

# 2011 Pennsylvania Deer Hunter Survey



## *Preliminary Statewide Results*

*April 2012*

Conducted by Pennsylvania Game Commission's Deer and Elk Section and Bureau of Wildlife Management

[www.pgc.state.pa.us](http://www.pgc.state.pa.us)

## **INTRODUCTION AND METHODS**

We completed this survey to quantify hunter behaviors and attitudes regarding deer hunting and management in Pennsylvania. This survey was modeled after the 1995 deer hunter survey, which was the last Game Commission deer hunter survey that covered a wide variety of topics. A number of surveys of deer hunters were completed from 2002 to 2010, but these surveys focused on hunter behaviors and attitudes towards antler restrictions and reporting rates. We randomly selected hunters who purchased 2010-11 hunting licenses, and conducted this survey using standard mail survey protocols (Dillman 1979).

### **RESPONSE RATES**

We sent surveys to 6,000 individual hunters. Our 2 mailings, including a pre-announcement post card and reminder post card following the first mailing, resulted in 108 non-deliverable surveys (i.e., moved with no forwarding address, death, etc.) and 3,572 usable responses for a response rate of 61%. We present results as an estimate (e.g., 55%). These estimates have an associated 95% confidence interval of approximately  $\pm 2\%$ . For example, if 55% of the respondents agreed with a statement, statistically, the interval from 53% (55 - 2) to 57% (55 + 2) would include the actual percent of hunters who agreed with the statement 95% of the time.

### **REPRESENTATIVENESS OF THIS SURVEY**

Participants in this survey represented a random sample of Pennsylvania hunters. Distribution of respondents closely matched license sales with adults constituting 76% of survey respondents and 78% of age-specific license sales. Nonresidents represented 5% of survey respondents and 6% of age-specific license sales.

## **RESULTS**

General statewide results are presented following the format of the survey. Additional analyses of specific topics will be completed in the future. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**PART 1. GENERAL DEER HUNTING QUESTIONS**

1. **About how many years have you hunted deer in Pennsylvania?** Average 29 years of deer hunting in PA  
Average 47 years of age
2. **During the last 5 years, how many years did you hunt deer in Pennsylvania?**
- |     |                          |
|-----|--------------------------|
| 1%  | None of the last 5 years |
| 4%  | 1 year                   |
| 6%  | 2 years                  |
| 6%  | 3 years                  |
| 7%  | 4 years                  |
| 76% | 5 years                  |
3. **Did you hunt deer in Pennsylvania during the 2010-11 hunting seasons? (Circle one number)**
- |     |     |    |    |
|-----|-----|----|----|
| 94% | Yes | 6% | No |
|-----|-----|----|----|
4. **Did you harvest an antlered deer in Pennsylvania during the 2010-11 hunting seasons? (Circle one number)**
- |     |     |     |    |
|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 18% | Yes | 82% | No |
|-----|-----|-----|----|
5. **Who processed your antlered deer from the 2010-11 hunting seasons? (Circle one number)**
- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 3%  | I gave the antlered deer away  |
| 37% | I took it to a processor   |
| 9%  | I skinned the antlered deer, then took the meat to a processor                         |
| 51% | I processed the entire deer myself or had a friend or family member process it for me. |
6. **How many antlerless deer did you harvest in Pennsylvania in the 2010-11 seasons?**
- |     |                           |
|-----|---------------------------|
| 77% | 0 antlerless deer         |
| 17% | 1 antlerless deer         |
| 3%  | 2 antlerless deer         |
| 1%  | 3 antlerless deer         |
| 1%  | 4 or more antlerless deer |
7. **How many deer in total did you pay someone to butcher during the 2010-11 seasons?**
- |     |                |
|-----|----------------|
| 11% | 1 deer         |
| 3%  | 2 deer         |
| 1%  | 3 or more deer |
8. **On what kind of land did you hunt deer in Pennsylvania during the 2010-11 seasons? (Circle one number)**
- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 48% | PRIVATELY-OWNED LAND (ex. Owned by private citizens and business corporations like large power companies and timber companies) |
| 17% | PUBLICLY-OWNED LAND (ex. Owned by a local, state, or federal government like state game lands and state forest lands)          |
| 34% | BOTH PRIVATELY-OWNED AND PUBLICLY-OWNED LAND   |
9. **During the 2010-11 seasons, did you pay a fee to access land for deer hunting?** 5% Yes 95% No

