



QDMA's **Whitetail** Report 2017

An annual report on the status of white-tailed deer –
the foundation of the hunting industry in North America

Compiled and Written by the QDMA Staff

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INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE

Members of the media who have questions about the *Whitetail Report*, need additional information, or need expert sources for stories on whitetail biology or management, can contact QDMA's Education & Outreach staff at any time using the information below, or contact the National Office at (800) 209-3337.



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INTRODUCTION

BY KIP ADAMS



White-tailed deer are the most important game species in North America. More hunters pursue whitetails than any other species, and whitetail hunters contribute more financially than any other hunter segment. Collectively speaking, whitetails are the foundation of the entire hunting industry.

That's why I am so excited we can bring you this annual report on the status of whitetail hunting and management programs. We are in a unique position to be able to gather data from state and provincial wildlife agencies, the nation's leading deer researchers, and other sources to provide a true "State of the Whitetail" address for hunters, landowners, natural resource professionals and the media.

So, how are whitetails and deer hunters doing? There are some very positive trends occurring. Yearling buck harvest rates remain at record low numbers, and the percentage of 3½-year-old and older bucks in the harvest is at a record high. In fact, hunters shot more bucks that were at least 3½ years old than yearling or 2½-year-old bucks! Hunters are clearly reaping the benefits of more naturally balanced age structures in herds across the whitetail's range.

In addition, more antlered bucks (those 1½ years or older) were shot in 25 of 37 states (68 percent) last season than the year before, and last season's buck harvest

is nearly identical to the previous five-year average. After a few seasons of reduced buck harvests, this is a positive sign. On the contrary, antlerless harvest was down 3 percent from the prior year, and it was 12 percent below the five-year average. Much of this was by design as states and provinces reduced antlerless harvest opportunity to purposely reduce the antlerless harvest. Regarding the 2015-16 total harvest, 66 percent of deer were shot with a firearm, followed by 22 percent with a bow, 10 percent by muzzleloader, and 2 percent by other means.

The biggest issues and trends include the continued growth of QDM Cooperatives. States confirmed there are nearly 3.5 million acres of land involved in Cooperatives. We feel this is a gross underestimate of acreage but are glad to see a baseline number to begin adding to. Fourteen states have an employee responsible for forming, maintaining, and/or providing outreach to Cooperatives. Twelve states have a formal Cooperative program, and 16 states provide incentives to landowners involved in one. A few states have new baiting and feeding regulations. Disease continues to be a major issue as bovine tuberculosis and screwworm competed with chronic wasting disease and hemorrhagic disease for the headlines. Finally, a new study found that approximately 440 million acres of private land — roughly 22 percent of the contiguous land area of the U.S. — are either leased or owned for wildlife-associated recreation.

All of this information and much more is included in the following pages. I hope you enjoy the data, interpretations, and QDMA's recommendations as you read this report. Each annual report is different as they cover the most pressing issues of that year so if you enjoy this

one be sure to check out the other reports going back to 2009 at www.QDMA.com. Here's to a productive 2017 and a great deer season this fall.

Outlook for 2016-17 Deer Season

At the time of writing this Whitetail Report, many 2016-17 deer seasons were still underway, so the statistics highlighted in this report are all from the most recent hunting season that is complete (2015-16). However, some states have already issued press releases on the 2016-17 deer season, and we've included six of the top headlines here as an outlook for the data you'll see in next year's Whitetail Report. If the early results hold true for the other states, 2016 was a tough year for many deer hunters.

Illinois – the 2016 7-day firearm harvest was about 8 percent below the 2015 harvest.

Iowa – the 2016 harvest was about 6 percent below the 2015 harvest.

New Hampshire – the 2016 harvest was about 2 percent below the 2015 harvest.

New York – Statewide across all deer seasons, hunters reported about 9 percent more deer than 2015.

Ohio – At the end of Ohio's week-long deer gun season, the harvest was down 10 percent from 2015.

Wisconsin – the 2016 firearms season harvest was virtually identical to the 2015 firearms season harvest.

PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF THE WHITETAIL REPORT



In various sections of this report, you will find references to previous editions of the *Whitetail Report*, which has been published annually since 2009. Every edition of the *Whitetail Report* is available as a free PDF on QDMA.com under the "About" menu.

ABOUT THE DEER HARVEST DATA IN THIS REPORT

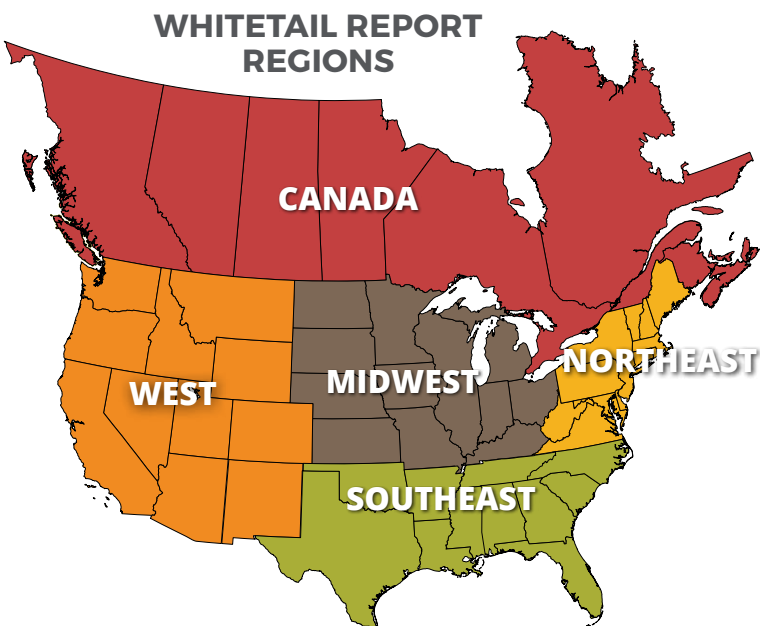
The 2016-17 deer season is closed or nearing so for states and provinces across the whitetail's range, and biologists will be crunching data in the coming months to assess the outcome of this past season. For the 2017 Whitetail Report, QDMA compared harvest data from the three most recent seasons available: 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16. We acquired harvest data from all 37 states in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast (see map), from seven of 11 states in the West, and from seven of eight Canadian provinces. To allow comparisons across years, we analyzed data from the 37 states in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast and also included data from the West and Canada in the harvest table. In

future years, we will also conduct analyses on data from these latter two regions as it's available. Finally, California, Nevada and Utah responded to our survey stating they didn't have any (legally hunted) white-tails, and some western states' harvest data included both whitetails and mule deer. Therefore, we chose to separate harvest data from the West from the total of other regions.

The following data are from each state and provincial wildlife agency. Agencies use different techniques to collect this data, and some collect more data than others. Analyses among agencies may not always compare "apples to apples," but each provided their best possible data.

Also, analyses across years should provide valid comparisons for individual agencies. An important note about the "per square mile" figures presented in the following pages is that some jurisdictions use total area for these statistics while others use deer habitat (and some differ on what is included in deer habitat). Therefore, we calculated per square mile estimates using each state/province's total area excluding water bodies. This allows estimates to be very comparable across years for a given state/province, but not always across states or provinces. We sincerely thank all of the agency deer biologists that provided data for this report.

ANTLERED BUCK HARVEST



More antlered bucks (those 1½ years or older) were shot in 25 of 37 states (68 percent) in the 2015-16 deer season than during the 2014-15 season. Six of 13 states in the Northeast, six of 11 states in the Southeast, and all 13 states in the Midwest shot more bucks in 2015 than 2014. The total buck harvest was 2,715,246, and that was 4 percent higher than in 2014. Southeast hunters shot 3 percent fewer bucks than the prior year while Midwest hunters shot 10 percent more and the Northeast harvest increased 11 percent.

Overall, Texas shot the most bucks (290,590) and Rhode Island shot the fewest (762). Texas typically leads this category, but hunters from the Lone Star State shot fewer bucks per square mile (PSM; 1.1) than the national average (1.5). Five states (Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and West Virginia) more than doubled the national average and shot 3.1 to 3.4 bucks PSM, while North Dakota shot the fewest (0.3 PSM).

Comparing the 2015 buck harvest to the previous five-year average shows a balanced harvest. Nineteen of 37 states

(51 percent) shot fewer bucks in 2015 than their prior five-year average, and the overall buck harvest was only down 1 percent. The Southeast's 2015 buck harvest was 6 percent below its five-year average, while the Midwest's and Northeast's were 2 percent above their five-year average.

ESTIMATED BUCK HARVEST

Antlered Bucks 1½ Years and Older

State/Province	2013	2014	2015	2015		2010-14 avg	% Change 2015 to 5-yr avg
				% Change 2014-15	PSM**		
Alabama	98,400	98,712	103,877	5	2.1	115,802	-10
Arkansas	91,132	89,617	90,655	1	1.7	89,192	2
Florida	65,357	64,223	61,492	-4	1.1	82,076	-25
Georgia	137,025	149,498	142,346	-5	2.5	141,083	1
Louisiana	93,072	82,541	84,416	2	2.0	84,135	0
Mississippi	108,664	104,665	109,732	5	2.3	115,936	-5
North Carolina	86,558	73,439	82,144	12	1.7	80,265	2
Oklahoma	52,197	51,775	51,495	-1	0.8	59,200	-13
South Carolina	114,482	99,946	101,435	1	3.4	111,353	-9
Tennessee	94,596	95,470	78,821	-17	1.9	88,830	-11
Texas	330,535	325,008	290,590	-11	1.1	325,233	-11
Southeast Total	1,272,018	1,234,894	1,197,003	-3	1.6	1,269,917	-6
Connecticut	5,280	4,894	4,574	-7	0.9	5,634	-19
Delaware	4,144	4,067	4,218	4	2.2	3,971	6
Maine	16,736	15,986	14,907	-7	0.5	14,679	2
Maryland	32,114	28,281	29,855	6	3.1	31,211	-4
Massachusetts	6,519	6,419	5,814	-9	0.7	6,247	-7
New Hampshire	7,171	6,743	6,153	-9	0.7	6,627	-7
New Jersey	18,511	17,412	15,290	-12	2.1	18,435	-17
New York	114,716	108,604	99,572	-8	2.1	111,855	-11
Pennsylvania	134,280	119,260	137,580	15	3.1	127,574	8
Rhode Island	1,020	922	762	-17	0.7	1,088	-30
Vermont	8,831	7,954	8,330	5	0.9	8,132	2
Virginia	106,349	88,311	103,522	17	2.6	97,244	6
West Virginia	74,528	51,205	81,219	59	3.4	66,772	22
Northeast Total	530,199	460,058	511,796	11	2.2	499,468	2
Illinois	57,769	60,721	67,193	11	1.2	65,565	2
Indiana	46,240	45,686	50,379	10	1.4	48,317	4
Iowa	39,447	44,540	46,889	5	0.8	45,375	3
Kansas	41,236	42,178	42,434	1	0.5	42,961	-1
Kentucky	67,760	66,080	75,720	15	1.9	64,625	17
Michigan	203,057	178,228	191,608	8	3.4	205,811	-7
Minnesota	87,865	81,036	98,318	21	1.2	87,907	12
Missouri	104,815	114,250	122,524	7	1.8	111,650	10
Nebraska	24,401	25,082	28,505	14	0.4	30,184	-6
North Dakota	18,645	18,266	20,300	11	0.3	23,045	-12
Ohio	70,100	68,515	79,176	16	1.9	77,500	2
South Dakota	25,199	26,704	30,700	15	0.4	31,305	-2
Wisconsin	143,738	143,397	152,701	6	2.8	150,362	2
Midwest Total	930,272	914,683	1,006,447	10	1.3	984,609	2
3-Region Total	2,732,489	2,609,635	2,715,246	4	1.5	2,753,994	-1
Arizona	*	*	16,210		0.1	*	*
California	*	*	*		*	*	*
Colorado	*	*	26,234		0.3	*	*
Idaho	*	*	18,868		0.2	*	*
Montana	*	*	68,242		0.5	*	*
Nevada	*	*	*		*	*	*
New Mexico	*	*	10,635		0.1	*	*
Oregon	*	*	*		*	*	*
Utah	*	*	*		*	*	*
Washington	*	*	10,112		0.2	*	*
Wyoming	*	*	16,662		0.2	*	*
West Total			166,963		0.1		
Alberta	*	*	21,575		0.1	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	8,600		0.0	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*		*	*	*
New Brunswick	*	*	3,647		0.1	*	*
Nova Scotia	*	*	5,551		0.3	*	*
Ontario	*	*	33,661		0.1	*	*
Quebec	*	*	26,458		0.1	*	*
Saskatchewan	*	*	16,000		0.1	*	*
Canada Total			115,492		0.1		

* Data not available/provided **PSM: Per Square Mile in 2015

Top-5 States Antlered Buck Harvest

State	2015 Harvest
Texas	290,590
Michigan	191,608
Wisconsin	152,701
Georgia	142,346
Pennsylvania	137,580

Top-5 States Antlered Buck Harvest Per Square Mile

State	2015 PSM
Michigan	3.4
South Carolina	3.4
West Virginia	3.4
Maryland	3.1
Pennsylvania	3.1

Top-5 States Greatest Antlered Buck Harvest Increase 2015 vs. Five-Year Average

State	% Increase
West Virginia	+22
Kentucky	+17
Minnesota	+12
Missouri	+10
Pennsylvania	+8

5 States Greatest Antlered Buck Harvest Decrease 2015 vs. Five-Year Avg

State	% Decrease
Rhode Island	-30
Florida	-25
Connecticut	-19
New Jersey	-17
Oklahoma	-13

AGE STRUCTURE OF THE BUCK HARVEST



The QDMA also acquired the age structure of the buck harvest data for most states. Twenty-eight states and two provinces reported the percentage of their antlered buck harvest that was 1½

years old, and 24 states and two provinces reported the percentage that was also 2½ and 3½ years or older. Most states in the Northeast and Southeast collect age data, and about half of the states in the Midwest

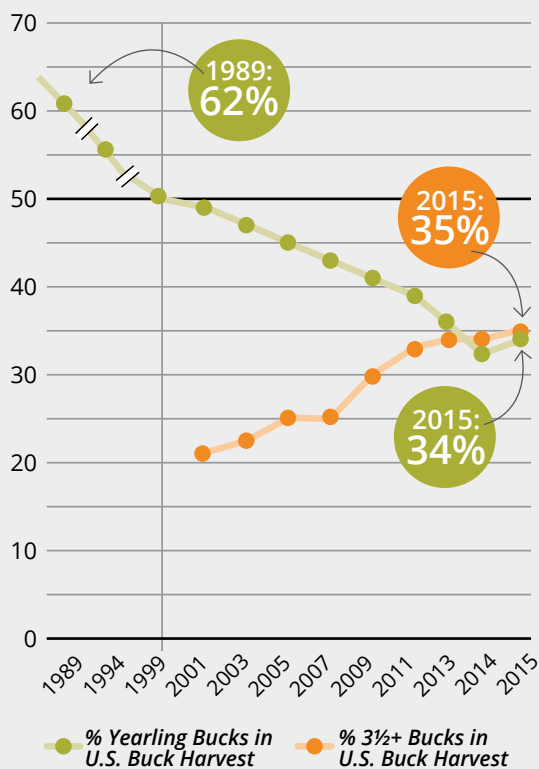
do. Conversely, no states in the West and few Canadian provinces collect age data, therefore we only included those agencies that did in the table on page 7.

In 2015, the average percentage of the antlered buck harvest that was 1½ years old was 34 percent, which remains near the lowest national percentage ever reported. For the first time in the past two and a half decades, the percentage of yearling bucks in the harvest increased. However, the increase was a mere percentage point and is likely a sign we have bottomed out on yearling buck harvest. The fact that only one in three antlered bucks shot today is 1½ years old is amazing, and the line graph to the left shows how the yearling percentage of the antlered buck harvest in the U.S. has changed during the past 27 years.

In 2015, Arkansas averaged the fewest yearlings (7 percent of antlered buck harvest) and Wisconsin reported the most

(55 percent of antlered buck harvest). As a region, the Southeast averaged the fewest yearlings (24 percent), followed by the Midwest (38 percent) and the Northeast (41 percent). New Jersey had the largest year-to-year decline in harvest percentage by dropping from 46 to 36 percent yearling bucks. New Jersey's deer project leader cautioned hunters from reading too much

MATURE BUCKS EXCEED YEARLINGS IN US BUCK HARVEST



Top-5 States Lowest Percentage of Yearling Bucks in Buck Harvest

State	2015 Percentage
Arkansas	7
Mississippi	14
Texas	14
Louisiana	16
Florida	17

5 States Highest Percentage of Yearling Bucks in Buck Harvest

State	2015 Percentage
Wisconsin	55
Maryland	51
Maine	48
New York	47
Virginia	46

Top-5 States Highest Percentage of 3½-Plus Bucks in Buck Harvest

State	2015 Percentage
Mississippi	77
Texas	75
Arkansas	74
Louisiana	67
Oklahoma	60

5 States Lowest Percentage of 3½-Plus Bucks in Buck Harvest

State	2015 Percentage
Wisconsin	17
New York	20
Tennessee	20
New Jersey	21
Vermont	22

into this however, as an incredible acorn crop and mild temperatures caused the deer harvest to drop precipitously in 2015. This impacted data collection efforts and resulted in fewer bucks being aged. Georgia had the largest year-to-year rise in harvest percentage by increasing from 30 to 45 percent yearling bucks. Georgia's deer project leader said the 2015 percentage is a return to normalcy and is more in line with long

term averages. The low yearling harvest rate in 2014 was not easily explained.

Twenty-four of 28 states (86 percent) that we received age structure data from were able to also provide the percentage of bucks 3½ years and older in the harvest; kudos to these states for their data collection efforts. The average percentage of the antlered buck harvest that was 3½ years and older was 35 percent in 2015.

This is the highest percentage of 3½-year-old or older bucks ever reported, and it is higher than the percentage of yearlings and 2½-year-olds harvested! This is a testament to how far we've come as hunters and deer managers. This statistic ranged from 17 percent in Wisconsin to 77 percent in Mississippi.

PERCENTAGE OF BUCK HARVEST BY AGE CLASS

State/Province	1½ Years Old			2½ Years Old			3½ and Older		
	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
Alabama***	30	28	21	35	31	28	34	41	51
Arkansas	8	8	7	25	25	19	67	67	74
Florida	*	23	17	*	44	45	*	32	38
Georgia	45	30	45	25	31	27	31	39	28
Louisiana	15	17	16	17	16	17	68	67	67
Mississippi	*	13	14	*	13	9	*	74	77
North Carolina	43	40	39	34	36	37	23	24	24
Oklahoma	20	24	25	18	16	15	62	60	60
South Carolina	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Tennessee	43	37	37	40	44	43	17	19	20
Texas	23	21	14	19	17	11	58	62	75
Southeast Average	26	24	24	26	27	25	48	49	51
Illinois	44	42	42	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indiana	39	*	*	38	*	*	23	*	*
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	21	16	*	33	35	*	46	49	*
Kentucky	28	28	33	43	44	41	29	28	26
Michigan	47	43	44	32	32	29	21	25	27
Minnesota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Missouri**	*	15(40)	24	*	49(36)	41	*	36(24)	35
Nebraska	25	24	30	40	39	35	35	36	35
North Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ohio	48	45	41	32	35	33	20	20	26
South Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wisconsin	53	48	55	28	31	28	19	21	17
Midwest Average	38	34	38	35	37	34	28	30	28
Connecticut	44	45	42	*	*	*	*	*	*
Delaware	53	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Maine	53	47	48	32	25	24	15	28	27
Maryland	53	47	51	*	*	*	*	*	*
Massachusetts	45	42	44	28	31	27	27	27	29
New Hampshire	45	46	43	32	29	28	23	25	29
New Jersey	39	46	36	41	45	43	20	9	21
New York	52	48	47	32	34	33	16	18	20
Pennsylvania	47	43	41	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rhode Island	33	36	33	36	38	32	31	26	35
Vermont	27	22	26	51	56	52	22	22	22
Virginia	48	43	46	22	29	28	30	28	26
West Virginia	34	26	*	40	47	*	26	27	*
Northeast Average	44	41	41	35	37	33	23	23	26
3-Region Average	36	33	34	31	34	31	34	34	35
New Brunswick	51	*	44	16	*	29	13	*	26
Nova Scotia	*	*	35	*	*	36	*	*	29
Canada Average	51		40	16		33	13		28

*Data not provided/available

**Data from antler-point-restriction counties (non-antler-point-restriction counties)

***Data from check stations and/or DMAP areas

ANTLERLESS DEER HARVEST



Coby Hudson (right) was able to harvest his first deer in 2016 at the QDMA National Youth Hunt with help from guide Kip Adams.

Antlerless harvests vary widely among states and years due to differences in deer density, productivity, a state's goals (reducing, stabilizing, or increasing the deer population), weather, disease and other factors. However, we can learn much about an agency's management program by comparing the antlerless and antlered buck harvests. Continuing with the analysis of states in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast, hunters from these regions harvested 2,870,972 antlerless deer in 2015. This was 3 percent below the 2014 antlerless harvest and 12 percent below the five-year average. Overall, Texas topped the

list with 257,247 antlerless deer, Georgia followed with 220,503, and Pennsylvania was third with 178,233.

Maryland harvested the most antlerless deer per square mile (5.6), followed by Delaware (5.4), and Pennsylvania (4.0). These are astounding harvest rates. Regionally, the Northeast averaged shooting the most antlerless deer per square mile (2.4), followed by the Southeast (1.8) and the Midwest (1.3).

Antlerless harvests were down across the board as the Midwest shot 1 percent fewer antlerless deer in 2015 than in 2014, the Southeast shot 3 percent fewer, and the Northeast shot 7 percent fewer. In total, 20 of 37 states (54 percent) shot fewer antlerless deer in 2015 than the prior year, and 30 of 37 states (81 percent) shot fewer antlerless deer than their 5-year average.

Seven of 13 Midwest states (54 percent) shot more antlerless deer than antlered bucks, eight of 13 Northeastern states (62

percent) shot more antlerless deer, and five of 11 Southeastern states (45 percent) shot more antlerless deer than antlered bucks in 2015. Reduced antlerless harvests are necessary in areas where deer herds have been balanced with the habitat and/or when other mortality factors (such as predation or disease) are increasing. However, very few states should be harvesting more antlered bucks than antlerless deer on a regular basis.

