



# QDMA's **Whitetail**Report 2018

*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 Conservation 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 remains at a third of the total antlered buck harvest.** Hunters are clearly reaping the benefits of more naturally balanced age structures in herds across the whitetail's range.

In addition, **4 percent more antlered bucks (those 1½ years or older) were shot last season than the year before,** and last season's buck harvest was 3 percent above the previous five-year average. This is a very positive sign for deer hunters and managers.

On the contrary, antlerless harvest was down 1 percent from the prior year, and it was 11 percent below the five-year average. **The antlerless harvest has now declined 19 percent in the past decade.** In 1999 hunters harvested more antlerless deer than antlered bucks for the first time in recorded history, and in 2016-17 that harvest trend nearly flip-flopped as hunters shot 2,818,571 antlered bucks and only 2,830,264 antlerless deer. This was a mere difference of 11,693 deer! Regarding the 2016-17 total harvest, 65 percent of deer were shot with a firearm, followed by 23 percent with a bow, 11 percent by muzzle-loader, and 1 percent by other means.

The biggest issues and trends include the continued spread of chronic wasting disease (CWD). **CWD made major headlines in Arkansas, Michigan and Montana in 2017.** Last year state wildlife agencies collected approximately 100,000 CWD samples. This was nearly double the number collected in 2008, but Missouri was responsible for more than a quarter of the total. Many states, like Wisconsin, are collecting fewer CWD samples today. Crossbows are now legal for the majority of hunters during at least a portion of the archery season in 78 percent of states. This is up from 57 percent in 2012. Trail-cameras with texting capabilities are legal during hunting season in 93 percent of states, while drones are only legal in 38 percent of states. Finally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service claims hunter numbers have declined by over two million from 2011 to 2016, while state wildlife agencies report a nearly identical number of deer hunters in 2007 and 2017.

All 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 QDMA.com.

Here's to a productive 2018 and a great deer season this fall.

### Outlook for 2017-18 Deer Season

At the time of writing this Whitetail Report, many 2017-18 deer seasons were still underway, so the statistics highlighted in this report are all from the most recent hunting season that is complete (2016-17). However, some states have already issued press releases on the 2017-18 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, 2017 was a good year for many deer hunters.

**Illinois** – the harvest was up slightly in 2017.

**Missouri** – hunters killed significantly more deer in 2017-2018 season.

**New Hampshire** – deer harvest up 15 percent in 2017.

**New York** – Southern Zone preliminary harvest was up 13 percent in 2017.

**Tennessee** – deer harvest lowest in 10 years.

**Wisconsin** – harvest down slightly in 2017.

### 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 2017-18 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 2018 Whitetail Report, QDMA compared harvest data from the three most recent seasons available 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17. We acquired some harvest data from all 37 states in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast (see map), from nine of 11 states in the West, and from six 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, 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.

## ANTLERED BUCK HARVEST

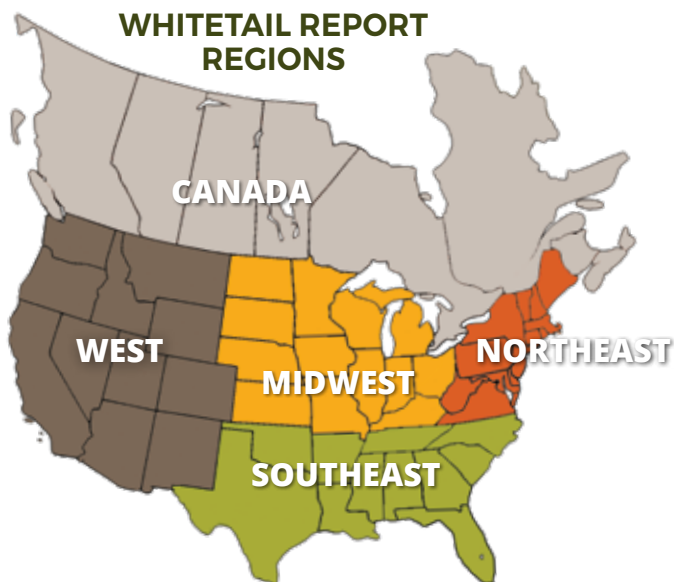


John Lanier, brother of QDMA Regional Director James Lanier, killed this mature Wisconsin buck during the rut. The property is in its third year as part of a QDM Cooperative.

