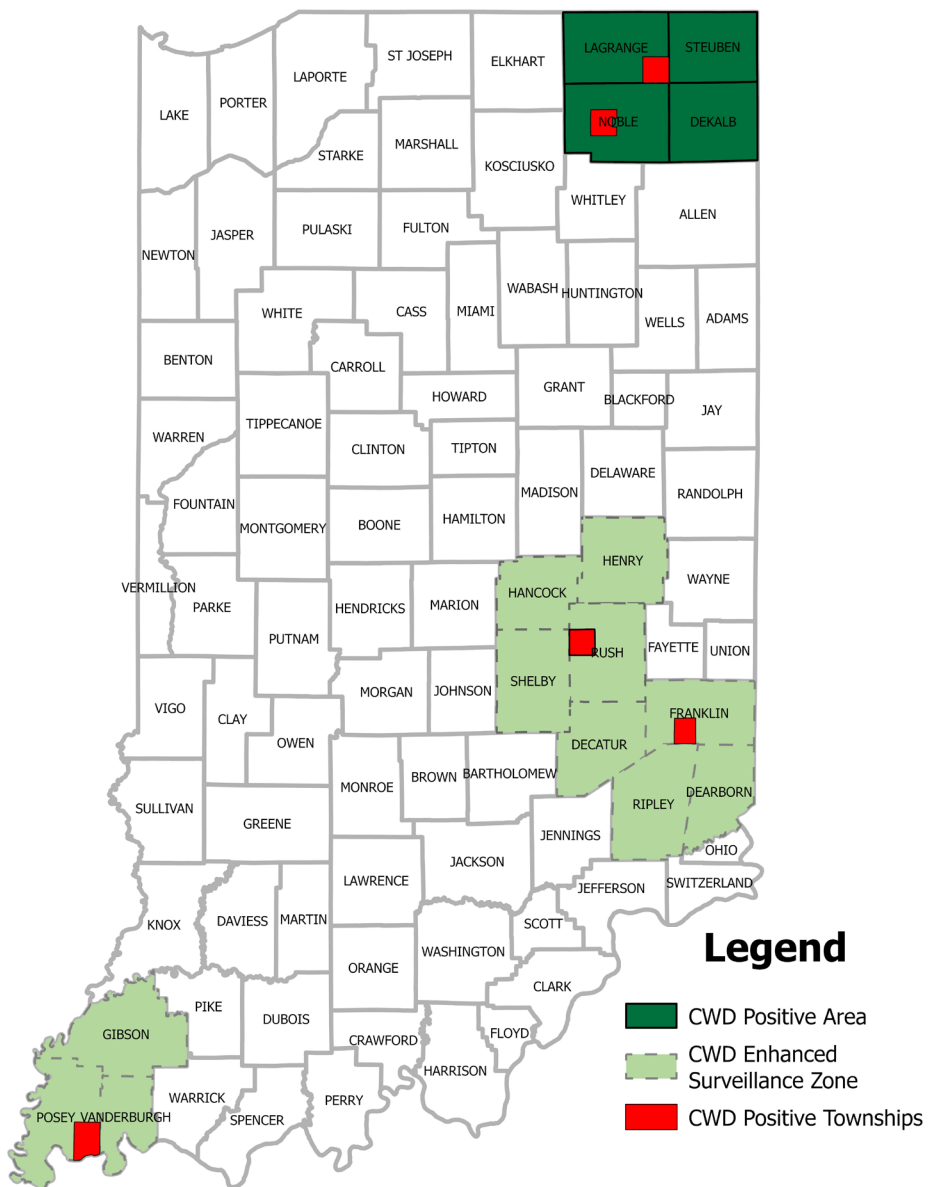


FIGURE 6-4. Locations of positive CWD detections in Indiana, enhanced surveillance zone, and CWD positive areas.

SARS-CoV-2 (Deer)

Indiana DNR's wildlife health program has actively been participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 infection and exposure in white-tailed deer for the past three years. In February 2024, DNR was notified that a deer had tested positive for active infection of SARS-CoV-2. During the 2022-2023 surveillance year, SARS-CoV-2 antibodies were detected in 65 of 315 deer samples, which were 20.6% of samples tested. These positive blood samples indicated exposure to the virus, but not an active infection. Since we know the deer herd was previously exposed to the virus, it is not surprising that an active infection was detected in 2024.

DNR's sampling goal for the 2025-2026 deer season was 250 to 300 SARS samples, collected opportunistically at military hunts with hunter permission. The samples included a nasal swab and nobuto strip blood sample. DNR and Ball State students collected a total of 264 nasal swabs and 253 blood samples from 266 deer in November and December 2025. Samples were submitted to USDA for testing. As of February 17, 2026, no test results have been received.

Bovine Tuberculosis Surveillance

Bovine tuberculosis (bTB) is a chronic disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium bovis*. DNR and other state and federal partners test wild white-tailed deer for bTB because it was found in Franklin County cattle in 2008, 2009, and 2016, and in Dearborn County in 2011. The disease was also detected in captive deer from a farm in Franklin County in 2009. Between 2009 and early 2021, a total of 4,144 wild hunter-harvested white-tailed deer were sampled in the bTB surveillance zones, and none of those deer tested positive for the disease.

In addition to testing hunter-harvested deer, small mammals and other deer have been sampled for bTB on the affected 2016 cattle farm or from lands within a 1.5-mile radius of that farm since 2017. In 2020, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (USDA APHIS WS) collected 117 raccoons, 13 opossums, three groundhogs, and one skunk from that area as targeted clean-up. As of early 2021, the total number of non-hunter-harvested deer and small mammals sampled in that area is 111 deer, 180 raccoons, 33 opossums, three groundhogs and one skunk. One wild raccoon tested positive for bTB in 2017. Another wild raccoon tested positive for bTB in 2020.

Since the 2017-2018 deer hunting season, DNR has not conducted intensive bTB surveillance in Fayette and Franklin counties; however, DNR still responds to bTB suspect cases reported by the public (i.e., presence of nodules or lesions in the lung cavity). No bTB was detected from these investigations during the 2025-2026 deer hunting season.

Automated Animal Disease Report Form

The automated animal disease report form has remained active since its launch in mid-2020. The report form is used to track trends over time from reports of animals presenting with signs of disease or reports of animals that died under unusual circumstances. Deer are often the single most common animal reported. While reports of various animals come in year-round, the majority of reports about deer present between late July, when EHD becomes most prominent, and in December and January, when antlered deer commonly die from brain abscesses.

While the report form is a tool to assist biologists in locating sick or dead wildlife, it is the responsibility of the biologists to use the information provided to investigate what has caused the animal's condition. The biologists use evidence to hypothesize what happened to the deer, and the deer are then classified into seven different categories: suspected EHD, suspected respiratory infection, other disease, injury, nontarget, tumor, or unknown death. Anyone can report sick or dead deer directly to DNR through the online Sick or Dead Wildlife Report form (on.IN.gov/sickwildlife). This form is useful for tracking reports of sick deer with clinical signs consistent with diseases of interest, such as EHD and CWD. The person who reports a deer showing clinical signs of EHD, CWD, or other diseases of potential concern receives a phone call from a wildlife biologist or technician to verify the clinical signs and lack of obvious injury, assess if the animal's location is still known, and determine whether to collect a sample or submit the animal for testing, if necessary.

Chapter 7. 2026 DEER MANAGEMENT SURVEY OF THE 2025-2026 DEER HUNTING SEASONS

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Understanding public opinion on topics and policies that affect deer hunting and management is an important part of the decision-making process for Indiana DNR. These data are used to set harvest regulations and to examine the potential effect of proposed regulatory changes. Since 2018, Indiana DNR has administered the Deer Management Survey to provide a convenient method for any interested hunter or non-hunter to share their opinions.

The Deer Management Survey consists of a core set of questions that remain the same every year to collect longitudinal data, with additional sets of unique questions that change each year to address emerging issues in state deer management. In the 2026 Deer Management Survey, the Indiana DNR asked several questions designed to assess opinions and behaviors related management of epizootic hemorrhagic disease. The inclusion of specific questions should not be interpreted as a change or a desire for a particular regulation by Indiana DNR or the public.

The information gathered from these questions is often useful in answering questions from the public about Indiana DNR regulations, hunter behavior, and the need for programs designed to assist hunters (e.g., hunter access program). Here we report the results of the 2026 Deer Management Survey on these topics across the entire state. Questions regarding the desires of hunters and non-hunters about the direction of the size of the deer herd, number of deer desired and taken, and other questions related to the deer population status at the scale of counties or deer management units are reported on the online Deer Management Survey Dashboard and can be queried by county or deer management unit at <https://www.in.gov/dnr/fish-and-wildlife/wildlife-resources/animals/white-tailed-deer/deer-management-survey-results/>.

Methods

The 2026 Deer Management Survey was sent to individuals who had previously participated in a Deer Management Survey, anyone who purchased a deer license or checked in a deer during the 2025-2026 deer season, and anyone who requested to receive the survey at https://idnr.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8zYk5LBekr76lts. Lifetime license holders and landowner hunters do not have to purchase a yearly license, and they can only be surveyed if they harvest a deer or sign up on Indiana DNR's electronic system specifically to receive the survey. Because of this, lifetime license holders and hunters who only use their landowner exemption and do not harvest a deer are likely underrepresented in the survey. Survey invitations were distributed via email in February and March 2026. The survey was developed in the program Qualtrics, all survey results were downloaded in March 2026, and descriptive statistics were generated using Program R.

Results and Discussion

General Demographics of Respondents

The 2026 Deer Management Survey was sent to 205,059 individuals with a valid email address. Out of the surveys successfully sent, 26,949 surveys were started for a response rate of 13.14% (Table 7-1). Because much of the survey is dependent upon potential respondents being assigned to a county for reporting, survey respondents had to include a county they hunted in or lived in to be included in the final data.

TABLE 7-1. The number of Deer Management Survey invitations sent to Indiana hunters and non-hunters, the number of surveys started, and the resulting survey response rates, 2018-2026.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Survey Invitations Sent	269,389	370,986	469,044	346,048	1,012,126	801,760	820,307	380,152	205,059
Surveys Started	23,283	33,987	30,078	26,012	28,109	39,888	40,310	22,454	26,949
Response rate	8.64	9.16	6.41	7.52	2.78	4.98	4.91	5.91	13.14

TABLE 7-2. Categories of individuals responding to the Deer Management Survey between 2018 and 2026.

Type	Description	Question Type	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Active Nonresident Hunters	Nonresident Indiana deer hunters who hunted during the most recent deer season	County where they hunt	676	1,318	1,066	1,210	921	875	1,303	850	1,094
Active Resident Hunters	Resident Indiana deer hunters who hunted during the most recent deer season	County where they hunt and county where they live (when they differ)	14,839	22,604	16,894	18,340	15,157	24,747	24,495	14,910	18,048
Inactive Resident Hunters	Resident Indiana deer hunters who did not hunt during the most recent deer season	County where they live	2,752	3,859	3,528	2,252	3,047	6,937	5,146	1,948	2,304
Resident Nonhunters	Indiana residents who are not deer hunters	County where they live	2,343	2,574	3,718	1,983	4,458	5,125	7,128	2,574	2,797
Invalid Responses	Participants who were not qualified to take the survey (nonresident nonhunters) and participants who did not answer enough questions to be categorized.	None	2,673	3,632	4,872	2,227	4,526	2,204	2,238	2,172	993
Total Reported	Total sample included for data analysis	All	20,610	30,355	25,206	23,785	23,583	37,684	38,072	20,282	24,243

When residents of Indiana were asked ***Do you consider yourself a deer hunter even if you did not hunt during the 2025-2026 deer hunting season***, 20,352 residents indicated they were deer hunters while 2,797 residents indicated they were not deer hunters but wanted to provide input on deer management where they live (i.e., were resident non-hunters; Table 7-2). Of the Indiana hunters, 18,048 hunted during the 2025-2026 deer season (i.e., were active resident hunters). An additional 2,304 did not hunt in the past season but still wanted to provide input on deer around where they live in Indiana (i.e., were inactive resident hunters). Of the nonresidents who responded to the survey, 1,094 reported they hunted during the 2025-2026 deer hunting season (i.e., were active nonresident hunters; Table 7-2).

Indiana hunters were asked about where they lived and hunted. Of the 17,209 hunters who responded, the most common responses were: “I hunt only in the county that I live in” (33.5%) and “I hunt mostly in the county that I live in, but I also occasionally hunt in other counties” (28.4%). These were followed by “I never hunt in the county that I live in, I only hunt deer in a different county” (22.0%). The remaining 16.1% “occasionally hunt in the county that I live in, but mostly hunt in other counties.”

We asked hunters to select **How many total years they had been a deer hunter and how many total years they have hunted deer in Indiana**. A total of 18,541 hunters reported the number of total years they had been a deer hunter. Most (70.3%) reported they had been a hunter for more than 20 years total, followed by 14.6% who reported 11-20 years deer hunting experience, 7.2% who reported 6-10 years hunting, 6.3% who reported 2-5 years hunting, and just 1.7% who reported that this was their first year hunting deer. A total of 18,516 hunters reported the number of years they had hunted in Indiana. Most (61.3%) reported they had hunted deer in Indiana for more than 20 years, followed by 16.3% who reported 11-20 years of deer hunting in Indiana, 9.4% who reported 6-10 years hunting deer in Indiana, 10.0% who reported 2-5 years hunting in Indiana, and 3.0% who reported that this was their first year hunting deer in Indiana.

Respondents were asked to report on all types of equipment they used during the 2025-2026 deer season. A total of 19,046 hunters reported which type of equipment they used to hunt deer. The most common responses were high-powered rifles (63.3% of hunters), crossbows (43.6%), compound bows (34.9%), modern in-line muzzleloaders (27.5%), and shotguns (16.9%). Few respondents indicated that they used pistol-caliber rifles or other low-powered rifles (10.2%). Hunters used traditional muzzleloaders (7.6%), handguns (3.7%), traditional bows (2.7%), modern recurve bows (1.1%), and breech-loading muzzleloaders (0.9%) less often. Air rifles (0.04%) and arrow guns (0.05%) were used by less than one percent of hunters. Most deer hunters (34.0%) reported hunting with two types of equipment, while 33.2% hunted with one, and 23.2% hunted with three types of equipment. Only 9.5% of Indiana deer hunters used four or more types of equipment.

Hunters were asked to select which license(s) they used in the 2025-2026 deer hunting season. A total of 18,921 hunters reported which license they used to hunt deer. The most reported answer was the license bundle (46.3% of hunters) followed by the lifetime license (23.5%), landowner exemption (15.5%), and firearm (11.8%). Few hunters used archery (10.1%), multi-season antlerless (2.5%), deer reduction zone (3.0%), muzzleloader (1.6%), youth (0.9%), apprentice (0.5%), or military exemption (0.5%) licenses.

Hunters were asked to report how many deer they wanted to harvest in the 2025-2026 deer hunting season by selecting from harvest combinations that included both bucks and does. A total of 18,729 hunters responded to this question. Most respondents (80.0%) wanted to harvest a buck. The most common combination was one buck and one doe (27.9%), followed by just a single buck (22.4%) and one buck and two does (22.2%). Very few individuals wanted to harvest one buck and three does (4.6%) or one buck and more than three does (2.8%). Only 1.3% reported wanting to harvest only a single doe. In total, under a quarter of hunters wanted to hunt a number of deer regardless of its sex (one deer 6.1%, two deer 6.3%, three deer 3.9%, four deer 1.1%, and more than four deer 1.2%).

Perceptions about Deer Populations and Management

Both hunters and non-hunters responded to a series of questions about deer population sizes and how harvest should change. **Hunters were asked How would you like to see the County Antlerless Bag Limit change next year in [County] for the 2026-2027 deer hunting season?** To avoid using terminology they may be unfamiliar with, non-hunters were asked **How would you like to see the number of does that can be harvested by hunters**

change in the next year in [County]? (Figure 7-1). Hunters and non-hunters were asked **Please describe the size of the deer population in [County] during the 2025-2026 deer hunting season (Figure 7-2), How does the number of deer you saw in [County] during the 2025-2026 deer hunting season compare to the number you saw five years ago? (Figure 7-3), and How would you like to see the number of deer change in the next five years in [County]? (Figure 7-4).**

In the 2026 survey, asked about how quotas should change, most hunters and non-hunters thought bag limits should be maintained (59.9% and 46.8%, respectively). Over the past nine years, the proportion of hunters who want to see bag limits decrease has fallen over time while the proportion of nonhunters who want to see bag limits increase has grown over time (Figure 7-1). Most hunters (50.1%) perceived the size of the deer population as low or too low while only 20.6% of nonhunters felt the same. Conversely, 35.7% of nonhunters perceived the size of the deer population as high or too high while only 8.7% of hunters felt the same. In both hunters and nonhunters, opinions about the size of the deer population have shifted toward perceptions of larger populations over time (Figure 7-2).

Asked about how the deer population had changed over the last five years, most hunters thought it was substantially, moderately, or slightly decreasing (20.3%, 14.7%, and 19.3%, respectively) or being maintained (20.1%). Most non-hunters thought it was substantially, moderately, or slightly increasing (13.8%, 15.2%, and 18.3%, respectively) or being maintained (22.4%). Both hunter and non-hunter perceptions about changes in the deer population have moved toward a stable or increasing population since 2018 (Figure 7-3).

Asked about how deer populations should change over the next five years, most hunters thought populations should increase to some degree (71.0%). Another 21.1% thought populations should be maintained. Responses from non-hunters were fairly evenly distributed, with most indicating that the population should be decreased (39.4%), 33.6% indicating the population should be maintained, and 27.0% indicating that population should be increased. Fewer hunters have indicated that populations should be increased moderately or considerably over time (Figure 7-4). For nonhunters, more have indicated the population should be decreased moderately or considerably over time (Figure 7-4).

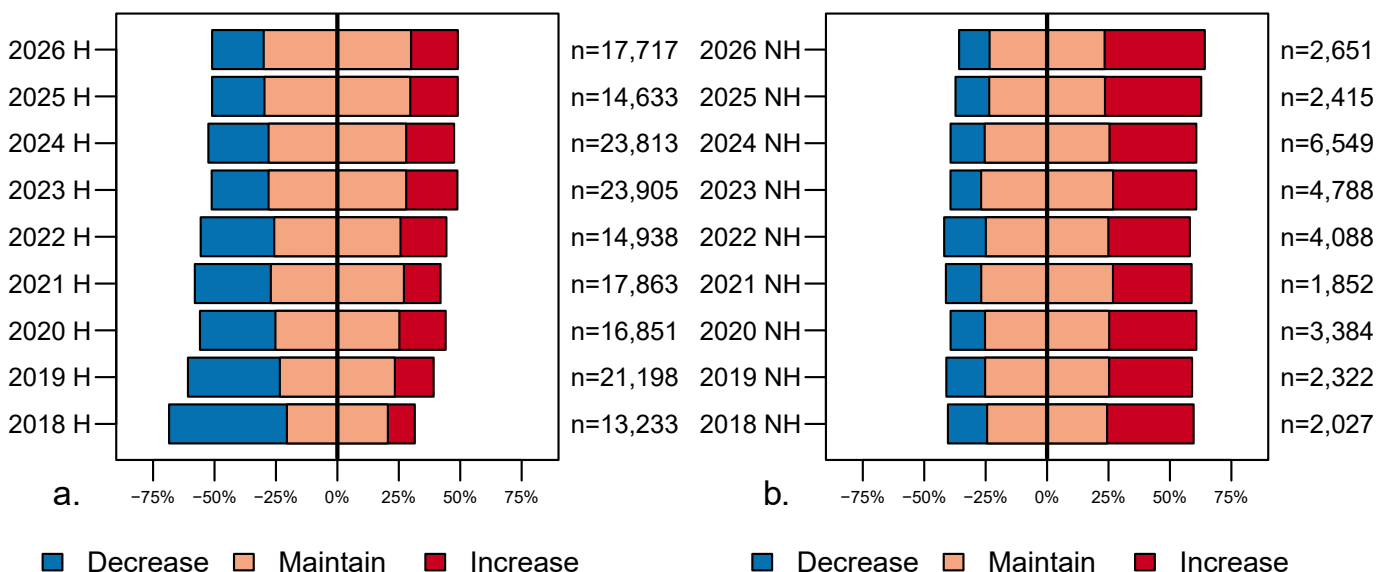


FIGURE 7-1. Hunter (a.) and nonhunter (b.) opinion on how the County Antlerless Bag Limit should change the following year in Indiana.

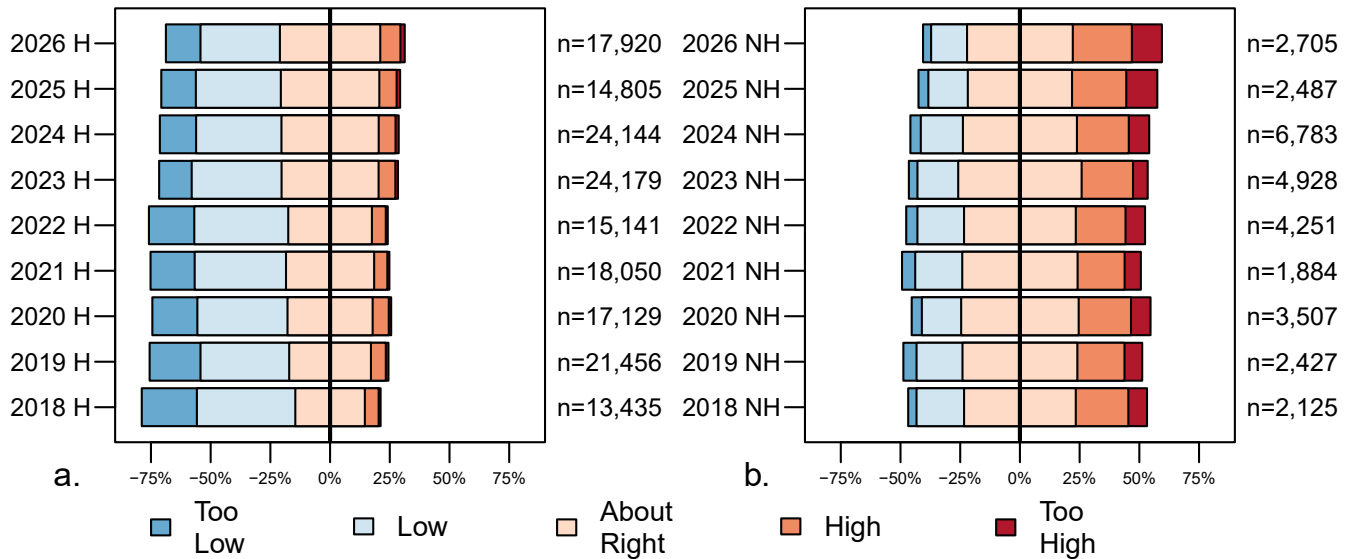


FIGURE 7-2. Hunters (a.) and nonhunters (b.) describe the current size of the deer population in the county where they hunt and/or live in Indiana.

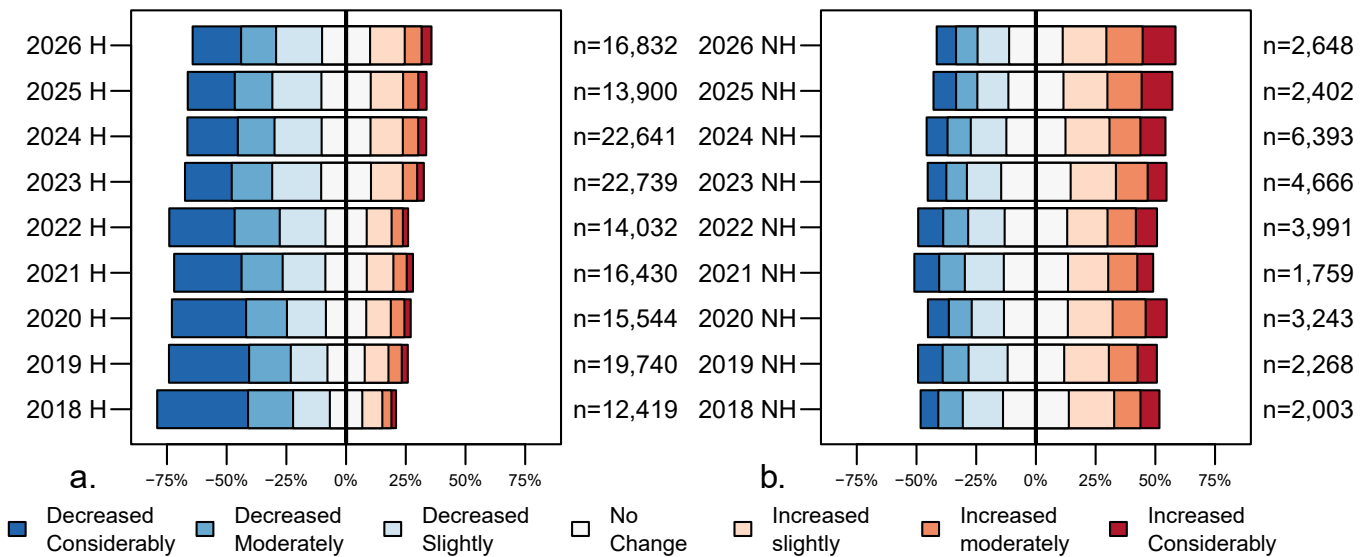


FIGURE 7-3. Hunters (a.) and nonhunters (b.) describe the number of deer seen now compared to five years ago in the county where they hunt and/or live in Indiana.

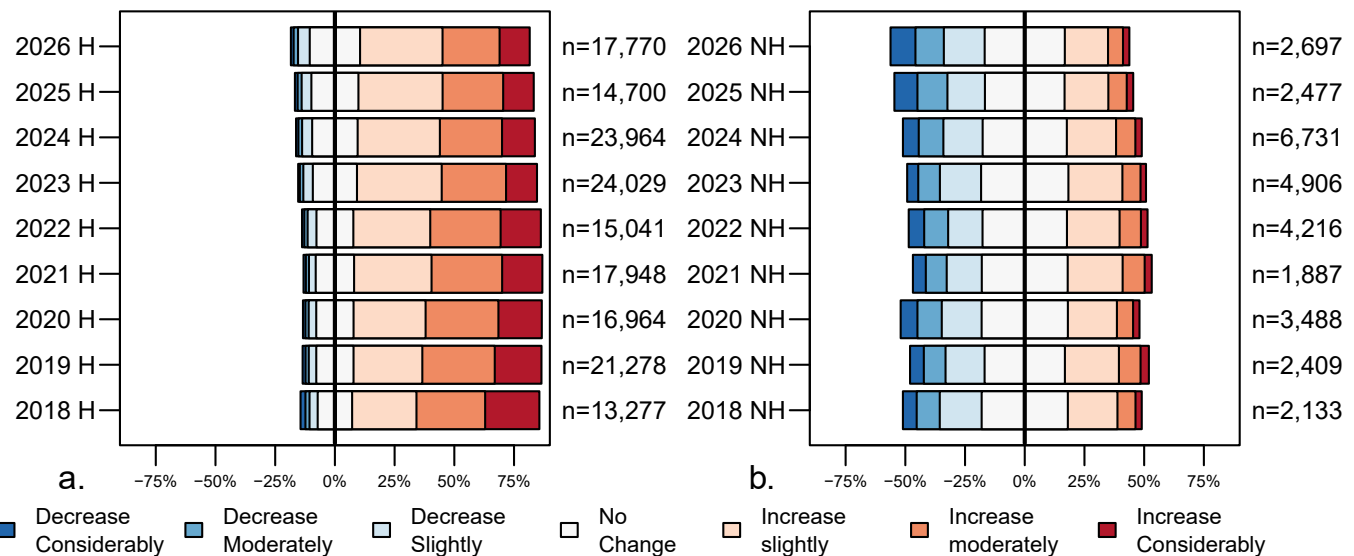


FIGURE 7-4. Hunters (a.) and nonhunters (b.) describe their desired change in the size of the deer population in the county where they hunt and/or live in Indiana.

Hunters were asked a few attitudinal questions to rate their hunting satisfaction and experience. Hunters were asked, **How do you think the total deer harvested in this hunting county has changed compared to five years ago?** Approximately half of hunters reported that they thought total deer harvest had decreased (49.4%). An additional 26.8% reported they thought there was no change. Hunters were asked, **How does the number of deer you harvested in this hunting county in the most recent season compare to five years ago?** Approximately half of hunters thought there was some degree of decrease (49.7%). Over a third of respondents (40.0%) thought there was no change. The perceptions of these questions have been shifting toward increased harvest over time (Figure 7-5). Hunters were also asked **to describe the QUALITY of the bucks in this hunting county during the most recent deer hunting season.** Most (50.5%) hunters thought the bucks were of average quality, followed by low quality (26.9%). This hunter opinion has remained very stable since 2018 (Figure 7-6).

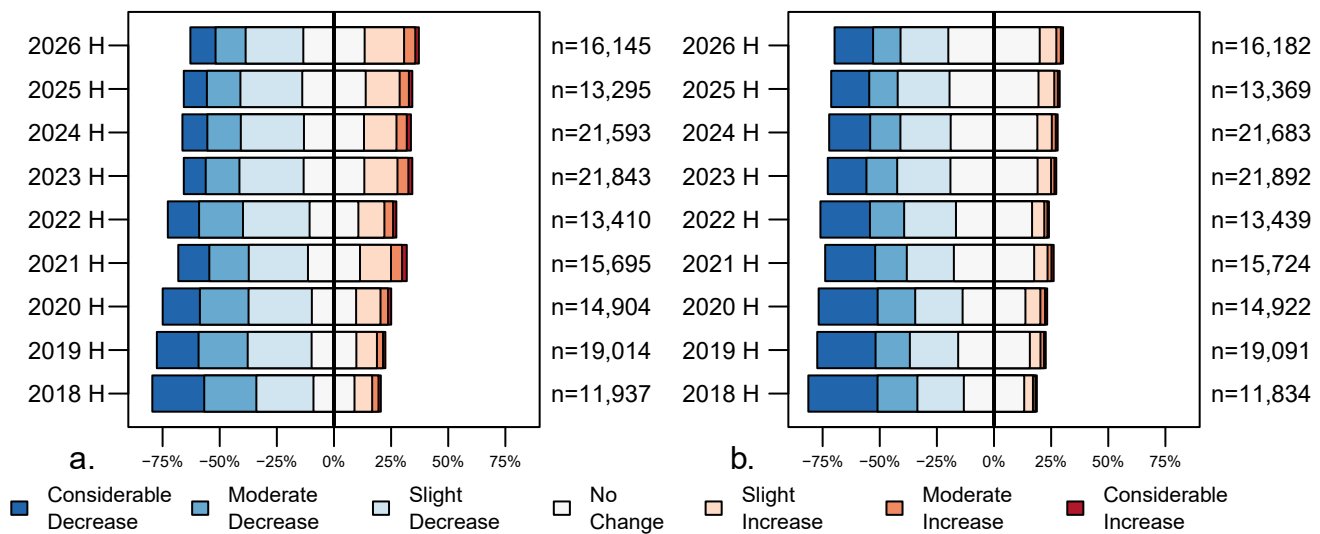


FIGURE 7-5. Hunter opinion on how the total number of harvested deer (a.) and their personal number of harvested deer (b.) in Indiana has changed over the last five years.

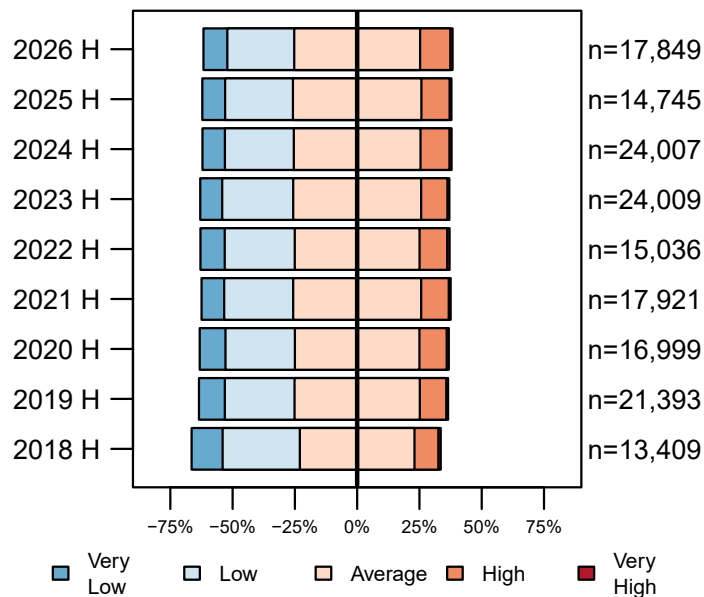


FIGURE 7-6. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they hunt in Indiana.

Respondents were also asked about attitudes toward management, including **On a scale of 0 (terrible) to 100 (excellent), how would you rate the job the Indiana DNR is doing managing deer STATEWIDE?** Non-hunters rated the DNR 76.4 ± 0.95 on average while hunters rated it 71.0 ± 0.39 on average out of 100 (Figure 7-7). Both non-hunters and hunters were asked the same question about how well Indiana DNR is doing managing deer in their county. On average, non-hunters rated the DNR at 75.7 ± 1.00 , while hunters rated the DNR at 70.5 ± 0.41 out of 100 (Figure 7-8). Finally, hunters were asked, **On a scale of 0 (no enjoyment) - 100 (great enjoyment), how would you rate your overall enjoyment of your hunting experience during the 2025-2026 deer hunting season?** This rating has increased slightly since 2018 (Figure 7-9). Hunters rated their enjoyment, on average, at 81.3 ± 0.33 out of 100.

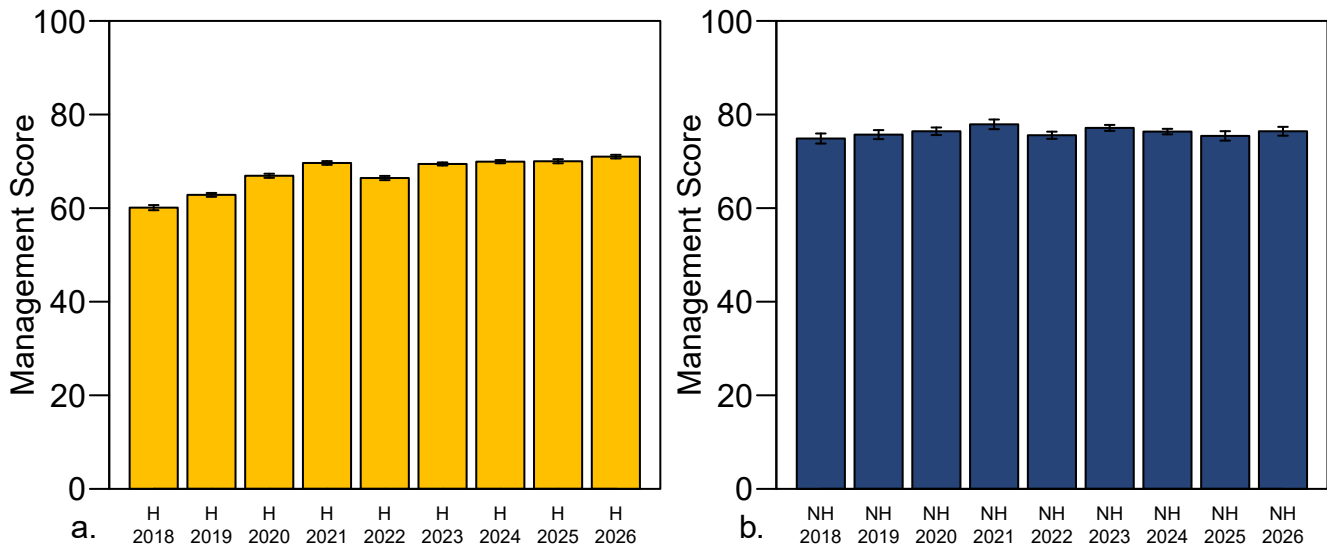


FIGURE 7-7. Hunters (a.) and nonhunters (b.) were asked to score the Indiana DNR's statewide deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent).

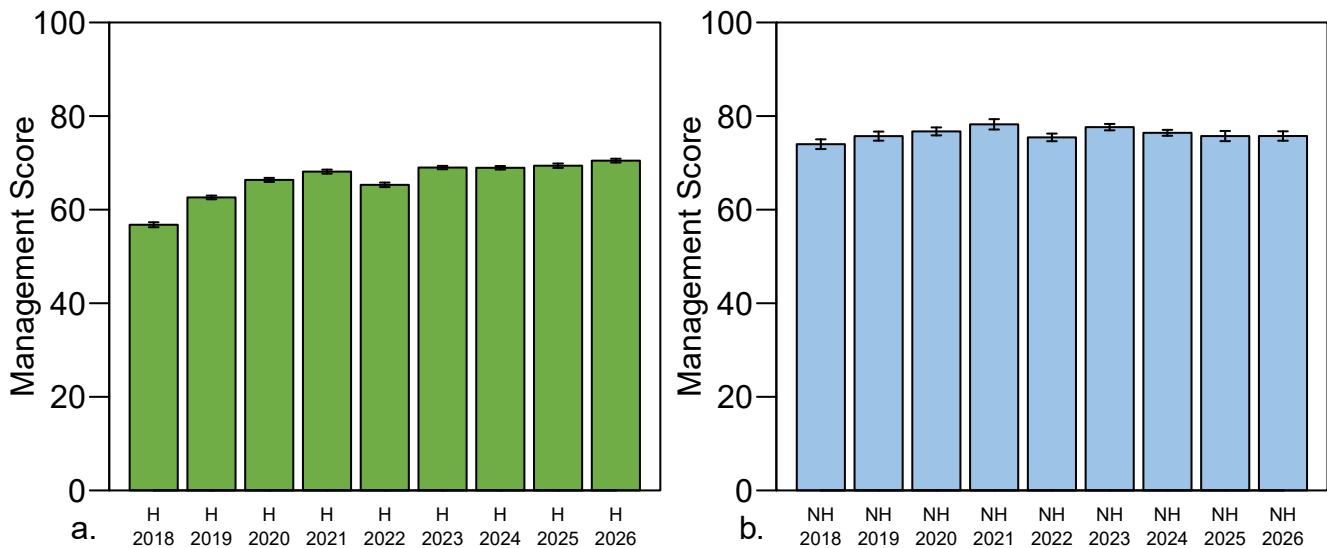


FIGURE 7-8. Hunters (a.) and nonhunters (b.) were asked to score the Indiana DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent).

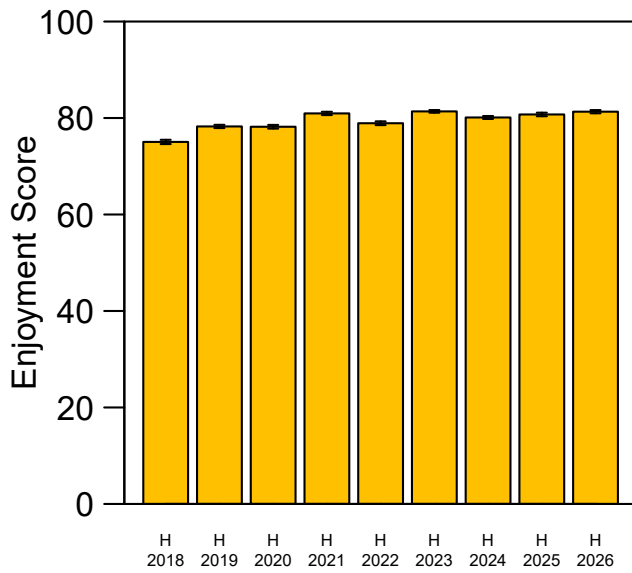


FIGURE 7-9. Hunters were asked to score their hunting experience on a scale of 0 (no enjoyment) to 100 (great enjoyment) during the previous Indiana deer season.

Chapter 8. VOLUNTEER MONITORING

Volunteer monitoring is public participation in data collection and analysis of natural resources. The Indiana DNR seeks assistance from volunteers as an alternative way to collect data traditionally obtained by biologists. Volunteer monitoring provides people with an opportunity to participate in natural resource management and allows for collection of a wider set of data from a broader scale, thus saving DNR time and resources. Currently, the Deer Program relies on volunteers for two projects: the Archer's Index and the After Hunt Survey.

Archer's Index

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Archery hunters play an important role in monitoring the abundance of furbearers and other wildlife species in Indiana. Since the early 1990s, Indiana archery hunters have voluntarily shared their wildlife observations with DNR to monitor trends in statewide wildlife populations. The partnership between archery hunters and DNR has provided a consistent and inexpensive method for monitoring many wildlife species. The DNR Furbearer Program currently manages the Archer's Index and has shared its data on deer observations for analysis in the White-tailed Deer Report. The complete Archer's Index report is available on a yearly basis and contains indices for several furbearer species. See previous Archer's Index reports at <https://www.in.gov/dnr/fish-and-wildlife/wildlife-resources/wildlife-and-fisheries-reports/>. Volunteers may sign up to participate in the Archer's Index at on.IN.gov/archersindex.

Methods

Before archery hunting season, hunters who volunteered to participate in the survey were sent a standardized survey form and directions for recording wildlife observations. Hunters were asked to record the number of hours they spent hunting each day, noting either morning or evening hunts, and the total number of each wildlife species observed daily.

Historically, the survey ended on the same day as the early archery season, typically in late November. However, regulation changes were implemented in 2012 that extended the archery season to one continuous season that ended in early January. Since then, the Archer's Index has ended one day prior to the opening of firearms season to ensure an unbiased and standard survey period. After the end of the survey period, participants returned their completed survey form to DNR.

Population indices were tabulated by dividing the total number of each wildlife species sighted by the total number of hours hunted. Observations per hour, fawn-to-doe ratios, and doe-to-buck ratios were calculated statewide and at a regional level based on the 10 deer management units (DMU) the Deer Program created, in partnership with Purdue University, to better understand deer trends across broad habitats. Statewide results are reported in this section, and regional results are reported in the DMU Data Sheets section. Bootstrapped confidence intervals (CI_{95}) were calculated for observations per hour each year.

Results and Discussion

In 2025, a total of 294 hunters in 89 counties reported deer observations in the Archer's Index. Hunters observed a total of 12,106 deer in 13,416 hours during 4,231 observational periods ranging from 0.25 to 8.5 hours. Hunters observed

an average of 0.96 deer per hour ($CI_{95}=0.92 - 1.00$; Figure 8-1). A total of 3,328 bucks, 4,950 does, 2,835 fawns, and 993 deer of an undetermined age and sex were observed. From the Archer's Index, the statewide fawn-to-doe ratio was 0.57:1 ($CI_{95}=0.54 - 0.60$), and the doe-to-buck ratio was 1.48:1 ($CI_{95}=1.41 - 1.55$). Comparatively, the harvest doe-to-buck ratio was 0.79:1 ($CI_{95}=0.78 - 0.79$; Figure 8-2).

The Archer's Index provides several trends or indices of the size, composition, and recruitment of the deer population and may be useful for monitoring how these populations change over time. However, because these values have not been measured against a known population, it is unclear how closely the values from these indices reflect true population values. Therefore, the results of the Archer's Index can only be used to monitor trends of deer population and not the actual size. One potential bias proposed by critics of volunteer monitoring observer indices is that fawn observations may be underrepresented. Older fawns can look like young does, especially if the fawns are not traveling with their doe. Thus, fawn-to-doe ratios and recruitment data may become skewed. However, the period when the Archer's Index occurs (October to mid-November) is considered an ideal time, because bias from fawns not traveling with their mother is minimized. Fawns are likely at their smallest body size, routinely traveling with their mother, and loss of the parent is minimized prior to firearms season. Furthermore, if the fawn-to-doe ratios are biased in favor of does, due to misidentified fawns, then the doe-to-buck ratio would likewise be skewed toward does.

This does not appear to be the case for DNR's data, as doe-to-buck ratios are between 1.3:1 and 2.0:1 in most areas (see DMU sheets in the Appendices).

Fawn recruitment is the number of fawns that are born and survive to join the huntable population in the fall. The recruitment value is lower than the total number of fawns born each spring. Fawns die or are killed between birth and the hunting season due to predation, disease, exposure, abandonment, deer-vehicle collisions, haying operations, and other reasons. Therefore, the recruitment rate is almost always lower than the birth rate. For example, the reproductive characteristics of does were recently studied in Illinois. Green et al. (2017) found an average of 20.5% of recruited fawns and 85.5% of adult does were bred by the end of the breeding season. Their average litter size was 1.9 ± 0.54 fawns. In 2015, Illinois reported its statewide recruitment, based on its fawn-to-doe ratio, was 0.5:1 (QDMA 2016). Even though a large proportion of deer were bred, resulting in a high rate of births, fawns experienced a high rate of mortality. Fawn recruitment values can be used for several different purposes, including modeling

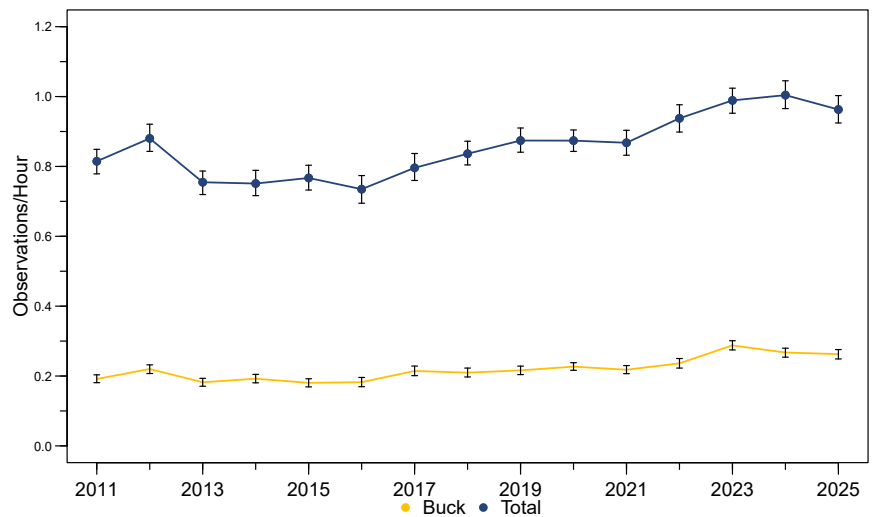


FIGURE 8-1. Annual average observations per hour of bucks and total deer reported in the Archer's Index.

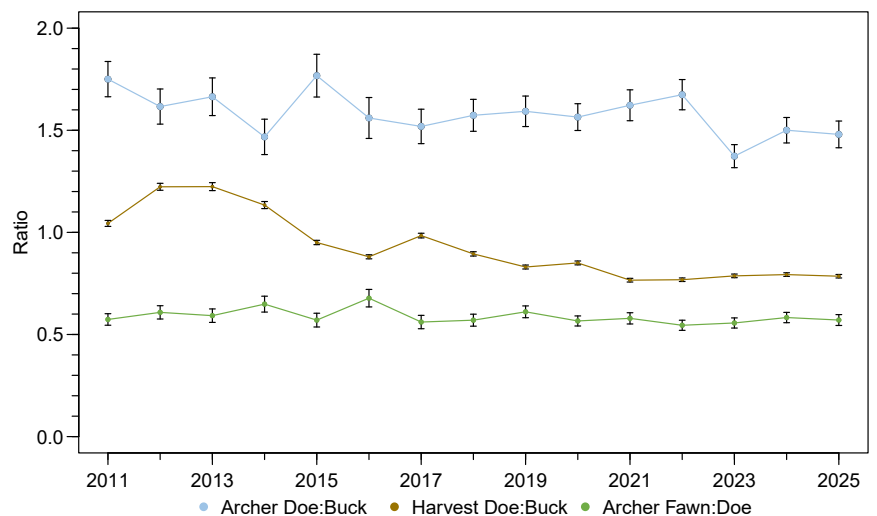


FIGURE 8-2. Statewide observation of doe-to-buck and fawn-to-doe ratios reported in the Archer's Index and the reported doe-to-buck harvest ratio from CheckIN Game data.

for allowable buck and/or doe harvest and as an indicator of potential problems with a deer herd, such as a slow growth rate.

Initially, it may appear that fawn-to-doe ratios are low for many of the DMUs and statewide. However, Indiana has similar fawn-to-doe ratios compared to nearby states, according to the 2015 recruitment data reported to QDMA (2019): Ohio (0.60:1), Illinois (1.18:1), Michigan (0.47:1; QDMA 2015), or the Midwest average (0.81; QDMA 2019). Although these reported ratios are similar, caution should be taken when directly comparing fawn-to-doe ratios across states, because the respective methodologies they use to calculate the fawn-to-doe ratios differ. These differences are often based on how the data have been historically collected. For example, Ohio uses the ratio of fawns to does in the harvest, whereas Wisconsin calculates its fawn-to-doe ratios on a regional basis, using the total number of biologist observations of fawns and does (0.90:1 in 2017; QDMA 2019). It may seem that all states should use the same system, but for each state's deer management program, the long-term trend (i.e., index) is more important than a comparison with neighboring states. Therefore, readers must understand how the data are collected in other states before comparing it to Indiana's fawn-to-doe ratios.

Currently, Indiana has an approximately balanced pre-hunt sex ratio (1.5:1). Balanced doe-to-buck ratios are generally considered to be desirable, because they increase the likelihood of all does being bred during the period when they are most receptive, a more condensed rut, and an earlier fawning season (Guynn and Hamilton 1986; Neuman et al. 2017).

Observations per hour is an index that can be used to examine long-term trends in the deer population. It is important to understand that this is an index of the population and does not represent population numbers or an expectation for hunters (i.e., if the average reported observations per hour is 1.00, hunters should not expect to see a deer every hour they are in the woods). Observations per hour for bucks have been level since 2011 but have increased slightly over time for total deer (Figure 8-1).

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After Hunt Survey

JOE N. CAUDELL AND EMILY MCCALLEN, *INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES*

For many years, Indiana DNR biologists examined deer at check stations where hunters brought their deer to record their harvest. Biologists recorded age, sex, and other biological information that was useful for managing the deer herd. In 2015, Indiana moved to an online system, CheckIN Game, to make the process more convenient for hunters. The After Hunt Survey was created in 2017 to allow hunters the opportunity to continue providing biological information about their harvested deer. The goal of the After Hunt Survey is for hunters to self-report on enough deer so that both hunters and managers can examine deer population biology, ecology, and demographics at the county level. The 2025-26 deer season was the ninth year the After Hunt Survey was available. Because the sample size for most counties was insufficient to report results at the county level, results are reported at regional and statewide levels.

Methods

The After Hunt Survey was administered using Qualtrics, an electronic survey system. Hunters were asked to participate in the survey after they had checked in their deer. They could also access the survey later by visiting deer.dnr.IN.gov and clicking on the After Hunt Survey link under Deer Management. Questions were asked about the equipment used to harvest the deer, the location of harvest, the number of hours spent hunting for that deer, the hunter's opinion of that hunt, and biological information for that deer.

Results and Discussion

Sample Size. A total of 2,110 hunters responded in 2025-2026 compared to 3,451 hunters in 2024-2025 (this decrease was likely due to incorrect and missing links in the automated license system email to hunters). At least one response was received from each county; the highest number of responses was 54 from Owen County, and the smallest was eight from Benton County. To be able to assess data at the county level, 80-120 responses are needed from each county, depending on the number of categories for each question. If these numbers aren't obtained, data can be analyzed at a regional level based on nine of Indiana's 10 Deer Management Units (DMUs; see Figure 3-6). The number of responses per DMU ranged from 9 (Urban Unit) to 468 (South Unit; Table 8-1).

TABLE 8-1. Number of After Hunt Survey responses by Deer Management Unit, 2025-2026.

Deer Management Unit	Number of Counties in Unit	Number of Responses	% of total responses
Dearborn Upland	3	68	3.2%
East Central	28	395	18.7%
Muscatatuck Plateau	4	71	3.4%
Northeast	4	136	6.4%
Northwest	13	383	18.2%
South	16	468	22.2%
Southwest	9	210	10.0%
Urban	1*	9	0.4%
Wabash Valley	6	177	8.4%
West Central	9	193	9.1%
Total Responses		2,110	

Deer Ages. Hunters were asked to age their deer using tooth wear and replacement patterns. Excluding incomplete responses, hunters did not report the ages of 211 does and 392 bucks, including 104 bucks that were going to be mounted. In total, hunters reported the age of 271 does and 372 bucks. Statewide, most deer were reported as 2.5 years old (Figure 8-3). There was an insufficient number of aged deer reported to summarize the age structure at the county level. Regional age structures were similar to the statewide distribution with a few exceptions (Table 8-2) because of the small sample size in many deer management units.

Lactation Rates. Lactation rates provide an estimate of fawn recruitment, which is especially useful in setting harvest quotas. Low fawn recruitment may warrant a change to quotas because it indicates fewer deer are surviving and entering next year's population. During the 2025-26 season, 762 hunters who harvested a female deer reported that 27.2% were lactating, and 52.2% were not, which was the same as the previous year. Lactation rates for does age 2.5 years or older obtained from all previous After Hunt Surveys depict a gradual decline as the season progresses. To report lactation rates at the county or regional level, especially for one season, the number of responses must increase substantially. The variation that results from the small sample size obtained does not allow for a reliable estimation of recruitment.

Hunter Experience. The After Hunt Survey asks several questions related to a particular hunting experience. On a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent), hunters were asked to rate their overall enjoyment of the hunt, the number of does and bucks they saw on the hunt, the quality of those bucks they observed, and how they felt DNR is managing deer in the county in which they hunt. In general, responses from quality of bucks, quantity of bucks, and quantity of does were bimodal, meaning most responses were either at the low end or the high end of the scale. Responses separated by public and private land are in Table 8-3.

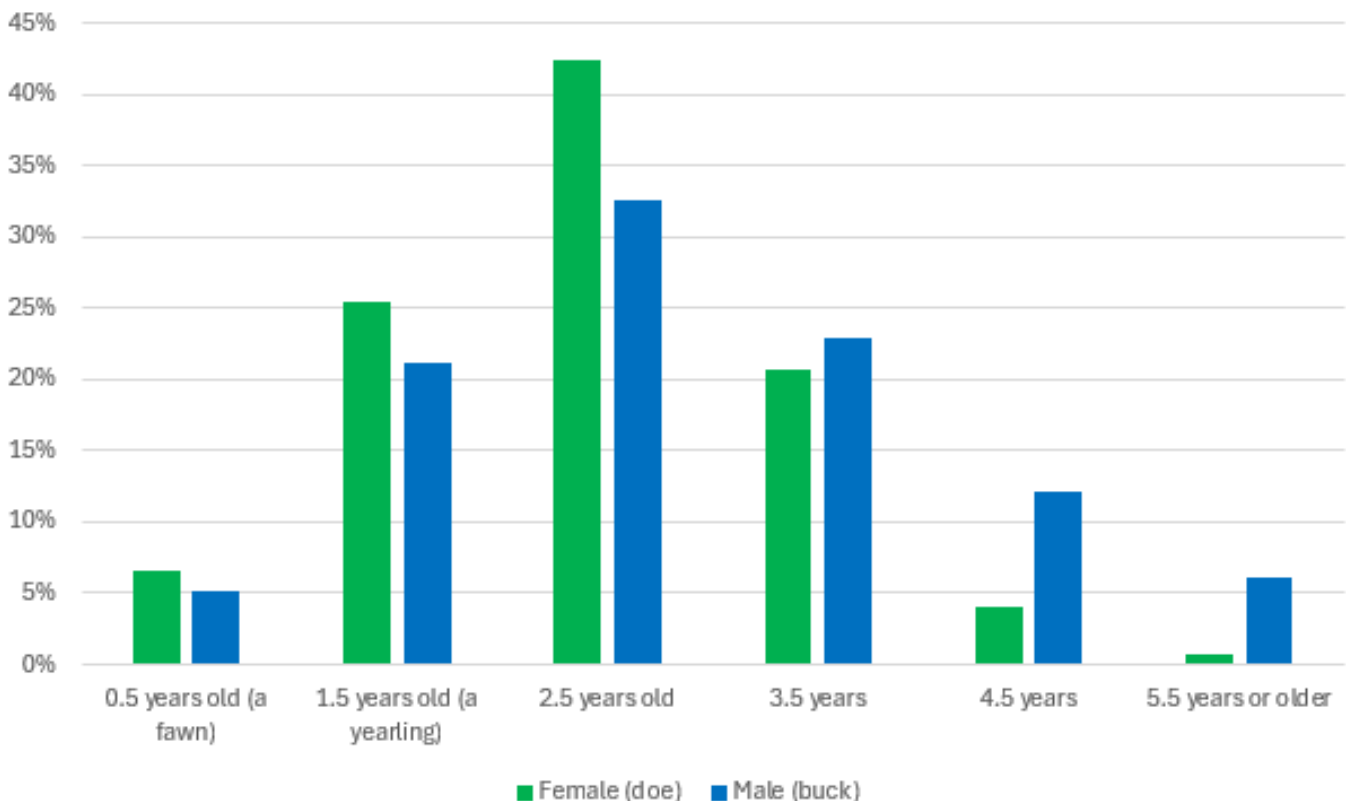


FIGURE 8-3. Age distribution of the statewide deer harvest reported in the 2025-2026 After Hunt Survey.

TABLE 8-2. Age distribution of harvested bucks and does by Deer Management Unit reported in the 2025-26 After Hunt Survey.

DMU and Estimated Age	% for DMU	Number of reports	% for DMU	Number of reports
Dearborn		19		24
0.5 years old (a fawn)	0.0%		4.2%	1
1.5 years old (a yearling)	5.3%	1	8.3%	2
2.5 years old	21.1%	4	12.5%	3
3.5 years	5.3%	1	8.3%	2
4.5 years	5.3%	1	4.2%	1
5.5 years or older	0.0%		4.2%	1
East Central		83		147
0.5 years old (a fawn)	7.2%	6	2.7%	4
1.5 years old (a yearling)	15.7%	13	6.1%	9
2.5 years old	14.5%	12	15.6%	23
3.5 years	13.3%	11	9.5%	14
4.5 years	3.6%	3	4.1%	6
5.5 years or older	0.0%		0.0%	
Muscatatuck		11		24
0.5 years old (a fawn)	0.0%		0.0%	
1.5 years old (a yearling)	9.1%	1	8.3%	2
2.5 years old	63.6%	7	12.5%	3
3.5 years	0.0%		16.7%	4
4.5 years	0.0%		8.3%	2
5.5 years or older	0.0%		0.0%	
Northeast		29		42
0.5 years old (a fawn)	0.0%		0.0%	
1.5 years old (a yearling)	13.8%	4	11.9%	5
2.5 years old	27.6%	8	19.0%	8
3.5 years	10.3%	3	9.5%	4
4.5 years	0.0%		9.5%	4
5.5 years or older	0.0%		0.0%	
Northwest		87		121
0.5 years old (a fawn)	3.4%	3	0.8%	1
1.5 years old (a yearling)	11.5%	10	12.4%	15
2.5 years old	29.9%	26	14.0%	17
3.5 years	12.6%	11	12.4%	15
4.5 years	2.3%	2	5.8%	7
5.5 years or older	0.0%		4.1%	5

DMU and Estimated Age	% for DMU	Number of reports	% for DMU	Number of reports
South		110		179
0.5 years old (a fawn)	5.5%	6	3.4%	6
1.5 years old (a yearling)	15.5%	17	10.6%	19
2.5 years old	20.9%	23	17.3%	31
3.5 years	10.0%	11	11.7%	21
4.5 years	1.8%	2	5.0%	9
5.5 years or older	0.9%	1	2.8%	5
Urban		2		2
0.5 years old (a fawn)	50.0%	1	50.0%	1
1.5 years old (a yearling)	0.0%		0.0%	
2.5 years old	50.0%	1	50.0%	1
Wabash		41		76
0.5 years old (a fawn)	1.9%	1	2.9%	2
1.5 years old (a yearling)	13.0%	7	8.7%	6
2.5 years old	9.3%	5	21.7%	15
3.5 years	14.8%	8	14.5%	10
4.5 years	5.6%	3	10.1%	7
5.5 years or older	0.0%		4.3%	3
Urban		2		2
0.5 years old (a fawn)	1.9%	1	5.8%	4
1.5 years old (a yearling)	13.0%	7	4.3%	3
2.5 years old	25.9%	14	13.0%	9
3.5 years	13.0%	7	11.6%	8
4.5 years	0.0%		5.8%	4
5.5 years or older	0.0%		4.3%	3

TABLE 8-3. Opinions of enjoyment of hunting trip, number of does seen, number of bucks seen, quality of bucks seen while hunting on a scale of 0 to 100 reported in the 2025-26 After Hunt Survey, including 95% confidence intervals (CI). Opinions of how well the DNR is managing deer in the county where the respondent hunted is also reported.

Enjoyment of Hunting Trip			
	Number of Responses	Average Score	95% CI
Private land	1,834	91.8	0.6
Public land	145	89.0	2.3

Number of Does Seen While Hunting			
	Number of Responses	Average Score	95% CI
Private land	1,715	68.5	1.5
Public land	135	60.0	6.1

Number of Bucks Seen While Hunting			
	Number of Responses	Average Score	95% CI
Private land	1,684	58.0	1.7
Public land	137	54.7	6.2

Quality of Bucks Seen While Hunting			
	Number of Responses	Average Score	95% CI
Private land	1,643	60.6	1.7
Public land	129	59.3	6.3

How Well is DNR Managing Deer in the County Hunted			
	Number of Responses	Average Score	95% CI
Private land	1,614	77.3	1.2
Public land	139	77.4	4.2

Antler Characteristics. Hunters reported 90.0% of the bucks harvested on private land had a typical rack; the remaining 10.0% were non-typical. Hunters reported 92.3% of the bucks harvested on public land had a typical rack; the remaining 7.7% were non-typical.

The average number of points reported from harvested bucks were similar on both public and private land (Table 8-4). The average total inches of antler, defined as the length of the main beam plus the length of each of the tines as measured from the center of the main beam along the longest portion of the tine, averaged 83.3 inches on private land and 74.0 inches on public land (Table 8-4).

Body Weights. Body weights can provide valuable information about the quality of deer and the relationship of recruitment to nutrition if data are frequently reported on small scales (i.e., county or 16-mile² grid level). Hunters reported the field-dressed weight of their deer only if it had been weighed on a scale (Table 8-4). Live weights can be estimated by multiplying the field-dressed weight by 1.26 as reported in Smart et al. (1973). The number of responses was insufficient to summarize body weights by age class at either the county or regional level. Self-reporting of deer body weights by hunters needs to be significantly higher for this factor to inform management.

Hunter Effort. The number of hours it takes to harvest a deer can be used to calculate harvest per unit effort, which can serve as an index for deer population size. Because this index may have an inherent selective bias, it should be viewed with caution. For example, hunters may spend more time harvesting a particular buck than they would to harvest a doe. Hunters reported they hunted an average of 22.4 hours on private land and 19.2 hours on public land before harvesting their buck (Table 8-5). During this time, hunters saw an average of 7.2 bucks on private land and 2.7 bucks on public land. Hunters reported they hunted an average of 14.2 hours on private land and 12.4 hours on public lands before harvesting their doe. During this time, hunters saw an average of 4.9 does on private land and an average of 2.7 does on public land (Table 8-5).

The After Hunt Survey has potential to provide valuable biological information from harvested deer, including age, sex, and reproductive status. It may also be used to develop an index of harvest per unit effort; however, additional research is needed to evaluate the utility of harvest per unit effort as an accurate estimator of population size. Reporting must increase significantly before information collected in the After Hunt Survey can be reliably applied at the regional, county, or subcounty level. Increasing promotion of the survey in the annual Indiana Hunting & Trapping Regulations Guide, media outlets, and on social media will help ensure enough responses are obtained so this information can be used for management purposes.

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TABLE 8-4. Antler characteristics and body weights of deer on public and private land. The number of responses (n), average, and 95% confidence interval (CI) are reported separately for public and private land.

Number of right side points			
	n	average	95% CI
Private land	1,006	3.8	0.1
Public land	83	3.5	0.3

Number of left side points			
	n	average	95% CI
Private land	1,006	3.8	0.1
Public land	83	3.6	0.3

Inside spread (inches)			
	n	average	95% CI
Private land	682	13.2	0.4
Public land	58	12.1	1.2

Total inches			
	n	average	95% CI
Private land	445	75.7	5.5
Public land	37	63.6	17.3

Dressed weight adult deer (lbs)			
	n	average	95% CI
Private land			
Female (doe)	373	96.2	4.1
Male (buck)	569	147.2	5.1
Public land			
Female (doe)	31	96.1	13.2
Male (buck)	50	145.3	17.7

TABLE 8-5. Hours spent hunting bucks and does on public and private land and number of does and bucks seen while hunting. The number of responses (n), average, and 95% confidence interval (CI) are reported separately for public and private land.

Hours spent hunting does before harvest			
	n	average	95% CI
Private land	705	14.2	1.5
Public land	52	12.4	5.3

Hours spent hunting bucks before harvest			
	n	average	95% CI
Private land	1,114	22.4	1.7
Public land	88	19.2	4.9

Does seen while hunting does			
	n	average	95% CI
Private land	707	4.9	0.4
Public land	53	2.7	1.0

Bucks seen while hunting bucks			
	n	average	95% CI
Private land	1,110	7.2	0.9
Public land	88	2.7	0.8

Chapter 9. DNR DEER RESEARCH

Each year the Indiana DNR conducts various research to investigate questions related to deer management. These can be literature reviews to answer specific questions that have arisen, such as for a new policy; field work to estimate deer populations; or statistical analysis of existing data. In this section we report on the internal research that was conducted on deer in 2025.

Using Camera Traps and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) to Estimate Post-Harvest White-tailed Deer Densities on Indiana Public Properties

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Indiana DNR maintains much of the public land accessed by hunters throughout the state and has a responsibility to ensure that white-tailed deer populations are healthy and abundant. A portion of this responsibility relies on surveying and estimating deer population densities among the state's properties to ensure proper game management practices are employed. Common methods for estimating deer densities in an area rely on using distance sampling or plot sampling methodologies. For distance sampling, staff record how far away deer are from randomized survey points or survey transects. These measurements contribute to building a model of detectability to calculate proper population density estimates (Buckland et al. 2004). This is used most commonly by game managers in roadside spotlight surveys. However, the use of game cameras (hereafter referred to as camera traps) in place of spotlights has become more common and more effective in calculating accurate density estimates with reduced biases (Preston et al. 2021). Plot sampling involves counting the number of deer in a defined area and assumes a higher, more uniform detectability of deer in the surveying area. This method is commonly used when the number of detections may be limited (Buckland et al. 2004). In ground or aerial surveys taking place over a single day or short period of time, these estimates calculate a simple average density of deer per area surveyed. Previously, in conjunction with partners from Purdue University, DNR began using camera traps on private properties in specific areas of the state in 2022. From this data, estimated deer density maps have been developed for three Deer Management Units (Caudell 2024). However, no estimates currently exist pertaining to Indiana DNR's Fish & Wildlife areas that would allow managers to detect trends in local populations with reasonably high confidence.

In August 2024, the DNR Deer Program began distributing camera traps to many of the Division of Fish, Wildlife & Nature Preserves properties that are actively hunted. Approximately 25 cameras were deployed in randomized areas throughout each of the properties to record photos. DNR set up camera sites following the methods of Howe et al. (2017) and Delisle et al. (2023). All cameras were set to continuously record photos with as minimal of a capture delay as each camera model would allow. Either Deer Program staff or property staff would check cameras for SD card and battery replacement every six to eight weeks. Camera images were scored, and distances to deer were recorded in TimeLapse software (Version 2.3.1, Greenberg 2024) by Deer Program staff. Distance sampling analysis was conducted using the function Distance in program R (version 4.4.1, R Core Team 2024).

For calculating density estimates, DNR used camera trap images taken between March 2 and March 16 to ensure estimates were postharvest, with all hunting activity ending in late January (Table 9-1). For each postharvest estimate of a state-owned property, 95% confidence intervals and a corresponding coefficient

of variation were provided. The intervals for each postharvest density estimate indicate the varying range of deer density across a particular property. In addition to the postharvest estimate, an approximate preharvest estimate was calculated by adding the total harvest density and estimated postharvest density. From this, DNR calculated the percentage of the property's deer population that was harvested during the 2025-2026 deer season.

TABLE 9-1. Estimated white-tailed deer densities calculated by camera traps and UAVs at public hunting properties managed by the DNR Division of Fish, Wildlife & Nature Preserves. Camera trap postharvest estimates for 2025 were calculated using camera trap conventional distance sampling with 95% confidence intervals and coefficient of variation reported for each estimate. Postharvest estimates from UAV surveys were calculated using plot sampling with 95% confidence intervals and coefficient of variation reported for each estimate. The approximate 2025 preharvest density for each property was calculated by adding the 2025 estimated postharvest density and 2025 deer harvest density. Properties impacted by EHD in 2025 are denoted by an asterisk. Using these calculated numbers, the approximate percentage of the population that was harvested in 2025 is reported.

Public Land	Survey Method	Estimated 2024 Pre-Harvest Deer Density (per mi ²)	2024 Deer Harvested (per mi ²)	2024 Post-Harvest Estimated Deer Density (per mi ²)	Upper 95% CI	Lower 95% CI	Estimated % of 2024 Property Population Harvested
Atterbury FWA	None	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bluegrass FWA	None	-	-	-	-	-	-
Busseron Creek FWA	None	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chinook FWA	None	-	-	-	-	-	-
Crosley FWA	UAV	20.9	4.5	16.4	0	84.2	21.6%
Deer Creek FWA	UAV	37.6	4.5	33.1	0	174.8	12.0%
Fairbanks Landing FWA	None	-	-	-	-	-	-
Glendale FWA	Camera Trap	17.9	7.6	10.3	5.9	18.0	42.5%
Goose Pond FWA	UAV	12.3	3.3	9.0	0	49.6	26.9%
Hillenbrand FWA	None	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hovey Lake FWA	None	-	-	-	-	-	-
J.E. Roush Lake FWA	UAV	27.1	8.9	18.2	1.8	92.5	32.9%
Jasper-Pulaski FWA	UAV	33.2	10.3	22.9	7.6	46.1	31.0%
Kankakee FWA	None	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kingsbury FWA	UAV	35.3	10.9	24.4	3.5	67.3	30.9%
LaSalle FWA	Camera Trap	46.6	10.9	35.7	25.0	51.1	23.4%
	UAV	36.7	12.6	24.1	1.8	71.9	34.3%
Pigeon River FWA*	Camera Trap	33.5	12.6	20.9	11.9	36.8	37.6%
	UAV	57.4	17.7	39.7	15.1	80.1	30.9%
Splinter Ridge FWA	None	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sugar Ridge FWA	UAV	27.9	4.5	23.4	8.0	66.0	16.1%
Tri-County FWA*	UAV	36.5	8.4	28.1	0	160.9	23.0%
	Camera Trap	32.1	8.4	23.7	13.6	41.3	26.2%
Wabashiki FWA	None	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wilbur Wright FWA	UAV	36.3	12.4	23.9	7.8	56.2	34.2%
Willow Slough FWA	UAV	25.4	8.7	16.7	1.6	50.5	34.3%
Winamac FWA	UAV	37.6	16.2	21.4	0	106.8	43.1%
Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge	UAV	22.1	1.7	20.4	10.0	34.8	7.7%
Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge	UAV	19.4	4.6	14.8	4.1	27.5	23.7%

The DNR Deer Program is in its second year of using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) on state and federally owned public lands to estimate deer densities, complementing ongoing camera trap monitoring. In February 2025, FAA-certified remote pilots from the Deer Program conducted UAV flights across 18 properties statewide. Because this was the first year of UAV surveys, flights were carried out during both daytime (dawn to 30 minutes after dusk) and nighttime (30 minutes after dusk to 30 minutes before dawn) to evaluate optimal survey conditions. These initial surveys employed a range of flight strategies—including grid and single-transect flights—covering areas between 6 and 40 acres per flight. Using information gained from the 2025 surveys, Deer Program pilots returned to many of the same properties beginning in late February 2026 to conduct 1–2 days of daytime flights. When possible, these flights overlapped locations where camera traps were deployed. For each property, pilots surveyed 25–30 large blocks measuring 400 × 400 meters each (approximately 39–40 acres each). Property flights continued until mid-April when statewide leaf-on began. As with the camera trap surveys, postharvest density estimates, 95% confidence intervals, and coefficients of variation were produced. These metrics contributed to calculations of the proportion of the deer population harvested on each property during the 2025–2026 season.