Top-5 States Antlerless Harvest

State	2015 Harvest
Texas	257,247
Georgia	220,503
Pennsylvania	178,233
Alabama	171,123
Wisconsin	159,034

Top-5 States Antlerless Harvest Per Square Mile

State	2015 Harvest PSM
Maryland	5.6
Delaware	5.4
Pennsylvania	4.0
Georgia	3.8
New Jersey	3.6

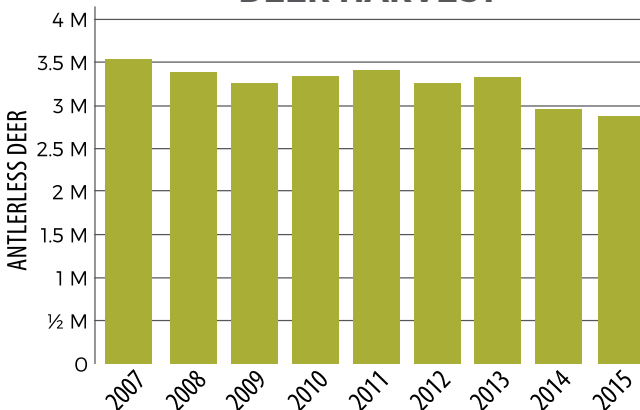
States With Lowest Antlerless Harvest Per Square Mile

State	2015 Harvest PSM
Maine	0.2
North Dakota	0.2
South Dakota	0.2
Nebraska	0.3
Massachusetts	0.5
New Hampshire	0.5
Oklahoma	0.5
Vermont	0.5

Top-5 States Antlerless Deer Per Antlered Buck Harvested

State	2015 Ratio
Delaware	2.5
Maryland	1.8
New Jersey	1.7
Alabama	1.6
Georgia	1.5

TOTAL US ANTLERLESS DEER HARVEST



ESTIMATED ANTLERLESS DEER HARVEST

State/Province	2013	2014	2015	% Change 2014-2015	2010-2014 average	% Change 2015 to 5-yr avg.	2015 Antlerless PSM**	2015 Antlerless per antlered
Alabama	171,560	171,288	171,123	0	180,330	-5	3.4	1.6
Arkansas	122,067	118,458	122,255	3	113,542	8	2.3	1.3
Florida	37,269	38,255	36,497	-5	50,357	-28	0.7	0.6
Georgia	316,927	262,570	220,503	-16	284,300	-22	3.8	1.5
Louisiana	73,128	57,359	68,684	20	65,085	6	1.6	0.8
Mississippi	152,061	145,328	144,514	-1	147,312	-2	3.1	1.3
North Carolina	86,366	80,190	80,414	0	91,279	-12	1.7	1.0
Oklahoma	35,812	45,490	36,972	-19	43,860	-16	0.5	0.7
South Carolina	111,324	103,006	93,593	-9	107,791	-13	3.1	0.9
Tennessee	73,898	69,405	88,518	28	79,338	12	2.1	1.1
Texas	295,042	265,104	257,247	-3	279,754	-8	1.0	0.9
Southeast Total	1,490,660	1,356,453	1,320,320	-3	1,413,485	-7	1.8	1.1
Connecticut	7,269	6,500	4,947	-24	6,840	-28	1.0	1.1
Delaware	10,119	10,172	10,463	3	9,938	5	5.4	2.5
Maine	8,035	6,325	5,418	-14	6,356	-15	0.2	0.4
Maryland	63,749	58,602	54,167	-8	61,098	-11	5.6	1.8
Massachusetts	4,925	4,747	4,240	-11	4,862	-13	0.5	0.7
New Hampshire	5,369	4,653	4,742	2	4,656	2	0.5	0.8
New Jersey	33,083	35,292	26,149	-26	33,515	-22	3.6	1.7
New York	128,851	130,068	103,401	-21	124,876	-17	2.2	1.0
Pennsylvania	218,640	184,713	178,233	-4	202,915	-12	4.0	1.3
Rhode Island	1,482	1,242	891	-28	1,272	-30	0.9	1.2
Vermont	5,276	5,634	4,417	-22	5,681	-22	0.5	0.5
Virginia	137,973	103,807	107,065	3	124,096	-14	2.7	1.0
West Virginia	75,446	52,922	57,274	8	60,282	-5	2.4	0.7
Northeast Total	700,217	604,677	561,407	-7	646,388	-13	2.4	1.1
Illinois	90,845	84,999	88,036	4	102,209	-14	1.6	1.3
Indiana	79,395	74,387	45,686	-39	80,678	-43	1.3	0.9
Iowa	59,953	57,053	58,512	3	67,645	-14	1.0	1.2
Kansas	48,424	51,761	51,031	-1	48,163	6	0.6	1.2
Kentucky	76,649	72,818	80,008	10	64,323	24	2.0	1.1
Michigan	175,737	144,139	137,073	-5	184,136	-26	2.4	0.7
Minnesota	84,916	58,406	61,027	4	83,664	-27	0.8	0.6
Missouri	147,109	142,503	152,042	7	164,829	-8	2.2	1.2
Nebraska	15,213	17,730	19,537	10	27,280	-28	0.3	0.7
North Dakota	15,148	12,902	12,100	-6	23,111	-48	0.2	0.6
Ohio	120,503	107,286	109,159	2	131,407	-17	2.7	1.4
South Dakota	23,548	14,453	16,000	11	32,010	-50	0.2	0.5
Wisconsin	198,893	158,689	159,034	0	187,315	-15	2.9	1.0
Midwest Total	1,136,333	997,126	989,245	-1	1,196,771	-17	1.3	1.0
3 Region Total	3,327,210	2,958,256	2,870,972	-3	3,256,643	-12	1.6	1.1
Arizona	*	*	315	*	*	*	0.0	0.0
California	*	*	*	*	*	*	0.0	*
Colorado	*	*	7,771	*	*	*	0.1	0.3
Idaho	*	*	11,476	*	*	*	0.1	0.6
Montana	*	*	17,610	*	*	*	0.1	0.3
Nevada	*	*	*	*	*	*	0.0	*
New Mexico	*	*	138	*	*	*	0.0	0.0
Oregon	*	*	*	*	*	*	0.0	*
Utah	*	*	*	*	*	*	0.0	*
Washington	*	*	3,398	*	*	*	0.1	0.3
Wyoming	*	*	8,089	*	*	*	0.1	0.5
West Total			48,797				0.1	0.3
Alberta	*	*	13,500	*	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	5,700	*	*	*	0.0	0.7
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	0.0	*
New Brunswick	*	*	714	*	*	*	0.0	0.2
Nova Scotia	*	*	2,234	*	*	*	0.1	0.4
Ontario	*	*	24,371	*	*	*	0.1	0.7
Quebec	*	*	21,162	*	*	*	0.0	0.8
Saskatchewan	*	*	3,500	*	*	*	0.0	0.2
Canada Total			71,181				0.0	0.6

*Data not provided/available

**PSM: Per Square Mile in 2015

AGE STRUCTURE OF THE ANTLERLESS HARVEST



QDMA also acquired the age structure of the antlerless harvest data for most states. Twenty-nine states and four provinces reported the percentage of their antlerless harvest that was approximately half a year old (fawns). Twenty-six states and two provinces reported the percentage that was 1½ years, and 21 states and two provinces reported the percentage that was 2½ and 3½ years or older. In 2015, the average antlerless deer that was a fawn was 23 percent; thus, less than one in four antlerless deer harvested was a fawn. The Southeast averaged the lowest

Monitoring the age structure of the harvest is key for deer hunters to make wise management decisions, including the appropriate number of antlerless deer to harvest annually.

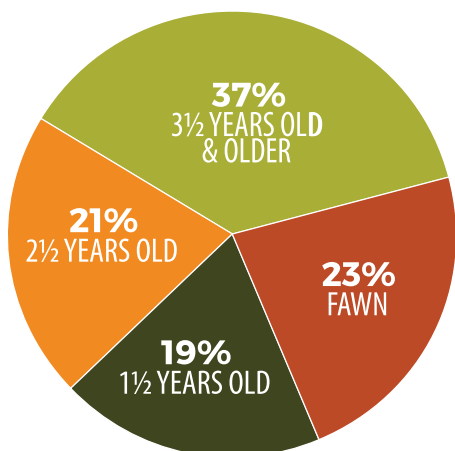
percentage of fawns (13 percent) and the Midwest averaged the most (31 percent of the antlerless harvest). Individually Texas (1 percent) shot the fewest fawns and Ohio (39 percent) shot the most. Monitoring the percentage of fawns in the antlerless harvest is one method for estimating the fawn recruitment rate, and this rate is one of the most important pieces of data a deer manager needs when assessing a herd's growth potential and applying a prescribed antlerless harvest.

The accompanying table also includes a state-by-state look at the percentage of the antlerless harvest from 2013 to 2015 that was 1½, 2½ and 3½ years or older (in the West and Canada, only states/provinces that submitted data were included). Monitoring how these percentages change over time is valuable, and that's especially true for the 3½ and older age class. This age class includes mature animals, and they typically are also the most productive individuals and most successful mothers. Nationally, over a third (37 percent) of the antlerless deer shot in 2015 were 3.5 or older. The Southeast leads the regions with 45 percent of antlerless deer in this age class, and Texas led all states with 65 percent being 3½ years and older.

Age structure data is the backbone of QDM programs. Monitoring the age structure of the harvest is key for deer hunters to make wise management decisions, includ-

ing the appropriate number of antlerless deer to harvest annually. Good age data helps hunters avoid under- or overharvesting deer herds. Many hunters learn how to estimate the age of deer they harvest, and all hunters should provide every piece of data requested by their wildlife agency.

2015 PERCENTAGE OF ANTLERLESS HARVEST BY AGE CLASS



5 States

With Lowest Percentage of Fawns in Antlerless Harvest

State	2015 Percentage
Texas	1
Rhode Island	6
Arkansas	7
Mississippi	7
Louisiana	11

5 States

With Highest Percentage of Fawns in Antlerless Harvest

State	2015 Percentage
Ohio	39
Pennsylvania	37
Wisconsin	36
Massachusetts	35
Missouri	34

Top-5 States

With Highest Percentage of 3½-Plus in Antlerless Harvest

State	2015 Percentage
Texas	65
Arkansas	55
Mississippi	54
Vermont	52
Oklahoma	50

PERCENTAGE OF ANTLERLESS HARVEST BY AGE CLASS

State/Province	Fawn			1½ Years Old			2½ Years Old			3½ Years and Older		
	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
Alabama**	21	16	15	18	20	18	22	20	18	39	44	49
Arkansas	13	12	7	18	18	17	21	23	21	48	47	55
Florida	*	6	15	*	18	19	*	30	23	*	46	43
Georgia	37	19	23	20	25	23	20	25	24	23	31	30
Louisiana	12	13	11	21	20	20	21	22	22	46	45	47
Mississippi	*	7	7	*	23	20	*	18	19	*	52	54
North Carolina	9	23	14	24	21	23	29	25	27	38	31	36
Oklahoma	17	18	16	17	18	19	14	15	15	52	49	50
South Carolina	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Tennessee	18	26	18	30	24	26	28	28	31	23	22	25
Texas	7	7	1	18	18	17	22	22	17	52	53	65
Southeast Average	18	15	13	20	21	20	21	23	22	40	42	45
Connecticut	*	*	20	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Delaware	34	*	*	24	*	*	20	*	*	22	*	*
Maine	33	18	21	17	15	17	21	13	*	29	53	*
Maryland	33	31	31	23	24	24	*	*	*	*	*	*
Massachusetts	36	33	35	20	17	13	20	22	18	25	28	34
New Hampshire	33	16	30	13	19	11	18	16	16	37	49	43
New Jersey	11	19	14	35	28	29	30	32	32	24	22	25
New York	31	31	27	22	19	19	19	20	21	27	30	33
Pennsylvania	39	39	37	19	19	18	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rhode Island	22	14	6	7	16	5	*	39	*	*	31	*
Vermont	17	28	18	18	12	16	13	15	14	48	45	52
Virginia	38	24	24	18	21	21	18	23	21	26	32	34
West Virginia	26	15	*	23	19	*	21	28	*	30	38	*
Northeast Average	29	22	24	20	17	18	20	23	21	30	36	37
Illinois	35	33	33	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indiana	29	*	*	25	*	*	26	*	*	20	*	*
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	7	15	*	15	13	*	46	38	*	32	34	*
Kentucky	8	25	32	26	20	23	40	32	21	26	23	24
Michigan	28	28	25	24	18	19	17	19	18	30	35	38
Minnesota	*	33	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Missouri	*	27	34	*	24	18	*	17	16	*	32	32
Nebraska	23	28	22	25	21	26	26	26	25	26	25	27
North Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ohio	41	42	39	18	16	18	20	22	*	21	20	*
South Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wisconsin	43	45	36	18	18	21	18	17	20	21	20	23
Midwest Average	27	31	31	22	19	21	28	24	20	25	27	29
3 Region Average	25	23	23	21	19	19	23	23	21	32	35	37
Wyoming	*	*	15	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
West Average			15									
New Brunswick	46	*	20	14	*	15	10	*	20	30	*	46
Nova Scotia	*	*	17	*	*	17	*	*	24	*	*	42
Ontario	*	*	34	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Quebec	32	*	32	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Canada Average	39		26	14		16	10		22	30		44

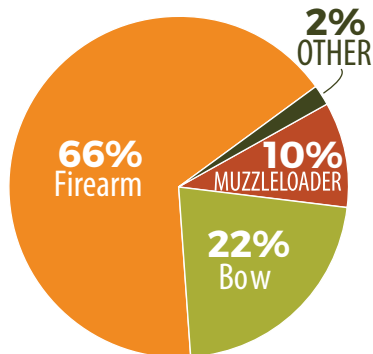
*Data not provided/available

** Data from check stations and/or DMAP areas

DEER HARVEST BY WEAPON TYPE

The average hunter today has much longer seasons and more opportunities with a variety of weapons than he/she had in the past. To assess how hunters take advantage of these, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to determine the percentage of the total deer harvest taken with a bow, rifle/shotgun, muzzleloader, or other weapon (pistol, etc.) during the 2013, 2014 and 2015 seasons. Nationally, muzzleloader hunters took 10 percent, bowhunters took 22 percent, and firearm (rifle/shotgun) hunters took 66 percent of the total deer harvest in 2015.

**TOTAL 2015
US DEER HARVEST
BY WEAPON**



Regionally, bowhunters averaged the highest percentage of the harvest in the Northeast (30 percent). Muzzleloader hunters also averaged their highest percentage in the Northeast (15 percent).

Surprisingly, firearm hunters in the Northeast took just over half of the deer (53 percent). In the Southeast, firearms reign supreme as three of four deer taken in 2015 (76 percent) were with a rifle or shotgun. Muzzleloading (9 percent) and bowhunting (14 percent) paled in comparison to the firearm harvest. In the Midwest muzzleloading was least popular at only 7 percent of the harvest, and a firearm harvest of 65 percent was far above the Northeast's and close to the Southeast's.

Individually, New Jersey leads the U.S. in the percentage of total harvest taken by archers (57 percent), Idaho had the highest percentage taken by firearm hunters (94 percent), and Rhode Island tops the list with percentage taken by muzzleloader hunters (44 percent). In Canada, bowhunting was most popular in Ontario



The number of hunters taking advantage of bow and muzzleloader seasons has increased. In fact, in the Northeast bow and muzzleloader hunters combined to take nearly half of the harvest (45 percent) with 30 percent attributed to bowhunters and 15 percent to muzzleloader hunters.

Top-5 States Percentage of Harvest by Bow

State	2015 Percentage
New Jersey	57
Connecticut	50
Massachusetts	45
Ohio	44
Illinois	37

Top-5 States Percentage of Harvest by Rifle/Shotgun

State	2015 Percentage
Idaho	94
Wyoming	93
Texas	90
South Carolina	90
Colorado	86

Top States Percentage of Harvest by Muzzleloader

State	2015 Percentage
Rhode Island	44
Tennessee	22
Indiana	20
Virginia	20
Delaware	19
Maryland	19
New Hampshire	19

(16 percent of harvest), muzzleloading was most popular in Nova Scotia (22 percent of harvest), and firearms hunting was most popular in New Brunswick (96 percent of harvest). Interestingly, the province of Quebec held the highest engagement in the "Other" category, as 21 percent of the deer harvest was taken with a crossbow. It should be noted that some states and provinces reported crossbow harvest as part of their archery total while others separated the two.

More hunters take advantage of bows and muzzleloaders today, and that's great for the future of hunting. More seasons to go afield help even occasional hunters stay engaged, and this greatly enhances the opportunities to mentor youth and new hunters. Finally, expanded opportunities help retain aging hunters, and every hunter is critically important to our wildlife management system.

PERCENTAGE OF DEER HARVEST BY WEAPON TYPE

State/Province	Bow			Rifle/Shotgun			Muzzleloader			Other		
	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
Alabama	12	12	16	86	86	82	2	2	2	0	0	0
Arkansas	9	12	10	74	77	74	14	10	11	3	0	4
Florida	21	28	28	68	63	64	7	8	7	4	1	1
Georgia	16	16	18	81	82	79	3	2	3	0	0	0
Louisiana	7	6	8	81	83	81	12	11	11	0	0	0
Mississippi	18	17	17	60	66	69	22	17	14	0	0	0
North Carolina	8	11	7	77	78	79	11	11	10	4	0	4
Oklahoma	24	27	26	59	58	58	17	15	16	0	0	0
South Carolina	6	8	7	89	89	90	2	3	2	2	0	1
Tennessee	12	13	12	65	59	66	24	27	22	0	0	0
Texas	*	10	9	*	89	90	*	1	1	*	0	0
Southeast Total	13	15	14	74	75	76	11	10	9	1	0	1
Connecticut	*	48	50	*	36	37	*	7	5	*	10	8
Delaware	21	20	20	60	63	61	18	16	19	1	1	1
Maine	9	9	11	87	86	85	4	5	4	0	0	0
Maryland	34	34	34	46	49	47	20	17	19	0	0	0
Massachusetts	43	43	45	35	37	37	22	20	18	0	0	0
New Hampshire	31	28	29	44	46	48	21	23	19	4	3	0
New Jersey	56	57	57	32	32	32	12	11	11	0	0	0
New York	22	22	24	67	67	63	10	10	9	1	1	4
Pennsylvania	15	31	31	64	62	62	22	7	7	0	0	0
Rhode Island	37	34	34	24	24	22	39	42	44	0	0	0
Vermont	23	23	27	60	45	52	17	20	11	0	12	10
Virginia	12	14	13	66	61	67	22	25	20	0	0	0
West Virginia	20	21	13	75	74	74	5	5	4	0	0	9
Northeast Total	27	30	30	55	52	53	18	16	15	0	2	2
Illinois	39	39	37	51	59	53	10	2	10	1	0	0
Indiana	19	29	16	52	51	54	20	20	20	9	1	10
Iowa	20	21	23	69	68	57	11	11	14	0	0	6
Kansas	29	34	34	63	61	62	5	4	4	4	0	0
Kentucky	15	15	15	72	74	70	11	11	12	2	0	3
Michigan	31	36	34	55	57	60	8	7	6	7	0	0
Minnesota	11	3	13	85	84	83	4	12	4	0	1	0
Missouri	20	19	18	75	77	78	5	4	4	0	0	0
Nebraska	10	*	9	82	*	82	6	*	7	2	*	2
North Dakota	16	18	21	77	76	78	1	1	1	6	5	0
Ohio	45	46	44	40	42	49	12	12	7	3	0	0
South Dakota	13	13	14	85	85	84	2	2	2	0	0	0
Wisconsin	26	27	17	73	71	70	2	2	2	0	0	11
Midwest Total	23	25	23	68	67	68	7	7	7	3	1	2
3 region average	21	23	22	65	65	66	12	11	10	1	1	2
Arizona	*	*	13	*	*	85	*	*	2	*	*	0
California	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Colorado	*	*	8	*	*	86	*	*	6	*	*	0
Idaho	*	*	4	*	*	94	*	*	2	*	*	0
Montana	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Nevada	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Mexico	*	*	12	*	*	75	*	*	13	*	*	0
Oregon	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Utah	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Washington	*	*	15	*	*	74	*	*	7	*	*	4
Wyoming	*	*	7	*	*	93	*	*	0	*	*	0
West Total	*	*	10	*	*	85	*	*	5	*	*	1
Alberta	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	*	*	4	*	*	96	*	*	0	*	*	0
Nova Scotia	*	*	4	*	*	69	*	*	22	*	*	5
Ontario	*	*	16	*	*	72	*	*	9	*	*	3
Quebec	*	*	2	*	*	61	*	*	16	*	*	21
Saskatchewan	2	2	2	91	92	93	7	5	5	1	1	1
Canada Total	*	*	6	*	*	78	*	*	10	*	*	6

*Data not provided/available

DEFINITION OF AN ANTLERED BUCK

For many North American deer hunters, harvesting your first whitetail buck is a rite-of-passage, a tradition that is as steeped in tradition as hunting for food. It's likely that this innate ritual, and our fascination with antlers, stems from our ancestors, as some of the earliest art consisted of cave drawings of bucks and other antlered animals. However, though it may seem on the surface that the mere presence of antlers should define what is and what is not a buck, the definition for an antlered deer isn't so cut-and-dry.

As most hunters know, correctly and swiftly identifying your target can be difficult, as sometimes there are only seconds to decide when to pull the trigger on an animal that both presents an ethical shot and qualifies under a tag they have in possession. Thus, state and provincial wildlife agencies define what constitutes a "buck" a little bit differently, often taking into account what one can see with the naked eye. They categorize deer that do not meet these standards as an "antlerless deer."

The definition of a buck varies for the 37 states and five provinces that completed our survey. Twenty-three states (62 percent) and three provinces (60 percent) use some form of physical measure on the antler(s) to gauge whether or not a deer constitutes an antlered buck or antlerless deer. Of those, the 3-inch increment was by far the most common rule, with 19 states (51 percent) using it as their benchmark; Arkansas and South Carolina use a shorter index at ≥ 2 inches, and Nebraska has the longest at ≥ 6 inches. Ten states (27 percent) and one province (20 percent) require the antlers to be "visible", six states (16 percent) used the deer's hairline as an important starting point, and four states (11 percent) require the antler to be "hardened" or "polished".

QDMA RECOMMENDATIONS

Though it makes sense to consider what can easily be observed from the hunter's perspective as per the presence/absence of antler(s) on a deer's head to legally determine what is and what is not an antlered buck, with today's modern optics we feel that using a physical measurement may be dated. A buck is a buck is a buck, and thus using criteria that credits both the modern hunter's abilities and the physiology of the deer is due. Pretty much every licensed hunter should be able to determine if a deer is a buck or not before they pull the trigger, even if it has antlers that are 2 inches long. Thus, we feel that wildlife agencies should consider defining a buck based on the fact the antlers are either "visible" or "above the hairline". For example, Tennessee recently adjusted their definition from antlers ≥ 3 inches in length to one that is more in line with this kind of thinking; we encourage other states/provinces to do the same.

States/Provinces with Longest Length Requirement for an Antlered Buck

State/Province	Length Requirement
Nebraska	≥ 6 inches
Colorado	≥ 5 inches
Florida	≥ 5 inches
Alberta	≥ 4 inches
Montana	≥ 4 inches

WHAT IS AN ANTLERED BUCK?