**10. During the 2010-11 seasons, how many trail cameras did you use for deer scouting?**

- 81% 0 trail cameras
- 11% 1 trail camera
- 5% 2 trail cameras
- 3% 3 or more trail cameras

**11. Did you hunt deer in another state during the 2010-11 hunting seasons? (Circle one number)**

- 11% Yes
- 89% No

Top States

1. New York
2. Ohio
3. Maryland
4. New Jersey & West Virginia
5. Virginia

**12. Did you purchase a crossbow in the last 2 years for deer hunting? 13% Yes 87% No**

***PART 2. DEER HUNTING MOTIVATIONS AND INTEREST***

**13. On a scale from 1 to 5, how important is deer hunting to you?**

- 50% Very important
- 23% Important
- 17% Moderately important
- 6% Slightly important
- 4% Not important

*For each question, circle the number that most closely describes your agreement with the following statements.*

	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
<b>14. I hunt deer to harvest a deer.</b>	76%	17%	8%
<b>15. I hunt deer because I can spend time with friends and family that also share my interest in hunting.</b>	88%	8%	4%
<b>16. I hunt deer because I can relax, enjoy nature, and escape from other everyday concerns.</b>	93%	5%	2%

**17. Although you may hunt for one or all of the reasons listed above, which SINGLE reason best describes why you hunt white-tailed deer? (Circle one number)**

- 34% Question 14, I hunt to harvest a deer
- 30% Question 15, I hunt to spend time with friends and family
- 36% Question 16, I hunt to relax and enjoy nature

*For each question, circle the number that most closely describes your satisfaction with the following topics related to your Pennsylvania deer hunting experience in 2010-11.*

	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
18. Deer hunting seasons and regulations	50%	21%	29%
19. Number of antlered deer seen	27%	20%	53%
20. Number of antlerless deer seen	37%	18%	45%
21. Quality of antlered deer seen	36%	26%	38%

*For each question, circle the number that most closely describes your agreement with the following statements.*

	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree
22. I hunt with the goal of harvesting an antlered deer only.	38%	28%	34%
23. I do not really care if I harvest an antlered or antlerless deer, as long as I get a deer.	42%	27%	31%

24. How has your interest in deer hunting in Pennsylvania changed in the last 5 years? (Circle one number)

- 36% I am less interested now than 5 years ago
- 45% My interest has not changed in the last 5 years (*skip to QUESTION 26*)
- 13% I am more interested now than 5 years ago
- 6% I did not hunt deer in Pennsylvania 5 years ago (*skip to QUESTION 26*)

25. What is the most important factor affecting change in your interest in deer hunting? (Circle one number)

- 17% Time to hunt
- 14% Place to hunt
- 6% Personal health
- 3% Hunting expenses
- 5% Hunting partner(s)
- 31% Number and/or quality of antlered deer seen or harvested
- 12% Number of antlerless deer seen or harvested
- 3% Legalization of crossbows for statewide archery hunting
- 9% Other responses (number of mentions)
  - Age 4
  - Antler restrictions 4
  - Concurrent seasons 3
  - Interactions with WCOs 3
  - Sunday hunting 2
  - Other species hunting 2
  - Regulations 2
  - No interest 2
  - Too many seasons 1
  - Too many hunters 1
  - Gas development 1
  - Timber cutting 1
  - QDM 1
  - Allocations 1
  - Learning 1
  - Development 1
  - Enjoy it 1

**PART 3. WMU HUNTED DURING THE 2010-11 REGULAR FIREARMS SEASON**

*Note: The following results are for all WMUs. Specific WMU analyses will be completed at a future date.*

**In which Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) did you hunt deer the most during the 2010-11 regular firearms hunting season (i.e., the firearms season after Thanksgiving)? (Mark 1 WMU on the map with an "X" or check the "I did not hunt the regular firearms season" box)**

WMU	% hunters								
1A	4	2A	3	3A	3	4A	4	5A	2
1B	4	2B	3	3B	5	4B	4	5B	4
		2C	6	3C	4	4C	5	5C	5
		2D	6	3D	4	4D	6	5D	<1
		2E	2			4E	4		
		2F	5						
		2G	8					UNK	9