Due to time constraints, malfunctioning cameras, and other issues, not all properties were sufficiently surveyed by UAV or camera traps following each deer hunting season. These surveys will continue in the future, with priority falling to properties that were not sufficiently surveyed or did not have cameras the previous year.

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Analysis of Boone and Crockett Record Book Data

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Introduction And Methods

Hunters and deer managers are often curious about where Indiana ranks for large deer when compared with other states. To answer this question, DNR worked with the Boone and Crockett Club's Big Game Record Department to access their records through their Big Game Records Live (BGRL) portal (www.boone-crockett.org/big-game-records-live-0) to collect the data to investigate this question. This is a public portal to Boone and Crockett data that can be accessed by the public for a small fee. Boone and Crockett records are awarded for 'typical' white-tailed deer with a score of over 160 and 'non-typical' deer over 185.

The records were accessed from the BGRL on February 24, 2026. Boone and Crockett records are constantly being updated as new records are submitted; therefore, the date when the records were accessed is important to note. There can often be a lag of one or more years as hunters wait to receive their deer back from taxidermists. Records from the 2025 harvest are not included because only a small fraction of the deer harvested and measured at this time have been uploaded into the system. Also, data examined at a later date may not match with this report because there is no cutoff for when deer are harvested and when they have to be measured (as long as it is longer than the 60-day drying period for the rack). Therefore, hunters who inherit, purchase, or find previously unscored deer may submit those records years later, adding to the records for that state.

Results And Discussion

DNR compiled the data for both typical and non-typical white-tailed deer in the United States and compared Indiana's outcomes to those from the other states in the U.S. and Canada (Table 9-2). Midwestern states were routinely in the highest rankings, with Indiana being the third highest overall ranking since 2011, behind Ohio (No. 2) and Wisconsin (No. 1) for total records accepted into the Boone and Crockett records. To adjust for the size difference among these states, DNR examined the records on a per 1,000 square mile basis (Table 9-2). When balanced for the size of the state, Indiana was in the top ranking overall (since 2011) with the top ranking each year since 2016.

DNR examined Indiana's average typical and non-typical scores for the deer reported since 1981 and compared those scores to other states (Table 9-3). Indiana's average typical score since 1981 was 169.28 and the non-typical score was 200.51 (Table 9-3). Against other states, Indiana ranked in the middle (29th) for the average size of typical bucks reported since 1981 (Table 9-3). The average score since 2011 has increased, moving Indiana's rank to 20 (Table 9-4). It is also important to note that many of the states that routinely produce many Boone and Crockett bucks are only within a few inches of each other, but Saskatchewan (SK) outpaces most other states and provinces for both the size of buck and the number produced (Tables 9-3 and 9-4).

Table 9-5 shows how the number of reports and scores for typical and non-typical Indiana deer have changed over time. Initially, it may appear that scores have declined over time, but this is likely due to a greater awareness of the Boone and Crockett record books, and hunters entering more deer that just make the cut-off score of 160 into the record books, as evidenced by the increasing number of records over time. Table 9-6 shows the total number of

Boone and Crockett records for the 92 Indiana counties, arranged by the total number of reports from highest to lowest since 1981.

Shooting a wild trophy deer is a rare occurrence for most hunters and only represents about 0.1% of the bucks harvested. Hunters have expressed interest in Indiana DNR adopting trophy deer management strategies, but there is still a relatively low number who desire this approach (Caudell and Buchanan-Schwanke 2021). Typically, there is no universal preference for regulations that hunters desire (Cornicelli et al. 2011), making large-scale and/or significant changes difficult. In Indiana, most hunters continually express a desire to be able to shoot the buck they want, rather than being constrained by the DNR to shoot a buck of a particular size. Additionally, regular outbreaks of EHD, annual mortality from brain abscess syndrome (BAS), and regular deer-vehicle collisions are likely to impede significant quality improvements on a statewide basis. Therefore, any further increases in the quality of the deer herd and quantity of Boone and Crockett deer will not be caused by widespread changes in deer regulations, but it will likely be caused by localized deer management decisions by private landowners, such as those that are achieved through deer management cooperatives (Mitterling et al. 2021) and management schemes such as quality deer management (Miller and Marchinton 1995).

Deer cooperatives have the greatest likelihood of success, because a cooperative effort by a group of landowners can have a much greater effect than the efforts of a single landowner who owns less land than a buck will use on a yearly basis. Hunters and landowners who desire further increases in buck quality should consider the development of cooperatives in the areas they hunt. Additional information about wildlife management cooperatives can be found at the National Wildlife Cooperative website (www.nationalwildlifecoop.com/national-wildlife-cooperative).

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TABLE 9-2. Total number of records and records per 1,000 square miles of typical white-tailed deer (WTD) accepted into the Boone and Crockett record book for the top 20 states, organized by overall rank, since 2010. The top state for each year is highlighted in yellow.

State	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Total Typical and Non-Typical WTD Records Accepted to Boone and Crockett Since 2011 for the Top 20 WTD Producing States															
WI	67	159	27	47	62	75	60	38	27	60	64	53	40	38	817
OH	50	60	40	34	49	73	64	44	50	54	53	52	28	41	692
IN	41	40	18	23	31	72	55	39	63	56	51	46	38	34	607
KY	60	52	43	39	50	36	43	36	42	45	39	28	31	33	577
IA	33	67	20	30	32	40	32	34	36	48	34	44	37	24	511
IL	62	50	12	21	18	37	32	31	39	40	36	42	25	28	473
KS	30	28	35	38	38	35	20	32	36	26	25	23	21	14	401
MN	15	59	8	29	41	26	34	15	24	31	39	27	14	26	388
MO	33	16	20	21	25	43	49	20	16	27	26	30	22	13	361
TX	17	22	28	29	38	22	30	26	36	29	29	12	25	16	359
SK	11	31	6	10	23	13	22	3	16	21	27	3	7	8	201
AB	17	27	4	5	19	15	11	4	10	8	15	18	5	10	168
NE	16	10	5	11	11	13	6	13	7	6	11	1	6	4	120
MI	4	7	5	8	9	14	12	2	9	8	7	5	8	8	106
OK	9	13	7	9	6	3	8	8	14	3	7	8	6		101
AR	4	5	7	14	14	12	13	2	1	1	1	2	2		78
SD	7	2	2	6	12	12	5	2	3	7	5	3	3	3	72
PA	5	4	3	6	2	10	10		5	6	9	2	5	2	69
MS	6	12	5	9	6	10	4	4		2	3	3	5	1	70
GA	9	8	2	2	4	4	2	6	4	9	2	3		1	56
Records per 1,000 Square Miles for Typical and Non-Typical WTD Accepted to Boone and Crockett Records Since 2011 for the Top 20 WTD Producing States															
IN	0.43	0.42	0.19	0.24	0.33	0.76	0.58	0.41	0.67	0.59	0.54	0.49	0.40	0.36	6.44
OH	0.43	0.52	0.34	0.29	0.42	0.63	0.55	0.38	0.43	0.47	0.46	0.45	0.24	0.35	5.96
KY	0.57	0.50	0.41	0.37	0.48	0.34	0.41	0.34	0.40	0.43	0.37	0.27	0.30	0.32	5.51
WI	0.39	0.94	0.16	0.28	0.37	0.44	0.35	0.22	0.16	0.35	0.38	0.31	0.24	0.22	4.82
IA	0.23	0.46	0.14	0.21	0.22	0.27	0.22	0.23	0.25	0.33	0.23	0.30	0.25	0.16	3.51
IL	0.41	0.33	0.08	0.14	0.12	0.25	0.21	0.21	0.26	0.27	0.24	0.28	0.17	0.19	3.15
MO	0.18	0.09	0.11	0.12	0.14	0.24	0.27	0.11	0.09	0.15	0.14	0.17	0.12	0.07	2.00
KS	0.14	0.13	0.16	0.18	0.18	0.16	0.09	0.15	0.17	0.12	0.12	0.11	0.10	0.07	1.88
MN	0.07	0.26	0.04	0.13	0.18	0.12	0.15	0.07	0.11	0.14	0.17	0.12	0.06	0.12	1.72
DE		0.16		0.16		0.16		0.16	0.16				0.16	0.16	1.09
MD	0.06	0.25	0.09	0.09		0.12	0.06	0.06	0.16	0.16	0.06	0.09	0.06	0.06	1.34
SK	0.04	0.12	0.02	0.04	0.09	0.05	0.09	0.01	0.06	0.08	0.11	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.80
AB	0.07	0.11	0.02	0.02	0.07	0.06	0.04	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.06	0.07	0.02	0.04	0.66
WV	0.02	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.10	0.08	0.11	0.05	0.02	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.02	0.70
NE	0.08	0.05	0.02	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.00	0.03	0.02	0.60
PA	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.02	0.08	0.08		0.04	0.05	0.08	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.58
AR	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.09	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01		0.57
MS	0.05	0.10	0.04	0.07	0.05	0.08	0.03	0.03		0.02	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.01	0.56
OK	0.05	0.07	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.08	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.03		0.56
TX	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.52

TABLE 9-3. Average white-tailed deer (WTD) typical and non-typical score and number of Boone and Crockett scores reported across the United States, Canada, and Mexico since 1981. States are in order by the typical average score.

State	Typical WTD		Non-typical WTD	
	Number of Reports	Average Score	Number of Reports	Average Score
NS	6	176.75	13	209.01
NL	15	175.72	2	214.25
NM	3	173.54		
MB	82	173.34	51	211.64
SK	572	173.11	258	205.90
IL	888	172.05	753	205.25
AB	375	172.03	231	204.70
IA	816	171.94	650	205.24
KS	519	171.88	491	206.67
WA	15	171.78	21	199.90
TM	3	171.58	1	189.38
CO	62	171.50	32	207.67
NB	22	171.36	8	201.03
TX	479	171.10	262	202.25
ID	43	170.83	27	205.81
BS	1	170.13		
MN	622	169.96	351	202.12
ND	77	169.91	41	200.89
SD	113	169.84	51	200.63
WY	17	169.74	13	206.01
MA	20	169.69	9	197.99
OH	791	169.66	530	202.45
MT	74	169.60	26	201.54
MO	566	169.60	439	201.99
MI	186	169.57	90	198.65
MD	75	169.45	42	204.01
BC	50	169.36	31	198.82
AR	133	169.36	68	201.54

State	Typical WTD		Non-typical WTD	
	Number of Reports	Average Score	Number of Reports	Average Score
IN	686	169.28	404	200.51
NE	206	169.27	132	201.36
ON	71	169.19	33	200.00
NC	35	168.81	8	206.19
ME	112	168.70	27	201.30
OK	116	168.52	154	200.36
WI	1363	168.47	525	198.83
DE	21	168.35	10	196.05
KY	819	168.31	409	199.71
LA	44	168.30	19	212.18
SC	10	168.25	2	196.44
MS	113	168.17	65	201.06
NY	91	168.05	29	198.09
RI	4	167.84		
TN	48	167.78	31	205.37
VA	104	167.75	50	203.85
NJ	8	167.67	5	195.85
VT	4	167.66		
CT	17	167.49	3	192.33
MX	7	167.39		
GA	160	167.27	43	198.90
AL	13	167.27	9	209.50
NH	49	167.24	4	201.31
WV	46	167.05	16	197.27
PA	86	166.55	39	197.69
OR	5	166.35	1	189.00
QC	40	165.97	3	191.04

TABLE 9-4. Average white-tailed deer (WTD) typical and non-typical score and number of Boone and Crockett scores reported across the United States, Canada, and Mexico since 2011. States are in order by the typical average score.

State	Typical WTD		Non-typical WTD	
	Number of Reports	Average Score	Number of Reports	Average Score
NM	2	176.63		
RI	1	176.50		
NL	6	172.33	1	204.75
SK	141	172.22	60	202.95
NB	2	171.38		
TX	218	171.04	141	202.61
IA	265	171.00	246	203.83
CO	17	170.85	5	203.50
IL	230	170.80	243	202.95
DE	6	170.52	1	193.88
ON	15	170.29	6	190.88
SD	46	170.12	26	201.83
AB	106	169.88	62	202.78
MX	2	169.88		
KS	174	169.84	227	206.52
OK	39	169.44	62	198.43
MO	171	168.72	190	201.32
NE	70	168.70	50	198.59
AL	3	168.67	3	195.63
IN	373	168.50	234	199.95
MS	49	168.47	21	197.44
NY	36	168.32	12	196.26
CT	5	168.30		
OH	402	168.26	290	201.33
MN	249	168.17	139	201.63
NC	12	168.02	3	200.71

State	Typical WTD		Non-typical WTD	
	Number of Reports	Average Score	Number of Reports	Average Score
AR	55	168.01	23	199.10
VA	35	167.80	15	197.08
WI	577	167.61	240	196.93
KY	374	167.53	203	198.43
MI	77	167.41	29	194.39
MB	16	167.37	14	204.17
TN	21	167.35	10	211.14
WV	32	167.34	12	192.83
BC	16	167.33	7	194.86
GA	45	167.30	11	195.45
VT	2	167.25		
ND	31	167.08	18	201.90
ME	29	167.04	3	189.96
MA	4	166.97	3	211.58
LA	14	166.96	4	227.16
MD	25	166.96	18	196.16
NS	1	166.75		
ID	3	166.58	2	200.75
PA	50	166.45	19	197.24
WY	4	166.16	2	203.06
QC	19	165.94		
MT	12	165.86	4	193.09
NH	12	165.56		
SC	2	164.31		
NJ	2	160.13	2	199.31
WA	1	160.00	2	195.19

TABLE 9-5. Average white-tailed deer (WTD) typical and non-typical score and number of Boone and Crockett scores in Indiana reported since 1981.

Year	Typical WTD		Non-typical WTD	
	Number of Reports	Average Score	Number of Reports	Average Score
1981	1	175.00	1	205.88
1982	1	170.50	1	198.88
1983	1	194.25		
1984	2	169.19	1	188.63
1985	4	188.41	1	226.38
1986	1	171.00	2	203.38
1987	4	169.69	1	225.75
1988	3	173.96	2	195.81
1989	6	169.98	5	204.95
1990	5	175.23	3	231.79
1991	4	172.03	1	197.25
1992	5	179.10	2	193.06
1993	8	171.58	1	212.63
1994	8	170.39	3	199.71
1995	15	172.93	5	205.25
1996	5	170.85	3	195.38
1997	8	175.88	6	202.81
1998	9	168.94	3	195.04
1999	9	174.10	5	195.15
2000	10	170.86	12	195.78
2001	16	171.38	2	186.06
2002	11	168.65	11	202.82

Year	Typical WTD		Non-typical WTD	
	Number of Reports	Average Score	Number of Reports	Average Score
2003	16	170.02	10	201.40
2004	17	167.16	12	198.96
2005	16	168.46	16	196.48
2006	22	168.06	10	201.79
2007	23	167.22	13	204.73
2008	14	167.57	7	202.36
2009	32	169.27	19	203.75
2010	37	168.89	12	200.25
2011	24	169.34	17	202.96
2012	26	168.73	14	205.84
2013	11	168.44	7	197.43
2014	16	166.89	7	198.80
2015	21	169.96	10	197.05
2016	40	168.39	32	198.39
2017	34	170.04	21	197.29
2018	23	170.08	16	201.58
2019	42	167.61	21	195.47
2020	36	166.43	20	202.61
2021	36	169.81	15	199.90
2022	30	168.85	16	192.04
2023	22	167.73	16	202.10
2024	12	164.71	22	206.10

TABLE 9-6. Average white-tailed deer (WTD) typical and non-typical score and number of Boone and Crockett scores in each Indiana county reported since 1981. Counties are in order by the total number of reports (both typical and non-typical).

County	Total Reports	Typical WTD		Non-typical WTD	
		Number of Reports	Average Score	Number of Reports	Average Score
Parke	46	24	169.00	22	194.82
Greene	27	18	169.20	9	203.03
Putnam	26	16	170.81	10	196.95
Laporte	25	16	165.31	9	197.40
Ripley	25	15	170.73	10	201.50
Jennings	21	16	174.53	5	205.95
Noble	21	11	165.58	10	199.18
Harrison	20	11	166.31	9	195.26
Lake	20	16	170.33	4	198.56
Martin	20	12	169.25	8	199.53
Tippecanoe	19	11	168.88	8	203.63
Clark	18	11	171.59	7	203.57
Franklin	18	12	168.39	6	202.50
Jasper	18	10	169.75	8	198.11
Porter	18	13	170.07	5	210.48
Clay	17	12	168.57	5	199.13
Henry	17	11	166.84	6	203.73
Jefferson	17	7	168.07	10	197.95
Montgomery	17	10	172.98	7	199.34
Sullivan	17	9	170.92	8	200.08
Switzerland	17	10	166.90	7	198.09
Washington	17	8	170.23	9	198.46
Wayne	17	10	169.03	7	197.82
Lawrence	16	14	166.45	2	196.88
Marshall	16	12	166.54	4	192.25
Saint Joseph	16	10	165.44	6	196.00
Dearborn	15	11	169.48	4	204.78
Kosciusko	15	9	168.71	6	192.98
Miami	15	8	171.47	7	212.73
Warren	15	10	169.00	5	196.55
Delaware	14	9	167.39	5	210.53
Dubois	14	9	170.00	5	204.83
Fayette	14	11	171.75	3	190.29
Rush	14	6	168.48	8	194.61
Newton	13	3	164.17	10	195.80
Vigo	13	8	170.55	5	201.08
White	13	11	170.19	2	188.38
Allen	12	9	169.13	3	197.17
Cass	12	8	168.30	4	203.19
Orange	12	9	164.32	3	194.67
Pike	12	7	176.14	5	198.80
Fountain	11	7	168.77	4	192.25
Hancock	11	6	166.58	5	201.08
Knox	11	7	167.91	4	198.31
Owen	11	6	169.94	5	202.55
Hendricks	10	5	168.80	5	195.38

County	Total Reports	Typical WTD		Non-typical WTD	
		Number of Reports	Average Score	Number of Reports	Average Score
Jackson	10	9	170.89	1	229.88
Scott	10	6	171.10	4	210.00
Wabash	10	4	164.66	6	194.04
Carroll	9	7	170.54	2	243.38
Fulton	9	5	170.45	4	209.28
Grant	9	4	169.72	5	215.53
Huntington	9	6	167.02	3	238.67
Morgan	9	5	168.00	4	206.63
Perry	9	5	168.68	4	203.72
Pulaski	9	7	165.96	2	195.88
Wells	9	7	173.48	2	196.00
Crawford	8	8	167.52		
Dekalb	8	5	167.30	3	200.08
Floyd	8	6	167.63	2	191.94
Jay	8	7	169.18	1	204.25
Marion	8	5	170.25	3	196.50
Posey	8	4	175.09	4	217.56
Starke	8	5	168.58	3	191.42
Bartholomew	7	4	166.41	3	199.38
Clinton	7	3	167.79	4	200.19
Gibson	7	7	164.54		
Hamilton	7	4	165.56	3	211.33
Madison	7	5	177.38	2	200.63
Randolph	7	6	173.56	1	185.50
Shelby	7	4	173.63	3	187.33
Steuben	7	4	171.22	3	197.13
Vermillion	7	4	168.50	3	203.58
Adams	6	5	166.13	1	197.50
Daviess	6	3	162.08	3	207.67
Elkhart	6	4	167.19	2	190.19
Monroe	6	2	184.31	4	193.94
Spencer	6	5	178.60	1	198.75
Union	6	4	175.03	2	197.94
Boone	5	3	165.00	2	248.88
Howard	5	4	166.00	1	216.88
Johnson	5	4	168.91	1	196.38
Ohio	5	4	169.00	1	187.13
Whitley	5	4	167.09	1	188.13
Decatur	4	2	191.25	2	214.75
Warrick	4	2	164.44	2	191.50
Benton	3	1	168.63	2	196.13
Brown	3	3	179.21		
Lagrange	3	2	165.00	1	199.00
Blackford	2	1	161.00	1	196.25
Tipton	2	2	165.38		
Vanderburgh	2			2	188.88

Analysis of Questions Related to the Reduction of County Bag Limits due to Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease

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Introduction and Methods

In the 2026 Deer Management Survey, DNR asked a series of questions related to how DNR manages deer during and after an outbreak of epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD). The questions were prompted to provide evidence of efforts to understand deer hunter preferences and opinions of these management actions. On Feb. 2, 2026, the survey was sent to 205,059 Division of Fish, Wildlife & Nature Preserve contacts that included deer hunters (i.e., individuals who had checked in a deer in 2025 and/or purchased a deer hunting license in 2025), anyone who had filled out a Deer Management Survey previously, and other individuals who had signed up to receive the annual deer management survey at on.IN.gov/deer-survey. A reminder was sent to 184,597 individuals on Feb. 9, and a final reminder was sent to 173,253 individuals on Feb. 16. The response rate was 13%, and the completion rate was 95%. The survey closed at 11 a.m. on Feb 25. A total of 25,236 surveys had at least their county of residence selected.

At the start of the section related to EHD management, DNR presented the following information to explain the proposed rule change.

Below are a series of questions about how DNR manages outbreaks of epizootic hemorrhagic disease (also known as EHD or bluetongue). EHD is a native virus that affects white-tailed deer that often results in deer dying. While deer deaths from EHD can occur at any time, Indiana also experiences severe periodic outbreaks. In 2025, Indiana experienced a significant EHD event in southern Indiana. Fifty-three counties experienced smaller localized outbreaks, but Bartholomew, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Martin, Scott and Switzerland counties experienced a widespread, severe outbreak. As a result, Indiana DNR reduced bag limits in these 7 counties. The effect of EHD will be further evaluated in all 60 counties after the deer season has concluded and recommended changes to the 2026-2027 county bag limits will be made in April 2026.

Methods and Results

Below are the series of questions we asked on the survey of both hunters and non-hunters (in the order presented), and the responses for each answer. Hunters were first asked ***“What is your level of engagement with deer hunting? A selection of zero (0) indicates no engagement at all for deer hunting. A selection of 100 indicates extreme engagement or enthusiasm for deer hunting.”*** The mean response was 83.7 (n=17,612) with the most commonly selected engagement score being 100 (n=5,012; 28%), indicating that individuals filling out the survey are highly engaged deer hunters and the results may not reflect the opinion of those who are only mildly engaged with hunting.

Indiana DNR’s current management practice is to lower antlerless bag limits during the same year that an outbreak of EHD is occurring. For example, if a county has a significant amount of deer deaths due to EHD in August 2025, DNR will work to lower the antlerless bag limits for the upcoming 2025-2026 deer season.

Prior to receiving this survey, were you aware of this management practice?

We also include a breakdown for individuals who consider themselves hunters and those who do not consider themselves hunters.

- No, I was not aware of this management practice (37.0%; n=8,101)
 - Non-hunter – 1,606
 - Hunter – 6,007
 - No answer – 488
- Yes, I was aware of this management practice (63.0%; n=13,807)
 - Non-hunter – 934
 - Hunter – 12,375
 - No answer – 498
- Total number of responses = 21,908

Do you support or oppose lowering antlerless bag limits in the year that an EHD outbreak has occurred?

- Strongly support (total = 52.2%; hunter = 53.9%; non-hunter = 40.6%)
- Somewhat support (total = 20.8%; hunter = 20.9%; non-hunter = 20.9%)
- Neither support nor oppose (total = 15.7%; hunter = 14.8%; non-hunter = 21.6%)
- Somewhat oppose (total = 4.8%; hunter = 4.6%; non-hunter = 6.3%)
- Strongly oppose (total = 3.1%; hunter = 2.9%; non-hunter = 4.4%)
- No opinion (total = 3.4%; hunter = 2.9%; non-hunter = 6.3%)
- Total number of responses = 22,049; hunter = 18,498; non-hunter 2,560

DNR evaluates the impact of EHD after the hunting season has concluded. The current management practice is to lower antlerless bag limits during subsequent years after an outbreak of EHD has occurred. For example, if a county has a significant amount of deer deaths due to EHD in August 2025, DNR will work to lower the antlerless bag limits for the upcoming 2026-2027 deer season, 2027-2028 deer season, etc. until the deer population is like the pre-EHD deer population densities.

Do you support or oppose lowering antlerless bag limits in subsequent years following an EHD outbreak until the population has recovered?

- Strongly support (total = 47.8%; hunter = 49.0%; non-hunter = 38.4%)
- Somewhat support (total = 25.2%; hunter = 25.3%; non-hunter = 24.0%)
- Neither support nor oppose (total = 15.6%; hunter = 15.0%; non-hunter = 19.9%)
- Somewhat oppose (total = 5.4%; hunter = 5.2%; non-hunter = 7.0%)
- Strongly oppose (total = 2.9%; hunter = 2.8%; non-hunter = 4.7%)
- No opinion (total = 3.1%; hunter = 2.7%; non-hunter = 5.9%)
- Total number of responses = 22,058; hunter = 18,505; non-hunter = 2,562

Indiana DNR should lower antlerless bag limits to help deer populations recover from EHD.

- Strongly agree (total = 48.5%; hunter = 49.6%; non-hunter = 40.9%)
- Somewhat agree (total = 26.1%; hunter = 26.3%; non-hunter = 23.9%)
- Neither agree nor disagree (total = 17.1%; hunter = 16.3%; non-hunter = 22.1%)
- Somewhat disagree (total = 5.7%; hunter = 5.4%; non-hunter = 8.7%)
- Strongly disagree (total = 2.5%; hunter = 2.3%; non-hunter = 4.5%)
- Total number of responses = 22,205; hunter = 18,484; non-hunter = 2,550

Before receiving this survey, I was

- Aware of what EHD is and aware a severe deer die-off had occurred prior/ during the 2025 hunting season. (total = 57.1%; hunter = 62.4%; non-hunter = 21.0%)
- Aware of what EHD is but unaware a severe die-off had occurred prior/ during the 2025 hunting season. (total = 32.1%; hunter = 30.9%; non-hunter = 38.2%)
- Unaware of what EHD is but aware a severe deer die-off had occurred prior/during the 2025 hunting season. (total = 3.0%; hunter = 2.5%; non-hunter = 7.1%)
- Unaware of what EHD is and unaware a severe deer die-off had occurred prior/during the 2025 season. (total = 7.7%; hunter = 4.3%; non-hunter = 33.6%)
- Total number of responses = 21,414; hunter = 17,964; non-hunter; 2,480

How concerned are you that deer deaths caused by EHD will negatively impact your future deer hunting satisfaction by reducing the number of deer where you do most of your hunting?

(Responses from counties heavily affected by EHD in 2025: Bartholomew, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Martin, Scott and Switzerland counties)

- Very concerned (56.4%; n=652)
- Moderately concerned (23.9%; n=276)
- Slightly concerned (13.5%; n=156)
- Not at all concerned (5.4%; n=62)
- Not sure (0.9%; n=10)
- Total number of responses = 1,156 hunters

How concerned are you that deer deaths caused by EHD will negatively impact your future deer hunting satisfaction by reducing the number of deer where you do most of your hunting?

(We chose counties where EHD has not severely hit the deer population in the past 5 or more years including Benton, Blackford, Boone, Clinton, Delaware, Fountain, Jay, Madison, Posey, Spencer, Tippecanoe, Tipton, and Warren counties to examine the level of concern for EHD in counties where EHD is not common)

- Very concerned (32.0%; n=621)

- Moderately concerned (29.8%; n=578)
- Slightly concerned (26.5%; n=514)
- Not at all concerned (9.4%; n=182)
- Not sure (2.0%; n=44)
- Total number of responses = 1,939 hunters

How concerned are you that EHD will severely reduce white-tailed deer populations in your county?

(Responses are from counties that were heavily affected by EHD in 2025: Bartholomew, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Martin, Scott and Switzerland counties)

- Very concerned (total = 55.2%; hunter = 57.3%; non-hunter = 24.1%)
- Moderately concerned (total = 26.1%; hunter = 24.4%; non-hunter = 50.6%)
- Slightly concerned (total = 12.5%; hunter = 12.1%; non-hunter = 17.7%)
- Not at all concerned (total = 4.9%; hunter = 4.9%; non-hunter = 5.1%)
- Not sure (total = 1.3%; hunter = 1.2%; non-hunter = 2.5%)
- Total number of responses = 1,234; hunter = 1,155; non-hunter = 79

How concerned are you that EHD will severely reduce white-tailed deer populations in your local area (within 3 miles of where you live or hunt)?

(Responses are from counties that were heavily affected by EHD in 2025: Bartholomew, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Martin, Scott and Switzerland counties)

- Very concerned (total = 54.7%; hunter = 56.8%; non-hunter = 24.1%)
- Moderately concerned (total = 25.4%; hunter = 24.0%; non-hunter = 45.6%)
- Slightly concerned (total = 12.3%; hunter = 11.8%; non-hunter = 20.3%)
- Not at all concerned (total = 6.3%; hunter = 6.3%; non-hunter = 6.3%)
- Not sure (total = 1.3%; hunter = 1.1%; non-hunter = 3.8%)
- Total number of responses = 1,234; hunter = 1,155; non-hunter = 79

How many deer do you plan to harvest next season (Choices were from zero to 18 deer)?

(Responses are from counties that were heavily affected by EHD in 2025: Bartholomew, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Martin, Scott and Switzerland counties)

- 0 deer – 2.0% (22 hunters)
- 1 deer – 33.5% (377 hunters)
- 2 deer – 39.8% (449 hunters)
- 3 deer – 19.9% (224 hunters)
- 4 deer – 3.6 % (41 hunters)
- 5 or more deer – 1.2% (14 hunters)
- Total number of responses = 1,127 hunters

How does the number of deer you plan to harvest in the next season (Fall 2026) compare to your typical harvest?

(Responses are from counties that were heavily affected by EHD in 2025: Bartholomew, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Martin, Scott and Switzerland counties)

- This is my normal harvest – 69.0% (794 hunters)
- This is less than my normal harvest – 21.3% (245 hunters)
- This is more than my normal harvest – 9.7% (112 hunters)
- Total number of responses = 1,151 hunters

Are you planning to reduce your normal hunting effort next year due to EHD outbreaks in your area?

(Responses are from counties that were heavily affected by EHD in 2025: Bartholomew, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Martin, Scott and Switzerland counties)

- Yes – 22.1% (255 hunters)
- No – 54.1% (624 hunters)
- Unsure – 23.8% (274 hunters)
- Total number of responses = 1,153 hunters

If you plan to hunt next year, what do you plan to harvest?

(Responses are from counties that were heavily affected by EHD in 2025: Bartholomew, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Martin, Scott and Switzerland counties)

- Antlered deer only – 31.1% (358 hunters)
- Antlerless deer only – 22.1 % (255 hunters)
- Both antlered and antlerless deer – 49.7% (572 hunters)
- No preference – 13.9% (160 hunters)
- I do not plan to hunt next year – 2.5% (29 hunters)
- Total number of responses = 1,152 hunters

Feel free to provide any additional comments about DNR's current EHD management practices that you have here.

We received 4,562 additional comments about EHD management and other topics. We filtered these comments using Generative AI (Google Notebook) to identify and categorize comments specifically referencing EHD. Based on a filter of these comments, the responses related to EHD and its management center on the following themes:

Observations of EHD Impacts

- **Massive Localized Die-offs:** Numerous hunters and landowners reported finding large numbers of dead deer near water sources (i.e., creeks, ponds, and rivers) during the late summer and early fall, particularly in Martin, Jennings, and Jackson counties in 2025 and Porter and Noble counties in 2024. For instance, one landowner reported finding 34 dead deer on their farm in Switzerland County, and another found 16 dead deer on an 80-acre farm in Noble County.

- **Physical Signs and Recovery:** Commenters noted specific symptoms like emaciated appearance, deer walking in circles, and cracked or sloughed hooves on harvested animals, which are indicative of a deer that survived a previous EHD infection.
- **Impact on Mature Bucks:** A recurring observation is that EHD appears to hit mature, trophy-class bucks harder than other segments of the population, leading to concerns about the long-term age structure and quality of the herd.

Feedback on Management and Policy

- **Support for Bag Limit Reductions:** Most hunters support the DNR's current practice of lowering antlerless (doe) quotas in counties with confirmed EHD outbreaks to facilitate herd recovery.
- **Need for Rapid/Multi-Year Response:** Many suggest that reductions should be implemented immediately upon discovery of a die-off rather than waiting for the following season. Others believe limits should stay lowered for 3–5 years to ensure a full rebound.
- **Township-Level Management:** A significant number of commenters argue that county-wide management is too broad, as EHD often decimates one “pocket” or township while a herd just a few miles away remains overpopulated.
- **Concerns Over Reporting Accuracy:** There is widespread frustration regarding the reporting process. Several commenters noted finding dozens of carcasses but being told by the DNR that their area was not a confirmed EHD zone, leading to the belief that the disease is under-reported.

Theories on Cause and Prevention

- **Environmental Factors:** Many comments link EHD outbreaks to regional droughts and the resulting stagnant water where the biting midge (no-see-um) vectors breed.
- **Suggested Preventive Measures:** Suggestions for mitigating EHD include:
- **Vector Control:** Spraying insecticides around waterways or supporting natural predators like bats.
- **Habitat Management:** Improving water distribution to prevent deer from crowding around limited, stagnant sources.
- **Supplementation:** Providing medicated minerals or supplements to strengthen the herd's immune system.
- While some comments diverge into unrelated topics such as poaching, hunting pressure, and predation by bobcats and coyotes, the vast majority of the 4,562 responses remain focused on the ecological and recreational impact of EHD in Indiana.

Discussion

There is a clear indicator in our survey responses that the public is in favor of DNR taking action to help deer populations recover, even if it means the number of deer they can take is being restricted. During years when EHD has occurred, 73.0% of the public generally supports (to some degree) DNR taking immediate action in the year when deer are dying to limit the number of deer that can be harvested by lowering antlerless bag limits in the affected counties. Only 7.9%

of the public opposes this management action to some degree. Likewise, in the following year post-EHD, 73.0% of the public generally supports (to some degree) lowering bag limits until population densities have recovered while 8.3% opposed (to some degree) this management action. And there is the same general level of support (74.6%) for keeping bag limits low until populations recover with few individuals (8.3%) dissenting with this management practice. Both hunters and non-hunters had a similar level of support and dissent with this management action. This level of consensus for a wildlife management policy is rare, especially among hunters who are highly engaged with deer hunting and who often have dissenting opinions about management policies (i.e., trophy management vs. managing for maximum opportunity; firearms season start dates; etc.; Caudell 2023), and often different from that of the general public.

EHD is of concern to hunters both where EHD has hit recently and in general. 68.3% of hunters expressed at least a moderate level of concern statewide that EHD would impact their future hunting. In counties that have not had EHD in recent years, 61.8% of hunters expressed at least a moderate amount of concern compared to 80.3% of hunters who were in counties that experienced EHD in the past year. So even hunters in counties that are not frequently affected by EHD still express a high level of concern that EHD will affect them in the future. Both hunters (80.8%) and non-hunters (69.6%) expressed at least a moderate amount of concern about the impact of EHD to the populations within 3 miles of where they live or hunt in the counties most heavily affected by EHD in 2025 including Bartholomew, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Martin, Scott and Switzerland counties. Likewise, both hunters (81.7%) and non-hunters (74.7%) expressed concerns about population level within the county. The concerns expressed by hunters can be at least partially addressed through active management practices, such as lowering bag limits. Even in areas that are not heavily impacted by EHD to the point where populations may experience severe declines, it may still be desirable to use bag limits to address these public concerns.

Literature Cited

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Estimating White-tailed Deer Densities within an Urban Area

CARSTEN WHITE AND TARYN SCHERMER, *INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES*

Urban deer populations have become an increasing concern across many cities and towns in Indiana. Each year, the Indiana DNR receives numerous reports from municipal officials and members of the public describing perceived increases in local deer numbers. These reports frequently highlight issues such as elevated human-wildlife conflict, rising deer-vehicle collisions, and noticeable increases in deer browsing on vegetation.

In the more recent past, the Indiana DNR Deer Program has relied on small scale, property level assessments of deer abundance to provide guidance for local management decisions. While useful, these assessments do not capture population patterns on a broader scale. Without a citywide or townwide understanding of deer distribution and abundance, it is difficult to develop effective, long-term management strategies.

In late 2025, staff from the City of Bloomington Animal Care & Control contacted the Indiana DNR Deer Program requesting assistance with evaluating the deer population within Bloomington city limits. This collaboration provided an opportunity for the Deer Program to further refine its approach to estimating deer populations, this time within a highly urbanized environment. Building on the recent development of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) survey techniques used on state-owned Fish & Wildlife areas, the program applied methods to ensure flights were completed safely, in compliance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) standards, and in a statistically valid manner. The goal of this effort was to develop a survey approach that could serve as a model for future deer abundance assessments in other urban areas throughout Indiana.

Beginning in March 2026, the Deer Program began UAV flights in randomly selected blocks within City of Bloomington parks. Block sizes were standardized at 350 × 350 meters to accommodate the wide range of park sizes within city limits. Flights were scheduled during low- use periods on weekdays to reduce the likelihood of encountering park visitors, minimize safety concerns, and avoid human interference with deer behavior. Because many parks lie within controlled airspace near the Monroe County Airport, FAA authorization was required in advance of each flight through the Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability (LAANC) system.

During the initial flight planning period, the Deer Program elected not to conduct UAV flights over privately owned, non-park property due to several logistical and regulatory considerations. Although surveying these areas would likely improve citywide abundance estimates, the program determined that existing density estimates derived from previous camera trap distance sampling work in 2022 (Delisle et al. 2023) within Deer Management Unit (DMU) 4, which encompasses the City of Bloomington, could be used to inform densities in adjacent private lands. Additionally, it was anticipated that deer densities on public park property would be slightly lower than surrounding private areas due to limited annual harvest in certain park properties compared to limited mortality within private property in city limits (i.e., deer-vehicle collisions).

In total, UAV surveys were completed across 30 randomly selected blocks within city owned park boundaries. These surveys produced an estimated deer density of 61.7 deer per square mile (95% CI: 32.8–114.5; Table 9-7). Using previously developed DMU wide density estimates, the Deer Program then produced deer density calculations for city owned park property, privately owned land, and the

TABLE 9-7. Population estimates of deer within Bloomington, Indiana, using previous estimates from camera traps and spatially explicit models (Delisle et al. 2023) and estimates from uncrewed aerial surveys in March 2026.

City of Bloomington Parks	72.9	71.3 - 74.8	2023 Camera Trap
Bloomington, IN (public & private)	97.2	95.7 - 98.8	2023 Camera Trap

combined area within Bloomington's full municipal boundary (public and private lands included). The resulting estimates were 72.9 deer per square mile (95% CI: 71.3–74.8) within city owned park property, 104.8 deer per square mile (95% CI: 101.8–107.9) on privately owned property, and 97.2 deer per square mile (95% CI: 95.7–98.8) across the entire city limits.

Because much of the 2022 camera trap dataset reflected non-urban private lands elsewhere in DMU 4, the Deer Program expected those estimates to produce higher values than the UAV based surveys conducted strictly within urban parks. As anticipated, camera derived estimates exceeded UAV estimates within the park system, and adjacent private property estimates were even higher, reflecting habitat differences and the low annual harvest that occurs on portions of public parkland.

The Indiana DNR Deer Program will continue refining urban deer density estimation methods to better assist Indiana communities in managing growing urban deer populations. Similar surveys will be conducted in other cities and towns as interest arises, with continued emphasis on maintaining public and pilot safety, improving methodology, and increasing the efficiency and reliability of deer population assessments in urban environments.

Literature Cited

Delisle, Z.J., Miller, D.L. and Swihart, R.K. 2023. Modelling density surfaces of intraspecific classes using camera trap distance sampling. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution* 14(5):1287-1298.

Change in Equipment Type used to Harvest Deer during the 2025-2026 Hunting Season

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With the change to state law IC 14-22-2-8 Deer hunting; permitted firearms by the General Assembly in 2025, hunters had a much greater range of rifles that could be used on both public and private land. The law now allows any rifle that fires a bullet with a diameter of 0.219 inches (5.56 mm) or larger to be used for deer hunting on both private and public land. Prior to this, hunters could use rifles that fired a bullet with a diameter of at least 0.243 inches with a case length between 1.16 and 3 inches on private land. On public land, hunters could use rifles that fired at least a 0.357 inch bullet with a case length between 1.16 and 1.8 inches. While the requirement of the case not being tapered was not included, most of the cartridges that fall into this range are referred to as 'straight-walled cartridges'. Historically, with changes in equipment type, we see hunters switch harvest to equipment they may have not been able to use previously (i.e., widespread adoption of crossbows, addition of rifles, addition of high-powered rifles, etc.). But it is unclear whether this change would cause a similar shift in harvest. Therefore, we examined the harvest records from 2025-2026 and 5 years prior to determine if similar shifts occurred overall, on both public and private lands. Because high-powered rifles were already being used on private land, and most cartridges were already legal, we do not expect a large shift in equipment type. On public land, because the new law allows for the use of high-powered rifles, we expect to see an increase in harvest using rifles. Although high-powered vs. straight-walled cartridge rifles is not a selection in the check-in game system, we expect to see an increase in the use of rifles overall.

Methods and Results

We used data from the electronic deer check-in system to determine changes in use of rifles and shotguns from 2020-21 through 2025-26 seasons. In the data, 423 out of 737,173 records were marked as void. Records can be voided when a customer calls and reports a duplicate check-in, a sick deer that was harvested, or other types of check-in errors. Because the reason for the void was not recorded in the data, all voided records were removed for this analysis. In late 2024, the Indiana DNR switched to a new vendor for license sales and deer check-in. We found an additional 1.7% error rate (2,192 errors out of 131,226 records from the 2025-26 season) associated with the switch in check-in accuracy. Errors included nonresident checking in deer on resident licenses and vice-versa, deer checked in for license types that should not have been used (i.e., state parks hunts did not occur in 2025), and similar mistakes related to hunters having all possible options to choose from in the check-in system.

We found a significant increase in rifle use in 2025 compared to the average of the previous 5 years in both the deer firearms license (6,287 compared to an average of 4,690 + 420) and the bundle license (32,192 compared to an average of 26,046 + 1,754; Table 9-8). This was followed by a significant decrease in shotgun use in the deer firearms license (1,031 compared to an average of 1,377 + 232; Table 9-8) and the bundle license (3,655 compared to an average of 5,120 + 863; Table 9-8).

The 2025 harvest of deer in public lands increased significantly with the use of rifles over the past 5 years (3,099 compared to an average of 2,840 + 542; Table 9-9). Likewise, the use of shotguns to harvest deer in 2025 was down significantly compared to the previous 5 years (496 compared to an average of 1,694 + 240; Table 9-9). However, the overall harvest in public lands did not increase significantly in 2025 compared to the previous 5 years (8,673 compared to an average of 9,262 + 691; Table 9-9).

TABLE 9-8. Harvest by license and equipment type for residents and nonresidents for the last 6 years. Averages for 5 years of harvest (2020-2024) and 95% confidence intervals are provided for comparison to the 2025 deer harvest. Data does not include voided records. An error rate of 1.7% was identified in the check-in records.

Resident License Type	Equipment Used for Harvest	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	5-year Prior Average	5-year Prior 95% CI	2025-2026
Deer Bonus or Multiseason Antlerless									
	Bow and Arrow	273	223	223	274	249	248.4	22.6	280
	Crossbow	272	213	234	253	248	244	19.7	283
	Handgun	22	15	20	13	14	16.8	3.5	23
	Muzzleloader	552	394	399	425	521	458.2	65.5	647
	Rifle	2416	1504	1775	1711	1809	1843	305.4	1766
	Shotgun	716	455	476	389	297	466.6	139.4	230
Deer Bundle									
	Bow and Arrow	7178	6422	6462	8094	8115	7254.2	744.6	8659
	Crossbow	8045	7565	7595	9742	8992	8387.8	851.1	9980
	Handgun	184	143	173	141	127	153.6	21.4	131
	Muzzleloader	6389	5286	5547	5235	5992	5689.8	440.6	6190
	Rifle	24893	24101	27360	25075	28804	26046.6	1754.3	32192
	Shotgun	6344	5462	5517	4243	4035	5120.2	862.5	3655
Deer Crossbow or Archery									
	Bow and Arrow	2147	1811	2030	2459	2283	2146	220.2	2132
	Crossbow	1843	1655	1844	2294	2107	1948.6	224.8	2362
	Unknown					7			61
Deer Firearms									
	Handgun	25	22	24	18	20	21.8	2.6	30
	Muzzleloader	321	245	282	201	182	246.2	51.1	186
	Rifle	4321	4079	5185	4855	5008	4689.6	420.2	6287
	Shotgun	1625	1346	1650	1206	1056	1376.6	232.1	1031
	Unknown					1			12
Deer Military/Refuge									
	Bow and Arrow	88	77	67	68	88	77.6	9.2	60
	Crossbow	54	49	30	47	59	47.8	9.8	41
	Handgun	1	2	1	2		1.5	0.5	1
	Muzzleloader	33	45	54	34	56	44.4	9.6	8
	Rifle	69	122	146	220	201	151.6	54.5	131
	Shotgun	41	105	109	125	132	102.4	32.3	14
Deer Muzzleloader									
	Muzzleloader	592	452	498	505	584	526.2	53.7	576
Deer Reduction Zone									
	Bow and Arrow	1036	816	891	990	821	910.8	88.8	883
	Crossbow	931	773	858	976	740	855.6	89.9	746
	Handgun	8	8	2	3	8	5.8	2.7	13
	Muzzleloader	146	96	137	86	108	114.6	23.2	90
	Rifle	904	975	1024	1076	1120	1019.8	75.7	1146
	Shotgun	211	181	163	138	133	165.2	28.7	101
Early Park Reduction									
	Bow and Arrow	28	26	14	36	23	25.4	7.1	
	Crossbow	15	15	9	25	13	15.4	5.3	1
	Handgun	5	4	5	5	4	4.6	0.5	
	Muzzleloader	50	43	57	52	25	45.4	11.1	
	Rifle	384	271	532	593	568	469.6	122.9	5
	Shotgun	329	205	306	266	206	262.4	50.6	
Landowner Exemption									
	Bow and Arrow	1057	942	936	1205	1079	1043.8	99.4	1173
	Crossbow	1813	1800	1851	2398	2332	2038.8	267.7	2340
	Handgun	51	25	33	23	26	31.6	10.3	47
	Muzzleloader	1367	1053	1146	1186	1243	1199	104.4	1150
	Rifle	7271	6949	8254	7639	8302	7683	532.8	8739
	Shotgun	1881	1592	1690	1315	1173	1530.2	255.5	1096
Late Park Reduction									
	Bow and Arrow	5	7	6	6	18	8.4	4.8	1
	Crossbow	7	3	2	3	5	4	1.8	2
	Handgun	1	2	3	1	1	1.6	0.8	
	Muzzleloader	12	12	10	15	31	16	7.7	
	Rifle	119	115	101	183	323	168.2	82.4	2
	Shotgun	69	51	70	75	106	74.2	17.9	

TABLE 9-8. Cont.

Resident License Type	Equipment Used for Harvest	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	5-year Prior Average	5-year Prior 95% CI	2025-2026
Lifetime License									
	Bow and Arrow	2206	1798	1782	2105	1829	1944	176.3	1673
	Crossbow	3537	3088	3071	3900	3409	3401	308.0	3431
	Handgun	97	79	77	75	79	81.4	7.9	76
	Muzzleloader	3027	2576	2626	2501	2704	2686.8	182.5	2561
	Rifle	9109	8019	9061	7867	8133	8437.8	535.3	8073
	Shotgun	2263	1804	1884	1406	1283	1728	351.6	1098
Military Exempt - IC 14-22-11-11									
	Bow and Arrow	8	11	5	10	9	8.6	2.1	10
	Crossbow	10	6	3	1	9	5.8	3.4	8
	Handgun	1				1	1	0.0	
	Muzzleloader	10	3	4	2	11	6	3.7	9
	Rifle	48	22	37	50	47	40.8	10.4	35
	Shotgun	4	9	12	9	4	7.6	3.1	4
Youth Free Hunt Days									
	Bow and Arrow	1			3	3	2.3	1.0	6
	Crossbow	9	5	1	8	4	5.4	2.9	11
	Handgun	1	1			2	1.3	0.5	
	Muzzleloader	7	11	3	2	3	5.2	3.4	6
	Rifle	125	139	5	167	136	114.4	56.4	127
	Shotgun	45	30	1	31	17	24.8	14.8	23
Youth Hunt/Trap									
	Bow and Arrow	793	733	755	898	898	815.4	70.1	873
	Crossbow	1570	1436	1483	1933	1986	1681.6	231.6	1925
	Handgun	7	10	10	9	8	8.8	1.2	11
	Muzzleloader	899	641	709	733	767	749.8	85.3	750
	Rifle	6609	6641	7554	7387	8311	7300.4	633.4	8901
	Shotgun	1289	1086	1127	791	826	1023.8	188.8	681
Deer Bonus or Multiseason Antlerless									
	Bow and Arrow	13	14	15	9	13	12.8	2	22
	Crossbow	10	7	9	7	14	9.4	2.5	15
	Handgun	1			1		1	0	1
	Muzzleloader	17	8	9	17	13	12.8	3.8	11
	Rifle	126	73	126	130	156	122.2	27	135
	Shotgun	30	14	28	12	8	18.4	8.8	4
Deer Bundle									
	Bow and Arrow	380	395	197	224	251	289.4	82	255
	Crossbow	430	422	277	319	298	349.2	64.1	299
	Handgun	7	9	5	2	3	5.2	2.5	1
	Muzzleloader	285	280	186	190	173	222.8	49.1	213
	Rifle	1792	1932	1207	928	1145	1400.8	390.3	1205
	Shotgun	291	294	157	100	100	188.4	87.5	91
Deer Crossbow or Archery									
	Bow and Arrow	507	491	509	638	680	565	78.1	703
	Crossbow	271	306	339	452	432	360	70.6	434
	Unknown								5
Deer Firearms									
	Handgun	1	1	2	3	2	1.8	0.7	1
	Muzzleloader	45	38	32	29	20	32.8	8.4	20
	Rifle	1017	1187	1637	1329	1663	1366.6	251.7	1710
	Shotgun	222	217	238	194	195	213.2	16.7	137
	Unknown								4
Deer Military/Refuge									
	Bow and Arrow	4			1	3	2.6	1.3	2
	Crossbow		1	1	1	2	1.25	0.4	1
	Handgun				1	1	1	0	1
	Muzzleloader					1	1	#DIV/0!	
	Rifle	7	6	7	6	6	6.4	0.4	11
	Shotgun	3	2	3	6	4	3.6	1.3	2
Deer Muzzleloader									
	Muzzleloader	89	98	86	70	84	85.4	9	84

TABLE 9-8. Cont.

Resident License Type	Equipment Used for Harvest	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	5-year Prior Average	5-year Prior 95% CI	2025-2026
Deer Reduction Zone									
	Bow and Arrow	16	14	11	12	12	13	1.7	6
	Crossbow	10	11	3	12	13	9.8	3.5	8
	Muzzleloader	1	3	2			2	0.9	1
	Rifle	20	25	28	25	24	24.4	2.6	27
	Shotgun	5	4	1	4	4	3.6	1.3	3
Early Park Reduction									
	Rifle		4	2			3	1.3	1
	Shotgun	3		1			2	1.3	
Landowner Exemption									
	Bow and Arrow	36	27	25	29	36	30.6	4.5	39
	Crossbow	65	60	39	42	87	58.6	17.3	70
	Handgun			1	1	2	1.3	0.5	3
	Muzzleloader	28	19	31	24	45	29.4	8.7	54
	Rifle	146	137	154	150	350	187.4	81.5	279
	Shotgun	45	35	27	23	64	38.8	14.7	46
Late Park Reduction									
	Rifle			2	1		1.5	0.6	
	Shotgun					3	3		
Lifetime License									
	Bow and Arrow	39	37	26	33	40	35	5.1	38
	Crossbow	46	41	50	65	60	52.4	8.9	45
	Handgun		1	1		3	1.7	1	
	Muzzleloader	32	45	30	41	28	35.2	6.6	34
	Rifle	164	187	183	169	169	174.4	8.9	153
	Shotgun	37	37	40	39	20	34.6	7.4	21
Military Exempt - IC 14-22-11-11									
	Bow and Arrow		2	1	1		1.3	0.5	
	Crossbow		1	1			1	0	
	Muzzleloader		2				2		
	Rifle	1	2	3		2	2	0.7	
	Shotgun			1			1		
Youth Free Hunt Days									
	Rifle	4	2		3	2	2.8	0.9	1
	Shotgun	1	1				1	0	
Youth Non-resident Deer Licenses									
	Bow and Arrow	4	5	2	3	2	3.2	1.2	6
	Crossbow	12	5	10	12	6	9	3	26
	Muzzleloader	4	4	5	2	3	3.6	1	15
	Rifle	85	65	88	82	50	74	14.4	175
	Shotgun	9	5	5	9	3	6.2	0	13

TABLE 9-9. Harvest by equipment type on public land for the last 6 years. Averages for 5 years of harvest (2020-2024) and 95% confidence intervals are provided for comparison to the 2025 deer harvest. Data does not include voided records. An error rate of 1.7% was identified in the check-in records.

Equipment Type	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	Average 2020-2024	95% CI	2025-2026
Bow and Arrow	1711	1527	1703	1941	2058	1788.0	188.5	2126
Crossbow	1685	1528	1650	1878	1787	1705.6	119.5	1848
Handgun	46	39	46	38	41	42.0	3.4	19
Muzzleloader	1282	1148	1181	1085	1263	1191.8	73.0	1085
Rifle	2235	2177	3033	3225	3533	2840.6	542.5	3099
Shotgun	1987	1655	1938	1539	1352	1694.2	240.0	496
Total	8946	8074	9551	9706	10034	9262.2	691.1	8673

Forecasting the Risk of CWD Infection in Indiana White-tailed Deer

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Introduction

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a fatal infectious disease caused by misfolded prions that affects white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) and other cervids in the United States. CWD spreads between deer through direct contact, bodily fluids, and contaminated environments, with shed prions remaining infectious for many years (Bartelt-Hunt and Bartz 2013). At high prevalences, CWD can negatively impact local deer populations and decrease deer population sizes (Edmunds et al. 2016). CWD infections in people have never been reported, but other prion diseases have crossed from animals to humans, and prion diseases can have long incubation periods, so the CDC recommends not consuming meat from CWD positive deer.

Indiana started routine surveillance for CWD shortly after the first confirmed case in the Midwest occurred in Wisconsin in 2002. Before CWD reached the state, Indiana DNR biologists started planning how to respond to the disease. Despite the efforts of many state and federal agencies to manage CWD, there have been no cost-effective methods found to stop the spread of the disease or indefinitely limit the growth of the disease in the deer population once it has been established. Therefore, Indiana opted for a CWD response plan focused on learning to live with CWD on the landscape (Caudell and Kelly 2026). The Indiana DNR performs routine surveillance with the goal of detecting the disease once it reaches 3-5% prevalence in the deer herd of each Indiana county. Once CWD is detected in a county, either a CWD Positive Area or a CWD Enhanced Surveillance Zone is established, depending on proximity to known cases and characteristics of the infected deer.

A CWD Positive Area indicates that we are confident that CWD is established in the local deer herd or soon will be. A CWD Enhanced Surveillance Zone indicates that more information is needed to adequately assess and define the positive area, and increased efforts for surveillance will occur during the following years. Statistical modeling based on data from other Midwestern states can be used to predict the spread of the disease even with limited positive cases. Following the detection of CWD in Indiana in 2024, we used a Bayesian ecological diffusion model to estimate the spread of the disease and define a CWD Positive Area.

An important part of learning to live with CWD on the landscape is for members of the public to assess personal risk tolerance. An individual may decide not to hunt deer, or to test all harvested deer within a certain area, depending on the relative risk of CWD infection. However, to be able to informatively make these decisions, individuals must understand the distribution of risk across the landscape. An additional benefit to developing a statistical model of how CWD spreads is that it provides a representation of the risk of CWD across a geographic area. We ran statistical models to estimate CWD spread in one CWD Positive Area and two CWD Enhanced Surveillance Zones.

Methods and Results

The first case of CWD in Indiana was detected in 2023 in a deer in LaGrange County in northeast Indiana. Because of its proximity to cases in Michigan, the LaGrange County case was determined to be sufficient to establish a CWD Positive Area. The infected deer was harvested in the southeastern corner of the county, near the border of three adjacent counties, so Steuben, DeKalb, and Noble counties were also included in the CWD Positive Area (Figure 9-1). An



FIGURE 9-1. Counties in Indiana where white-tailed deer have tested positive for chronic wasting disease since 2024.

additional case was detected in Noble County in 2025.

In 2024, CWD was detected at the opposite end of the state in Posey County (Figure 9-1). This case was not proximate to any known CWD outbreaks in Illinois or Kentucky. Posey, Vanderburgh, and Gibson counties were established as a CWD Enhanced Surveillance Zone. In 2025, CWD was detected in Rush and Franklin counties, in the west-central portion of the state (Figure 9-1). These cases were not close to any known CWD outbreaks in Ohio. A CWD Enhanced Surveillance Zone was established and included Dearborn, Decatur, Hancock, Henry, Franklin, Ripley, Rush, and Shelby counties.

We used a Bayesian approach to modeling the spread of CWD since we had few initial observations for each cluster of cases. Bayesian models can be useful even with limited local data because relevant posterior distributions obtained from similar systems can be used to help model the data. By using a spatial ecological diffusion model, we forecasted the intensity of infection on the landscape into the future for each CWD cluster.

The model we used was first developed for Wisconsin using surveillance data that was collected since CWD was detected in the state in 2002 (Hefly et al. 2017). The area being modeled was broken into 2.6 km² grids. Within each grid, the proportion of human development, the proportion of hardwood forest, and the presence or absence of large rivers were used to model how the disease spread on the landscape (Hefly et al. 2017). This model was adapted to use the posterior distributions of model parameters to forecast CWD spread in Michigan (Cook et al. 2023). We used the same approach to forecast CWD spread in each of the disease clusters in Indiana.

In the Northeast CWD Positive Area, the highest risk area is in Noble County (Figure 9-2). Significant areas of high risk also occur in Allen, DeKalb, LaGrange, Steuben, and Whitley counties. Elkhart and Kosciusko counties have large areas of moderate risk. In the Southwest CWD Surveillance Zone, the highest risk areas are in Posey and Vanderburgh counties (Figure 9-3). More moderate risk areas occur in Gibson and Warrick counties. In the Central CWD Surveillance Zone, there are considerable high-risk areas in Franklin, Ripley, and Dearborn counties (Figure 9-4). Decatur, Fayette, Ohio, Rush, and Union counties have widespread moderate risk areas.

Based on the results of the model of the Northeast CWD cluster, the CWD Positive Area was expanded to include Whitley and Allen counties. These model results can help the public assess their optimal risk level and help guide landowners learning to live with CWD on the landscape. We will continue to update these models annually to account for new cases and additional spread. If CWD cases are found in new areas, we will develop additional models to account for these new clusters of disease.

One important caveat is that these models only address areas where CWD cases have already been detected. Because Indiana is surrounded by states with infected deer herds, no area can truly be considered risk free. Models that predict CWD spread rely on dynamics in areas where the disease is already established. They cannot predict new areas where the disease might become established because of the long-distance movement of either an infected animal or a diseased carcass.

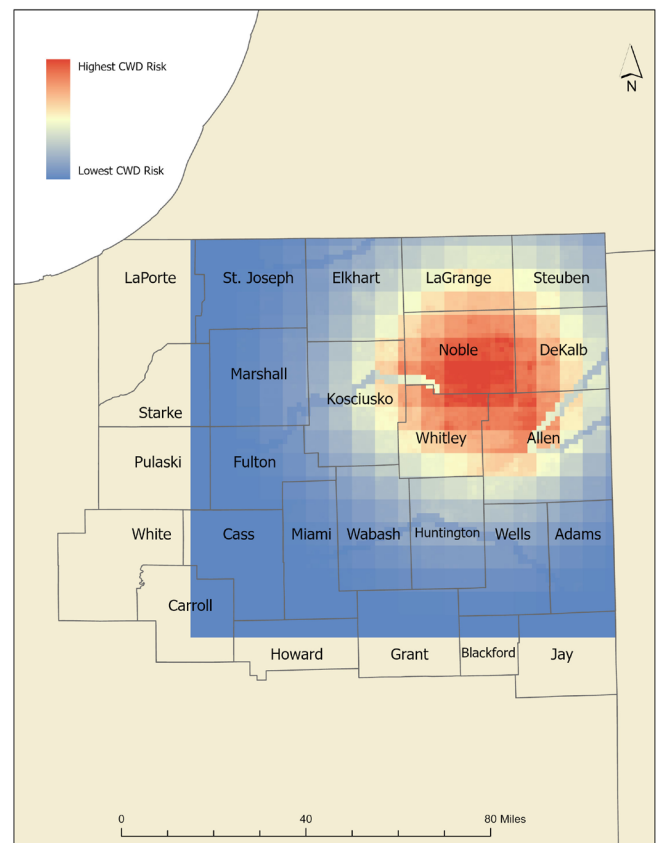


FIGURE 9-2. The relative risk of chronic wasting disease infection in deer herds surrounding the CWD Positive Area in northeastern Indiana.

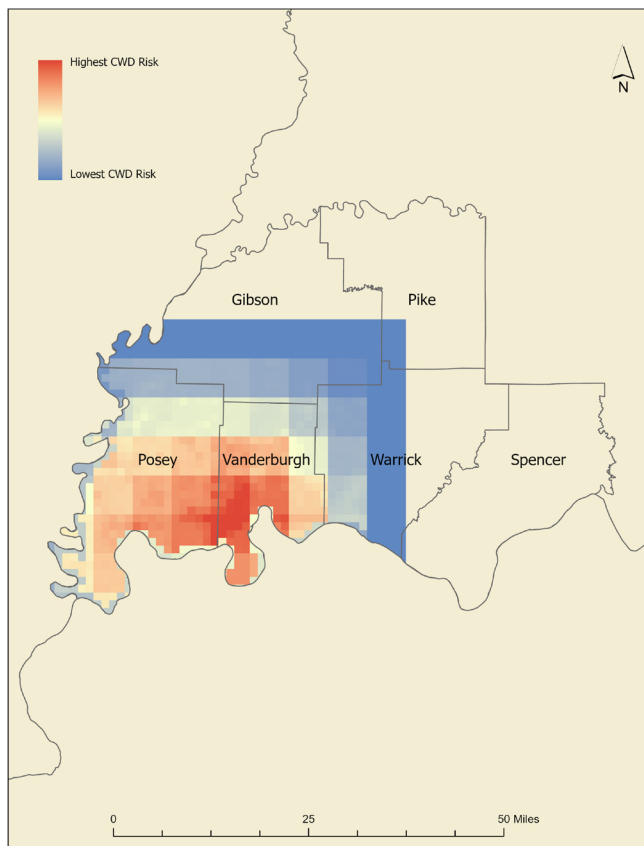


FIGURE 9-3. The relative risk of chronic wasting disease infection in deer herds surrounding the CWD Enhanced Surveillance Zone in southwestern Indiana.

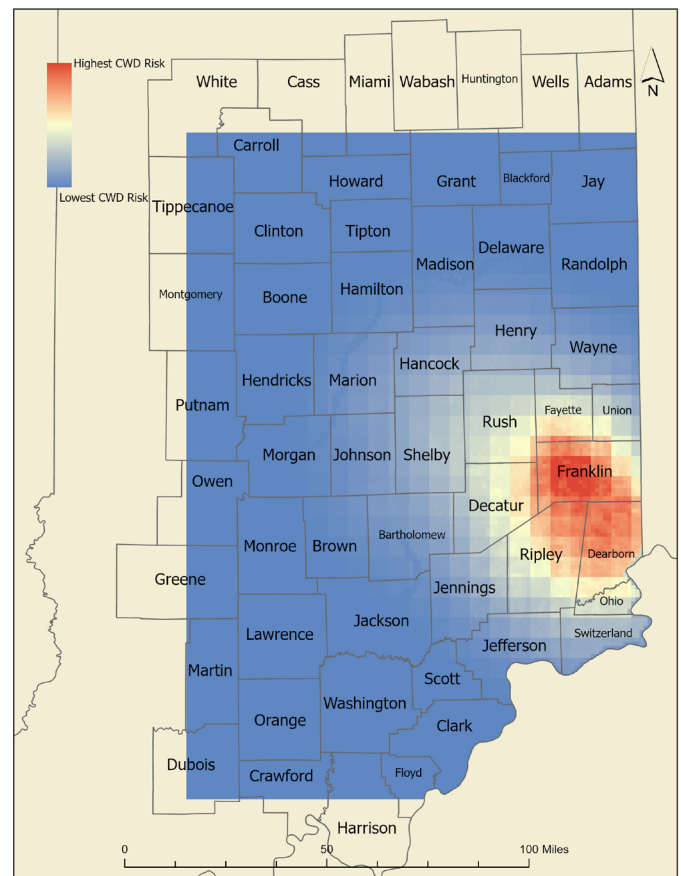


FIGURE 9-4. The relative risk of chronic wasting disease infection in deer herds surrounding the CWD Enhanced Surveillance Zone in central Indiana.

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- Hefley, T.J., Hooten, M.B., Russell, R.E., Walsh, D.P. and Powell, J.A., 2017. When mechanism matters: Bayesian forecasting using models of ecological diffusion. *Ecology Letters*, 20(5), pp.640-650.

Chapter 10. EXTERNAL DEER RESEARCH

Studies described in the External Deer Research chapter are projects being conducted by university partners to better understand deer and inform management decisions in Indiana.

Publications with External Research Partners

2025 Publications

- Ahmed, M. S., B. J. Hanley, C. I. Mitchell, R. C. Abbott, N. A. Hollingshead, J. G. Booth, J. Guinness, C. S. Jennelle, F. H. Hodel, C. Gonzalez-Crespo, C. R. Middaugh, J. R. Ballard, B. Clemons, C. H. Killmaster, T. M. Harms, J. N. Caudell, K. M. Benavidez-Westrich, E. McCallen, C. Casey, L. M. O'Brien, J. K. Trudeau, C. Stewart, M. Carstensen, William T. McKinley, K. P. Hynes, A. E. Stevens, L. A. Miller, M. Cook, R. T. Myers, J. Shaw, M. J. Tonkovich, J. D. Kelly, D. M. Grove, D. J. Storm, and K. L. Schuler. 2024. Predicting chronic wasting disease in white-tailed deer at the county scale using machine learning. *Scientific Reports* 14:14373. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-024-65002-7>
- Booth, J. G., B. J. Hanley, N. E. Thompson, C. Gonzalez-Crespo, S. A. Christensen, C. S. Jennelle, J. N. Caudell, Z. J. Delisle, J. Guinness, N. A. Hollingshead, C. E. Them, and K. L. Schuler. 2025. Management Agencies can Leverage Animal Social Structure for Wildlife Disease Surveillance. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 61(2):472-476.
- Navarro, D., E. K. Latch, A. K. Tallon, C. N. Ott-Conn, R. W. DeYoung, D. P. Walsh, P. T. Euclide, C. R. G., W. A. Larson, A. S. Seetharam, A. J. Severin, J. M. Reecy, Z. Hu, J. R. Cantrell, M. Carstensen, J. N. Caudell, C. H. Killmaster, M. L. Lockwood, W. T. McKinley, A. S. Norton, K. L. Schuler, D. J. Storm, J. A. Sumners, W. D. Walter, J. A. Blanchong. 2026. Development of High-Throughput Genomic Resources to Inform White-Tailed Deer Population and Disease Management. *Molecular Ecology Resources* 26(1):e70085. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1755-0998.70085>
- Wang, J., B. J. Hanley, N. E. Thompson, Y. Gong, D. P. Walsh, C. Gonzalez-Crespo, Y. Huang, J. G. Booth, J. N. Caudell, L. A. Miller, and K. L. Schuler. 2025. Strategic planning of prevention and surveillance for emerging diseases and invasive species. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 122(39):e2507202122. <https://www.pnas.org/doi/epdf/10.1073/pnas.2507202122>

2024 Publications

- Delisle, Z. J., R. D. Sample, J. N. Caudell, and R. K. Swihart. 2024. Deer activity levels and patterns vary along gradients of food availability and anthropogenic development. *Scientific Reports* 14:10223. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-024-60079-6>
- Delisle, Z. J., C. J. Reeling, J. N. Caudell, E. B. McCallen, R. K. Swihart. 2024. Targeted recreational hunting can reduce animal-vehicle collisions and generate substantial revenue for wildlife management agencies. *Science of the Total Environment* 935:173460
- Lancaster, N. A., C. J. Reeling, J. G. Lee, R. T. Melstrom, J. N. Caudell, G. Albers. 2024. Willingness-to-Pay for Rationed Goods: Bobcat Harvest Permits in Indiana. *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics* 56(1):70-85. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/aae.2024.1>
- Stinchcomb, T. R., Z. Ma, R. K. Swihart, J. N. Caudell, Z. Nyssa, C. C. Sponarski. 2024. Mapping social conflicts to enhance the integrated management of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). *Conservation Science and Practice* 6(3):e13086. <https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/csp2.13086>

White-Tailed Deer and Furbearer Economics

Cost: \$814,663.00 federal dollars; \$0 state dollars

Grant Period: Jan. 1, 2021, to Jan. 31, 2028

Project Personnel

- Dr. Carson Reeling – Project Co-Lead Investigator, Purdue University
- Dr. Mo Zhou – Project Co-Lead Investigator, Purdue University
- Dr. John Lee – Project Co-Lead Investigator, Purdue University
- Dr. Zhao Ma – Co-Principal Investigator, Purdue University
- Dr. Richard Melstrom – Project Co-Lead Investigator, Loyola University – Chicago
- Dr. Robert Swihart – Project Co-Lead Investigator, Purdue University
- Dr. Joe N. Caudell – DNR Project Liaison, Indiana DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife
- Geriann Albers – DNR Project Liaison, Indiana DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife

Overview and Purpose

White tailed deer and furbearers provide substantial economic value to Indiana residents through both consumptive uses (hunting and trapping) and nonconsumptive uses (viewing, photography, and existence values). They also impose costs through vehicle collisions, crop and property damage, and potential transmission of infectious diseases.

Effective management requires understanding the balance between these benefits and costs; however, reliable statewide estimates have historically been limited. This project addresses that gap by quantifying the economic value of key deer and furbearer species and by developing models to inform long term management decisions.

Objectives

- Estimate the benefits of consumptive uses of white-tailed deer.
- Estimate the benefits of consumptive uses of furbearers.
- Estimate nonconsumptive benefits and costs.
- Evaluate distributional effects of deer and furbearer management.
- Develop an integrated dynamic model combining human behavior and wildlife populations to evaluate management scenarios.

Approach

The project integrates multiple data streams—hunter surveys, harvest records, household surveys, spatial land use data, and economic modeling—to estimate the value derived from hunting, trapping, wildlife watching, and ecosystem services. The team then uses these estimates to build statewide economic impact models and an integrated bioeconomic simulation framework for management decision support.

Objective 1 — Consumptive Value of White-tailed Deer

Researchers developed several recreation demand models linking hunters' site choices to landscape features and trip costs, using:

- 2019 Deer Management Survey responses
- 2019 harvest check-in data
- Customer demographic characteristics

Across three model versions, results were largely consistent. For example, hunters value keeping Allen County open for hunting at approximately \$0.31 per trip, or \$3.1 million annually assuming 10 million statewide hunting trips. Models differ somewhat in how population density and developed land influence location choice, with check-in based models showing stronger sensitivity to development. A manuscript synthesizing these comparisons is in preparation. Next steps include integrating deer population metrics into each model.

Objective 2 — Consumptive Value of Furbearers

A statewide survey of 2,000 licensed furbearer hunters and trappers yielded 421 responses. The survey assessed willingness to pay (WTP) for bobcat harvest licenses, which were not permitted during the time of the survey.