State/Province	Definition of Antlered Buck
Southeast	
Alabama	at least one hardened antler visible above the natural hairline
Arkansas	both antlers ≥ 2 inches in length
Florida	at least one antler ≥ 5 inches in length
Georgia	antlers visible above hairline
Louisiana	hardened and visible antler
Mississippi	any antlered deer
North Carolina	visible antlers
Oklahoma	antlers ≥ 3 inches in length
South Carolina	antlers ≥ 2 inches above the natural hairline
Tennessee	antler protruding above the hairline
Texas	hardened antler protruding through the skin
Northeast	
Connecticut	visible antlers
Delaware	at least one antler ≥ 3 inches in length
Maine	antlers ≥ 3 inches in length
Maryland	at least one antler > 3 inches in length
Massachusetts	at least one antler > 3 inches in length
New Hampshire	at least one antler ≥ 3 inches in length
New Jersey	at least one antler ≥ 3 inches in length
New York	at least one antler ≥ 3 inches in length
Pennsylvania	at least one antler ≥ 3 inches in length
Rhode Island	antlers ≥ 3 inches in length
Vermont	at least one antler > 3 inches in length
Virginia	visible antlers above the hairline
West Virginia	at least one antler ≥ 3 inches above the hairline
Midwest	
Illinois	at least one antler ≥ 3 inches in length
Indiana	at least one antler ≥ 3 inches in length
Iowa	forked antlers or bigger
Kansas	visible antler plainly protruding from the skull
Kentucky	visible antler protruding above the hairline
Michigan	antlers ≥ 3 inches in length
Minnesota	antlers ≥ 3 inches in length
Missouri	at least one antler ≥ 3 inches in length
Nebraska	at least one antler ≥ 6 inches in length
North Dakota	visible antler
Ohio	at least one antler ≥ 3 inches in length
South Dakota	visible polished antler
Wisconsin	antlers ≥ 3 inches in length
West	
Arizona	antler fully erupted through the skin and capable of being shed
California	*
Colorado	antlers ≥ 5 inches in length
Idaho	at least one antler > 3 inches in length
Montana	antler or antlers ≥ 4 inches in length as measured from the top of the skull
Nevada	*
New Mexico	fork antlered deer
Oregon	*
Utah	*
Washington	any antlered buck
Wyoming	any antlered deer
Canada	
Alberta	antlers > 4 inches in length
British Columbia	presence of antlers, at least one year old
Manitoba	*
New Brunswick	visible antlers
Nova Scotia	*
Ontario	antlers ≥ 2.8 inches (7cm)
Quebec	antlers ≥ 2.8 inches (7cm)
Saskatchewan	*

*Data not provided/available

ANTLERED BUCK BAG LIMIT



Killing a buck is on the mind of, and potentially the primary goal for, most white-tailed deer hunters in North America when they go afield, and the antlered-buck limit per hunter dictates exactly how many can be legally harvested in a hunting season. It's also a contentious topic in some corners of the whitetail range, as some believe they should be allowed to shoot more while others feel that the lack of older age-class bucks in their area is the result of liberal opportunities for taking them.

Thus, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies and asked what the current antlered buck limit per hunter is in their jurisdiction. Seven of 37 states (19 percent) today allow only one buck per hunter; in contrast, hunters can kill three or more bucks in 15 states (41 percent). For comparison, and to measure how this has changed over time, we conducted a

5 States
With Highest Antlered
Buck Bag Limit

State	Buck Bag Limit
Florida	no limit
Connecticut	6+
New Jersey	6
South Carolina	5+
South Dakota	5+

similar survey in 2010 (as reported in our 2011 Whitetail Report), and seven of 32 states (22 percent) that responded to both surveys have reduced the buck limit in the past five years. In Canada, only Nova Scotia reported a buck limit greater than one per hunter with a standard hunting license.

QDMA RECOMMENDATIONS

With respect to buck harvest, tools such as bag limits and season length can be altered to help protect young bucks, but other factors also need to be considered. For example, Pennsylvania has the most restrictive bag limit (1 buck) and a short season (12 days), yet hunters historically shot the majority of yearling bucks every year. This was due to nearly a million deer hunters being very successful within the framework of Pennsylvania's season. In 1989, 81 percent of the antlered buck harvest was 1½ years old and by 2015 that statistic was only 41 percent (see page 7). Both years had the same season length and bag limit for bucks. Thus, season length and bag limits are useful tools for a deer manager, but to be most effective, they

need to be used in conjunction with other tools and accompanied by a strong educational campaign.

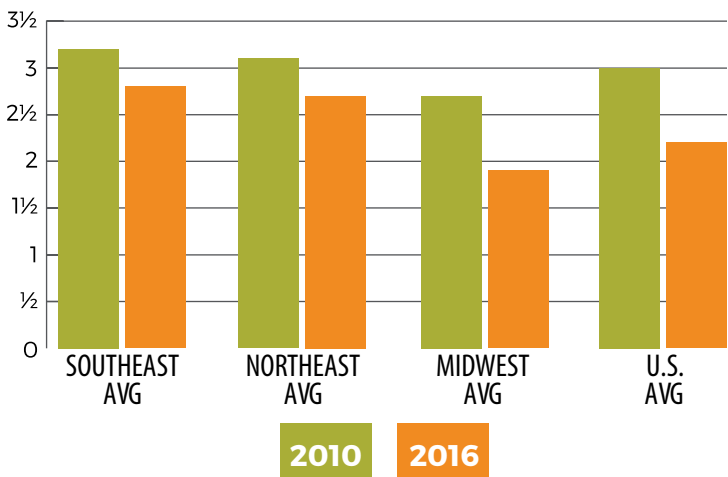
****Notes:** North Carolina and Virginia - depends on part of state; Idaho and Wyoming - generally 1 buck limit; Alberta and Ontario - can get additional licenses; British Columbia - varies by region.

ANTLERED BUCK BAG LIMIT BY STATE/PROVINCE

State/Province	2010	2016
Alabama	3	3
Arkansas	2	2
Florida	*	no limit
Georgia	2	2
Louisiana	6	3
Mississippi	3	3
North Carolina**	2 or 4	2 or 4
Oklahoma	2	2
South Carolina	5+	5+
Tennessee	3	2
Texas	1 to 3	1 to 3
Southeast Avg	3.2	2.8
Connecticut	*	6+
Delaware	2	2
Maine	2	1
Maryland	9	3
Massachusetts	2	2
New Hampshire	3	3
New Jersey	6	6
New York	2	2
Pennsylvania	1	1
Rhode Island	3	2
Vermont	2	2
Virginia**	2 to 3	2 to 3
West Virginia		3
Northeast Avg	3.1	2.7
Illinois	2	2
Indiana	1	1
Iowa	2	2
Kansas	1	1
Kentucky	1	1
Michigan	2	2
Minnesota	1	1
Missouri	3	2
Nebraska	2	2
North Dakota	*	3
Ohio	1	1
South Dakota	14	5+
Wisconsin	2	2
Midwest Avg	2.7	1.9
Arizona	*	1
California	*	*
Colorado	*	1
Idaho**	*	1
Montana	*	1
Nevada	*	*
New Mexico	*	1
Oregon	*	*
Utah	*	*
Washington	*	1
Wyoming**	*	1
West Avg.		1.0
U.S. Average	3.0	2.2
Alberta**	*	1
British Columbia**	*	1
Manitoba	*	*
New Brunswick	*	1
Nova Scotia	*	2
Ontario**	*	1
Quebec	*	1
Saskatchewan	*	1
Canada Avg		1.1

*Data not provided/available

ANTLERED BUCK BAG LIMIT BY REGION



COUNTY VS. ZONE DEER MANAGEMENT

Whether at the individual property, regional, statewide or even greater scale, the ability to collect deer harvest and observation data, analyze it and then make recommendations from it is a critical component of sound wildlife and Quality Deer Management (QDM) principles. Hunters and landowners can positively influence their own success by managing the ground where they hunt, making informed decisions along the way and working with their neighbors. That's why the QDMA specializes in producing the best educational resources available anywhere, and why we continually promote QDM Cooperatives through those outlets (see page 27). It's also one of the reasons we compile this report annually, to inform the general public about the latest national issues and trends impacting whitetail populations. However, state and provincial wildlife agencies manage at scales found in between these two levels of decision-making, both within their widest political boundaries and at finer physiographic scales.

We were curious how these were defined, so we asked every state and province whether they managed deer populations by county or an alternate form of boundary, and how many they currently used. Non-county delineations come in a wide variety of names and acronyms (wildlife or deer management units, districts, areas, zones, etc.), so, we chose to assign all of them under the name "zone." Also, a few states use both county and zoning systems (see table). For example, Texas hunting regulations are set at the county level (254 counties), but they manage deer at a larger scale (44 DMUs).

Today, the average state manages deer in 52 counties or zones, ranging from two in Maryland to 186 in Colorado. Regionally speaking, the Southeast maintains the lowest average of blocks to manage (11) and

the West has the highest (93). With the expansive space available in Canada, the average province manages deer in 98 counties or zones, ranging from 12 in Nova Scotia to 225 in British Columbia.

QDMA RECOMMENDATIONS

It's a delicate balance to integrate cultural, geographic, and biological considerations when drawing a line on the ground and lump data to make decisions regarding deer management. There has to be enough of a sample to analyze, but harvest regulations must make logical sense to prescribe, regulate and enforce going forward. Regardless of the number in any state or province, we hunt at the property level, which is much smaller than any county or zone. This is why QDMA encourages all hunters to collect harvest and observation data and make site-specific harvest decisions.

Regardless of the number [of management units] in any state or province, we hunt at the property level which is much smaller than any county or zone. This is why QDMA encourages all hunters to collect harvest and observation data and make site-specific harvest decisions.

States/Provinces With the Most Management Units

State	Total Units
British Columbia	225
Colorado	186
Alberta	175
Ontario	144
Wyoming	133

States/Provinces With the Fewest Management Units

State	Total Units
Maryland	2
Alabama	3
Mississippi	3
Rhode Island	4
South Carolina	4

MANAGEMENT UNITS AND NUMBERS BY STATE/PROVINCE

State/Province	County/Zone	#
Alabama	Zone	3
Arkansas	Zone	25
Florida	Zone	12
Georgia	Zone	5
Louisiana	Zone	10
Mississippi	Zone	3
North Carolina	Zone	5
Oklahoma	Zone	10
South Carolina	Zone	4
Tennessee	Zone	5
Texas	Both	44
Southeast Avg		11

Connecticut	Zone	13
Delaware	Zone	17
Maine	Zone	29
Maryland	Zone	2
Massachusetts	Zone	15
New Hampshire	Zone	20
New Jersey	Zone	60
New York	Zone	92
Pennsylvania	Zone	23
Rhode Island	Zone	4
Vermont	Zone	20
Virginia	County	97
West Virginia	Both	55
Northeast Avg		34

Illinois	County	102
Indiana	County	92
Iowa	County	99
Kansas	Zone	19
Kentucky	County	120
Michigan	Zone	85
Minnesota	Zone	128
Missouri	County	114
Nebraska	Zone	18
North Dakota	Zone	37
Ohio	County	88
South Dakota	Both	89
Wisconsin	Both	78
Midwest Avg		82

Arizona	Zone	73
California		
Colorado	Zone	186
Idaho	Zone	99
Montana	Zone	
Nevada		
New Mexico	Zone	60
Oregon		
Utah		
Washington	Zone	6
Wyoming	Zone	133
West Avg		93

U.S. Avg 52

Alberta	Zone	175
British Columbia		225
Manitoba		
New Brunswick		27
Nova Scotia	Zone	12
Ontario	Zone	144
Quebec	Zone	29
Saskatchewan	Zone	76
Canada Avg		98

*Data not provided/available

HUNTER ORANGE REQUIREMENTS

Pumpkin. Army.

Two words, when spoken independently, have two meanings; however, put them together and you have a very different meaning. The “pumpkin army” is slang commonly used by hunters to describe the start of deer season (usually one that involves the legal use of a firearm) in a particular state or province, and the seeming flood of fluorescent or blaze orange-clad hunters that go along with it. And, for good reason. Research shows that hunters are safer wearing orange clothing, and that deer can’t see colors in those wavelengths; so why not enlist and don some pumpkin-colored attire?

We surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies and asked if they mandated hunters to wear orange during the firearms season, and if so how much or what type of garments were required. Fortunately, 38 of the 44 states (86 percent) and five of the seven provinces (71 percent) that responded require deer hunters to wear blaze or fluorescent orange in at least some circumstances. Two states (Louisiana and Wisconsin) and one province (Saskatchewan) also allow alternative fluorescent colors to be worn.

QDMA RECOMMENDATIONS

Hunters who wear orange are seven times less likely to be shot than those who don't. Thus, the QDMA strongly recommends that all

deer hunters wear blaze or fluorescent orange clothing (or an alternative, legal color) when afield during firearms season, regardless of your agency’s requirements. And, we urge those states and provinces that don’t currently require it to change their regulation so that it’s mandated in the future.



States Requiring the Most Fluorescent Orange (500 sq. in.) During Firearms Deer Season

- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Colorado | Florida |
| Georgia | Kentucky |
| Massachusetts | Mississippi |
| Rhode Island | Tennessee |

HUNTER ORANGE REQUIREMENTS AND AMOUNT BY STATE/PROVINCE

State/Province	Orange Required?	# Square Inches	Comments
Southeast			
Alabama	yes	144	
Arkansas	yes	400	hat and coat or vest
Florida	yes	500	
Georgia	yes	500	
Louisiana	yes	400	orange or pink accepted
Mississippi	yes	500	
North Carolina	yes		visible from all sides
Oklahoma	yes	400	
South Carolina	sometimes		hat, coat or vest; only on public lands (WMAs)
Tennessee	yes	500	
Texas	no		
Northeast			
Connecticut	yes	400	
Delaware	yes	400	
Maine	yes		hat plus jacket/vest
Maryland	yes	250	
Massachusetts	yes	500	
New Hampshire	no		
New Jersey	yes	200	
New York	sometimes	250	only required for junior hunters and their mentors
Pennsylvania	yes	250	
Rhode Island	yes	200/500	muzzleloader/shotgun season
Vermont	no		
Virginia	yes	100	
West Virginia	yes	400	
Midwest			
Illinois	yes	400	
Indiana	yes		vest, coat, jacket, coveralls, hat or cap
Iowa	yes		vest, jacket, coat, sweatshirt, sweater, shirt or coveralls
Kansas	yes	200, plus a hat	
Kentucky	yes	500	
Michigan	yes		no minimum but has to be visible 360 degrees
Minnesota	yes	144	
Missouri	yes		hat plus shirt, vest or coat
Nebraska	yes	400	
North Dakota	yes	400	
Ohio	yes		vest, coat, jacket or coveralls
South Dakota	yes		hat, shirt, vest, jacket, coat or sweater
Wisconsin	yes		50% of outer clothing above waist (orange or pink accepted)
West			
Arizona	no		
California	*		
Colorado	yes	500	
Idaho	no		
Montana	yes	400	
Nevada	*		
New Mexico	no		
Oregon	*		
Utah	*		
Washington	yes	400	
Wyoming	yes		one outer garment including hat, vest, etc.
Canada			
Alberta	no		
British Columbia	no		
Manitoba	*		
New Brunswick	yes		vest or jacket
Nova Scotia	yes		hat and coat or vest
Ontario	yes	62 (400 square cm)	
Quebec	yes	400	
Saskatchewan	yes		full coverage of torso (orange, scarlet, yellow and lime green accepted)

*Data not provided/available

DOE FAWN BREEDING RATES



Susan C. Morse

Doe fawn breeding rates are the percentage of doe fawns that conceive during their first year (generally six to eight months of age). This is governed by nutrition, and doe fawns attain sexual maturity when they reach a specific weight threshold. In general, southern fawns reach it at approximately 70 pounds live weight and northern fawns at approximately 80 pounds. Fawns hitting this threshold tend to do so in December to February and are one reason for an apparent “second” rut in many areas.

Since the percentage of doe fawns that breed is typically based on weight, not age, it is a good indicator of herd health, and you can monitor this index by checking the lactation status of all yearling does that are harvested. Deer herds with access to abundant high-quality forage and light to moderate winters can have breeding in over 50 percent of their doe fawns. Conversely, deer herds exposed to poor habitat, overabundant densities, or severe winters often have less than 5 percent of their doe fawns reach the threshold weight and breed.

Twenty of 48 states (42 percent) and one of eight provinces (13 percent) collect this data. Doe fawn breeding rates vary widely across states. Less than 1 percent of doe fawns breed in Maryland and New Mexico, while 43 percent of them breed in parts of South Dakota. Nationwide, about

13 percent of doe fawns breed, with the highest percentage coming from the Midwest (16 percent), followed by the Southeast (13 percent) and Northeast (10 percent).

A similar state wildlife agency survey in 2009 (as reported in our 2010 Whitetail Report) showed approximately 26 percent of doe fawns bred in 1998, and 23 percent did in 2008. The sharp decline to 12 percent in 2015 suggests vastly different nutritional planes and habitat conditions in many areas today.

QDMA RECOMMENDATIONS

The percentage of doe fawns that breed can have a major impact on your management program, especially regarding the number of deer you can harvest annually. This partly explains why highly-productive states can have so many bucks in their herds. Restricting the buck harvest clearly plays a role, but the fact that a sizable percentage of doe fawns contribute their own fawns at one year of age can't be overlooked. We recommend deer managers annually monitor this important herd demographic.

States With Highest Doe Fawn Breeding Rates

State	2016 Percentage
Ohio	24
Pennsylvania	23
South Dakota	22
Illinois	21
Arkansas	15
Maine	15
North Carolina	15

States With Lowest Doe Fawn Breeding Rates

State	2016 Percentage
Maryland	<1
New Mexico	<1
North Dakota	4
Vermont	<5
West Virginia	5

PERCENT OF DOE FAWNS BREEDING

State/Province	% Doe Fawns Breeding
Alabama	*
Arkansas	15
Florida	12
Georgia	*
Louisiana	13
Mississippi	9
North Carolina	15
Oklahoma	*
South Carolina	*
Tennessee	*
Texas	*
Southeast Average	13
Connecticut	*
Delaware	*
Maine	15
Maryland	<1
Massachusetts	*
New Hampshire	8
New Jersey	*
New York	4 to 9
Pennsylvania	23
Rhode Island	*
Vermont	<5
Virginia	12
West Virginia	0 to 10
Northeast Average	10
Illinois	21
Indiana	*
Iowa	11
Kansas	*
Kentucky	10
Michigan	*
Minnesota	*
Missouri	*
Nebraska	*
North Dakota	2 to 5
Ohio	16 to 31
South Dakota	11 to 43
Wisconsin	*
Midwest Average	16
3-Region Average	13
Arizona	*
California	*
Colorado	*
Idaho	*
Montana	*
Nevada	*
New Mexico	<1
Oregon	*
Utah	*
Washington	*
Wyoming	*
West Average	*
Alberta	*
British Columbia	*
Manitoba	*
New Brunswick	1
Nova Scotia	*
Ontario	*
Quebec	*
Saskatchewan	*
Canada Average	*

*Data not provided/available

AVERAGE NUMBER OF DEER HUNTER DAYS AFIELD



Ten to 11 million hunters pursue deer annually, and they spend nearly 168 million days afield doing so. Season lengths and bag limits, deer densities, hunter numbers, and other variables impact the average number of days hunters spend afield. According to data from C.J. Winand in *Bowhunter Magazine's* 2016 Deer Forecast, the average deer hunter in the U.S. spends 13 days chasing deer annually. This varies from 4 days in Maine and New Mexico to 30 days annually in Illinois. Regionally, the Southeast averages 18 days afield per deer hunter per year, followed by the Midwest (17 days), Northeast (12 days), and West (6 days). In Canada, Nova Scotia is the only province that records this data, and hunters in that province average four days per year.

QDMA RECOMMENDATIONS

The number of days spent afield annually can have a large impact on an agency's management programs and on its budget from the associated Pittman Robertson funds obtained from specific hunting gear. More time afield equates to more needed supplies, which is good for the hunting industry and our wildlife management programs. More time afield also affords additional mentoring opportunities which

is good for the future of hunting. QDMA favors enhanced opportunities where wildlife populations can support them.

States With Highest Average Number of Days Afield Per Deer Hunter Per Year

State	Avg. Days Afield
Illinois	30
Mississippi	26
Florida	22
Wisconsin	22
Georgia	20
Louisiana	20
Ohio	20
Virginia	20

States With Fewest Average Number of Days Afield Per Deer Hunter Per Year

State	Avg. Days Afield
Maine	4
New Mexico	4
Arizona	5
Colorado	5
Missouri	5
Utah	5

AVERAGE DAYS AFIELD PER HUNTER

State/Province	Avg. # Days Afield Per Hunter
Alabama	*
Arkansas	16
Florida	22
Georgia	20
Louisiana	20
Mississippi	26
North Carolina	16
Oklahoma	19
South Carolina	16
Tennessee	*
Texas	10
Southeast Average	18
Connecticut	*
Delaware	*
Maine	4
Maryland	15
Massachusetts	13
New Hampshire	9
New Jersey	*
New York	18
Pennsylvania	11
Rhode Island	11
Vermont	10
Virginia	20
West Virginia	*
Northeast Average	12
Illinois	30
Indiana	*
Iowa	*
Kansas	19
Kentucky	14
Michigan	15
Minnesota	*
Missouri	5
Nebraska	*
North Dakota	*
Ohio	20
South Dakota	9
Wisconsin	22
Midwest Average	17
Arizona	5
California	*
Colorado	5
Idaho	6
Montana	*
Nevada	*
New Mexico	4
Oregon	*
Utah	5
Washington	6
Wyoming	8
West Average	6
U.S. Average	13
Alberta	*
British Columbia	*
Manitoba	*
New Brunswick	*
Nova Scotia	4
Ontario	*
Quebec	*
Saskatchewan	*
Canada Average	4

*Data not provided/available

BAITING REGULATIONS



Bait. The mere word conjures strong emotional views from hunters and deer managers, and your specific opinion likely arises from the hunting culture in the state or province you started hunting in. Some hunters despise the practice of baiting, while others view it as American as hot-dogs and apple pie.

Baiting is defined as the placement of food, minerals, or attractants to concentrate deer for the purpose of hunting, trapping or viewing. Baiting is different from supplemental feeding in that feeding is typically defined as the act of placing food resources for the purpose of increasing dietary quality, especially during periods of nutritional stress. In reality, the difference often comes down to whether you're shooting a deer over the placed food. If so, then it's baiting.

Regardless of your personal stance, it's important to understand how society views this practice because only about 6 percent of Americans purchase a hunting license annually. That means we are in the extreme minority as hunters. We get to hunt because, according to research by Responsive Management and the National Shooting Sports Foundation, nearly 80 percent of Americans support legal, ethical, regulated hunting. That's great news. However, that same research also shows only 27 percent of Americans support hunting over bait. That's not good news

for the future of hunting regardless of the advantages and disadvantages of this practice.

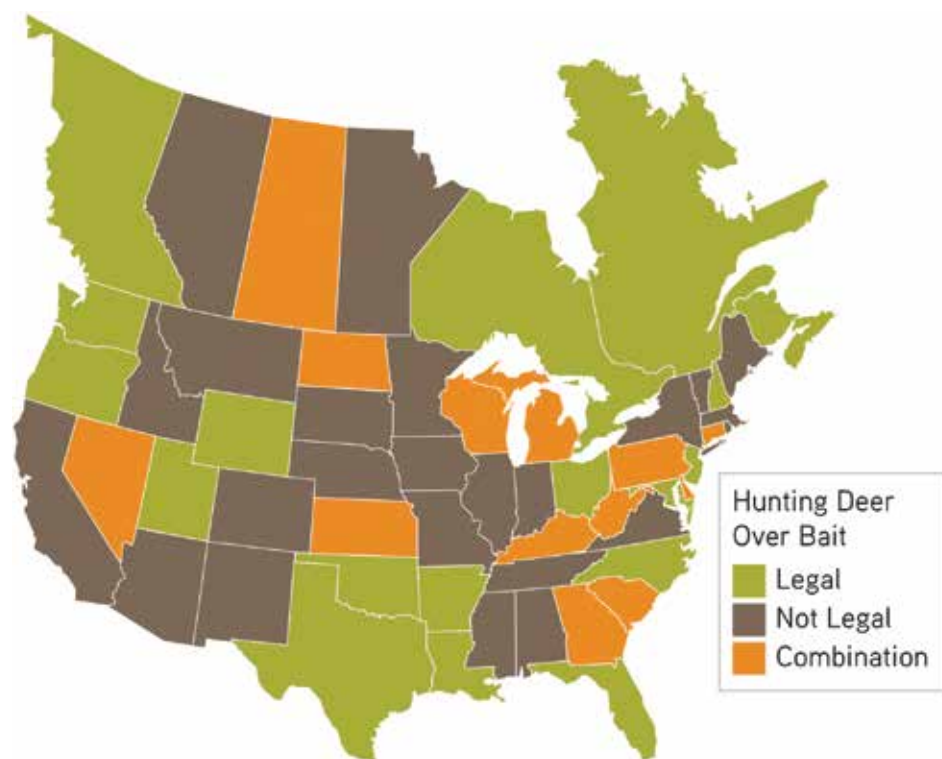
We surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies on their regulations and determined baiting was legal in at least some part of 26 of the 48 contiguous states (54 percent) and in six of eight provinces (75 percent). The map shows where hunting deer over bait is legal state- or province-wide, prohibited state- or province-wide, or allowed in some areas of a state or province. In general, baiting is allowed in most of Canada and the Southeast U.S. However, while it is technically illegal to hunt over bait in Alabama and Mississippi, both states allow it to occur with certain restrictions; thus, Tennessee is really the only state in this region to completely prohibit it. Conversely, the majority of states in the Northeast and Midwest regions prohibit it either statewide or in a portion of the state. Some of these states have never allowed baiting while others (Michigan and Wisconsin) historically allowed it but now prohibit it in some areas due to CWD or TB concerns. Ohio allows it in all but a 10-township area, and Pennsylvania only allows it in a five-county area or with a special permit. The West region is more varied as it's nearly a 50/50 split on the use of this

practice. Nevada allows baiting on private land, but that only makes up 15 percent of the state. Wyoming allows it with a permit, but that's generally only given to handicapped hunters or in suburban settings.

