

2014 Pennsylvania Deer Hunter Survey



Statewide Results

March 2015

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 and 2011 deer hunter surveys conducted by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. We randomly selected hunters who purchased 2013-14 hunting licenses.

RESPONSE RATES

We sent surveys to 6,000 individual hunters. Our 4 mailings included 2 mailings that provided instructions to complete the survey online and 2 mailings that contained a hard copy of the survey. A total of 198 surveys were non-deliverable (i.e., moved with no forwarding address, death, etc.) and 3,352 usable responses for a response rate of 58%. 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 73% of survey respondents and 72% of age-specific license sales. Nonresidents represented 6% of survey respondents and 5% of license sales.

RESULTS

General statewide results are presented following the format of the survey. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PART 1. GENERAL DEER HUNTING QUESTIONS

1. How many years have you hunted deer in Pennsylvania?

Average 30 years of deer hunting
Average 48 years old

2. During the last 5 years, how many years did you hunt deer in Pennsylvania?

1 year 4%
2 years 6%
3 years 7%
4 years 7%
5 years 73%

3. Did you hunt deer in Pennsylvania during the 2013-14 hunting season?

93% Yes

4. Did you harvest an antlered deer in Pennsylvania during the 2013-14 hunting season?

18% Yes

5. Did you take your antlered deer to a taxidermist in Pennsylvania during the 2013-14 hunting seasons?

18% Yes, for hunters who harvested an antlered deer

6. Who processed your antlered deer from the 2013-14 hunting seasons? (Circle only one)

4% I gave the antlered deer away
43% I took it to a processor
6% I skinned the antlered deer, then took the meat to a processor
47% I processed the entire deer myself or had a friend or family member process it for me.

7. How many antlerless deer did you harvest in Pennsylvania during the 2013-14 seasons?

0 deer 76%
1 deer 19%
2 deer 4%
>2 deer 1%

8. How many total deer did you pay someone to process during the 2013-14 seasons?

0 deer 82%
1 deer 14%
2 deer 3%
>2 deer <1%

9. On what kind of land did you hunt deer in Pennsylvania during the 2013-14 seasons? (Circle only one)

55% Privately owned land (ex. Owned by private citizens and companies)
16% Publicly owned land (ex. Government-owned lands like State Game Lands and State Forests)
29% Both privately and publicly owned land

10. During the 2013-14 seasons, did you pay a fee to access land for deer hunting?

4% Yes

11. During the 2013-14 seasons, how many trail cameras did you use for deer scouting?

0 cameras	73%
1 camera	14%
2 cameras	7%
>2 cameras	5%

12. Did you hunt deer in another state during the 2013-14 hunting seasons?

10% Yes

Top States

New York
Ohio
Maryland
West Virginia
New Jersey

13. Did you hunt bears in Pennsylvania during the 2013 archery bear season?

5% Yes

PART 2. DEER HUNTING MOTIVATIONS AND INTEREST

For each question, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
14. I hunt with the goal of harvesting an antlered deer only.	36%	26%	38%
15. I do not care if I harvest an antlered or antlerless deer, as long as I get a deer.	46%	24%	30%

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

33%	I am less interested now than 5 years ago
48%	My interest has not changed in the last 5 years
14%	I am more interested now than 5 years ago
6%	I did not hunt deer in Pennsylvania 5 years ago

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

18%	Time to hunt
15%	Place to hunt
6%	Personal health
15%	Age
3%	Hunting expenses (ex. gas, equipment, licenses)
5%	Hunting partner(s)
17%	Number of antlered deer seen or harvested
8%	Number of antlerless deer seen or harvested
5%	Quality of antlered deer seen or harvested
10%	Antler restrictions

PART 3. WMU HUNTED DURING THE 2013-14 ARCHERY SEASON

In which Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) did you hunt deer the most during the 2013-14 FALL ARCHERY SEASON (i.e., October to mid-November)?

40% of deer hunters hunted in archery season.