- Estimated mean WTP: \$10.40–\$26.40, depending on bag limits and quotas.
- Estimated statewide outputs:
 - Hunting: \$238.7 million
 - Trapping: \$6.7 million

These results help quantify the potential economic impact of introducing new furbearer harvest opportunities.

Objectives 3 & 5 — Nonconsumptive Values and Integrated Modeling

The team implemented a two-stage household survey to estimate nonconsumptive values and measure wildlife related damages.

Stage 1 — Wildlife Viewing and Ecological Values

A two-wave mail survey to 7,500 Indiana residents (summer 2022) used a discrete choice experiment to estimate WTP for wildlife sightings in state parks. Findings include:

WTP ranged from \$0–\$60 per sighting, depending on species and recreational context.

One state park’s wildlife “natural capital” was valued at nearly \$60 million.

A manuscript summarizing these results is in development.

Stage 2 — Wildlife Around the Home

A second survey (spring 2023) assessed WTP for seeing or avoiding wildlife in residential settings. Beginning in late 2024, seasonal logbooks were distributed to measure actual expenditures on wildlife feeding or deterrence which serve as lower-bound WTP estimates. Preliminary findings show:

- Squirrel/chipmunk: ~\$0.50 (statistically significant)
- Songbirds: \$2.89 (statistically significant)
- Deer: \$2.69 (not statistically significant)
- Furbearers: \$14.84 (not statistically significant)
- Waterfowl: –\$1.01, indicating perceived nuisance

Additional waves continue through summer 2025.

Public Attitudes Toward Regulations

Household surveys included questions on wanton waste laws and predator hunting tournaments that revealed:

- Although nearly all residents agree with the purpose of wanton waste laws, ~75% of residents and >50% of hunters do not know what the laws are.
- Acceptance of deer hunting by 80% of residents once the wanton waste laws were explained.
- Acceptance of furbearer harvests increases from 20% to 70% if wanton waste laws are extended to these species.
- Support for predator hunting tournaments is higher among those with hunting/trapping experience and among higher income households.

Two manuscripts reporting these findings are under review.

Objective 4 — Economic Impact and Sector Analysis

The team completed updated input output analyses for hunting and trapping activities using 2020 statewide data.

Hunting (Furbearer)

- Total economic impact: ~\$143.9 million
- Direct output: ~\$81.7 million
- Output multiplier: 1.76

Each dollar of direct output generates an additional \$0.76 in indirect and induced activity.

Key benefiting sectors: retail, gasoline, groceries, restaurants, warehousing.

Trapping

- Total impact: ~\$2.5 million
- Direct output: ~\$1.4 million

Impacts concentrated in retail (general merchandise, gasoline, clothing/sporting goods), trucking, and specific durable goods manufacturing.

Future analyses will compare effects across multiple years.

Next steps in the project

- Incorporate population estimates into recreational demand models.
- Complete analysis of nonconsumptive value logbook data and refine statewide extrapolations.
- Finalize manuscripts related to hunting demand, nonconsumptive values, and policy attitudes.
- Continue updating economic impact analyses using additional years of data.
- Develop and calibrate integrated bioeconomic population behavior models to support deer and furbearer management decisions statewide.

Testing and Validation of Telomere-Based Age Estimates in Wildlife

Cost: \$515,197.00 federal dollars; \$0 state dollars

October 1, 2022 – June 30, 2027

Project Personnel

- Dr. Andrew DeWoody – Principal Investigator, Purdue University
- Julia Buchannan-Schwanke – Graduate Research Assistant, Purdue University
- Dr. Joe N. Caudell – DNR Project Liaison, Indiana DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife
- Geriann Albers – DNR Project Liaison, Indiana DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife

Overview and Purpose

Accurate age estimation is fundamental for wildlife population modeling, harvest quota development, and demographic analyses. Traditional aging methods—such as tooth wear and replacement or cementum annuli analysis—are widely used but can be subjective, inconsistent, or costly, particularly at large sample sizes. This project evaluates the potential of DNA-based aging methods, including telomere length and emerging methylation technology, for white-tailed deer and coyotes. If validated, these methods may offer a scalable, objective alternative for age estimation across multiple species.

Scientific Background

Telomeres, protective DNA sequences at chromosome ends, shorten with age and can be measured using quantitative PCR. When calibrated using known-age individuals, telomere length has potential as an age estimator. Methylation at specific genomic cytosine nucleotide (CpG) sites—already shown to predict age with high accuracy in humans and some wildlife—may offer even greater precision. These DNA-based tools could improve accuracy compared to traditional methods and broaden sampling opportunities using minimally or noninvasive tissue sources.

Objectives

- Validate telomeric and methylation-based age estimates using known-age deer, coyotes, and other available mammals.
- Compare DNA-based age estimates to tooth wear/replacement (TWR) and cementum annuli (CA) methods across age classes to determine the most accurate approach for management applications.

Progress and Key Activities

Objective 1 — Validation Using Known-Age Samples

Laboratory Development and Early Assays

During 2023, the graduate researcher established laboratory protocols and began testing six candidate telomere assays. DNA was successfully extracted from available 2021–2022 coyote blood samples and 2021 deer tissue samples. Nasal swab sampling trials showed low DNA yields when using FTA cards but acceptable yield when stored in lysis buffer.

Sample Acquisition

- Coyotes: In November 2023, 83 known-age coyotes were sampled at USDA-APHIS's Logan, Utah facility.
- Deer: In January 2024, 310 known-age deer antler samples (recent and historical, dating to the 1970s) were collected at Kerr Wildlife Management Area.

- Additional coyote samples (n=31) will be provided as part of an ongoing MOU.

Telomere Assays

Three telomere-length assays have been completed for ~800 deer and coyote samples. Universal ultraconserved element (UCE) primers did not amplify reliably, prompting development of species-specific UCE controls.

Key Findings

- Telomere length generally declines with age, as expected.
- Antler samples unexpectedly showed positive correlations, potentially linked to differences in effective population size or sample history.
- Preliminary accuracy using telomere length alone:
 - ± 3.1 years for coyotes
 - ± 1.8 years for deer

These results indicate that telomere-based aging holds some promise but is unlikely to match the precision required for fine-scale demographic inference, especially in deer.

A manuscript describing these results was submitted to the Journal of Wildlife Management in October 2025, and the graduate student successfully defended her M.S. thesis in July 2025.

Objective 2 — Comparison With Traditional Aging Methods

Cementum Annuli and TWR Comparisons

Incisor samples collected by Indiana DNR were submitted to Wildlife Analytical Labs in September 2024 for CA analysis. These results (1.5–10.5 years) frequently disagreed with field-based TWR age estimates, underscoring the variability in traditional approaches. Integrating telomere data with CA and TWR estimates revealed similarly low correspondence, affirming that no current method is error-free and highlighting the importance of developing calibrated, species-specific DNA tools.

Advancing Methylation-Based Aging

In August 2025, a postdoctoral researcher was hired to develop and deploy methylation-based “epigenetic clocks,” which recent studies in wildlife suggest can achieve much higher age-prediction accuracy than telomere length alone. Work on these assays will continue through the next performance periods.

Interim conclusions

- Telomere length is generally correlated with age but is not sufficiently precise for individual-level age assignment in management contexts.
- Variability in TWR and CA estimates further demonstrates the need for improved and standardized aging tools.
- Methylation-based clocks represent the most promising path forward and will be the project’s primary focus moving ahead.

Next steps in the project

- Complete design and validation of species-specific UCE primers.
- Expand methylation analyses and calibrate epigenetic age-prediction models using known-age samples.
- Integrate DNA-based age estimates with traditional methods to quantify accuracy, cost, and logistical requirements.
- Produce management-oriented guidance for implementing DNA-based age estimation in statewide monitoring programs.

Relationships Between Disease and Spatially Explicit Densities of Deer, Turkey, and Coyote

Cost: \$1,598,458 federal dollars; \$0 state dollars

October 1, 2023 – December 31, 2028

Project Personnel

- Dr. Patrick Zollner – Principal Investigator, Purdue University
- Dr. Sonja Christensen – Principle Investigator, Michigan State University
- Dr. Wendy Beauvais – Principal Investigator, Purdue University
- Dr. Jonathan Brooks – Investigator, Purdue University
- Dr. Zackary Delisle – Investigator, National Park Service
- Dr. Joe N. Caudell – DNR Project Liaison, Indiana DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife
- Geriann Albers – DNR Project Liaison, Indiana DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife

Project Overview

The Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife will contract with researchers at Purdue University to study how deer, coyote, and turkey densities explicitly change across space within Indiana, how deer populations recover from outbreaks of disease, how disease persists in deer populations, and apply this work to the management of deer. This project will collect spatially explicit counts of deer using crewless and crewed aircraft equipped with infrared and red-green-blue cameras. Counts will then be modelled as a function of environmental characteristics and the fit model will be used to predict spatially explicit density across several Deer Management Units of Indiana. If successful, maps of deer, coyote, and turkey density will be provided to the Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife which can then be used to set county bag limits for these game species and improve the process for awarding deer damage permits and deer management assistance permits.

Relationships between disease prevalence and/or transmission and the spatial patterns of deer density will be evaluated to determine how populations recover from outbreaks of disease, such as Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD), how to improve disease surveillance, and integrating disease events into harvest management. This research will allow for more informed decision making by the Indiana DNR when determining the number of deer licenses to award to counties that experienced an outbreak of EHD and facilitate more cost-effective monitoring of deer populations for disease.

Objective 1 — Develop Spatial Density Maps and Evaluate Monitoring Tools

Approach

Infrared and RGB video is collected along transects using crewed aircraft and drones. Observers or machine-learning methods identify deer, coyotes, and turkeys and record coordinates. Environmental covariates are extracted for both detected and non-detected areas. Statistical models then predict species densities statewide and map associated uncertainty.

Progress

Crewed Aircraft Surveys (2024–2025)

In spring 2024, 521 transects were flown across central and eastern Indiana, prioritizing counties with past EHD outbreaks. Undergraduate researcher Emma Johnson analyzed the effect of flight speed on detection and prepared a manuscript.

In early 2025, 1,223 transects were flown, covering 93% of long-term monitoring grids and 93% of supplemental grids designed to capture disease-affected areas. Additional flights targeted deer farms, coyote rescues, and areas with GPS-tagged turkeys to support calibration of detection probabilities. Only ~20% of footage has been scored, and manual scoring remains the main bottleneck.

Hardware Improvements:

New IR and RGB camera systems have been selected (Vayu HD-Industrial VLIR; Marshall CV355-27X-IP) and an upgraded DVR procured. Testing of aircraft pod systems for use on Cessna aircraft is ongoing but challenged by wireless-connection reliability.

Drone Program:

PhD student Tina Jackson trained in DISTANCE analysis, FLIR thermal imaging, and participated in multiple workshops. From late 2024 through early 2025, her team conducted 407 drone surveys across 23 sites, including farms with known animal densities and Purdue properties used for experimental comparisons of day/night sampling, plot vs. transect methods, and sampling intensity. Orthomosaics have been processed and control-site imagery scored. Coordination with Indiana DNR has standardized sampling techniques.

Next Steps

- Finalize integration of new IR hardware, explore automated scoring tools once hardware is installed, and generate preliminary statewide density predictions for agency review using spatially explicit models.

Objective 2 — Monitor Deer Population Recovery After EHD and Evaluate Cost-Effective Recruitment Monitoring

Approach

This objective combines:

- IR flights to estimate herd size
- Camera traps to estimate population structure (fawn:doe ratios and sex ratios)
- Archer's Index data and volunteer submissions of camera data
- Cost-effectiveness comparisons of monitoring methods across outbreak-prone areas

Progress

Camera Deployment

More than 100 cameras were deployed in targeted EHD regions (Franklin, Union, Fayette counties), on state properties, and later statewide. A shortage of private-land permissions led to a shift toward agency-managed lands. A new EHD outbreak in northwest Indiana prompted additional camera deployments. By early 2025, ~80 cameras had been checked, with minor losses due to theft, vandalism, or malfunction.

- Counts included:
 - 25 at Moraine Nature Preserve
 - 25 at Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary
 - 26 at Whitewater Memorial State Park
 - 25 at Brookville Lake
 - 40 at Mounds State Recreation Area

Disease Surveillance Collaboration

NPS and USDA-APHIS collected blood samples from 150 harvested deer at Indiana Dunes National and State Park units. An additional 13 samples were obtained by MSU researchers from a private processor.

Environmental and Statistical Modeling

Climate variables (precipitation, temperature) were extracted via Google Earth Engine for watershed-level analyses. Generalized linear mixed models (GLMMs) have been developed to predict EHD-positive watersheds and are undergoing validation using annual surveillance data.

Image Processing

Manual tagging is being conducted with Timelapse 2.0, while a semi-automated workflow combining distance-estimation.exe with animl-r species classification is being developed. Automated results are verified using human-annotated samples, and notable species detections are forwarded to DNR biologists.

Next Steps

Continue statewide camera deployment, finalize GLMM validation, refine cost-effectiveness analyses, and complete processing of camera imagery to support density and recruitment estimates across outbreak zones.

Objective 3 — Model Disease Transmission Potential and Improve Sampling Strategies

Approach

A mathematical model based on susceptible–exposed–infectious (SEI) frameworks is being developed to evaluate the potential for sustained bovine tuberculosis (Btb) transmission among deer, cattle, and raccoons. The model incorporates age structure, herd behavior, and species interactions, and will estimate the basic reproduction number (R_0) under varying contact scenarios.

Progress

In February 2025, a postdoctoral researcher (Dr. Jonathan Brooks) began work on this objective.

After conducting a comprehensive literature review on Btb models, he constructed an initial SEI model for a single doe group, testing random mixing, heterogeneous mixing, and matrilineal social structures.

Stochastic simulations indicate transmission probabilities ranging from ~1.9% to 57.1%, depending on behavioral assumptions.

Abstracts have been submitted to The Wildlife Society (October 2025) and the Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference (January 2026).

Next steps include developing comparable models for cattle and raccoons and integrating them into a multi-species system operating across multiple years.

Overall Project Contributions

This project is building Indiana's most comprehensive multi-species spatial density dataset to date and improving understanding of disease dynamics across landscapes. Combined IR/drone surveys, ground-based cameras, and modeling tools will help the DNR:

- Adjust harvest levels following disease outbreaks
- Improve EHD surveillance and long-term population recovery assessments
- Calibrate detection methods for future statewide monitoring
- Evaluate Btb transmission risks across wildlife–livestock interfaces

Appendix: DMU DEER DATA SHEETS

DMU 1: Northwest

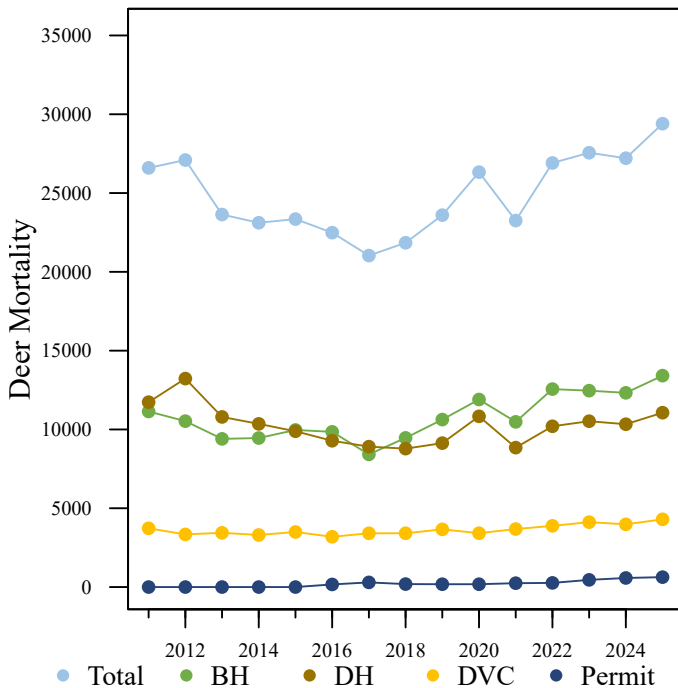
3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 6,022
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 937
 Percent Deer Habitat: 16

Table 1. Total harvest, buck harvest, and doe harvest (error < 1 percent). Damage permits are issued by DNR to landowners to control deer damage. Deer vehicle collisions (DVC) and miles traveled are reported by the Indiana Department of Transportation. Mean bag limit is the average antlerless bag limit of all counties in the DMU. The trend in total harvest, buck harvest, doe harvest, and DVCs are in standard deviations (SD) and are equivalent to effect size. A change greater than 2 SD is considered both a large and statistically significant effect size.

Year	Total	Total Trend in SD	Buck Harvest	Buck Trend in SD	Buck Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	Doe Harvest	Doe Trend in SD	Doe Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	% Doe in Harvest	Damage Permit Deer Taken	DVC per Billion Miles Traveled	DVC Trend in SD	Mean Bag Limit
2011	22,870	-0.4	11,139	-0.8	11.9	11,731	-0.2	12.5	51.3		232.8	-2.7	7.1
2012	23,755	-0.2	10,527	-3.3	11.2	13,228	1.4	14.1	55.7		206.4	-3.4	6.8
2013	20,195	-4.5	9,402	-3.3	10.0	10,793	-2.8	11.5	53.4		210.4	-1.4	5.8
2014	19,810	-1.8	9,456	-1.4	10.1	10,354	-1.9	11.1	52.3		200.0	-1.4	4.4
2015	19,854	-1.1	9,968	-0.5	10.6	9,886	-1.5	10.6	49.8		207.3	-0.6	4.3
2016	19,132	-1.2	9,849	-0.3	10.5	9,283	-1.4	9.9	48.5	165	185.7	-2.0	4.6
2017	17,327	-1.8	8,418	-3.1	9.0	8,909	-1.2	9.5	51.4	295	194.4	-0.8	3.3
2018	18,245	-0.9	9,463	0.1	10.1	8,782	-1.4	9.4	48.1	188	191.6	-0.8	2.6
2019	19,757	0.8	10,626	2.0	11.3	9,131	-0.5	9.7	46.2	180	201.4	0.7	2.0
2020	22,730	3.6	11,899	2.7	12.7	10,831	3.8	11.6	47.7	179	186.4	-1.1	2.0
2021	19,329	-0.1	10,482	0.3	11.2	8,847	-0.7	9.4	45.8	245	196.9	0.8	2.0
2022	22,763	1.6	12,561	1.8	13.4	10,202	1.0	10.9	44.8	263	207.6	2.4	2.0
2023	22,984	1.2	12,461	1.2	13.3	10,523	1.1	11.2	45.8	455	218.4	2.6	2.1
2024	22,654	0.6	12,323	0.7	13.2	10,331	0.5	11.0	45.6	576	209.7	0.6	1.9
2025	24,476	1.5	13,413	1.7	14.3	11,063	1.2	11.8	45.2	628	278.8	6.1	2.8

(a) Cumulative Known Deer Mortality



(b) Archer Deer Observations

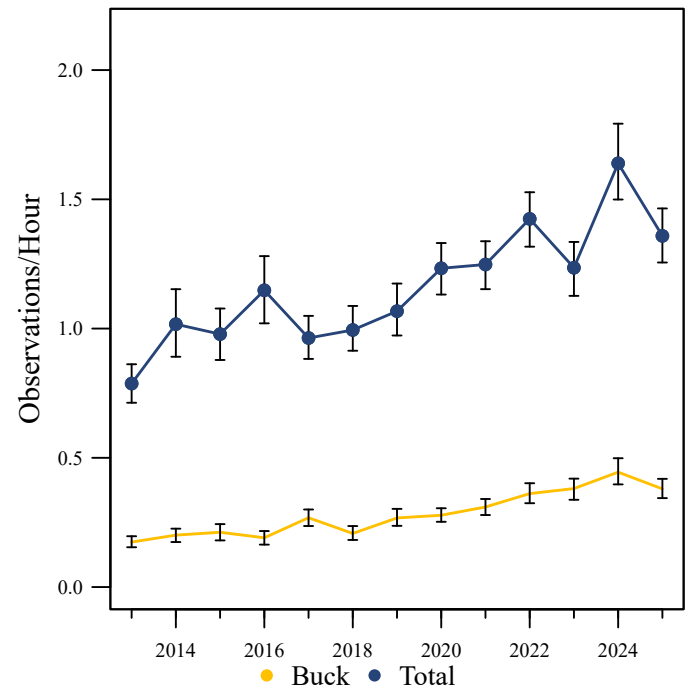


Figure 1. (a) The total known annual deer mortality based on buck harvests (BH), doe harvests (DH), deer vehicle collisions (DVC), and deer permit takes. (b) Total deer and buck observations per hour based on the Archer's Index.

DMU 1: Northwest

3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 6,022
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 937
 Percent Deer Habitat: 16

Table 2. Estimated number of antlered (A) and antlerless (AL) deer harvested per hunter. Estimated totals may not match exactly with total number of deer harvested. Reporting errors are examined and investigated as they are located; therefore, subsequent reports may contain corrected totals.

Year	Total Hunters	0 A	1 A	2 A	3 A	0 AL	1 AL	2 AL	3 AL	4 AL	5 AL	6 AL	7 AL	8 AL	9 AL	10 AL
2016	14,283	6,488	7,740	54	1	5,665	6,580	1,580	347	72	24	13	2	0	0	0
2017	12,917	6,368	6,488	61	0	4,630	6,398	1,492	292	82	14	4	3	2	0	0
2018	13,603	6,088	7,428	86	1	5,356	6,340	1,535	302	47	13	6	2	0	0	1
2019	14,758	6,011	8,633	113	1	6,077	6,839	1,580	199	38	15	5	2	2	0	0
2020	16,468	6,993	9,329	145	1	6,327	7,703	2,058	289	63	15	6	5	0	0	0
2021	14,541	5,951	8,472	118	0	6,131	6,587	1,550	208	41	12	7	2	1	1	0
2022	16,644	6,142	10,348	151	3	7,171	7,283	1,862	248	62	11	4	1	0	1	1
2023	16,799	6,368	10,248	178	5	7,203	7,306	1,932	278	59	12	6	0	1	1	0
2024	16,730	6,560	10,045	121	2	7,048	7,431	1,942	237	56	7	4	2	1	1	0
2025	17,565	6,202	11,216	142	4	7,791	7,155	2,165	389	41	14	6	1	1	1	1

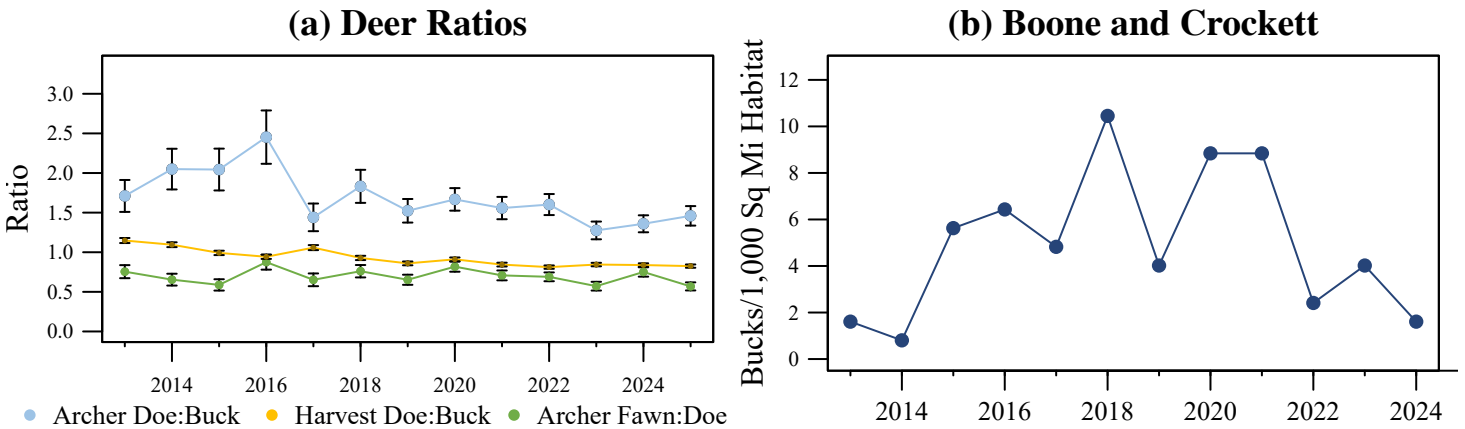
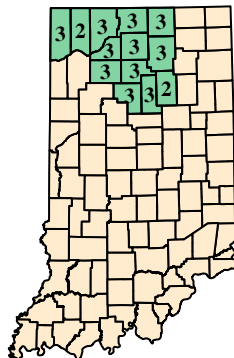


Figure 2. (a) Annual doe:buck ratios and fawn:doe ratios based on the Archer's Index and harvest records. (b) The number of Boone and Crockett bucks (minimum 160 score) per 1,000 square miles of deer habitat.

(a) Counties in DMU 1



(b) Deer Habitat in DMU 1

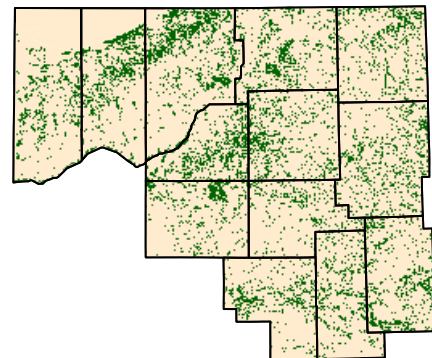


Figure 3. (a) Counties included in DMU 1 for summarizing harvest and deer management survey statistics. Labels are the 2024 county bonus antlerless quotas. (b) Green represents the land use types classified as deer habitat in DMU 1.

DMU 1: Northwest

3/31/2026

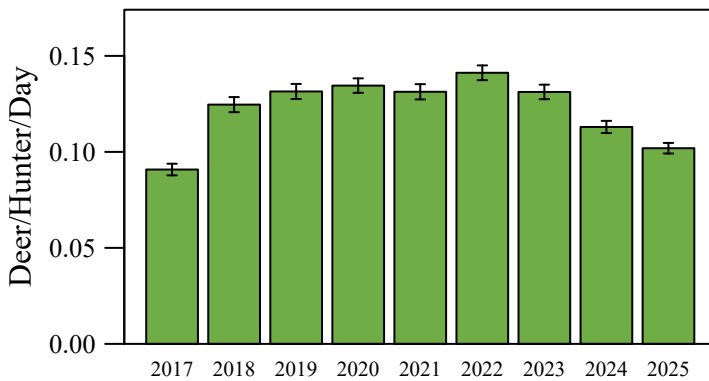
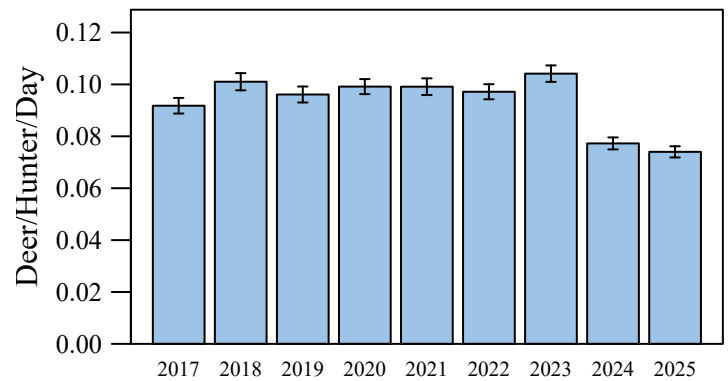
Deer Management Survey Results**(a) Buck Firearm Harvest Effort****(b) Doe Firearm Harvest Effort**

Figure 4. Firearm harvest effort is the number of bucks (a) and does (b) killed by firearms per hunter divided by the mean number of days hunted per hunter during the firearm season based on data reported in the deer management survey. Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate less effort required to harvest a deer.

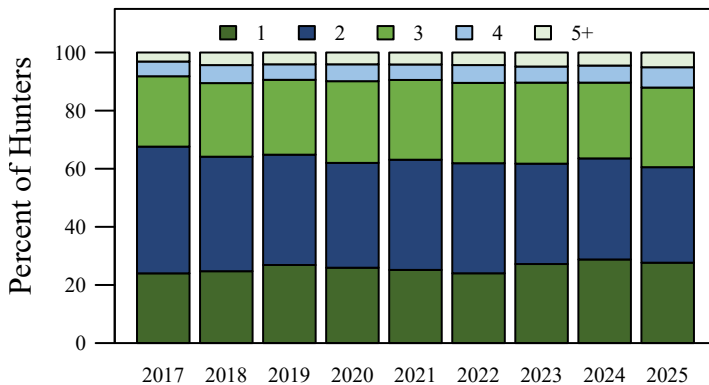
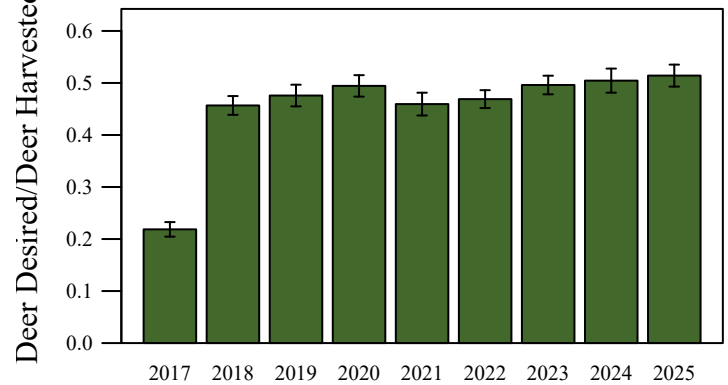
(a) Number of Deer Desired**(b) Estimated Success**

Figure 5. (a) The annual percent of hunters wishing to harvest each number of deer as reported in the deer management survey. (b) Success rate is estimated from the deer management survey as the Number of Harvested Deer/Number of Deer Desired (reported only; does not account for attempts that were not made). Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate greater success.

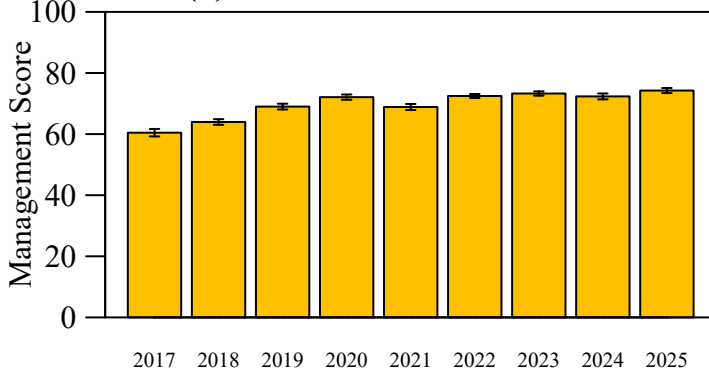
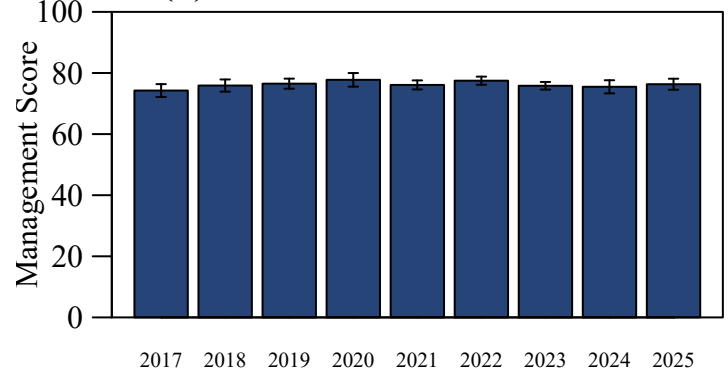
(a) Hunter State Satisfaction**(b) Nonhunter State Satisfaction**

Figure 6. Hunters (a) and nonhunters (b) were asked to score the DNR's statewide deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent).

DMU 1: Northwest

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Satisfaction

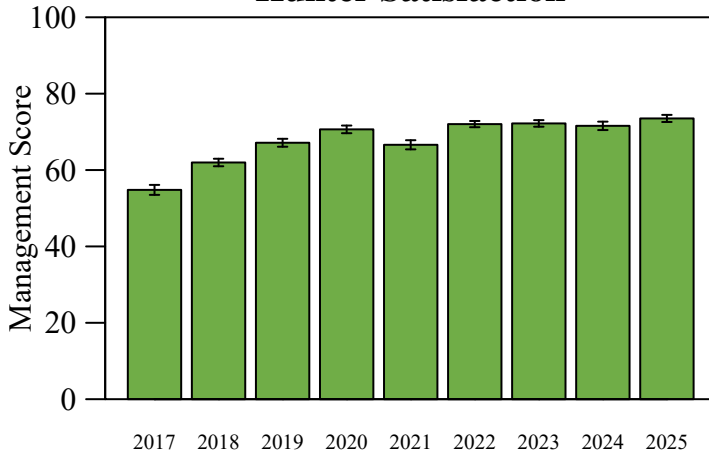


Figure 7. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 1 where they hunt.

Resident Hunter Satisfaction

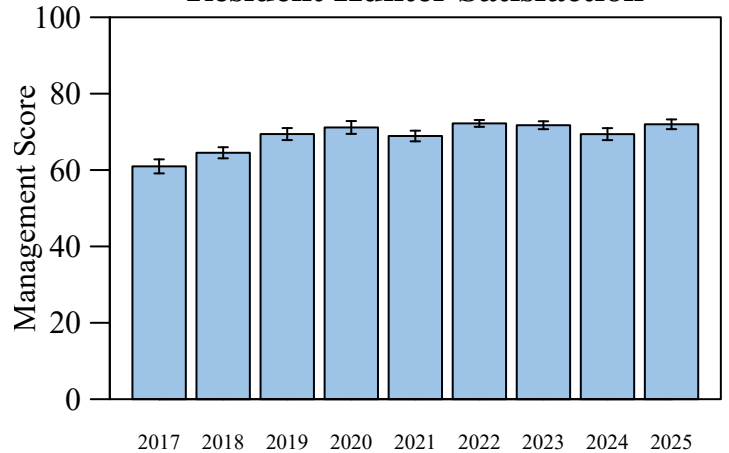


Figure 8. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 1 where they live.

Resident Nonhunter Satisfaction

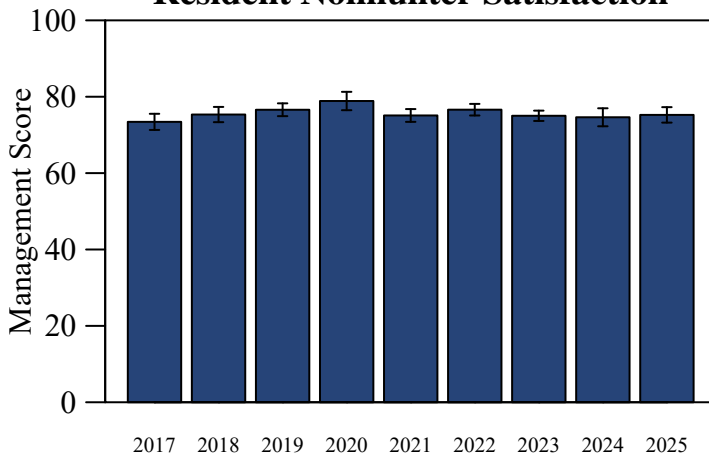


Figure 9. Nonhunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 1 where they live.

Hunter Population Size

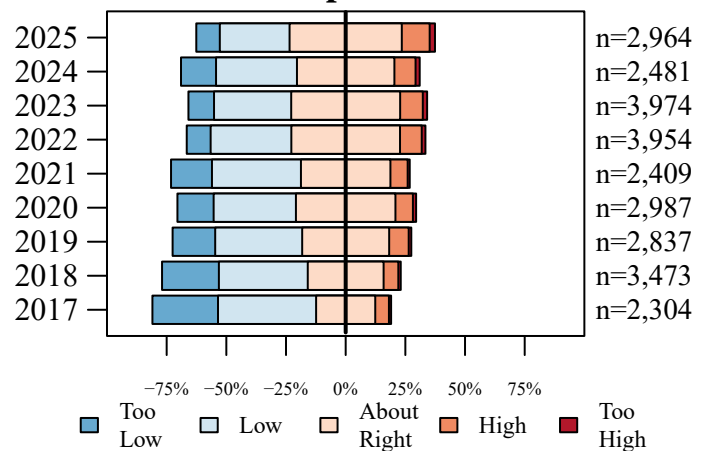


Figure 10. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 1.

Resident Hunter Population Size

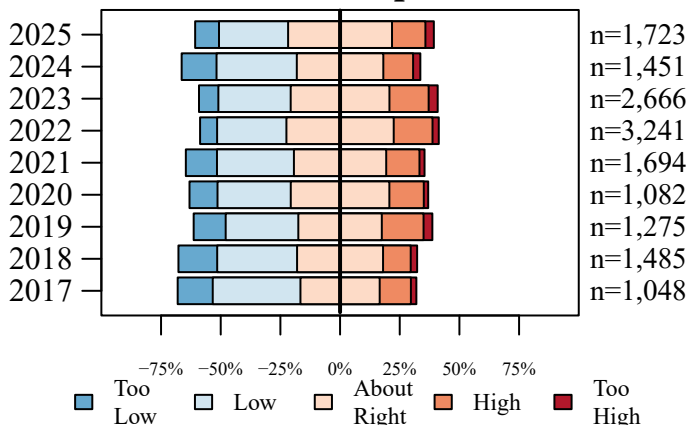


Figure 11. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 1.

Resident Nonhunter Population Size

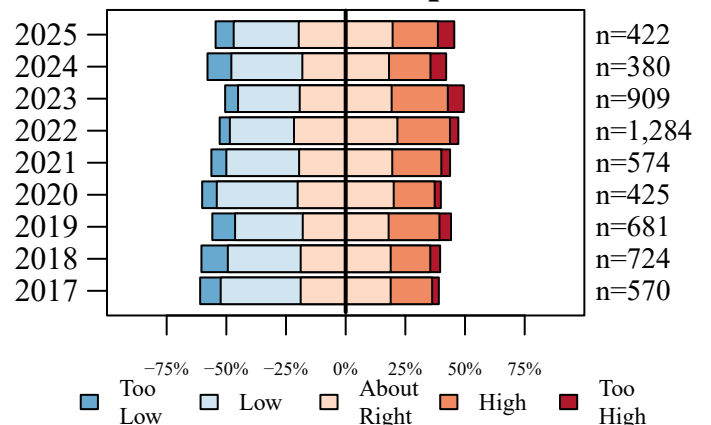


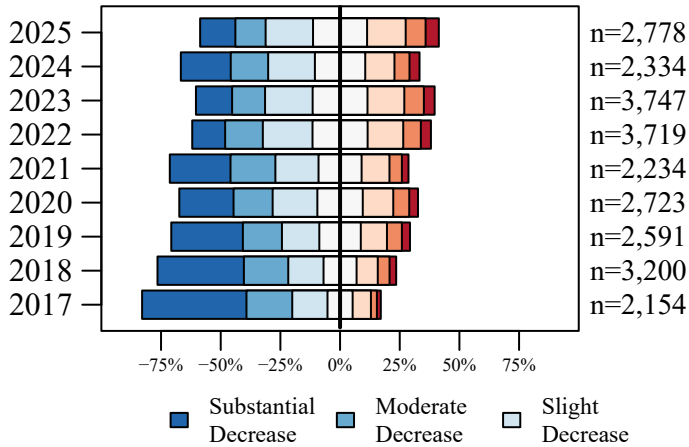
Figure 12. The current size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 1.

DMU 1: Northwest

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Perceived Change



Resident Hunter Perceived Change

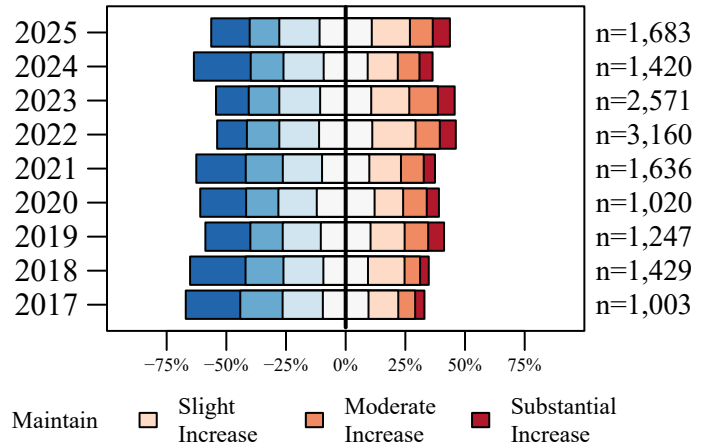
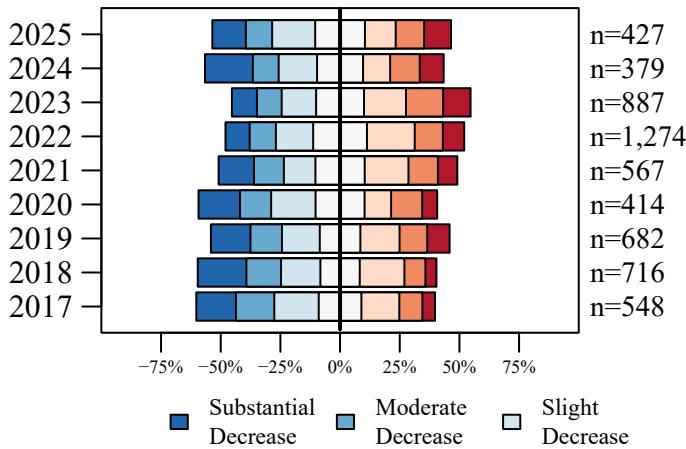


Figure 13. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 1.

Figure 14. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 1.

Resident Nonhunter Perceived Change



Hunter Desired Change

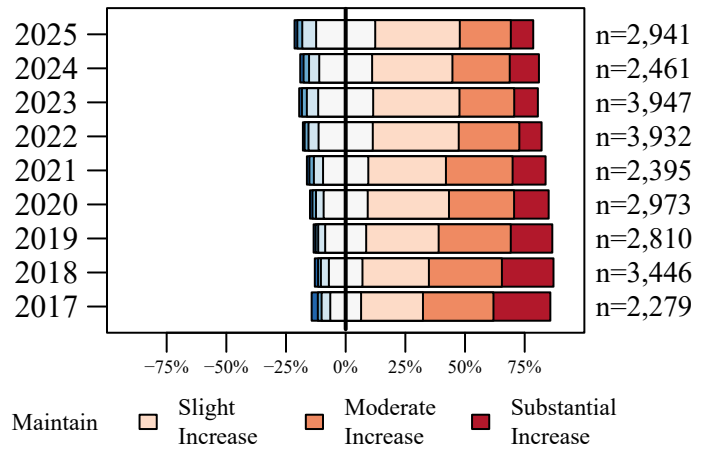
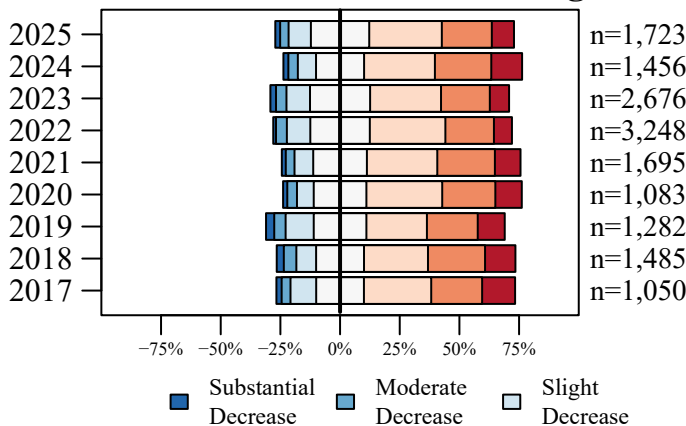


Figure 15. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 1.

Figure 16. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 1.

Resident Hunter Desired Change



Resident Nonhunter Desired Change

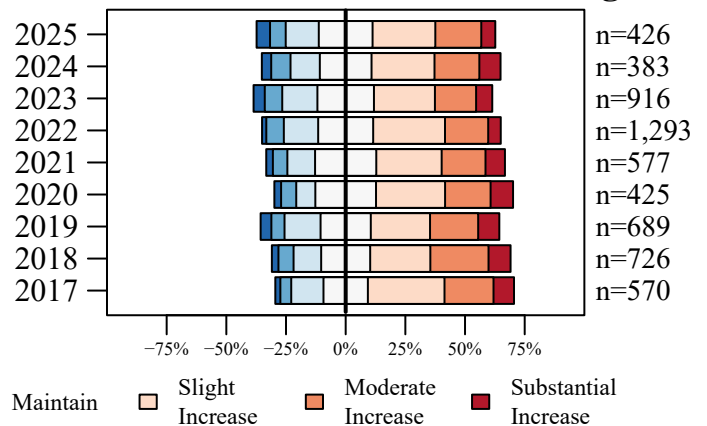


Figure 17. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 1.

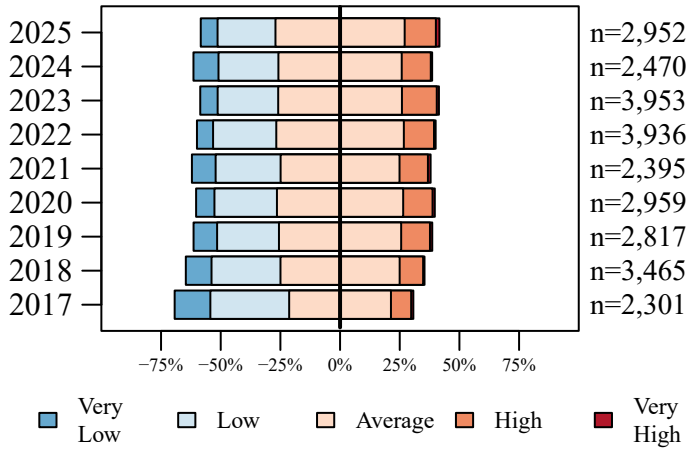
Figure 18. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 1.

DMU 1: Northwest

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Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Buck Quality



Resident Hunter Buck Quality

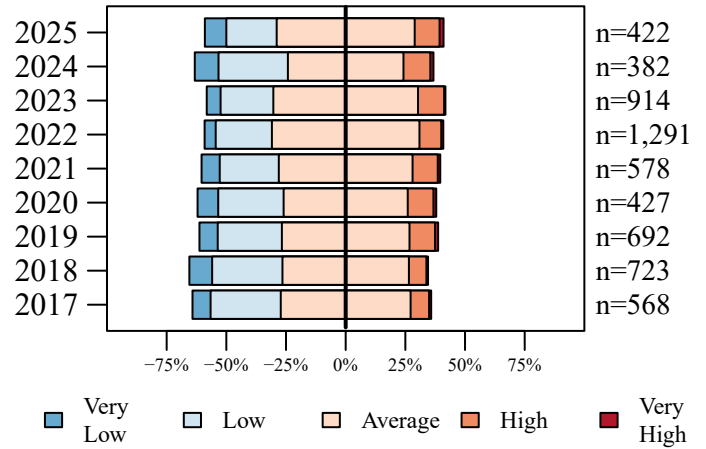


Figure 19. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they hunt in DMU 1.

Figure 20. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they live in DMU 1.

Personal Harvest Change

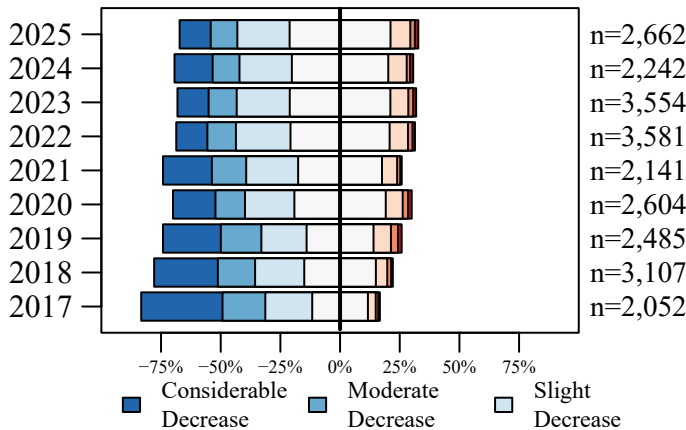


Figure 21. Opinion of hunters on how their personal number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 1.

Total Harvest Change

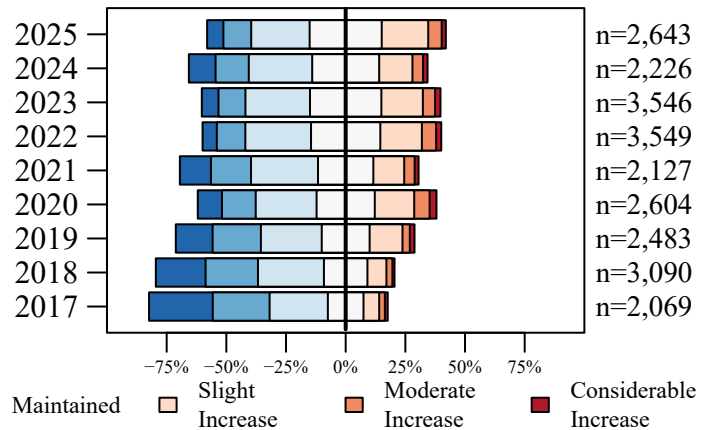


Figure 22. Opinion of hunters on how the total number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 1.

Hunter CBAQ

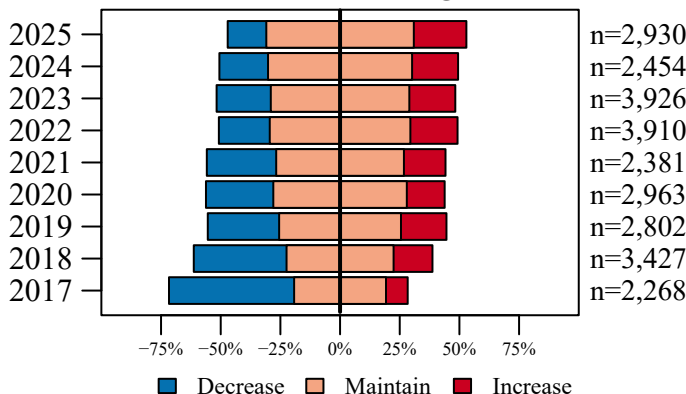


Figure 23. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 1.

Resident Hunter CBAQ

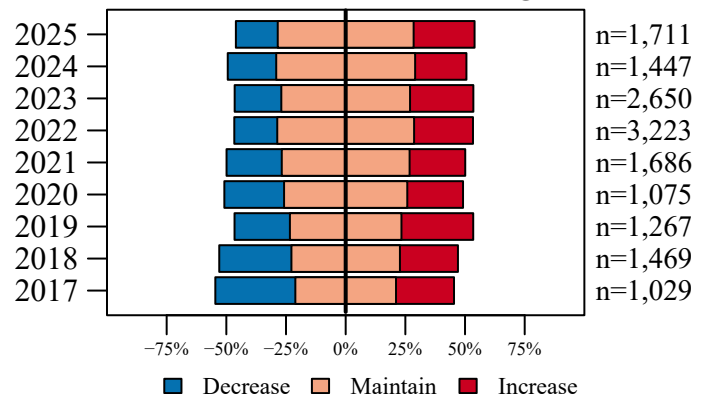


Figure 24. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they live in DMU 1.

DMU 1: Northwest

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Resident Nonhunter CBAQ

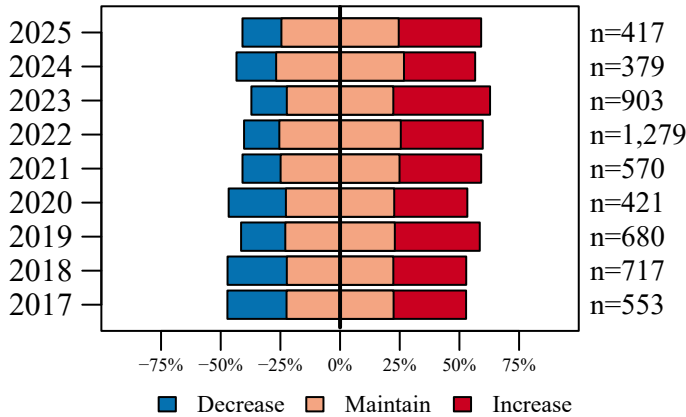


Figure 25. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 1.

Hunter Opinion

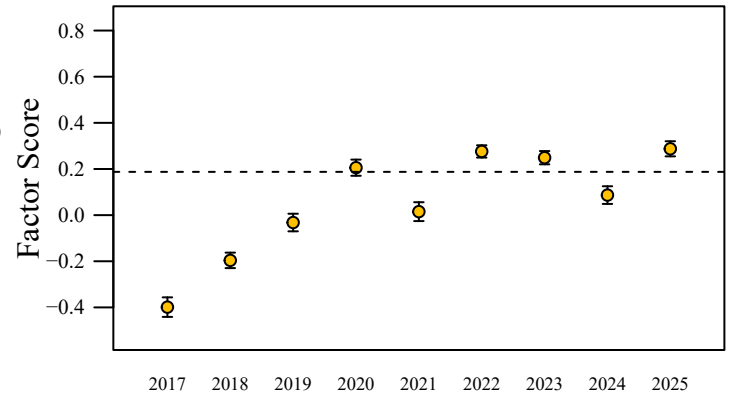


Figure 26. Hunter opinion scores over five years of the deer management survey. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked only to hunters. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Population Size Opinion

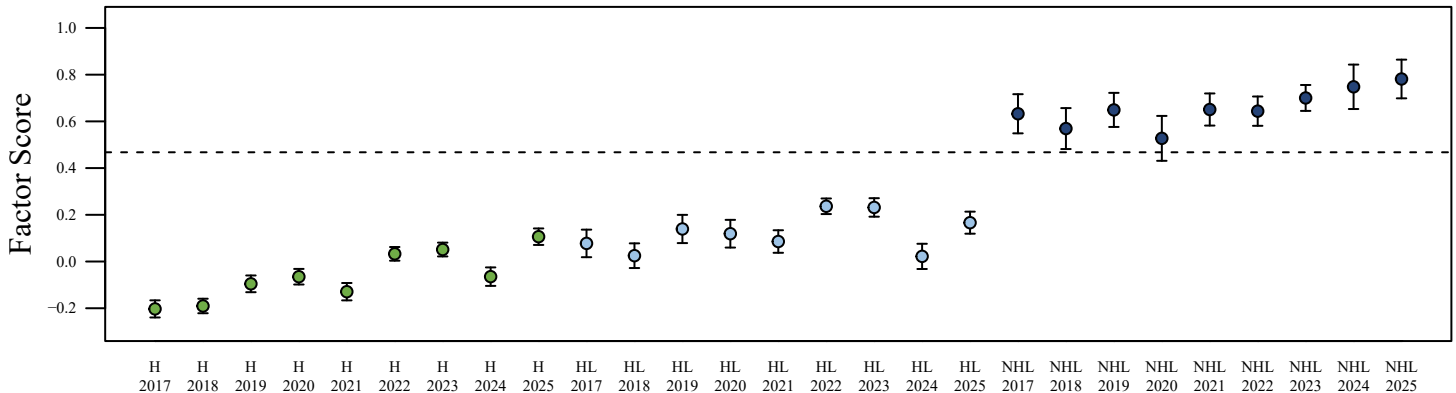


Figure 27. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer population size. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Deer Management Opinion

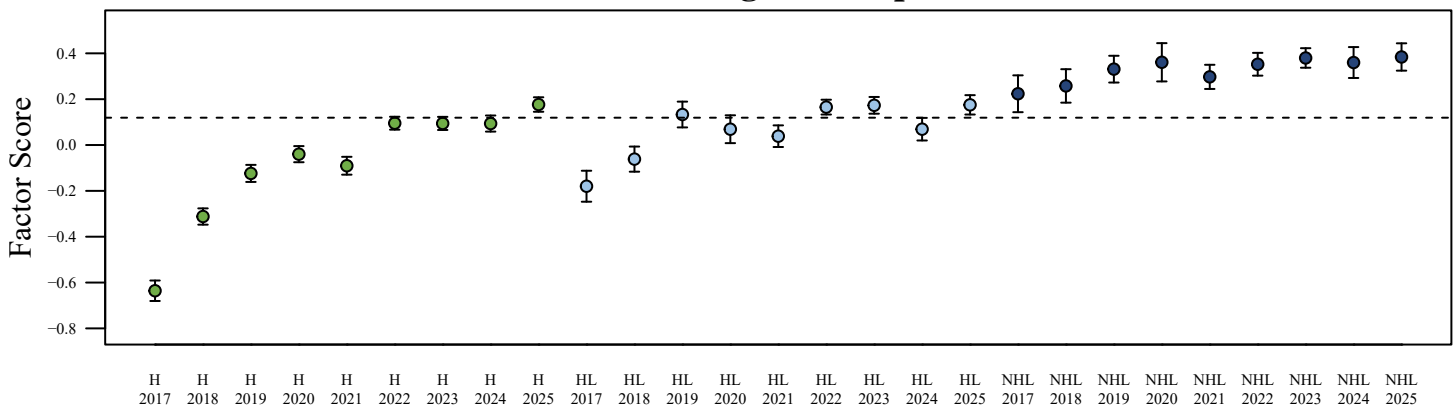


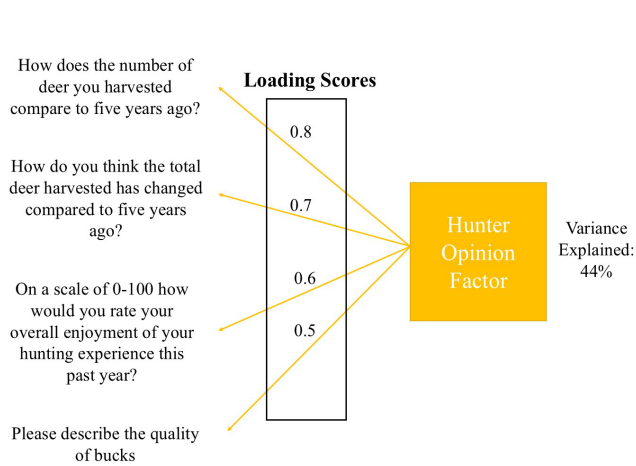
Figure 28. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer management. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

DMU 1: Northwest

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

(a) Factor Analysis Results: Hunter Questions



(b) Factor Analysis Results: All Group Questions

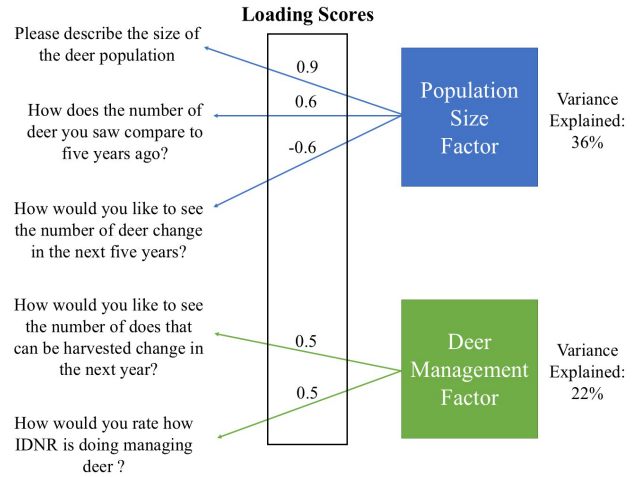


Figure 29. Results from two factor analyses used to develop the hunter opinion (a), population opinion (b), and management opinion (b) scores. Higher loading scores indicate a stronger correlation between the original question and the derived factor. These figures are included to help interpret Figure 26, Figure 27, and Figure 28.

DMU 2: Northeast

3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 1,490
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 312
 Percent Deer Habitat: 21

Table 1. Total harvest, buck harvest, and doe harvest (error < 1 percent). Damage permits are issued by DNR to landowners to control deer damage. Deer vehicle collisions (DVC) and miles traveled are reported by the Indiana Department of Transportation. Mean bag limit is the average antlerless bag limit of all counties in the DMU. The trend in total harvest, buck harvest, doe harvest, and DVCs are in standard deviations (SD) and are equivalent to effect size. A change greater than 2 SD is considered both a large and statistically significant effect size.

Year	Total	Total Trend in SD	Buck Harvest	Buck Trend in SD	Buck Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	Doe Harvest	Doe Trend in SD	Doe Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	% Doe in Harvest	Damage Permit Deer Taken	DVC per Billion Miles Traveled	DVC Trend in SD	Mean Bag Limit
2011	11,499	-0.3	5,150	-0.3	16.5	6,349	-0.3	20.3	55.2		519.2	-6.9	8.0
2012	9,941	-3.7	4,306	-4.3	13.8	5,635	-2.9	18.1	56.7		491.8	-2.7	8.0
2013	9,540	-2.0	4,412	-1.4	14.1	5,128	-2.5	16.4	53.8		533.1	-0.4	5.0
2014	8,610	-1.9	4,132	-1.4	13.2	4,478	-2.2	14.4	52.0		515.9	-0.6	4.0
2015	9,123	-0.8	4,609	-0.2	14.8	4,514	-1.2	14.5	49.5		507.5	-0.6	3.5
2016	9,090	-0.6	4,676	0.4	15.0	4,414	-1.0	14.1	48.6	90	523.6	0.7	3.5
2017	7,994	-2.5	3,989	-2.0	12.8	4,005	-1.6	12.8	50.1	68	554.9	2.6	2.5
2018	8,880	0.0	4,600	0.8	14.7	4,280	-0.6	13.7	48.2	79	605.9	4.3	1.8
2019	9,785	2.3	5,141	2.3	16.5	4,644	1.5	14.9	47.5	61	634.2	2.3	1.5
2020	11,058	3.2	5,642	2.5	18.1	5,416	4.3	17.4	49.0	77	548.0	-0.3	1.5
2021	9,284	-0.1	4,986	0.3	16.0	4,298	-0.5	13.8	46.3	77	608.4	0.8	2.0
2022	11,132	1.5	5,963	1.8	19.1	5,169	1.2	16.6	46.4	85	625.2	0.9	2.0
2023	11,767	1.7	6,014	1.4	19.3	5,753	1.9	18.4	48.9	134	641.2	1.1	2.8
2024	11,306	0.7	5,737	0.4	18.4	5,569	0.9	17.8	49.3	224	617.9	0.2	2.8
2025	12,540	1.7	6,464	1.9	20.7	6,076	1.5	19.5	48.5	254	660.5	1.5	2.8

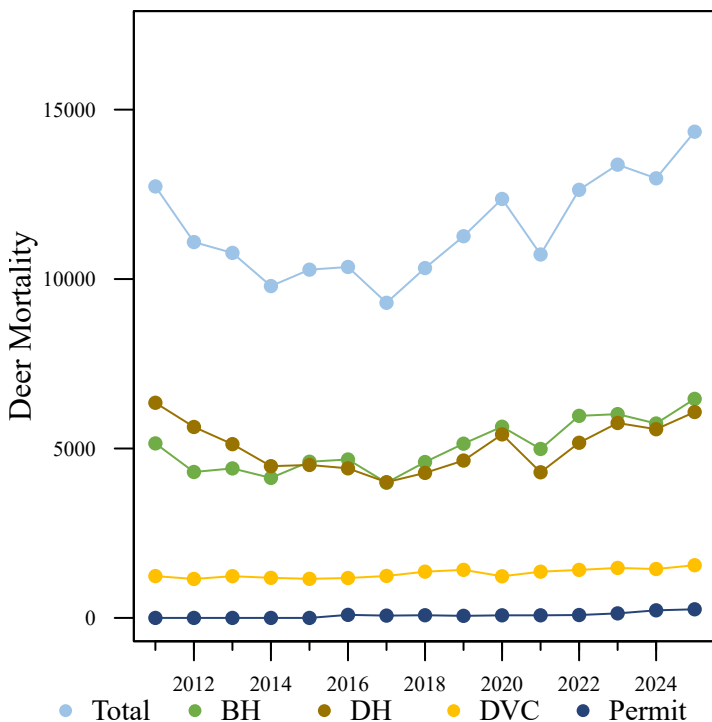
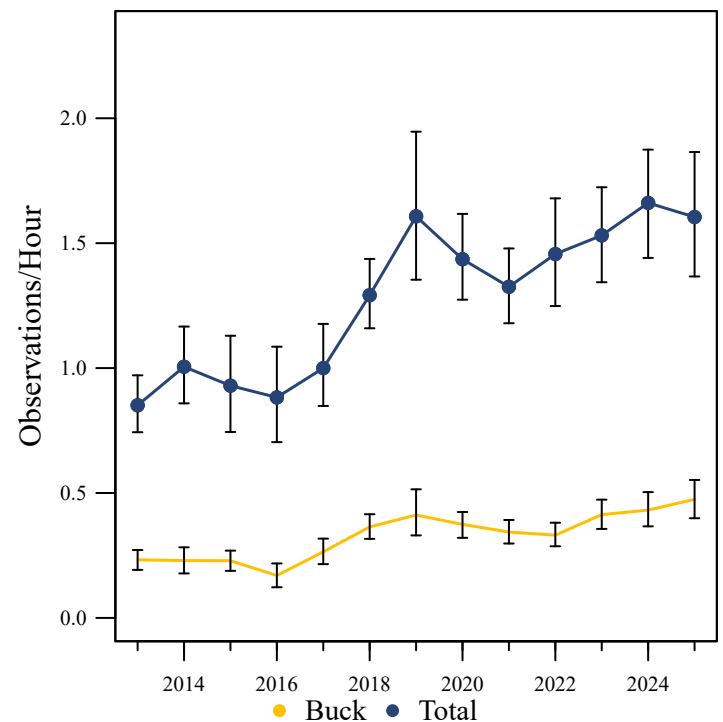
(a) Cumulative Known Deer Mortality**(b) Archer Deer Observations**

Figure 1. (a) The total known annual deer mortality based on buck harvests (BH), doe harvests (DH), deer vehicle collisions (DVC), and deer permit takes. (b) Total deer and buck observations per hour based on the Archer's Index.

DMU 2: Northeast

3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 1,490
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 312
 Percent Deer Habitat: 21

Table 2. Estimated number of antlered (A) and antlerless (AL) deer harvested per hunter. Estimated totals may not match exactly with total number of deer harvested. Reporting errors are examined and investigated as they are located; therefore, subsequent reports may contain corrected totals.

Year	Total Hunters	0 A	1 A	2 A	3 A	0 AL	1 AL	2 AL	3 AL	4 AL	5 AL	6 AL	7 AL	8 AL	9 AL	10 AL
2016	6,866	3,128	3,726	11	1	2,729	3,175	772	147	36	7	0	0	0	0	0
2017	6,172	3,009	3,157	6	0	2,307	3,051	691	104	16	2	1	0	0	0	0
2018	6,874	3,127	3,716	31	0	2,693	3,401	662	100	15	2	0	1	0	0	0
2019	7,487	3,189	4,261	37	0	2,988	3,682	712	87	13	2	1	1	1	0	0
2020	8,193	3,583	4,558	52	0	3,090	3,990	971	109	28	5	0	0	0	0	0
2021	7,101	2,927	4,131	42	1	2,979	3,306	716	79	17	1	3	0	0	0	0
2022	8,310	3,278	4,979	53	0	3,512	3,724	936	114	17	2	4	1	0	0	0
2023	8,443	3,482	4,909	51	1	3,308	3,865	1,006	205	42	10	6	1	0	0	0
2024	8,115	3,465	4,598	51	1	3,098	3,746	1,038	174	46	9	3	0	0	0	0
2025	8,949	3,601	5,287	59	2	3,572	3,892	1,270	183	19	9	3	0	0	1	0

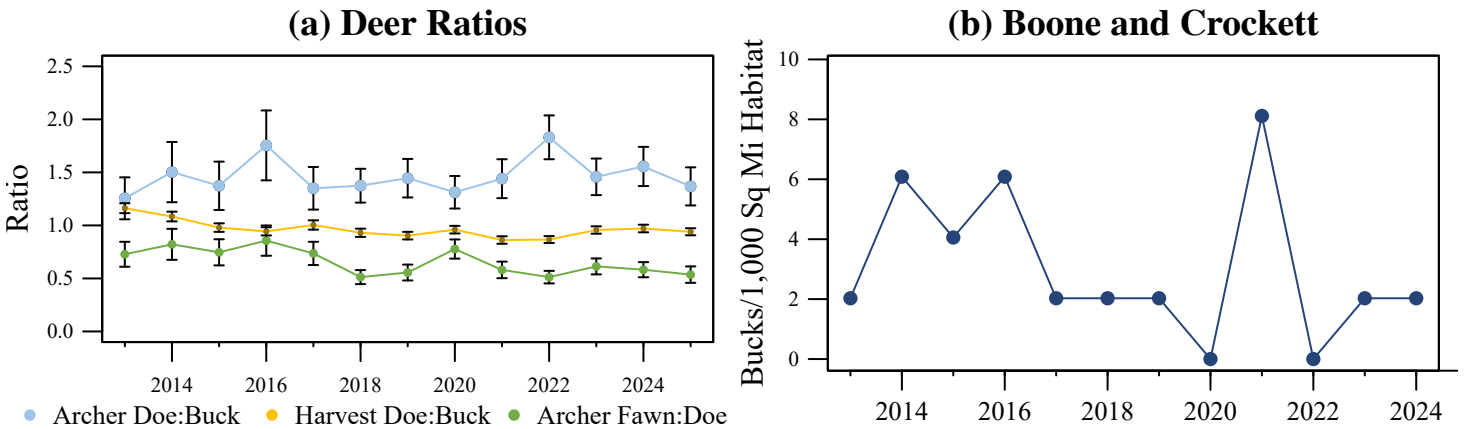
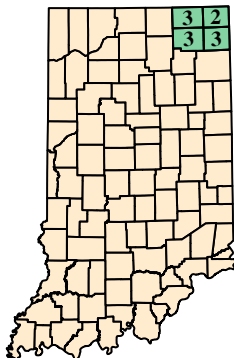


Figure 2. (a) Annual doe:buck ratios and fawn:doe ratios based on the Archer's Index and harvest records. (b) The number of Boone and Crockett bucks (minimum 160 score) per 1,000 square miles of deer habitat.

(a) Counties in DMU 2



(b) Deer Habitat in DMU 2

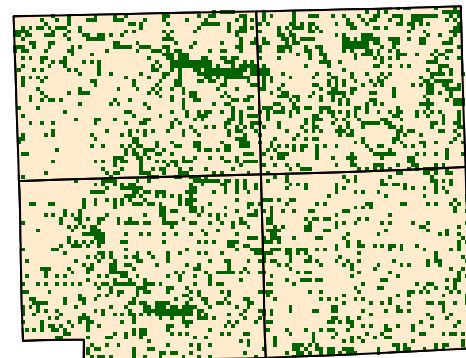


Figure 3. (a) Counties included in DMU 2 for summarizing harvest and deer management survey statistics. Labels are the 2024 county bonus antlerless quotas. (b) Green represents the land use types classified as deer habitat in DMU 2.

DMU 2: Northeast

3/31/2026

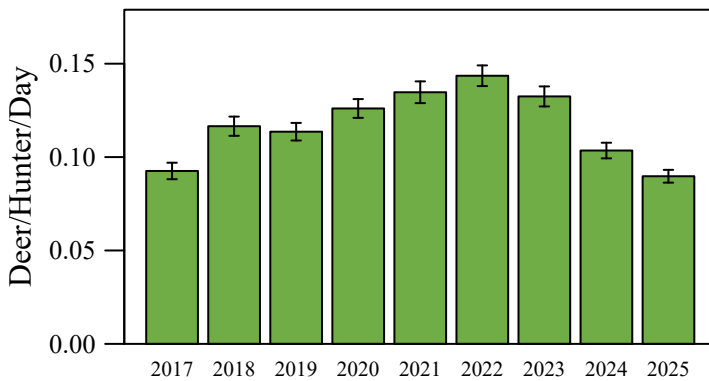
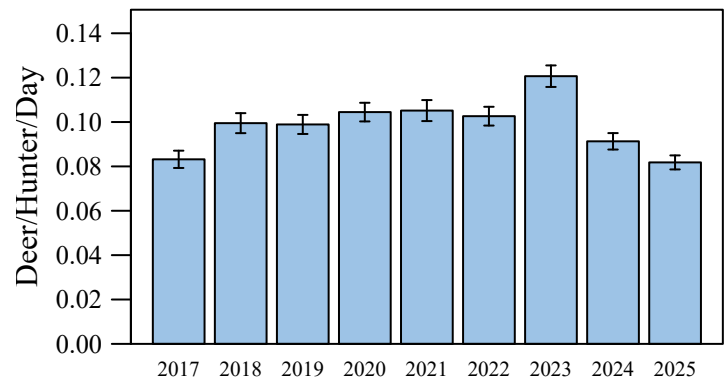
Deer Management Survey Results**(a) Buck Firearm Harvest Effort****(b) Doe Firearm Harvest Effort**

Figure 4. Firearm harvest effort is the number of bucks (a) and does (b) killed by firearms per hunter divided by the mean number of days hunted per hunter during the firearm season based on data reported in the deer management survey. Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate less effort required to harvest a deer.