We conducted a similar survey of state wildlife agencies five years ago and found nearly identical results. The four major changes from 2011 to 2016 were baiting was prohibited in Georgia, Michigan and Wyoming five years ago and is allowed at least to some extent in each state today. Conversely, baiting was allowed in Arizona five years ago but is prohibited there today.

QDMA RECOMMENDATIONS

Baiting is a hot issue for many hunters and wildlife agencies. You can argue the ethics of baiting, but we believe the future of baiting will be increasingly decided by political desires and actual disease outbreaks rather than recommendations from wildlife professionals. The history of deer management in North America makes it pretty clear that if baiting is prohibited in your state or province today then it's likely to remain that way in the future. Also, it's an even better bet that if it's allowed in your jurisdiction, nothing short of confirming CWD or TB is likely to change that in the future.



FEEDING REGULATIONS



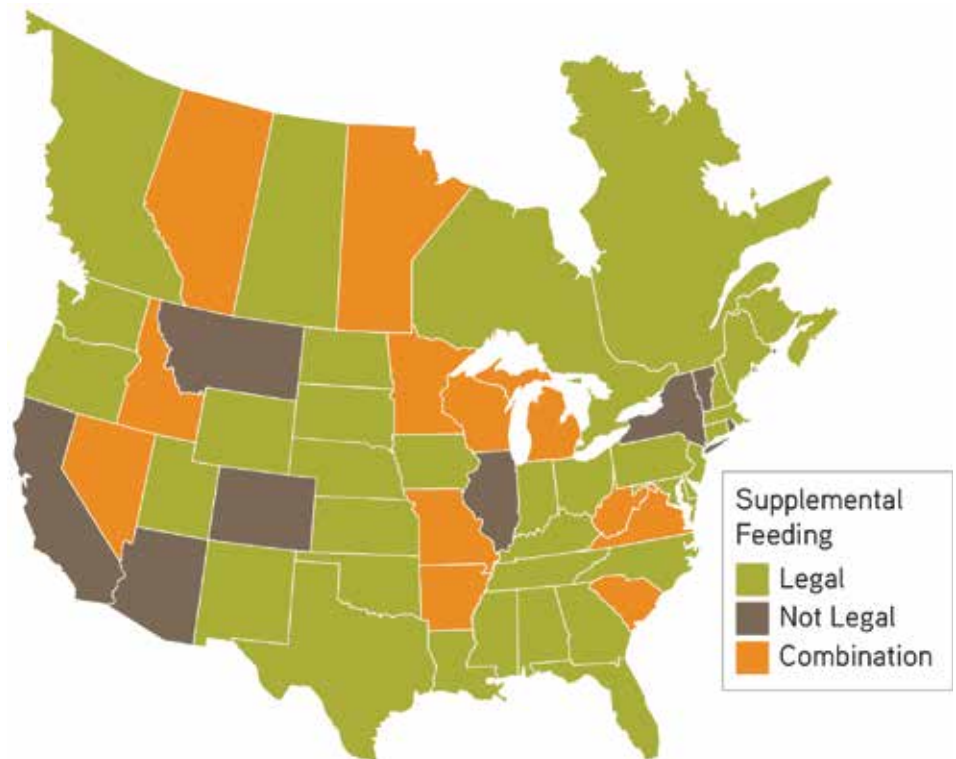
We conducted a similar survey of state wildlife agencies five years ago and found nearly identical results. The five major changes from 2011 to 2016 were feeding was allowed in Arizona, Arkansas, Nebraska and West Virginia five years ago, but is prohibited in part or all of those states today. Michigan is the only state that prohibited it five years ago, but allows it in a part of the state today.

QDMA RECOMMENDATIONS

Supplemental feeding can provide additional nutrition for deer, but this management strategy should be viewed as part of an overall management program including herd and habitat management. Supplemental feeding alone will not improve deer health and should not be viewed as a quick-fix solution or as a means to carry a deer herd above what the habitat can support.

Supplemental feeding is defined as the act of placing quality food resources for the purpose of increasing dietary quality. For many, the difference between feeding and baiting is whether deer are shot over the food source. If so, then it's baiting; and if not, then it's feeding.

We surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies on their regulations and determined feeding was legal in at least some part of 39 of the 48 contiguous states (81 percent) and all eight provinces. The map shows where supplemental feeding of deer is legal state- or province-wide, prohibited state- or province-wide, or allowed in some areas of a state or province. In general, feeding is allowed in all of Canada and the Southeast U.S. It's also allowed in most of the Northeast and Midwest, while the West is the most restricted region. Some states have variances on feeding such as you cannot feed during the hunting season in South Dakota, and you can't feed on public land in Nevada.



CAPTIVE DEER AUTHORITY



No matter where you stand – or take cover – on captive deer, the practice of fencing in white-tailed deer for aesthetic, financial or other reasons is one of the most divisive issues today within the deer hunting and management industries. In fact, you're even sure to find professional deer biologists on either end of the support spectrum. But because deer farms vary from 1-acre pens to fenced ranches covering tens of thousands of acres, it is difficult to discern where the ethical line should be drawn.

Although the philosophical void on this subject is vast, one of the most destructive consequences from this division, with regard to the future of deer hunting and the overall health of our deer herds, is the

confusing maze of regulatory control of captive cervid (deer and elk) facilities currently found across North America.

As of 2016, 18 of 47 states (38 percent) and five of eight provinces (63 percent) that responded to our survey grant jurisdiction over captive cervids to the state or provincial Department of Agriculture or Board of Animal Health. The state/provincial wildlife agency has authority in 14 of 47 states (30 percent) and one of eight provinces (12 percent). In the remaining 15 states and two Canadian provinces,

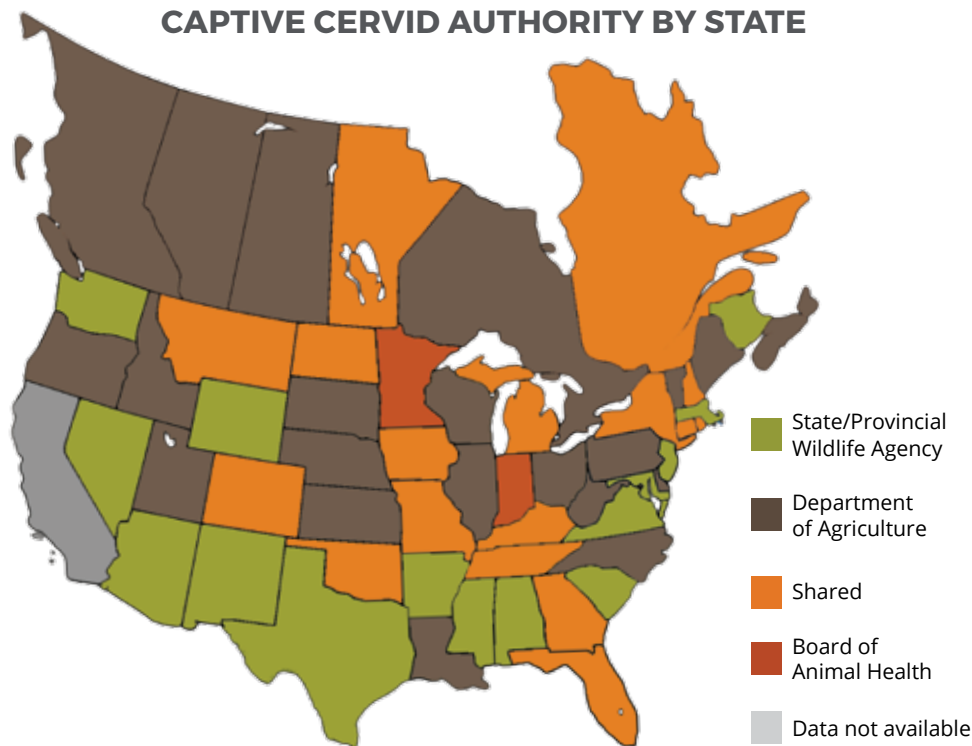
captive cervid farms are jointly managed by both agencies. This is constantly changing. If you're interested in just how much this has changed since 2009, check out our 2010 Whitetail Report.

QDMA RECOMMENDATIONS

In most cases, this regulatory matrix is a direct result of lobbied and enacted law, swapping control from one agency to another. The problem is this inconsistency across state or provincial boundaries often creates missed opportunities for communication between agencies controlling and regulating captive cervid facilities and certainly limits management efforts. There are also fundamental differences between wildlife and agricultural departments regarding captive cervid issues and free-ranging wildlife populations.

Given the potential for disease transmission and the threat to our \$67 billion hunting industry, the QDMA advocates for sole regulatory authority of captive cervid facilities to belong to state/provincial wildlife agencies. These agencies have more experience with wildlife species, and have more at stake with wildlife disease issues, especially with regard to transmission to free ranging populations.

CAPTIVE CERVID AUTHORITY BY STATE



Percentage of Control Over Captive Cervids in U.S.

Authority	2009	2016
State Wildlife Agency	18%	30%
Dept. of Agriculture	20%	38%
Shared	62%	32%

Percentage of Control Over Captive Cervids in Canada

Authority	2009	2016
Prov. Wildlife Agency	50%	12%
Dept. of Agriculture	40%	63%
Shared	10%	25%

FIREARMS SEASON OPENING DAYS

The opening day of firearms season is like a national holiday for the majority of deer hunters. Schools close, restaurants and firehouses host special breakfasts, and there’s an overall feeling of electricity in the air – or at least there is where we hunt. Opening day varies widely for the 35 states and four provinces that completed our survey.

Eight state openers vary by zone, but 34 state openers (81 percent) are statewide on a specific date or day every year. This is the holiday we so anxiously await, and most opening days’ roots are deep. Delaware has the earliest statewide opener on the Friday before Columbus Day, and nearby New Jersey has the latest on the second Monday after Thanksgiving. Many states use Thanksgiving as the basis for their opener by starting on the “Friday before” or “Saturday before” or “Monday after Thanksgiving.” Of

The opening day or date is so culturally ingrained that only 8 of 42 states have changed opening day during the past decade. Thirty-four states’ (81 percent) opening days have remained the same.

the 34 states that listed a specific statewide start date, 27 (79 percent) start before Thanksgiving. In Canada two provinces start before the U.S. holiday and two vary by zone.

The opening day or date is so culturally ingrained that only eight of 42 states have changed opening day during the past decade. Thirty-four states’ (81 percent) opening days have remained the same. In Canada, six of seven provinces’ (86 percent) start dates have remained the same, and only Saskatchewan has changed it during the past 10 years.

QDMA RECOMMENDATIONS

The opening day of firearms season is typically so ingrained with a state or province’s hunter base that moving the date rarely makes biological sense. If management changes are needed, there are many better ways to influence the size or composition of the deer harvest rather than changing the opening day of the firearms season.

Regional Start Date for Firearms Season Opener

Region	Before Thanksgiving	After Thanksgiving	Varies
Southeast	7	0	4
Northeast	8	4	1
Midwest	9	3	1
West	3	0	2
Canada	2	0	2

FIREARMS DEER SEASON OPENING DAY BY STATE/PROVINCE

State/Province	Date	Changed in Past 10 Years?
Southeast		
Alabama	Saturday before Thanksgiving	no
Arkansas	Second Saturday in November	no
Florida	Depends on zone	yes
Georgia	Fourth Saturday in October	no
Louisiana	Depends on zone	no
Mississippi	Saturday before Thanksgiving	no
North Carolina	Depends on zone	no
Oklahoma	Saturday before Thanksgiving	no
South Carolina	Depends on zone	no
Tennessee	Saturday before Thanksgiving	no
Texas	First Saturday in November	no
Northeast		
Connecticut	Always Wednesday before Thanksgiving	no
Delaware	Friday before Columbus Day	no
Maine	Monday in late October/early November	*
Maryland	Saturday after Thanksgiving	no
Massachusetts	Monday after Thanksgiving	no
New Hampshire	Second Wednesday in November	no
New Jersey	Second Monday after Thanksgiving	no
New York	Depends on zone	yes
Pennsylvania	Monday after Thanksgiving	no
Rhode Island	First Saturday in November	no
Vermont	Saturday 12 days before Thanksgiving	no
Virginia	Saturday prior to third Monday in November	no
West Virginia	Monday prior to Thanksgiving	no
Midwest		
Illinois	Friday before Thanksgiving	no
Indiana	First Saturday after Veteran’s Day	no
Iowa	First Saturday in December	no
Kansas	Wednesday after Thanksgiving	no
Kentucky	Second Saturday in November	no
Michigan	November 15	no
Minnesota	November 5	no
Missouri	Second Saturday in November	no
Nebraska	Saturday closest to November 13	yes
North Dakota	First Friday in November	no
Ohio	Monday after Thanksgiving	no
South Dakota	Depends on zone	yes
Wisconsin	Saturday before Thanksgiving	no
West		
Arizona	Friday of week 43	yes
California	*	*
Colorado	varies	*
Idaho	*	no
Montana	37 days before Thanksgiving Sunday (always starts on a Saturday)	yes
Nevada	*	*
New Mexico	Depends on zone	yes
Oregon	*	*
Utah	*	*
Washington	Saturday after October 10th	yes
Wyoming	Depends on zone	no
Canada		
Alberta	Depends on zone	no
British Columbia	*	no
Manitoba	*	*
New Brunswick	*	no
Nova Scotia	Last Friday in October	no
Ontario	Depends on zone	no
Quebec	Saturday closest to November 1	no
Saskatchewan	November 20	yes

*Data not provided/available

2016 DEER DISEASE UPDATE



Found dead by a stream at QDMA Headquarters in Georgia, this buck was a likely victim of EHD, a virus transmitted by biting gnats. Outbreaks of EHD are most likely to occur in late summer and early fall, especially in abnormally dry, hot summers.

By now pretty much every deer hunter has heard of chronic wasting disease (CWD), and unfortunately an increasing number of deer herds are being directly impacted by it every year. However, there are several other disease threats to deer populations that you may or may not have heard of. Below is a run-down of some of the biggest issues regarding white-tailed deer diseases that hit the headlines in 2016, starting with hemorrhagic disease.

HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE

Hemorrhagic Disease (HD) is an infectious, blood-borne disease of deer and elk that is transmitted by biting midges or flies. It is caused by either of two closely related viruses, epizootic hemorrhagic disease virus (EHDV) or bluetongue virus (BTV). Since the symptoms and disease features produced by both of these viruses are relatively indistinguishable, the general term “HD” is often used. For additional information on the biology of HD, see our 2009 Whitetail Report.

HD made a few headlines in 2016 and some of the biggest included:

- As of late October 2016, the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (SCWDS) confirmed HD in 12 states. One of the more important findings was BTV outbreaks in Virginia and West Virginia. This strain and its location adds to existing concerns of a gradual northern

expansion of HD over time, potentially associated with climate change.

- An additional noteworthy finding from 2016 was an EHDV positive mule deer in New Mexico, representing the western most detection of this serotype ever.

BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS

Bovine tuberculosis (bTB) is a bacterial infection of the respiratory system. Bovine TB is a chronic, progressive disease that can take years to develop. There is no vaccine. Prior to 1994, only eight wild white-tailed deer and mule deer were reported with bTB. Since then, it has been discovered in Montana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and now Indiana (see below). With the exception of Michigan and Indiana, bTB appears to be eradicated in the other states. The key is quickly reducing/eliminating the reservoir or host (e.g., cattle or captive elk).

bTB made a single big headline in 2016:

- Bovine TB was confirmed in August 2016 in a free-ranging white-tailed deer in Indiana, marking the first reported case of bTB in free-ranging wildlife in that state. Indiana has maintained its federal “TB-Free” status since 1984, though individual TB cases have been discovered in three cattle herds and one captive elk facility since this time. Those cases and others from the four states listed above were

from a strain known as the “captive cervid strain.” This is the first documented case of this specific bTB strain in wild deer in North America. Therefore, its behavior in wild deer is unknown.

SCREWWORM

New World screwworms are fly larvae (maggots) that can infest livestock and other warm-blooded animals, including deer and even people. They most often enter an animal through an open wound or, in the case of newborns, the navel. They feed on the animal’s living flesh. If not treated, infestations can be fatal. While New World screwworm has not been widely present in the United States since the 1960s, it is still found in most of South America and in five Caribbean countries.

Screwworms made a single big headline in 2016:

- A screwworm outbreak in Florida Key deer marked the first time in three decades the parasite has infested a group of animals in the U.S., and the first time in 50 years the insect appeared in Florida. Following the first confirmation in Big Pine Key, the USDA and Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services announced that the screwworm had also been detected on six additional Keys. Eradication efforts include establishing an Animal Health Check Point at the northern-most Key, releasing sterile adult screw-

worm flies (a scientifically proven method), enhanced surveillance and extensive public outreach. For more info visit: freshfromflorida.com/screwworm

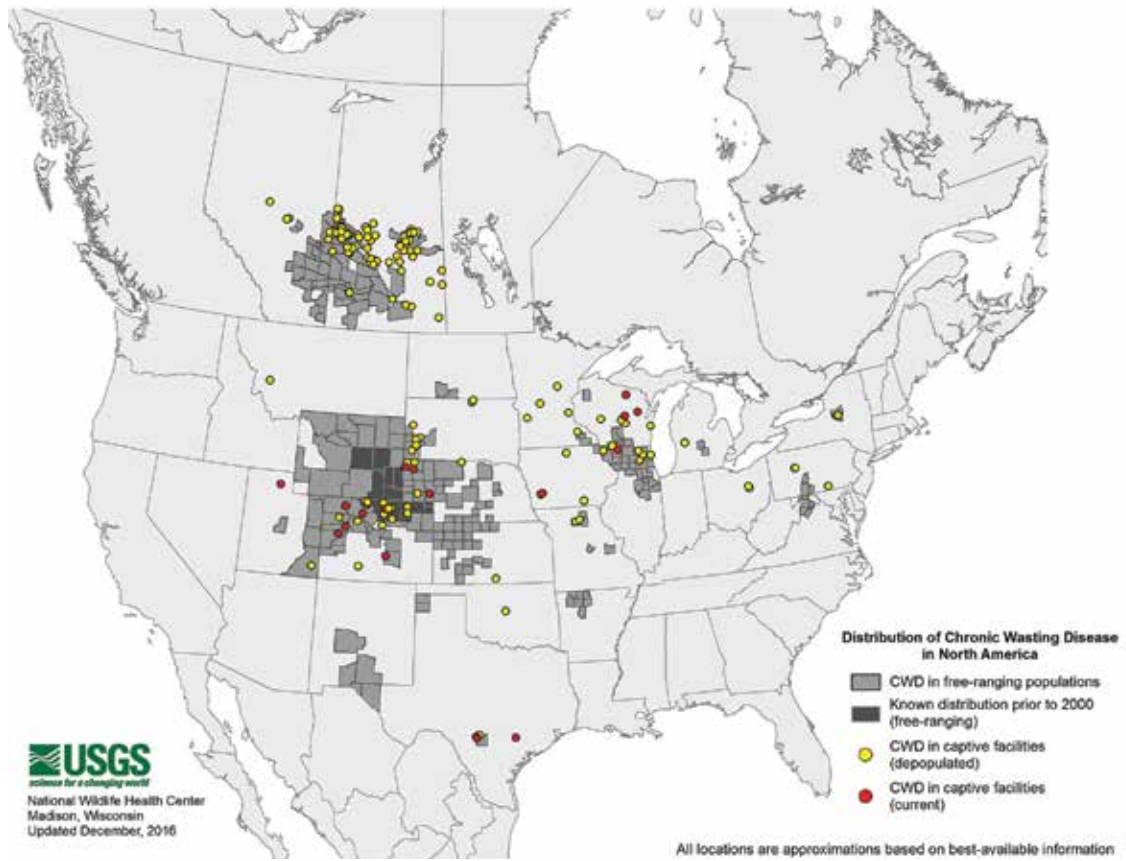
CWD

Chronic Wasting Disease is an always-fatal disease found in most deer species, including elk, moose, mule and white-tailed deer, and CWD has now been identified in 23 U.S. states, two Canadian provinces, Korea (from an elk imported from Canada in 1997) and, most recently, in free-ranging reindeer and moose in Norway. Contagions spread through urine, feces, saliva, blood, deer parts, and especially via live deer. Importantly, there is no vaccine or cure. New research shows variances in infectivity among prion

transport systems (for example, saliva may be ten times as infectious as urine); that plants can bind, uptake and transport prions from infected soil; and hamsters that ate the plants contracted the disease. In addition, recent research provides evidence of some infection in humanized mice. These results do not cast a favorable light for CWD, deer, and American agriculture.

CWD made numerous other headlines in 2016, and some of the biggest included:

- In February, Arkansas confirmed its first case of CWD. By end of the year, the total number of free-ranging positive samples included 152 deer and six elk.
- Minnesota confirmed that three wild deer were CWD positive, the first found since 2010.
- Wyoming Game and Fish found CWD in four new deer hunt areas.
- The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) veterinary division released the CWD Program Standards Working Group summary document for review and comment.
- Two new CWD cases were discovered at captive cervid facilities in Texas, including the first confirmed from a live test



(tonsillar biopsy sample).

- An Alabama man was charged with violating the state’s CWD carcass importation ban.

- Texas also confirmed CWD in a free-ranging elk harvested in the panhandle in early December. This is the first known elk in Texas to test positive for CWD.

To help combat the spread of CWD, the Archery Trade Association (ATA) developed a new “Deer Protection Program” in 2016, designed to ensure that ATA-members do everything possible to prevent the spread of the disease. The program encourages scent manufacturers and urine suppliers to apply self-imposed protective restrictions, allegedly designed to ensure that their urine-based products and the deer/elk facilities themselves do not contain the infectious prions that cause CWD. The restrictions meet or exceed rules already imposed by USDA’s APHIS Herd Certification Program.

QDMA RECOMMENDS

Disease transmission among free-ranging and from captive to free-ranging deer is a major threat to the future of wildlife management and hunting in North

America. QDMA recommends a continued and strengthened effort by wildlife professionals to study, monitor and evaluate solutions for minimizing the spread of CWD, bTB and other communicable, preventable diseases.

