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
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 ±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

Survey support was provided by the Bureaus of Administration, Automated Technology Services, and Information and Education.
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.

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

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Deer hunting seasons and regulations</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Number of antlered deer seen</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Number of antlerless deer seen</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Quality of antlered deer seen</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WMU</th>
<th>% hunters</th>
<th>WMU</th>
<th>% hunters</th>
<th>WMU</th>
<th>% hunters</th>
<th>WMU</th>
<th>% hunters</th>
<th>WMU</th>
<th>% hunters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5A</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5B</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4C</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4E</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5C</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2D</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3D</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4D</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5D</td>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2E</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>2F</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2G</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Week Day</th>
<th>% Hunters Hunting</th>
<th>2nd Week Day</th>
<th>% Hunters Hunting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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)
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>I don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52. Deer harvest estimates based on field checked deer and hunter reporting rates are acceptable to me.</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. Deer harvest estimates based on a mail survey of hunters would be acceptable to me.</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. All deer should be checked through mandatory check stations.</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. Low reporting rates reflect poorly on hunters.</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. Low reporting rates reflect poorly on the Game Commission.</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. I would believe deer harvest estimates if they were estimated using 2 different methods that provided similar results.</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**PART 6. POSTING AND PUBLIC HUNTING LANDS**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>I don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58. There is enough public land in Pennsylvania to provide access to anyone who wants to hunt.</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. Land development has forced me to hunt deer on public land.</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. Posting of land has forced me to hunt deer on public land.</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. Number of deer hunters on State Game Lands should be limited.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. Deer seasons should be shorter on State Game Lands.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. State Game Lands should be closed once a deer harvest quota has been reached.</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. State Game Lands should remain open to all deer hunters.</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART 7. DEER MANAGEMENT**

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

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

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

**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)