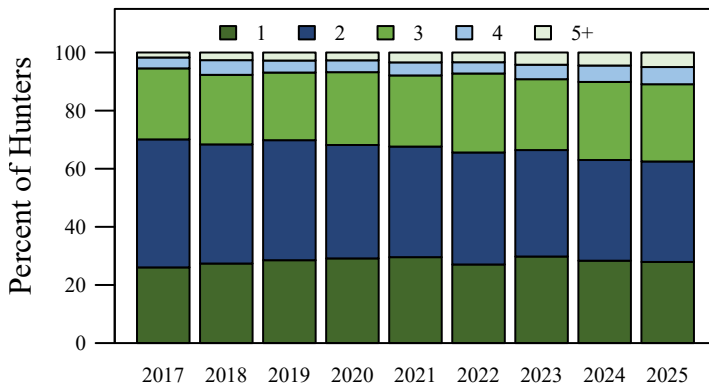
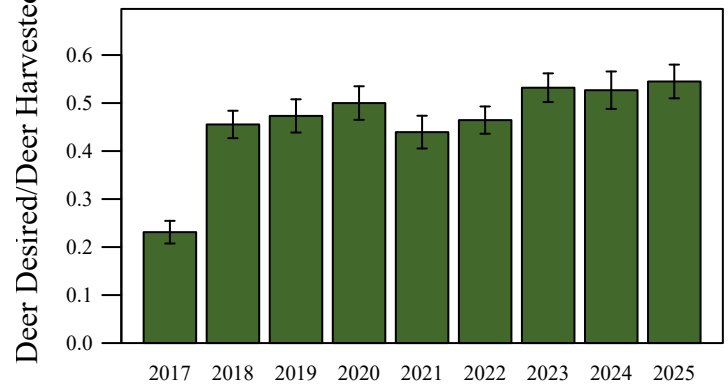
(a) Number of Deer Desired**(b) Estimated Success**

Figure 5. (a) The annual percent of hunters wishing to harvest each number of deer as reported in the deer management survey. (b) Success rate is estimated from the deer management survey as the Number of Harvested Deer/Number of Deer Desired (reported only; does not account for attempts that were not made). Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate greater success.

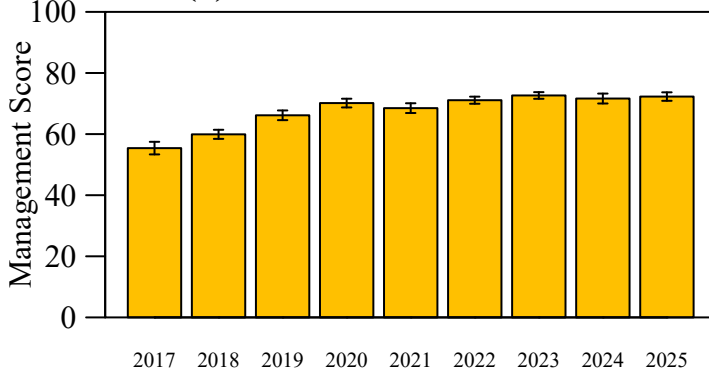
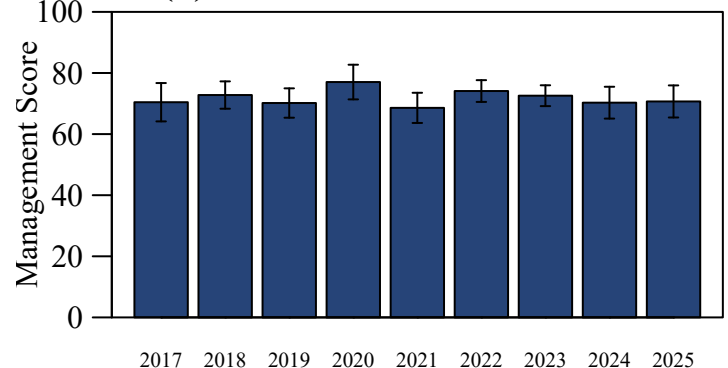
(a) Hunter State Satisfaction**(b) Nonhunter State Satisfaction**

Figure 6. Hunters (a) and nonhunters (b) were asked to score the DNR's statewide deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent).

DMU 2: Northeast

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Satisfaction

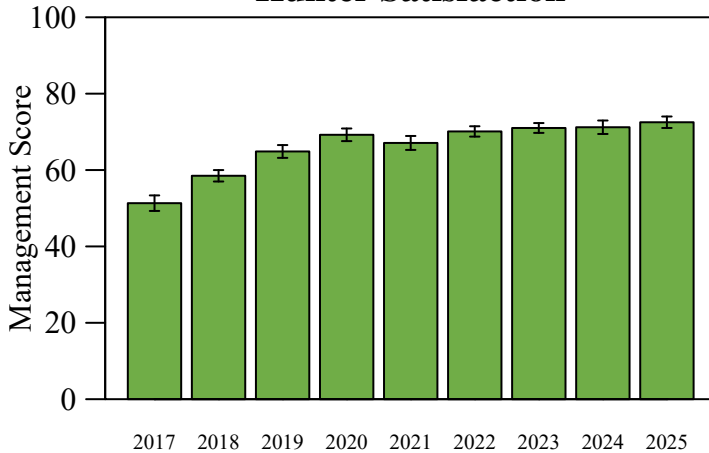


Figure 7. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 2 where they hunt.

Resident Hunter Satisfaction

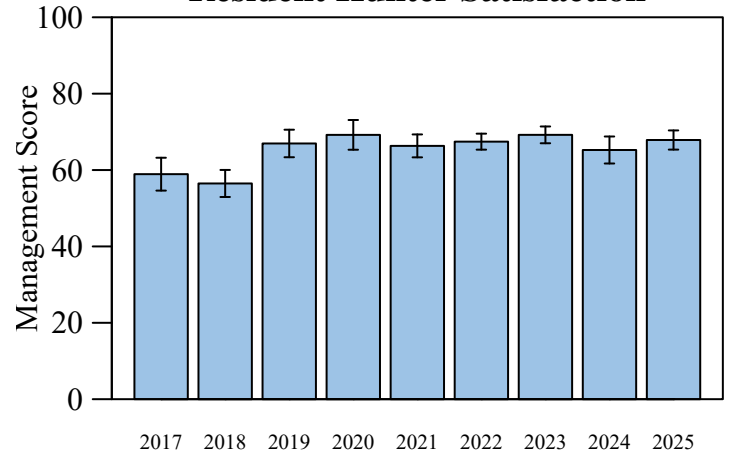


Figure 8. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 2 where they live.

Resident Nonhunter Satisfaction

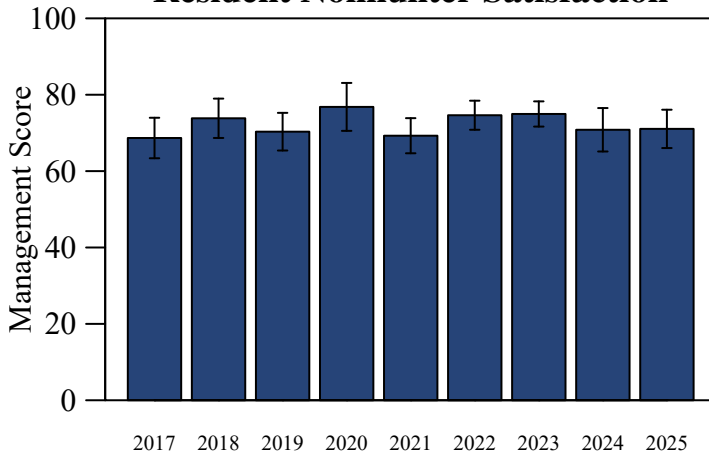


Figure 9. Nonhunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 2 where they live.

Hunter Population Size

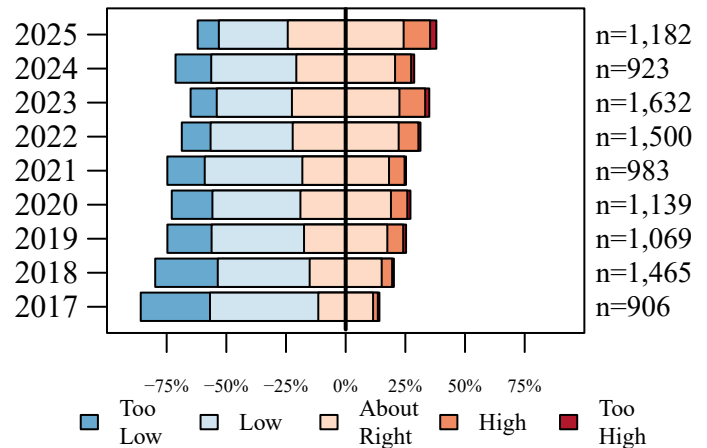


Figure 10. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 2.

Resident Hunter Population Size

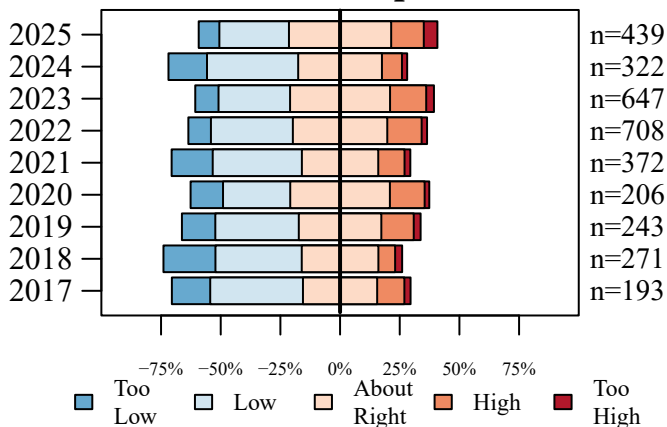


Figure 11. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 2.

Resident Nonhunter Population Size

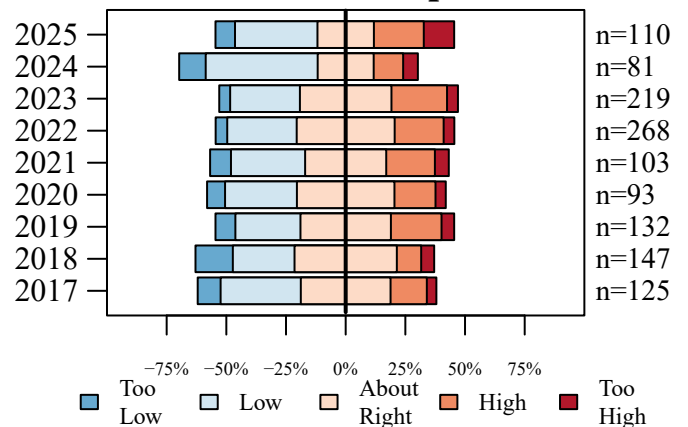


Figure 12. The current size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 2.

DMU 2: Northeast

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Perceived Change

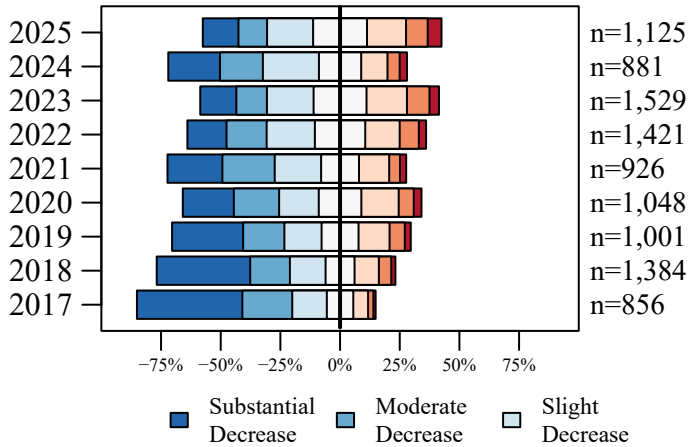


Figure 13. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 2.

Resident Hunter Perceived Change

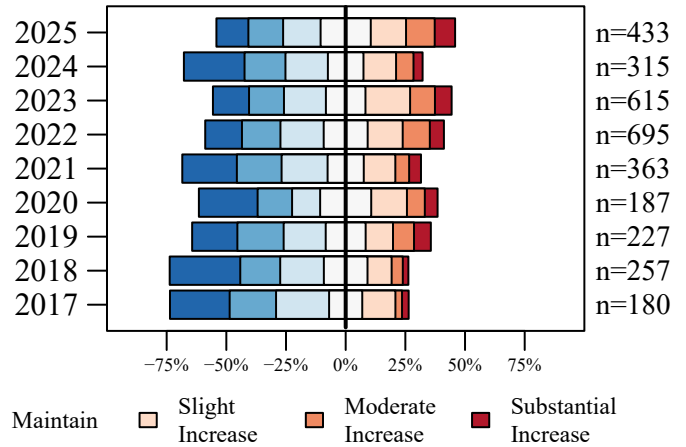


Figure 14. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 2.

Resident Nonhunter Perceived Change

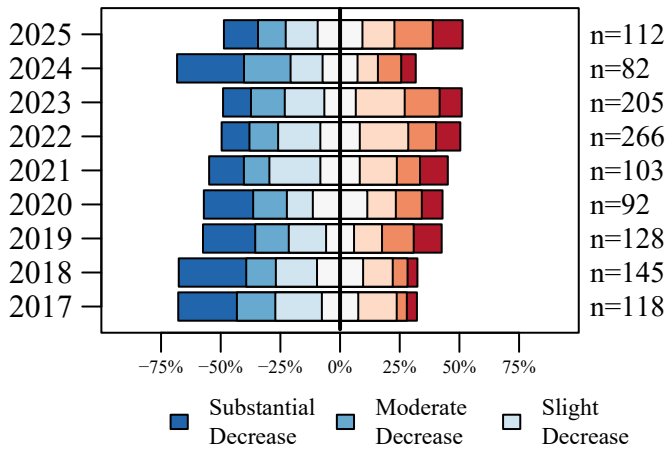


Figure 15. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 2.

Hunter Desired Change

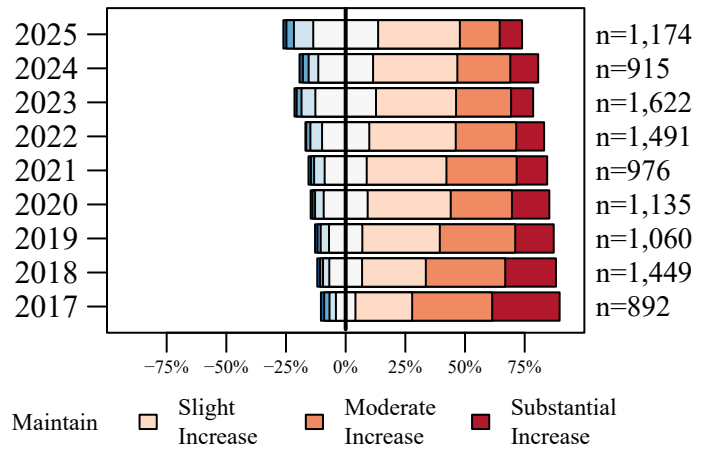


Figure 16. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 2.

Resident Hunter Desired Change

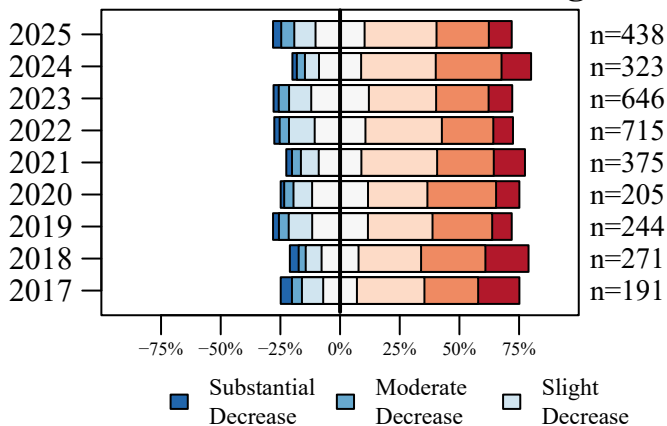


Figure 17. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 2.

Resident Nonhunter Desired Change

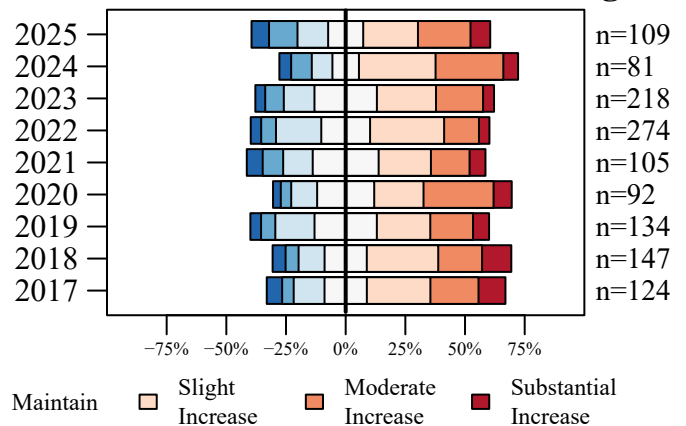


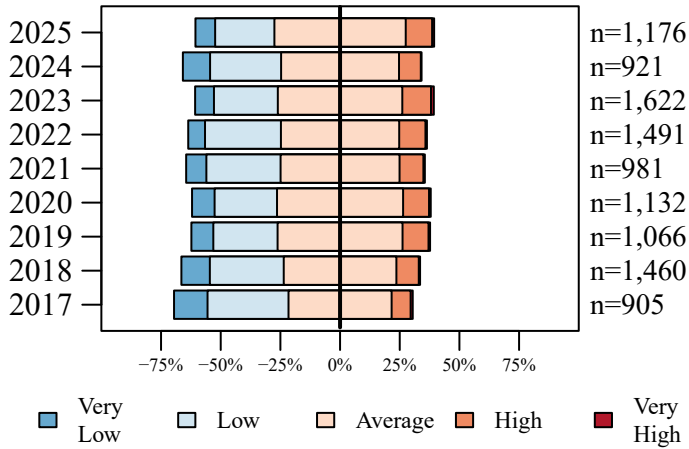
Figure 18. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 2.

DMU 2: Northeast

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Buck Quality



Resident Hunter Buck Quality

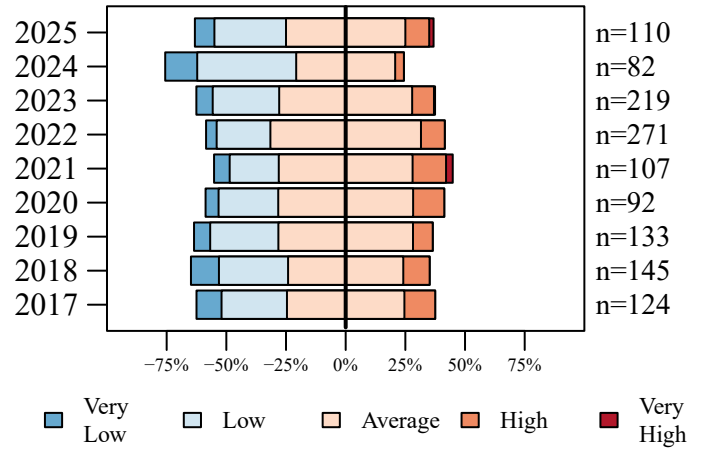


Figure 19. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they hunt in DMU 2.

Figure 20. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they live in DMU 2.

Personal Harvest Change

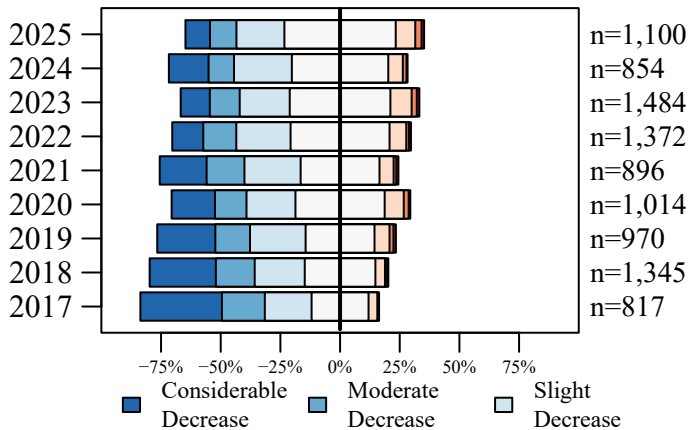


Figure 21. Opinion of hunters on how their personal number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 2.

Total Harvest Change

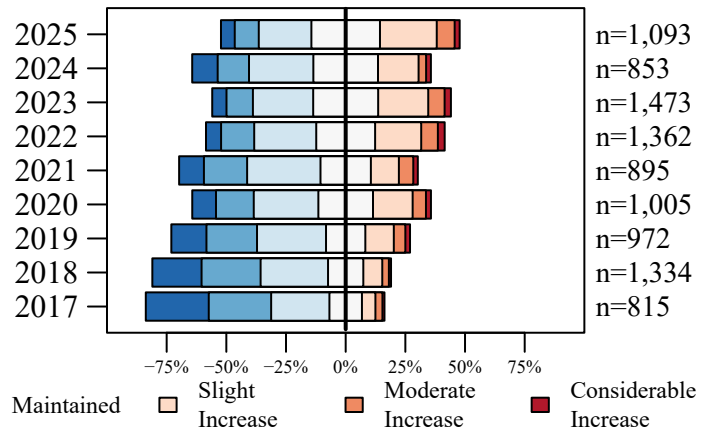


Figure 22. Opinion of hunters on how the total number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 2.

Hunter CBAQ

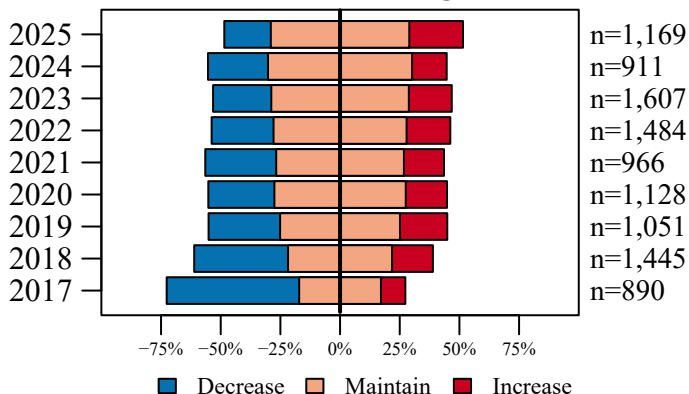


Figure 23. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 2.

Resident Hunter CBAQ

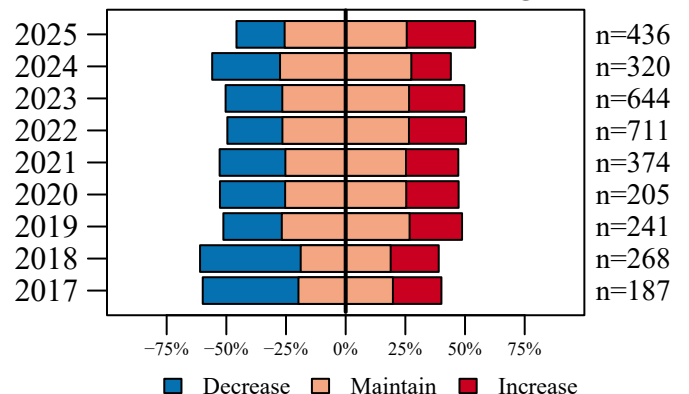


Figure 24. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they live in DMU 2.

DMU 2: Northeast

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Deer Management Survey Results

Resident Nonhunter CBAQ

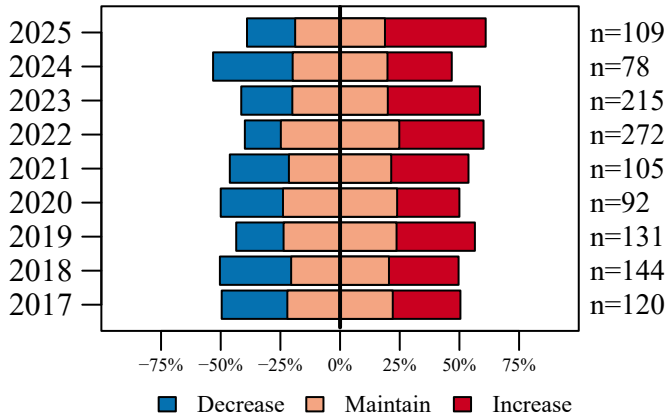


Figure 25. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 2.

Hunter Opinion

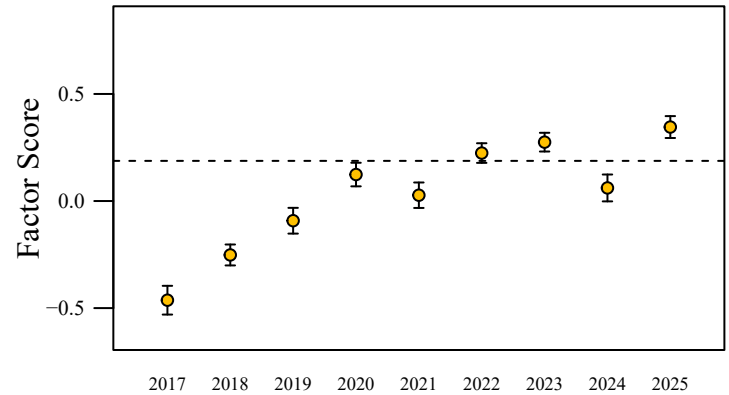


Figure 26. Hunter opinion scores over five years of the deer management survey. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked only to hunters. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Population Size Opinion

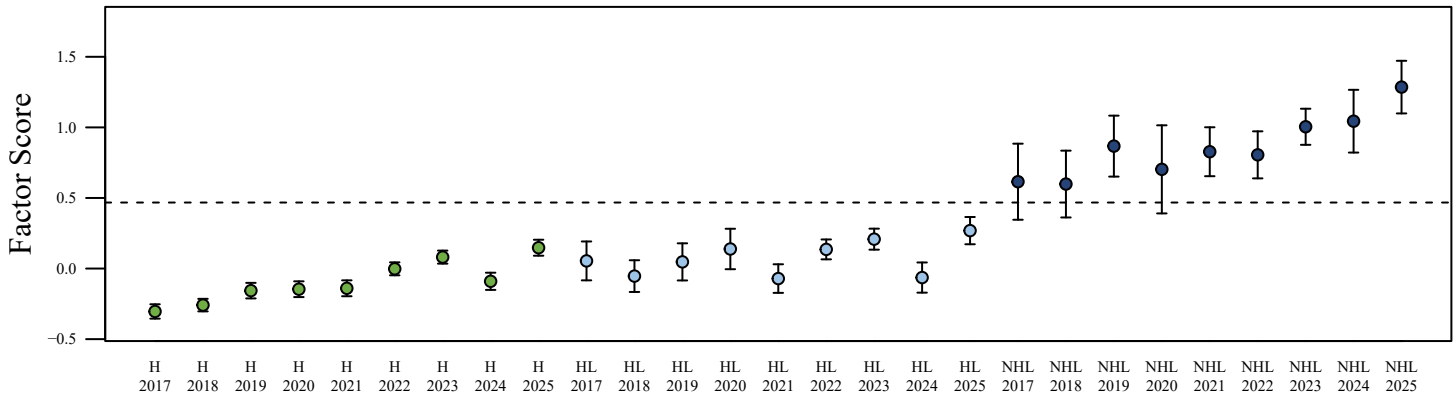


Figure 27. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer population size. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Deer Management Opinion

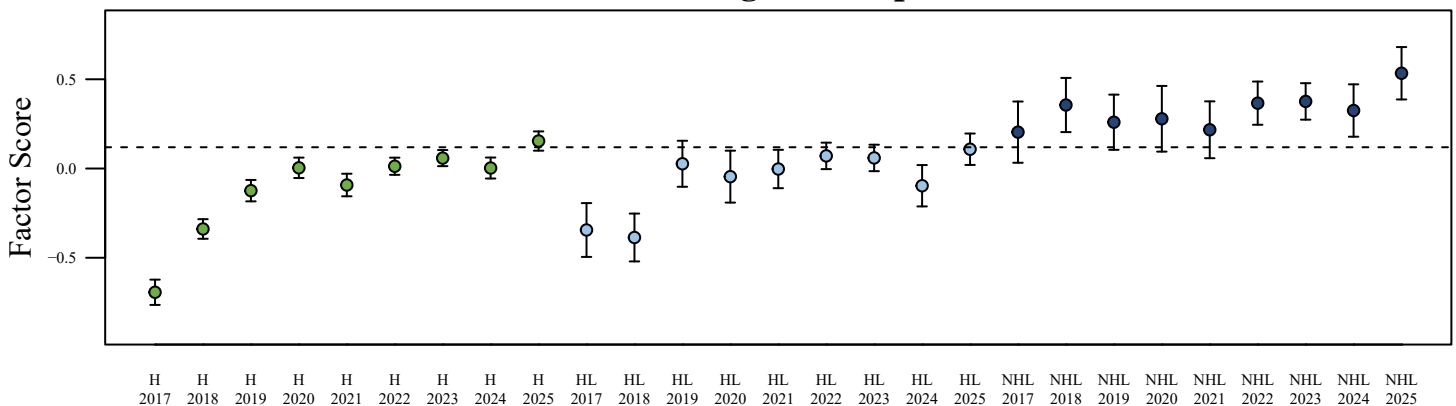


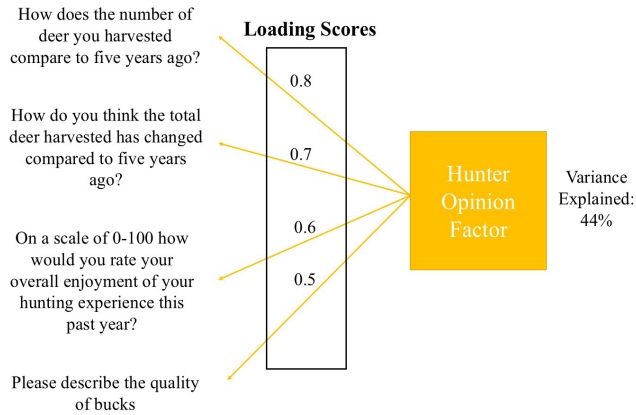
Figure 28. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer management. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

DMU 2: Northeast

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Deer Management Survey Results

(a) Factor Analysis Results: Hunter Questions



(b) Factor Analysis Results: All Group Questions

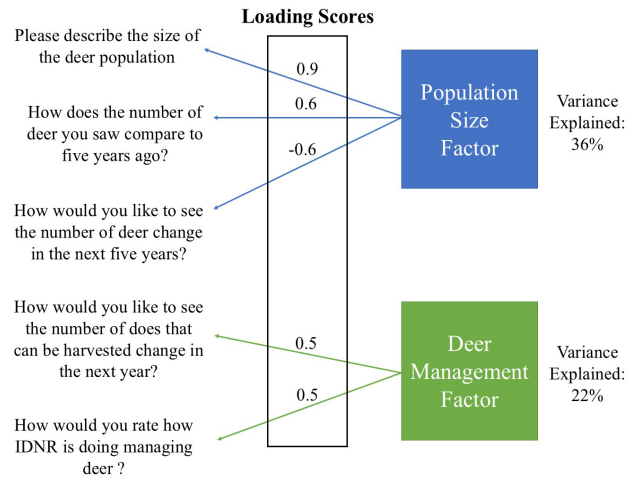


Figure 29. Results from two factor analyses used to develop the hunter opinion (a), population opinion (b), and management opinion (b) scores. Higher loading scores indicate a stronger correlation between the original question and the derived factor. These figures are included to help interpret Figure 26, Figure 27, and Figure 28.

DMU 3: West Central

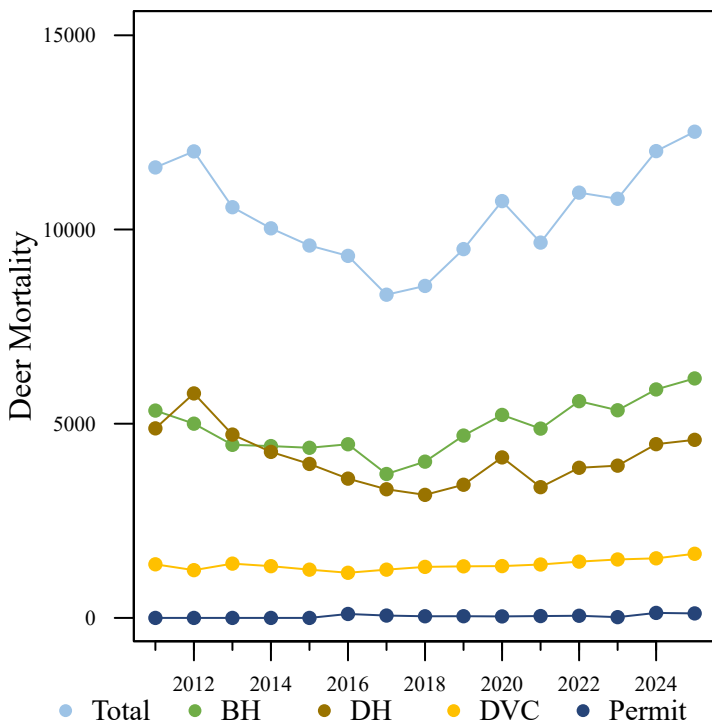
3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 4,025
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 433
 Percent Deer Habitat: 11

Table 1. Total harvest, buck harvest, and doe harvest (error < 1 percent). Damage permits are issued by DNR to landowners to control deer damage. Deer vehicle collisions (DVC) and miles traveled are reported by the Indiana Department of Transportation. Mean bag limit is the average antlerless bag limit of all counties in the DMU. The trend in total harvest, buck harvest, doe harvest, and DVCs are in standard deviations (SD) and are equivalent to effect size. A change greater than 2 SD is considered both a large and statistically significant effect size.

Year	Total	Total Trend in SD	Buck Harvest	Buck Trend in SD	Buck Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	Doe Harvest	Doe Trend in SD	Doe Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	% Doe in Harvest	Damage Permit Deer Taken	DVC per Billion Miles Traveled	DVC Trend in SD	Mean Bag Limit
2011	10,218	1.4	5,338	1.3	12.3	4,880	1.3	11.3	47.8		301.7	-2.1	5.9
2012	10,781	2.4	5,001	-0.6	11.5	5,780	5.5	13.3	53.6		271.4	-2.5	5.9
2013	9,176	-1.6	4,456	-2.8	10.3	4,720	-0.5	10.9	51.4		309.3	-0.2	5.4
2014	8,698	-2.0	4,424	-1.5	10.2	4,274	-1.5	9.9	49.1		293.9	-0.5	4.3
2015	8,344	-1.7	4,380	-1.2	10.1	3,964	-1.7	9.2	47.5		274.4	-1.5	4.3
2016	8,057	-1.3	4,471	-0.6	10.3	3,586	-1.6	8.3	44.5	102	257.4	-2.0	4.2
2017	7,017	-1.9	3,705	-3.3	8.6	3,312	-1.4	7.6	47.2	61	276.3	-0.2	2.9
2018	7,191	-1.3	4,023	-0.8	9.3	3,168	-1.4	7.3	44.1	42	290.3	0.4	2.1
2019	8,123	0.4	4,695	1.5	10.8	3,428	-0.5	7.9	42.2	44	292.5	1.0	1.8
2020	9,358	2.7	5,226	2.5	12.1	4,132	2.1	9.5	44.2	39	290.8	0.9	1.8
2021	8,240	0.3	4,874	0.8	11.3	3,366	-0.4	7.8	40.8	48	298.6	1.1	1.8
2022	9,445	1.6	5,580	1.7	12.9	3,865	1.0	8.9	40.9	55	311.3	2.6	1.9
2023	9,266	0.8	5,346	0.8	12.3	3,920	0.8	9.1	42.3	20	318.8	2.5	1.9
2024	10,355	2.3	5,882	2.1	13.6	4,473	2.2	10.3	43.2	129	319.6	1.4	1.9
2025	10,751	1.9	6,166	2.1	14.2	4,585	1.6	10.6	42.6	116	378.9	5.6	2.9

(a) Cumulative Known Deer Mortality



(b) Archer Deer Observations

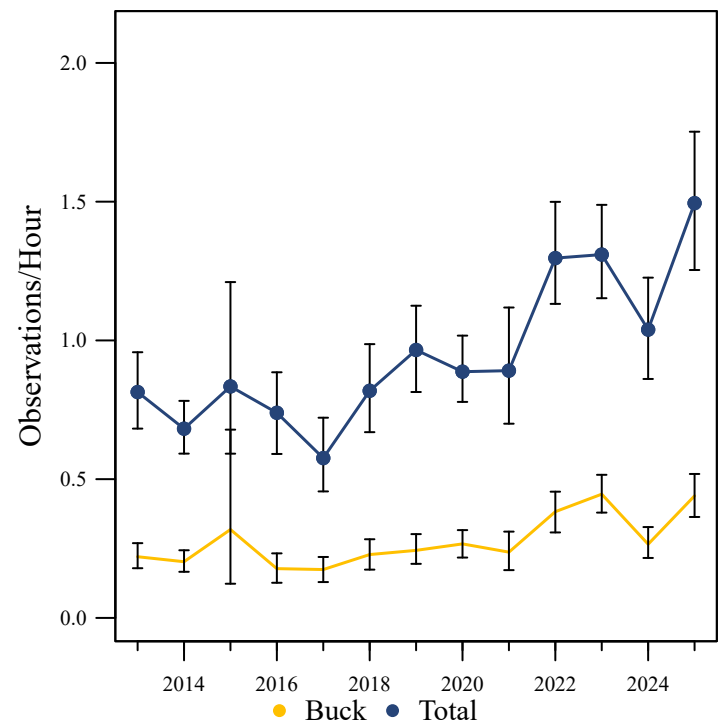


Figure 1. (a) The total known annual deer mortality based on buck harvests (BH), doe harvests (DH), deer vehicle collisions (DVC), and deer permit takes. (b) Total deer and buck observations per hour based on the Archer's Index.

DMU 3: West Central

3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 4,025
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 433
 Percent Deer Habitat: 11

Table 2. Estimated number of antlered (A) and antlerless (AL) deer harvested per hunter. Estimated totals may not match exactly with total number of deer harvested. Reporting errors are examined and investigated as they are located; therefore, subsequent reports may contain corrected totals.

Year	Total Hunters	0 A	1 A	2 A	3 A	0 AL	1 AL	2 AL	3 AL	4 AL	5 AL	6 AL	7 AL	8 AL	9 AL	10 AL
2016	6,209	2,547	3,655	7	0	2,797	2,633	636	102	30	9	2	0	0	0	0
2017	5,364	2,439	2,916	8	0	2,213	2,388	629	102	31	1	0	0	0	0	0
2018	5,646	2,302	3,329	15	0	2,519	2,493	570	59	3	2	0	0	0	0	0
2019	6,215	2,246	3,955	14	0	2,873	2,625	651	54	10	1	1	0	0	0	0
2020	6,993	2,682	4,290	21	0	3,038	3,006	853	77	16	2	0	0	0	1	0
2021	6,418	2,229	4,183	6	0	3,159	2,543	657	52	5	1	0	1	0	0	0
2022	7,116	2,282	4,820	13	1	3,475	2,786	774	66	12	2	1	0	0	0	0
2023	7,064	2,387	4,658	19	0	3,422	2,802	761	70	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	7,760	2,630	5,101	29	0	3,669	3,085	920	74	11	1	0	0	0	0	0
2025	7,821	2,435	5,361	23	2	3,761	2,964	923	166	5	2	0	0	0	0	0

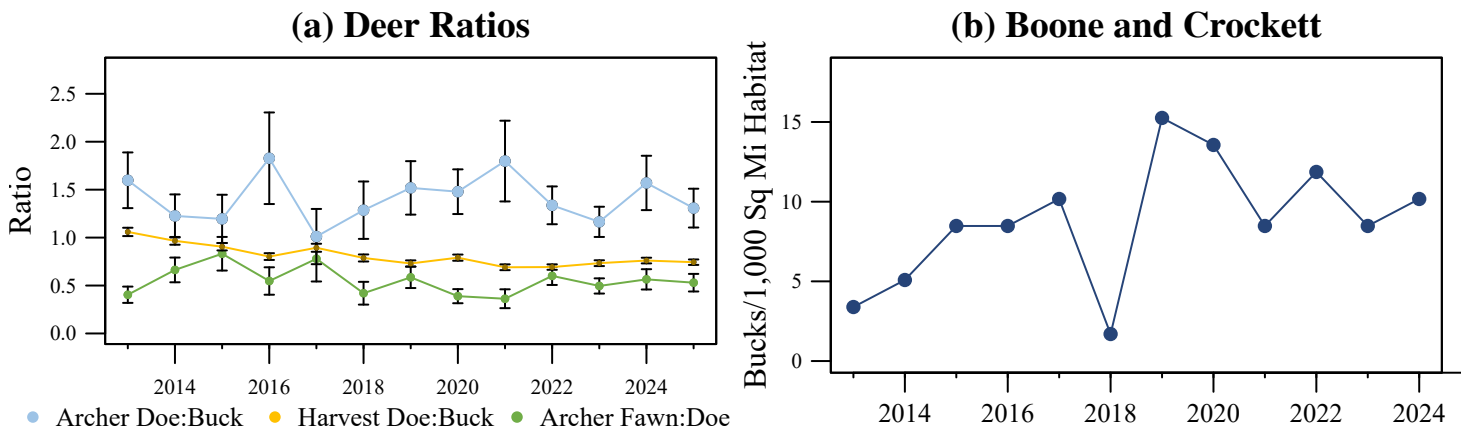
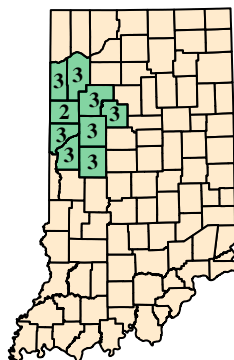


Figure 2. (a) Annual doe:buck ratios and fawn:doe ratios based on the Archer's Index and harvest records. (b) The number of Boone and Crockett bucks (minimum 160 score) per 1,000 square miles of deer habitat.

(a) Counties in DMU 3



(b) Deer Habitat in DMU 3

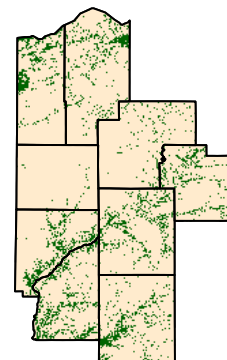


Figure 3. (a) Counties included in DMU 3 for summarizing harvest and deer management survey statistics. Labels are the 2024 county bonus antlerless quotas. (b) Green represents the land use types classified as deer habitat in DMU 3.

DMU 3: West Central

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Deer Management Survey Results

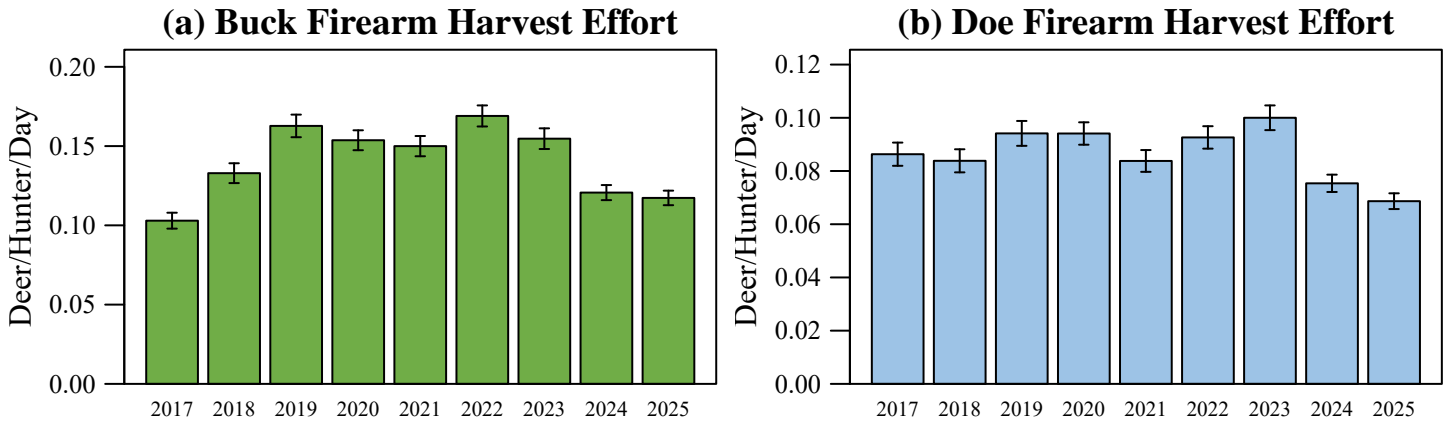


Figure 4. Firearm harvest effort is the number of bucks (a) and does (b) killed by firearms per hunter divided by the mean number of days hunted per hunter during the firearm season based on data reported in the deer management survey. Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate less effort required to harvest a deer.

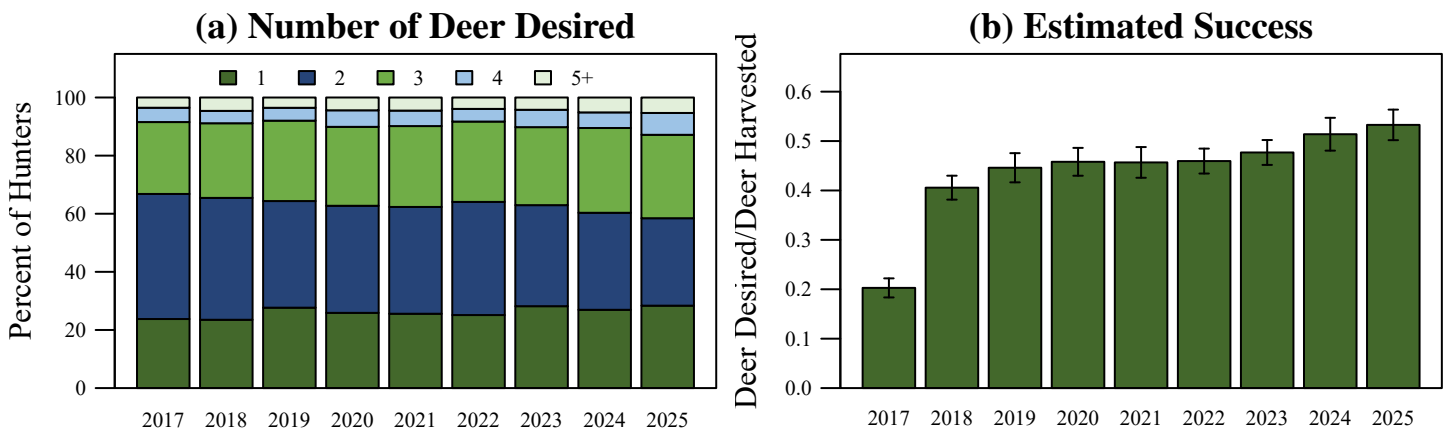


Figure 5. (a) The annual percent of hunters wishing to harvest each number of deer as reported in the deer management survey. (b) Success rate is estimated from the deer management survey as the Number of Harvested Deer/Number of Deer Desired (reported only; does not account for attempts that were not made). Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate greater success.

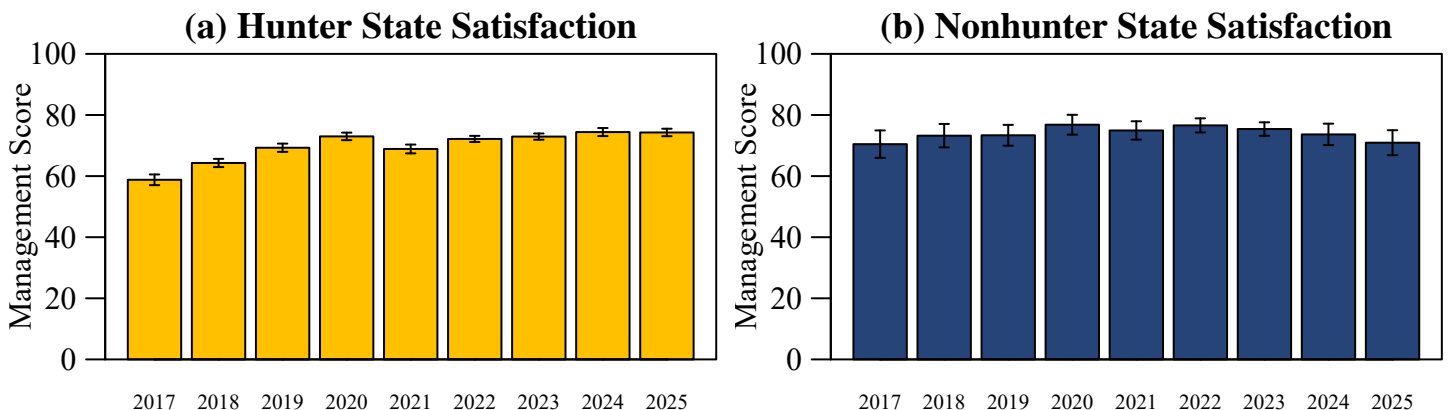


Figure 6. Hunters (a) and nonhunters (b) were asked to score the DNR's statewide deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent).

DMU 3: West Central

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Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Satisfaction

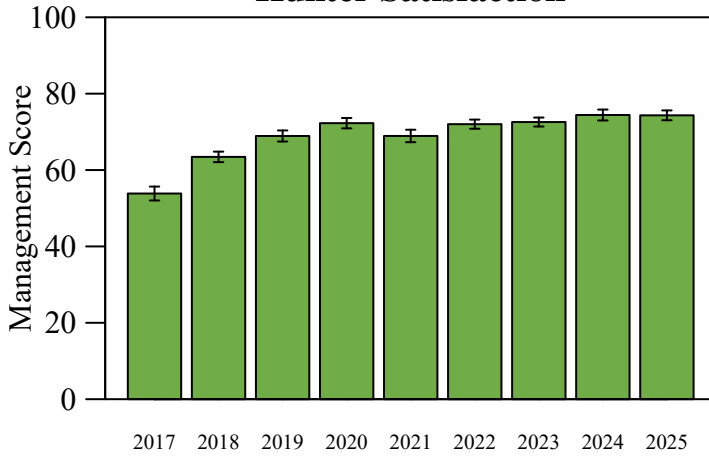


Figure 7. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 3 where they hunt.

Resident Hunter Satisfaction

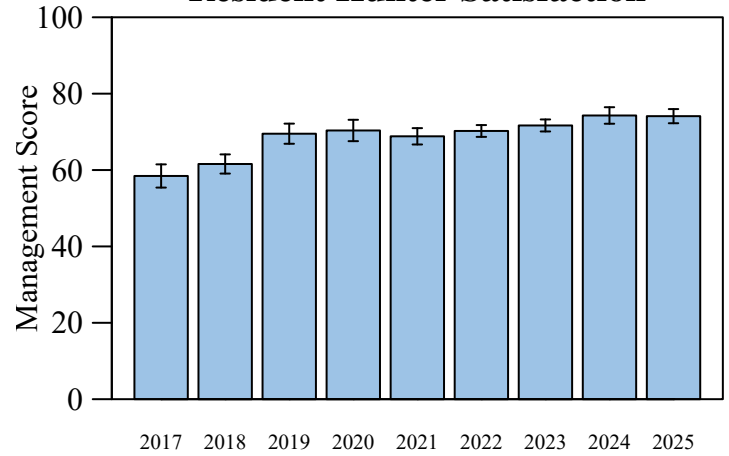


Figure 8. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 3 where they live.

Resident Nonhunter Satisfaction

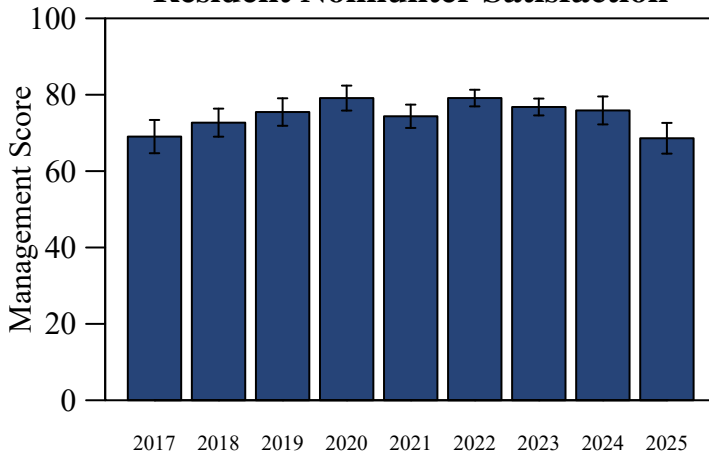


Figure 9. Nonhunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 3 where they live.

Hunter Population Size

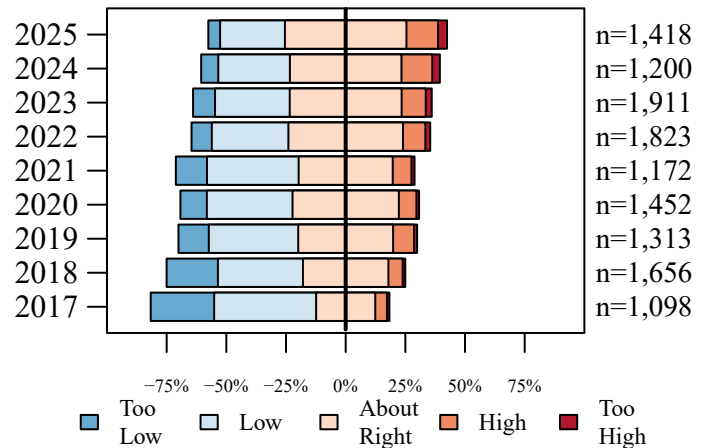


Figure 10. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 3.

Resident Hunter Population Size

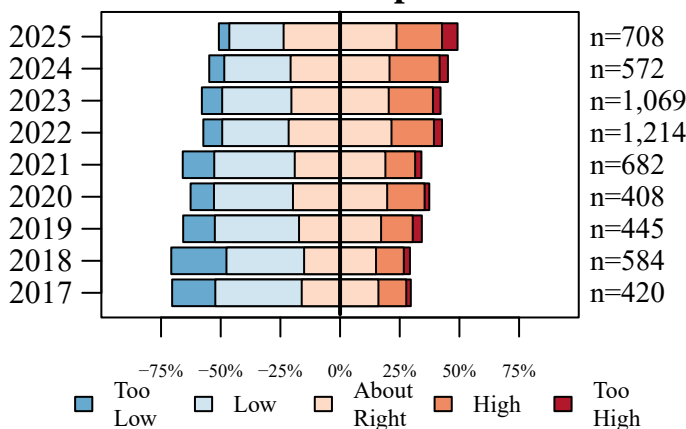


Figure 11. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 3.

Resident Nonhunter Population Size

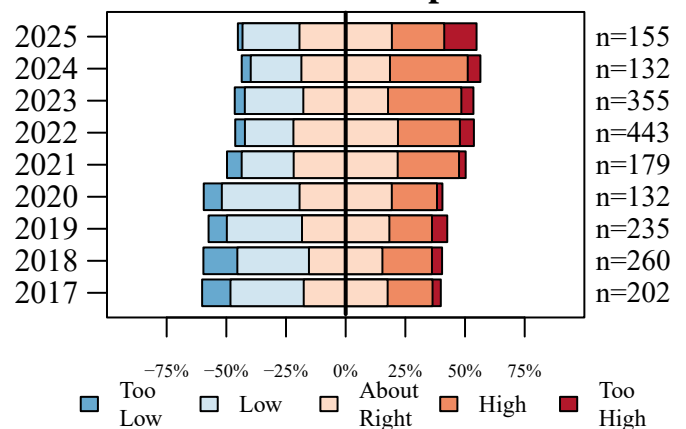


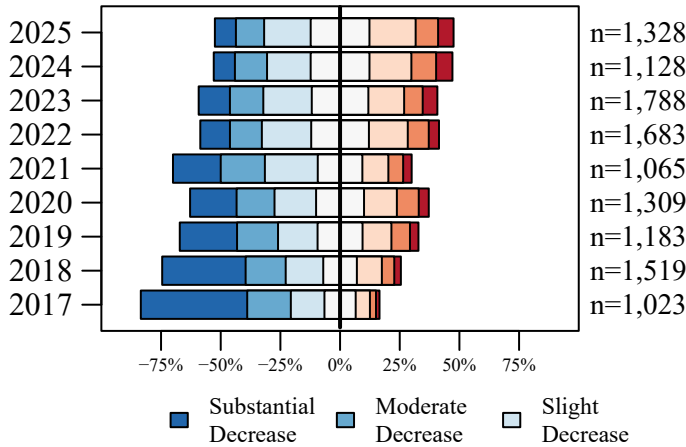
Figure 12. The current size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 3.

DMU 3: West Central

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Perceived Change



Resident Hunter Perceived Change

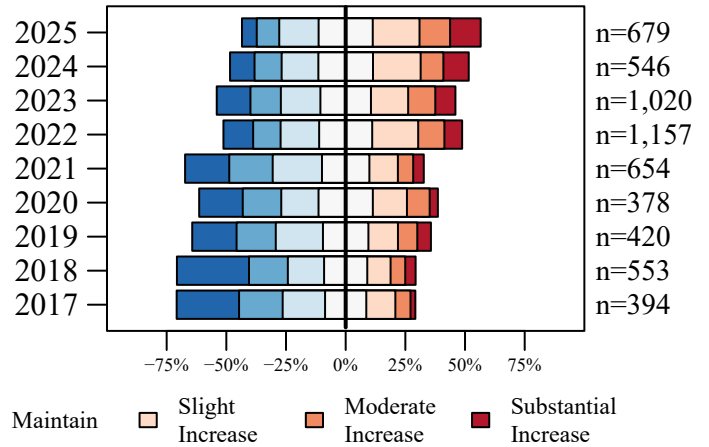
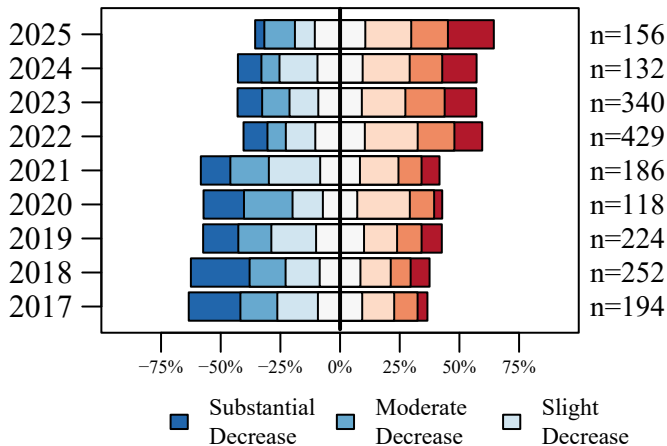


Figure 13. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 3.

Figure 14. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 3.

Resident Nonhunter Perceived Change



Hunter Desired Change

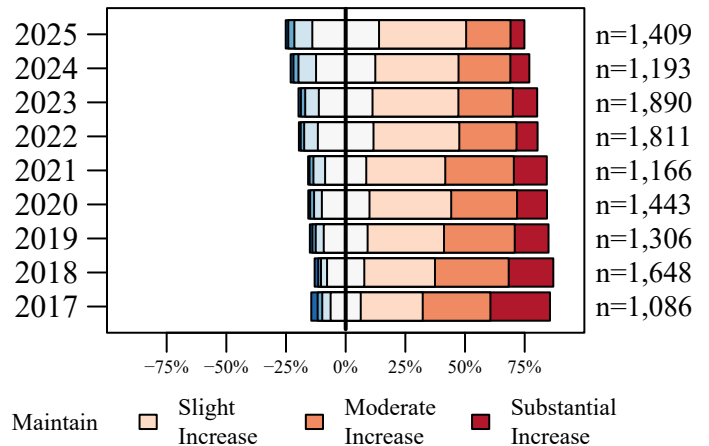
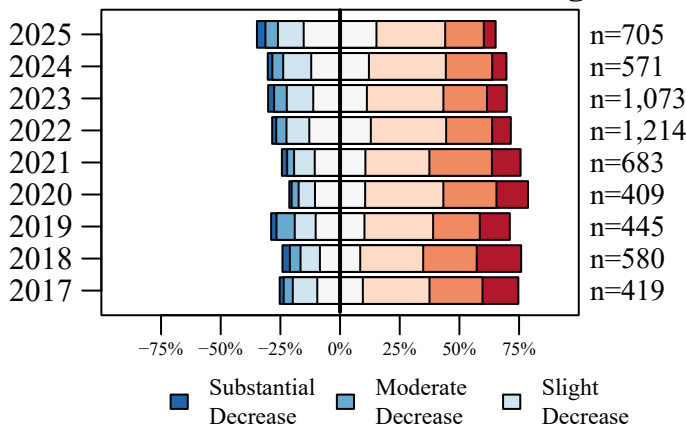


Figure 15. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 3.

Figure 16. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 3.

Resident Hunter Desired Change



Resident Nonhunter Desired Change

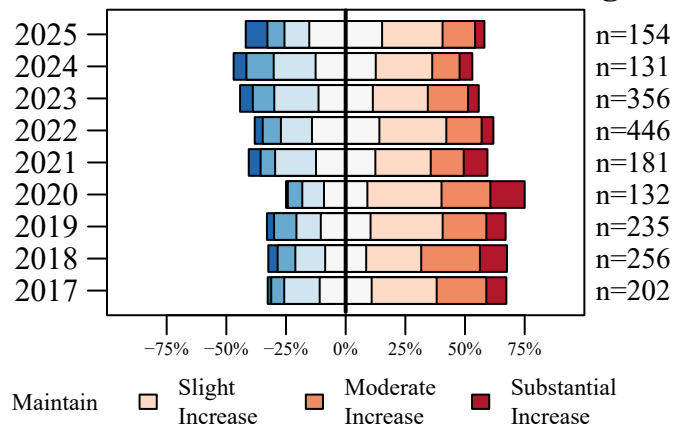


Figure 17. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 3.

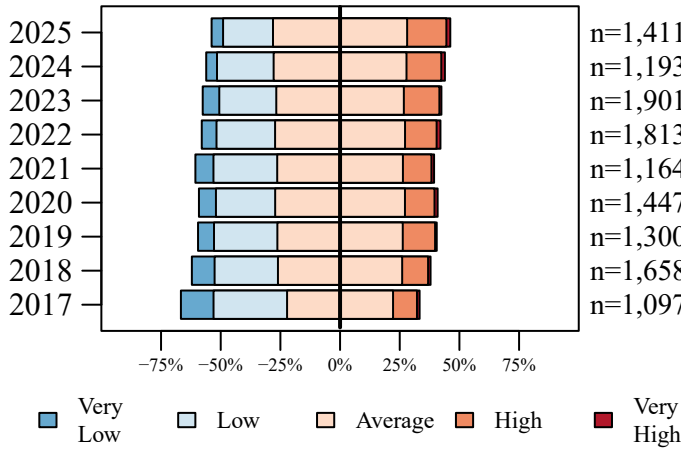
Figure 18. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 3.

DMU 3: West Central

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Buck Quality



Resident Hunter Buck Quality

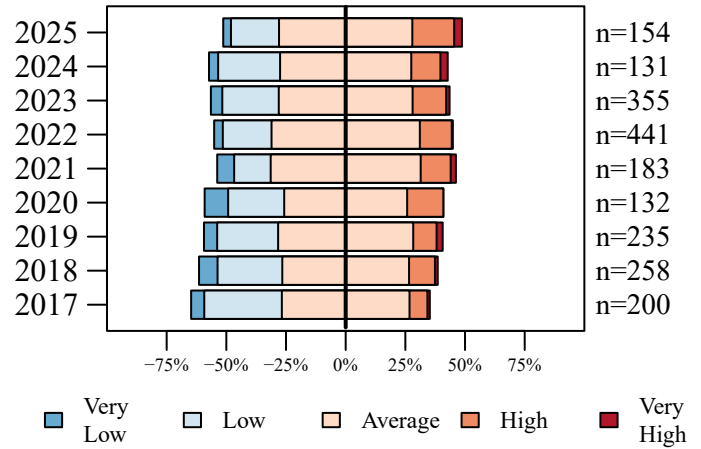


Figure 19. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they hunt in DMU 3.

Figure 20. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they live in DMU 3.

Personal Harvest Change

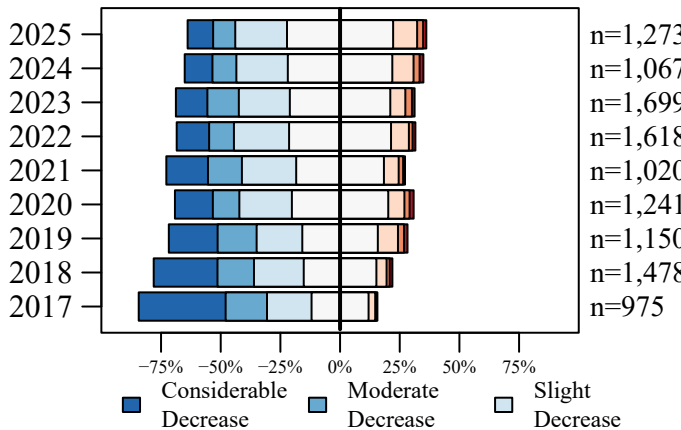


Figure 21. Opinion of hunters on how their personal number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 3.

Total Harvest Change

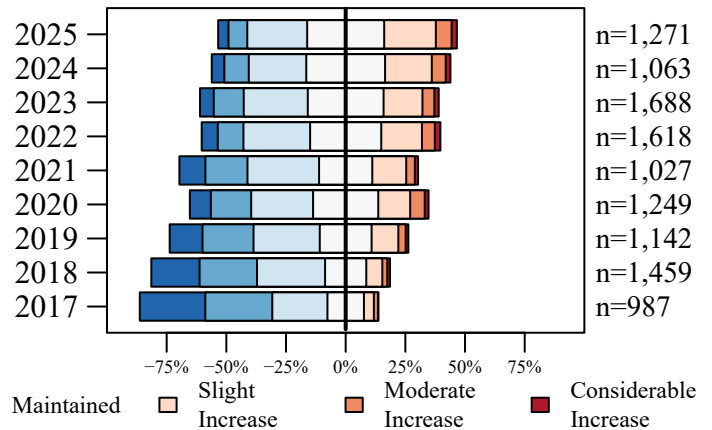


Figure 22. Opinion of hunters on how the total number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 3.

Hunter CBAQ

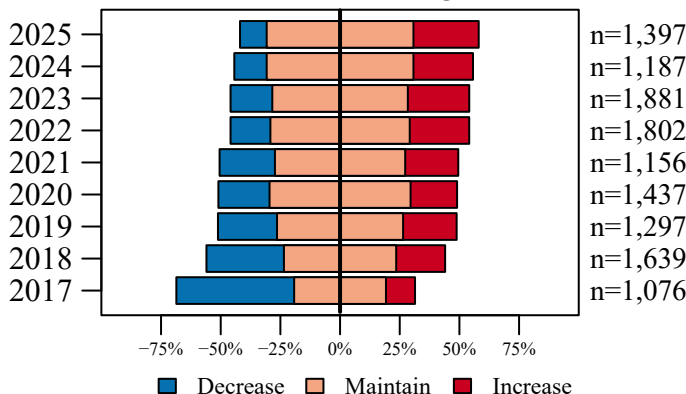


Figure 23. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 3.

Resident Hunter CBAQ

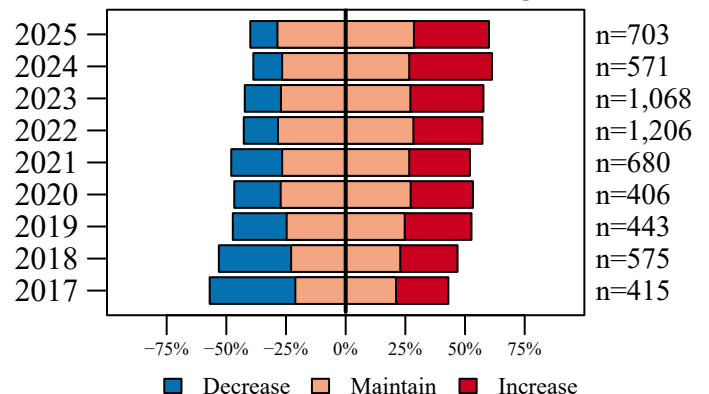


Figure 24. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they live in DMU 3.

DMU 3: West Central

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Resident Nonhunter CBAQ

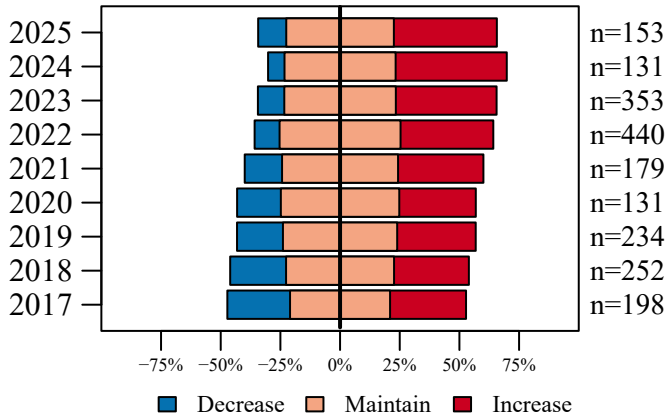


Figure 25. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 3.