QDMA also recommends maintaining or enhancing strict movement restrictions (like border closings) and testing protocols on captive deer, as well as returning/maintaining full authority over captive deer facilities and regulations with the state/provincial wildlife agencies. Currently, some state/provinces have this authority while the Department of Agriculture shares it or maintains sole possession in others (See page 22).

Regarding HD, although its national impact on deer populations was minor in 2016, it can be locally severe, especially in areas where the disease is relatively new. QDMA recommends hunters who experience significant losses closely monitor population indicators to determine if reducing the local antlerless harvest is necessary, and if any hunter identifies a sick or malnourished deer, to please report it immediately to your state/provincial agency or to SCWDS.

DEER HUNTING IS GOOD FOR CONSERVATION



A new study has found that recreational use of private land could have significant benefits for both conservation efforts and economic return, especially when coupled with certain policy mechanisms. The 2016 UC Berkeley research, published in the journal *Land Use Policy*, found that approximately 440 million acres of private land — roughly 22 percent of the contiguous land area of the U.S. — are either leased or owned for wildlife-associated recreation, which was defined as hunting, fishing and wildlife-watching. Hunting was the most widespread recreational use, accounting for 81 percent of the total acreage (356 million acres). Luke Macaulay, an Assistant Cooperative Extension Specialist at UC Berkeley, authored the study, which used eighteen national surveys over fourteen years (1999–2013) for a comprehensive analysis.

The study estimated the annual spending for wildlife-associated recreation on private land to be \$814 million in day-use fees, \$1.48 billion for long-term leases, and \$14.8 billion for ownership of land primarily for recreation. It also found that on crop and grazing land, landowners who earn income from recreation are more likely to participate in government conservation programs and are more likely to pay for

private conservation practices.

Macaulay suggests that this data provides support for the idea that recreation incentivizes conservation at higher rates than agricultural activities alone, saying “Wildlife habitat on private land is vulner-

The study showed that hunters own or lease much larger properties than anglers or wildlife-watchers, which indicates that hunting may provide a greater economic incentive for maintaining large unfragmented properties that provide a variety of conservation and recreational benefits.

able to degradation and loss, but this study highlights recreation as an incentive for conservation. That’s because many landowners are receiving either personal enjoyment or financial benefit from the wildlife that live on their land.”

The study showed that hunters own or lease much larger properties than anglers or wildlife-watchers, which indicates that hunting may provide a greater economic

incentive for maintaining large unfragmented properties that provide a variety of conservation and recreational benefits.

Macaulay believes that the role of recreation in private land conservation has largely been overlooked due to the relatively low participation rate of landowners earning income from recreation. For example, only 7.3 percent of forest landowners earn income from recreation, but this study found that those individuals own much larger properties, accounting for over a third of all private forestland.

The study also emphasized the importance of encouraging conservation practices in conjunction with recreation in order to yield benefits for both conservation and landowner economic return. Macaulay suggested several policy measures to achieve this, including tying habitat improvement practices to property tax breaks that rural landowners receive — an approach that some states have already taken — as well as evaluating, enhancing, and expanding state programs that give regulatory flexibility for hunting in exchange for conservation practices.

Source: UC Berkeley Department of Natural Resources. To learn more about this study visit lukemacaulay.com.

SPECIAL WILDLIFE COOPERATIVE SECTION: CURRENT AGENCY STAFF AND INTEREST LEVEL



A QDM Cooperative is a group of landowners and hunters working together to improve the quality of wildlife (in this case, deer herds), habitat and hunting experiences on their collective acreage. Cooperatives vary in size, number of participants and structure, depending on the needs and objectives of members. A primary benefit of Cooperatives is they enable hunters with small landholdings to participate in QDM. Cooperatives are voluntary and do not entitle neighboring hunters access to your property or diminish the landowner’s control. They are simply collections of landowners and hunters who agree to abide by similar deer management guidelines over a larger area. They are also among the fastest growing trends in both private and public deer management today.

To gauge their popularity, we asked state and provincial agencies if they currently have a staff member dedicated toward Cooperatives and if interest in them has increased within the past five years. Fourteen of 44 states (32 percent) that

responded to our survey employ a person responsible for forming, maintaining and/or providing outreach to Cooperatives; most are found in the Midwest (5), followed by the Southeast (4), Northeast (3) and West (2). Though half of the states (21 of 42) do not have a good feel of interest level, 12 (29 percent) confirmed there is greater interest today than in the past, with the majority occurring in the Midwest (4) and Northeast (4). In Canada, none of the provinces that responded have a staff person or reported there is greater interest today in Cooperatives.

QDMA RECOMMENDATIONS

Deer hunters across North America are rapidly becoming interested in and are forming Cooperatives at a growing rate. State and provincial agencies that have regular contact with hunters should query their constituents about them and should consider hiring staff members that are dedicated to working with private landowners and hunters in this capacity.

COOPERATIVE STAFF & INTEREST LEVEL BY STATE/PROVINCE

State/Province	Staff Member	Interest Level Increased Past 5 Years?
Southeast		
Alabama	yes	don't know
Arkansas	yes	yes
Florida	no	no
Georgia	no	don't know
Louisiana	no	no
Mississippi	no	yes
North Carolina	yes	don't know
Oklahoma	no	don't know
South Carolina	no	don't know
Tennessee	no	don't know
Texas	yes	yes
Northeast		
Connecticut	yes	no
Delaware	yes	no
Maine	no	don't know
Maryland	no	yes
Massachusetts	no	no
New Hampshire	no	no
New Jersey	yes	don't know
New York	no	yes
Pennsylvania	no	don't know
Rhode Island	no	yes
Vermont	no	don't know
Virginia	no	don't know
West Virginia	no	yes
Midwest		
Illinois	no	don't know
Indiana	no	yes
Iowa	no	don't know
Kansas	yes	don't know
Kentucky	yes	yes
Michigan	yes	yes
Minnesota	no	don't know
Missouri	yes	don't know
Nebraska	no	don't know
North Dakota	no	no
Ohio	no	don't know
South Dakota	no	don't know
Wisconsin	yes	yes
West		
Arizona	yes	don't know
California	*	*
Colorado	*	*
Idaho	no	*
Montana	yes	yes
Nevada	no	don't know
New Mexico	no	no
Oregon	*	*
Utah	*	*
Washington	no	*
Wyoming	no	no
Canada		
Alberta	no	*
British Columbia	no	don't know
Manitoba	*	*
New Brunswick	no	no
Nova Scotia	no	no
Ontario	no	no
Quebec	no	don't know
Saskatchewan	no	no

*Data not provided/available

SPECIAL WILDLIFE COOPERATIVE SECTION: FORMAL AGENCY PROGRAMS AND INCENTIVES



More than 90 percent of white-tailed deer live on private land (see 2014 Whitetail Report) and, according to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, most big game hunting (84 percent) occurs on private land. Thus, the most successful deer management programs should provide outreach and technical support for private landowners to maintain and/or improve habitat and enhance recreational opportunities.

With regards to QDM Cooperatives, we asked state and provincial agencies if they have a formal program for private landowners involved in wildlife cooperatives, and if they offer any incentives to those involved in them. Twelve of 44 states (27 percent) that responded to our survey have such a program; most are found in the Southeast (5), followed by the Northeast (3), Midwest (2) and West (2). Incentives such as professional guidance (including site visits, habitat assessments, property management plans, annual harvest reports, and population monitoring),

free or reduced-price bonus antlerless tags (through a program like DMAP), financial assistance toward land rental or habitat improvements, access to workshops, and other items are available in 16 of 44 states (36 percent), with the majority occurring in the Southeast (9) and the least in the Midwest (1). In Canada, none of the provinces that responded have a formal program, and only New Brunswick offers any incentives.

QDMA RECOMMENDATIONS

Although we're pleased to see that programs and/or incentives exist in nearly every region in North America, similar to cataloging the minimum acreage involved in cooperatives (see page 29), there is room for improvement here as well. We encourage all state and provincial agencies that currently do not offer either a formal program or incentivizes landowners to get involved in wildlife cooperatives to consider their availability in the future.

COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS AND INCENTIVES BY STATE/PROVINCE

State/Province	Formal Program	Incentives
Southeast		
Alabama	yes	yes
Arkansas	yes	yes
Florida	yes	yes
Georgia	no	no
Louisiana	no	yes
Mississippi	no	yes
North Carolina	no	yes
Oklahoma	yes	yes
South Carolina	no	yes
Tennessee	no	no
Texas	yes	yes
Northeast		
Connecticut	no	no
Delaware	yes	yes
Maine	no	no
Maryland	no	no
Massachusetts	no	no
New Hampshire	no	no
New Jersey	no	yes
New York	yes	yes
Pennsylvania	no	no
Rhode Island	yes	no
Vermont	no	no
Virginia	no	yes
West Virginia	no	no
Midwest		
Illinois	no	no
Indiana	no	no
Iowa	no	no
Kansas	no	no
Kentucky	no	no
Michigan	yes	no
Minnesota	no	no
Missouri	no	no
Nebraska	no	no
North Dakota	no	no
Ohio	no	no
South Dakota	no	no
Wisconsin	yes	yes
West		
Arizona	yes	yes
California	*	*
Colorado	*	*
Idaho	no	no
Montana	yes	yes
Nevada	no	no
New Mexico	no	no
Oregon	*	*
Utah	*	*
Washington	no	no
Wyoming	no	no
Canada		
Alberta	no	no
British Columbia	no	no
Manitoba	*	*
New Brunswick	no	yes
Nova Scotia	no	no
Ontario	no	no
Quebec	no	no
Saskatchewan	no	no

*Data not provided/available

SPECIAL WILDLIFE COOPERATIVE SECTION: MINIMUM ACREAGE IN COOPERATIVES



To measure the scope of positive impacts associated with QDM Cooperatives, such as more efficient communication strategies between/among hunters and their wildlife agencies, increased hunter satisfaction, improved habitat, better population and disease control, and enjoying an advanced buck age structure, among other benefits, we also asked state and provincial agencies to estimate the minimum acreage they currently have in wildlife cooperatives within their jurisdictions.

Clearly there is much to be learned, as most surveys were returned blank. This is troubling considering the fact that we know interest in cooperatives is growing,

there are tangible benefits to forming them and there are at least 14 states that employ personnel to work with private landowners on wildlife cooperatives.

QDMA RECOMMENDATIONS

Our survey revealed nearly 3.5 million acres in some form of wildlife Cooperative throughout the Southeast, Northeast and Midwest. This is cause for celebration, but it's also a concern because we know this assessment is a gross underestimate based on known Cooperative-heavy states whose acreage totals were not provided. In fact, Maryland, Missouri and Texas alone accounted for 92 percent of the total Cooperative acreage. Secondly, there is serious potential for more hunters, landowners and agencies throughout North America to reap the very real benefits that Cooperatives have to offer.

Hunters and managers involved in unidentified wildlife Cooperatives should reach out to their state/provincial deer project leader (see page 55 for contact info) to discuss opportunities for collaboration such as harvest and observation data sharing, as well as discussion of population goals, disease concerns, and available programs and incentives to landowners.

COOPERATIVE ACREAGES BY STATE/PROVINCE

State/Province	Acreage
Alabama	*
Arkansas	500
Florida	*
Georgia	*
Louisiana	1,000
Mississippi	100,000
North Carolina	*
Oklahoma	*
South Carolina	*
Tennessee	*
Texas	2,762,923
Southeast Total	2,864,423
Connecticut	0
Delaware	1500
Maine	*
Maryland	200,000
Massachusetts	*
New Hampshire	*
New Jersey	*
New York	*
Pennsylvania	*
Rhode Island	11,229
Vermont	*
Virginia	*
West Virginia	*
Northeast Total	212,729
Illinois	*
Indiana	0
Iowa	*
Kansas	*
Kentucky	*
Michigan	108,598
Minnesota	*
Missouri	220,000
Nebraska	*
North Dakota	*
Ohio	*
South Dakota	*
Wisconsin	38,400
Midwest Total	366,998
3-Region Total	3,444,151
Arizona	*
California	*
Colorado	*
Idaho	*
Montana	*
Nevada	*
New Mexico	*
Oregon	*
Utah	*
Washington	*
Wyoming	0
West Total	0
Alberta	0
British Columbia	*
Manitoba	*
New Brunswick	*
Nova Scotia	*
Ontario	*
Quebec	0
Saskatchewan	*
Canada Total	0

*Data not provided/available

Top-5 States Total Acreage in Wildlife Cooperatives

State	Acres
Texas	2,762,923
Missouri	220,000
Maryland	200,000
Michigan	108,598
Mississippi	100,000

QDMA: ENSURING THE FUTURE OF DEER HUNTING



QDMA is the leading whitetail organization dedicated to conserving North America's favorite game animal. We are hunters from all walks of life who share a passion for white-tailed deer. We believe it is our responsibility to ensure the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. As the authority on all things whitetail, we blend the art of hunting with the science of management to create better deer and better deer hunting. We accomplish our mission by focusing efforts in five key areas: Research, Education, Advocacy, Certification and Hunting.

RESEARCH

Sound deer management decisions require reliable information, and this information generally comes from research. QDMA is involved in all areas of white-tailed deer research including biology, ecology, management, hunting, diseases and human dimensions. QDMA helps design, coordinate, and fund practical research projects that increase knowledge and improve management. Since 2006, QDMA has contributed more than half a million dollars to support important research projects in over 20 states.

EDUCATE

Since its earliest days, QDMA has been a recognized leader in educating hunters, landowners, wildlife professionals and the

public on all aspects of whitetail biology and management and habitat improvement. However, the types of information desired by these groups as well as the tools available to deliver this information constantly changes, and QDMA is keeping pace. QDMA continues with existing educational activities such as seminars, field days, and the ever-popular *Quality Whitetails* magazine, but it also includes delivery methods such as television, DVDs, Web-based opportunities and our new e-book, *QDMA's Guide to Successful Deer Hunting*. We also now staff several habitat and Cooperative specialists around the U.S. to help guide management decisions for hunters and landowners.

ADVOCATE

Each year there are countless threats to the future of deer hunting and management as the local, state and national levels. These issues impact everyone that pursues white-tailed deer. Due to QDMA's growth and strong support from the professional wildlife community, it is considered the most respected and influential whitetail organization in North America. As a result, QDMA serves as the leading advocate for the wise management of white-tailed deer and the protection of our deer-hunting heritage. QDMA also maintains strong ties with its members, other conservation organizations, state and

federal agencies, and other groups with an interest in whitetail hunting and management. In fact, recently the QDMA helped launch and became a principal partner organization of the National Deer Alliance to help address the biggest advocacy issues in the country. Every day QDMA fights for all deer hunters across North America!

CERTIFY

In 2006, QDMA created an individual certification program that includes three levels of potential achievement, and each must be completed in sequence. Deer Steward I provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the key principles of deer and habitat biology, ecology, and management. Deer Steward II teaches students how to apply the principles learned in Level I through hands-on and field experience. Finally, Deer Steward III, the most prestigious, must be earned through an individual's long-term service to white-tailed deer and/or the QDMA. QDMA also launched the Land Certification Program in 2012, and more recently offered our inaugural Deer Steward module in 2015. The goal of these programs is to create more knowledgeable hunters and managers and to have improved deer herds and habitats.

HUNT

Hunting is an essential tool for sound deer management and part of our sporting heritage. However, in many states hunter numbers have declined, and existing hunter recruitment programs are proving only marginally effective. In response, QDMA developed an innovative youth and new hunter education and outreach program, and it is comprised of the following components: Share Your Hunt™, #FirstDeer Campaign, Field to Fork, QDMA in the Classroom, QDMA's Rack Pack, and our Mentored Hunting Guide, to name a few. The collective goal of these programs is to produce more deer hunters and better ambassadors for hunting, not simply to take more kids deer hunting.

The following pages are a brief synopsis of what was accomplished in the last 12 months within each of these mission areas.

2016 QDMA ADVOCACY UPDATE



Every year QDMA monitors legislation, regulation changes and policy on behalf of deer hunters, supporting initiatives that help ensure the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat, and our hunting heritage – and opposing those that do not. This past year was the busiest for QDMA’s advocacy team, and what follows is a look at QDMA’s actions on legislation and policy during 2016.

Since 2006, QDMA has engaged in nearly 850 major initiatives. In 2016 we engaged in 100 legislative, regulatory or policy issues; 31 at the national level and 69 at the state level in 19 states and one province (see map). Regionally, this included five states in the Northeast, six states in the Midwest, and eight in the Southeast. The QDMA’s engagement ranged from comments on state deer management plans to increasing fines for poaching, habitat management on public lands, ensuring the right to hunt, and more. Below is a sample of some of the advocacy issues QDMA was involved with during 2016:

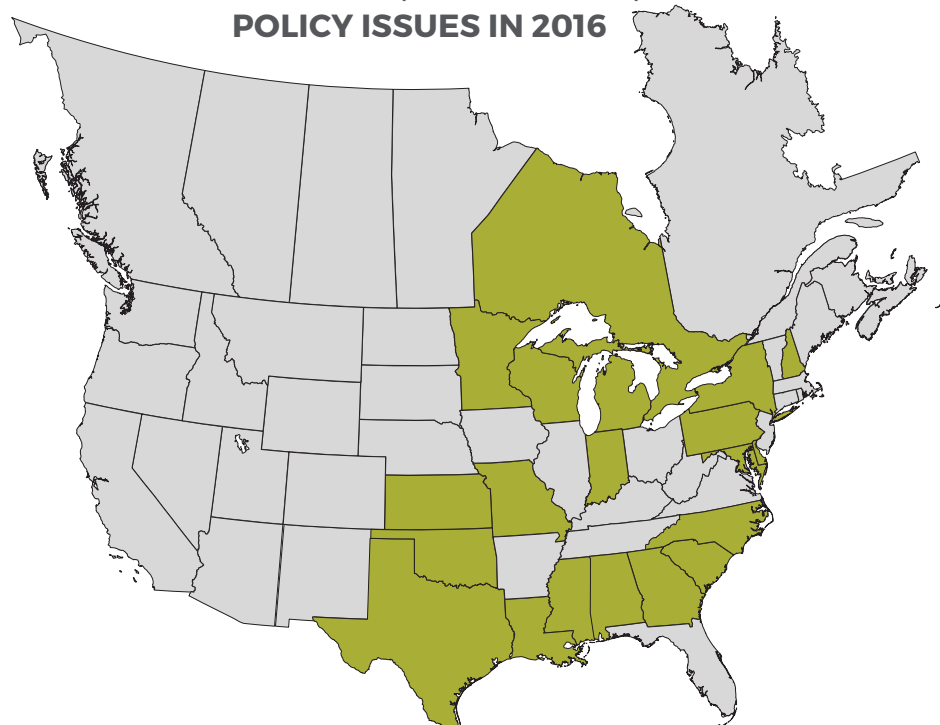
- Supported Bipartisan Sportsmen’s Act (S. 659)
- Supported North Carolina Senate Bill 889 to provide the right to hunt and fish
- Supported New York Assembly Bill 1846 and Senate Bill 3101 to provide additional liability protection to private land-owners
- Opposed Pennsylvania House Bill 2083 that would amend the Game Code and negatively impact hunting

- Supported Louisiana’s and Minnesota’s carcass import prohibitions to protect against the spread of CWD
- Encouraged Congress to keep public lands public
- Provided comments to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry on its wildlife management plan
- Supported Delaware legislation to increase poaching fines and penalties

- Provided comments to USDA-APHIS on their CWD regulations
- Supported Kansas Constitutional Amendment 1 providing the right to hunt, fish and trap
- Supported Indiana Public Question 1 providing the right to hunt, fish and harvest wildlife
- Supported Pennsylvania House Bill 1722 that would allow leashed tracking to locate wounded big game species
- Supported Indiana DNR’s forestry management programs
- Supported Mississippi House Bill 1151 to increase wildlife funding
- Supported South Carolina Senate Bill 454 – the Deer Management Bill

If you have questions about any of these items, or if there are emerging issues in your state or province that you’d like to discuss with QDMA, contact Kip Adams. No other deer organization fights as hard for hunters’ rights as QDMA. We need your help to increase QDMA’s effectiveness at fighting for deer hunters, so please consider becoming a member of QDMA today if you are not one already, or help by signing up your hunting friends and family.

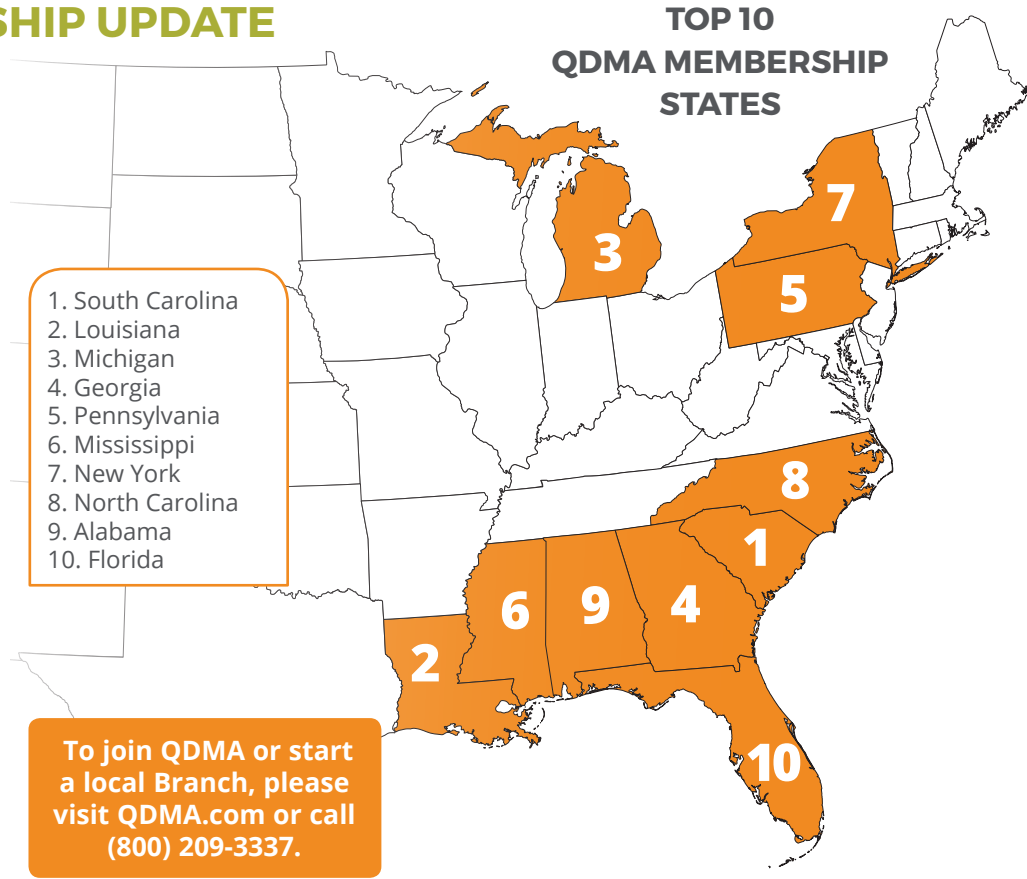
STATES/PROVINCES WHERE QDMA ENGAGED IN LEGISLATION, REGULATION, OR POLICY ISSUES IN 2016



2016 QDMA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

In 2016, QDMA had more than 60,000 members in all 50 states and Canada. Since the beginning, QDMA has worked to educate its members and all deer hunters about the benefits of the Quality Deer Management (QDM) philosophy. This effort – aided by the support of numerous member-volunteers, corporate sponsors, and other QDM advocates – has rapidly increased awareness and implementation of QDM throughout North America, resulting in healthier, more balanced deer populations and more rewarding hunting experiences.