The total buck harvest was 2,818,571 and that was 4 percent higher than in 2015. More antlered bucks (those 1½ years or older) were shot in 19 of 37 states (51 percent) in the 2016-17 deer season than during the 2015-16 season. Eleven of 13 states in the Northeast, six of 13 states in the Midwest, and only four of 11 states in the Southeast shot more bucks in 2016 than 2015. Midwest and Northeast hunters shot a similar percentage of bucks as the prior year, while Southeast hunters shot 8 percent more.

Overall, Texas shot the most bucks (399,487) and Rhode Island shot the fewest (951). Texas typically leads this category, but hunters from the Lone Star State shot fewer bucks per square mile (1.5) than the national average (1.6). Michigan, Pennsylvania and South Carolina more than doubled the national average and shot 3.3 to 3.5 bucks PSM, while North Dakota shot the fewest at 0.3 PSM.

Comparing the 2016 buck harvest to the previous five-year average shows a balanced harvest. Nineteen of 37 states (51 percent) shot more bucks in 2016 than their prior five-year average, and the overall buck harvest was up 3 percent. The Northeast's 2016 buck harvest was 1 percent above its five-year average, and the Midwest's



and Southeast's were both 3 percent above their five-year averages. Notables include Texas, Vermont and Delaware shot significantly more bucks in 2016 as compared to their five-year averages, while Florida, Mississippi and West Virginia shot significantly fewer.

### Top-5 States

#### Antlered Buck Harvest

State	2016 Harvest
Texas	399,487
Michigan	196,233
Wisconsin	156,920
Pennsylvania	149,460
Georgia	134,456

### Top-5 States

#### Antlered Buck Harvest Per Square Mile

State	2016 Harvest PSM
Michigan	3.5
Pennsylvania	3.3
South Carolina	3.3
Maryland	3.1
Wisconsin	2.9

### Top-5 States

#### With Greatest Antlered Buck Harvest Increase 2016 vs. Five-Year Average

State	% Increase
Texas	+28
Vermont	+23
Delaware	+18
Pennsylvania	+15
New Jersey	+14

### Top-6 States

#### With Greatest Antlered Buck Harvest Decrease 2016 vs. Five-Year Average

State	% Decrease
Florida	-22
Mississippi	-13
West Virginia	-12
Virginia	-9
South Carolina	-8
South Dakota	-8