5% I did not hunt the regular firearms season

26. **Did you harvest an antlered deer in the WMU marked above?** See Question 4 for statewide results
27. **How many antlerless deer did you harvest in the WMU marked above?** See Question 6 for statewide results
28. **In the area you hunt in the WMU marked above, I believe the deer population is: (Circle one number)**
- 8% Increasing  
32% Staying the same  
60% Decreasing
29. **In my opinion, the deer population in the WMU marked above is: (Circle one number)**
- 66% Too low  
31% About right  
3% Too high
30. **In the WMU marked above, antlerless allocations should: (Circle one number)**
- 13% Increase  
38% Stay the same  
39% Decrease  
10% Be eliminated
31. **In the WMU marked above, how many days did you actually spend in the woods scouting for deer?** Average 10 Days
32. **On what kind of land did you hunt deer in the WMU marked above? (Circle one number)**
- See Question 8 for statewide results
33. **In the WMU marked above, the number of antlered deer you saw last year was: (Circle one number)**
- 74% Too low for me to be satisfied  
24% Enough for me to be satisfied  
2% More than enough for me to be satisfied
34. **In the WMU marked above, the number of antlerless deer you saw last year was: (Circle one number)**
- 61% Too low for me to be satisfied  
33% Enough for me to be satisfied  
6% More than enough for me to be satisfied

For questions 35 to 37, about how many days did you hunt during the 2010-11 deer seasons in the WMU marked above? (If none, write in 0)

35. **Fall Archery** Average 7 Days
36. **October Muzzleloader** Average 1 Day
37. **Archery and Flintlock after Christmas** Average 3 Days
38. **In the WMU marked above, which days of the firearms season did you hunt?** (Circle all that apply)

<u>1st Week Day</u>	<u>% Hunters Hunting</u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup> Week Day</u>	<u>% Hunters Hunting</u>
Monday	80	Monday	25
Tuesday	59	Tuesday	21
Wednesday	40	Wednesday	21
Thursday	29	Thursday	21
Friday	36	Friday	34
Saturday	70	Saturday	65

39. **In the WMU marked above, I support the antler restriction.**

61% Agree      17% Neither Agree or Disagree      22% Disagree

40. **In the WMU marked above, how satisfied were you with your deer hunting experience in 2010-11?**

37% Satisfied      24% Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied      40% Dissatisfied

41. **Is your primary residence in the WMU marked above?**      62% Yes      38% No

42. **How many miles do you travel one-way to hunt in the WMU marked above?**      Median 15 Miles Driven to Hunt

For the 2010-11 regular firearms season in the WMU marked above:

43. **Did you hunt as part of a hunting camp?**      25% Yes      75% No

44. **Did you hunt with a portable treestand?**      35% Yes      65% No

45. **Did you hunt from a permanent treestand?**      33% Yes      67% No

46. **Did you hunt using deer urine-based lures?**      24% Yes      76% No

47. **Did you hunt as part of a drive?**      28% Yes      72% No

48. **If the deer population remained the same in the WMU marked above, I would prefer the regular firearms season to be:** (Circle one number)

48%      12-day antlered and antlerless concurrent

52%      5-day antlered only followed by a 7-day antlerless and antlered concurrent

**PART 4. DEER AND DEER HUNTING INFORMATION**

49. What is the best way to provide information on deer and deer hunting to you? (Circle one number)

- 15% Game News magazine
- 1% The Deer Chronicle
- 20% Hunting and Trapping Digest (Booklet provided with each hunting license purchase)
- 14% Game Commission Website
- 2% Social Networking Sites (For example, Facebook and Twitter)
- 9% Email
- 8% Pennsylvania Outdoor News/Pennsylvania Outdoor Times
- 16% Newspapers
- 7% Hunting magazines
- 7% TV/Radio
- 2% Other responses (number of mentions)
  - Other hunters 8
  - Mail 4
  - All methods 2
  - Meetings 1
  - Experience 1

50. Do you visit social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter? 29% Yes 71% No

**PART 5. DEER HARVEST REPORTING AND ESTIMATES**

51. The method you would most prefer to use when reporting each deer you harvest: (Circle one number)

- 51% Postage-paid report card
- 33% Internet
- 11% Toll-free phone number
- 5% Check stations

For each question, circle the number that most closely describes your agreement with the following statements.