WMU	% hunters	WMU	% hunters	WMU	% hunters	WMU	% hunters	WMU	% hunters
1A	5	2A	6	3A	2	4A	3	5A	2
1B	4	2B	6	3B	3	4B	5	5B	8
		2C	6	3C	4	4C	5	5C	9
		2D	7	3D	3	4D	5	5D	1
		2E	2			4E	4		
		2F	4						
		2G	5						
		2H	1						

18. **During fall archery season, approximately how many days did you hunt in the WMU where you hunted the most during fall archery? (Circle only one)**

- 6% 1-2 days
- 23% 2-5 days
- 29% 6-10 days
- 20% 11-15 days
- 22% More than 15 days

19. **Did you start or return to archery hunting because you could use a crossbow?**

- 27% Yes

20. **Did you harvest an antlered deer in the WMU where you hunted the most during the fall archery season?**

- 17% Yes

21. **How many antlerless deer did you harvest in the WMU where you hunted the most during the fall archery season?**

- 0 deer 81%
- 1 deer 14%
- 2 deer 3%
- >2 deer 1%

22. **Based on your experience during the fall archery season, the deer population in the WMU where you hunted the most during the fall archery season is: (Circle only one)**

- 9% Increasing
- 45% Staying the same
- 46% Decreasing

23. **Based on your experience during the fall archery season, the deer population in the WMU where you hunted the most during the fall archery season is: (Circle only one)**

- 54% Too low
- 42% About right
- 3% Too high

24. **On what kind of land did you hunt deer during the fall archery season in the WMU where you hunted the most during the fall archery season? (Circle only one)**

- 63% Privately owned land (ex. Owned by private citizens and companies)
- 13% Publicly owned land (ex. Government-owned lands like State Game Lands and State Forests)
- 23% Both privately and publicly owned land

25. **In the WMU where you hunted the most during the fall archery season, the number of antlered deer you saw last year when hunting during the fall archery season was: (Circle only one)**

- 65% Too low for me to be satisfied
- 33% Enough for me to be satisfied
- 2% More than enough for me to be satisfied

26. **In the WMU where you hunted the most during the fall archery season, the number of antlerless deer you saw last year when hunting during the fall archery season was: (Circle only one)**

- 50% Too low for me to be satisfied
- 43% Enough for me to be satisfied
- 7% More than enough for me to be satisfied

27. **Which statement best describes your use of a crossbow during the fall archery season in the WMU where you hunted the most during the fall archery season? (Circle only one)**

- 37% I only used a crossbow
- 49% I only used a vertical bow
- 13% I used both a crossbow and vertical bow

For the 2013-14 fall archery season in the WMU where you hunted the most during the fall archery season:

- 28. Did you hunt as part of a hunting camp? 11% Yes
- 29. Did you hunt with a portable treestand? 64% Yes
- 30. Did you hunt from a permanent treestand? 45% Yes
- 31. Did you hunt using natural deer urine-based lures? 46% Yes
- 32. Is your primary residence in the WMU hunted most? 71% Yes
- 33. How many miles do you travel one-way to hunt in the WMU hunted most? Average 28 Miles Driven to Hunt

PART 4. WMU HUNTED DURING THE 2013-14 REGULAR FIREARMS SEASON

In which Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) did you hunt deer the most during the 2013-14 REGULAR FIREARMS hunting season (i.e., the firearms season after Thanksgiving)?

87% of hunters hunted firearms season.

WMU	% hunters	WMU	% hunters	WMU	% hunters	WMU	% hunters	WMU	% hunters
1A	5	2D	7	3A	3	4A	4	5A	2
1B	4	2E	3	3B	5	4B	5	5B	5
2A	5	2F	6	3C	5	4C	4	5C	4
2B	3	2G	6	3D	4	4D	7	5D	<1
2C	7	2H	1			4E	4		

34. **Did you harvest an antlered deer in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season?**

- 15% Yes

35. **How many antlerless deer did you harvest in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season?**

- 0 deer 77%
- 1 deer 18%
- 2 deer 3%
- >2 deer 2%

36. **The deer population in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season is: (Circle only one)**
- 7% Increasing
43% Staying the same
50% Decreasing
37. **The deer population in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season is: (Circle only one)**
- 60% Too low
37% About right
2% Too high
38. **In the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season, antlerless allocations should: (Circle only one)**
- 13% Increase
46% Stay the same
33% Decrease
8% Be eliminated
39. **In the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season, how many days did you spend in the woods scouting for deer before the season? Median 3 Days**
40. **On what land did you hunt deer in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season? (Circle one)**
- 59% Privately owned land (ex. Owned by private citizens and companies)
19% Publicly owned land (ex. Government-owned lands like State Game Lands and State Forests)
22% Both privately and publicly owned land
41. **In the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season, the number of antlered deer you saw last year during the firearms season was: (Circle only one)**
- 75% Too low for me to be satisfied
24% Enough for me to be satisfied
1% More than enough for me to be satisfied
42. **In the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season, the number of antlerless deer you saw last year during the firearms season was: (Circle only one)**
- 56% Too low for me to be satisfied
37% Enough for me to be satisfied
6% More than enough for me to be satisfied