## ESTIMATED BUCK HARVEST

### Antlered Bucks 1½ Years and Older

State/Province	2014	2015	2016	2016 % Change 2015-16	% Bucks PSM**	2011-15 avg	Change 2016 to 5 yr avg
Alabama	98,712	103,877	103,445	0	2.0	110,778	-7
Arkansas	89,617	90,655	94,794	5	1.8	90,729	4
Florida	64,223	61,492	57,403	-7	1.1	73,802	-22
Georgia	149,498	142,346	134,456	-6	2.3	138,501	-3
Louisiana	82,541	84,416	78,831	-7	1.8	84,133	-6
Mississippi	104,665	109,732	100,158	-9	2.1	114,695	-13
North Carolina	73,439	82,144	76,206	-7	1.6	80,608	-5
Oklahoma	51,775	51,495	62,595	22	0.9	56,836	10
South Carolina	99,946	101,435	99,678	-2	3.3	108,289	-8
Tennessee	95,470	78,821	85,977	9	2.1	88,622	-3
Texas	325,008	290,590	399,487	37	1.5	311,875	28
Southeast Total	1,234,894	1,197,003	1,293,030	8	1.7	1,258,867	3
Connecticut	4,894	4,574	6,092	33	1.3	5,489	11
Delaware	4,067	4,218	4,729	12	2.4	4,016	18
Maine	15,986	14,907	16,711	12	0.5	15,214	10
Maryland	28,281	29,855	30,326	2	3.1	30,769	-1
Massachusetts	6,419	5,814	7,043	21	0.9	6,269	12
New Hampshire	6,743	6,153	6,629	8	0.7	6,655	0
New Jersey	17,412	15,290	19,889	30	2.7	17,508	14
New York	108,604	99,572	107,006	7	2.3	110,377	-3
Pennsylvania	119,260	137,580	149,460	9	3.3	130,504	15
Rhode Island	922	762	951	25	0.9	962	-1
Vermont	7,954	8,330	9,995	20	1.1	8,112	23
Virginia	88,311	103,522	89,675	-13	2.3	98,782	-9
West Virginia	51,205	81,219	62,862	-23	2.6	71,332	-12
Northeast Total	460,058	511,796	511,368	0	2.2	505,990	1
Illinois	60,721	67,193	65,534	-2	1.2	65,175	1
Indiana	45,686	50,379	51,783	3	1.4	47,792	8
Iowa	44,540	46,889	45,379	-3	0.8	45,003	1
Kansas	42,178	42,434	42,287	0	0.5	42,839	-1
Kentucky	66,080	75,720	71,041	-6	1.8	67,935	5
Michigan	178,228	191,608	196,233	2	3.5	201,665	-3
Minnesota	81,036	98,318	100,921	3	1.3	89,971	12
Missouri	114,250	122,524	128,173	5	1.9	115,234	11
Nebraska	25,082	28,505	27,241	-4	0.4	28,291	-4
North Dakota	18,266	20,300	22,660	12	0.3	20,925	8
Ohio	68,515	79,176	78,132	-1	1.9	76,132	3
South Dakota	26,704	30,700	27,869	-9	0.4	30,170	-8
Wisconsin	143,397	152,701	156,920	3	2.9	151,226	4
Midwest Total	914,683	1,006,447	1,014,173	1	1.3	982,358	3
3 Region Total	2,609,635	2,715,246	2,818,571	4	1.6	2,747,216	3
Arizona	*	16,210	7,623	-53	0.1	*	*
California	*	*	32,029	*	0.2	*	*
Colorado	*	26,234	28,769	10	0.3	*	*
Idaho	*	18,868	18,498	-2	0.2	*	*
Montana	*	68,242	31,475	-54	0.2	*	*
Nevada	*	*	6,750	*	0.1	*	*
New Mexico	*	10,635	10,756	1	0.1	*	*
Oregon	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Utah	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Washington	*	10,112	27,929	176	0.4	*	*
Wyoming	*	8,573	9,187	7	0.1	*	*
West Total		158,874	173,016	9	0.1	*	*
Alberta	*	21,575	22,275	3	0.1	*	*
British Columbia	*	8,600	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	*	3,647	4,769	31	0.2	*	*
Nova Scotia	*	5,551	6,523	18	0.3	*	*
Ontario	*	33,661	40,592	21	0.1	*	*
Quebec	*	26,458	31,531	19	0.1	*	*
Saskatchewan	*	16,000	17,253	8	0.1	*	*
Canada Total		115,492	122,943	6	0.1	*	*

\*Data not provided/available

\*\*PSM: Per Square Mile in 2016

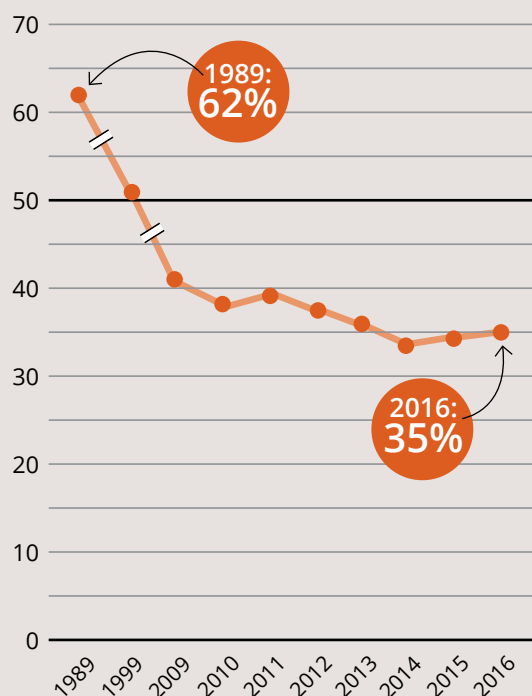


## AGE STRUCTURE OF THE BUCK HARVEST



John Deon Bellamy Jr. (left) and his father Deon Bellamy with a mature buck John harvested at the QDMA-sponsored Palmetto State Youth Hunt.

### PERCENT YEARLING BUCKS IN THE U.S. BUCK HARVEST



The QDMA also acquired the age structure of the buck harvest data for most states. Twenty-five states and one province reported the percentage of their antlered buck harvest that was 1½ years old, and 22 states and one province 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.