	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	I don't know
52. Deer harvest estimates based on field checked deer and hunter reporting rates are acceptable to me.	44%	31%	22%	2%
53. Deer harvest estimates based on a mail survey of hunters would be acceptable to me.	40%	33%	25%	2%
54. All deer should be checked through mandatory check stations.	16%	20%	62%	2%
55. Low reporting rates reflect poorly on hunters.	57%	26%	15%	2%
56. Low reporting rates reflect poorly on the Game Commission.	33%	38%	26%	4%
57. I would believe deer harvest estimates if they were estimated using 2 different methods that provided similar results.	58%	31%	7%	5%

**PART 6. POSTING AND PUBLIC HUNTING LANDS**

*For each question, circle the number that most closely describes your agreement with the following statements.*

		Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	I don't know
58.	There is enough public land in Pennsylvania to provide access to anyone who wants to hunt.	53%	18%	26%	3%
59.	Land development has forced me to hunt deer on public land.	30%	30%	38%	2%
60.	Posting of land has forced me to hunt deer on public land.	40%	26%	33%	1%
61.	Number of deer hunters on State Game Lands should be limited.	19%	27%	51%	3%
62.	Deer seasons should be shorter on State Game Lands.	11%	24%	62%	4%
63.	State Game Lands should be closed once a deer harvest quota has been reached.	26%	24%	46%	4%
64.	State Game Lands should remain open to all deer hunters.	75%	15%	7%	2%

**PART 7. DEER MANAGEMENT**

*For each question, circle the number that most closely describes your agreement with the following statements.*

		Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	I don't know
65.	Deer populations should be managed for healthy and sustainable forest habitat.	75%	15%	8%	1%
66.	Deer populations should be managed for healthy and sustainable deer population.	88%	8%	3%	1%
67.	Deer populations should be managed for safe and acceptable levels of deer-human conflicts.	57%	24%	18%	1%
68.	Crossbows should remain legal statewide for archery deer hunting.	55%	18%	25%	2%
69.	Keeping deer in balance with natural food supplies is necessary.	81%	14%	5%	1%
70.	There are not enough deer unless some are starving to death each year.	18%	25%	52%	5%
71.	Predators are causing deer populations to decline.	48%	24%	23%	6%
72.	If needed to improve deer population health, I would accept lower deer populations and seeing fewer deer when hunting.	29%	32%	36%	3%
73.	If needed to improve habitat conditions, I would accept lower deer populations and seeing fewer deer when hunting.	27%	32%	37%	3%
74.	If needed to reduce deer-human conflicts, I would accept lower deer populations and seeing fewer deer when hunting.	17%	29%	51%	3%

*For each question, circle the number that describes your satisfaction with the Game Commission's performance in the following areas.*

	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	I don't know
75. Archery seasons and regulations	55%	20%	14%	10%
76. October muzzleloader season and regulations	40%	29%	17%	14%
77. Regular firearms season and regulations	60%	15%	24%	1%
78. Late-season flintlock season and regulation	50%	29%	7%	14%
79. Antler restrictions	60%	14%	25%	1%
80. Research and science of deer management	39%	31%	20%	10%
81. Overall deer management program	36%	27%	33%	4%

### **PART 8. SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU**

82. **At what age did you begin hunting?** Average 14 Years old.
83. **What is the highest level of education you have attained? (Circle one number)**
- 45% High school or less
  - 31% Some college/vocational training
  - 24% College graduate
84. **The surrounding area around your current home is: (Circle one number)**
- 55% Country/rural
  - 19% Rural town/village
  - 19% Suburban
  - 6% City
85. **When you began hunting, the area surrounding your home would have been best described as: (Circle one number)**
- 63% Country/rural
  - 17% Rural town/village
  - 13% Suburban
  - 7% City
86. **Who was the primary person that helped you get started hunting? (Circle one number)**
- 69% Parent or Grandparent
  - 13% Relative
  - 5% Other adult
  - 10% Friend
  - 3% No one
87. **How would you describe your current health status (Circle one number)**
- 51% Excellent (no health problems or injuries)
  - 36% Good (minor health problems or injuries)
  - 11% Fair (some health problems or injuries that affect my daily life and mobility)
  - 3% Poor (significant health problems or injuries that affect my daily life and mobility)