As QDMA continues to grow in membership and influence, the nonprofit association will work to secure a sustainable future for wild white-tailed deer through practical research and by advocating for wise policy and regulation that will protect our hunting heritage. Additionally, QDMA members and advocates continue to attract, assist, educate and guide young and new hunters to ensure they become tomorrow's stewards of whitetails and all wildlife.

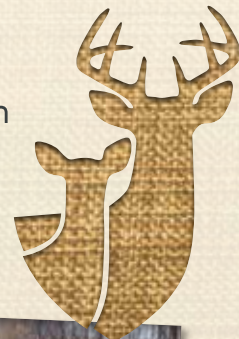


QDMA - WHERE DEER HUNTERS BELONG

Your support enables QDMA to share our:

- ★ Educational Resources in Your Community
- ★ Commitment to Recruit and Mentor New Hunters
- ★ Powerful Voice on Whitetail Hunting and Management Issues
- ★ Resources to Fund Whitetail Research Projects

Join us in making a difference in your community by becoming a member today!



Make a Difference - Keep it Local!



2016 QDMA CANADA UPDATE



2016 was a great year not only for QDMA Canada but also for our members, our deer herds and deer hunters across the country. The shorter and milder winter of 2015/16 gave Canada's deer herds a much needed reprieve after several harsh winters during recent years.

Across much of the landscape, more does and fawns were observed this spring and summer, giving hope that populations are on the rise after several years of decline or only moderate growth. Although the eastern half of the country experienced a very dry summer, deer seem to be in good overall health heading into what appears to be a more "normal" winter for many jurisdictions.

In the past 18 months, QDMA Canada membership has almost tripled, ending the year at slightly over 1,200 members. Advertising and marketing efforts are proving fruitful as are the increasing number of banquets and publicly-held Branch events resulting in more and more of Canada's hunters being introduced to the QDM philosophy. Four fundraising banquets were held in 2016 compared to what was normally one, giving our Branches the oppor-

tunity to host productive events for their local membership while also raising funds to be used within their communities. With the addition of the new Simcoe County and Prescott-Russell County Branches this year, we are expecting eight to 10 banquets to be held in 2017, with our increased number of Branches now totalling three in New Brunswick, two in Quebec and 10 in Ontario.

Increased visibility on social media and in print matched with a new and expanding Branch network are sure to have a positive effect on Canadian membership and expansion for 2017.

Many of our Branches became involved with helping get the next generation of hunters educated and into the field in 2016. Four educational youth events were held, including one in Eastern Ontario that provided all hunter and firearms safety training to the youth at no cost and ended with a fully-guided goose hunt. As a key partner with the Eastern Ontario Youth Hunting Collaborative, this model is sure to continue with QDMA support for many years to come.

A first-time educational opportunity

was also offered to our adult membership this year. The Deer Steward I class was held this past September at Eastern Canadian Outfitters in Cayamant, Quebec, approximately 1.5 hours north of Ottawa. This marks the first time this incredible training opportunity has been offered north of the border. Thirteen Canadian and two American participants thoroughly enjoyed the class and field portions of the course, while they and the instructors enjoyed fishing, campfires and great comradery in the Canadian wilderness.

Partnership opportunities continue to present themselves in Canada, and we are honored to be considered and included with other like-minded conservation organizations. We can't let this year pass without thanking our Corporate Sponsors Rackstacker and Valley Guiding and Outfitting for their financial support and assistance.

Individually and collectively, we are well positioned to continue to promote our mission of ensuring the future of white tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage here in Canada. For more information visit QDMA.ca.

QDMA COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE: THE TRUSTED SOURCE

At QDMA, we work to provide hunters with the most relevant and useful information to help them produce better deer and enjoy better deer hunting. Yes, lots of websites and publications do this, too. What separates QDMA's website and publications from many others is an extra effort to ensure our information is reliable and as free from bias as possible. QDMA members can learn with confidence, knowing that at least three wildlife biologists proofread QDMA's *Quality Whitetails* magazine before it goes to press. They ensure our content is supported by the most current scientific research. Whether it's a statement about deer behavior, biology or habitat management, information that doesn't withstand fact-checking doesn't make it into our pages or onto our website. Even articles written by wildlife biologists are reviewed by other wildlife biologists – they are human and have their own biases and flaws just like the rest of us. In our magazine and on the QDMA website, wildlife biologists get fact-checked just like everyone else.

This commitment to reliable, science-based guidance on deer hunting and management – combined with our staff's passion for the joys and rewards of deer hunting and our hunting heritage – is helping to drive growth of our audiences.

In 2016, our social media fan-base

continued steady upward growth. Our following on Facebook has doubled in the last two years alone to almost a quarter-million fans, all earned organically. Launched in early 2015, our Instagram presence is growing rapidly and will likely surpass 50,000 followers by its second birthday. So, whether you enjoy Facebook, Twitter or Instagram – or all three – you'll find that QDMA's social media accounts supply reliable information and great social engagement and enjoyment.

This occurred during a very busy year for QDMA Communications: 2016 included the production and launch of QDMA's first-ever e-book, our *Guide to Successful Deer Hunting* (see page 36 of this report), which will be distributed free to all graduates of HunterEd.com's online hunting safety courses. Additionally, the Communications staff undertook a complete redesign and relaunch of the QDMA website (see the facing page).

Going into 2017, QDMA's flagship publication, *Quality Whitetails*, received one of its regular design make overs, but

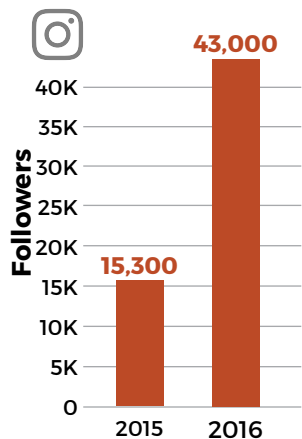
our commitment to filling its pages with high-quality, reliable deer hunting content remains the same. This commitment was rewarded in 2016 by the Professional Outdoor Media Association (POMA), which recognized one of our articles for its 2016 Pinnacle Award in Conservation. The article focused on the impacts of chronic wasting disease (CWD) on deer hunters.

Whether you engage with QDMA through our free e-newsletter, social media, the website, as a supporting member, as an attendee at an educational event, as a donor, or all of the above and more, we look forward to helping you enjoy better deer hunting in 2017!

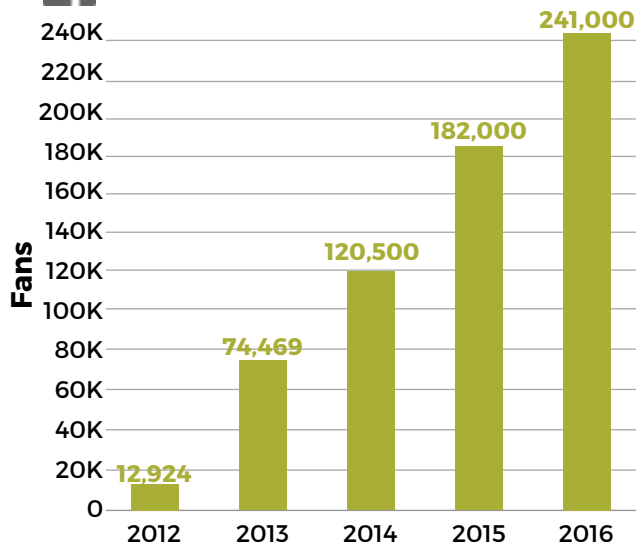


The Professional Outdoor Media Association (POMA) named QDMA's article, "10 Reasons You Don't Want CWD in Your Woods," the winner of the 2016 Pinnacle Award in the Conservation category. POMA's annual Pinnacle Awards, presented in partnership with Mossy Oak, honor journalists for remarkable achievement in traditional outdoor sports-focused communications.

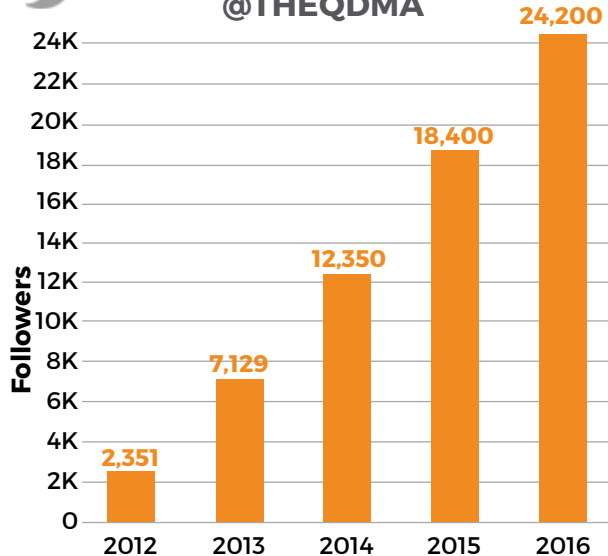
INSTAGRAM @THEQDMA



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THE NEW QDMA.COM

QDMA announced the launch of its redesigned website, **QDMA.com**, on August 15, 2016. The new website, produced in partnership with Blackbaud, Inc., represents a significant advancement over the old site in a number of areas.

The new website is responsive to mobile devices, a critical feature now that the majority of visitors are viewing the site on smartphones or tablets. Whatever device you are using, navigation is easier, and improvements to automated forms make it much simpler to join, renew or update your membership information, as well as make donations to the organization, any time of the day or week.

For deer hunting and management guidance, content is organized under a “Hunt” menu – for basic and advancing hunting strategies – and a “Manage” menu for tips on food plots, herd management and habitat improvement. Blogs and video content are easy to share with hunters in your neighborhood, Cooperative, or other social networks. For specific questions not answered by freely available content, use the “Ask QDMA” feature under the Manage menu to submit questions and get timely



responses from a qualified member of the QDMA staff. Since August 2016, QDMA has fielded and responded to hundreds of “Ask QDMA” questions from members and fans.

To get involved in QDMA’s grassroots events, you can easily locate your nearest QDMA Branch banquet or educational field day on the new website, or to start a new Branch in your area you can find and contact your nearest QDMA Regional Director. For volunteers, the new website also now includes a Branch leader portal with access to important forms, documents and media necessary to manage and promote QDMA Branches.

There’s much more to explore: Browse the schedule of Deer Steward courses, find out about our youth programs and Share Your Hunt support system, or shop the online store for management gear and QDMA apparel.

Jump on your mobile device now and check out the new QDMA.com!



QDMA’s newly relaunched website is now mobile friendly and easy to view and navigate on any smartphone or tablet.

HERD, HABITAT, HUNTING.

Ask QDMA

Get answers to your deer questions from our trained staff.

GET ANSWERS

GREAT HUNTING STARTS HERE!

Want to become a deer hunter? QDMA is committed to helping you, or people you know, get started. You'll find plenty of information here, and soon we will release our new 6-book, QDMA's Guide to Successful Deer Hunting.

5 Red-Hot Rut Stands for Pressured Deer

November 17, 2016 | By Jack Rosewell

READ MORE

Food Plots

Food plots can help fill essential nutritional gaps when natural deer food sources are scarce.

Habitat Improvement

Simple, do-it-yourself techniques can improve open and forage, attracting more deer to your hunting area.

Herd Management

The most exciting deer hunting occurs where herds have adequate nutrition and bucks of many ages are roaming the woods.

Helping New Hunters

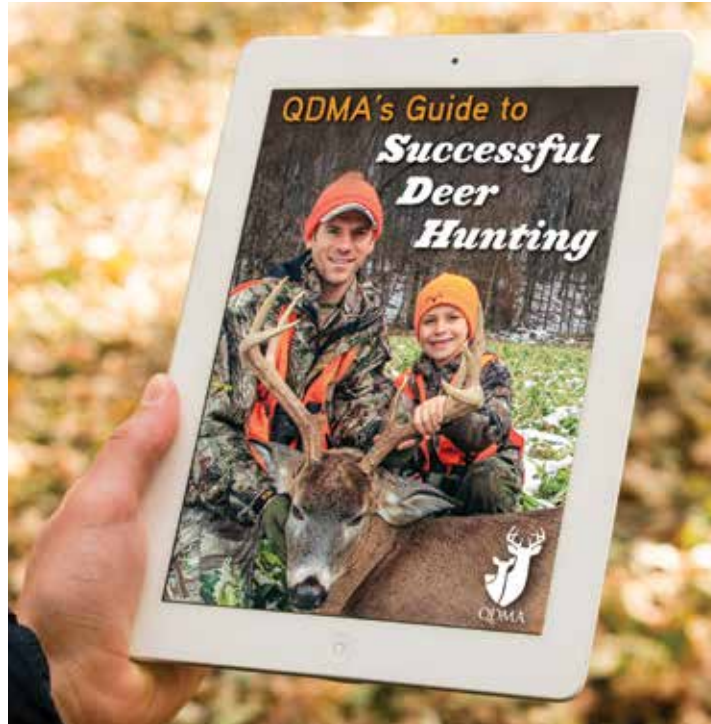


QDMA's New E-book is a Graduation Gift to Hunting Safety Students

Your QDMA membership dues are helping tens of thousands of new hunters learn how to pursue deer. They are graduates of Hunter-Ed.com's online hunting safety course, and in the past they had one primary request: Now that we are certified safe hunters, how do we hunt deer?

Kalkomey, the parent company of Hunter-Ed.com and many other outdoor safety programs, approached QDMA last year for a solution. In response, we produced an interactive e-book, *QDMA's Guide to Successful Deer Hunting*, that is now being provided **free** to every graduate of Hunter-Ed.com's course – which is an official hunting safety course in 45 states.

"When it comes to the 'what's next' beyond basic hunter education, Kalkomey relies heavily on partners such as QDMA," said Mitch Strobl, Vice President of Business Development. "We want our students to have access to the best resources out there, and this new e-book is a prime example of just that. Through strategic partnerships, we're able to help our students along from initial interest to total participation, thus helping achieve our recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) goals."



QDMA's Guide to Successful Deer Hunting is designed to fill the role of a hunting mentor for new hunters who may not have family or friends who can guide them. The e-book is 267 pages long and includes 15 chapters written by eight different contributors, all QDMA staff members. Major subjects are expanded upon in 18 embedded videos produced exclusively for the project by Primos Hunting. Dozens of full color photos also help illustrate the chapters, and links to external resources and articles allow readers to explore every

topic in greater depth as desired.

"Will Primos and his team produced a fantastic series of supporting videos for the e-book," said Hank Forester, QDMA's Hunting Heritage Programs Manager and one of the book's contributors. "The videos cover some of the more complex subjects, like choosing a rifle or using deer calls, and they really round out the usefulness and interactivity of the project. For those readers who don't have someone to teach them how to hunt or take them to the woods, our e-book will be a terrific help."

Chapters of the book cover topics like how to find a place to hunt, whether on public or private land; how to

scout for and read deer sign; productive stand sites; selecting and using archery equipment or hunting firearms; making successful shots; recovering deer; processing and cooking venison, and many others. Throughout the book, QDMA included sidebar information on whitetail biology and behavior, conservation, and management.

In addition to being distributed free to Hunter-Ed.com graduates, the new e-book is also available for purchase on Amazon, and you can download and read it on any device using the free Kindle app. Gifting the e-book to new or aspiring hunters is easy through Amazon. All you need is the e-mail address of the gift recipient.

QDMA's Guide to Successful Deer Hunting is the first e-book in QDMA's library. Previously, QDMA published *Deer Cameras: The Science of Scouting* and also *Quality Food Plots*, the highest selling book on wildlife food plots ever published, in addition to other educational booklets, maps and posters. Visit QDMA's online store at QDMA.com for more information on these other titles.

How to Gift or Get QDMA's E-Book

Hunter-Ed.com Graduates: Anyone who completes their hunting safety training through Hunter-Ed.com will be provided a free copy as a graduation gift.

Purchase through Amazon: You can read the e-book on any smartphone or tablet by first downloading the free Kindle app. Then locate the e-book in Amazon, purchase for \$9.95, and have the file delivered to your device. It's easy.

Gift through Amazon: Share the e-book with anyone you know who is new to hunting by giving it as a gift. All you need is the gift recipient's e-mail address. Amazon will deliver the gift on the date you choose.

CAN QDM COOPERATIVES REVOLUTIONIZE HOW WE MANAGE WILDLIFE?



About 20 years ago, Quality Deer Management (QDM) Cooperatives, spurred by increasing popularity of QDM, began to pop up across much of the white-tail's range. However, in the past 10 years, we have seen a tremendous increase in voluntary partnerships between landowners with a common goal to influence large-scale deer management decisions. QDM Cooperatives may not only revolutionize how landowners manage for white-tailed deer with increasing in habitat fragmentation and decreasing parcel sizes in much of the whitetails range, but they could revolutionize how state and federal agencies implement wildlife conservation.

The University of Georgia (UGA), the QDMA, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have set out to quantify the conservation utility of Cooperatives by increasing habitat network connectivity across large landscapes, and to determine what factors create successful Cooperatives.

The project will determine the landscape level impact that QDM Cooperatives can have as conservation planning tools for state wildlife agencies in six states: Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Missouri, New York, and Texas. Researchers will also be surveying a subset of Cooperatives in each state to determine what makes them successful. Working with the current network of QDM Cooperatives in each state through QDMA and state wildlife agencies, we can determine which demographics and what spatial attributes aid in the successful formation of a Cooperative.

Increasing landowner implementation and formation of Cooperatives raises specific questions about the opportunity for them to provide conservation benefits. This increase in implementation also raises questions of their landscape level importance as conservation planning tools. As many QDMA members know, QDM Cooperatives can drastically increase

hunter satisfaction among members while allowing for increased numbers of young bucks making it to maturity; but, what other benefits do wildlife receive from Cooperatives? Most deer hunters who are actively involved in a Cooperative spend many hours afield improving habitat for white-tailed deer by implementing food plots, conducting timber stand improvement, or even just hunting. The increased level of habitat and herd management may translate into QDM Cooperatives being the only high-quality habitat islands available to many wildlife species in the sea of under-managed landscapes.

This research could take a secret that QDM practitioners and QDMA members have known about for years, and put QDMA members at the forefront of revolutionizing conservation planning and implementation across North America.

2016 QDMA CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS UPDATE



DEER STEWARD PROGRAM

The QDMA's Deer Steward Certification program is a personal educational experience designed to offer landowners, hunters, and natural resource professionals an opportunity to learn from the nation's top experts about QDM. The first two Levels are courses, Level III is an application; all three need to be taken in succession. By taking Levels I and II, graduates are able to design and implement their own personal comprehensive, property-specific white-tailed deer management plan. Level III is an honor earned after giving back to the resource over a long period of time rather than something you can learn in a course.

To date, 1,588 individuals have completed the Deer Steward program, with 1,024 Level I, 518 Level II, and 46 Level III graduates, representing 45 states and the nation's capital, five Canadian provinces, one of the U.S. Virgin Islands and Australia. Over 100 more were also enrolled and engaged in the Level I class online at the

time of this printing, bringing the total to nearly 1,700 individuals! Since 2007, QDMA has held 21 Level I classes and 18 Level II classes in the following states: Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas, as well as in the province of Quebec.

ONLINE DEER STEWARD CLASSES

QDMA's popular educational series continued to offer the option to take Level I online in 2016, and after four years of availability, over 800 people (nearly half) have participated in this format.

The good news is that it never sells out! All that is required is a high-speed internet connection and you can enroll in the Level I class online. Once registered, attendees gain access to a digital recording of one of our previous Deer Steward Level I courses (filmed in front of a live audience

at Clemson University) and will have up to 180 days to complete the series of six sessions (approximately 16 one-hour topics) at their own pace. Just like the in-person classes, registrants must pass an exam to graduate, and continuing education credits are available. Graduates of Deer Steward Level I online will be eligible to take one of the in-person Level II courses upon completion.

DEER STEWARD MODULES

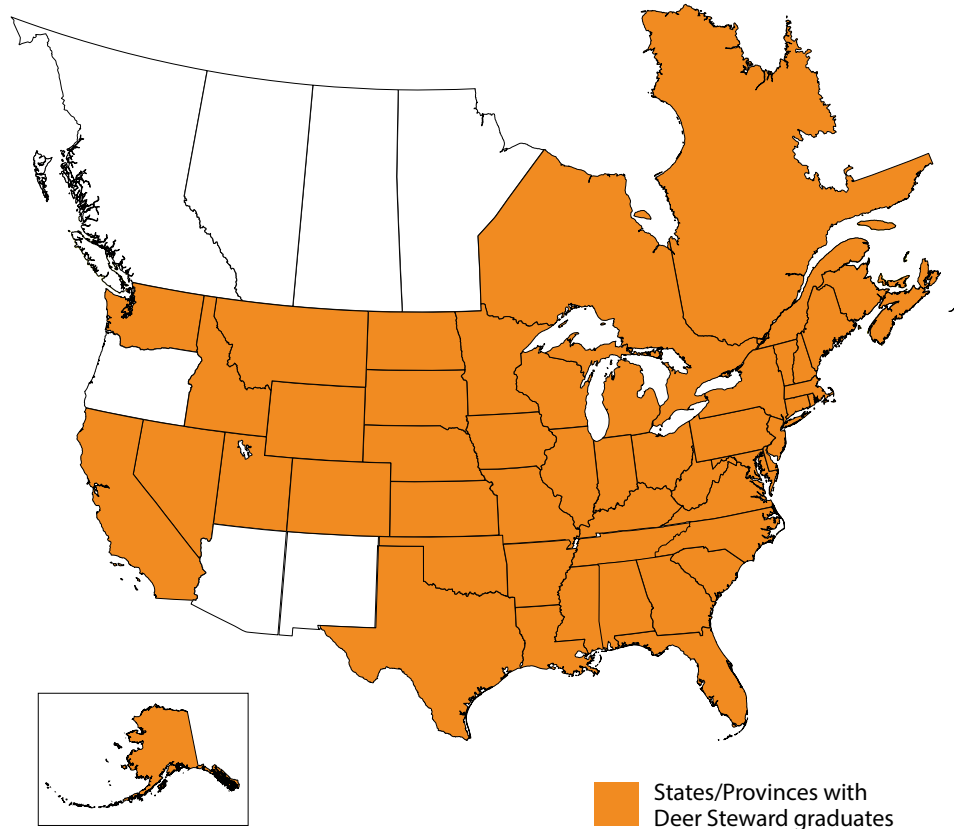
To expand on our traditional delivery methods of education, we launched a new, more intensive, topic-specific training to our members and interested hunters in 2015. This new series was called the Deer Steward Modules, and it addresses only one aspect or management technique of QDM, instead of all Four Cornerstones that we cover in Deer Steward Level I and II. In 2016 we offered Modules on Habitat Enhancement and Predator Management. Because of their popularity, we expect to expand this program in the future.

LAND CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

In 2011, QDMA launched the Land Certification Program (LCP). The LCP was developed to recognize the accomplishments of landowners and sportsmen implementing the Four Cornerstones of QDM throughout North America, as well as those committed to ethics, conservation and biodiversity through land stewardship. The LCP also encourages management practices on participating lands that will enhance deer and other wildlife species, habitat conditions, and hunting experiences by providing incentives and/or assistance.

The LCP is a multi-level, voluntary process which evaluates one or more properties against an established list of standards. Three categories of achievement are outlined in the program, including Pledged Lands, Certified Lands and Legacy Lands. Criteria are established for each level of achievement.