In 2016, the average percentage of the antlered buck harvest that was 1½ years old was 35 percent, which remains near the lowest national percentage ever reported, although it has increased a percentage point each of the last two years. The fact that only about one in three antlered bucks shot today

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

State	2016 Percentage
Arkansas	5
Mississippi	10
Louisiana	13
Oklahoma	17
Florida	19

### Top-6 States With Highest Percentage of Yearling Bucks in Buck Harvest

State	2016 Percentage
Wisconsin	65
New Hampshire	51
New York	49
Virginia	49
Maryland	47
Michigan	47

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

State	2016 Percentage
Mississippi	78
Arkansas	77
Louisiana	72
Oklahoma	59
Texas	59

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

State	2016 Percentage
Tennessee	16
Wisconsin	16
New York	19
Vermont	20
New Hampshire	24

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 28 years.

In 2016, Arkansas averaged the fewest yearlings at 5 percent of antlered buck harvest, and Wisconsin reported the most

at 65 percent of antlered buck harvest. Arkansas was the only state in the single digits, and Wisconsin was one of only two states above 50 percent. As a region, the Southeast averaged the fewest yearlings (22 percent), followed by the Midwest (39 percent) and the Northeast (44 percent). Georgia had the largest year-to-year decline in harvest percentage by dropping from 45 to 33 percent yearling bucks.

Wisconsin had the largest year-to-year rise in harvest percentage by increasing from 55 to 65 percent yearling bucks.

Twenty-two of 25 states (88 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 34 percent in 2016. This is similar to the percentage of yearlings and 2½-year-olds harvested, and it's amazing to realize that one of every three antlered bucks shot in the U.S. is at least 3½ years old. This is a testament to how far we've come as hunters and deer managers. This statistic ranged from 16 percent in Tennessee and Wisconsin to 78 percent in Mississippi.

## PERCENTAGE OF BUCK HARVEST BY AGE CLASS

State/Province	1½ Years Old			2½ Years Old			3½ and Older		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
Alabama***	28	21	20	31	28	24	41	51	56
Arkansas	8	7	5	25	19	18	67	74	77
Florida***	23	17	19	44	45	46	32	38	35
Georgia	30	45	33	31	27	32	39	28	35
Louisiana	17	16	13	16	17	15	67	67	72
Mississippi	13	14	10	13	9	13	74	77	78
North Carolina	40	39	39	36	37	36	24	24	25
Oklahoma	24	25	17	16	15	24	60	60	59
South Carolina	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Tennessee	37	37	37	44	43	46	19	20	16
Texas	21	14	23	17	11	18	62	75	59
<b>Southeast Average</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>51</b>
Illinois	42	42	39	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indiana	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	16	*	*	35	*	*	49	*	*
Kentucky	28	33	30	44	41	41	28	26	29
Michigan	43	44	47	32	29	26	25	27	27
Minnesota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Missouri**	15(40)	24	22	49(36)	41	48	36(24)	35	30
Nebraska	24	30	28	39	35	37	36	35	35
North Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ohio	45	41	43	35	33	32	20	26	25
South Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wisconsin	48	55	65	31	28	18	21	17	16
<b>Midwest Average</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>
Connecticut	45	42	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Delaware	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Maine	47	48	47	25	24	23	28	27	30
Maryland	47	51	47	*	*	*	*	*	*
Massachusetts	42	45	44	30	27	26	28	29	30
New Hampshire	46	43	51	29	28	25	25	29	24
New Jersey	46	36	*	45	43	*	9	21	*
New York	48	47	49	34	33	31	18	20	19
Pennsylvania	43	41	44	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rhode Island	36	33	35	38	32	37	26	35	23
Vermont	22	26	34	56	52	46	22	22	20
Virginia	43	46	49	29	28	27	28	26	25
West Virginia	26	*	*	47	*	*	27	*	*
<b>Northeast Average</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3 Region Average</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>34</b>
Alberta	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	*	44	51	*	29	23	*	26	26
Nova Scotia	*	35	*	*	36	*	*	29	*
Ontario	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Quebec	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

\*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



Ben Carson, 16, was able to harvest his first deer in 2017 at the QDMA National Youth Hunt.

Antlerless deer 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 2,830,264 antlerless deer in 2016. This was 1 percent below the 2015 antlerless harvest and 11 percent below the five-year average. Overall, Texas topped the list with 322,557 antlerless deer, Alabama followed with 191,555, and Pennsylvania was third with 183,794. The antlerless harvest has now declined 19% in these regions since 2007. In fact, in 2016 for the first time since 1998 hunters nearly shot more antlered bucks than antlerless deer.

Maryland harvested the most antlerless deer per square mile (5.7), fol-

lowed by Delaware (5.2), and Pennsylvania (4.1). These are astounding harvest rates. Regionally, the Northeast averaged shooting the most antlerless deer PSM (2.3), followed by the Southeast (1.7) and the Midwest (1.2).