Hunter Opinion

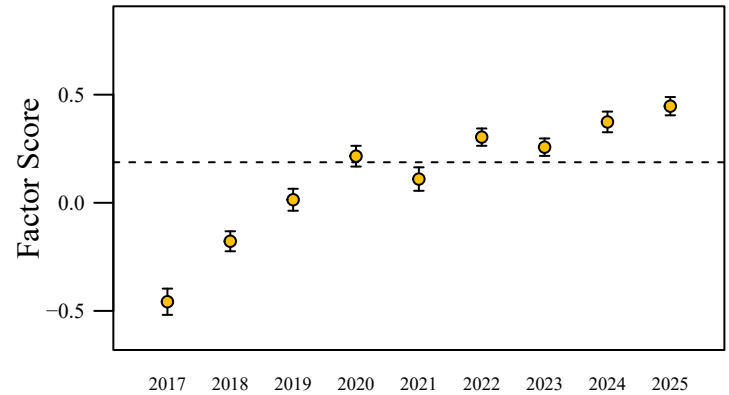


Figure 26. Hunter opinion scores over five years of the deer management survey. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked only to hunters. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Population Size Opinion

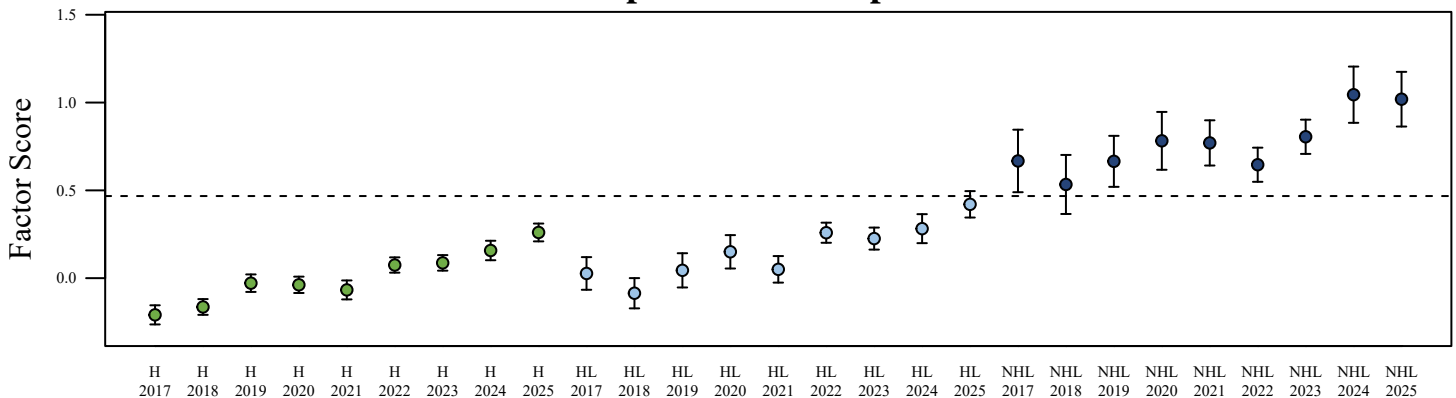


Figure 27. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer population size. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Deer Management Opinion

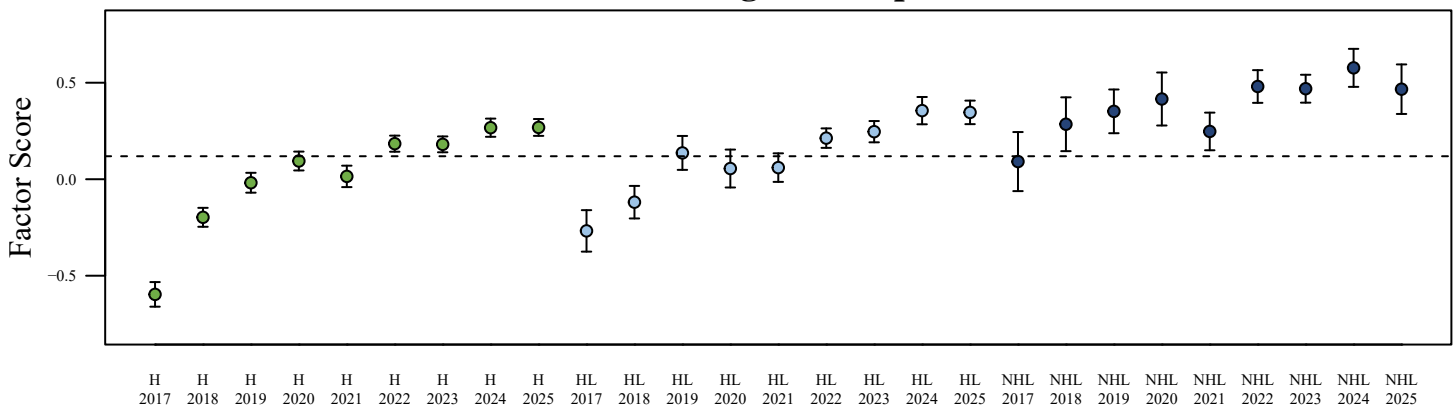


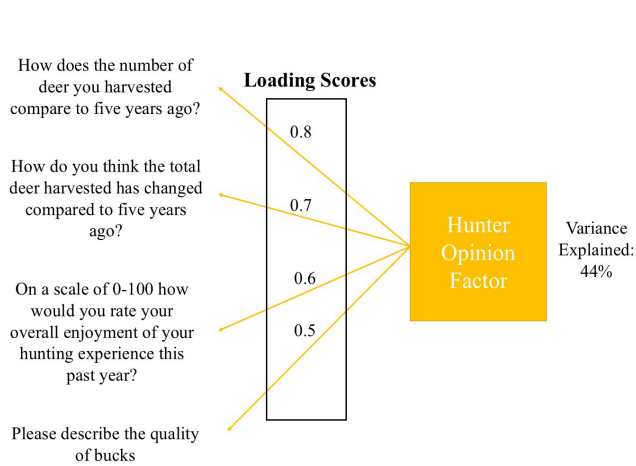
Figure 28. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer management. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

DMU 3: West Central

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

(a) Factor Analysis Results: Hunter Questions



(b) Factor Analysis Results: All Group Questions

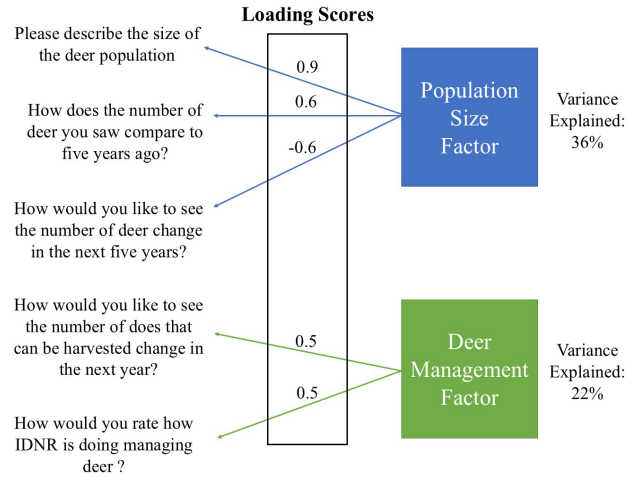


Figure 29. Results from two factor analyses used to develop the hunter opinion (a), population opinion (b), and management opinion (b) scores. Higher loading scores indicate a stronger correlation between the original question and the derived factor. These figures are included to help interpret Figure 26, Figure 27, and Figure 28.

DMU 4: East Central

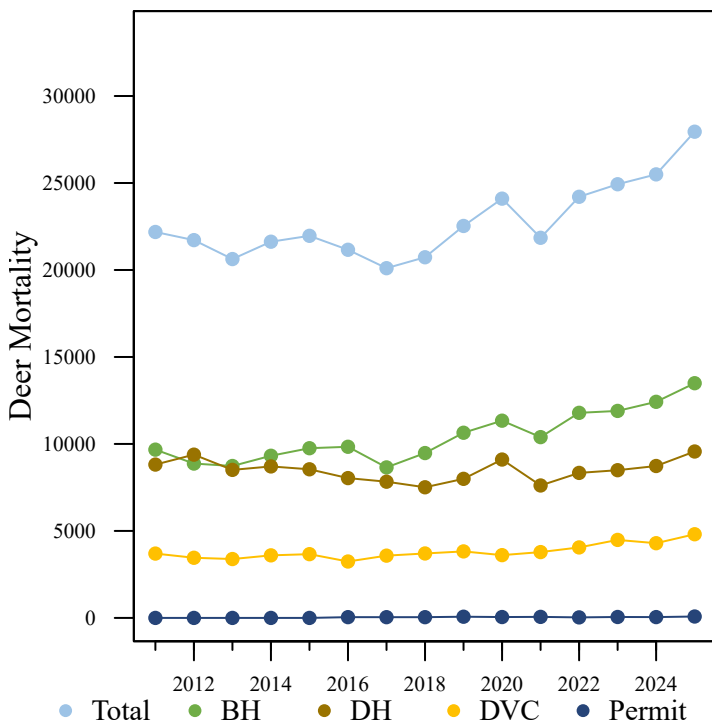
3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 9,965
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 1,063
 Percent Deer Habitat: 11

Table 1. Total harvest, buck harvest, and doe harvest (error < 1 percent). Damage permits are issued by DNR to landowners to control deer damage. Deer vehicle collisions (DVC) and miles traveled are reported by the Indiana Department of Transportation. Mean bag limit is the average antlerless bag limit of all counties in the DMU. The trend in total harvest, buck harvest, doe harvest, and DVCs are in standard deviations (SD) and are equivalent to effect size. A change greater than 2 SD is considered both a large and statistically significant effect size.

Year	Total	Total Trend in SD	Buck Harvest	Buck Trend in SD	Buck Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	Doe Harvest	Doe Trend in SD	Doe Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	% Doe in Harvest	Damage Permit Deer Taken	DVC per Billion Miles Traveled	DVC Trend in SD	Mean Bag Limit
2011	18,487	1.2	9,673	0.8	9.1	8,814	1.7	8.3	47.7		162.1	-1.9	3.9
2012	18,258	0.5	8,873	-2.0	8.3	9,385	3.6	8.8	51.4		150.8	-2.5	3.8
2013	17,243	-1.5	8,733	-1.6	8.2	8,510	-0.4	8.0	49.4		146.7	-1.8	3.5
2014	18,029	0.0	9,321	0.1	8.8	8,708	-0.1	8.2	48.3		154.2	-0.5	3.4
2015	18,299	0.7	9,755	1.3	9.2	8,544	-0.6	8.0	46.7		155.7	0.0	3.3
2016	17,875	-0.4	9,838	1.2	9.3	8,037	-2.1	7.6	45.0	44	136.5	-3.0	3.3
2017	16,481	-3.4	8,651	-1.3	8.1	7,830	-1.7	7.4	47.5	43	149.3	0.1	3.0
2018	16,985	-0.8	9,476	0.4	8.9	7,509	-2.2	7.1	44.2	43	152.3	0.5	1.9
2019	18,638	1.4	10,644	2.6	10.0	7,994	-0.3	7.5	42.9	69	155.3	0.7	1.6
2020	20,441	3.1	11,337	2.3	10.7	9,104	3.0	8.6	44.5	51	145.3	-0.6	1.6
2021	18,006	-0.1	10,393	0.4	9.8	7,613	-0.8	7.2	42.3	60	151.0	0.4	1.6
2022	20,125	1.3	11,789	1.6	11.1	8,336	0.5	7.8	41.4	30	159.5	2.4	1.7
2023	20,390	1.1	11,898	1.3	11.2	8,492	0.6	8.0	41.6	54	173.4	4.0	1.7
2024	21,154	1.5	12,421	1.8	11.7	8,733	0.8	8.2	41.3	47	160.8	0.4	1.6
2025	23,058	2.5	13,492	2.5	12.7	9,566	2.0	9.0	41.5	81	222.1	6.0	2.5

(a) Cumulative Known Deer Mortality



(b) Archer Deer Observations

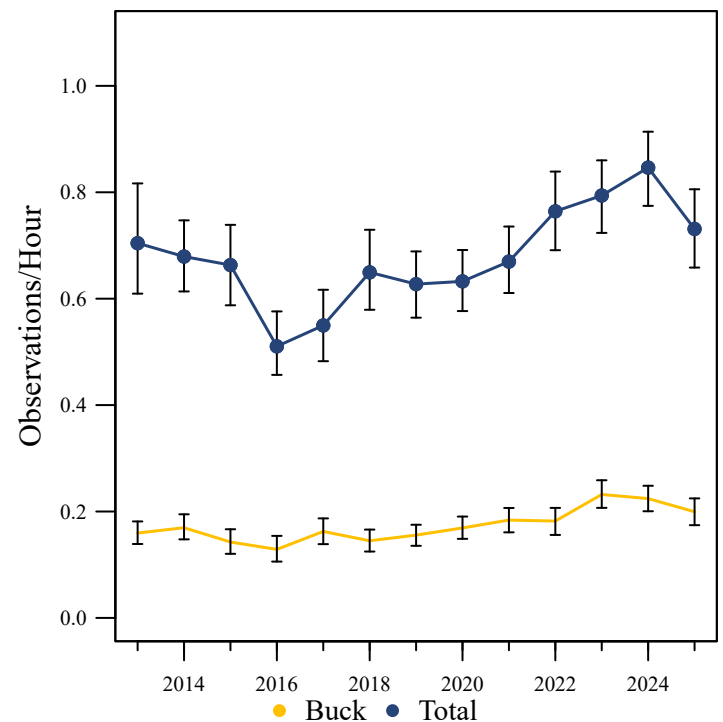


Figure 1. (a) The total known annual deer mortality based on buck harvests (BH), doe harvests (DH), deer vehicle collisions (DVC), and deer permit takes. (b) Total deer and buck observations per hour based on the Archer's Index.

DMU 4: East Central

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

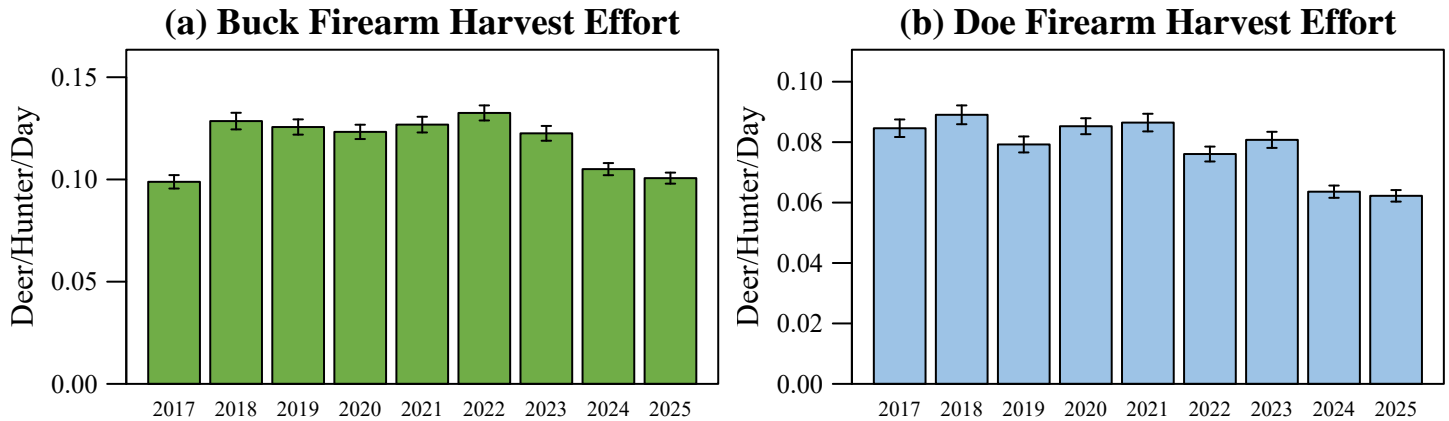


Figure 4. Firearm harvest effort is the number of bucks (a) and does (b) killed by firearms per hunter divided by the mean number of days hunted per hunter during the firearm season based on data reported in the deer management survey. Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate less effort required to harvest a deer.

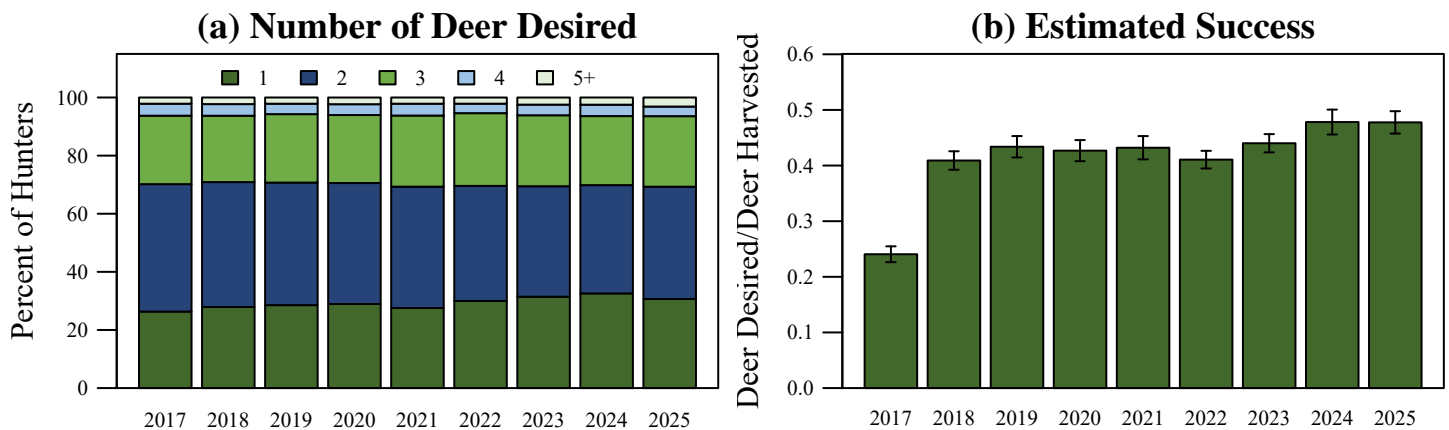


Figure 5. (a) The annual percent of hunters wishing to harvest each number of deer as reported in the deer management survey. (b) Success rate is estimated from the deer management survey as the Number of Harvested Deer/Number of Deer Desired (reported only; does not account for attempts that were not made). Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate greater success.

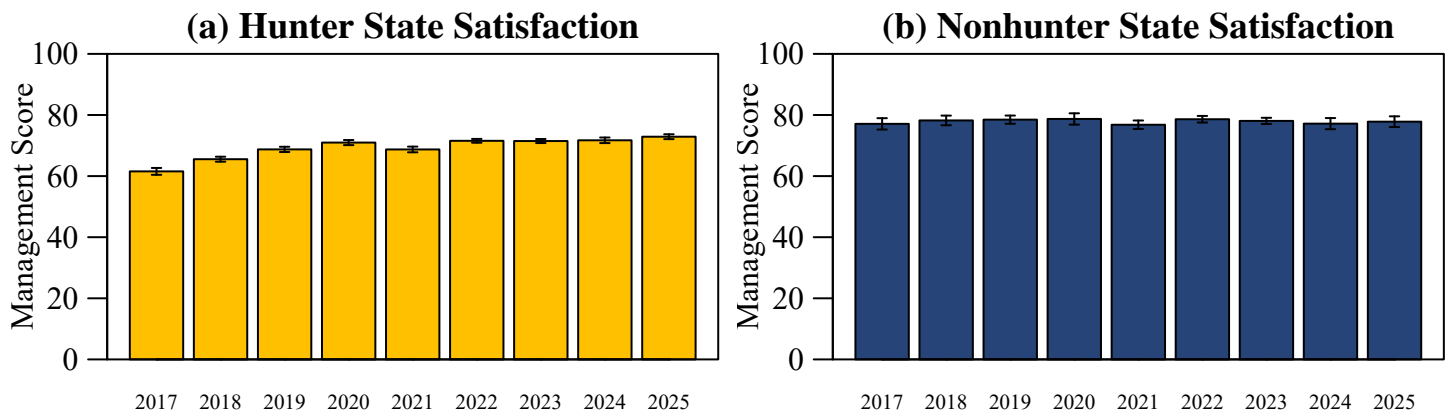


Figure 6. Hunters (a) and nonhunters (b) were asked to score the DNR's statewide deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent).

DMU 4: East Central

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Satisfaction

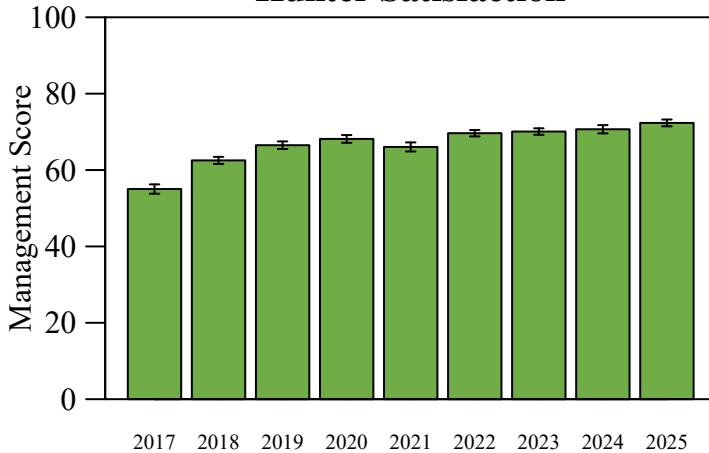


Figure 7. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 4 where they hunt.

Resident Hunter Satisfaction

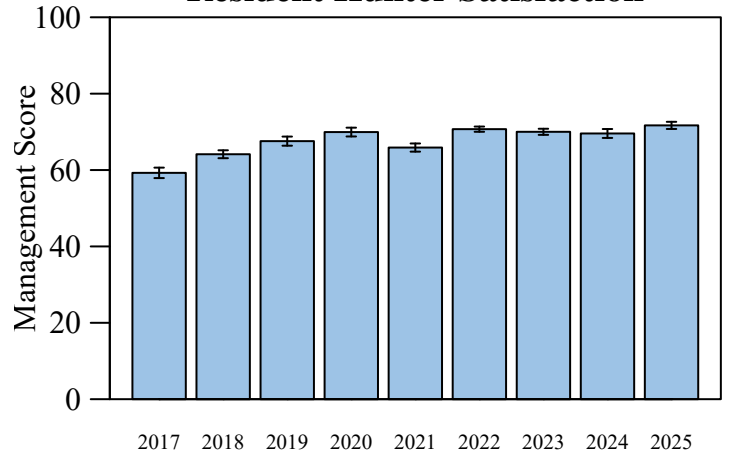


Figure 8. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 4 where they live.

Resident Nonhunter Satisfaction

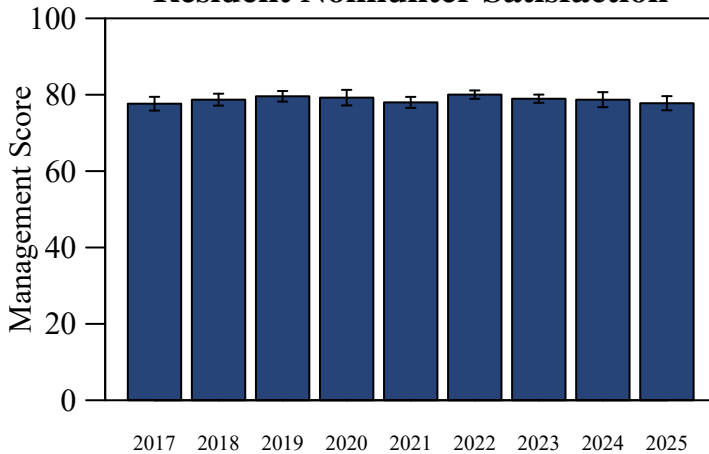


Figure 9. Nonhunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 4 where they live.

Hunter Population Size

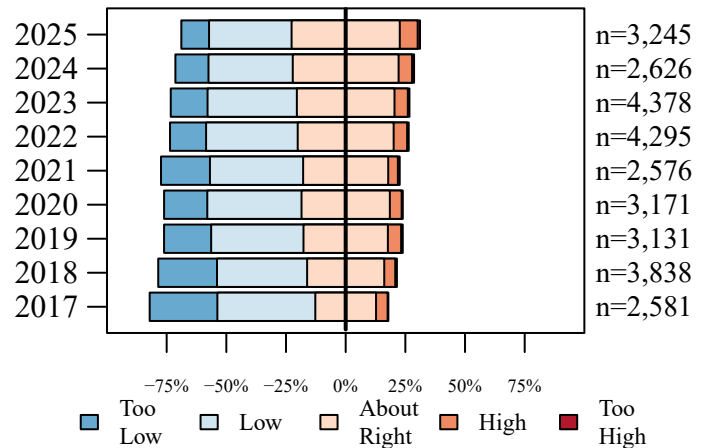


Figure 10. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 4.

Resident Hunter Population Size

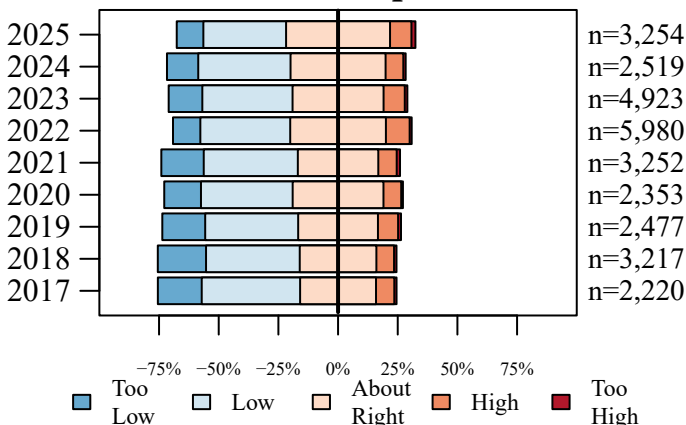


Figure 11. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 4.

Resident Nonhunter Population Size

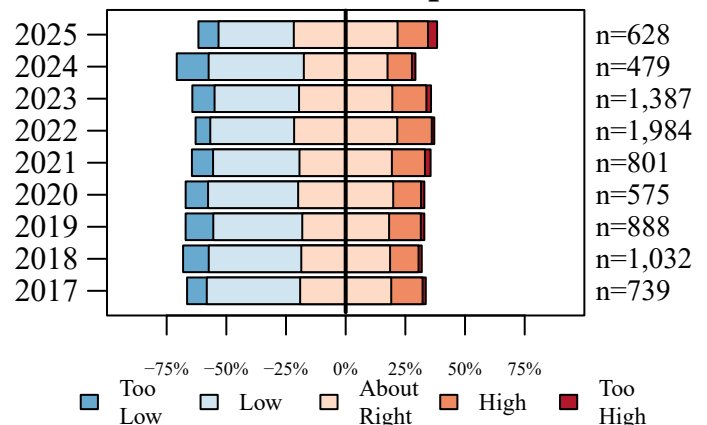


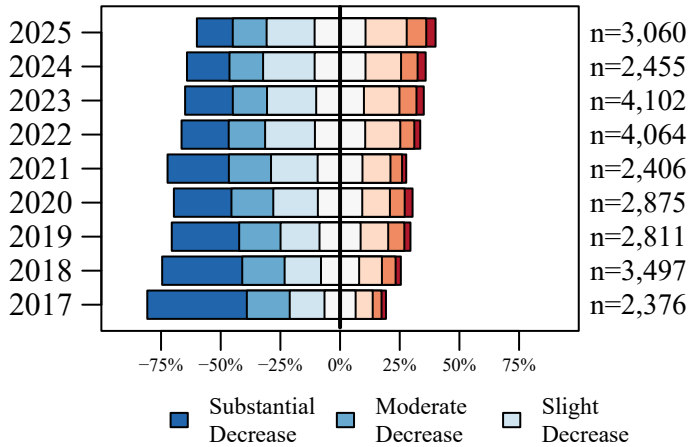
Figure 12. The current size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 4.

DMU 4: East Central

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Perceived Change



Resident Hunter Perceived Change

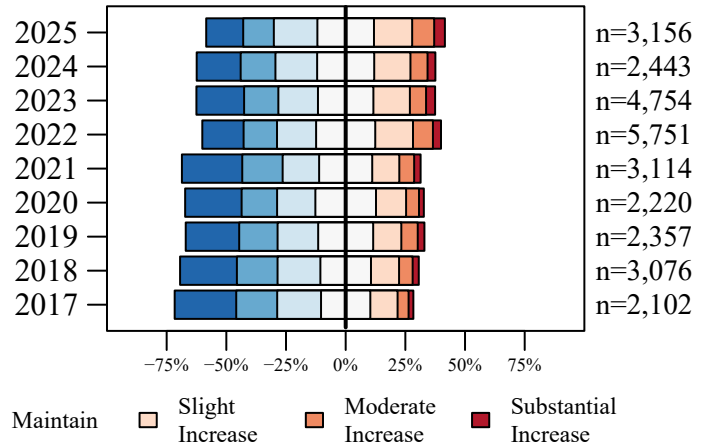
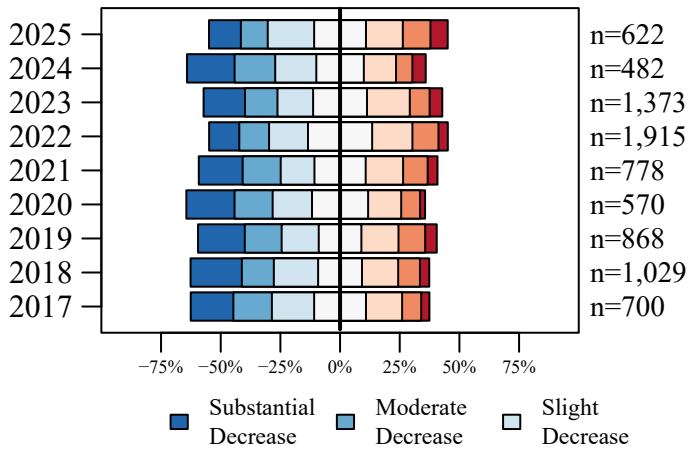


Figure 13. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 4.

Figure 14. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 4.

Resident Nonhunter Perceived Change



Hunter Desired Change

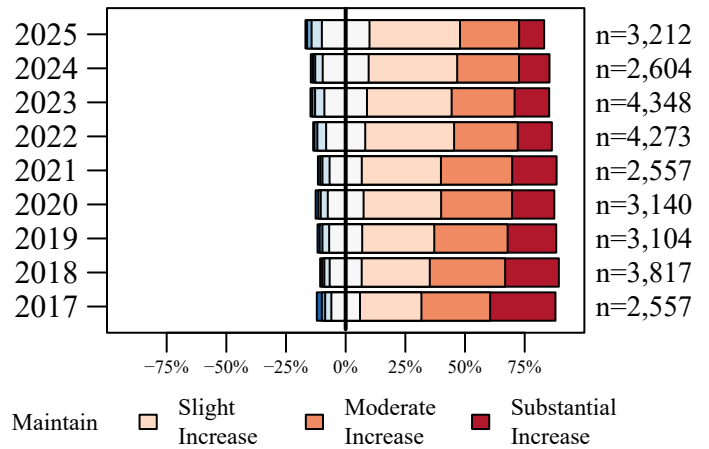
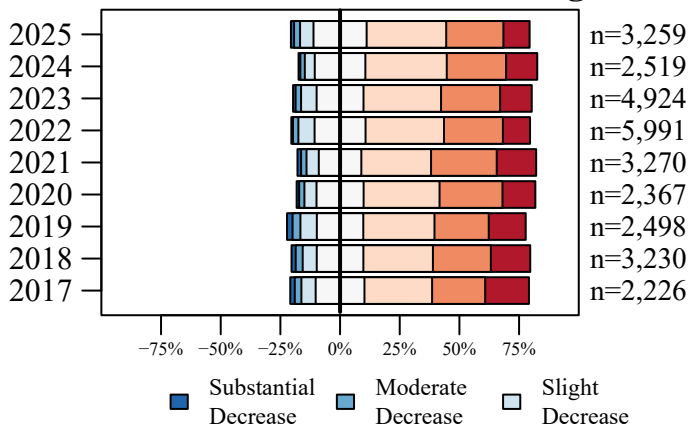


Figure 15. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 4.

Figure 16. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 4.

Resident Hunter Desired Change



Resident Nonhunter Desired Change

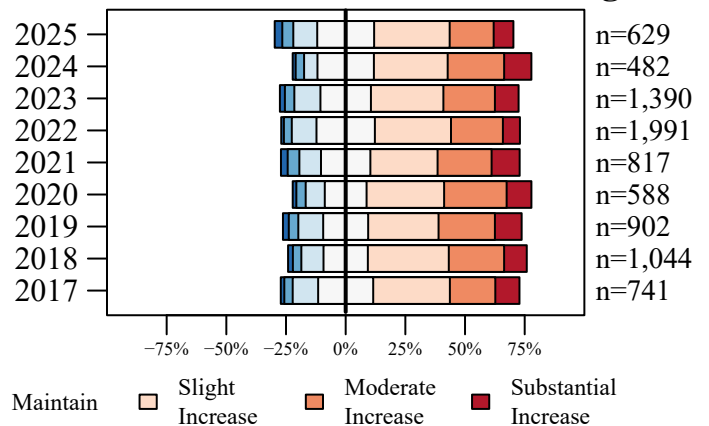


Figure 17. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 4.

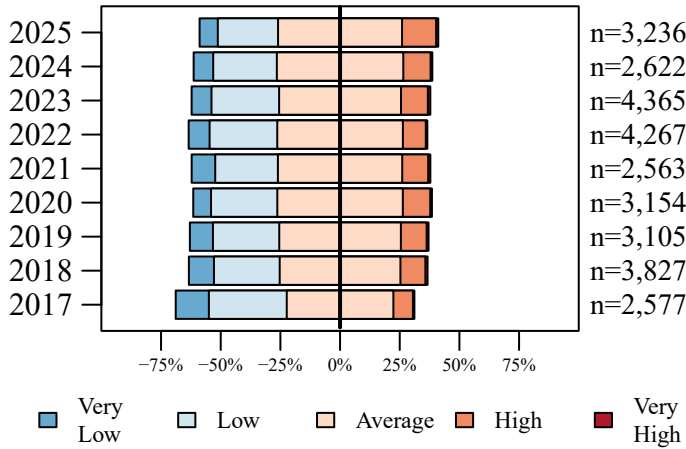
Figure 18. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 4.

DMU 4: East Central

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Buck Quality



Resident Hunter Buck Quality

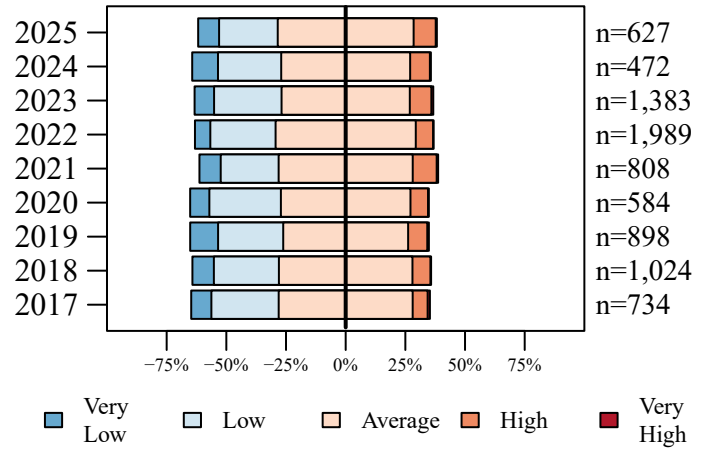


Figure 19. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they hunt in DMU 4.

Figure 20. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they live in DMU 4.

Personal Harvest Change

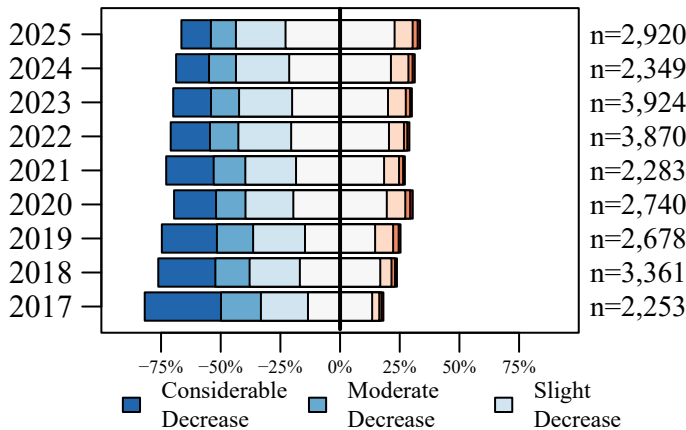


Figure 21. Opinion of hunters on how their personal number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 4.

Total Harvest Change

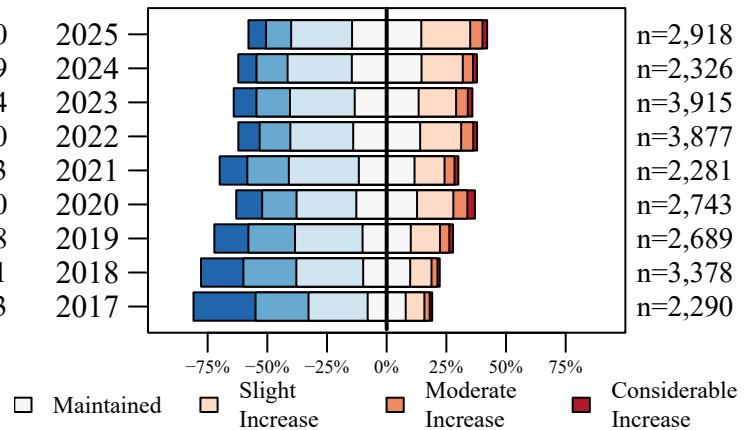


Figure 22. Opinion of hunters on how the total number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 4.

Hunter CBAQ

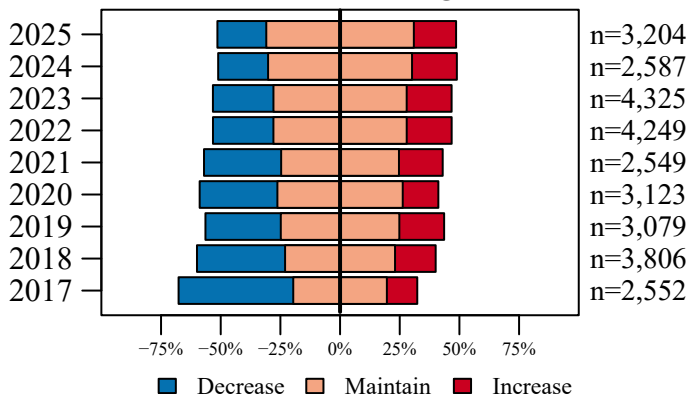


Figure 23. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 4.

Resident Hunter CBAQ

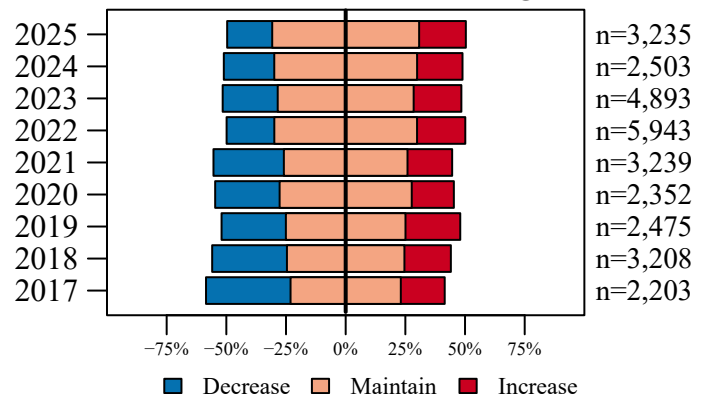


Figure 24. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they live in DMU 4.

DMU 4: East Central

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Resident Nonhunter CBAQ

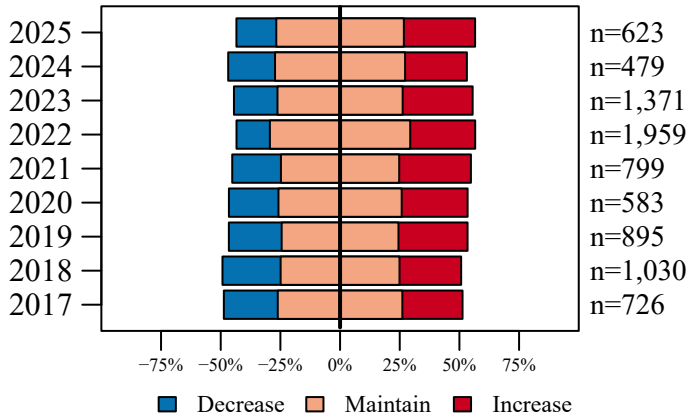


Figure 25. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 4.

Hunter Opinion

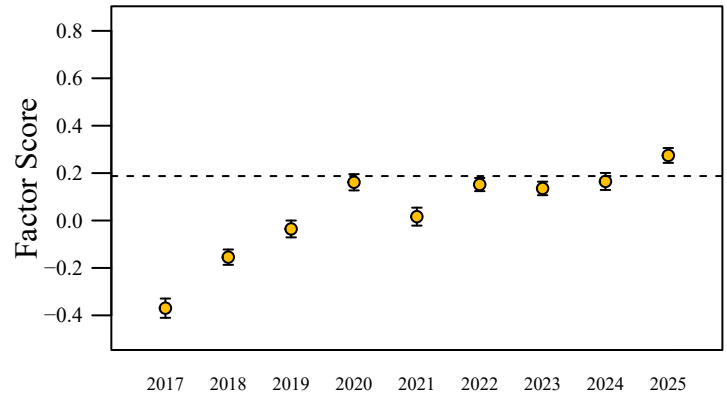


Figure 26. Hunter opinion scores over five years of the deer management survey. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked only to hunters. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Population Size Opinion

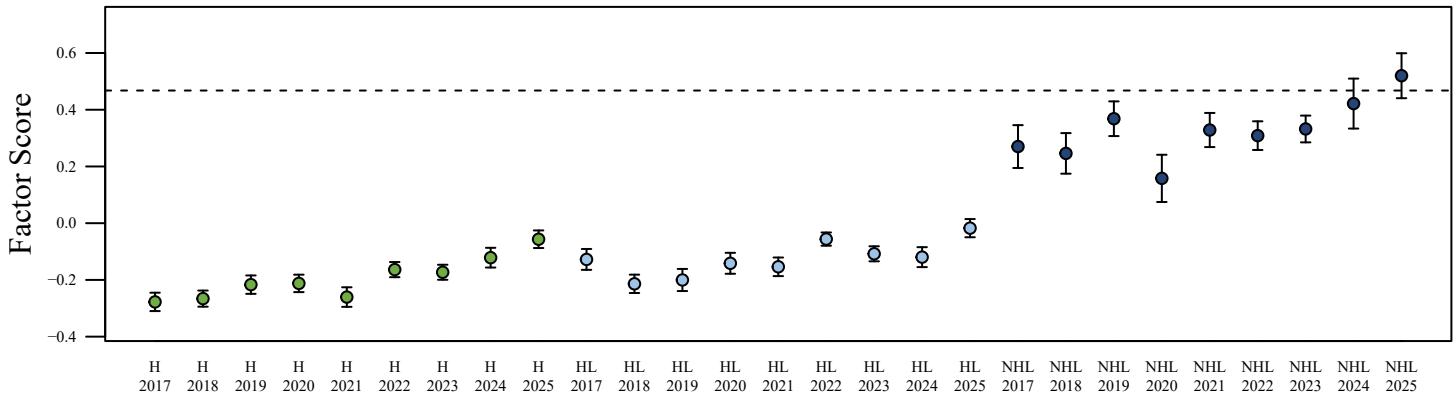


Figure 27. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer population size. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Deer Management Opinion

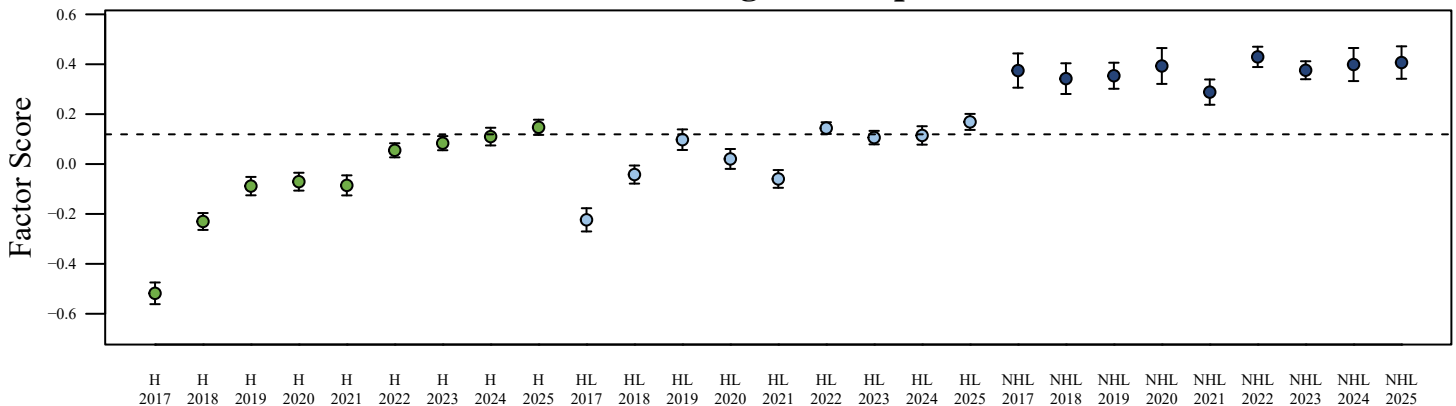


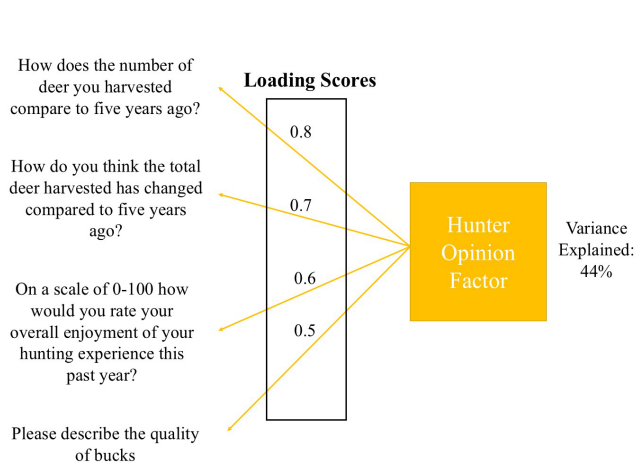
Figure 28. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer management. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

DMU 4: East Central

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

(a) Factor Analysis Results: Hunter Questions



(b) Factor Analysis Results: All Group Questions

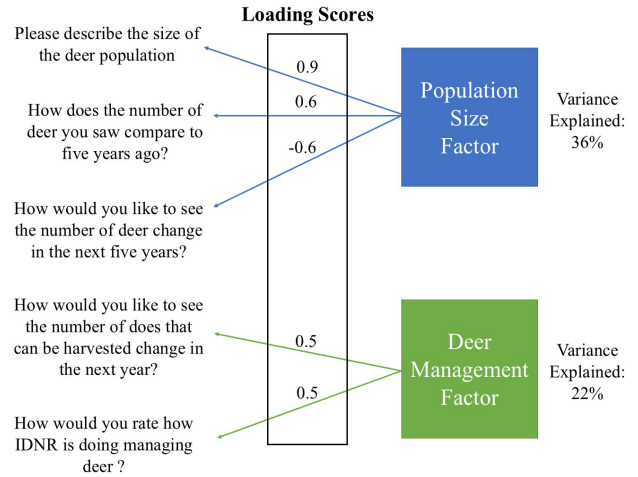


Figure 29. Results from two factor analyses used to develop the hunter opinion (a), population opinion (b), and management opinion (b) scores. Higher loading scores indicate a stronger correlation between the original question and the derived factor. These figures are included to help interpret Figure 26, Figure 27, and Figure 28.

DMU 5: Wabash

3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 2,416
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 736
 Percent Deer Habitat: 30

Table 1. Total harvest, buck harvest, and doe harvest (error < 1 percent). Damage permits are issued by DNR to landowners to control deer damage. Deer vehicle collisions (DVC) and miles traveled are reported by the Indiana Department of Transportation. Mean bag limit is the average antlerless bag limit of all counties in the DMU. The trend in total harvest, buck harvest, doe harvest, and DVCs are in standard deviations (SD) and are equivalent to effect size. A change greater than 2 SD is considered both a large and statistically significant effect size.

Year	Total	Total Trend in SD	Buck Harvest	Buck Trend in SD	Buck Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	Doe Harvest	Doe Trend in SD	Doe Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	% Doe in Harvest	Damage Permit Deer Taken	DVC per Billion Miles Traveled	DVC Trend in SD	Mean Bag Limit
2011	10,827	1.7	5,657	1.5	7.7	5,170	1.5	7.0	47.8		265.2	-0.7	6.7
2012	11,128	1.6	5,243	-0.8	7.1	5,885	3.1	8.0	52.9		237.9	-2.1	7.3
2013	9,510	-2.2	4,840	-2.8	6.6	4,670	-1.1	6.3	49.1		253.7	-0.6	6.0
2014	9,116	-2.2	4,727	-1.9	6.4	4,389	-1.7	6.0	48.1		236.8	-1.3	5.3
2015	9,785	-0.5	5,115	-0.2	6.9	4,670	-0.6	6.3	47.7		267.1	1.3	5.2
2016	9,931	-0.2	5,475	1.0	7.4	4,456	-0.8	6.1	44.9	78	284.5	2.2	5.2
2017	9,619	-0.4	5,013	-0.2	6.8	4,606	-0.3	6.3	47.9	76	268.7	0.6	4.5
2018	9,831	0.8	5,387	1.2	7.3	4,444	-0.9	6.0	45.2	72	288.1	1.5	3.5
2019	9,176	-1.5	5,185	0.1	7.0	3,991	-4.4	5.4	43.5	82	269.4	0.0	2.0
2020	10,103	1.5	5,813	3.0	7.9	4,290	-0.5	5.8	42.5	63	251.4	-2.4	2.0
2021	9,594	-0.4	5,658	0.9	7.7	3,936	-1.8	5.3	41.0	67	275.9	0.2	2.0
2022	10,011	1.0	5,885	1.4	8.0	4,126	-0.4	5.6	41.2	69	270.1	0.0	2.0
2023	9,789	0.1	5,672	0.3	7.7	4,117	-0.2	5.6	42.1	54	245.4	-1.9	3.0
2024	10,648	2.5	6,123	1.8	8.3	4,525	3.2	6.1	42.5	107	243.1	-1.5	3.0
2025	11,264	3.1	6,612	4.1	9.0	4,652	2.0	6.3	41.3	103	284.5	1.8	3.0

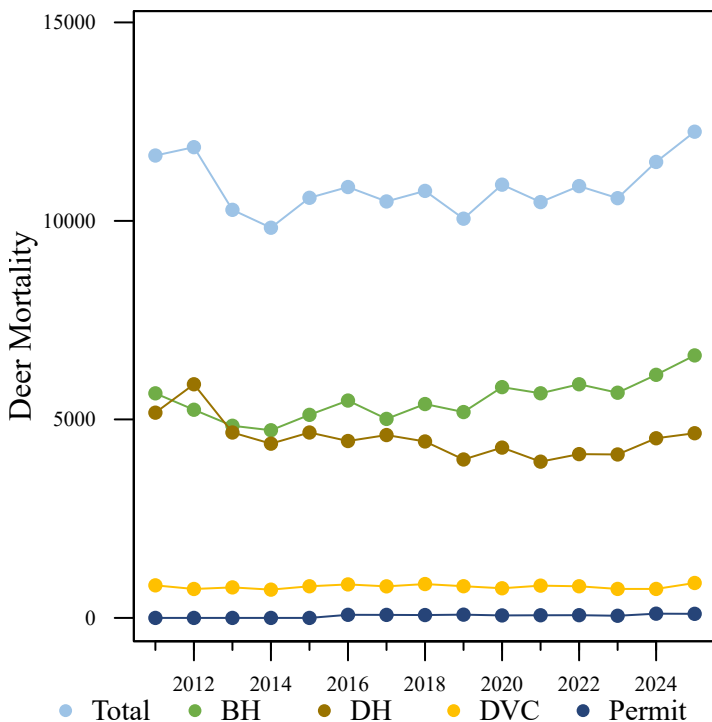
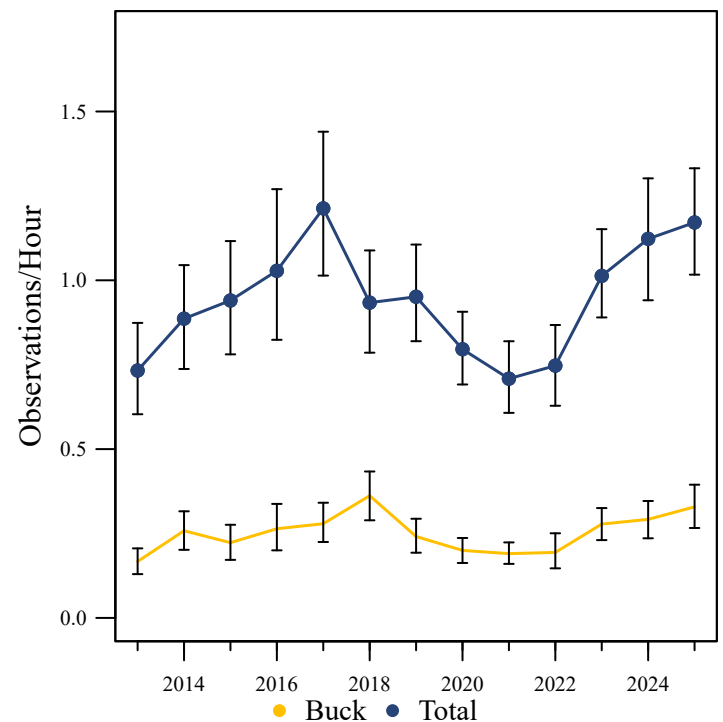
(a) Cumulative Known Deer Mortality**(b) Archer Deer Observations**

Figure 1. (a) The total known annual deer mortality based on buck harvests (BH), doe harvests (DH), deer vehicle collisions (DVC), and deer permit takes. (b) Total deer and buck observations per hour based on the Archer's Index.

DMU 5: Wabash

3/31/2026

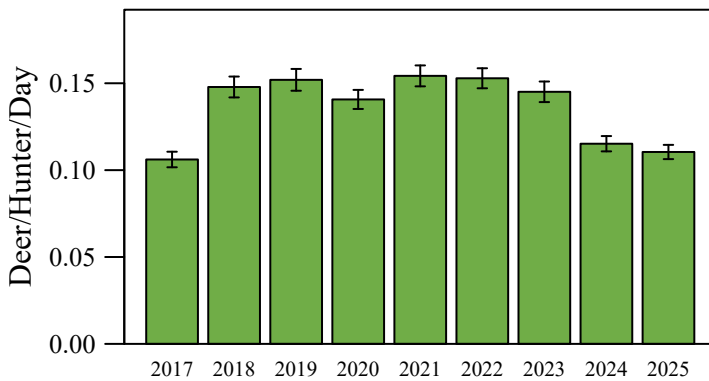
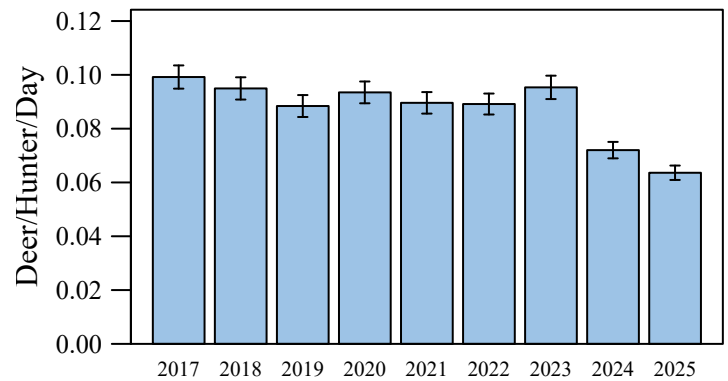
Deer Management Survey Results**(a) Buck Firearm Harvest Effort****(b) Doe Firearm Harvest Effort**

Figure 4. Firearm harvest effort is the number of bucks (a) and does (b) killed by firearms per hunter divided by the mean number of days hunted per hunter during the firearm season based on data reported in the deer management survey. Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate less effort required to harvest a deer.

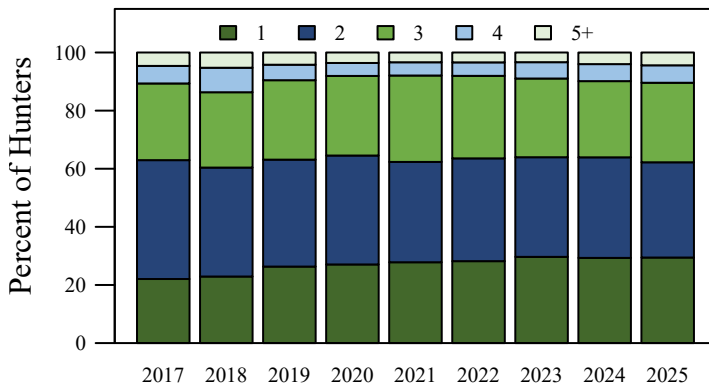
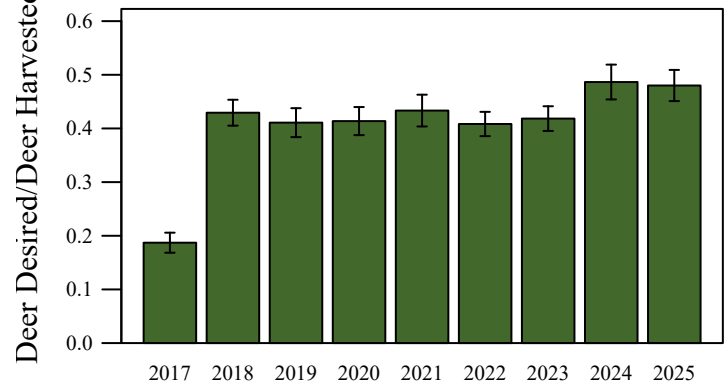
(a) Number of Deer Desired**(b) Estimated Success**

Figure 5. (a) The annual percent of hunters wishing to harvest each number of deer as reported in the deer management survey. (b) Success rate is estimated from the deer management survey as the Number of Harvested Deer/Number of Deer Desired (reported only; does not account for attempts that were not made). Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate greater success.

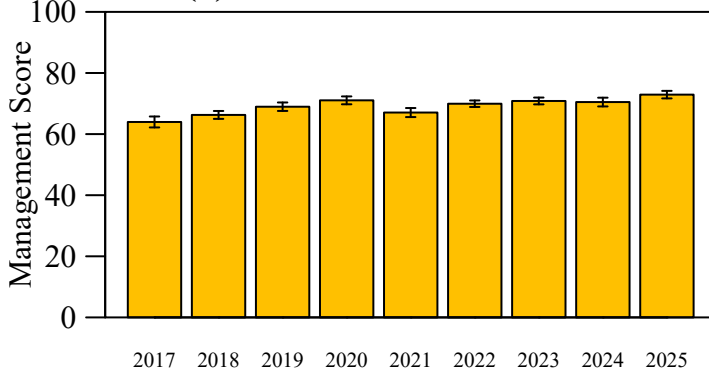
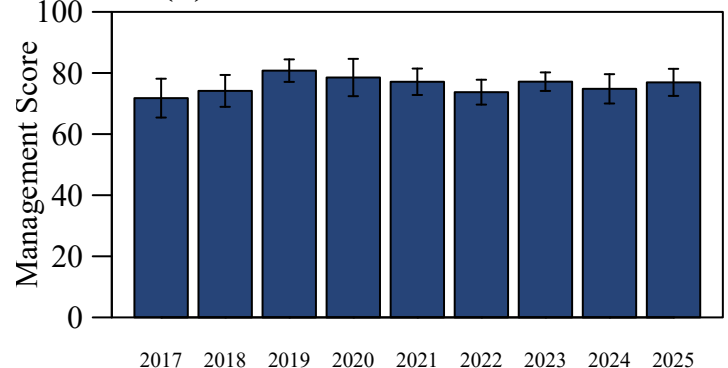
(a) Hunter State Satisfaction**(b) Nonhunter State Satisfaction**

Figure 6. Hunters (a) and nonhunters (b) were asked to score the DNR's statewide deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent).

DMU 5: Wabash

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Satisfaction

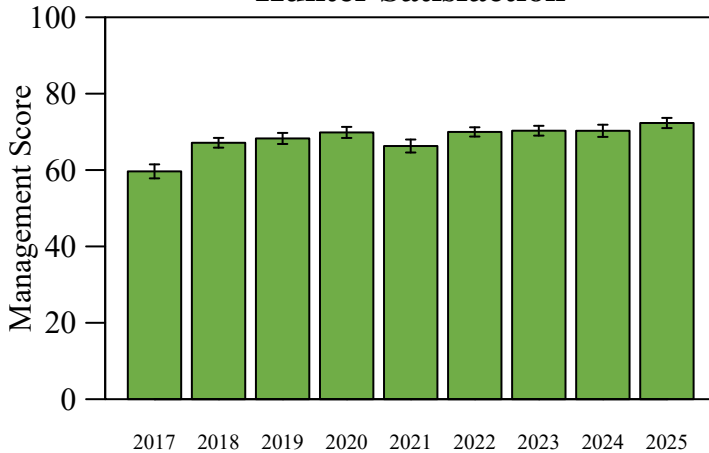


Figure 7. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 5 where they hunt.

Resident Hunter Satisfaction

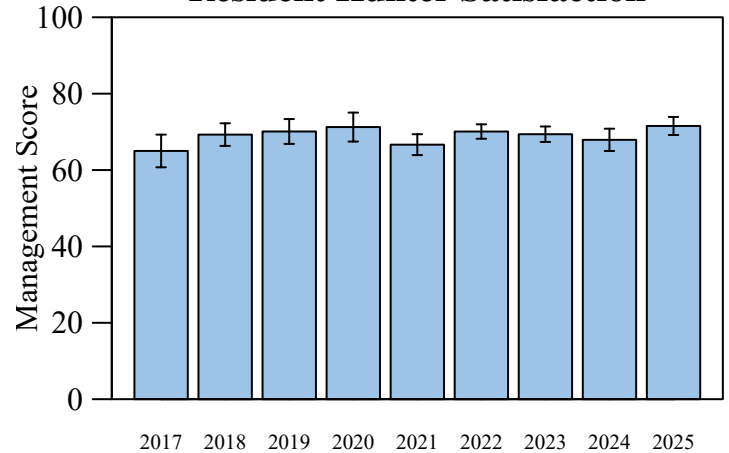


Figure 8. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 5 where they live.

Resident Nonhunter Satisfaction

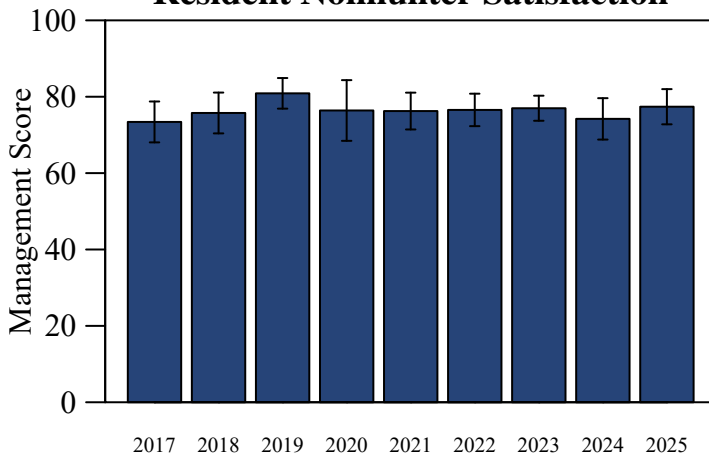


Figure 9. Nonhunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 5 where they live.

Hunter Population Size

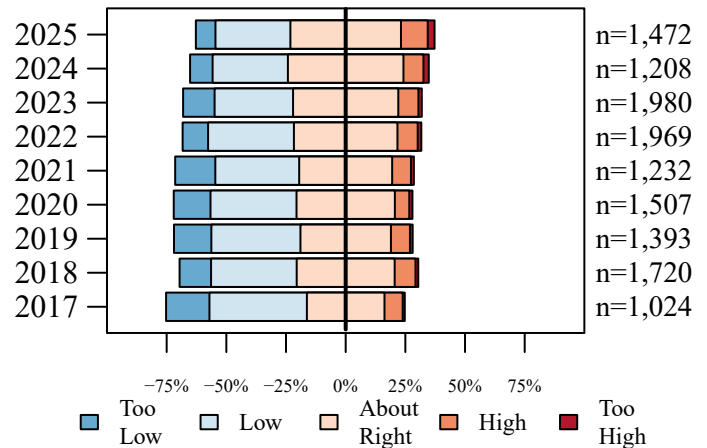


Figure 10. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 5.

Resident Hunter Population Size

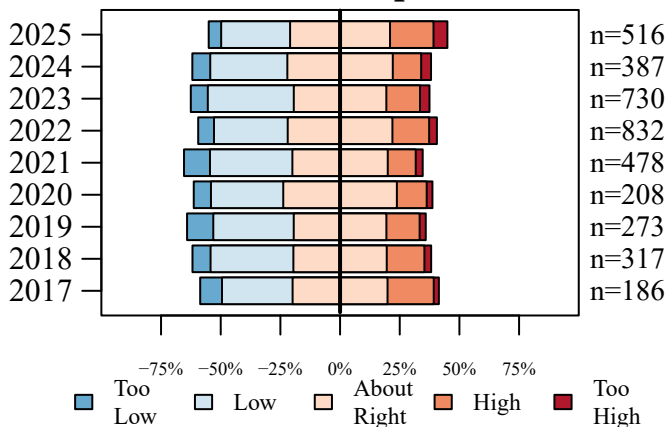


Figure 11. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 5.

Resident Nonhunter Population Size

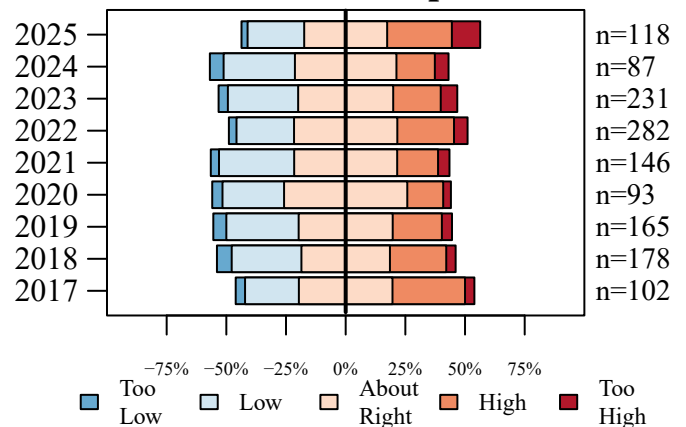


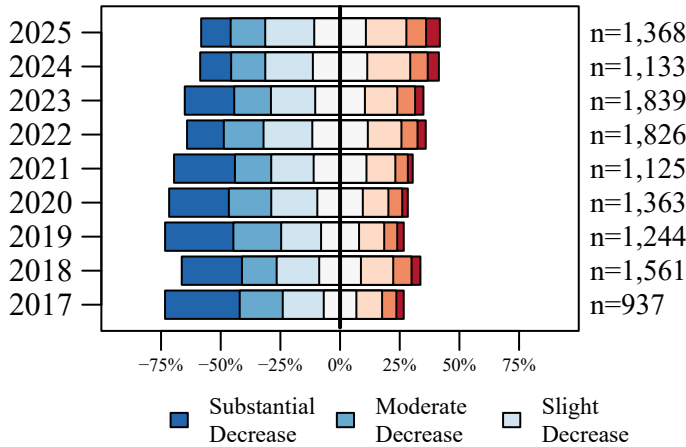
Figure 12. The current size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 5.

DMU 5: Wabash

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Perceived Change



Resident Hunter Perceived Change

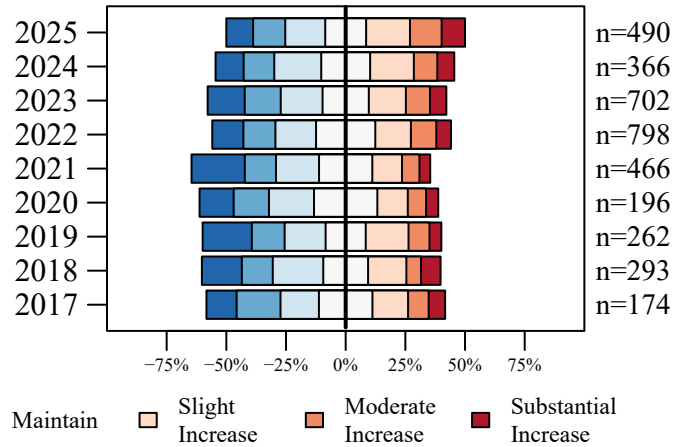
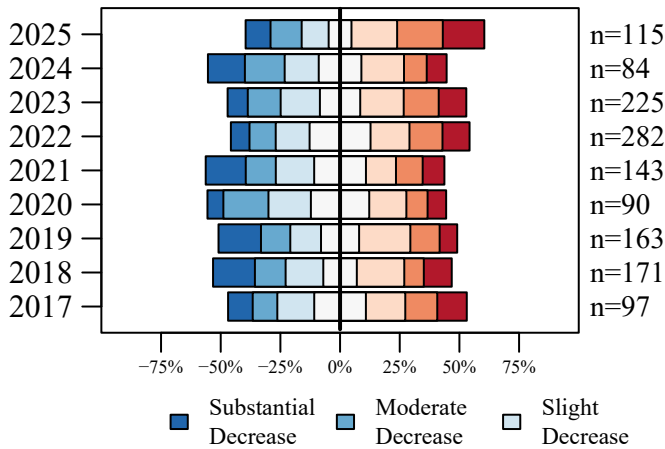


Figure 13. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 5.

Figure 14. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 5.

Resident Nonhunter Perceived Change



Hunter Desired Change

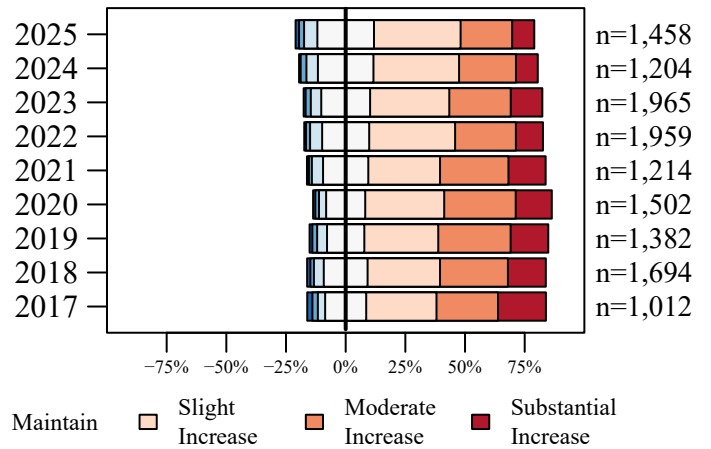
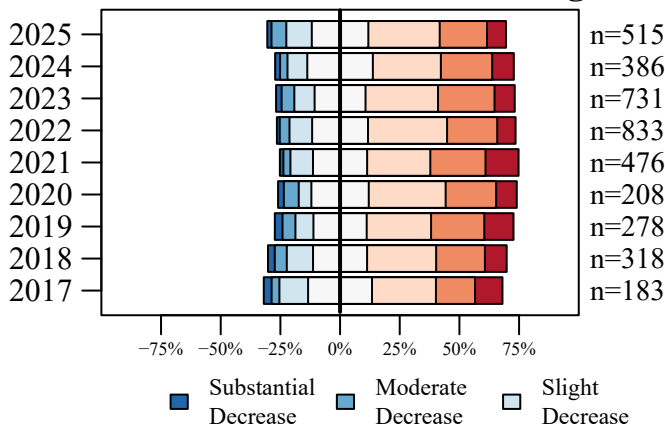


Figure 15. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 5.

Figure 16. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 5.

Resident Hunter Desired Change



Resident Nonhunter Desired Change

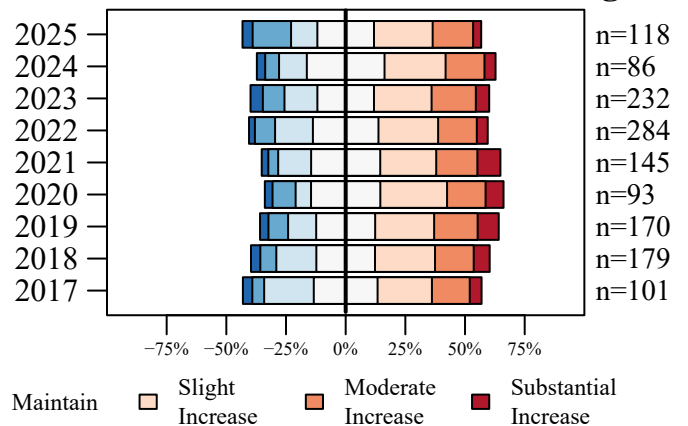


Figure 17. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 5.

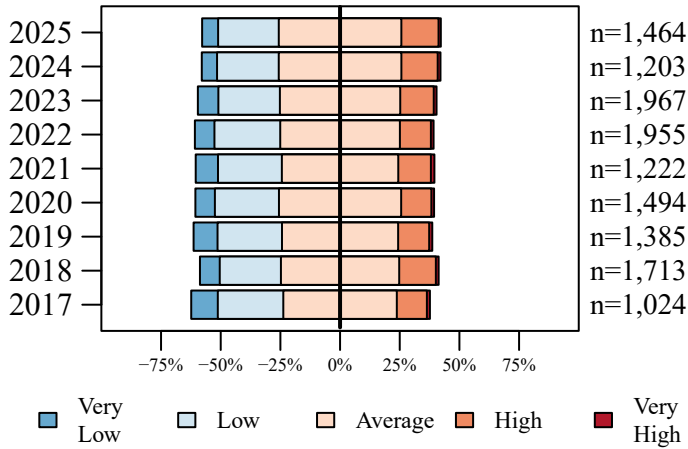
Figure 18. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 5.