Numerous half-day training courses to qualify LCP property inspectors were also conducted over the last several years in 10 states and New Brunswick, Canada. Five of those were held in cooperation with American Tree Farm System inspector trainings, and one of those was at the Association of Consulting Foresters national convention in 2014. To date, nearly 35,000 total acres have been enrolled in LCP, and about 250 LCP inspectors are available to QDMA members to inspect



their land. These folks can be found on our website under the “Manage” menu option.

To learn more about either the Deer Steward or Land Certification Programs,

or about registering for an upcoming course in 2017, visit www.QDMA.com or contact Matt Ross at mross@qdma.com or by calling (518) 886-1732.

HEARTLAND BOWHUNTER FARM AMONG 2017 DEER STEWARD LOCATIONS



Level 1

May 19-22

Kirkville, Missouri
Heartland Bowhunter Farm Field Trip

Level 2

June 23-26

Hazen, Arkansas
Mike Freeze
Wattensaw WMA

September 8-11

Hastings, Michigan
Thornapple River
QDM Cooperative

For more information, visit QDMA.com or contact QDMA Certification Programs Manager Matt Ross by e-mail at mross@qdma.com or by calling (518) 886-1732.

QDMA FINANCIAL STATEMENT

As a grassroots member-centric organization, QDMA strives to maximize mission delivery and member value. To achieve this, QDMA exercises extreme fiscal discipline to enable consistent revenue growth and expense containment. This approach has proven successful as QDMA continues to experience sustained growth while maintaining its reputation as one of the leanest and most efficient nonprofit wildlife conservation organizations in the United States.

The Internal Revenue Service has ruled that QDMA qualifies under the provisions of Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization created for charitable, educational, and scientific purposes and, therefore, is exempt from federal income taxes. Donations to QDMA are deductible by the donor as charitable contributions for federal tax income purposes. QDMA's Federal Employer Identification Number is 57-0941892.

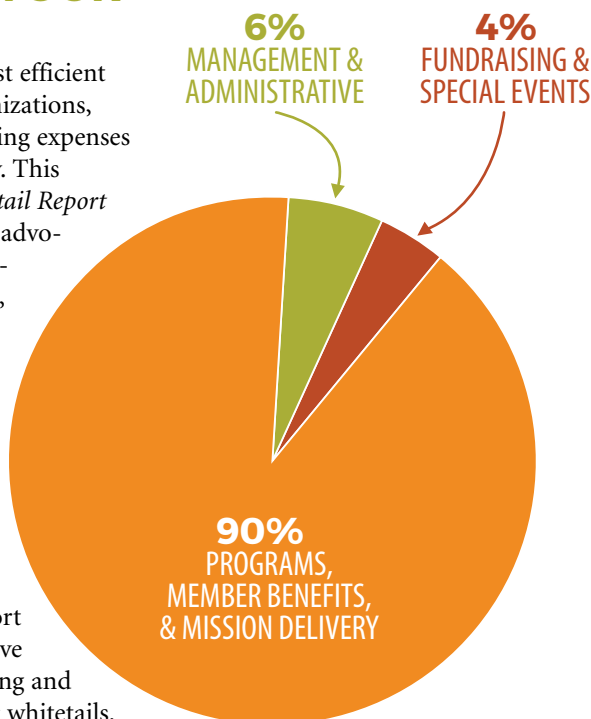
Notes to Spreadsheets:

2014 and 2015 financial information audited by Royals and Associates, Athens, Georgia.

2014 and 2015 financial information compiled by Turner and Patat, Athens, Georgia.

WHERE DOES YOUR MONEY GO?

QDMA is among the most efficient and effective non-profit organizations, with 90 percent of our operating expenses going toward mission delivery. This includes producing the *Whitetail Report* you are reading now, but also advocating for sound deer management in policy and regulation, working to secure our hunting heritage, supporting practical whitetail research to advance our hunting knowledge, and improving deer management and hunter education at the grassroots level throughout North America. When you donate to QDMA, your support enables action that will improve the quality of your deer hunting and secure a sustainable future for whitetails.



QDMA is among the most efficient non-profit conservation organizations, with 90 percent of operating expenses directed toward member services and mission delivery, especially in communities where our grassroots volunteers are active.



Statement of Financial Activities

Revenues	2014	2015
Advertising & Corporate Support	\$736,696	\$531,206
Member Program Services	\$2,159,775	\$2,275,767
Fundraising & Donations	\$1,440,101	\$1,460,196
Membership Dues	\$986,736	\$928,038
Other Income	\$71,851	\$85,744
Gross Receipts	\$5,397,159	\$5,280,951
Total Revenue	\$2,964,520	\$2,854,166
Expenses	2014	2015
Total Functional Expenses	\$2,800,394	\$2,872,614
Increase in Net Assets	\$164,126	-\$18,448
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$2,034,274	\$2,199,285
Net Assets at End of Year	\$2,199,285	\$2,162,700

Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS	Dec 31, 2014	Dec 31, 2015
Current Assets		
Cash Accounts	\$458,841	\$473,259
Accounts Receivable	\$198,278	\$104,103
Inventory	\$504,075	\$567,665
Investments	\$627,380	\$616,175
Total Current Assets	\$1,788,574	\$1,761,202
Property & Equipment		
Net of Accumulated Depreciation	\$1,826,212	\$1,782,555
Total Assets	\$3,614,786	\$3,544,082
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$302,057	\$365,995
Total Deferred Liabilities	\$1,113,444	\$1,015,387
Total Liabilities	\$1,415,501	\$1,381,382
Net Assets		
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$2,034,274	\$2,181,148
Increase in Net Assets	\$165,011	-\$18,448
Total Net Assets	\$2,199,285	\$2,162,700
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$3,614,786	\$3,544,082

QDMA 2015 HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

QDMA would like to thank and recognize those who were generous donors to QDMA in 2015. Through financial support beyond membership and participation in other programs, these donors are securing QDMA's mission: *To ensure the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage.*

Donor Recognition Categories

FOUNDER'S CIRCLE \$5,000+
CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE \$1,000-\$4,999
DIRECTOR'S CLUB \$500-\$999
LEADERSHIP CLUB \$250-\$499
QDMA PATRON \$100-\$249

FOUNDER'S CIRCLE

Bass Pro Shops, Mo.
 David Bastow, Pa.
 Ceres Foundation Inc, S.C.
 Camp-Younts Foundation/
 Hal Atkinson, Va.
 M. Austin Davis, Fla.
 Robert Nunnally, Ga.
 Brian Schafer, Mich.
 Vincent Shiel, Fla.

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 Brian Rouse, W.V.
 Jeffrey Rozhon, Fla.
 Vincent & Alba Russo, Ala.*
 Rodney Sather, S.D.
 James Simons, S.C.
 Carlton Spence, Fla.
 Art Schleich, N.Y.
 Jackie Schwan, N.D.*
 Linda Stern*
 Donnie Shedd, Ga.
 Peter Skrgic Jr, Pa.
 Ivan Stoltzfus, Pa.
 Rick Taketa, N.J.*
 Al Taylor, N.C.
 J. Theriot, Texas
 Kerry Thomas, Ga.
 Lindsay Thomas Jr., Ga.
 John Thornhill, S.C.
 Jimmy Timberlake, Ga.
 John Trout III, Ind.
 Ryan Tuttle, N.Y.
 Anthony Urciuoli, N.Y.
 Philip Vallone, N.Y.
 Josh Vann, S.C.
 Clay & Christy Vincent, Fla.*
 Sandra Warner, La.*
 Warner Wason, Texas
 Mike Welch, S.C.
 Charles West Sr, Del.
 Wharton TWP Hunt/Fish Club, Pa.
 Mark Wilmot, Mich.
 Howard Wilt, Pa.
 Robert Zaiglin, Texas

* Donation given in memory or honor of a QDMA member.

Please consider becoming a donor by contributing to QDMA. Your support is tax-deductible and will be greatly appreciated and used wisely to further our mission. Contact Jeff Beall, Director of Advancement (jbeall@qdma.com or **843-830-0087**), to learn about several options for Planned Giving.

THE RACK PACK – QDMA'S YOUTH PROGRAM

SUPPORT THE NEXT GENERATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

Another deer season is behind us. We hope yours was filled with productive hunts and precious memories. We also hope you took some time to introduce hunting to the next generation. The Rack Pack would like to ask every deer hunter to think about the role you can play in growing youth involvement in your community. Can you commit to signing up a new member, helping organize a youth hunt, championing a food plot competition or sponsoring a classroom? With your help, we can accomplish our goal of ensuring the future of deer hunting for generations to come.



QDMA PARTNERS WITH SCHOLASTIC 3-D ARCHERY

QDMA has partnered with the Scholastic 3-D Archery Program (S3DA) to help mentor more of the next generation of deer hunters. QDMA will offer free access to our *QDMA's Guide to Successful Deer Hunting* ebook to all S3DA participants, young proficient archers yearning to try deer hunting. The mission of Scholastic 3D Archery Program is to foster, educate, and guide youth in the areas of 3D, indoor, and outdoor target archery as well as safe, ethical bowhunting practices.

“More than 80 percent of students who participate in Scholastic 3-D Archery want to learn to hunt, and since many of their parents do too, a partnership with the nonprofit Quality Deer Management Association is a logical next step to meeting this demand and creating more hunters,” said Jennie Richardson, Executive Director of S3DA. “The QDMA is the leading whitetail organization providing educational resources for deer hunting and management and has a nationwide network of more than 60,000 members and volunteers. This partnership will not only expand our reach, but also the quality and quantity of information we can provide our students and instructors. The natural progression from shooting 3-D animal targets to hunting deer is the perfect pathway for recruiting future hunters and enhancing the already phenomenal growth of the S3DA program.”

QDMA will also provide discounted “QDMA in the Classroom” memberships (see page 43) and additional resources for S3DA coaches and teams to help educate and guide current archers into future deer hunters and stewards.

As QDMA and S3DA continue to grow, QDMA's ultimate goal is to empower Branches and members to host deer hunting workshops and facilitate hunts for S3DA members through our Share Your Hunt™ program



QDMA LAUNCHES SHARE YOUR HUNT™ PROGRAM

Last year QDMA Branches set an all-time record in new hunter recruitment, successfully taking over 500 hunters afield through various mentored hunt programs. Through 61 events — ranging from youth to first time adult hunters to military veterans and 70 military youth through partnership with the National Guard — Branches spent roughly \$100,000. With the launch of the Share Your Hunt™ program, QDMA will provide these hunters with educational resources, material support and safety.

The Share Your Hunt™ support program is available to Branches, providing insurance, membership, background checks, QDMA-branded hats and vests, program materials and best practices for hosting events targeting new hunters. We understand the challenge of expanding the base of hunters begins at the grassroots level and often creates some hurdles. With the generous support of title sponsor Bass Pro Shops and presenting sponsors Tactacam, Weyerhaeuser and Yeti, the program will assist in offsetting the cost of hosting hunts allowing Branches to focus efforts on scheduling more hunts and recruiting new hunters.



QDMA in the Classroom



The Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) is a non-profit wildlife conservation organization *dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage.*

QDMA is a recognized leader in educating deer hunters, wildlife professionals, the public and the next generation on all aspects of whitetail biology, management and habitat improvement.

With the advent of their youth education and outreach program, the Rack Pack, QDMA wanted to do more for the classrooms throughout the country.

Thus our QDMA in the Classroom membership was created. With the addition of a full deer biology and management curriculum, this is the best resource available to educate the next generation of deer hunters and stewards.

Deer Biology and Management Curriculum:

1. Deer Senses and Biology Presentation
2. Deer History and Management Presentation
3. Deer ID and Aging Presentation
 - Aging on the Hoof Activity
 - Aging and Judging DVD & Worksheet
 - Jawbone Aging Worksheet and Quiz (With 3-part video series)
4. Camera Survey Presentation
 - Camera Survey Analysis Activity
 - Management Plan Lab
5. Cumulative Test

Additional items: Guided Notes, QDMA's Whitetail Report, Crossword, Word Find, Careers in Conservation Blog, QDMA Approved Resources Guide

Classroom Membership: \$60

Sign up for QDMA's Classroom Membership and your class will receive ...



Six Issues of Quality Whitetails Magazine



Aging and Scoring Bucks on the Hoof DVD



Three Poster Combo Pack

QDMA's Deer Biology and Management Curriculum



HOW TO SIGN UP: Visit OneLessThing.net



Field to fork

An effort to recruit suburban “locavores” and introduce them to deer hunting met with great success. Now, to repeat the recipe!

BY CHARLES EVANS

When I ask people why they choose to pursue deer each fall, there are always a variety of replies. Some even struggle with the answer because hunting has become so ingrained in their lifestyle. However, a common theme across responses is “for the meat.” When it comes to speaking with those outside the hunting community, sometimes we get lost in the traditions and trophies and fail to communicate the satisfaction of putting food on our tables.

There is a large cultural shift in progress, and people are more conscious about the food they are consuming. Organic is by far the fastest growing segment of the food industry, supermarket chains like Whole Foods Market are gaining unprecedented popularity, and farm-to-table restaurants have become the place to be. These trends are being driven by “locavores” who want a deeper understanding of where their food comes from, and they prefer it to be locally sourced.

What locavores usually do not realize is that every American possesses the opportunity to obtain some of the healthiest red meat known to man. Fair-chase venison is the original free-range, additive-free meat, and it comes from an

animal that lived its life free from animal welfare concerns. How are we not doing a better job of marketing this? Well, we are working on that.

Hank Forester, QDMA’s Hunting Heritage Programs Manager, and I decided to take on the challenge of introducing locavores to the benefits of hunting for food in QDMA’s hometown of Athens, Georgia. We put our heads together, did a little research, based our program on an example from Kentucky created by QDMA and the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources, and the Athens

Field to Fork program was born. It’s a joint effort between QDMA, the National Wild Turkey Federation, and Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division.

Hank and I set up a booth at the local farmer’s market. We offered an impressive spread of samples of venison sausage, sliced backstrap with chimichurri sauce, venison jerky, and a handout entitled “Why should you hunt deer?” The reception was overwhelming. Everyone was curious, most tried venison, and quite a few signed up to go hunting with us. In a matter of six hours, we reached program capacity with a substantial waiting list. We ended up with a diverse group of participants ages 18 to 47 who all shared a common desire to have a connection with the food on their plate.

The training sessions came first. We held these on weekday evenings and



Venison samples and information about learning to hunt deer were well received at the Athens, Georgia farmer’s market.



In fall 2016, three of the Field to Fork hunters connected on venison, including Evan Stout (left) and Sam Kilkenny (below). Neither Evan nor Sam had been hunting before signing up for the program in summer 2016.

learned a little more about why everyone was there – while enjoying venison tacos. In the classroom, we covered how hunting has played a vital role in conservation historically and present day, an overview of deer biology, and crossbow safety. Crossbows were chosen to introduce this audience to the outdoors, because this allowed us to access local suburban properties, and for some locavores archery is initially more palatable than firearms. For the field component of training, we discussed hunting strategies and provided ample shooting opportunity on the range and from simulated stands.


Our guide selection process was an important one. We needed open-minded guides who shared a passion for locally sourced food with our target audience. The University of Georgia's Deer Lab students fit the bill perfectly! Hunting commenced when archery season opened in September.

On the afternoon of September 17, the guide/participant pairs departed for their respective stand locations. No bolts were released that first weekend, but there were quite a few sightings. We have been offering additional hunting opportunities since the initial hunt weekend and, so far, have had three successful harvests.

The first was Evan Stout, an undergraduate student at the University of Georgia. Evan and I were in a double hang-on set nestled amongst cedar limbs when we spotted two does and a fawn. We watched them move through, out of range, and I was sure we had missed our chance when Evan said, "Be quiet, one is coming back." Sure enough, the bigger doe was headed right for our best shooting lane. I bleated to stop her once she cleared the brush, and before I could say anything else Evan had doubled-lunged her at 35 yards. The blood trail was short, and Evan got his first field-dressing lesson!

To cap off the Field to Fork program, we hosted a culinary social at QDMA Headquarters with the participants, guides, and representatives from the partnering organizations. We had a variety of venison dishes and even grilled a backstrap from Evan's first deer. There were some excellent hunting stories told, and everyone gave their input on their experience in the program. A common response from participants when asked what they enjoyed about hunting was the meditative component of spending quiet time in the woods. This experience was equally rewarding for me, as it was inspiring to see there is interest

in hunting across other segments of society. They just need a welcoming hand to get started in what can definitely be an intimidating activity.

The rural traditions, values, and beliefs that have long formed the foundation of hunting in America are shifting. If we as hunters do not shift with them, if we do not welcome people who are interested in hunting but think differently or come from different backgrounds than us, we will be left behind. If you live in an area where farmer's markets are popular, farm-to-table restaurants are plentiful, and you are interested in replicating Field to Fork, please contact Hank Forester by e-mail at hforester@qdma.com. 

About the Author: Charles Evans earned his bachelor's and master's in wildlife biology from the University of Georgia and now works for the National Wild Turkey Federation as the Georgia R3 Coordinator. His position – which is also supported by QDMA, Georgia DNR-WRD, Safari Club International and the Georgia Wildlife Federation – was created to increase hunting participation and societal acceptance of hunting under the National Wild Turkey Federation's Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt initiative.



2016 QDMA BRANCH HIGHLIGHTS



No doubt, the heart and soul of QDMA is our volunteers; and, as a grassroots, member-based conservation organization, our network of local volunteers is integral to helping QDMA spread our mission and the message about Quality Deer Management (QDM).

2016 BRANCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- QDMA Branches raised over \$4 million for conservation.
- QDMA Branches contributed over 25 tons of venison, representing well over 200,000 meals.
- QDMA Branches conducted numerous educational events (field days, seminars and workshops) across the whitetail range.
- QDMA Branches enrolled well over 17,500 QDMA members - including 900 youth and 1,100 life and sponsor members.
- QDMA Branches hosted 120 fundraising events across the United States and Canada, up from 95 in 2015!
- QDMA Regional Directors formed 40 new Branches.
- QDMA Regional Directors maintained 222 active Branches in the United States and Canada.
- QDMA Branches or Branch members were directly involved in at least 69 advocacy issues in their locales involving white-tailed deer legislation or regulations.

look forward to an even better 2017.

Would you like to become a volunteer leader in your local hunting community, helping spread QDMA's message of sound deer management? Consider starting an official QDMA Branch – that's our name for local groups of QDMA members who join together for fellowship, fundraising, and promotion of the philosophy at the grassroots level. By volunteering to help lead a QDMA Branch, you get to know other like-minded deer hunters in your area and have fun working together to grow QDMA membership and QDM knowledge in your community. QDMA Branches host annual banquets and other fundraisers, field days, youth hunts, and other educational and promotional events.

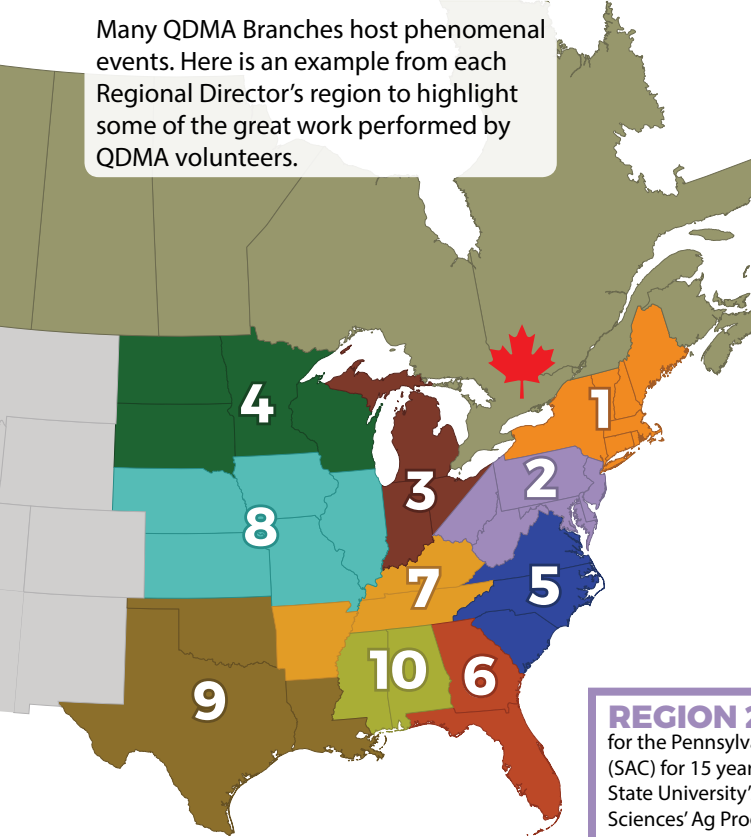
QDMA needs volunteer leaders like you! Join the fun by sending an e-mail to backyard@qdma.com and letting us know you would be willing to help form or grow a QDMA Branch in your area. We look forward to working with you to ensure the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage!

It was a great year for QDMA Branches and for those impacted by their efforts. Importantly, we



SPECIAL BRANCH EVENTS IN 2016

Many QDMA Branches host phenomenal events. Here is an example from each Regional Director's region to highlight some of the great work performed by QDMA volunteers.



CANADA The Southwestern Ontario Branch of QDMA Canada partnered with other local conservation groups for its annual presentation at a week-long youth hunting education event. The Branch also donated \$600 worth of archery equipment to a local youth archery program. The Lanark County Branch, in cooperation with the Eastern Ontario Youth Hunting Collaborative, completed the last of a series of youth events this past October. The Renfrew County Branch partnered with Rackstacker to put on a Food Plot Field Day discussing food plot techniques and the Four Cornerstones of QDM.

REGION 1 In February, the Jefferson-Lewis Branch held their fifth annual Ice Fishing Derby to get members and their families out of the house and enjoying a great time in the outdoors. Over 75 people showed up for the event, catching over 150 fish. The First New Hampshire Branch recently donated scholarship money to two separate causes. First, the Branch made a \$600 donation to the Becoming an Outdoor Woman program, which will cover two full scholarships. In addition, the Branch also made a \$1,000 donation for four half-scholarships toward the Barry Conservation 4-H Camp in Berlin, New Hampshire.

REGION 3 The Hall of Fame Branch hosted a Share Your Hunt™ event at president Zachary Boldizar's property in Ohio this past November. All three youth participants were fortunate enough to harvest deer. For two of the participants, it was their first deer. In May, the Southeast Michigan Branch held its 8th annual habitat improvement day. The event was held at Brauker Farms outside of Addison Michigan and had nearly 100 QDMA members in attendance.

REGION 6 The Georgia Foothills Branch donated four "QDMA in the Classroom" memberships to educators in both Habersham and Rabun County schools. The Branch also awarded a \$500 college scholarship to Brandon Kilby of Rabun County. The scholarship was limited to graduating high school seniors who will be entering a field of study that benefits the QDMA through education, research or law enforcement. The Georgia Foothills Branch also hosted its first FFA Deer Education Day in 2016.

REGION 4 The Southwestern Wisconsin Branch purchased two robotic deer decoys for local DNR Game Wardens to help them deter and apprehend poachers. This is the second set the Branch has purchased for the DNR in the past several years. The Southeast South Dakota Branch sponsored a Youth Deer Hunt put on by the South Dakota Game and Fish Department. As part of the hunt, eight youth were introduced to hunting laws/ethics, gun safety, first aid and deer biology. Seven of the eight hunters were able to kill their first deer. The Prairie to Wood Whitetails Branch of Minnesota donated an \$8,000 handicap accessible Scissor Lift mobile deer hunting blind.

REGION 2 August marked a milestone for the Pennsylvania State Advisory Council (SAC) for 15 years of partnership with Penn State University's College of Agricultural Sciences' Ag Progress Days (APD). The North Mountain Branch sponsored its first Women in the Outdoors program. Nineteen women participated in three hands-on activities: light handgun, light rifle and archery shooting.