For questions 43 to 45, about how many days did you hunt during the 2013-14 deer seasons in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season? (If none, write in 0)

43. **October Muzzleloader** Average 1 Day
44. **Archery and Flintlock after Christmas** Average 2 Days
45. **Firearms after Christmas (only in WMUs 2B, 5C, and 5D)** Average 1 Day
46. **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>2nd Week Day</u>	<u>% Hunters Hunting</u>
Monday	74	Monday	22
Tuesday	53	Tuesday	18
Wednesday	34	Wednesday	17
Thursday	24	Thursday	16
Friday	30	Friday	28
Saturday	62	Saturday	60

47. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: In the WMU where I hunted the most during the firearms season, I support the antler restriction.

- 62% Agree
- 16% Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 22% Disagree

48. Please indicate your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with you deer hunting experience in 2013-14 in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season

- 37% Satisfied
- 27% Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- 36% Dissatisfied

For the 2013-14 regular firearms season in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season:

- 49. Did you hunt as part of a hunting camp? 24% Yes
- 50. Did you hunt from a portable treestand? 33% Yes
- 51. Did you hunt from a permanent treestand? 34% Yes
- 52. Did you hunt using natural deer urine-based lures? 16% Yes
- 53. Did you hunt as part of a drive? 27% Yes

54. Is your primary residence in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season?

- 58% Yes

55. How many miles do you travel one-way to hunt in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season?

Average 50 Miles Driven to Hunt

56. If the deer population remained the same in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season, I would prefer the regular firearms season to be: (Circle only one)

- 47% 12-day antlered and antlerless concurrent
- 53% 5-day antlered followed by a 7-day antlered and antlerless concurrent

57. In the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season, I would prefer the regular firearms season to start on: (Circle only one)

- 38% The Saturday after Thanksgiving
- 62% The Monday after Thanksgiving

58. Given the following examples of antlerless allocations and antlerless firearms season lengths needed to maintain a stable deer population, I would prefer: (Circle only one)

- 58% Same antlerless licenses and a 12-day concurrent antlered and antlerless season
- 26% 15 percent more antlerless licenses and a 5-day antlered only followed by a 7-day concurrent antlerless and antlered season
- 17% 40 percent more antlerless licenses and a 12-day antlered season followed by a separate 3-day antlerless season

PART 5. DEER HARVEST REPORTING AND DEER HUNTING REGULATIONS

For each question, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
59. Current methods to report deer harvests (e.g., report card, Internet, toll-free phone number) are easy and convenient	83%	15%	3%
60. Deer harvest estimates based on field checked deer and hunter reporting rates are acceptable to me.	54%	30%	17%
61. Deer harvest estimates based on a mail survey of hunters are acceptable to me.	47%	31%	22%
62. All deer should be checked through mandatory check stations.	18%	20%	61%
63. Accurate reporting of each deer harvested is the hunter's ethical responsibility.	89%	9%	3%

PART 6. CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE (CWD)

64. Have you heard about the detection of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Pennsylvania?

82% Yes

65. Based on what you know about CWD, how concerned are you about this disease? (**Circle only one**)

31% Very concerned
55% Somewhat concerned
14% Not concerned

For each question, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
66. Because of CWD, I am concerned about eating venison.	36%	31%	33%
67. Because of CWD, I am concerned about the health of wild deer.	82%	13%	5%
68. Because of CWD, I am concerned about the future of deer hunting.	79%	15%	6%
69. If CWD was detected in the area I hunt most often, I would hunt in a different area.	44%	32%	24%
70. If CWD was detected in the area I hunt most often, my interest in deer hunting would decrease.	40%	26%	34%
71. Reducing the deer population can help control spread of CWD.	22%	44%	33%
72. The Game Commission should continue to prohibit deer feeding in CWD areas.	57%	34%	9%
73. The Game Commission should continue to prohibit use of natural deer urine-based lures in CWD areas.	38%	47%	15%
74. The Game Commission should continue to restrict transport of deer carcasses from CWD areas.	64%	29%	7%
75. The Game Commission should continue to use Disease Management Area permits to reduce deer populations.	51%	38%	11%

76. My interest in deer hunting would be reduced if:

- 25% Any deer in the area I hunt had CWD
- 7% 1 out of 100 deer in the area I hunt had CWD
- 18% 10 out of 100 deer in the area I hunt had CWD
- 8% 25 out of 100 deer in the area I hunt had CWD
- 6% 40 out of 100 deer in the area I hunt had CWD
- 36% CWD will not reduce my interest in deer hunting