DMU 5: Wabash

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Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Buck Quality



Resident Hunter Buck Quality

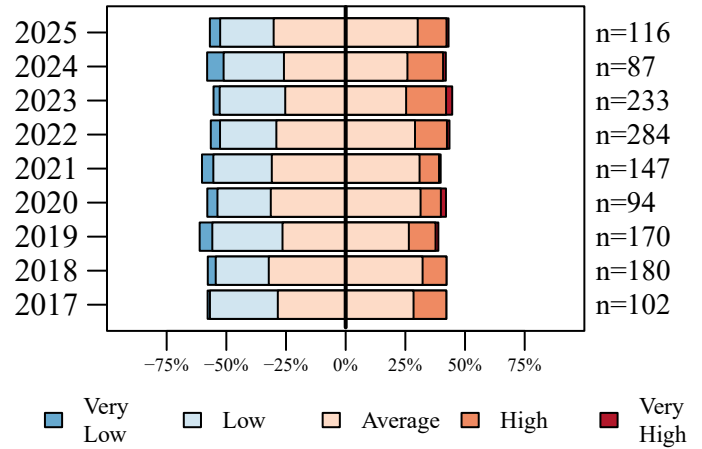


Figure 19. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they hunt in DMU 5.

Figure 20. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they live in DMU 5.

Personal Harvest Change

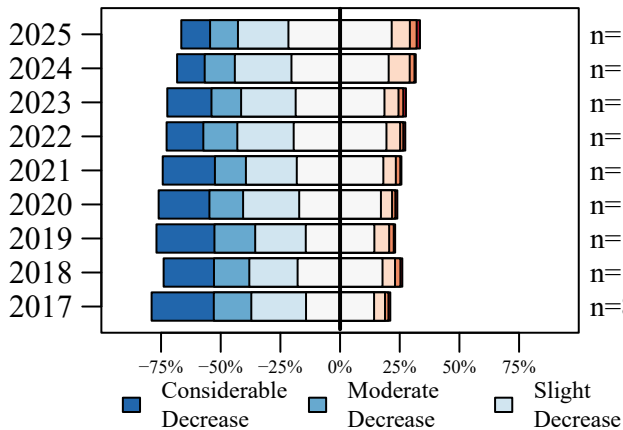


Figure 21. Opinion of hunters on how their personal number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 5.

Total Harvest Change

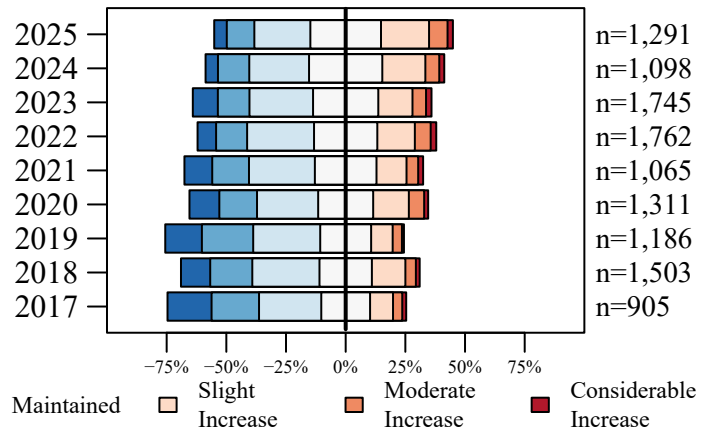


Figure 22. Opinion of hunters on how the total number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 5.

Hunter CBAQ

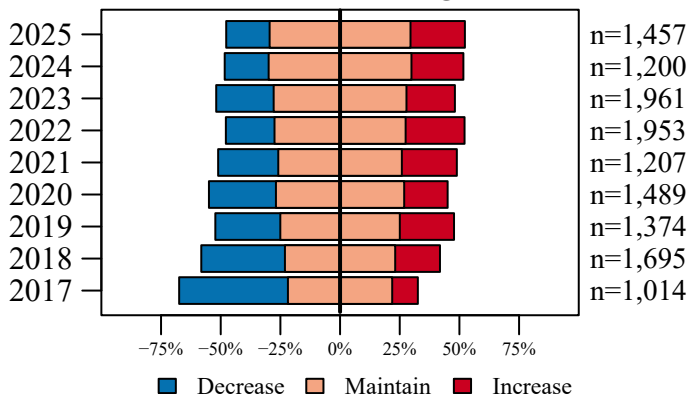


Figure 23. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 5.

Resident Hunter CBAQ

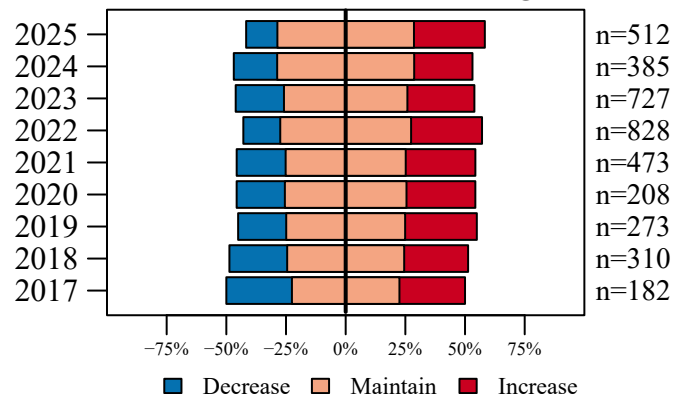


Figure 24. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they live in DMU 5.

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Deer Management Survey Results

Resident Nonhunter CBAQ

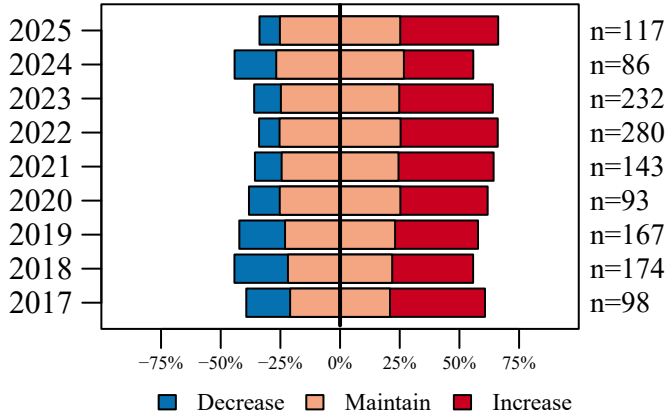


Figure 25. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 5.

Hunter Opinion

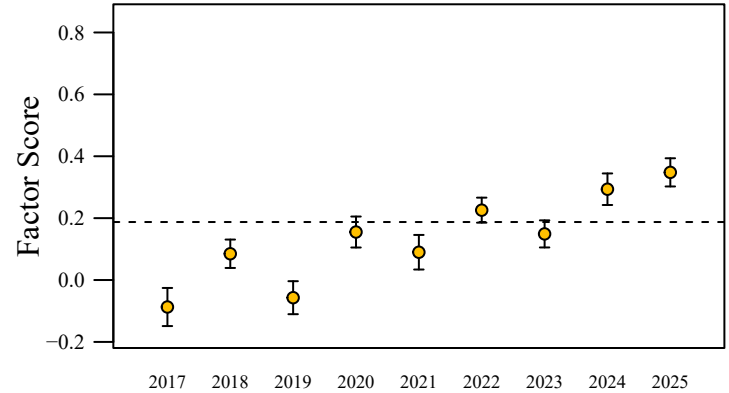


Figure 26. Hunter opinion scores over five years of the deer management survey. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked only to hunters. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Population Size Opinion

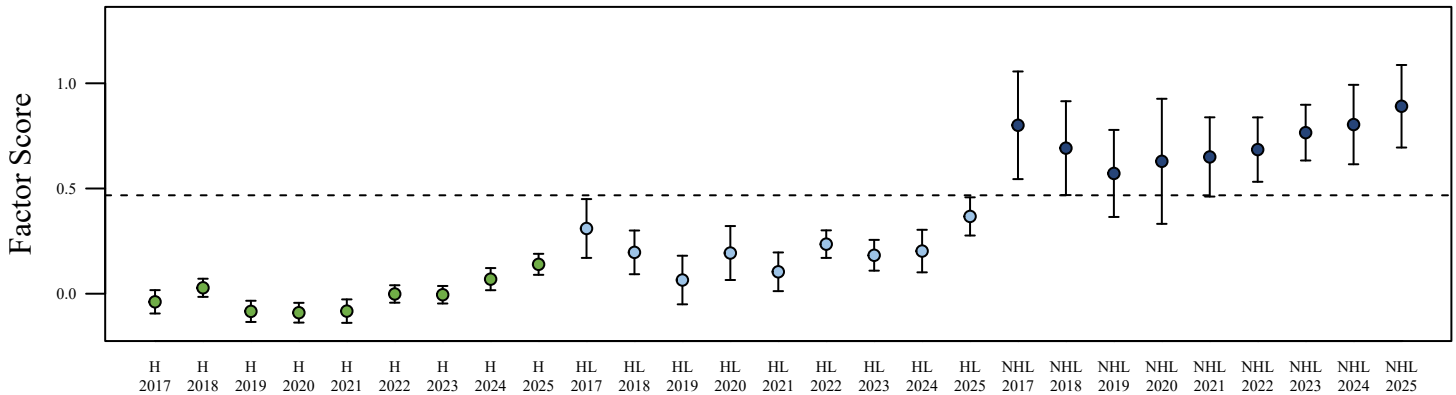


Figure 27. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer population size. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Deer Management Opinion

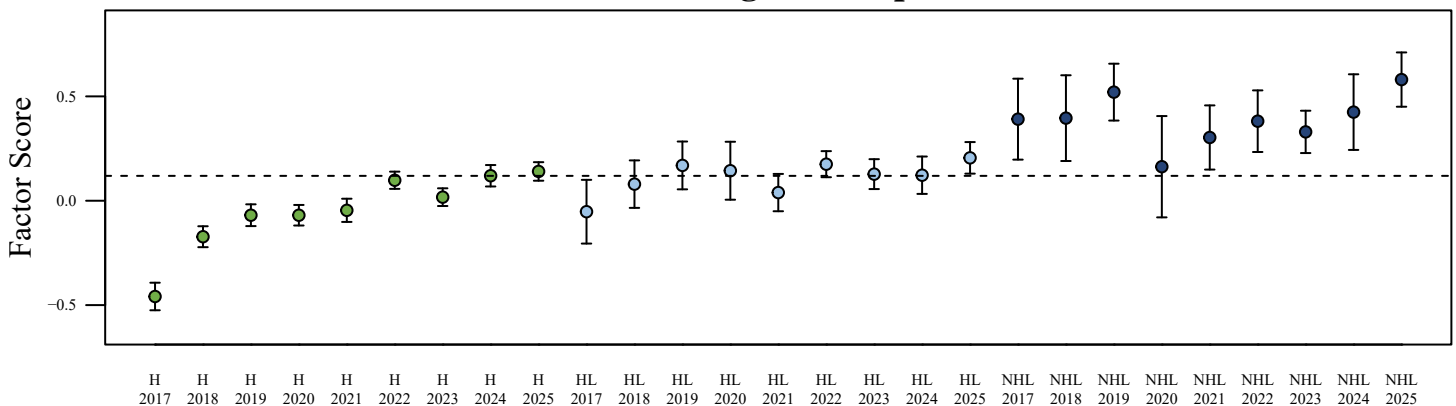


Figure 28. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer management. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

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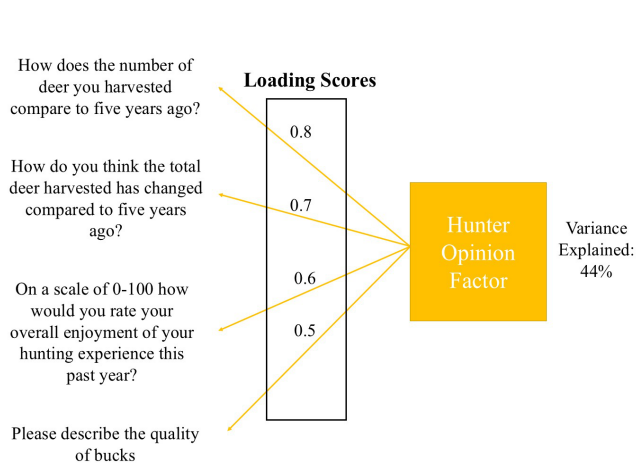
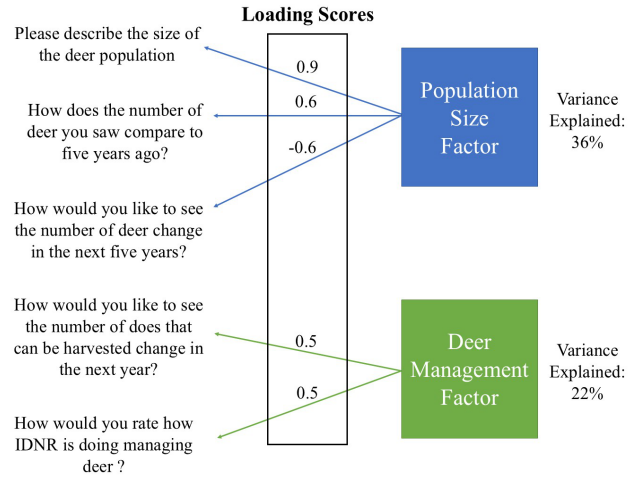
Deer Management Survey Results**(a) Factor Analysis Results: Hunter Questions****(b) Factor Analysis Results: All Group Questions**

Figure 29. Results from two factor analyses used to develop the hunter opinion (a), population opinion (b), and management opinion (b) scores. Higher loading scores indicate a stronger correlation between the original question and the derived factor. These figures are included to help interpret Figure 26, Figure 27, and Figure 28.

DMU 6: South

3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 6,368
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 3,380
 Percent Deer Habitat: 53

Table 1. Total harvest, buck harvest, and doe harvest (error < 1 percent). Damage permits are issued by DNR to landowners to control deer damage. Deer vehicle collisions (DVC) and miles traveled are reported by the Indiana Department of Transportation. Mean bag limit is the average antlerless bag limit of all counties in the DMU. The trend in total harvest, buck harvest, doe harvest, and DVCs are in standard deviations (SD) and are equivalent to effect size. A change greater than 2 SD is considered both a large and statistically significant effect size.

Year	Total	Total Trend in SD	Buck Harvest	Buck Trend in SD	Buck Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	Doe Harvest	Doe Trend in SD	Doe Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	% Doe in Harvest	Damage Permit Deer Taken	DVC per Billion Miles Traveled	DVC Trend in SD	Mean Bag Limit
2011	29,468	1.3	14,809	0.9	4.4	14,659	1.4	4.3	49.7		275.0	-0.5	5.7
2012	31,458	3.2	14,485	0.3	4.3	16,973	5.2	5.0	54.0		283.3	0.6	5.6
2013	33,888	3.5	16,201	4.9	4.8	17,687	2.3	5.2	52.2		316.5	5.7	5.3
2014	30,442	0.0	14,599	-0.4	4.3	15,843	0.2	4.7	52.0		293.6	0.5	6.1
2015	32,927	1.0	16,736	2.4	5.0	16,191	0.2	4.8	49.2		332.1	2.3	5.9
2016	30,864	-0.4	16,234	0.8	4.8	14,630	-1.4	4.3	47.4	675	301.0	0.0	5.9
2017	31,315	-0.4	15,475	-0.2	4.6	15,840	-0.4	4.7	50.6	749	335.9	1.6	5.7
2018	27,746	-2.8	14,274	-1.9	4.2	13,472	-2.3	4.0	48.6	722	314.6	-0.1	4.7
2019	26,660	-2.1	14,233	-1.2	4.2	12,427	-2.4	3.7	46.6	612	299.6	-0.9	2.0
2020	26,639	-1.3	14,746	-0.6	4.4	11,893	-1.7	3.5	44.6	360	254.0	-3.7	2.4
2021	25,784	-1.3	14,997	0.0	4.4	10,787	-1.8	3.2	41.8	495	265.5	-1.2	2.4
2022	26,971	-0.3	15,379	1.2	4.6	11,592	-0.7	3.4	43.0	444	280.0	-0.4	2.0
2023	26,706	-0.1	15,089	0.7	4.5	11,617	-0.4	3.4	43.5	650	308.6	1.0	2.9
2024	28,647	4.7	16,115	2.8	4.8	12,532	1.5	3.7	43.7	747	285.0	0.2	3.0
2025	28,639	1.6	16,061	1.5	4.8	12,578	1.4	3.7	43.9	908	317.4	1.9	3.6

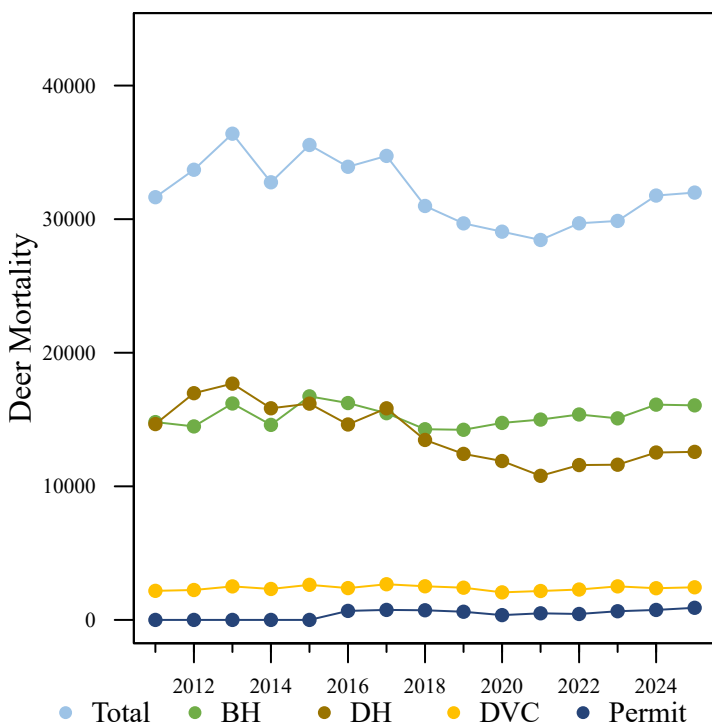
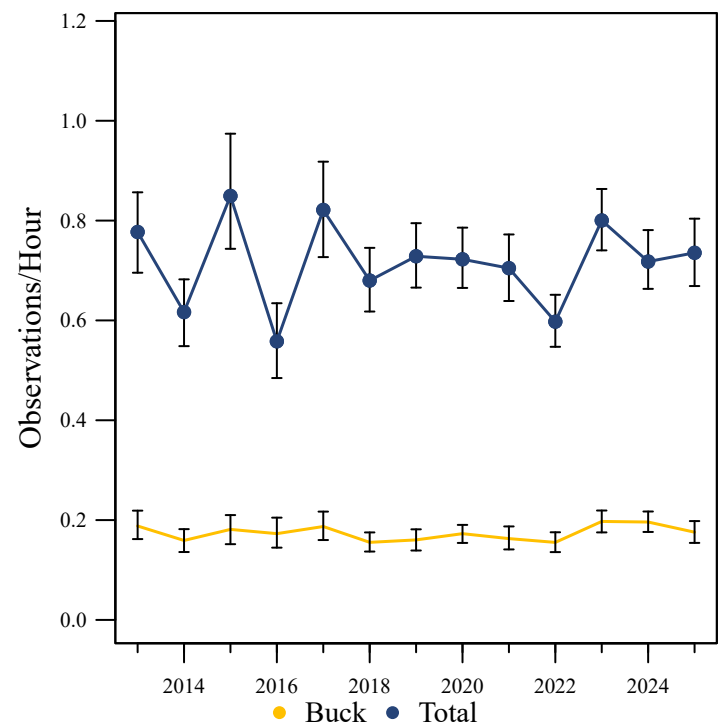
(a) Cumulative Known Deer Mortality**(b) Archer Deer Observations**

Figure 1. (a) The total known annual deer mortality based on buck harvests (BH), doe harvests (DH), deer vehicle collisions (DVC), and deer permit takes. (b) Total deer and buck observations per hour based on the Archer's Index.

DMU 6: South

3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 6,368
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 3,380
 Percent Deer Habitat: 53

Table 2. Estimated number of antlered (A) and antlerless (AL) deer harvested per hunter. Estimated totals may not match exactly with total number of deer harvested. Reporting errors are examined and investigated as they are located; therefore, subsequent reports may contain corrected totals.

Year	Total Hunters	0 A	1 A	2 A	3 A	0 AL	1 AL	2 AL	3 AL	4 AL	5 AL	6 AL	7 AL	8 AL	9 AL	10 AL
2016	23,189	10,040	13,087	60	2	9,839	10,155	2,439	518	163	51	16	5	2	0	1
2017	22,834	10,709	12,071	52	2	8,741	10,404	2,787	614	195	51	25	8	8	1	0
2018	20,707	9,465	11,176	63	3	8,301	9,297	2,429	504	133	33	7	2	0	0	0
2019	20,569	9,206	11,287	74	2	8,422	9,403	2,473	228	36	6	0	0	0	0	0
2020	20,849	8,527	12,255	65	2	9,337	9,106	2,126	240	34	2	4	0	0	0	0
2021	20,504	7,851	12,590	61	1	9,810	8,565	1,923	180	20	5	0	0	1	0	0
2022	21,241	8,183	12,972	84	2	9,915	9,063	2,072	155	28	7	1	0	0	0	0
2023	20,841	8,000	12,767	67	7	9,787	8,682	2,069	262	32	6	2	0	1	0	0
2024	22,025	8,515	13,413	92	4	10,135	9,186	2,332	320	44	4	2	1	0	1	0
2025	21,611	8,151	13,376	83	1	9,976	8,771	2,396	365	88	11	2	1	0	0	1

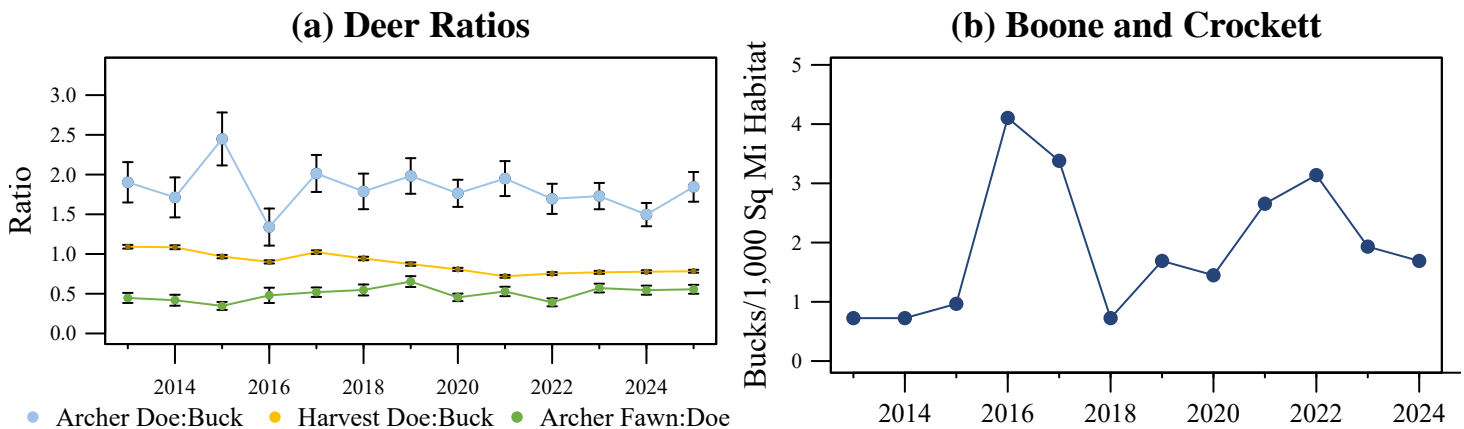
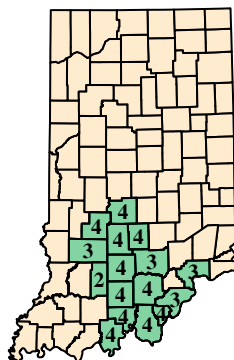


Figure 2. (a) Annual doe:buck ratios and fawn:doe ratios based on the Archer's Index and harvest records. (b) The number of Boone and Crockett bucks (minimum 160 score) per 1,000 square miles of deer habitat.

(a) Counties in DMU 6



(b) Deer Habitat in DMU 6

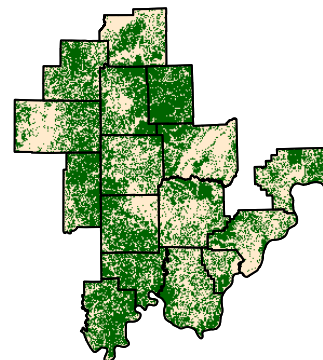


Figure 3. (a) Counties included in DMU 6 for summarizing harvest and deer management survey statistics. Labels are the 2024 county bonus antlerless quotas. (b) Green represents the land use types classified as deer habitat in DMU 6.

DMU 6: South

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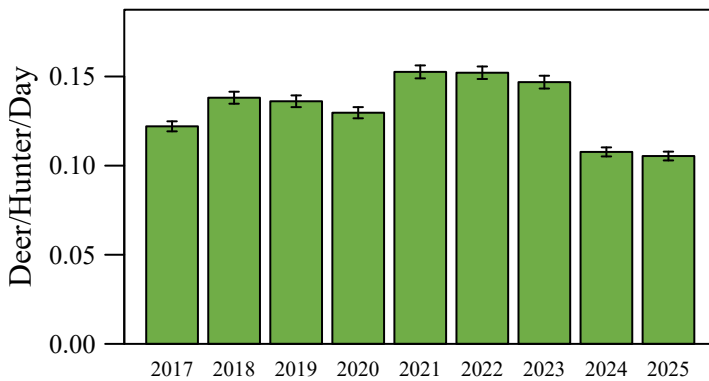
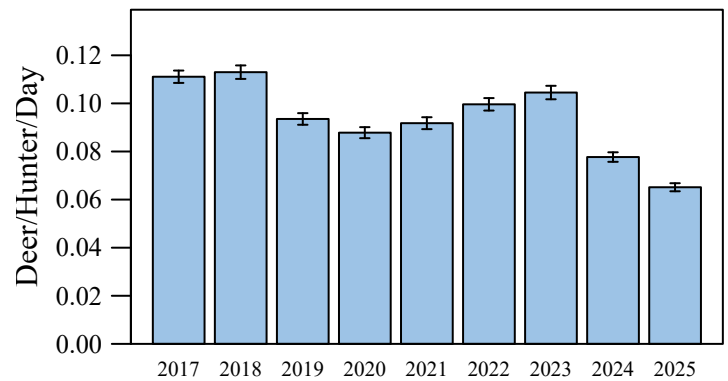
Deer Management Survey Results**(a) Buck Firearm Harvest Effort****(b) Doe Firearm Harvest Effort**

Figure 4. Firearm harvest effort is the number of bucks (a) and does (b) killed by firearms per hunter divided by the mean number of days hunted per hunter during the firearm season based on data reported in the deer management survey. Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate less effort required to harvest a deer.

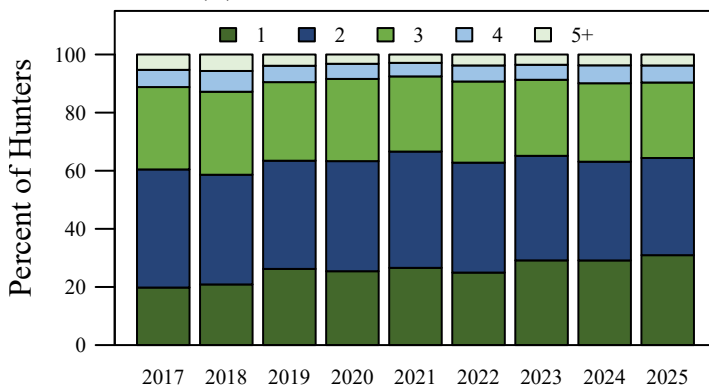
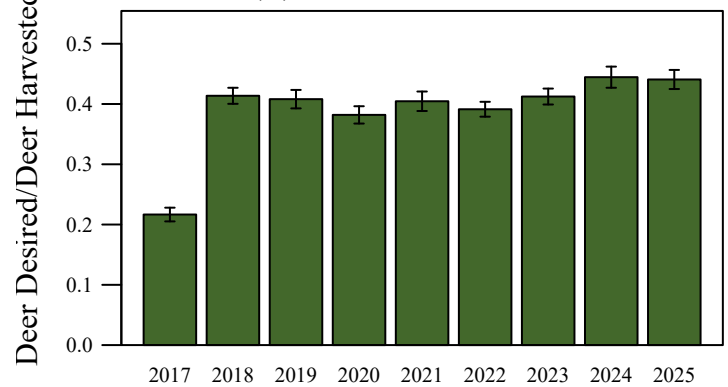
(a) Number of Deer Desired**(b) Estimated Success**

Figure 5. (a) The annual percent of hunters wishing to harvest each number of deer as reported in the deer management survey. (b) Success rate is estimated from the deer management survey as the Number of Harvested Deer/Number of Deer Desired (reported only; does not account for attempts that were not made). Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate greater success.

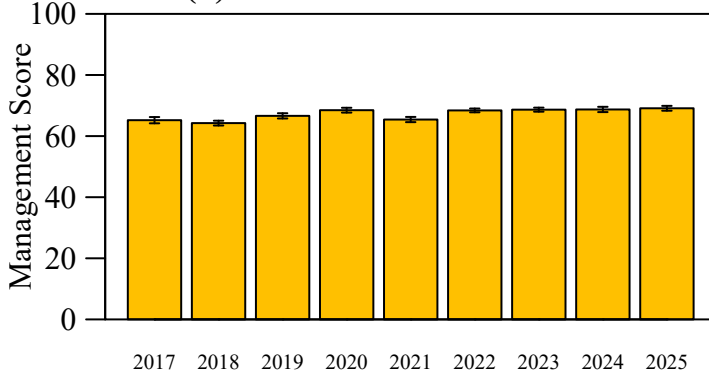
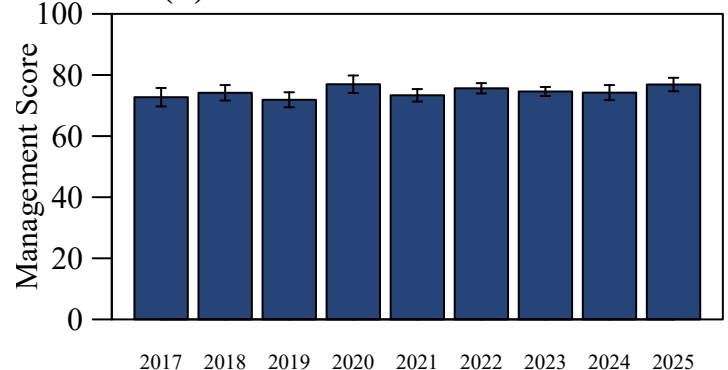
(a) Hunter State Satisfaction**(b) Nonhunter State Satisfaction**

Figure 6. Hunters (a) and nonhunters (b) were asked to score the DNR's statewide deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent).

DMU 6: South

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Satisfaction

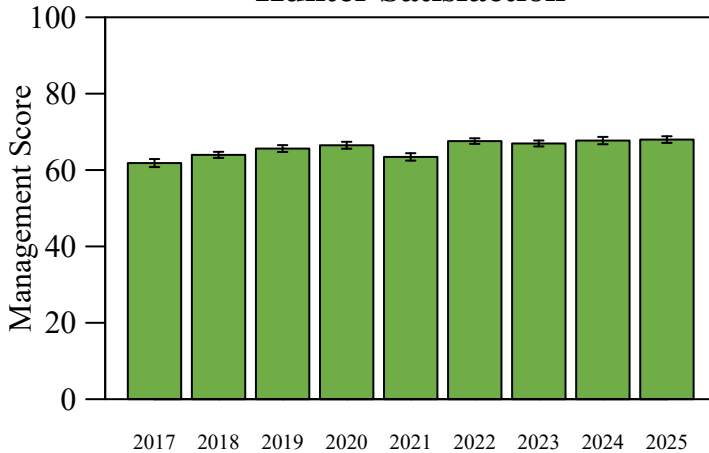


Figure 7. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 6 where they hunt.

Resident Hunter Satisfaction

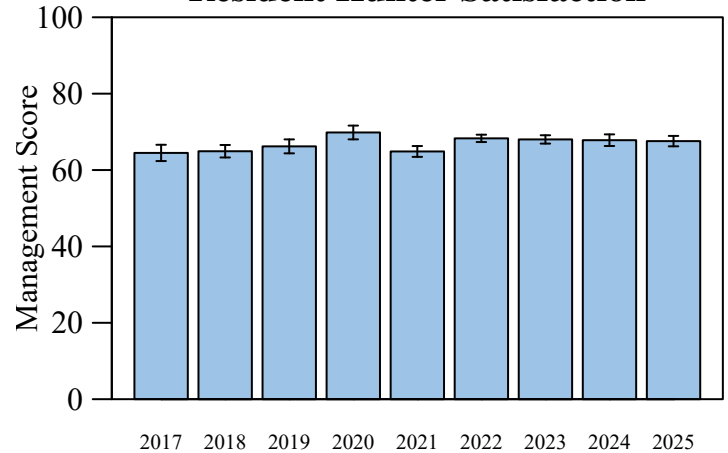


Figure 8. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 6 where they live.

Resident Nonhunter Satisfaction

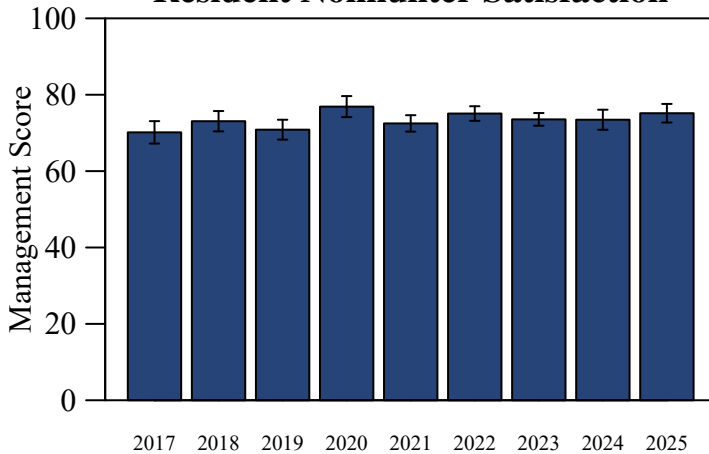


Figure 9. Nonhunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 6 where they live.

Hunter Population Size

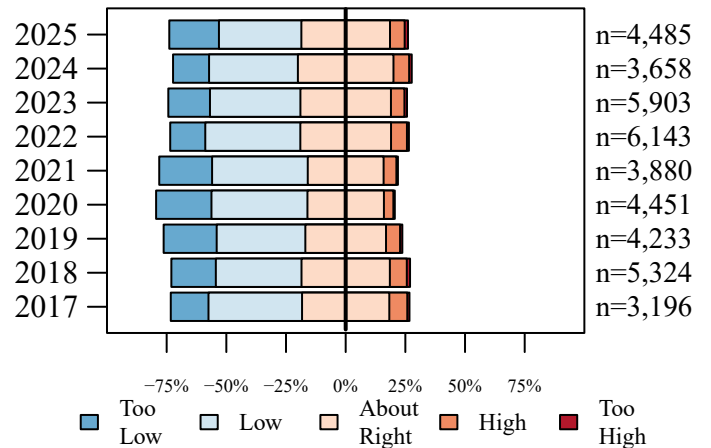


Figure 10. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 6.

Resident Hunter Population Size

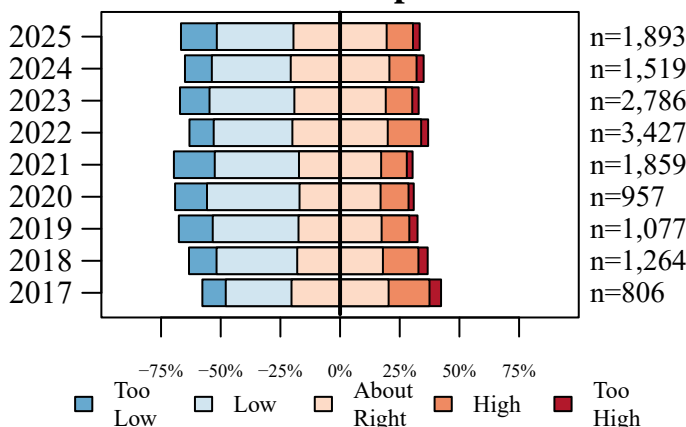


Figure 11. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 6.

Resident Nonhunter Population Size

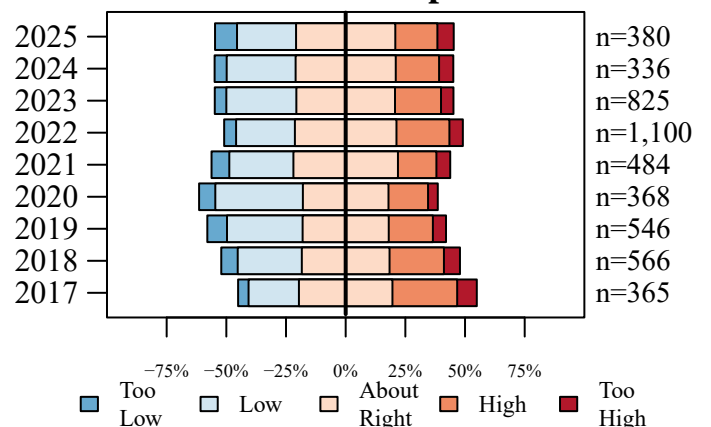


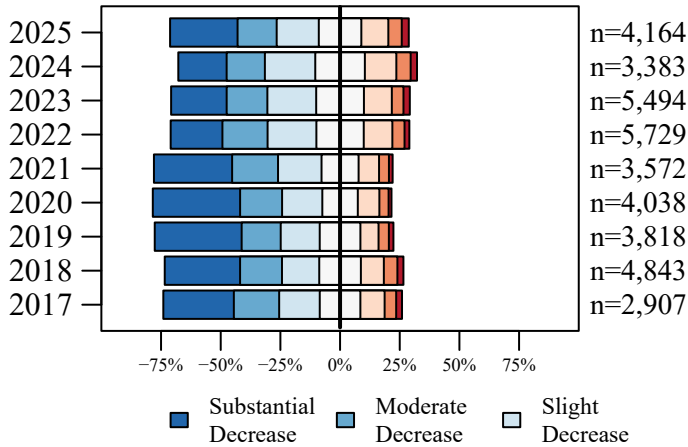
Figure 12. The current size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 6.

DMU 6: South

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Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Perceived Change



Resident Hunter Perceived Change

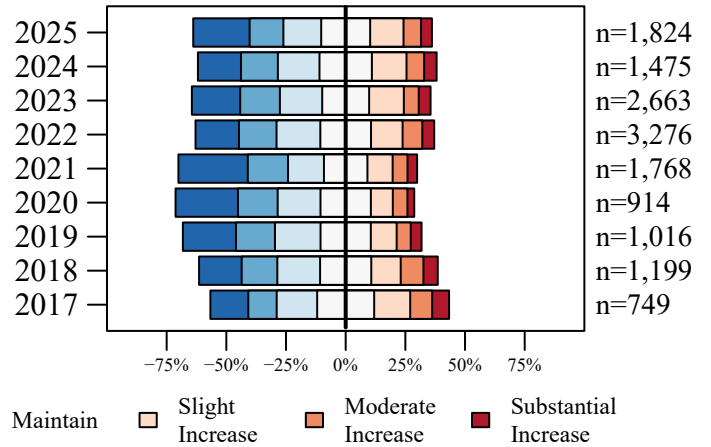
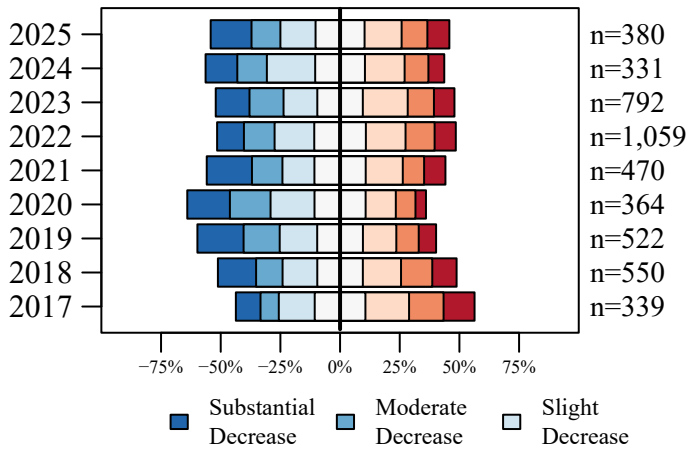


Figure 13. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 6.

Figure 14. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 6.

Resident Nonhunter Perceived Change



Hunter Desired Change

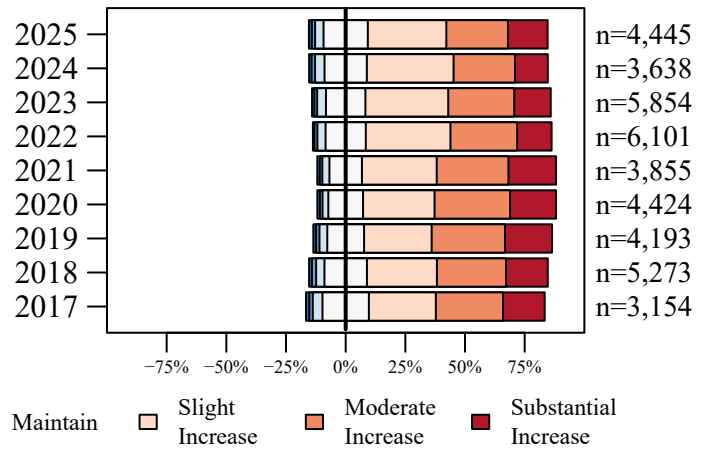
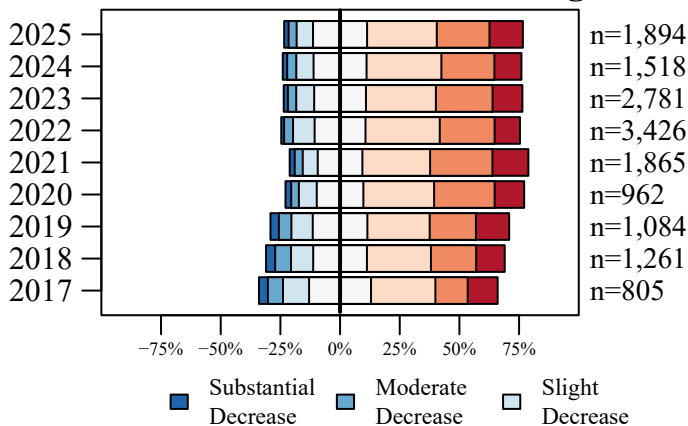


Figure 15. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 6.

Figure 16. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 6.

Resident Hunter Desired Change



Resident Nonhunter Desired Change

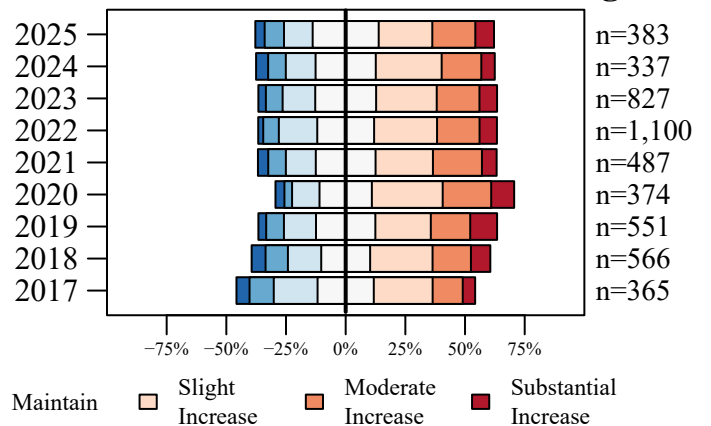


Figure 17. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 6.

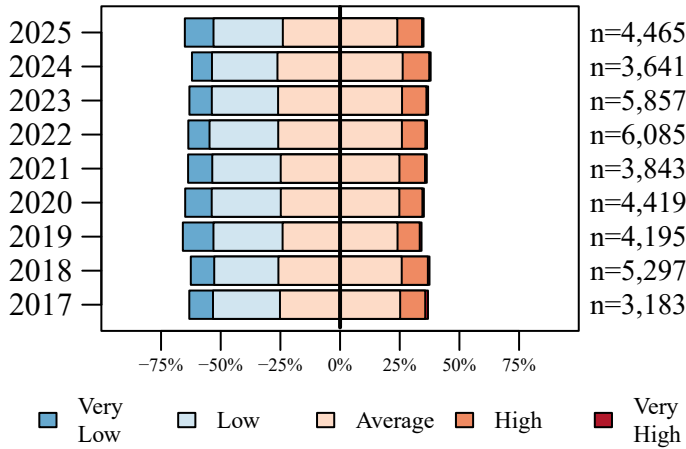
Figure 18. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 6.

DMU 6: South

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Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Buck Quality



Resident Hunter Buck Quality

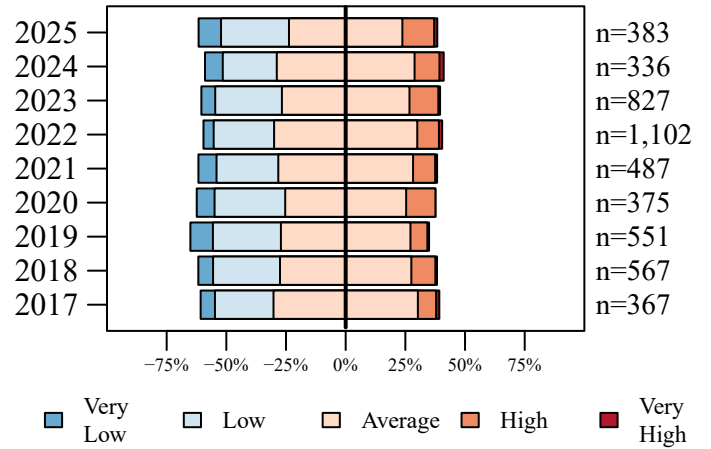


Figure 19. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they hunt in DMU 6.

Figure 20. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they live in DMU 6.

Personal Harvest Change

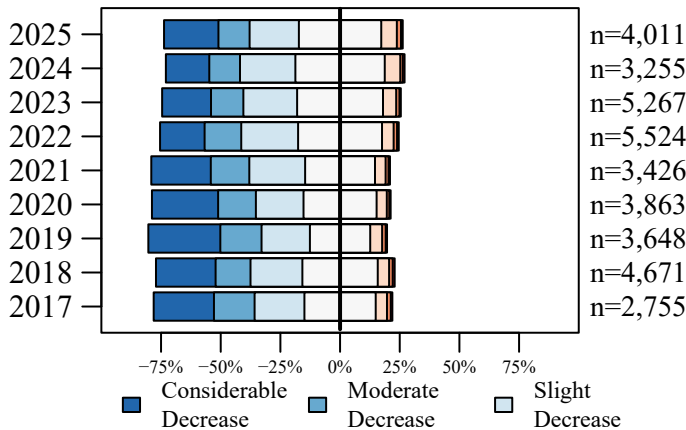


Figure 21. Opinion of hunters on how their personal number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 6.

Total Harvest Change

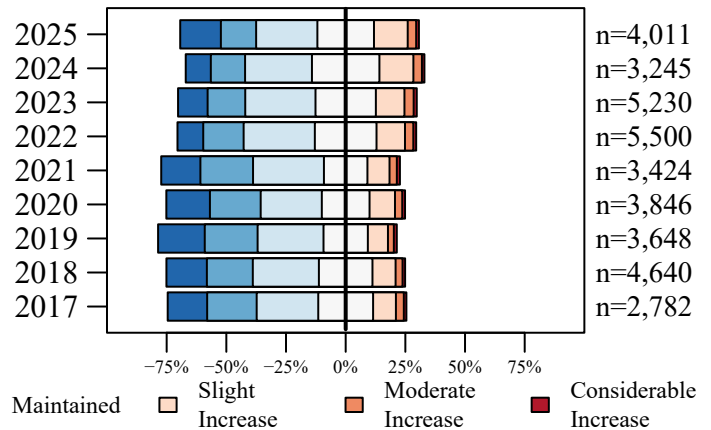


Figure 22. Opinion of hunters on how the total number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 6.

Hunter CBAQ

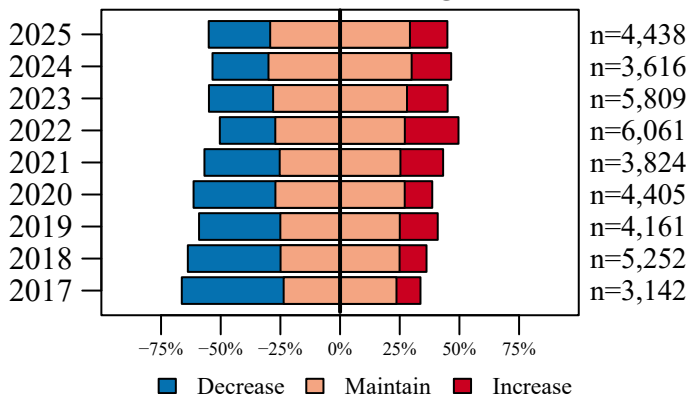


Figure 23. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 6.

Resident Hunter CBAQ

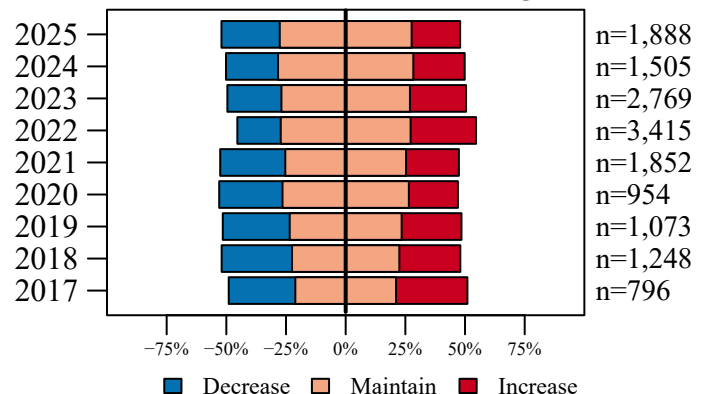


Figure 24. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they live in DMU 6.

DMU 6: South

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Resident Nonhunter CBAQ

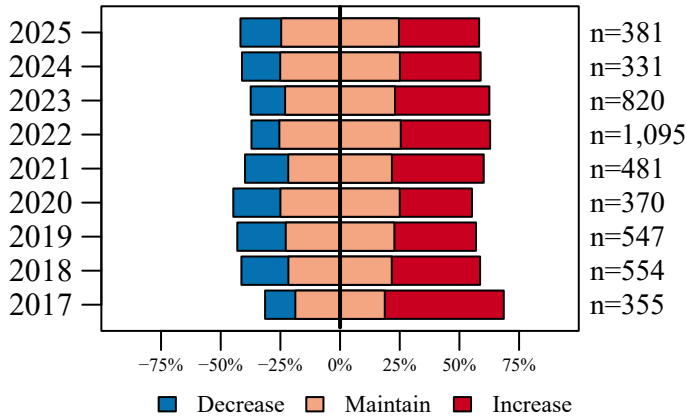


Figure 25. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 6.

Hunter Opinion

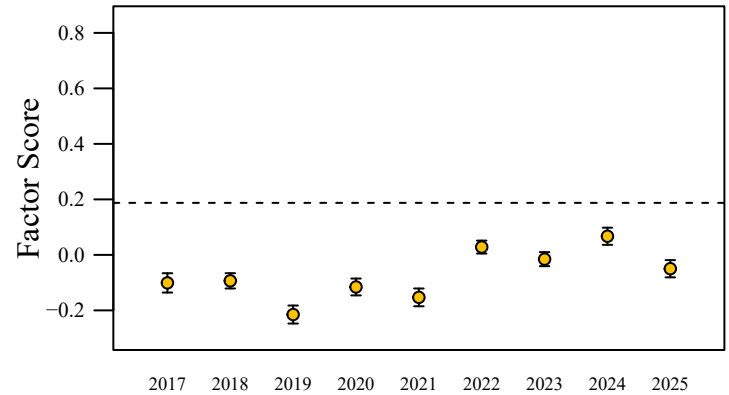


Figure 26. Hunter opinion scores over five years of the deer management survey. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked only to hunters. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Population Size Opinion

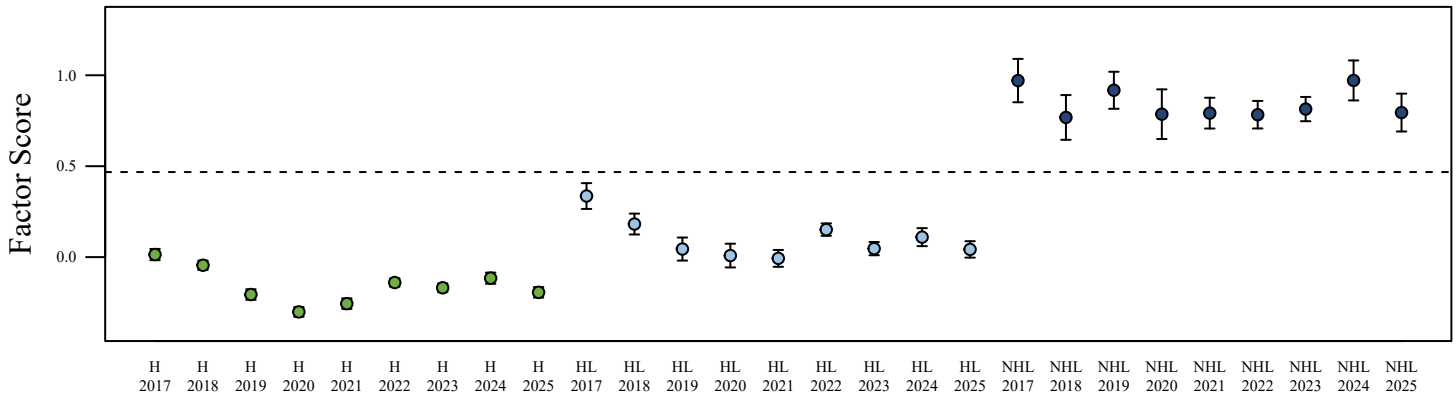


Figure 27. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer population size. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Deer Management Opinion

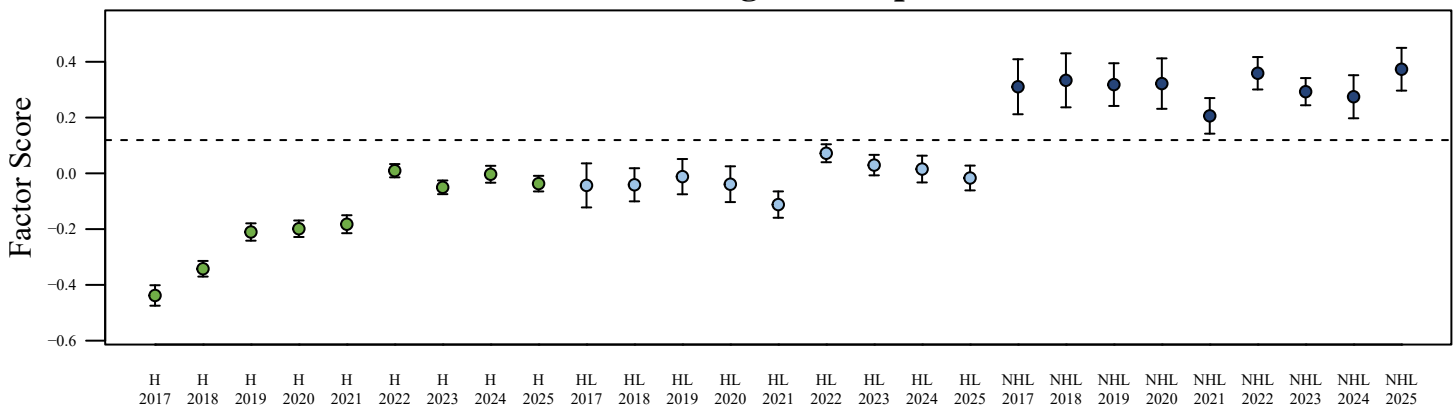


Figure 28. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer management. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

DMU 6: South

3/31/2026

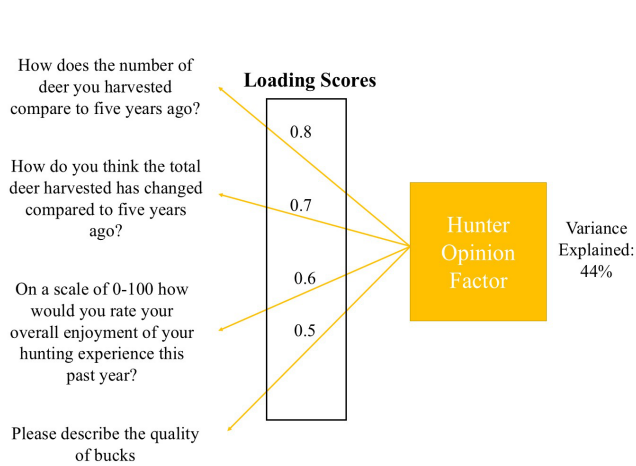
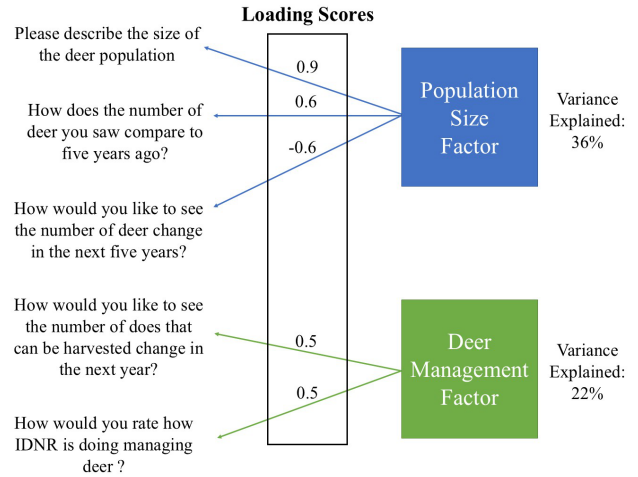
Deer Management Survey Results**(a) Factor Analysis Results: Hunter Questions****(b) Factor Analysis Results: All Group Questions**

Figure 29. Results from two factor analyses used to develop the hunter opinion (a), population opinion (b), and management opinion (b) scores. Higher loading scores indicate a stronger correlation between the original question and the derived factor. These figures are included to help interpret Figure 26, Figure 27, and Figure 28.

DMU 7: Muscatatuck

3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 1,410
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 612
 Percent Deer Habitat: 43

Table 1. Total harvest, buck harvest, and doe harvest (error < 1 percent). Damage permits are issued by DNR to landowners to control deer damage. Deer vehicle collisions (DVC) and miles traveled are reported by the Indiana Department of Transportation. Mean bag limit is the average antlerless bag limit of all counties in the DMU. The trend in total harvest, buck harvest, doe harvest, and DVCs are in standard deviations (SD) and are equivalent to effect size. A change greater than 2 SD is considered both a large and statistically significant effect size.

Year	Total	Total Trend in SD	Buck Harvest	Buck Trend in SD	Buck Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	Doe Harvest	Doe Trend in SD	Doe Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	% Doe in Harvest	Damage Permit Deer Taken	DVC per Billion Miles Traveled	DVC Trend in SD	Mean Bag Limit
2011	7,747	0.7	3,790	0.7	6.2	3,957	0.7	6.5	51.1		275.5	2.0	7.0
2012	8,797	1.9	3,948	0.9	6.5	4,849	3.0	7.9	55.1		248.7	-0.2	8.0
2013	8,185	0.5	3,895	0.6	6.4	4,290	0.4	7.0	52.4		272.8	1.4	7.0
2014	7,639	-1.1	3,643	-3.7	6.0	3,996	-0.6	6.5	52.3		275.4	1.1	7.0
2015	8,380	0.7	4,219	3.2	6.9	4,161	-0.2	6.8	49.7		315.3	4.0	7.0
2016	7,641	-1.1	4,040	0.7	6.6	3,601	-1.8	5.9	47.1	117	339.5	2.6	7.0
2017	7,323	-1.6	3,602	-1.6	5.9	3,721	-1.0	6.1	50.8	138	370.3	2.2	7.0
2018	6,878	-2.2	3,462	-1.6	5.7	3,416	-1.9	5.6	49.7	81	318.7	0.1	4.0
2019	6,841	-1.3	3,589	-0.6	5.9	3,252	-1.8	5.3	47.5	169	314.2	-0.3	2.0
2020	6,510	-1.4	3,351	-1.3	5.5	3,159	-1.4	5.2	48.5	87	307.6	-1.0	2.5
2021	6,577	-1.0	3,745	0.5	6.1	2,832	-2.6	4.6	43.1	65	382.3	2.1	2.0
2022	5,100	-5.4	2,876	-4.5	4.7	2,224	-3.2	3.6	43.6	101	322.3	-0.5	1.8
2023	4,856	-2.1	2,937	-1.4	4.8	1,919	-2.2	3.1	39.5	62	325.5	-0.1	2.0
2024	5,310	-0.7	3,110	-0.5	5.1	2,200	-0.8	3.6	41.4	97	337.3	0.2	1.5
2025	4,753	-1.1	2,692	-1.4	4.4	2,061	-0.8	3.4	43.4	85	318.7	-0.6	2.8

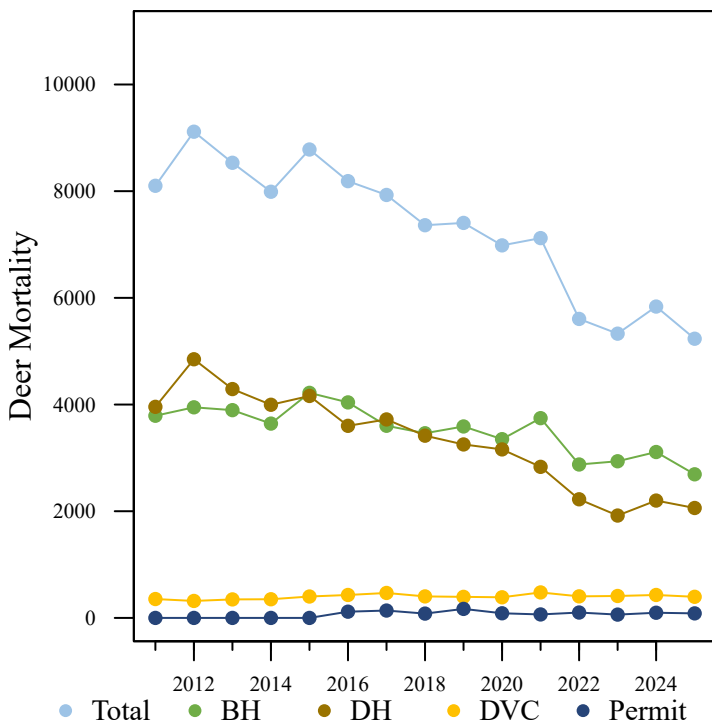
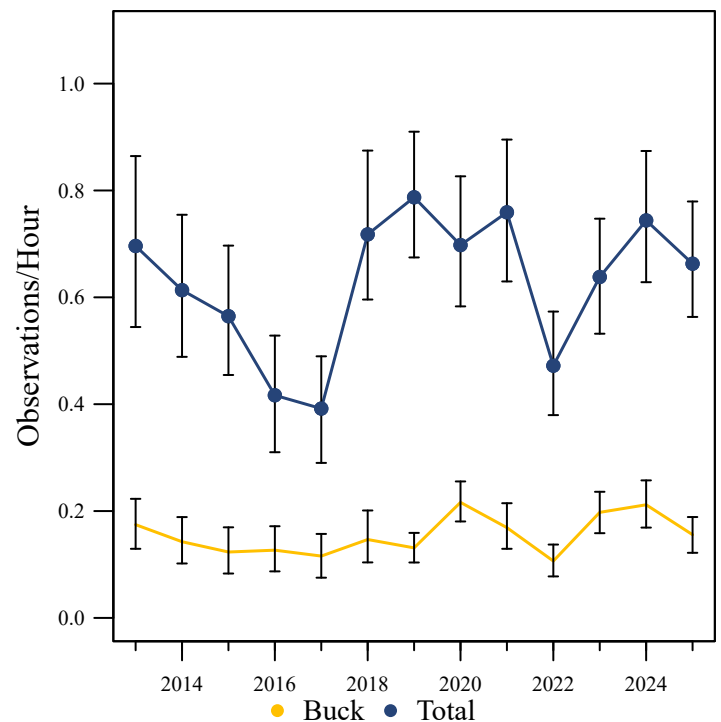
(a) Cumulative Known Deer Mortality**(b) Archer Deer Observations**

Figure 1. (a) The total known annual deer mortality based on buck harvests (BH), doe harvests (DH), deer vehicle collisions (DVC), and deer permit takes. (b) Total deer and buck observations per hour based on the Archer's Index.

DMU 7: Muscatatuck

3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 1,410
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 612
 Percent Deer Habitat: 43

Table 2. Estimated number of antlered (A) and antlerless (AL) deer harvested per hunter. Estimated totals may not match exactly with total number of deer harvested. Reporting errors are examined and investigated as they are located; therefore, subsequent reports may contain corrected totals.

Year	Total Hunters	0 A	1 A	2 A	3 A	0 AL	1 AL	2 AL	3 AL	4 AL	5 AL	6 AL	7 AL	8 AL	9 AL	10 AL
2016	5,548	2,428	3,051	69	0	2,288	2,388	652	161	36	14	5	2	0	1	1
2017	5,280	2,566	2,699	15	0	2,014	2,367	638	159	61	25	11	2	2	1	0
2018	5,010	2,408	2,589	13	0	1,864	2,290	648	162	39	7	0	0	0	0	0
2019	5,230	2,415	2,802	11	2	2,041	2,474	626	71	18	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	4,906	2,264	2,629	12	1	1,916	2,252	631	91	13	3	0	0	0	0	0
2021	5,186	2,141	3,034	11	0	2,303	2,289	558	30	5	0	1	0	0	0	0
2022	4,129	1,838	2,286	5	0	1,743	1,995	368	20	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
2023	3,999	1,434	2,547	18	0	2,058	1,629	296	12	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	4,442	1,796	2,629	17	0	2,124	2,012	285	19	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025	3,766	1,574	2,186	6	0	1,676	1,660	399	27	4	0	0	0	0	0	0

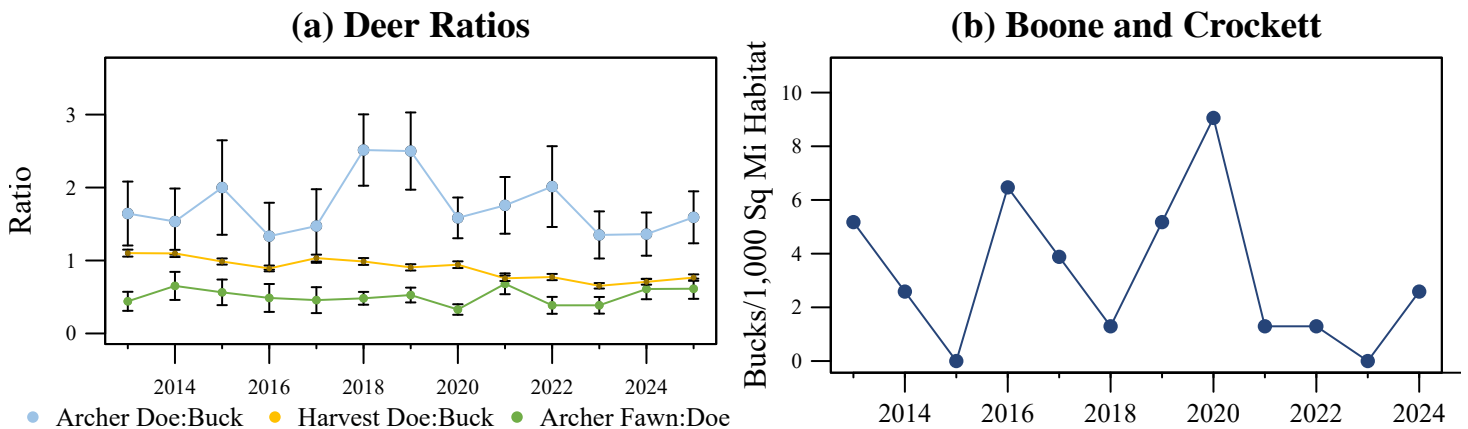
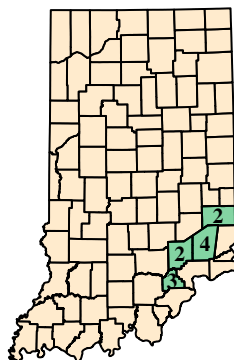


Figure 2. (a) Annual doe:buck ratios and fawn:doe ratios based on the Archer's Index and harvest records. (b) The number of Boone and Crockett bucks (minimum 160 score) per 1,000 square miles of deer habitat.

(a) Counties in DMU 7



(b) Deer Habitat in DMU 7

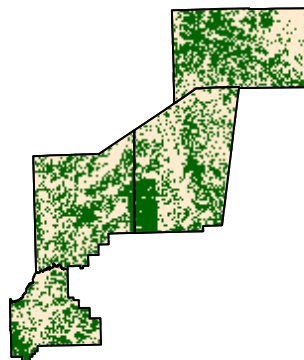


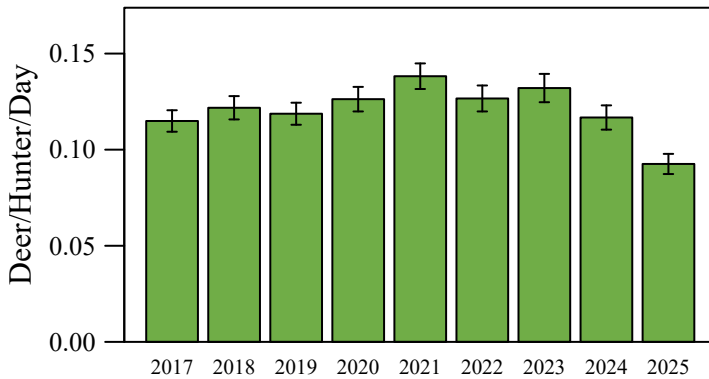
Figure 3. (a) Counties included in DMU 7 for summarizing harvest and deer management survey statistics. Labels are the 2024 county bonus antlerless quotas. (b) Green represents the land use types classified as deer habitat in DMU 7.

DMU 7: Muscatatuck

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

(a) Buck Firearm Harvest Effort



(b) Doe Firearm Harvest Effort

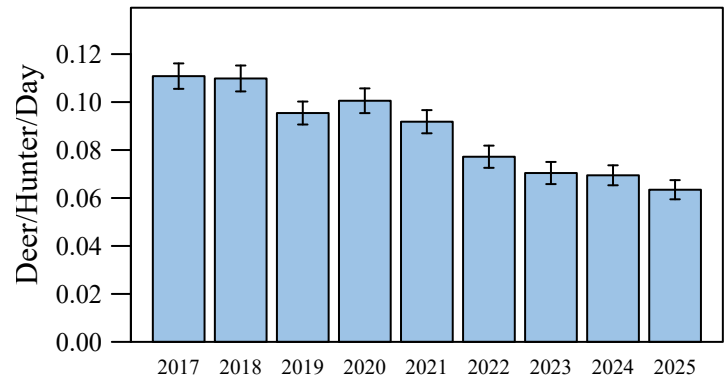
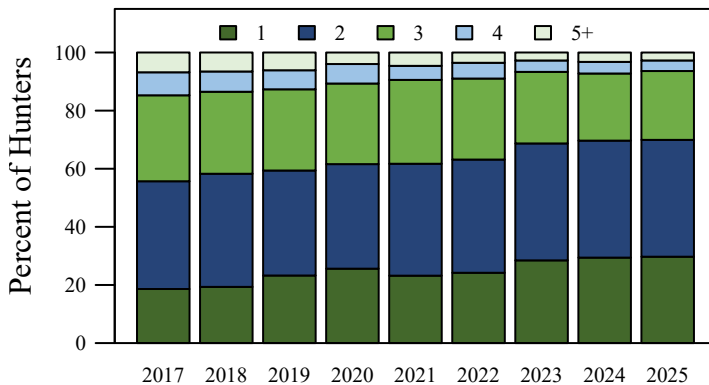


Figure 4. Firearm harvest effort is the number of bucks (a) and does (b) killed by firearms per hunter divided by the mean number of days hunted per hunter during the firearm season based on data reported in the deer management survey. Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate less effort required to harvest a deer.