Antlerless harvests were down slightly across the board again as the Midwest shot less than 1 percent fewer antlerless deer in 2016 than in 2015, while the Northeast and Southeast both shot 2 percent fewer. In total, 19 of 37 states (51 percent) shot fewer antlerless deer in 2016 than the prior year, and 31 of 37 states (84 percent) shot fewer antlerless deer than their five-year average.

Six of 13 (46 percent) Midwest states shot more antlerless deer than antlered bucks, six of 13 (46 percent) Northeastern states shot more antlerless deer, and four of 11 (36 percent) Southeastern states shot more antlerless deer than antlered bucks in 2016. Reduced antlerless harvests are necessary in areas where deer herds have been balanced with the habitat and/or

### Top-5 States

#### Antlerless Harvest

State	2016 Harvest
Texas	322,557
Alabama	191,555
Pennsylvania	183,794
Georgia	181,998
Wisconsin	159,854

### Top-5 States

#### Antlerless Harvest Per Square Mile

State	2016 Harvest PSM
Maryland	5.7
Delaware	5.2
Pennsylvania	4.1
New Jersey	4.0
Alabama	3.8

### Top States

#### With Lowest Antlerless Harvest Per Square Mile

State	2016 Harvest PSM
Maine	0.2
North Dakota	0.2
South Dakota	0.2
Nebraska	0.3
Kansas	0.5
New Hampshire	0.5
Oklahoma	0.5

### Top States

#### Antlerless Deer Per Antlered Buck Harvested

State	2016 Ratio
Delaware	2.1
Alabama	1.9
Maryland	1.8
New Jersey	1.5
Georgia	1.4
Mississippi	1.4

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.



## ESTIMATED ANTLERLESS DEER HARVEST

State/Province	2014	2015	2016	% Change 2015-16	2011-15 average	% Change 2016 to 5 yr avg.	2016 Antlerless PSM**	2016 Antlerless per antlered
Alabama	171,288	171,123	191,555	12	172,954	11	3.8	1.9
Arkansas	118,458	122,255	107,276	-12	117,355	-9	2.1	1.1
Florida	38,255	36,497	32,024	-12	42,519	-25	0.6	0.6
Georgia	262,570	220,503	181,998	-17	266,651	-32	3.2	1.4
Louisiana	57,359	68,684	59,469	-13	65,007	-9	1.4	0.8
Mississippi	145,328	144,514	144,622	0	146,752	-1	3.1	1.4
North Carolina	80,190	80,414	73,605	-8	88,416	-17	1.5	1.0
Oklahoma	45,490	36,972	36,428	-1	42,054	-13	0.5	0.6
South Carolina	103,006	93,593	72,637	-22	105,331	-31	2.4	0.7
Tennessee	69,405	88,518	71,650	-19	80,451	-11	1.7	0.8
Texas	265,104	257,247	322,557	25	265,064	22	1.2	0.8
<b>Southeast Total</b>	<b>1,356,453</b>	<b>1,320,320</b>	<b>1,293,821</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>1,392,554</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.0</b>
Connecticut	6,500	4,947	4,320	-13	6,467	-33	0.9	0.7
Delaware	10,172	10,463	10,064	-4	9,993	1	5.2	2.1
Maine	6,325	5,418	6,685	23	6,399	4	0.2	0.4
Maryland	58,602	54,167	54,867	1	59,167	-7	5.7	1.8
Massachusetts	4,747	4,240	5,206	23	4,692	11	0.7	0.7
New Hampshire	4,653	4,742	4,047	-15	4,856	-17	0.5	0.6
New Jersey	35,292	26,149	29,357	12	31,649	-7	4.0	1.5
New York	130,068	103,401	106,055	3	120,928	-12	2.2	1.0
Pennsylvania	184,713	178,233	183,794	3	199,899	-8	4.1	1.2
Rhode Island	1,242	891	985	11	1,230	-20	0.9	1.0
Vermont	5,634	4,417	6,225	41	5,154	21	0.7	0.6
Virginia	103,807	107,065	90,986	-15	120,261	-24	2.3	1.0
West Virginia	52,922	57,274	49,467	-14	62,209	-20	2.1	0.8
<b>Northeast Total</b>	<b>604,677</b>	<b>561,407</b>	<b>552,058</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>632,904</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>1.1</b>
Illinois	84,999	88,036	78,769	-11	97,190	-19	1.4	1.2
Indiana	74,387	45,686	67,694	48	73,616	-8	1.9	1.3
Iowa	57,053	58,512	56,018	-4	63,679	-12	1.0	1.2
Kansas	51,761	51,031	41,738	-18	49,808	-16	0.5	1.0
Kentucky	72,818	80,008	69,301	-13	70,084	-1	1.8	1.0
Michigan	144,139	137,073	145,054	6	170,449	-15	2.6	0.7
Minnesota	58,406	61,027	72,292	18	80,169	-10	0.9	0.7
Missouri	142,503	152,042	138,071	-9	161,119	-14	2.0	1.1
Nebraska	17,730	19,537	19,701	1	23,347	-16	0.3	0.7
North Dakota	12,902	12,100	13,195	9	17,851	-26	0.2	0.6
Ohio	107,286	109,159	104,037	-5	122,547	-15	2.5	1.3
South Dakota	14,453	16,000	18,661	17	26,397	-29	0.2	0.7
Wisconsin	158,689	159,034	159,854	1	182,080	-12	3.0	1.0
<b>Midwest Total</b>	<b>997,126</b>	<b>989,245</b>	<b>984,385</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,138,335</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>3 Region Total</b>	<b>2,958,256</b>	<b>2,870,972</b>	<b>2,830,264</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>3,163,795</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.0</b>
Arizona	*	315	0	-100	*	*	0.0	0.0
California**	*	*	485	*	*	*	0.0	0.0
Colorado***	*	7,771	8,055	4	*	*	0.1	0.3
Idaho	*	11,476	9,657	-16	*	*	0.1	0.5
Montana	*	17,610	18,044	2	*	*	0.1	0.6
Nevada	*	*	1,000	*	*	*	0.0	0.1
New Mexico	*	138	142	3	*	*	0.0	0.0
Oregon	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Utah	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Washington	*	3,398	5,565	64	*	*	0.1	0.2
Wyoming	*	8,089	8,427	4	*	*	0.1	0.9
<b>West Total</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>48,797</b>	<b>51,375</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>
Alberta	*	13,500	18,331	36	*	*	0.1	0.8
British Columbia	*	5,700	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	*	714	609	-15	*	*	0.0	0.1
Nova Scotia	*	2,234	1,806	-19	*	*	0.1	0.3
Ontario	*	24,371	24,195	-1	*	*	0.1	0.6
Quebec	*	21,162	21,311	1	*	*	0.0	0.7
Saskatchewan	*	3,500	4,215	20	*	*	0.0	0.0
<b>Canada Total</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>71,181</b>	<b>70,467</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.3</b>