REGION 5 The River City Branch hosted their seventh annual youth deer hunt on September 24. With 28 kids in attendance, it was the largest youth hunt in the Branch's history. The Lake Murray Branch held a Share Your Hunt™ event on September 24 at Sunny Side Farms in Cameron, South Carolina. The River City Branch hosted their First Annual American Hero Dove Hunt in Rockville, hosting 20 veterans.

REGION 8 The Greater Kansas City Branch conducted the final phase of a three-phase youth hunt in January in Mercer County, Missouri. The Missouri hunt featured military youth from across the state. In addition to the five Missouri hunters, eight Kansas youth hunters were hosted by the Kansas City and Bluestem Branches on hunts earlier in the fall of 2015. The Southern Illinois University-Carbondale Branch provided members with volunteer and research opportunities on and off of SIUC's campus. Over fifty hours of volunteering and research work has been provided by the members.

REGION 9 In April, the Bayou Branch from Thibodaux teamed up with Ducks Unlimited and the Coastal Conservation Association to put on a Kid's Conservation Fest. The Northeast Louisiana, South Louisiana, Central Louisiana and Red River Branches were pleased to be able to purchase a track chair for an injured Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Agent. Sgt. Scott Bullitt was shot in the line of duty.

REGION 7 Over 75 volunteers hosted 42 military youth on the 2016 QDMA Kentucky Military Youth Hunt October 6-9, 2016. Participants included 22 girls and 20 boys, who were hosted by four Branches — Derby City Branch, Northern KY Tri-State Branch, Kentucky Heartland Branch and the Owensboro Branch — at three different deer camps. The Branches wish to extend a special thanks to all the volunteers, sponsors, and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources for their dedication to these deserving military youth!

REGION 10 The Lake Martin Branch partnered with the Tallapoosa County Treasure Forest Association to offer a Timber and Wildlife Habitat Tour near Hackneyville. The Gulf Coast Branch hosted a Whitetail Seminar. Chuck Sykes, Director of Alabama Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries (WFF) and Chris Nix, a local wildlife biologist, spoke at the event. In December, the Alabama's Heart of Dixie Branch presented the Alabama Conservation Enforcement Officers Association (ACEOA) with a \$500 check to help fund their initiative of providing each CEO in the state with a life-saving piece of equipment known as a field tourniquet.

QDMA'S WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT COOPERATIVE COORDINATOR - MICHIGAN UPDATE



Michigan is home to 91 known and active QDM Cooperatives. This number has increased from single digits in the 1990s and has experienced incredible annual growth since the early 2000s (see chart). Of the 36 more active Cooperatives, there are over 108,598 acres under Cooperative management. This includes 1,518 involved landowners and at least 1,261 active members.

Typical early stage harvest guidelines

for a QDM Cooperative in Michigan is to pass 1½-year-old bucks while letting first time and elderly hunters harvest any deer they desire. Cooperatives also promote the need to harvest an adequate number of does to keep deer herds in balance with what the habitat can support.

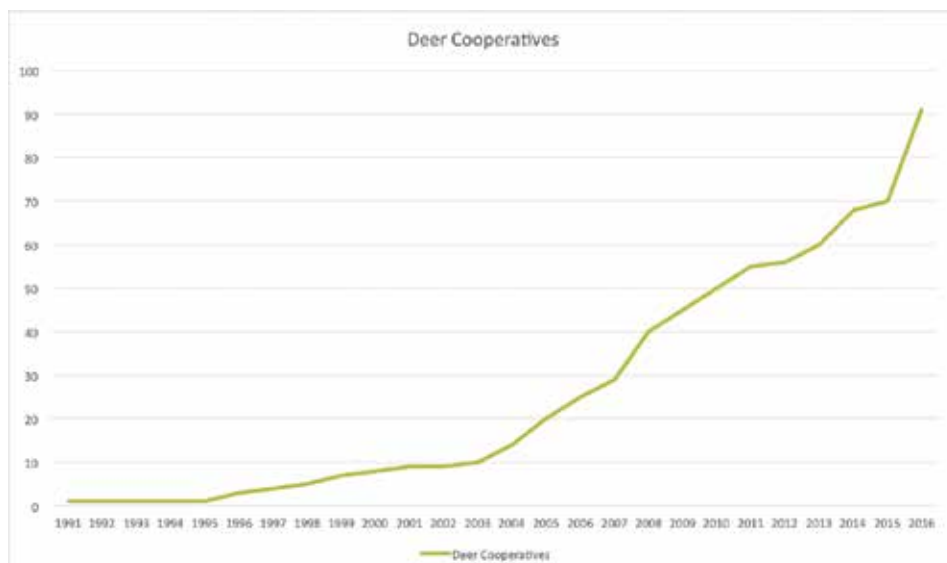
From a management perspective, many Cooperatives collect harvest data to allow aging by tooth wear and replacement on jawbones, monitoring body weights,

lactation status, and antler parameters by age class. Many also conduct trail-camera surveys and numerous habitat improvement projects.

From a social events perspective, Cooperatives provide trail-camera nights, where you can share some of your trail-camera photos and talk harvest strategy, 3D bow tournaments, jaw aging/harvest celebration nights, and pre-season chili meetings. They also bring in the DNR and other professional speakers and have casual meet-and-greets over food.

One of the best reasons for hunters to be involved in a Cooperative relates to their hunting satisfaction level. Research on satisfaction data from 2011 showed only 46 percent of general southern Michigan hunters had a satisfying hunting season. That is compared to 79 percent for hunters who indicated they were members of a Cooperative. That's a huge difference in the "fun" department during the hunting season! Want to take your hunting to another level? Join or start a QDM Cooperative in your area today.

For more information please visit www.mucc.org/cooperatives or contact Anna Mitterling at amitterling@mucc.org.



QDMA'S WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT COOPERATIVE SPECIALISTS - MISSOURI UPDATE



In 2013, QDMA worked in partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation (DOC) to hire Brian Towe to engage landowners and establish QDM Cooperatives in Missouri. This position is responsible for establishing new Cooperatives and servicing existing ones, assisting landowners with wildlife and habitat management programs, and making them aware of CRP and other NRCS and DOC conservation programs. Since that time, the program has grown and proven to be highly successful.

If you consider expansion as progress, then 2016 was a year filled with progress. It began with the addition of Alex Foster. A graduate of the University of Missouri, Alex worked as a wildlife biologist for the Missouri Department of Conservation prior to coming to QDMA. The new position allowed for more focused efforts in both the northern and southern portions of the state. Working to increase the number of Cooperatives across the state is always a priority, and we added six new Cooperatives this year that encompass more than 13,500 additional acres to statewide totals.

While new development is a major highlight, expansion and activities conducted by existing Cooperatives were tre-

mendous. Management was completed on more than 600 forested acres through forest stand improvement, edge-feathering, and/or prescribed fire. Prescribed fire or fall disking was used to slow succession on an estimated 1,700 acres of old field. Missouri Cooperatives also reported grassland management or planting on 210 acres. In an effort to help measure success, data was collected from trail-camera surveys, harvest information, observations, and whistling counts for quail by 10 separate Cooperatives.

In an effort to ensure each member has the information needed, 90 gatherings were held. Some of the gatherings were more social to develop a greater trust among members. Technical information was provided through landowner tours, workshops, and hands-on training, like the chainsaw training conducted by the Mayfield Holler Cooperative (pictured above). An effort was also made to gather leadership of deer-oriented Cooperatives from around the state. The meeting was held to promote communication and coordination among individual groups. The Branson Area QDM Cooperative was gracious enough to host, providing a tour by Dr. Grant Woods of his property, "The Proving Grounds."

For 2017, the development of new Cooperatives will continue with an even greater effort on assisting existing groups. As Cooperatives mature, they are continually looking for greater diversity in activities, but more and more members want detailed technical training on how to conduct management practices. Where possible, workshops will be conducted with participants of multiple Cooperatives. Holding a statewide leadership summit will be a priority to further promote communication among Cooperatives. The summit will strive to provide quality information and tools that can be utilized in the growth of each Cooperative. Over the past year, a Facebook page, H.U.N.T. MO, was developed for information exchange among members and aid in the promotion of Cooperatives. As we transition with over 50 Cooperatives statewide and more than 200,000 acres managed, coordination is going to be increasingly difficult. The Facebook page will become an important tool in the coordination of meetings and trainings. A good problem to have!

For more information on Cooperative development contact QDMA Cooperative Specialists Brian Towe at (573) 397-1664 for southern Missouri or Alex Foster at (660) 605-0501 for northern Missouri.

QDMA ADVANCEMENT



Brothers-Hamilton Legacy Society members at the 2016 National Convention: (from left) David Brothers, Kevin Moran standing in for Frank Robinson, Judge Holdford, Latty Hoch, Nicole Garriss, Joe Hamilton, Jeff Beall, Brian Murphy, Dr. Charles Shields, David Bastow, and Robert Dann, Jr.

BY JEFF BEALL

Recently I was speaking with a donor who committed 10 percent of his estate to QDMA. In the course of our conversation, he related that from his perspective, he did not think our association was doing enough to make members aware of the ways to support our ongoing mission. This statement caught me a bit off guard. From my perspective, I thought we had been doing this well, and then I remembered something I had learned years ago.

I was told once by a mentor that marketing is a lot like a parade. If you are on one of the floats, your perspective doesn't change. I think this accurately portrays where I see myself in describing ways to give and in asking for your help. My perspective is that I am constantly hammering that same message, time and again. I almost forgot to consider the point of view of the spectator at the parade. That person is constantly seeing something new, and if he or she looks away at the key moment (or in my case, turns the page too soon), the message of the float (or article) is missed. So, why are you even at the parade?

These ideals get our members to the parade. **Deer Research** that can improve your hunting success and help preserve our hunting heritage, like studying the effectiveness of QDM Cooperatives or ways to prevent the spread of chronic wasting

disease (CWD); **Education** for all deer hunters as well as future wildlife professionals; **Advocacy** for sound deer management in policy and law (see page 34 for our most recent efforts); **Certification** of thousands of Deer Stewards improving herds and seeking even more acres of certified lands; and ensuring our **Hunting Heritage** – in 2016, QDMA will pursue our largest endeavor yet to introduce new hunters (youths and adults) through the Share Your Hunt™ program. These are just a few examples.

Your membership alone doesn't provide the fuel necessary to propel the Quality Deer Management Association parade, so allow me to inspire you as a spectator to give by showing you a few of the ways other members have donated recently:

- Land Gifts
- Brothers-Hamilton Legacy Society Membership Gifts (see page 51)
- Donation of Appreciated Assets
- Bequests
- Planned Giving
- Life Insurance
- Grants
- Sponsorships

QDMA is and will continue to be a lean, efficient organization. We recently came very close to achieving a perfect four-star rating with Charity Navigator, the leading rating service of non-profits, with more than 87 percent of our budget going

toward mission delivery. Our appreciation of your gifts and our uncompromising stewardship of them will always be our standard.

Contact QDMA Director of Advancement Jeff Beall at 843-830-0087 or jbeall@qdma.com to discuss the various ways you can provide financial support for the QDMA. Thank you!

QDMA Fights for Deer Hunters

Are healthy, huntable populations of whitetails important to you?

Is your hunting heritage and way of life important to your family?

Is it vital for all deer hunters to be knowledgeable about whitetails and how best to manage and protect them?

Should more be done to keep deer hunters engaged in hunting while helping more people discover the benefits and rewards of hunting?

If you agree, your support of QDMA above and beyond your membership dues is vital. Please partner with QDMA by donating to ensure the future of deer and deer hunting. Contact Jeff Beall for ideas on how to extend your support.

jbeall@qdma.com • 843.830.0087

A HISTORY LESSON: THE BROTHERS-HAMILTON LEGACY SOCIETY



Donnie Harmel, Gerald Moore, Al Brothers, Ernie Davis, and Joe Hamilton on a tour of properties in south Texas in 1981

Following the 4th annual meeting of the Southeast Deer Study Group (SEDSG) in Texas in 1981, South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Department wildlife biologists Gerald Moore and Joe Hamilton rendezvoused with Al Brothers on the Chaparral Wildlife Management Area near Cotulla, Texas. Gerald and Joe were accompanied by the late Donnie Harmel of the Kerr Wildlife Management Area in Kerrville, Texas and Ernie Davis, wildlife biologist and area supervisor of the Chaparral WMA.

Gerald and Joe were the co-chairmen of the 5th annual meeting of the SEDSG the next year in Charleston, South Carolina, hosted by the South Carolina wildlife agency. Al Brothers, co-author of *Producing Quality Whitetails* (published in 1975), was invited to present the keynote address in Charleston.

In addition to his speaking engagement at the annual meeting, Al arrived several days early and remained in the South Carolina Lowcountry for almost a week following the meeting. Each night he entertained and educated a different group of interested deer hunters from along the coast and up the Savannah River. This marked the formal beginning of the Quality Deer Management movement in South Carolina. Al was involved in laying the groundwork for an organiza-

tion to support the white-tailed deer. His enthusiasm for and encouragement of the founding of QDMA were invaluable. From that initial meeting with Al in 1981, Joe returned to Texas for over 40 visits with his mentor.

Fast forward to 2015 — The QDMA's membership approaches the 60,000 level and we are recognized as the premier support organization for the whitetail. In an effort to formally recognize major donors and to pay tribute to two pioneers in deer management, Al Brothers for his role in introducing quality deer management and Joe Hamilton for founding the QDMA, the Brothers-Hamilton Legacy Society was formed. Last winter at the QDMA's National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, there were 10 new inductees of the Brothers-Hamilton Legacy Society, bringing the total membership to 17. Dr. Charles Shields from Paducah, Kentucky was among the 2016 inductees. He joined as a Gold Society Member and provided Bronze Society Memberships for Dr. Craig Harper, Dr. Karl Miller, and Dr. Grant Woods. They will be inducted in 2017. We expect membership in the Society will more than double at our National Convention in New Orleans in July 2017.

A major gift to the QDMA through the Brothers-Hamilton Legacy Society is an opportunity to leave your legacy, your

“track,” to protect our hunting heritage protection programs. These programs include our focused efforts such as advocating for fair and effective deer hunting legislation, research to improve our national whitetail population, and delivering quality outdoor education and instruction to the next generation of North American hunters. In addition to a cash donation, there are other ways to support our efforts and they include a gift of assets, bequests, land gifts, and retirement transfers.

ELIGIBILITY FOR INDUCTION INTO THE BROTHERS-HAMILTON LEGACY SOCIETY

- Gifts of \$10,000 or more. Only one individual per family can become a Brothers-Hamilton Legacy Society member per contribution.

RECOGNIZED LEVELS OF SUPPORT:

- Bronze Society Member - \$10,000*
- Silver Society Member - \$25,000
- Gold Society Member - \$50,000

*Society members will be recognized for accrued donations beyond the Bronze level.

To become a member of the Brothers-Hamilton Legacy Society or for more information, please contact QDMA's Director of Advancement, Jeff Beall at jbeall@qdma.com or (843) 830-0087.

NATIONAL CONVENTION



Johnny Morris, founder and “Chief Fishing Officer” of Bass Pro Shops, received the **Joe Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award**. Morris and his company have been long time supporters of QDMA and the partnership has generated over \$700,000 to help fuel QDMA’s mission. The award was bestowed by QDMA Founder and Senior Advisor Joe Hamilton.



The 2016 recipient of QDMA’s **Agency of the Year Award** was the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, whose recent accomplishments include having the lowest rate of yearling buck harvest of any state in the whitetail’s range during six of the seven previous deer seasons. Accepting the award on behalf of the agency was deer project leader Cory Gray (right).



One of two recipients of the **Volunteer Appreciation Award** this year was Donna Hamilton of South Carolina. Donna is the wife of QDMA founder Joe Hamilton, and she has a long and critically important connection to QDMA. QDMA CEO Brian Murphy presented the award to Donna, saying “If Joe is the heart of QDMA, then Donna is its soul.”

2016 QDMA CONSERVATION &



QDMA Founder and Senior Advisor Joe Hamilton presented Bryant Kroutch (left) of Kansas with the **AI Brothers Deer Manager of the Year** award. Kroutch is a landowner, QDMA Life Member and Level III Deer Steward who recognizes the importance of managing his land while embracing the QDMA’s mission of preserving our hunting heritage.



Mike Staten (left) and Stan Priest (right), both wildlife biologists with the Anderson-Tully Company, were named the **AI Brothers Professional Deer Managers of the Year**. Their dedication to the management, conservation and stewardship of Anderson-Tully lands and associated natural resources spans over two decades.



QDMA Director of Communications Lindsay Thomas Jr. presented the **Signpost Communicator of the Year** award to Tony Hansen (left) who wrote: “I desire to see whitetail hunters take their role as managers more seriously, and it should be the outdoor media that leads that charge. The QDMA’s *Whitetail Report* is an ideal example.” Tony is a freelance writer for Outdoor Life and founder of the Antler Geeks blog.



The **Wildlife Officer of the Year** award was presented to Sgt. Joseph Ortis (right) of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for his outstanding service to the sportsmen and women of his region. Sgt. Ortis spends well over 100 hours a year participating in public outreach programs for his department as well as conducting hunter education talks at businesses, schools and radio stations.



The 2016 recipient of QDMA’s **Corporate Achievement Award** was Carbon Express. Though they just became a sponsor in 2015, they did so in a big way, launching a national co-branded campaign to increase awareness of both QDMA and their new Whitetail line of arrows. As part of this partnership, each person who buys Whitetail arrows is entitled to receive a complimentary copy of QDMA’s *Aging and Judging Bucks on the Hoof* DVD. That has exposed thousands of bowhunters to QDMA, many for the first time. L-R: QDMA Chairman of the Board Louis Batson III, QDMA Vice Chairman of the Board Leon Hank, Erik Eastman of Carbon Express, and QDMA CEO Brian Murphy.

BRANCH ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



The Upper Hudson River Valley Branch of New York was named the **Branch of the Year** for their community involvement and impact. Branch President Dave Collins (right) and former Branch President Tony Rainville (left) accepted the award on behalf of the Branch and are pictured here with QDMA Vice Chairman of the Board Leon Hank.



Chad Thelen of the Clinton-Ionia Branch in Michigan, pictured here with QDMA Vice-Chairman of the Board Leon Hank (left) and QDMA CEO Brian Murphy (right), was named **Branch President of the Year**. Chad has been the president of his local Branch for over 10 years and was instrumental in the Branch being named 2009 QDMA Branch of the Year.



The Lowcountry Branch of South Carolina was named both the Membership and the Sponsor Membership Branch of the Year having recruited 539 members including 83 Sponsor memberships. David Galloway (left), Branch Officer and South Carolina State Advisory Council President, and Michael Cochran (center), Lowcountry Branch President, accepted the award from QDMA's Steve Levi.



Louisiana's Bayou Branch took the honors of Fundraising Branch of the Year by raising an all-time high of \$73,005 net. Additionally, they recruited 440 new members and donated a track chair to a handicapped hunter in Baton Rouge. Ben Caillouet (left) and Beau Schexnaildre (center) accept the award from QDMA Founder and Senior Advisor Joe Hamilton.



The **Event of the Year** was the reopening of a large tract of public land, championed by the Northern New Brunswick Branch of Canada. The Branch collected three years of trail-camera data on the large tract and provided that data to provincial biologists and even met with the Provincial Minister of Natural Resources. These efforts were successful in reopening the area to public hunting for the first time in 22 years! L-R: Branch Officer Denis Levesque, QDMA Canada Board of Directors' member Daniel Gautreau, QDMA CEO Brian Murphy, Branch Officer Sylvain Caron, and Branch Officer James Savoie.

NATIONAL CONVENTION



This year's **Volunteer of the Year** honoree is Mark Lovell of Georgia. Mark is a QDMA Life Member, Deer Steward Level III graduate and he recently founded the first QDMA Branch in his area, the Georgia Foothills Branch. QDMA Chairman of the Board Louis Batson III (left) and QDMA CEO Brian Murphy (right) presented the award.



Ron Fleming (left) of South Carolina was one of two special volunteers to receive the **Volunteer Appreciation Award** this year. Ron is a QDMA Life Member who is a highly respected, self-made professional and a great ambassador for QDMA. Ron has attended all but the very first QDMA National Convention. Presenting Ron with the award was QDMA Chairman of the Board Louis Batson III.



While there are dozens of new QDMA Branches deserving of recognition, the Georgia Foothills Branch ultimately rose to the top of the field through tireless and selfless support of the QDMA. The Branch earned the **New Branch of the Year** award with its inaugural banquet netting \$14,000 and capturing more than 200 members. In addition to a great first banquet, the Branch also had two educational field days, initiated a Branch youth hunting program and mentored their first two hunters, and donated five trail-cameras to the Georgia DNR Law Enforcement Division.

QDMA INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The QDMA has selected interns to assist with specific projects in past years, but in 2016 we developed an official internship program. The Education and Outreach Department chose Mark Turner and Morgan Warda to assist with projects during their internship from July through December. The six-month positions focused on research, education, advocacy and certification program issues.

Their duties included:

- Identifying research funding opportunities
- Updating national list of agency authority over captive cervids
- Developing educational materials
- Conducting literature reviews on treestand accidents
- Helping with QDMA's upcoming online courses
- Surveying state and provincial wildlife agencies
- Engaging in legislative efforts
- Interviewing former Deer Steward scholarship winners and writing articles on their current positions
- Helping with QDMA's certifications programs
- Assigning with the Michigan State Advisory Council's Deer Rendezvous and the Deer Steward Habitat Enhancement Module
- Updating national baiting and feeding regulation maps
- Assisting with deer management plan template



Mark Turner

Mark was a student at North Carolina State University pursuing his bachelor's degree in fisheries, wildlife and conservation biology, with a wildlife science concentration. He had served as an intern with Grant Wood's Growing Deer online show, as well as worked as an elk forage research technician with the University of Tennessee. He is the vice president of the N.C. State Branch of QDMA, and is a Level II Deer Steward. Mark has also contributed two articles to QDMA's Quality Whitetails magazine.

Morgan was a senior at University of Michigan-Flint, pursuing a bachelor's degree in wildlife biology. She has worked as a farm equipment operator, deer check station volunteer, and most currently as a research assistant for the university she attends. In addition to her work experience, Morgan also received her Level I Deer Steward certification.



Morgan Warda

The internship program is ongoing with new interns selected to work January to June and July to December. The QDMA's Education and Outreach department will continue using two internship periods annually, and hopes to expand the opportunities to additional departments/interns in the future.



Mark demonstrating use of a backpack boom sprayer at the Deer Steward Habitat Enhancement Module in Tennessee in 2016.



QDMA staff, Brian Murphy, Morgan Warda, Kip Adams and Matt Ross at a Deer Steward Course in Iowa in 2016.

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Blackbelt Branch	Mathews	Alabama	Mike O'Malley	(334) 462-1300	omalley@mtb-group.com
Five Rivers Delta	Mobile	Alabama	Daryl Bell	(850) 982-3554	darylbell7041@gmail.com
Gulf Coast Branch	McIntosh	Alabama	Russ Sims	(251) 509-9313	rsims3006@gmail.com
Heart of Dixie Branch	Birmingham	Alabama	Chris Guest	(205) 540-6633	chris.guest@mckinneycapital.net
Lake Martin Branch	Opelika	Alabama	Fletcher Scott	(256) 212-4334	mcoosae@gmail.com
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N.E. Arkansas Branch	Jonesboro	Arkansas	Lorne Shrive	(901) 598-6111	lorneshive22@gmail.com
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