(a) Number of Deer Desired



(b) Estimated Success

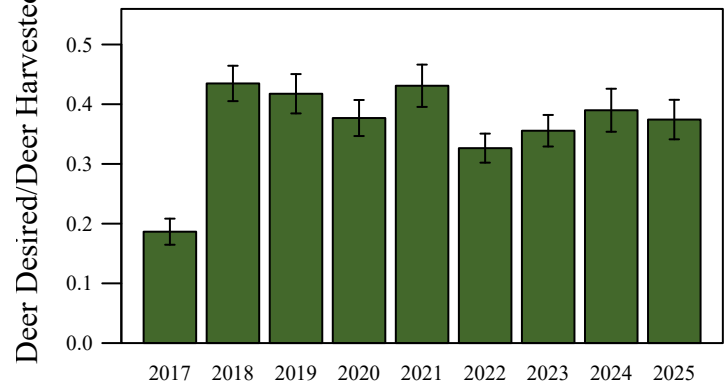
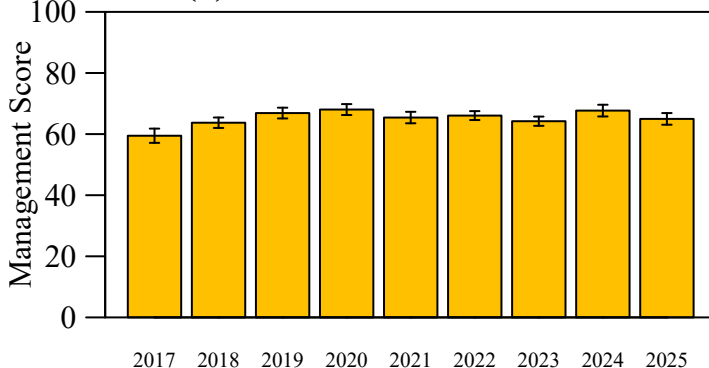


Figure 5. (a) The annual percent of hunters wishing to harvest each number of deer as reported in the deer management survey. (b) Success rate is estimated from the deer management survey as the Number of Harvested Deer/Number of Deer Desired (reported only; does not account for attempts that were not made). Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate greater success.

(a) Hunter State Satisfaction



(b) Nonhunter State Satisfaction

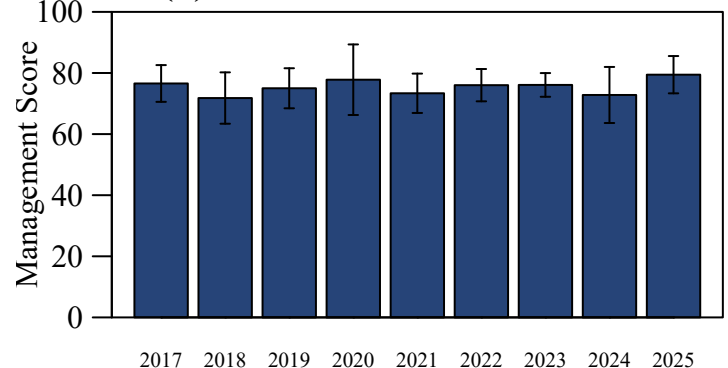


Figure 6. Hunters (a) and nonhunters (b) were asked to score the DNR's statewide deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent).

DMU 7: Muscatatuck

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Satisfaction

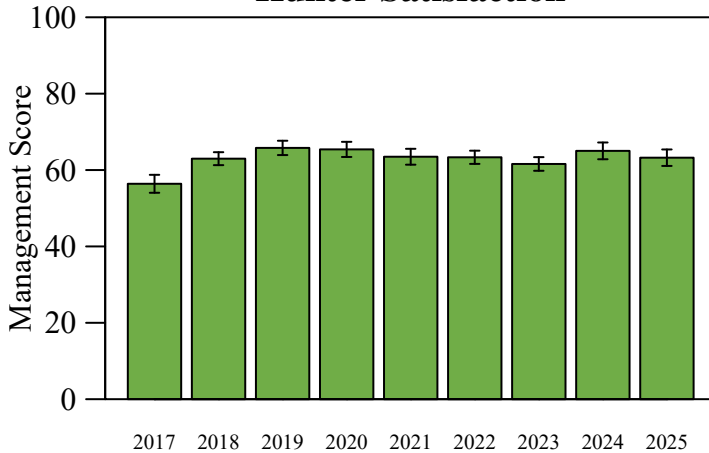


Figure 7. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 7 where they hunt.

Resident Hunter Satisfaction

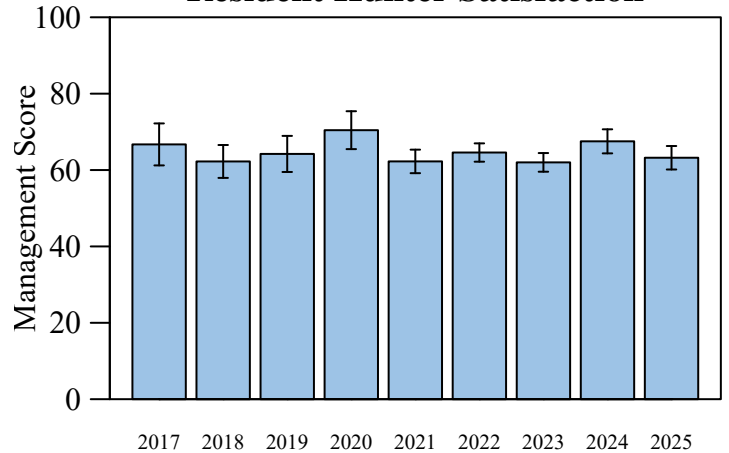


Figure 8. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 7 where they live.

Resident Nonhunter Satisfaction

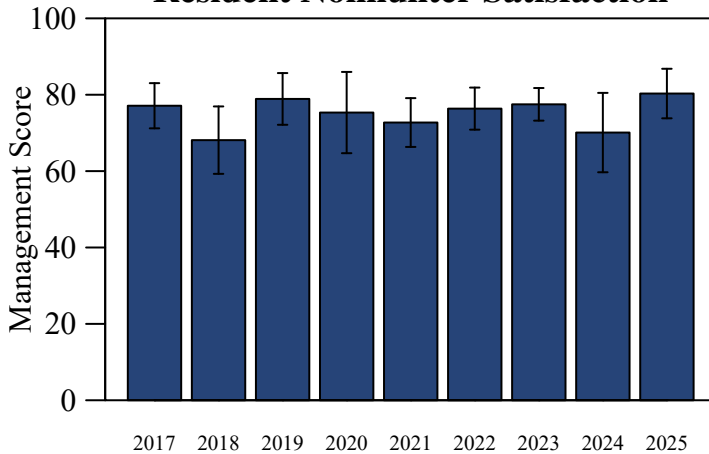


Figure 9. Nonhunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 7 where they live.

Hunter Population Size

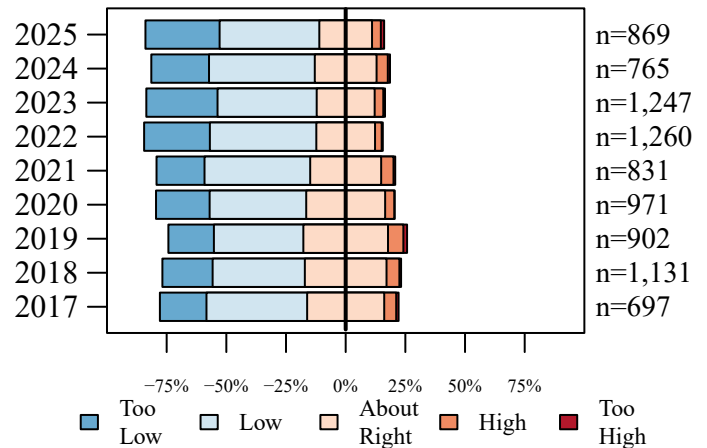


Figure 10. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 7.

Resident Hunter Population Size

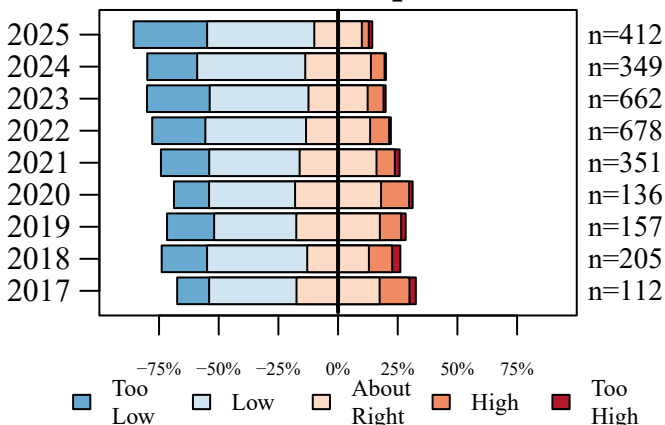


Figure 11. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 7.

Resident Nonhunter Population Size

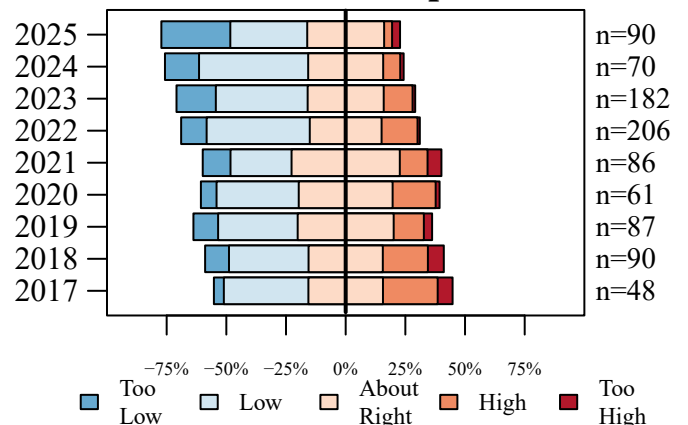


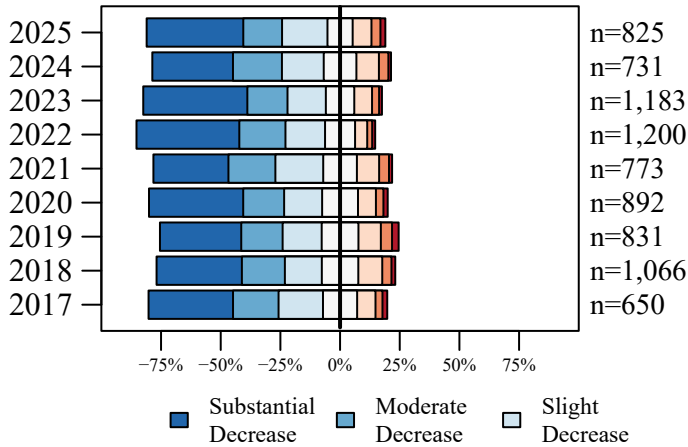
Figure 12. The current size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 7.

DMU 7: Muscatatuck

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Perceived Change



Resident Hunter Perceived Change

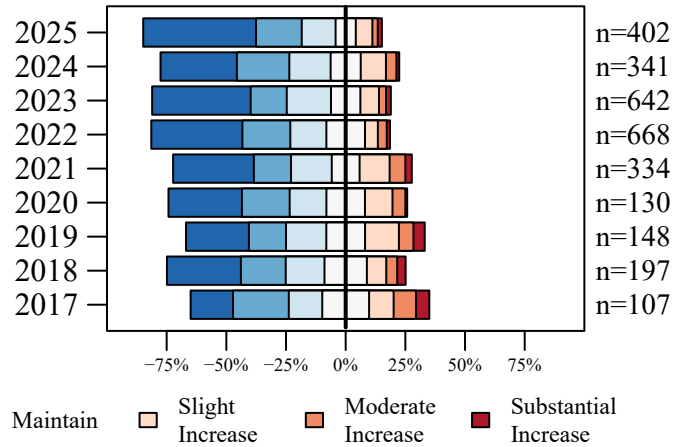
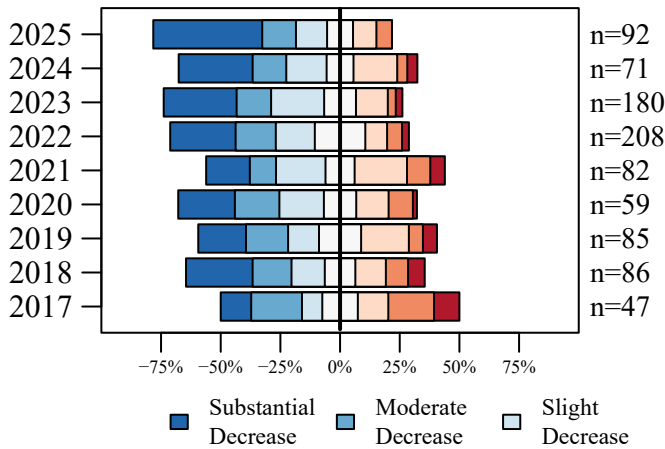


Figure 13. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 7.

Figure 14. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 7.

Resident Nonhunter Perceived Change



Hunter Desired Change

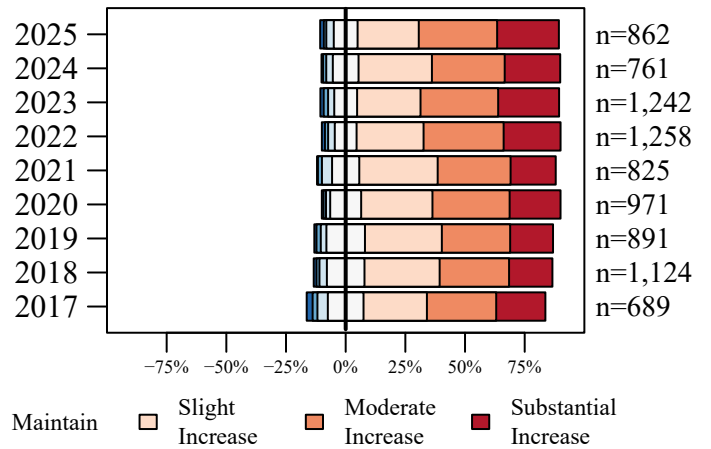
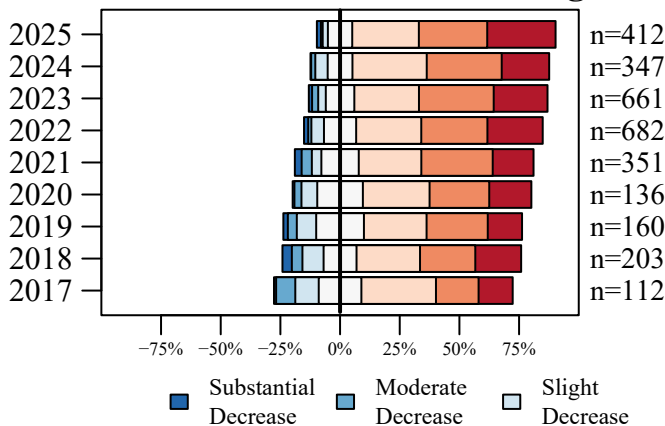


Figure 15. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 7.

Figure 16. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 7.

Resident Hunter Desired Change



Resident Nonhunter Desired Change

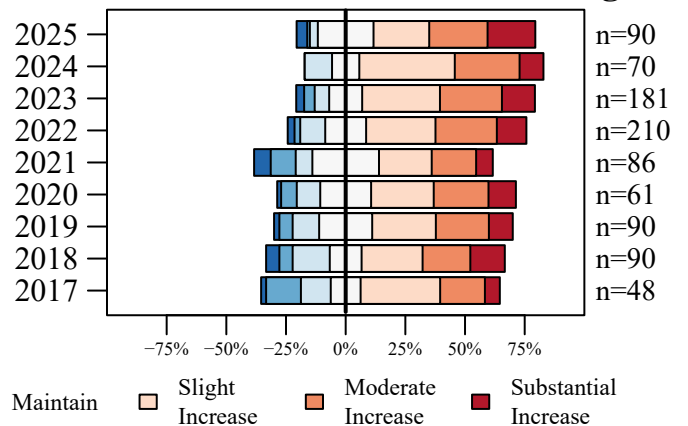


Figure 17. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 7.

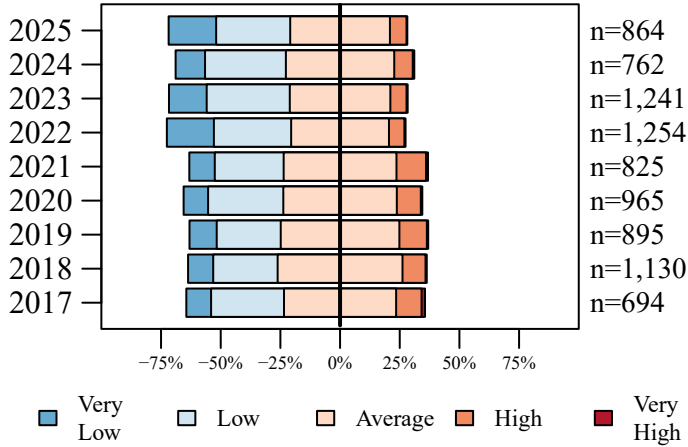
Figure 18. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 7.

DMU 7: Muscatatuck

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Buck Quality



Resident Hunter Buck Quality

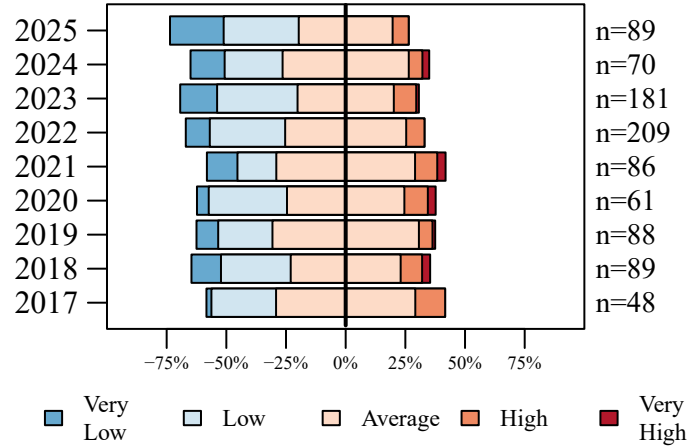
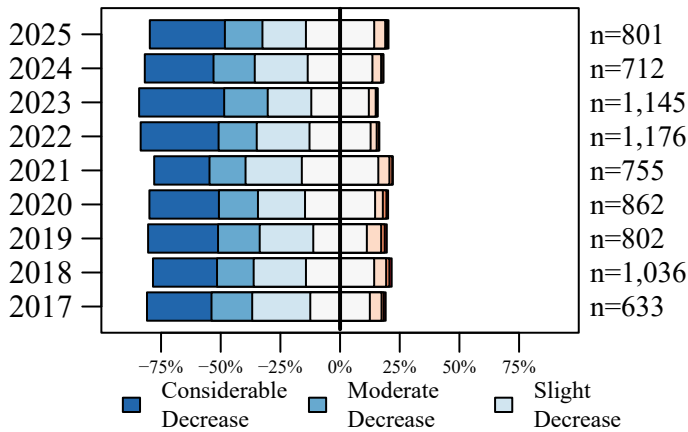


Figure 19. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they hunt in DMU 7.

Figure 20. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they live in DMU 7.

Personal Harvest Change



Total Harvest Change

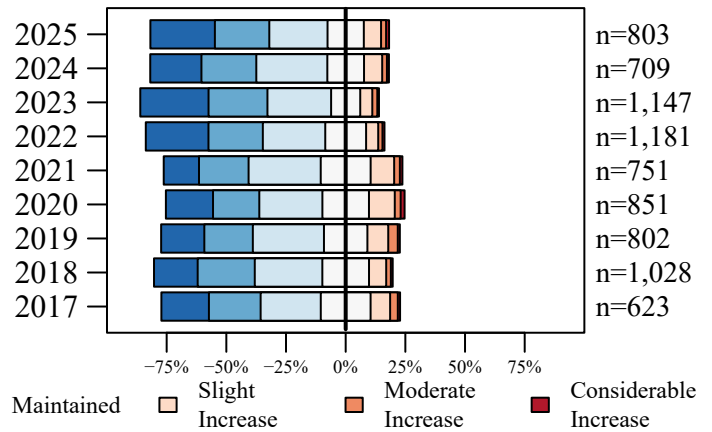
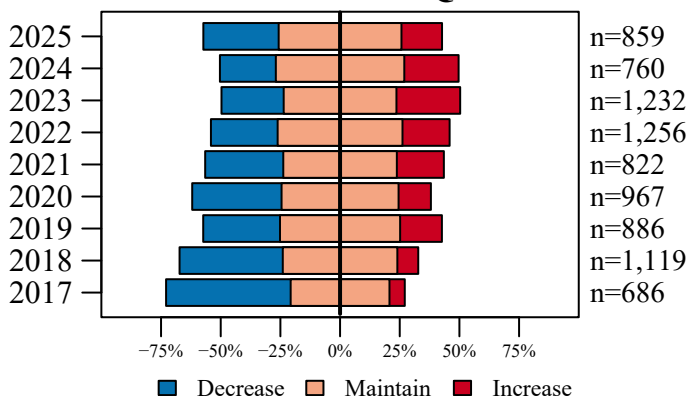


Figure 21. Opinion of hunters on how their personal number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 7.

Figure 22. Opinion of hunters on how the total number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 7.

Hunter CBAQ



Resident Hunter CBAQ

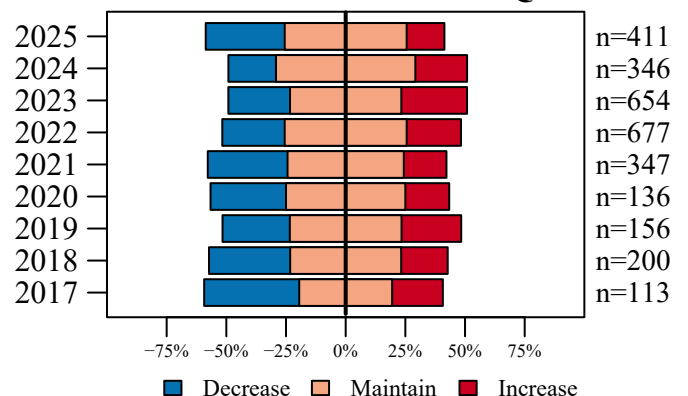


Figure 23. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 7.

Figure 24. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they live in DMU 7.

DMU 7: Muscatatuck

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Resident Nonhunter CBAQ

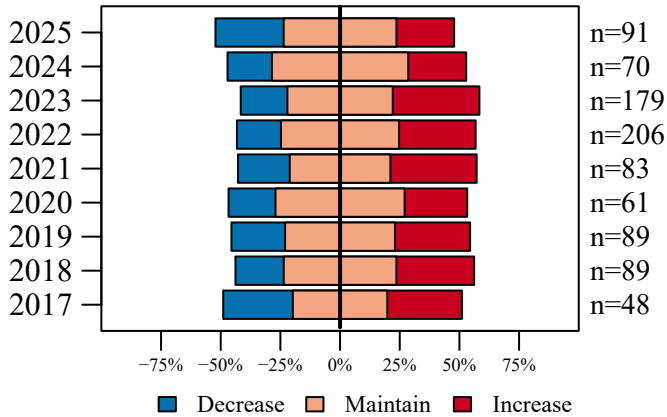


Figure 25. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 7.

Hunter Opinion

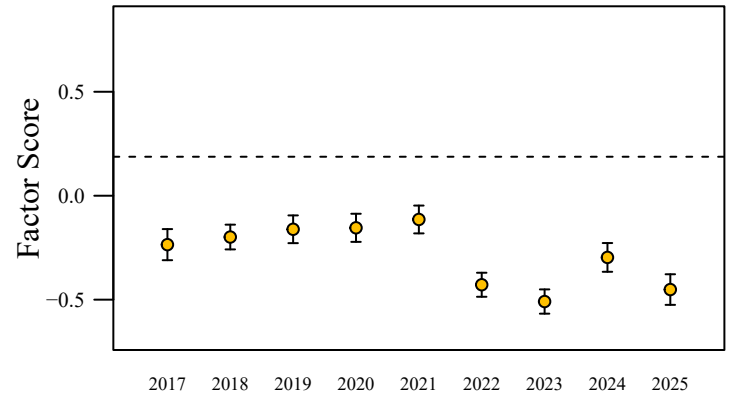


Figure 26. Hunter opinion scores over five years of the deer management survey. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked only to hunters. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Population Size Opinion

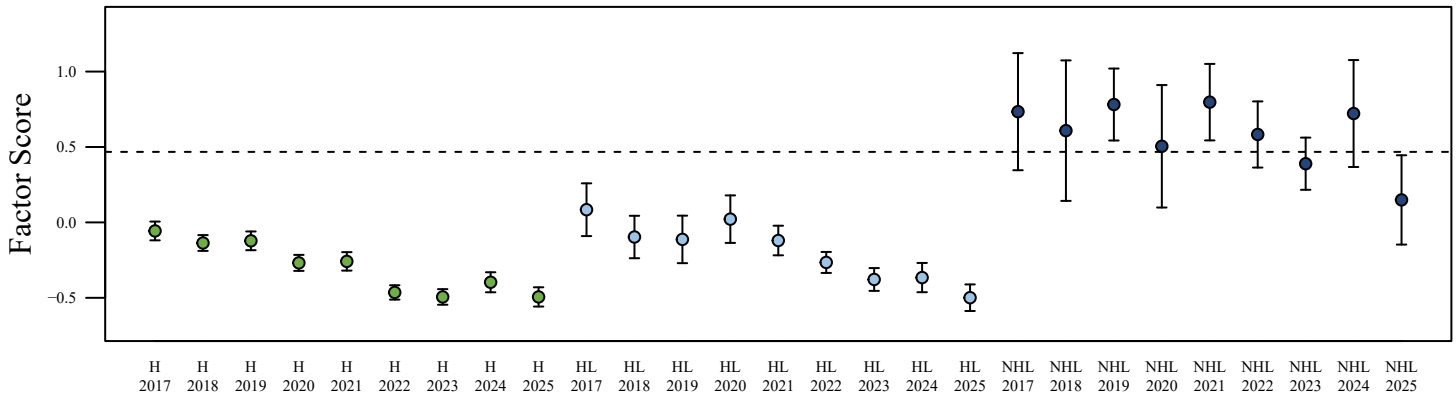


Figure 27. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer population size. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Deer Management Opinion

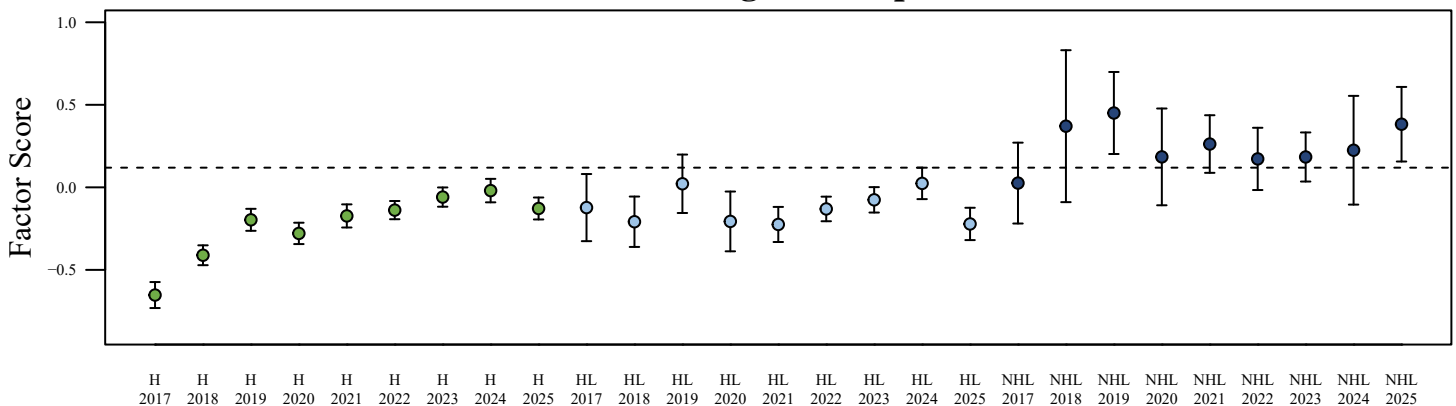


Figure 28. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer management. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

DMU 7: Muscatatuck

3/31/2026

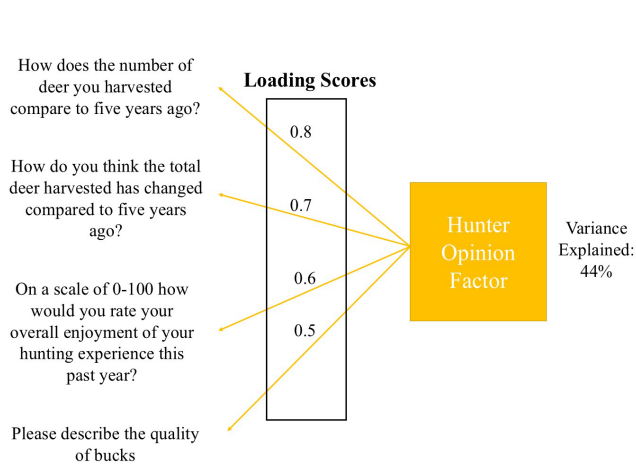
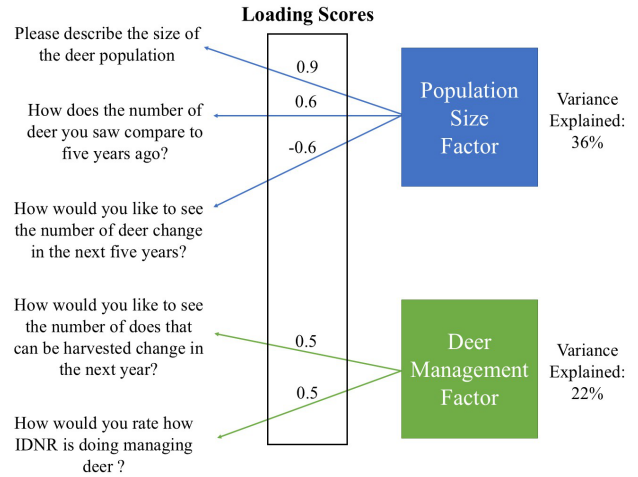
Deer Management Survey Results**(a) Factor Analysis Results: Hunter Questions****(b) Factor Analysis Results: All Group Questions**

Figure 29. Results from two factor analyses used to develop the hunter opinion (a), population opinion (b), and management opinion (b) scores. Higher loading scores indicate a stronger correlation between the original question and the derived factor. These figures are included to help interpret Figure 26, Figure 27, and Figure 28.

DMU 8: Dearborn

3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 618
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 338
 Percent Deer Habitat: 55

Table 1. Total harvest, buck harvest, and doe harvest (error < 1 percent). Damage permits are issued by DNR to landowners to control deer damage. Deer vehicle collisions (DVC) and miles traveled are reported by the Indiana Department of Transportation. Mean bag limit is the average antlerless bag limit of all counties in the DMU. The trend in total harvest, buck harvest, doe harvest, and DVCs are in standard deviations (SD) and are equivalent to effect size. A change greater than 2 SD is considered both a large and statistically significant effect size.

Year	Total	Total Trend in SD	Buck Harvest	Buck Trend in SD	Buck Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	Doe Harvest	Doe Trend in SD	Doe Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	% Doe in Harvest	Damage Permit Deer Taken	DVC per Billion Miles Traveled	DVC Trend in SD	Mean Bag Limit
2011	7,323	1.0	3,353	0.8	9.9	3,970	1.4	11.7	54.2		511.7	-1.7	8.0
2012	7,849	2.1	3,333	0.5	9.9	4,516	5.2	13.4	57.5		486.7	-1.5	8.0
2013	6,226	-2.0	2,789	-1.8	8.3	3,437	-1.6	10.2	55.2		512.5	-0.7	8.0
2014	6,077	-1.9	2,733	-2.0	8.1	3,344	-1.5	9.9	55.0		462.9	-1.5	6.7
2015	6,023	-1.2	3,108	0.0	9.2	2,915	-2.0	8.6	48.4		540.3	0.4	5.3
2016	5,514	-1.4	2,965	-0.3	8.8	2,549	-1.8	7.5	46.2	175	424.9	-2.7	4.0
2017	5,205	-1.3	2,537	-1.8	7.5	2,668	-0.9	7.9	51.3	130	438.6	-1.1	4.0
2018	4,684	-2.6	2,353	-2.2	7.0	2,331	-1.6	6.9	49.8	174	415.6	-1.2	3.3
2019	4,733	-1.3	2,586	-0.5	7.7	2,147	-1.6	6.4	45.4	127	499.3	0.9	2.0
2020	4,921	-0.6	2,549	-0.5	7.5	2,372	-0.5	7.0	48.2	107	409.6	-1.0	2.0
2021	4,452	-1.6	2,478	-0.5	7.3	1,974	-2.2	5.8	44.3	102	429.3	-0.2	2.0
2022	4,046	-2.7	2,200	-3.3	6.5	1,846	-1.7	5.5	45.6	130	364.5	-2.1	2.0
2023	3,629	-2.8	2,020	-2.6	6.0	1,609	-2.3	4.8	44.3	80	367.7	-1.1	1.3
2024	3,729	-1.2	2,035	-1.3	6.0	1,694	-1.0	5.0	45.4	78	302.3	-2.0	1.3
2025	3,643	-1.0	2,017	-1.0	6.0	1,626	-0.9	4.8	44.6	51	388.7	0.3	3.0

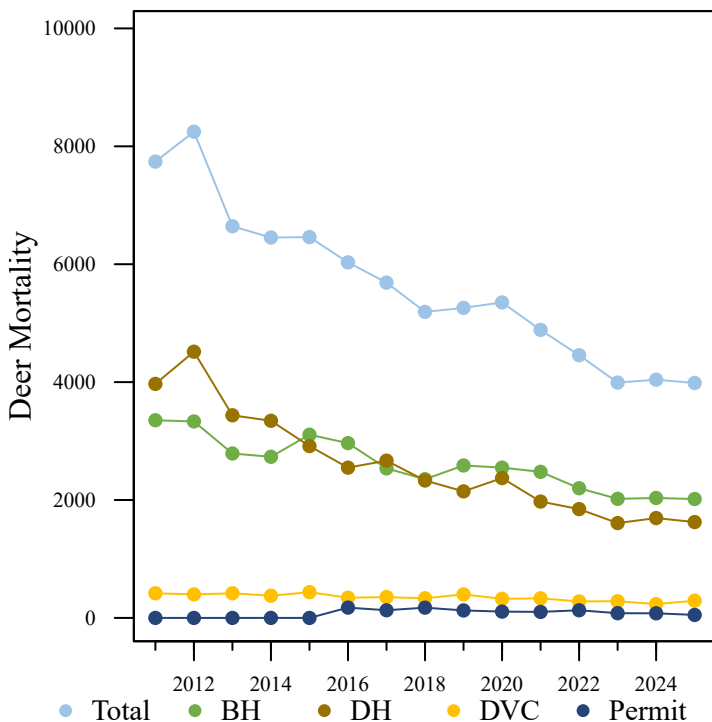
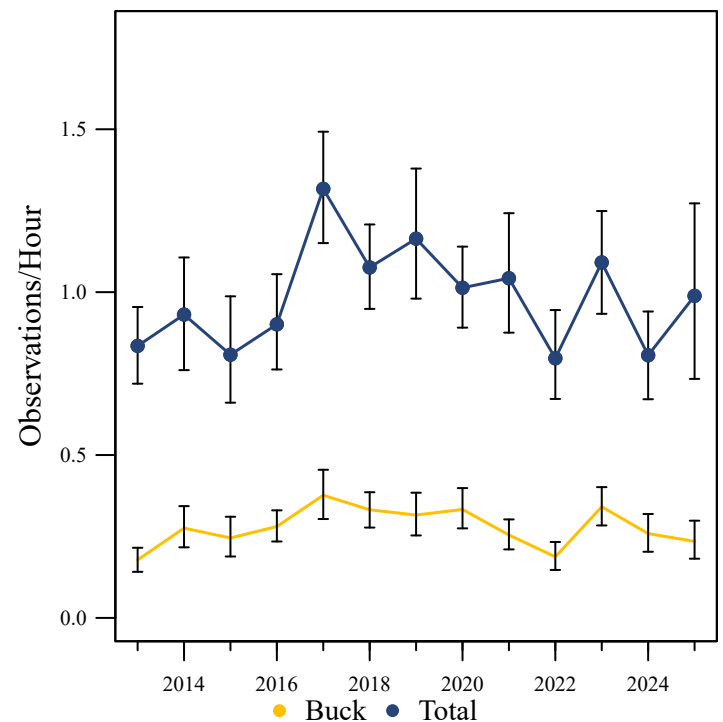
(a) Cumulative Known Deer Mortality**(b) Archer Deer Observations**

Figure 1. (a) The total known annual deer mortality based on buck harvests (BH), doe harvests (DH), deer vehicle collisions (DVC), and deer permit takes. (b) Total deer and buck observations per hour based on the Archer's Index.

DMU 8: Dearborn

3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 618
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 338
 Percent Deer Habitat: 55

Table 2. Estimated number of antlered (A) and antlerless (AL) deer harvested per hunter. Estimated totals may not match exactly with total number of deer harvested. Reporting errors are examined and investigated as they are located; therefore, subsequent reports may contain corrected totals.

Year	Total Hunters	0 A	1 A	2 A	3 A	0 AL	1 AL	2 AL	3 AL	4 AL	5 AL	6 AL	7 AL	8 AL	9 AL	10 AL
2016	4,164	1,739	2,389	36	0	1,847	1,740	452	94	29	1	1	0	0	0	0
2017	3,772	1,787	1,979	6	0	1,467	1,634	486	141	37	5	2	0	0	0	0
2018	3,425	1,550	1,868	7	0	1,354	1,514	421	107	24	4	0	0	0	1	0
2019	3,619	1,459	2,151	9	0	1,595	1,560	412	34	14	3	0	1	0	0	0
2020	3,710	1,594	2,098	18	0	1,543	1,646	441	66	10	3	1	0	0	0	0
2021	3,454	1,327	2,108	19	0	1,592	1,468	358	28	4	2	2	0	0	0	0
2022	3,093	1,257	1,826	10	0	1,376	1,300	372	32	7	5	0	1	0	0	0
2023	2,942	1,195	1,740	7	0	1,363	1,326	227	16	5	3	2	0	0	0	0
2024	3,001	1,235	1,759	7	0	1,362	1,354	260	20	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
2025	2,785	1,082	1,690	13	0	1,291	1,141	294	42	14	2	1	0	0	0	0

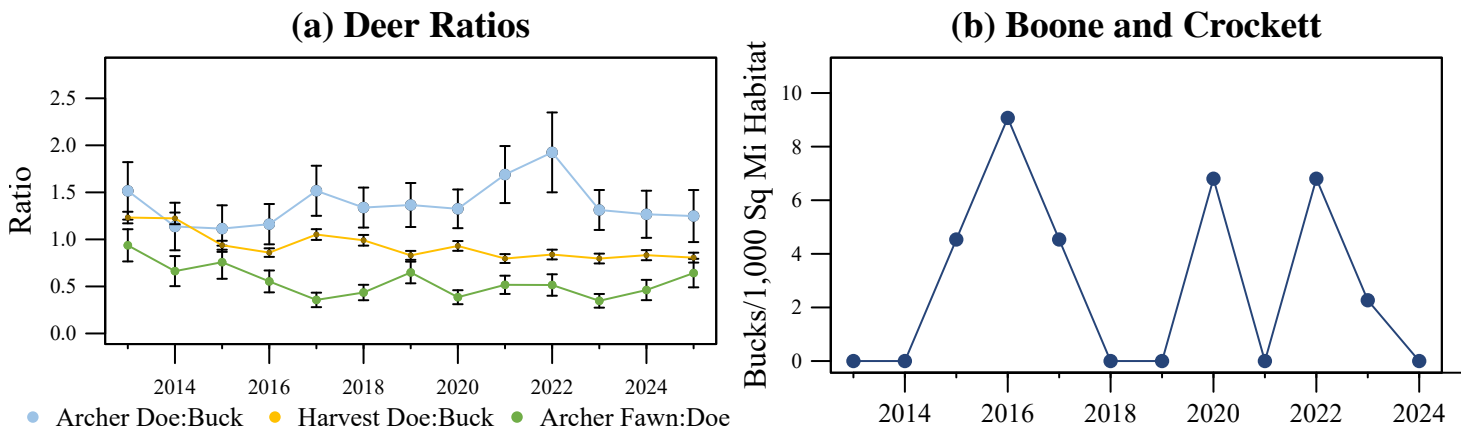
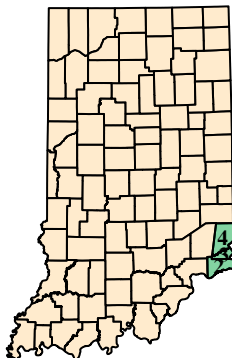


Figure 2. (a) Annual doe:buck ratios and fawn:doe ratios based on the Archer's Index and harvest records. (b) The number of Boone and Crockett bucks (minimum 160 score) per 1,000 square miles of deer habitat.

(a) Counties in DMU 8



(b) Deer Habitat in DMU 8

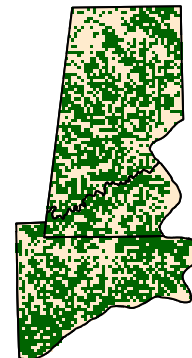


Figure 3. (a) Counties included in DMU 8 for summarizing harvest and deer management survey statistics. Labels are the 2024 county bonus antlerless quotas. (b) Green represents the land use types classified as deer habitat in DMU 8.

DMU 8: Dearborn

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Deer Management Survey Results

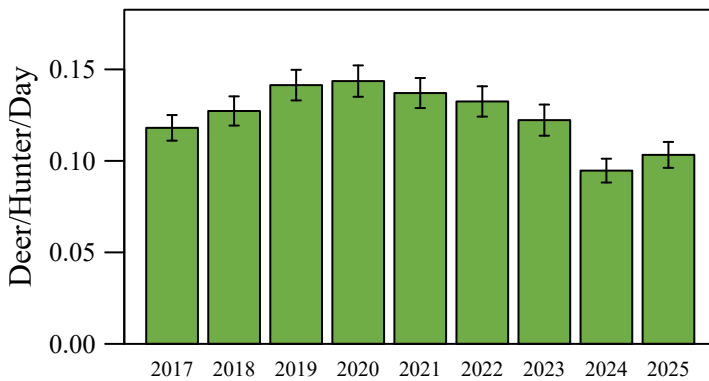
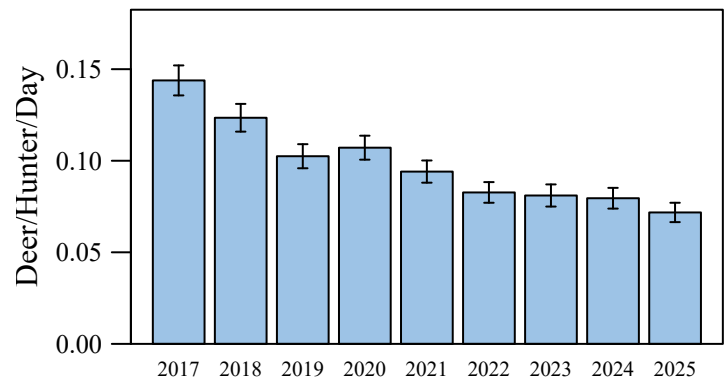
(a) Buck Firearm Harvest Effort**(b) Doe Firearm Harvest Effort**

Figure 4. Firearm harvest effort is the number of bucks (a) and does (b) killed by firearms per hunter divided by the mean number of days hunted per hunter during the firearm season based on data reported in the deer management survey. Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate less effort required to harvest a deer.

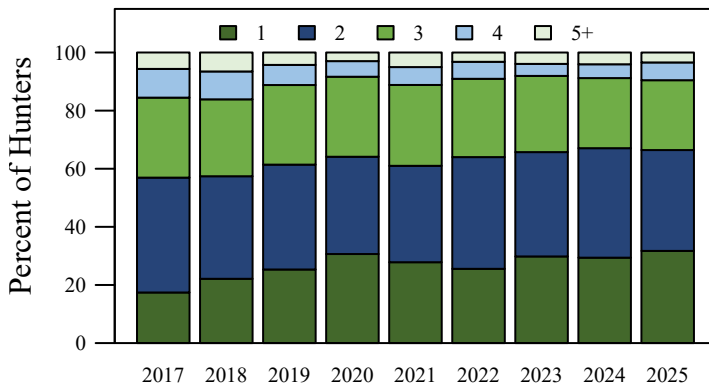
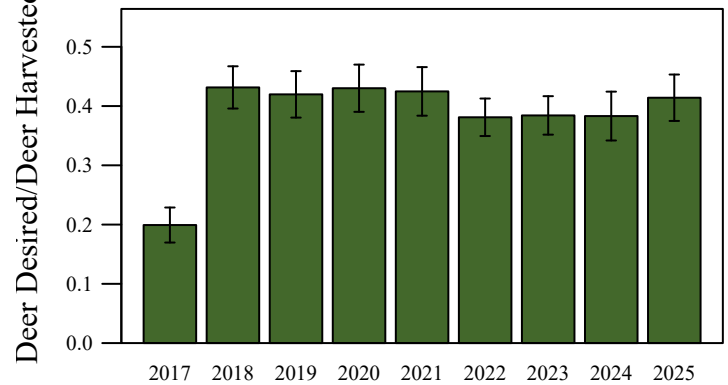
(a) Number of Deer Desired**(b) Estimated Success**

Figure 5. (a) The annual percent of hunters wishing to harvest each number of deer as reported in the deer management survey. (b) Success rate is estimated from the deer management survey as the Number of Harvested Deer/Number of Deer Desired (reported only; does not account for attempts that were not made). Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate greater success.

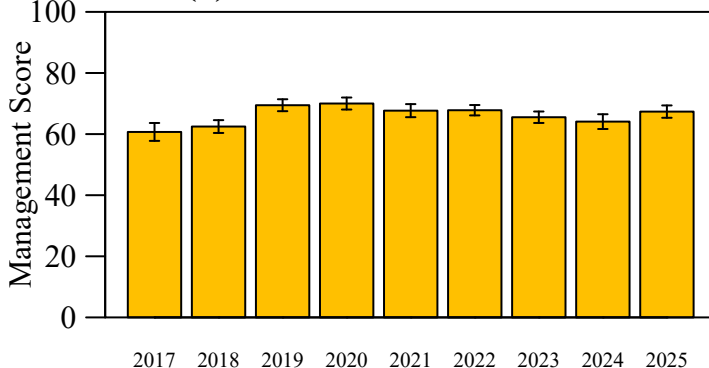
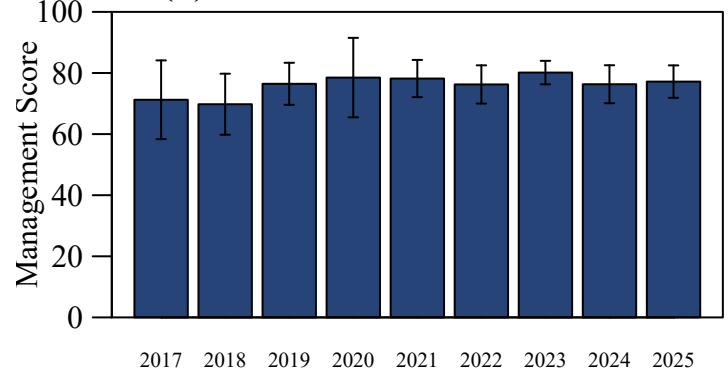
(a) Hunter State Satisfaction**(b) Nonhunter State Satisfaction**

Figure 6. Hunters (a) and nonhunters (b) were asked to score the DNR's statewide deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent).

DMU 8: Dearborn

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Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Satisfaction

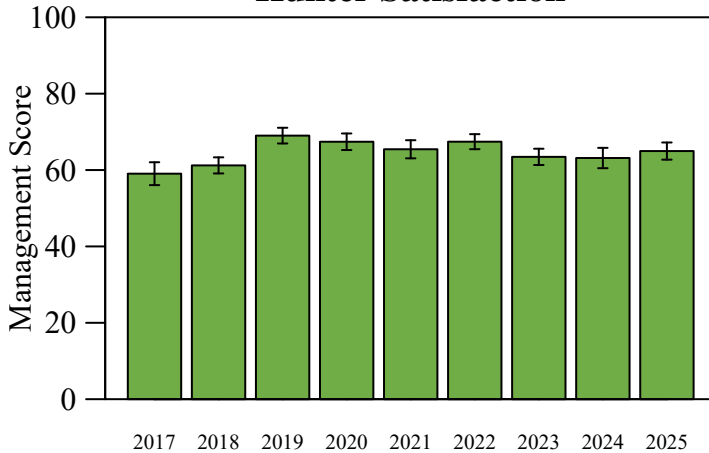


Figure 7. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 8 where they hunt.

Resident Hunter Satisfaction

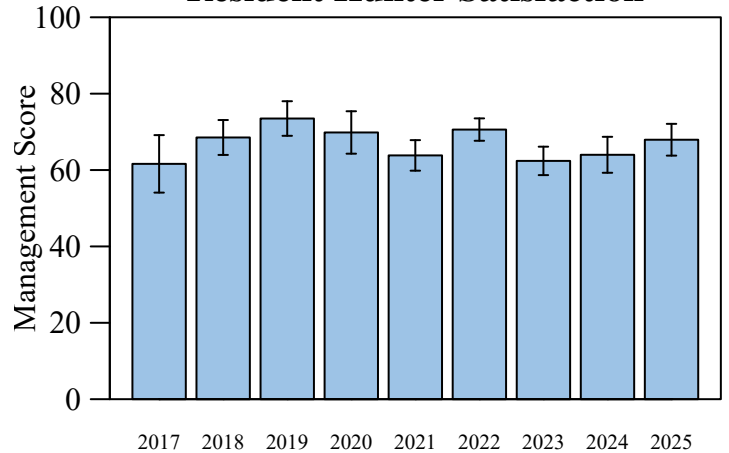


Figure 8. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 8 where they live.

Resident Nonhunter Satisfaction

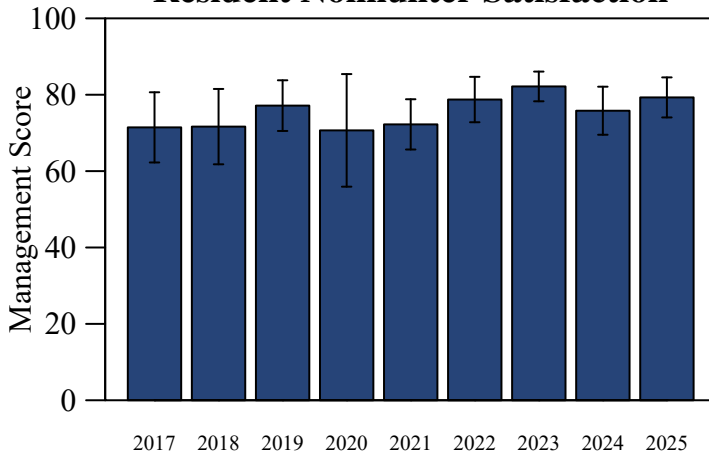


Figure 9. Nonhunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 8 where they live.

Hunter Population Size

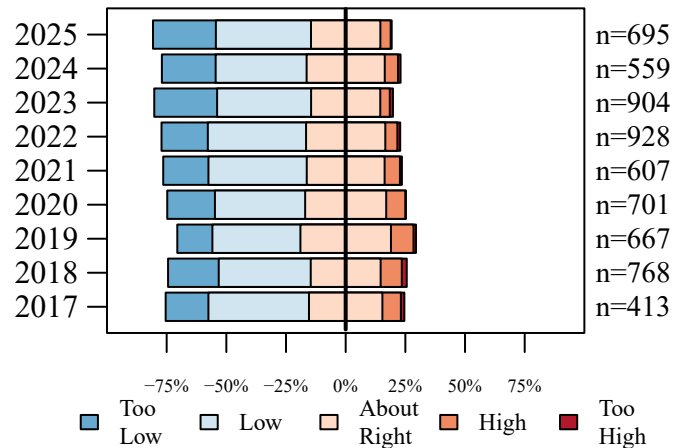


Figure 10. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 8.

Resident Hunter Population Size

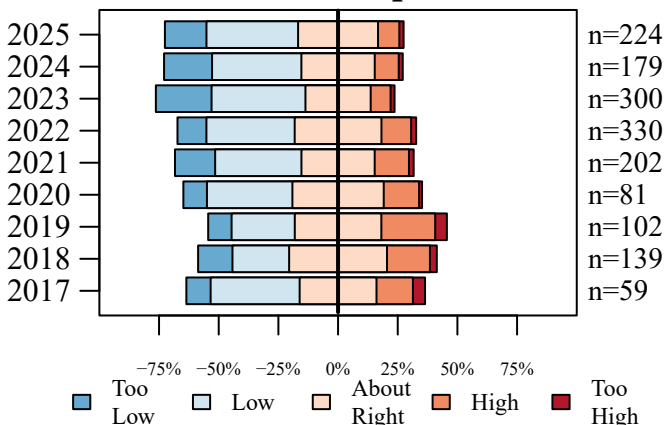


Figure 11. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 8.

Resident Nonhunter Population Size

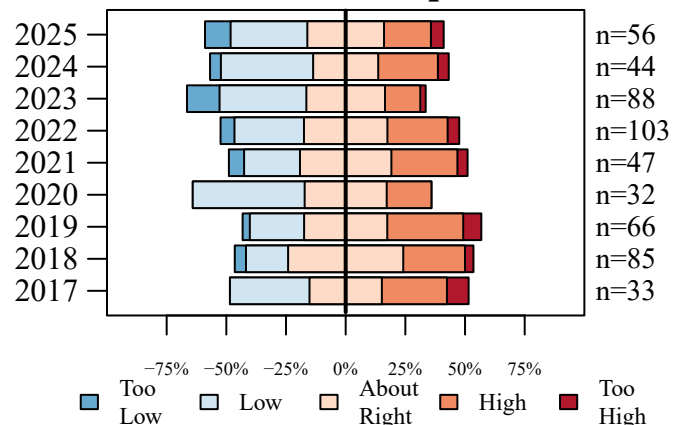


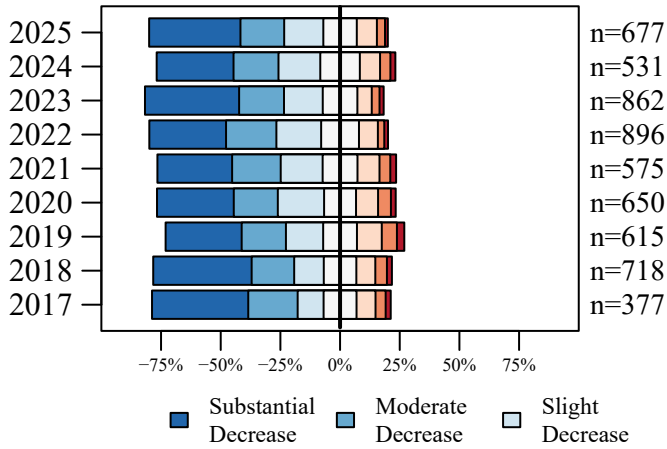
Figure 12. The current size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 8.

DMU 8: Dearborn

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Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Perceived Change



Resident Hunter Perceived Change

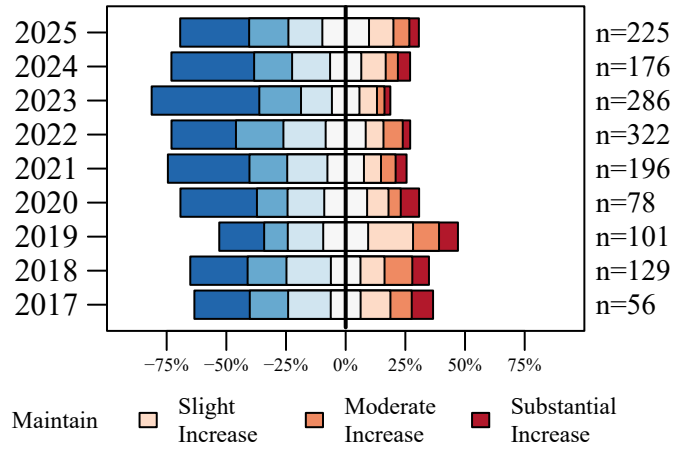
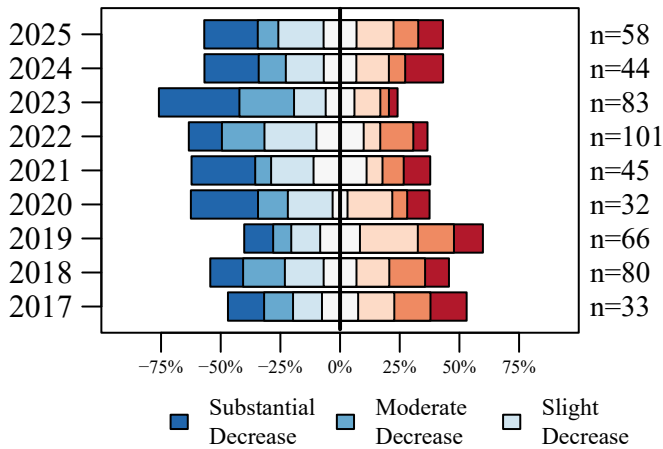


Figure 13. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 8.

Figure 14. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 8.

Resident Nonhunter Perceived Change



Hunter Desired Change

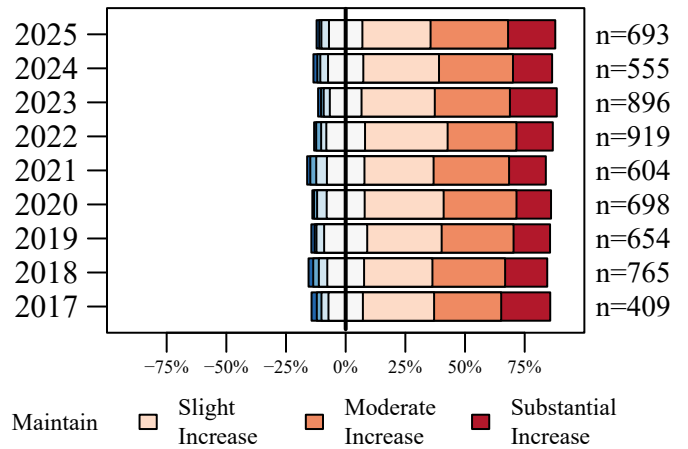
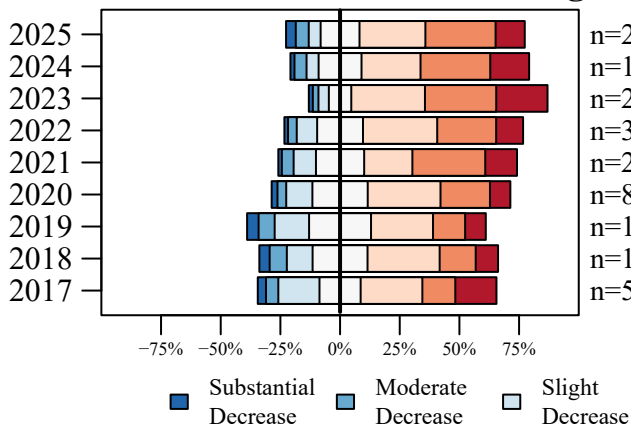


Figure 15. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 8.

Figure 16. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 8.

Resident Hunter Desired Change



Resident Nonhunter Desired Change

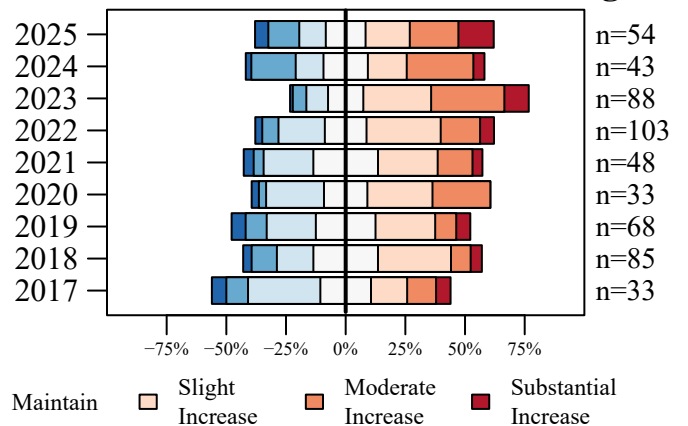


Figure 17. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 8.

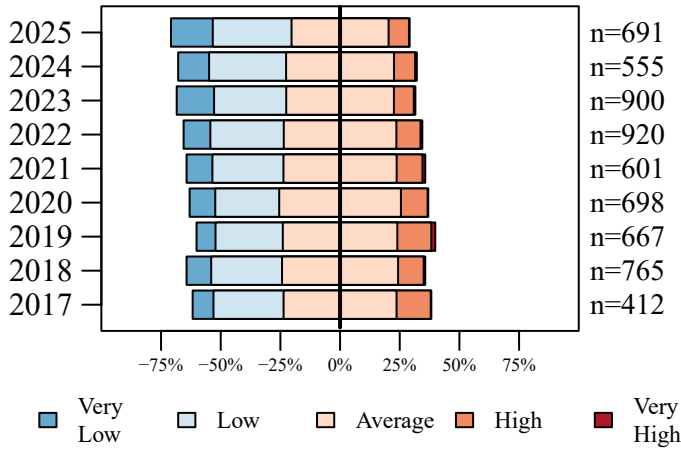
Figure 18. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 8.

DMU 8: Dearborn

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Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Buck Quality



Resident Hunter Buck Quality

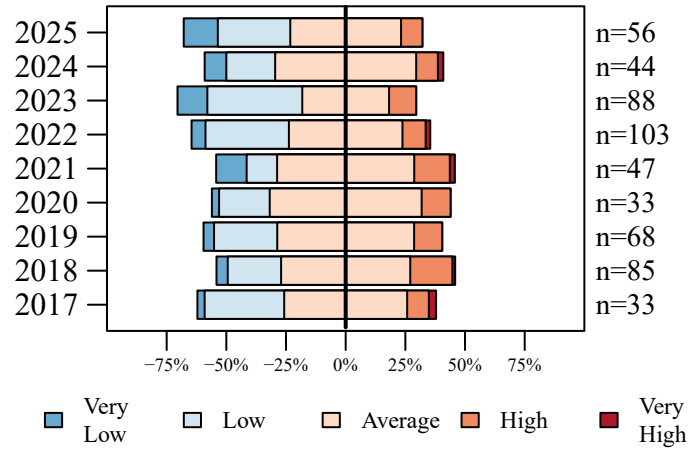


Figure 19. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they hunt in DMU 8.

Figure 20. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they live in DMU 8.

Personal Harvest Change

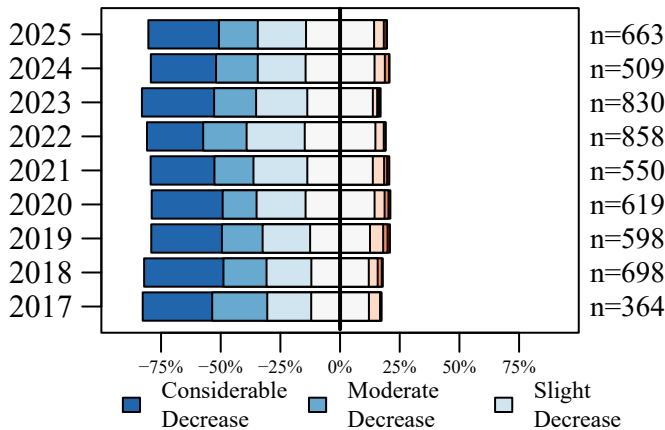


Figure 21. Opinion of hunters on how their personal number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 8.

Total Harvest Change

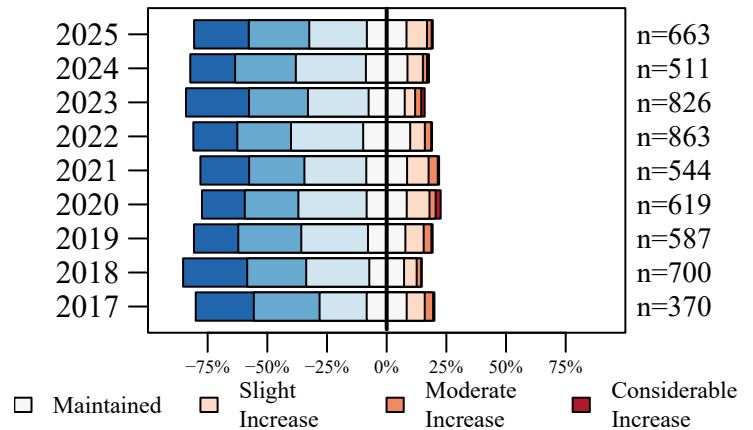


Figure 22. Opinion of hunters on how the total number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 8.

Hunter CBAQ

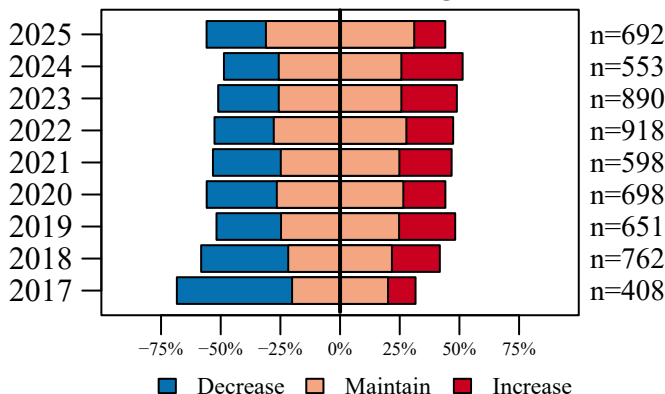


Figure 23. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 8.

Resident Hunter CBAQ

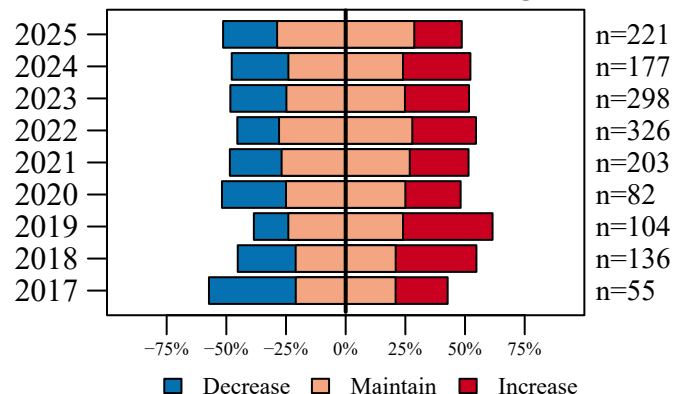


Figure 24. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they live in DMU 8.

DMU 8: Dearborn

3/31/2026

Deer Management Survey Results

Resident Nonhunter CBAQ

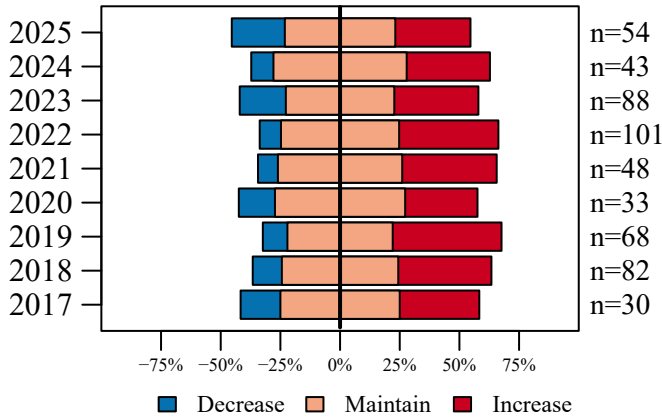


Figure 25. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 8.