PART 7. DEER MANAGEMENT

For each question, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
77. Deer populations should be managed for healthy and sustainable forest habitat.	79%	14%	7%
78. Deer populations should be managed for healthy and sustainable deer populations.	89%	8%	3%
79. Deer populations should be managed for safe and acceptable levels of deer-human conflicts.	62%	22%	16%
80. Crossbows should remain legal statewide for archery deer hunting.	66%	15%	19%
81. Keeping deer in balance with natural food supplies is necessary.	83%	13%	4%
82. There are not enough deer unless some are starving to death each year.	20%	30%	50%
83. Predators are causing deer populations to decline.	53%	28%	18%
84. Bear populations should be reduced to increase deer populations.	20%	38%	42%
85. Coyote populations should be reduced to increase deer populations.	76%	16%	8%
86. If needed to improve deer population health, I would accept lower deer populations and seeing fewer deer when hunting.	33%	36%	31%
87. If needed to improve habitat conditions, I would accept lower deer populations and seeing fewer deer when hunting.	30%	35%	35%
88. If needed to reduce deer-human conflicts, I would accept lower deer populations and seeing fewer deer when hunting.	21%	31%	49%
89. The Game Commission should prohibit deer feeding statewide.	24%	33%	43%
90. Archery bear season should occur during the last week of the fall deer archery season.	37%	51%	12%
91. If archery bear season occurred during the last week of the fall deer archery season, I would purchase a bear license to hunt that week.	28%	43%	29%

For each question, please indicate your level of satisfaction with the Game Commission's performance in the following areas.

	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
92. Archery seasons and regulations	63%	26%	11%
93. October muzzleloader season and regulations	46%	39%	15%
94. Regular firearms season and regulations	69%	15%	15%
95. Late-season flintlock season and regulations	56%	38%	6%
96. Antler restrictions	64%	15%	21%
97. Research and science of deer management	53%	35%	12%
98. Chronic Wasting Disease response and regulations	51%	41%	9%
99. Overall deer management program	50%	28%	22%

PART 8. SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

101. At what age did you begin deer hunting?

Average 15 years old.

102. What is the highest level of education you have attained? (Circle only one)

42% High school or less
33% Some college/vocational training
26% College graduate

103. The area surrounding your current home is: (Circle only one)

55% Country/rural
21% Rural town/village
18% Suburban
6% City

104. When you began hunting, the area surrounding your home would have been best described as: (Circle only one)

62% Country/rural
18% Rural town/village
13% Suburban
6% City

105. Who was the primary person that helped you get started hunting? (Circle only one)

70% Parent or Grandparent
13% Relative
4% Other adult
10% Friend
3% No one

106. How would you describe your current health status (Circle only one)

44% Excellent (no health problems or injuries)
40% Good (minor health problems or injuries)
13% 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)

In cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Health, please respond to the following questions regarding ticks and preventative measures.

For the following questions, please indicate how often you take the following precautions when hunting, trapping, or scouting.

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
1. Apply insect repellent to clothes.	8%	16%	34%	42%
2. Apply insect repellent to skin.	4%	12%	34%	50%
3. Wear light colored clothing	10%	18%	41%	31%
4. Wear long sleeves.	41%	40%	17%	2%
5. Wear long pants.	68%	25%	6%	1%
6. Tuck pants into boots or socks.	20%	23%	28%	29%

7. How many times in the past 12 months have you found an unattached tick on yourself or your clothing when hunting, trapping, or scouting.

29%	None
29%	1-2 times
26%	3-10 times
13%	More than 10 times
3%	I can't remember

8. How many times in the past 12 months have you found an attached tick on yourself when hunting, trapping, or scouting.

58%	None
31%	1-2 times
8%	3-10 times
2%	More than 10 times
2%	I can't remember

For the following questions, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
9. Ticks can carry diseases that affect humans.	99%	1%	0%
10. Exposure to ticks affects my decision to hunt certain hunting seasons.	22%	26%	52%
11. Tick-borne illnesses are a serious problem for hunters and trappers in Pennsylvania.	67%	25%	7%
12. I always wear gloves when field dressing game.	53%	18%	28%
13. I always wear gloves when butchering game.	37%	30%	34%

14. Have you ever sought medical treatment for a tick bite? (Circle one)

21%	Yes
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Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.