Hunter Opinion

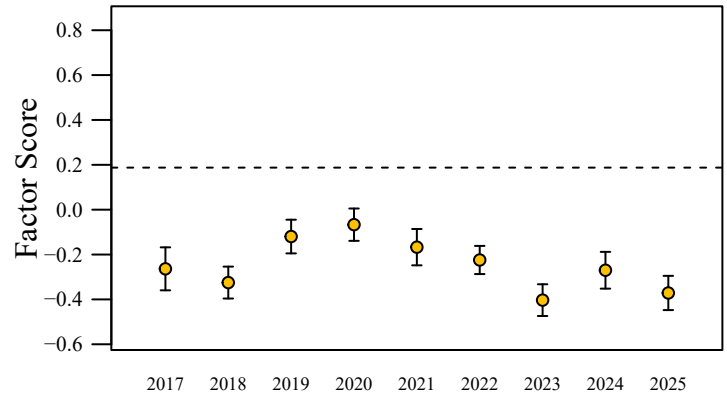


Figure 26. Hunter opinion scores over five years of the deer management survey. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked only to hunters. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Population Size Opinion

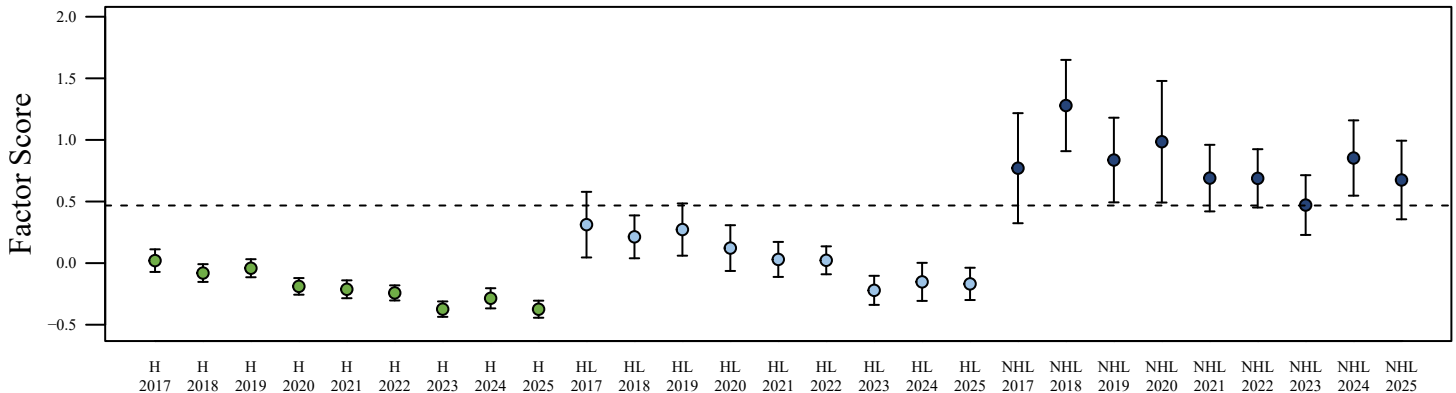


Figure 27. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer population size. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Deer Management Opinion

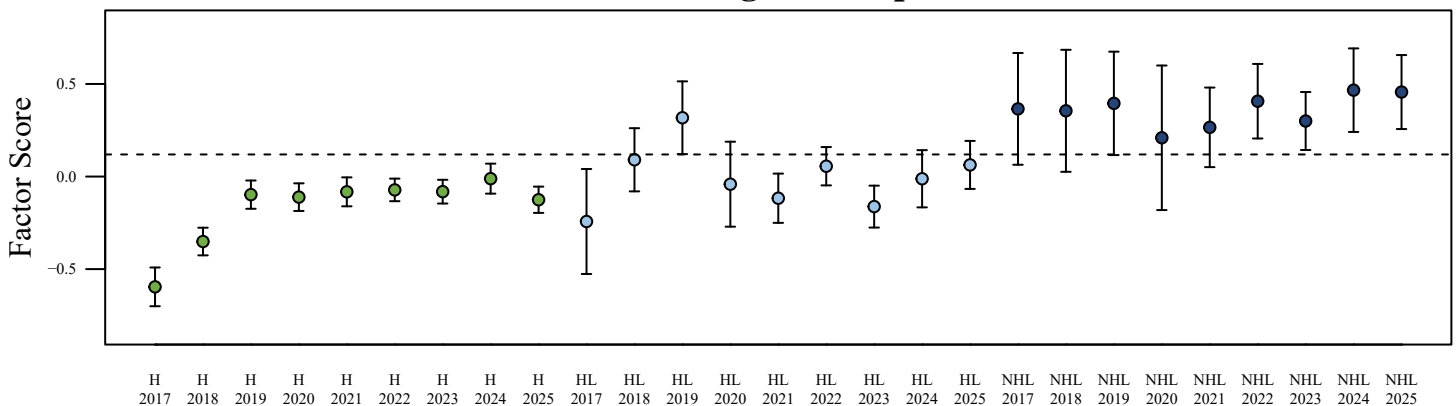


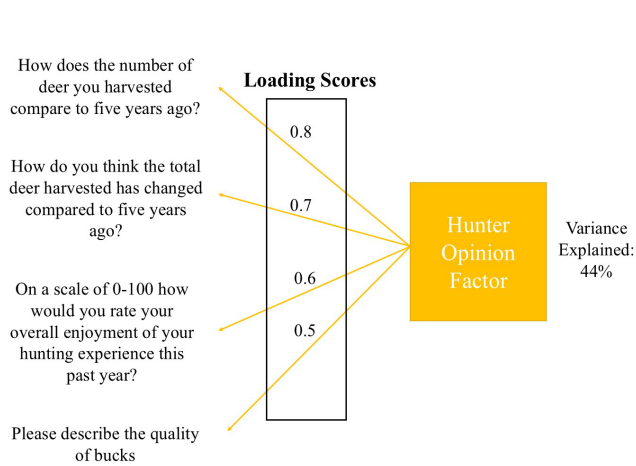
Figure 28. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer management. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

DMU 8: Dearborn

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Deer Management Survey Results

(a) Factor Analysis Results: Hunter Questions



(b) Factor Analysis Results: All Group Questions

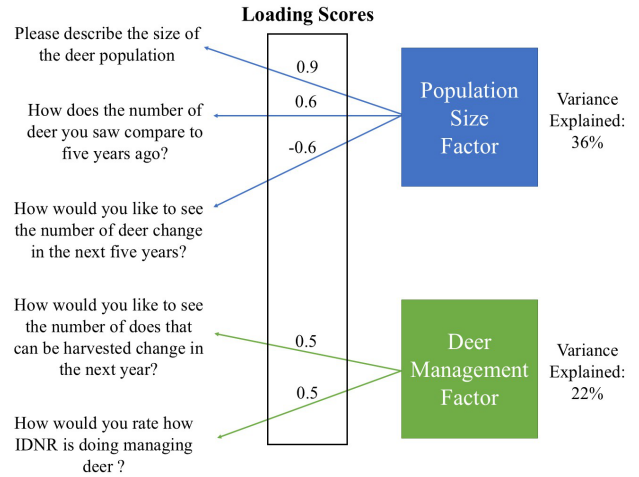


Figure 29. Results from two factor analyses used to develop the hunter opinion (a), population opinion (b), and management opinion (b) scores. Higher loading scores indicate a stronger correlation between the original question and the derived factor. These figures are included to help interpret Figure 26, Figure 27, and Figure 28.

DMU 9: Southwest

3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 3,682
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 866
 Percent Deer Habitat: 24

Table 1. Total harvest, buck harvest, and doe harvest (error < 1 percent). Damage permits are issued by DNR to landowners to control deer damage. Deer vehicle collisions (DVC) and miles traveled are reported by the Indiana Department of Transportation. Mean bag limit is the average antlerless bag limit of all counties in the DMU. The trend in total harvest, buck harvest, doe harvest, and DVCs are in standard deviations (SD) and are equivalent to effect size. A change greater than 2 SD is considered both a large and statistically significant effect size.

Year	Total	Total Trend in SD	Buck Harvest	Buck Trend in SD	Buck Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	Doe Harvest	Doe Trend in SD	Doe Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	% Doe in Harvest	Damage Permit Deer Taken	DVC per Billion Miles Traveled	DVC Trend in SD	Mean Bag Limit
2011	11,747	-0.3	6,019	-0.3	7.0	5,728	-0.3	6.6	48.8		238.5	2.1	4.7
2012	12,409	1.6	5,802	-0.9	6.7	6,607	4.0	7.6	53.2		224.7	0.0	4.7
2013	12,172	0.6	5,888	-1.0	6.8	6,284	0.8	7.3	51.6		260.3	3.5	4.4
2014	11,929	-0.2	5,891	-0.7	6.8	6,038	0.1	7.0	50.6		265.0	1.9	3.9
2015	11,589	-1.5	5,883	-0.5	6.8	5,706	-1.0	6.6	49.2		276.0	1.7	3.9
2016	10,822	-3.5	5,706	-2.4	6.6	5,116	-2.5	5.9	47.3	107	219.0	-1.6	3.6
2017	10,657	-1.8	5,474	-4.5	6.3	5,183	-1.3	6.0	48.6	128	232.4	-0.6	2.6
2018	10,377	-1.6	5,531	-1.3	6.4	4,846	-1.6	5.6	46.7	65	231.7	-0.8	2.0
2019	10,725	-0.5	5,859	0.8	6.8	4,866	-1.1	5.6	45.4	81	224.2	-0.8	1.8
2020	11,927	2.4	6,348	3.5	7.3	5,579	1.3	6.4	46.8	94	199.5	-1.6	2.0
2021	10,787	-0.2	5,905	0.3	6.8	4,882	-0.8	5.6	45.3	96	207.3	-1.0	2.0
2022	11,781	1.5	6,470	1.8	7.5	5,311	0.8	6.1	45.1	110	208.3	-0.7	2.0
2023	11,433	0.5	6,225	0.5	7.2	5,208	0.3	6.0	45.6	105	226.6	0.9	2.0
2024	11,917	1.1	6,398	0.9	7.4	5,519	1.2	6.4	46.3	189	199.2	-1.2	2.0
2025	11,686	0.2	6,380	0.5	7.4	5,306	0.0	6.1	45.4	191	285.6	7.0	3.0

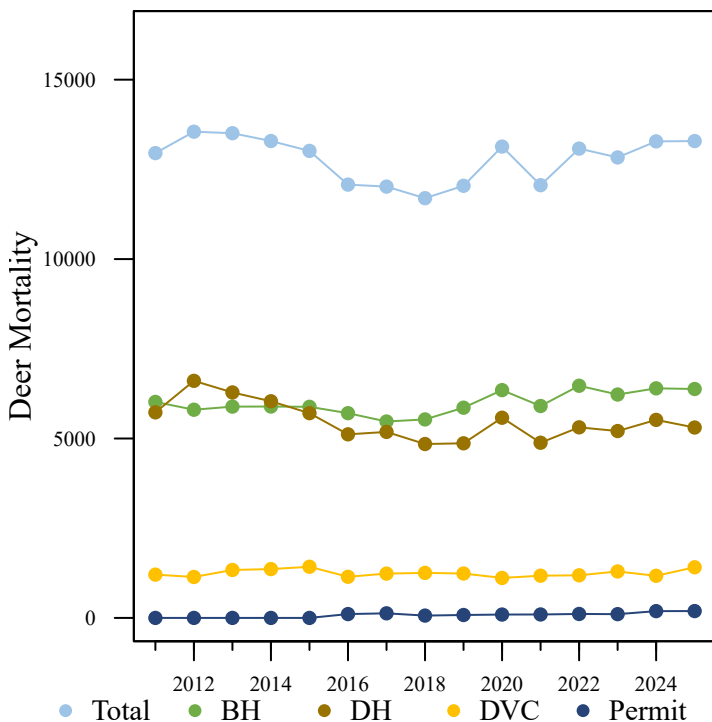
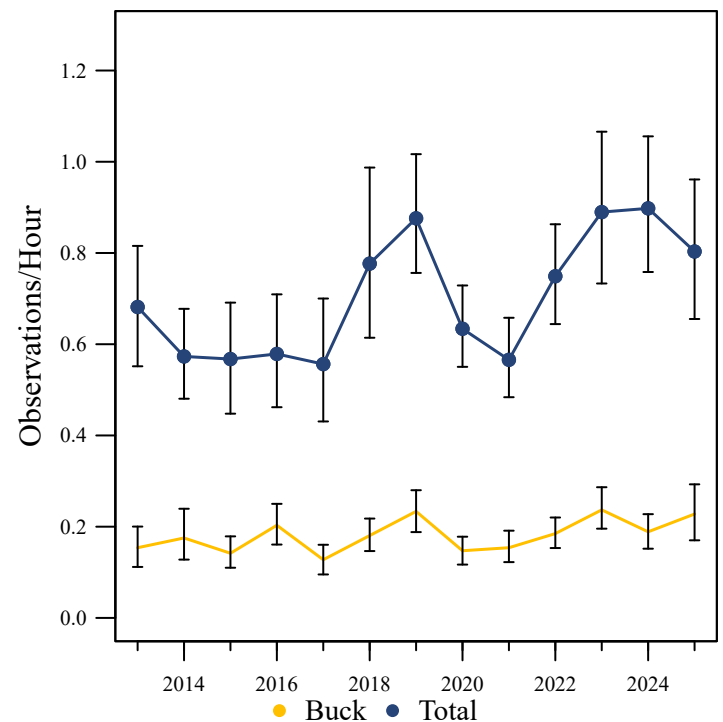
(a) Cumulative Known Deer Mortality**(b) Archer Deer Observations**

Figure 1. (a) The total known annual deer mortality based on buck harvests (BH), doe harvests (DH), deer vehicle collisions (DVC), and deer permit takes. (b) Total deer and buck observations per hour based on the Archer's Index.

DMU 9: Southwest

3/31/2026

Total Square Miles: 3,682
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 866
 Percent Deer Habitat: 24

Table 2. Estimated number of antlered (A) and antlerless (AL) deer harvested per hunter. Estimated totals may not match exactly with total number of deer harvested. Reporting errors are examined and investigated as they are located; therefore, subsequent reports may contain corrected totals.

Year	Total Hunters	0 A	1 A	2 A	3 A	0 AL	1 AL	2 AL	3 AL	4 AL	5 AL	6 AL	7 AL	8 AL	9 AL	10 AL
2016	8,489	3,705	4,765	18	0	3,649	3,852	832	127	25	4	0	0	0	0	0
2017	8,305	3,903	4,386	16	0	3,260	4,030	864	129	18	2	2	0	0	0	0
2018	8,218	3,624	4,572	21	1	3,459	3,866	797	86	9	0	1	0	0	0	0
2019	8,359	3,462	4,870	27	0	3,569	3,869	851	57	10	0	2	1	0	0	0
2020	9,192	3,906	5,254	29	2	3,785	4,331	975	85	13	2	1	0	0	0	0
2021	8,523	3,515	4,986	22	0	3,725	3,913	823	52	8	2	0	0	0	0	0
2022	9,100	3,543	5,531	25	1	4,053	4,004	954	73	14	2	0	0	0	0	0
2023	8,904	3,546	5,333	25	0	3,947	3,971	899	73	10	2	2	0	0	0	0
2024	9,134	3,673	5,434	27	0	3,959	4,053	1,019	84	14	3	1	0	0	1	0
2025	8,845	3,316	5,496	32	1	3,968	3,793	949	122	7	3	1	1	0	0	1

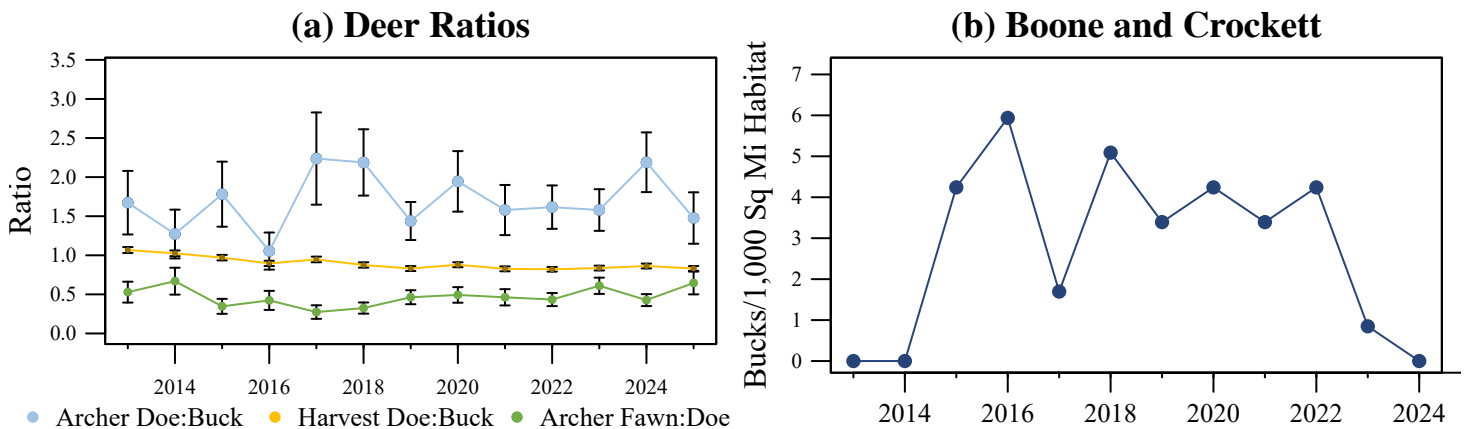
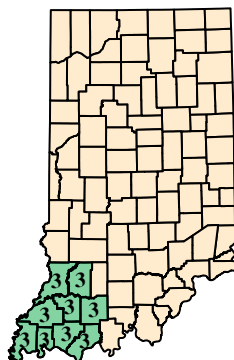


Figure 2. (a) Annual doe:buck ratios and fawn:doe ratios based on the Archer's Index and harvest records. (b) The number of Boone and Crockett bucks (minimum 160 score) per 1,000 square miles of deer habitat.

(a) Counties in DMU 9



(b) Deer Habitat in DMU 9

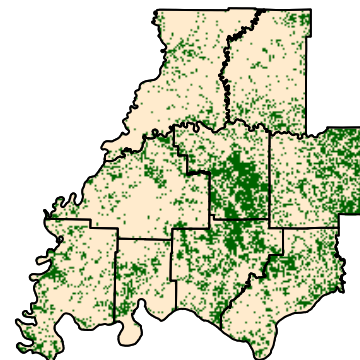


Figure 3. (a) Counties included in DMU 9 for summarizing harvest and deer management survey statistics. Labels are the 2024 county bonus antlerless quotas. (b) Green represents the land use types classified as deer habitat in DMU 9.

DMU 9: Southwest

3/31/2026

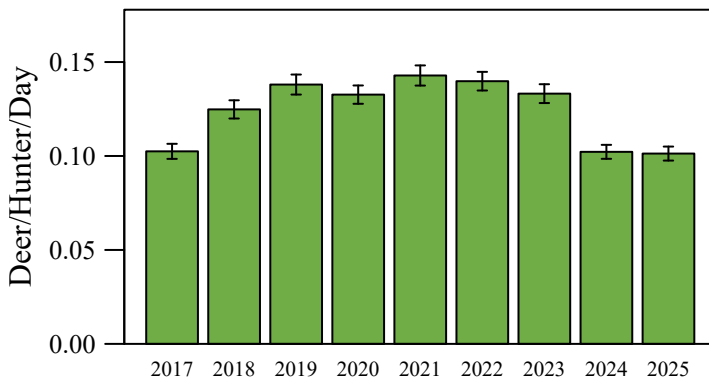
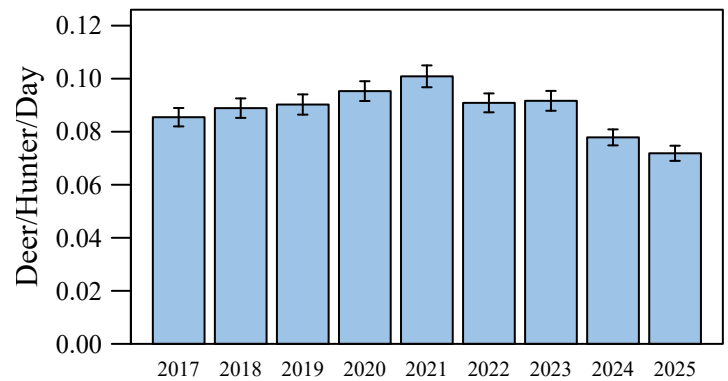
Deer Management Survey Results**(a) Buck Firearm Harvest Effort****(b) Doe Firearm Harvest Effort**

Figure 4. Firearm harvest effort is the number of bucks (a) and does (b) killed by firearms per hunter divided by the mean number of days hunted per hunter during the firearm season based on data reported in the deer management survey. Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate less effort required to harvest a deer.

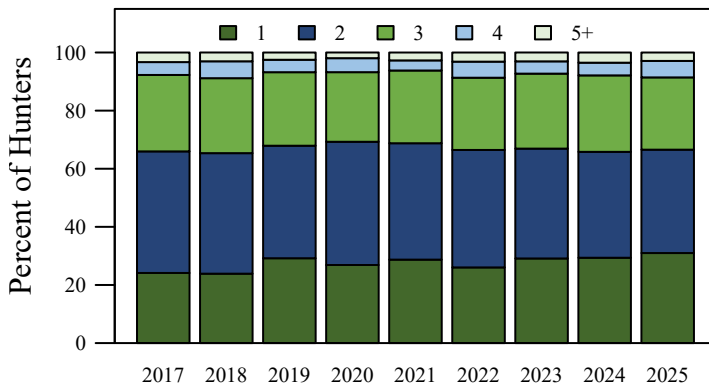
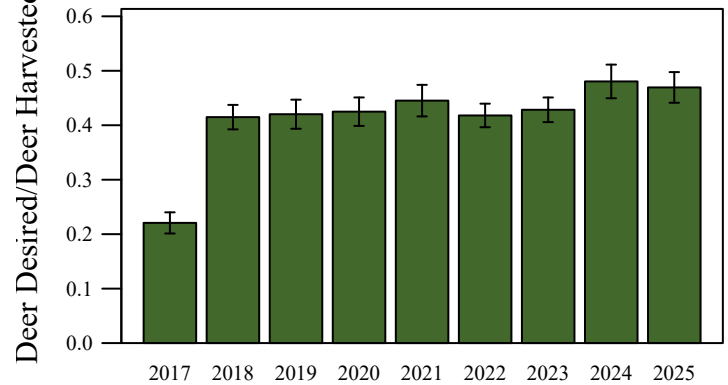
(a) Number of Deer Desired**(b) Estimated Success**

Figure 5. (a) The annual percent of hunters wishing to harvest each number of deer as reported in the deer management survey. (b) Success rate is estimated from the deer management survey as the Number of Harvested Deer/Number of Deer Desired (reported only; does not account for attempts that were not made). Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate greater success.

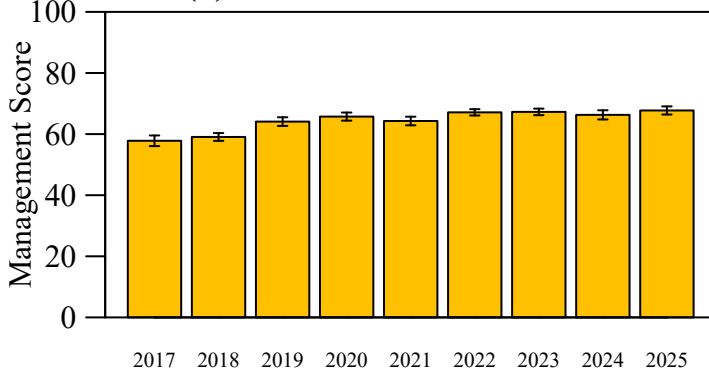
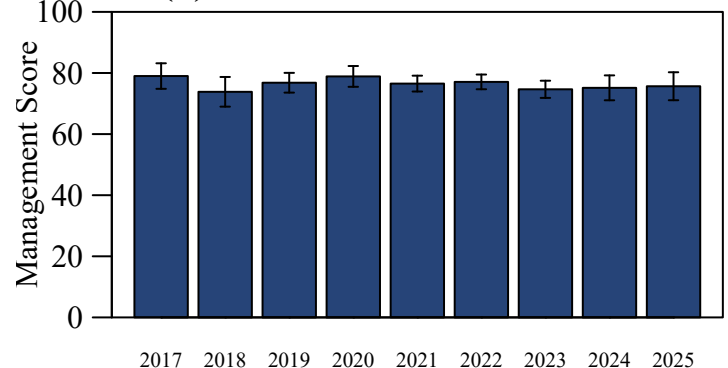
(a) Hunter State Satisfaction**(b) Nonhunter State Satisfaction**

Figure 6. Hunters (a) and nonhunters (b) were asked to score the DNR's statewide deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent).

DMU 9: Southwest

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Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Satisfaction

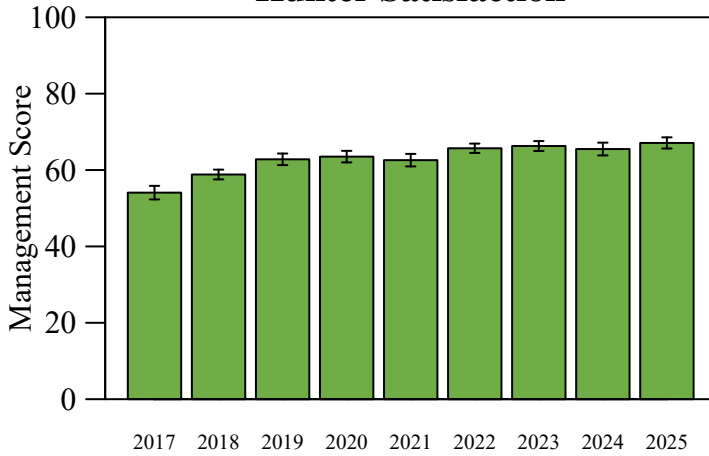


Figure 7. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 9 where they hunt.

Resident Hunter Satisfaction

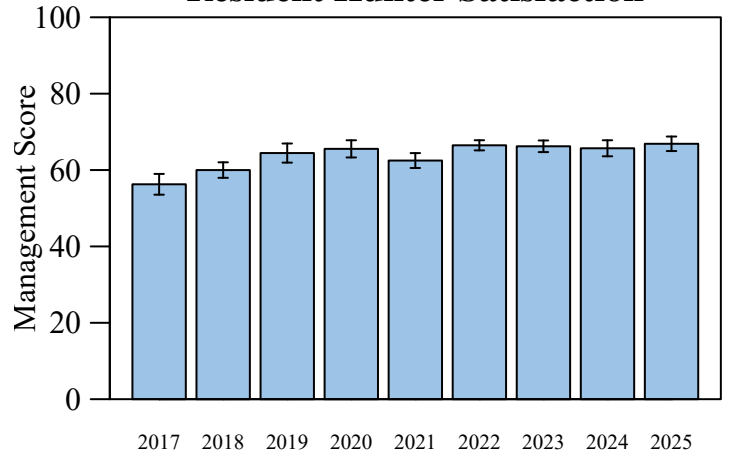


Figure 8. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 9 where they live.

Resident Nonhunter Satisfaction

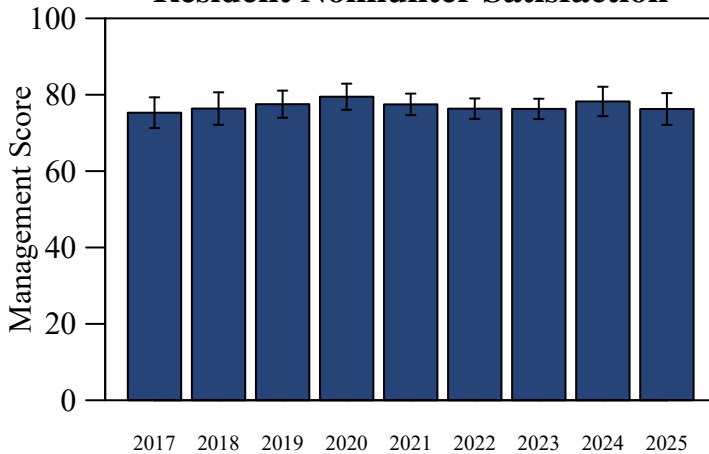


Figure 9. Nonhunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 9 where they live.

Hunter Population Size

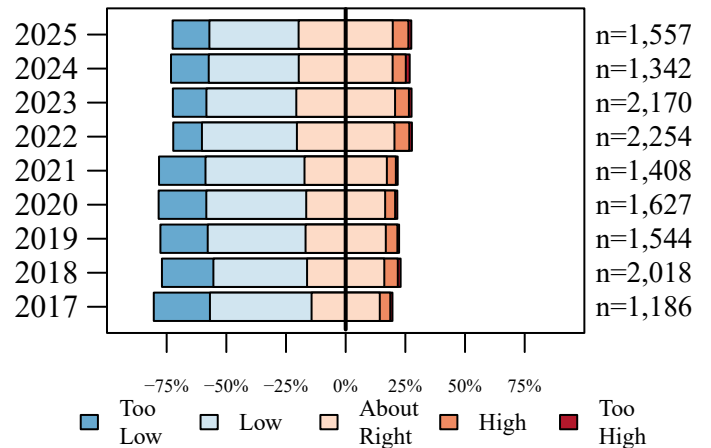


Figure 10. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 9.

Resident Hunter Population Size

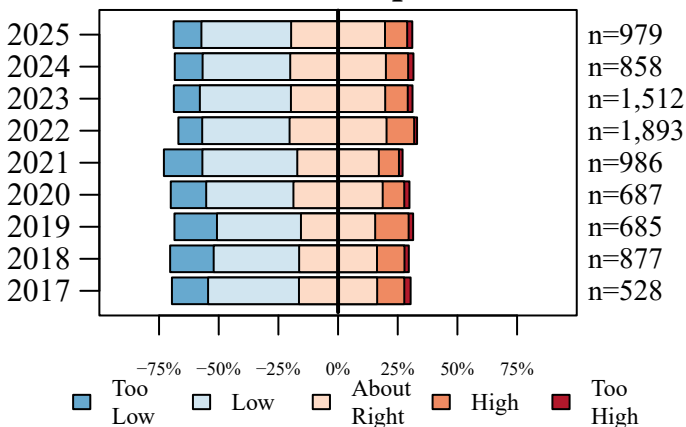


Figure 11. The current size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 9.

Resident Nonhunter Population Size

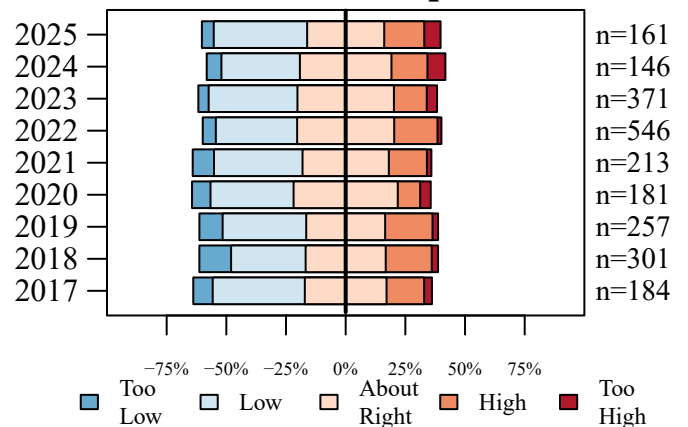


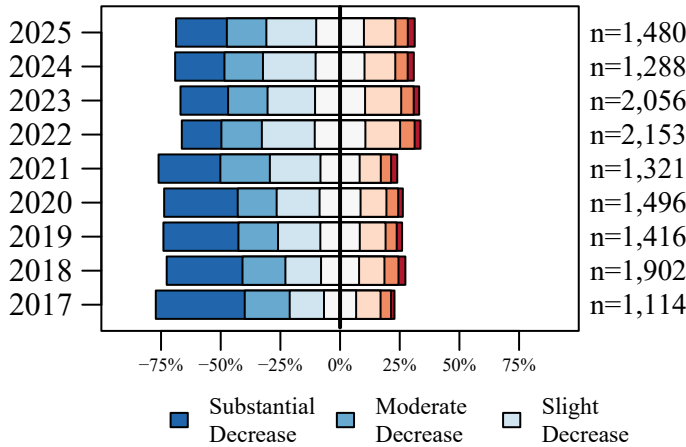
Figure 12. The current size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 9.

DMU 9: Southwest

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Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Perceived Change



Resident Hunter Perceived Change

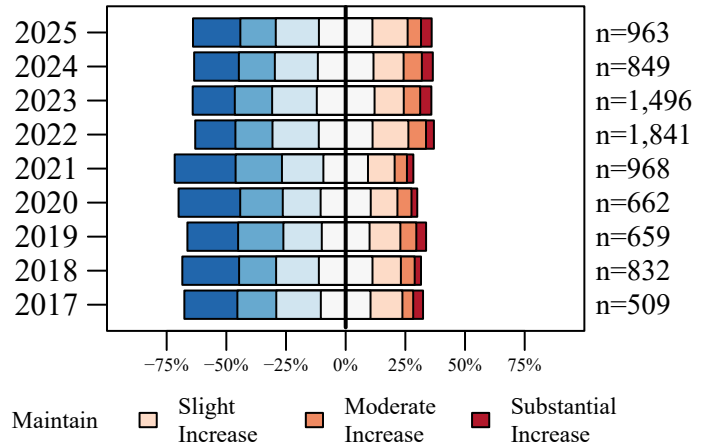
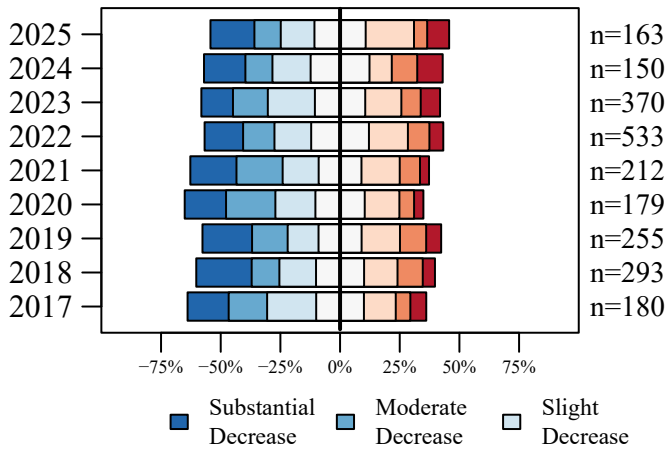


Figure 13. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 9.

Figure 14. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 9.

Resident Nonhunter Perceived Change



Hunter Desired Change

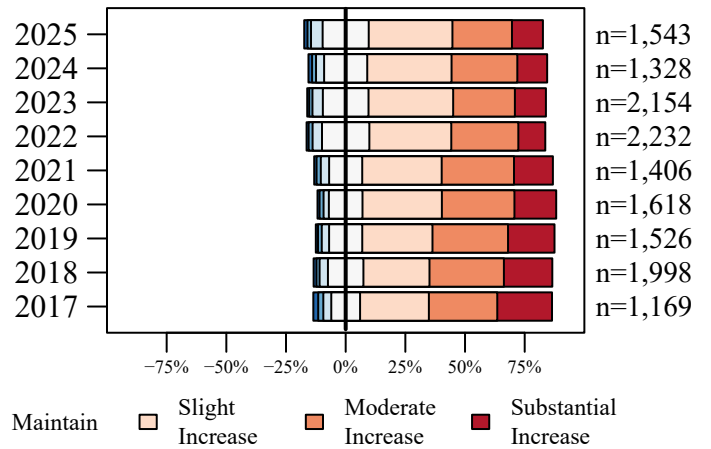
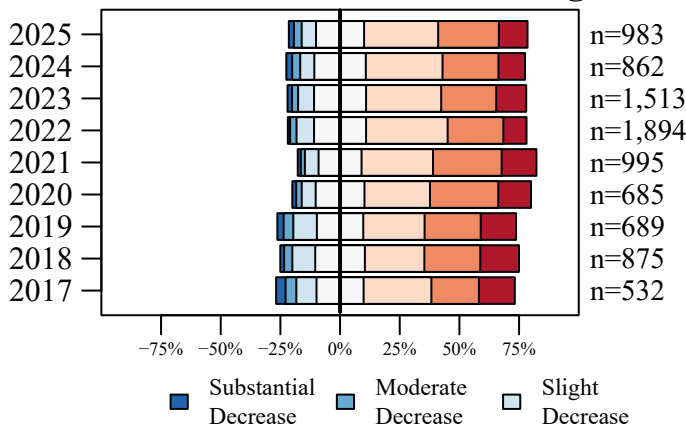


Figure 15. The number of deer seen compared to five years ago described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 9.

Figure 16. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 9.

Resident Hunter Desired Change



Resident Nonhunter Desired Change

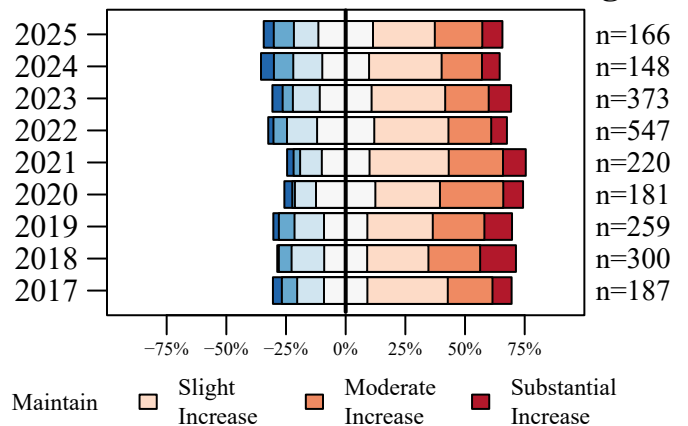


Figure 17. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by hunters in the county where they live in DMU 9.

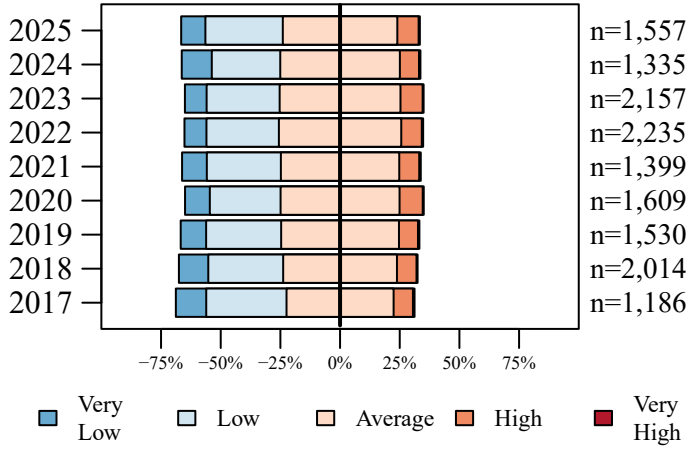
Figure 18. The desired change in the size of the deer population described by nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 9.

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Deer Management Survey Results

Hunter Buck Quality



Resident Hunter Buck Quality

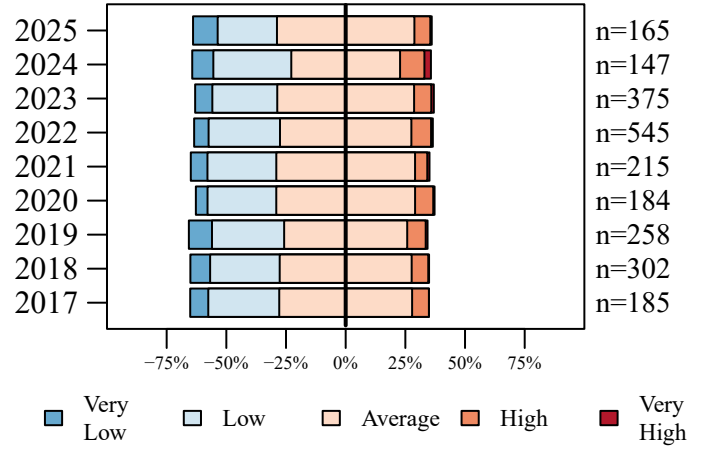
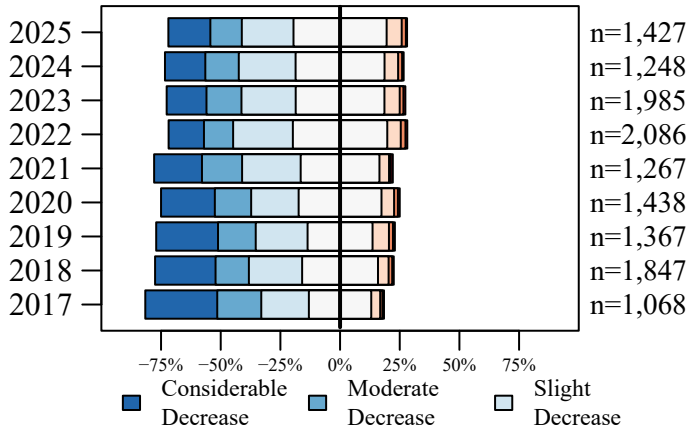


Figure 19. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they hunt in DMU 9.

Figure 20. Hunters describe the quality of bucks in the county where they live in DMU 9.

Personal Harvest Change



Total Harvest Change

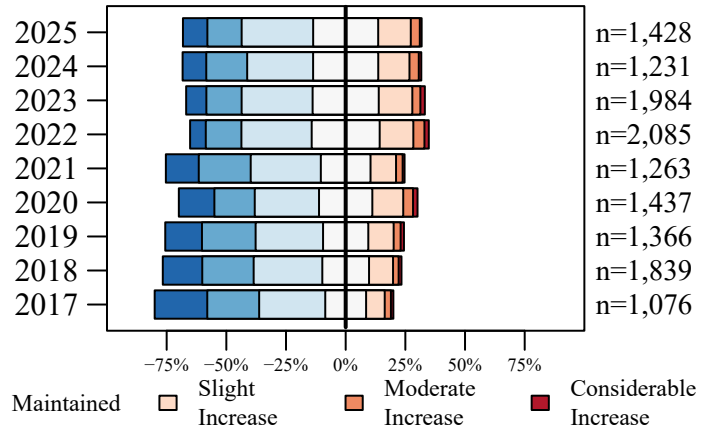
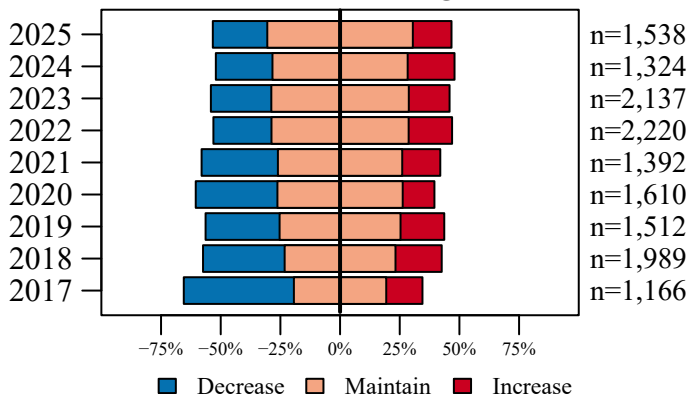


Figure 21. Opinion of hunters on how their personal number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 9.

Figure 22. Opinion of hunters on how the total number of harvested deer has changed over the last five years in a county in DMU 9.

Hunter CBAQ



Resident Hunter CBAQ

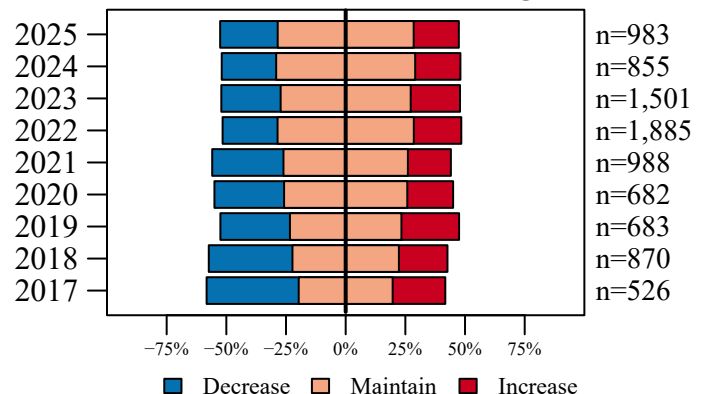


Figure 23. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they hunt in DMU 9.

Figure 24. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from hunters in the county where they live in DMU 9.

DMU 9: Southwest

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Deer Management Survey Results

Resident Nonhunter CBAQ

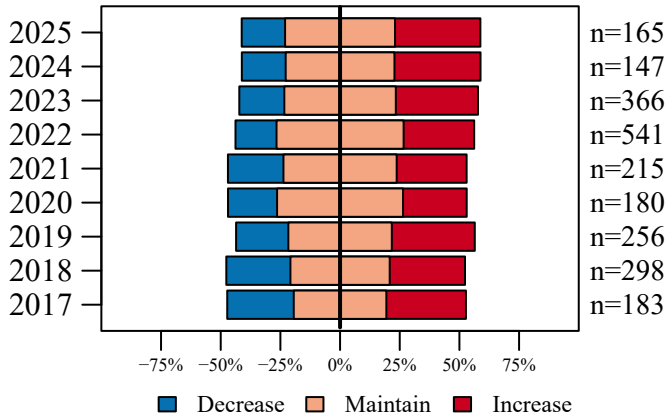


Figure 25. Opinion on how the County Bonus Antlerless Quota should change from nonhunters in the county where they live in DMU 9.

Hunter Opinion

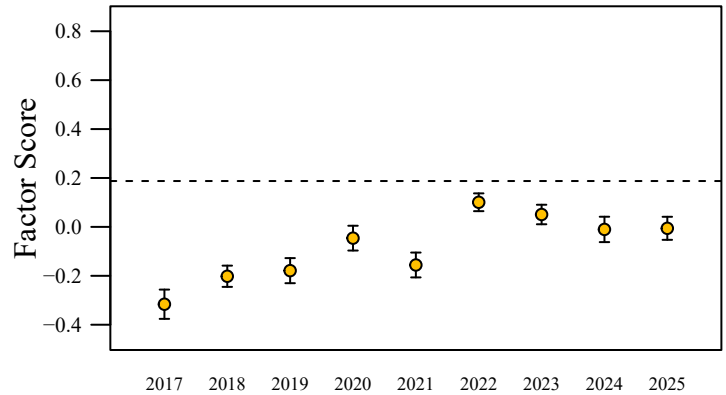


Figure 26. Hunter opinion scores over five years of the deer management survey. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked only to hunters. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Population Size Opinion

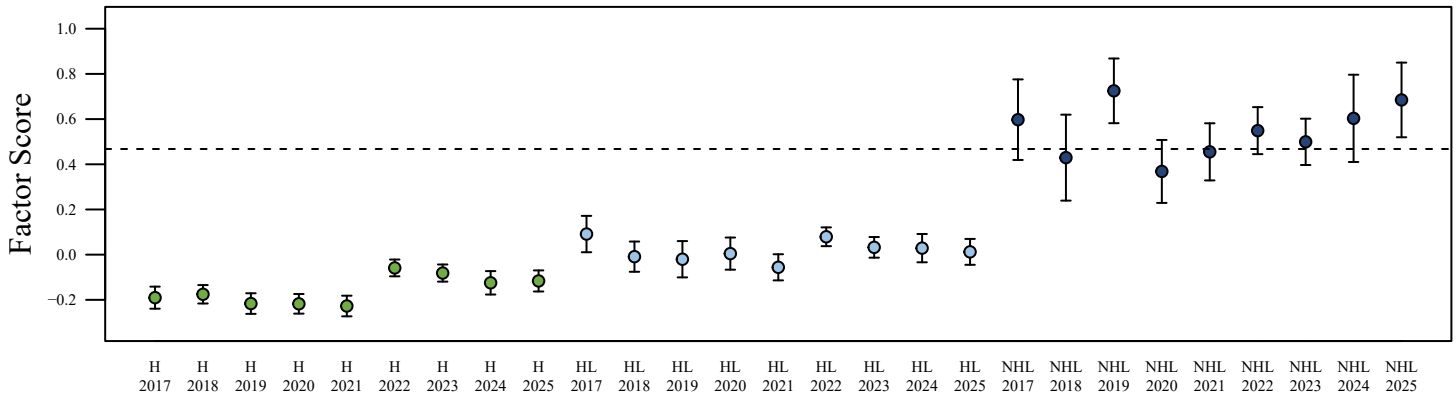


Figure 27. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer population size. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

Deer Management Opinion

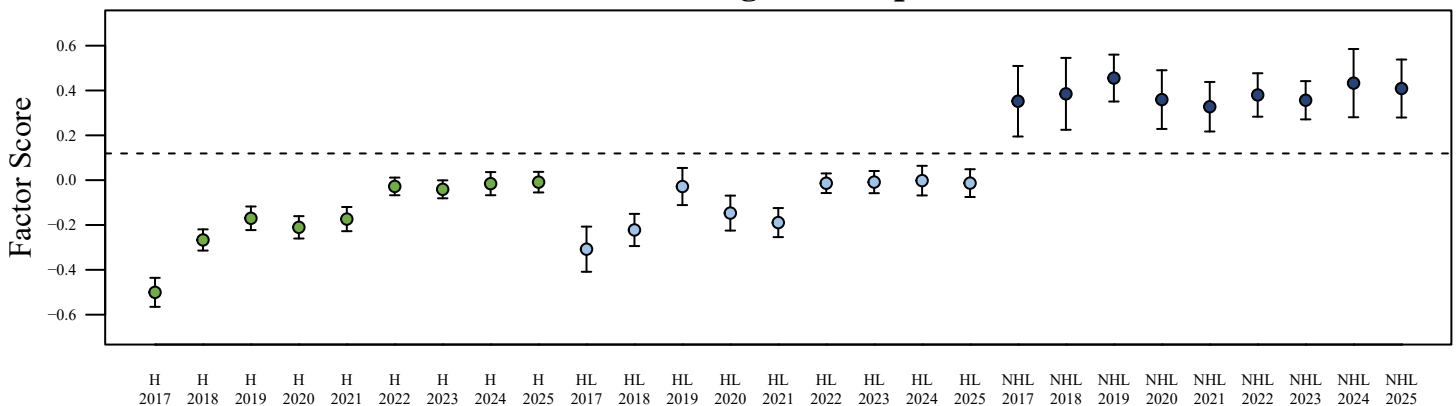


Figure 28. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer management. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

DMU 9: Southwest

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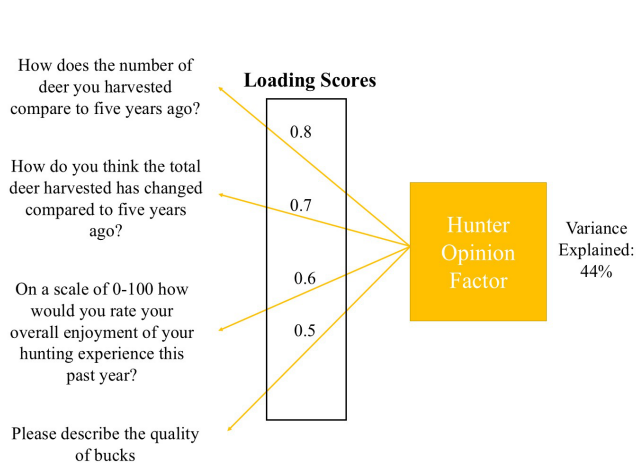
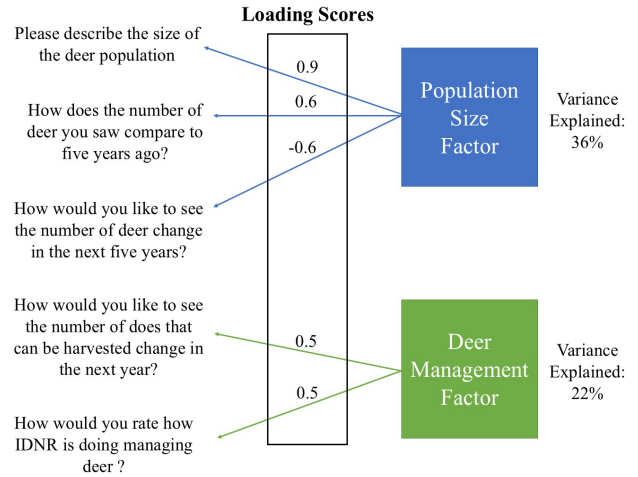
Deer Management Survey Results**(a) Factor Analysis Results: Hunter Questions****(b) Factor Analysis Results: All Group Questions**

Figure 29. Results from two factor analyses used to develop the hunter opinion (a), population opinion (b), and management opinion (b) scores. Higher loading scores indicate a stronger correlation between the original question and the derived factor. These figures are included to help interpret Figure 26, Figure 27, and Figure 28.

DMU 10: Urban

3/31/2025

Total Square Miles: 403
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 28
 Percent Deer Habitat: 7

Table 1. Total harvest, buck harvest, and doe harvest (error < 1 percent). Damage permits are issued by DNR to landowners to control deer damage. Deer vehicle collisions (DVC) and miles traveled are reported by the Indiana Department of Transportation. Mean CBAQ is the average county bonus antlerless quota of all counties in the DMU. The trend in total harvest, buck harvest, doe harvest, and DVCs are in standard deviations (SD) and are equivalent to effect size. A change greater than 2 SD is considered both a large and statistically significant effect size.

Year	Total	Total Trend in SD	Buck Harvest	Buck Trend in SD	Buck Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	Doe Harvest	Doe Trend in SD	Doe Harvest per SQ MI Habitat	% Doe in Harvest	Damage Permit Deer Taken	DVC per Billion Miles Traveled	DVC Trend in SD	Mean Bag Limit
2011	375	1.4	207	0.5	7.4	168	1.8	6.0	44.8		12.2	0.3	8
2012	501	7.5	179	-1.9	6.4	322	8.1	11.5	64.3		9.0	-2.1	8
2013	510	1.9	203	0.3	7.2	307	1.6	11.0	60.2		11.2	-0.1	8
2014	469	0.6	166	-2.0	5.9	303	1.0	10.8	64.6		9.5	-1.3	8
2015	444	0.0	167	-1.3	6.0	277	0.3	9.9	62.4		10.5	-0.1	8
2016	416	-0.8	166	-0.9	5.9	250	-0.4	8.9	60.1	3	9.8	-0.5	8
2017	448	-0.5	187	0.7	6.7	261	-1.1	9.3	58.3	174	11.0	1.2	8
2018	435	-0.6	170	-0.5	6.1	265	-0.6	9.5	60.9	123	10.0	-0.5	3
2019	444	0.1	196	2.8	7.0	248	-1.1	8.9	55.9	100	7.6	-4.3	2
2020	493	4.3	196	1.4	7.0	297	3.1	10.6	60.2		8.7	-0.8	2
2021	428	-0.7	174	-0.6	6.2	254	-0.5	9.1	59.3	94	9.5	0.1	2
2022	480	1.2	209	2.0	7.5	271	0.3	9.7	56.5	80	9.2	-0.1	2
2023	443	-0.5	197	0.5	7.0	246	-1.1	8.8	55.5	1	11.4	2.5	2
2024	449	-0.3	199	0.4	7.1	250	-0.6	8.9	55.7	100	11.9	1.9	2
2025	418	-1.5	202	0.5	7.2	216	-2.3	7.7	51.7	65	10.4	0.2	3

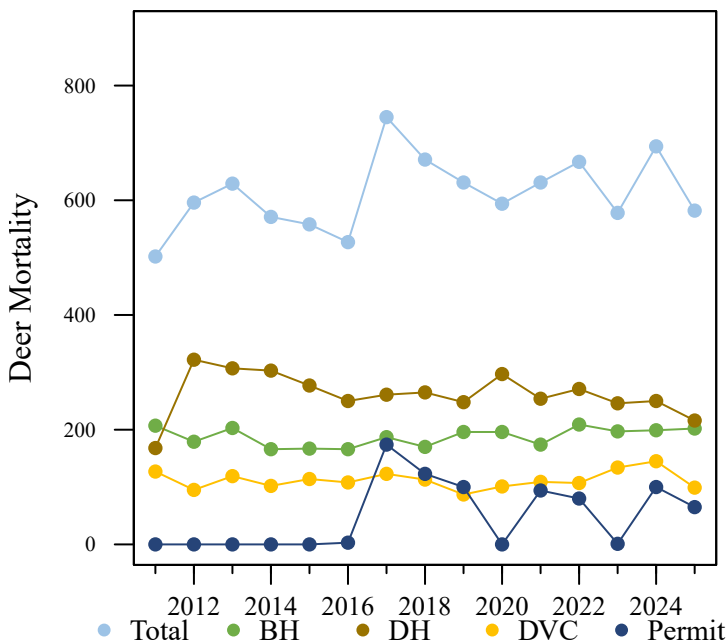
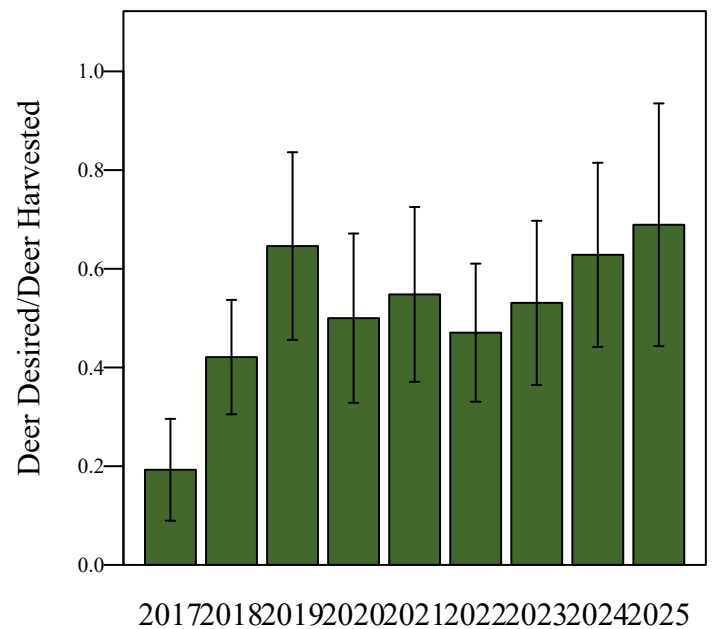
(a) Cumulative Known Deer Mortality**(b) Estimated Success**

Figure 1. (a) The total known annual deer mortality based on buck harvests (BH), doe harvests (DH), deer vehicle collisions (DVC), and deer permit takes. (b) Success rate is estimated from the deer management survey as the Number of Harvested Deer/Number of Deer Desired (reported only; does not account for attempts that were not made). Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate greater success.

DMU 10: Urban

3/31/2025

Total Square Miles: 403
 Square Miles of Deer Habitat: 28
 Percent Deer Habitat: 7

Table 2. Estimated number of antlered (A) and antlerless (AL) deer harvested per hunter. Estimated totals may not match exactly with total number of deer harvested. Reporting errors are examined and investigated as they are located; therefore, subsequent reports may contain corrected totals.

Year	Total Hunters	0 A	1 A	2 A	3 A	0 AL	1 AL	2 AL	3 AL	4 AL	5 AL	6 AL	7 AL	8 AL	9 AL	10 AL
2016	313	182	127	4	0	71	211	24	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2017	316	187	120	9	0	65	206	35	8	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
2018	303	179	120	4	0	63	188	40	10	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
2019	311	186	112	13	0	64	198	40	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	337	190	140	7	0	64	227	32	8	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	311	171	134	6	0	63	220	22	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022	335	179	145	11	0	70	228	29	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	310	164	135	11	0	71	202	27	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	316	161	146	9	0	73	213	20	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
2025	307	151	146	10	0	89	194	18	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0

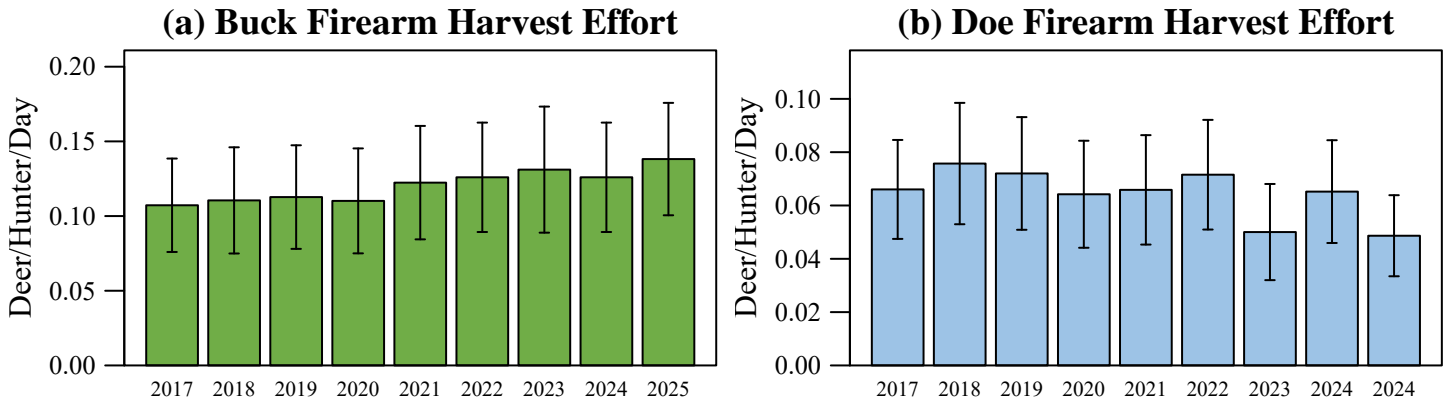


Figure 2. Firearm harvest effort is the number of bucks (a) and does (b) killed by firearms per hunter divided by the mean number of days hunted per hunter during the firearm season based on data reported in the deer management survey. Larger values (i.e. taller bars) indicate less effort required to harvest a deer.

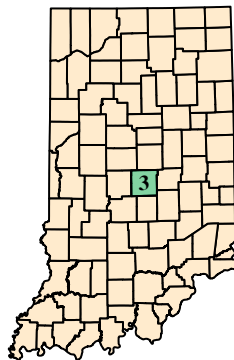
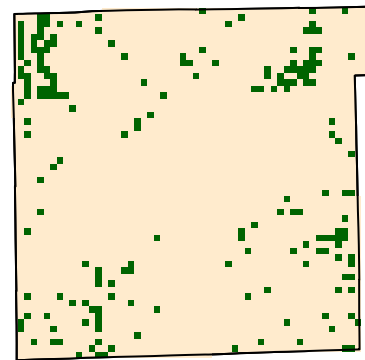
(a) Counties in DMU 10**(b) Deer Habitat in DMU 10**

Figure 3. (a) Counties included in DMU 10 for summarizing harvest and deer management survey statistics. Labels are the 2024 county bonus antlerless quotas. (b) Green represents the land use types classified as deer habitat in DMU 10.

DMU 10: Urban

3/31/2025

Deer Management Survey Results

(a) Hunter State Satisfaction

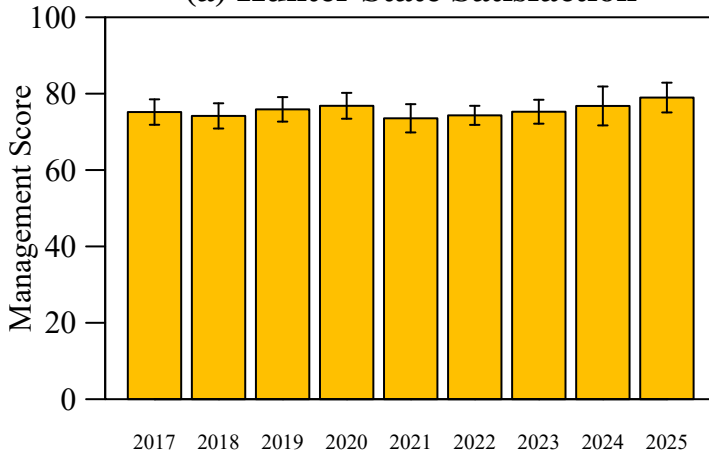


Figure 4. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's state deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 10 where they live.

(b) Nonhunter State Satisfaction

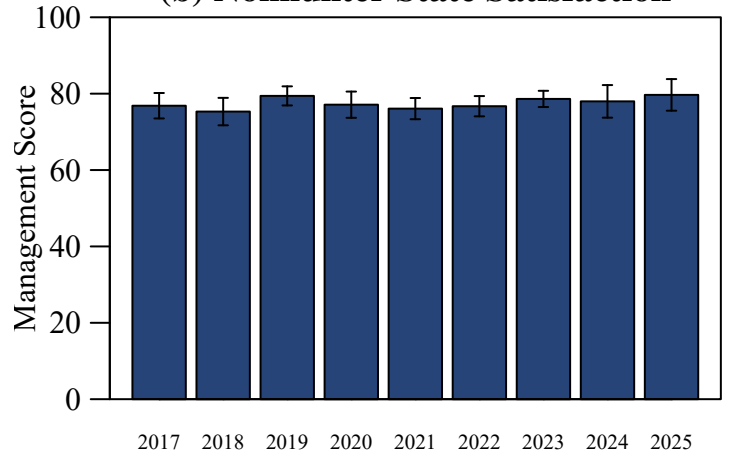


Figure 5. Nonhunters were asked to score the DNR's state deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 10 where they live.

Hunter Satisfaction

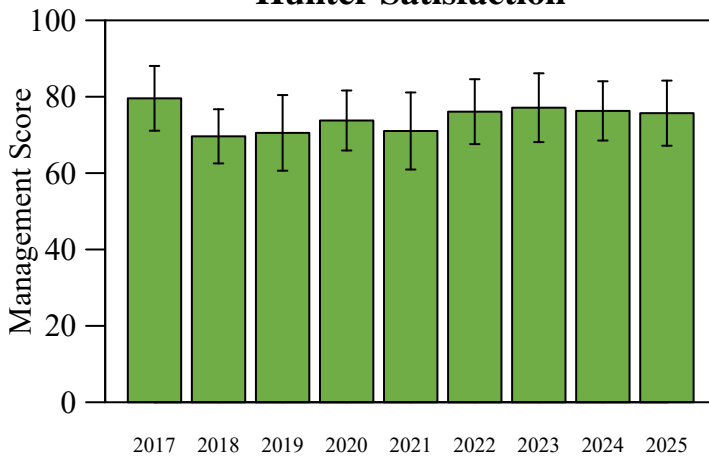


Figure 6. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 10 where they hunt.

Resident Hunter Satisfaction

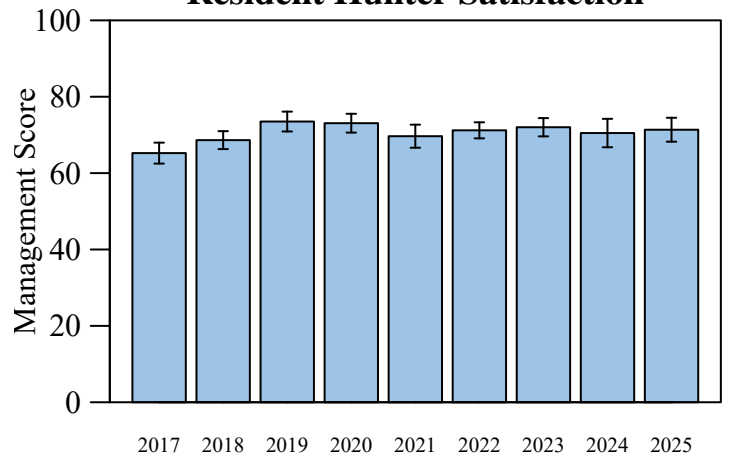


Figure 7. Hunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 10 where they live.

Resident Nonhunter Satisfaction

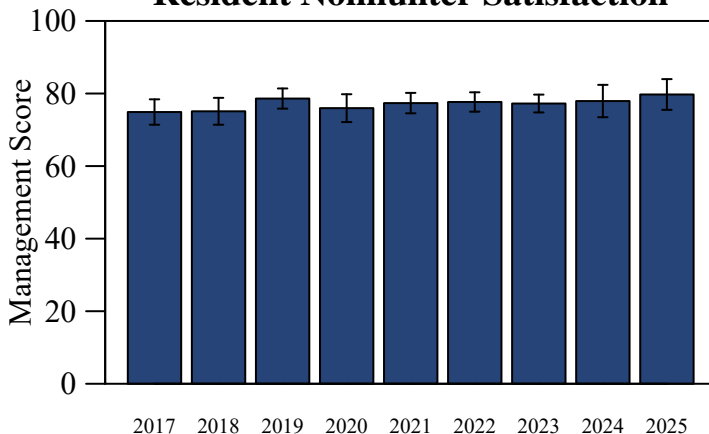


Figure 8. Nonhunters were asked to score the DNR's county deer management on a scale of 0 (poor) to 100 (excellent) for the county in DMU 10 where they live.

Hunter Opinion

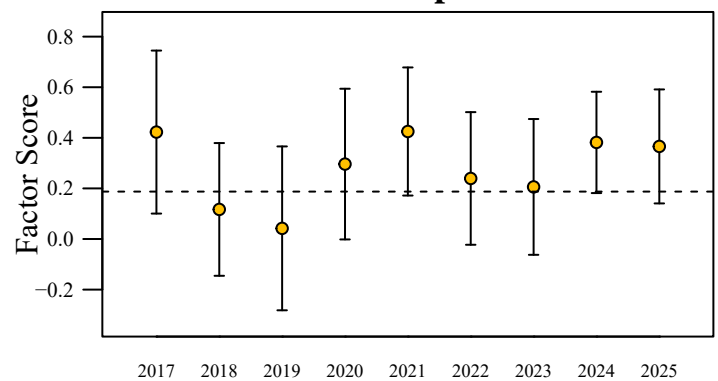


Figure 9. Hunter opinion scores over five years of the deer management survey. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked only to hunters. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

DMU 10: Urban

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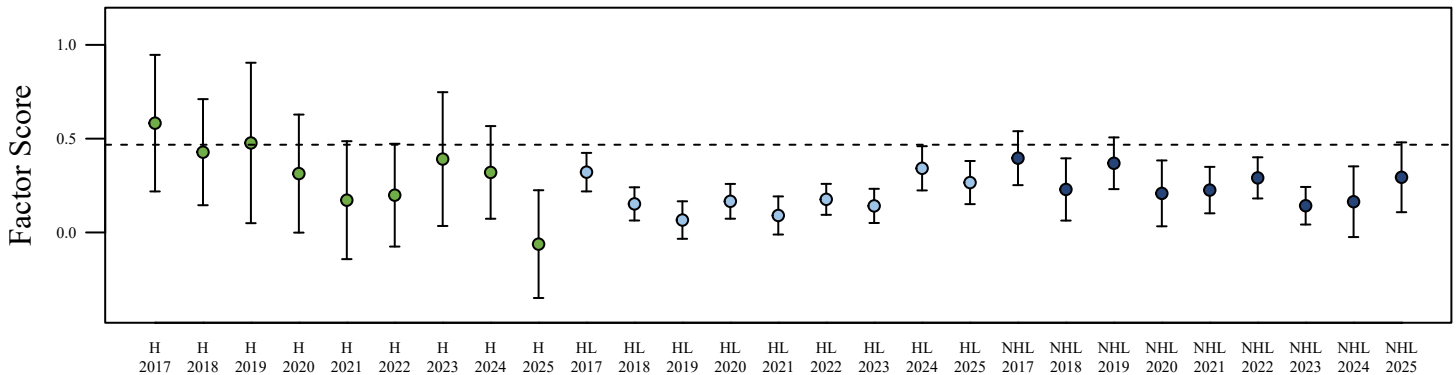
Deer Management Survey Results**Population Size Opinion**

Figure 10. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer population size. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

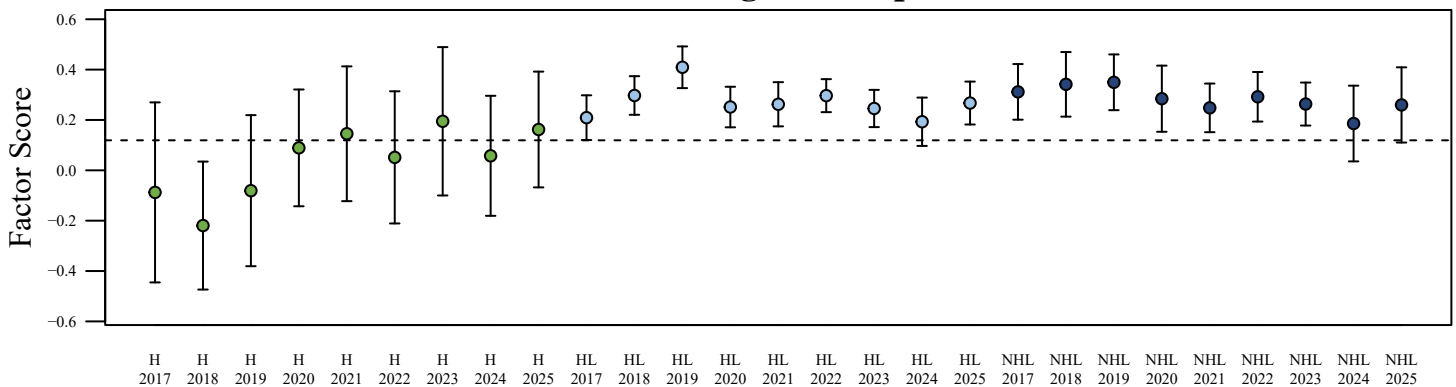
Deer Management Opinion

Figure 11. The opinion of nonhunters (NHL) and hunters in the county where they live (HL) and hunters in the county where they hunt (H) on deer management. The score was aggregated using factor analysis of questions asked to all participants. The dashed line represents the score if all questions are answered neutrally.

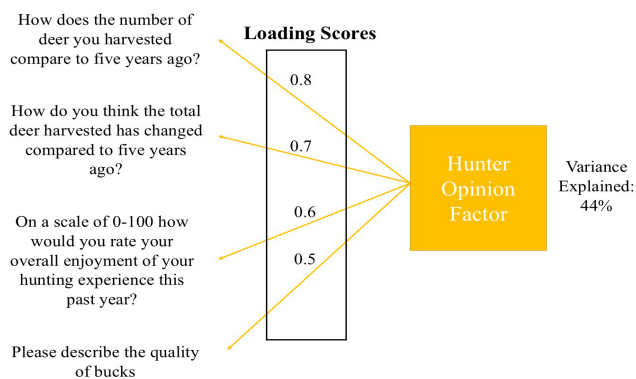
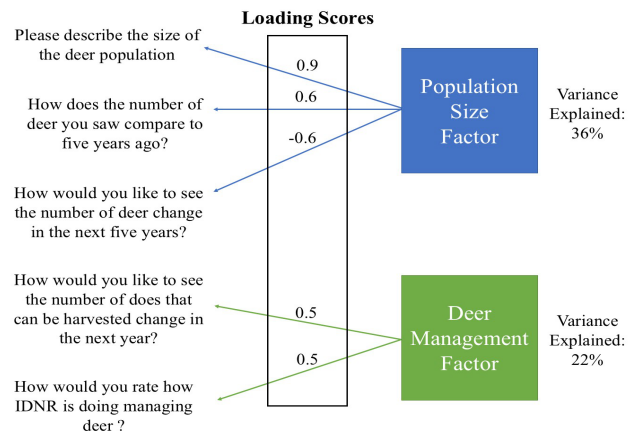
(a) Factor Analysis Results: Hunter Questions**(b) Factor Analysis Results: All Group Questions**

Figure 12. Results from two factor analyses used to develop the hunter opinion (a), population opinion (b), and management opinion (b) scores. Higher loading scores indicate a stronger correlation between the original question and the derived factor. These figures are included to help interpret Figure 9, Figure 10, and Figure 11.