\*Data not provided/available

\*\*PSM: Per Square Mile in 2016

## AGE STRUCTURE OF THE ANTLERLESS HARVEST



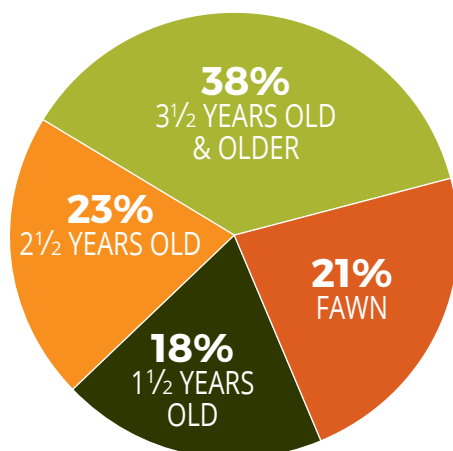
This mature doe was taken by Brooke Grossman on a special-opportunity public land youth hunt in Georgia. QDMA has set an aggressive goal to strengthen partnerships with state and federal agencies to enhance deer herds and habitats on public hunting lands and provide enhanced QDM hunting experiences.

The QDMA also acquired the age structure of the antlerless harvest data for most states. Twenty-three states and two provinces reported the percentage of their antlerless harvest that was approximately half a year old (fawns). Twenty-two states and one province reported the percentage that was 1½ years, and 19 states and one province reported the percentage that was 2½ and 3½ years or older. In 2016, the average antlerless harvest that was a fawn was 21 percent; thus, about one in five antlerless deer harvested was a fawn. The Southeast averaged the lowest percentage of fawns (12 percent) and the Northeast averaged the most (27 percent of the ant-

lerless harvest). Individually Texas (1 percent) shot the fewest fawns and Ohio (45 percent) shot the most. Texas historically shoots a very small percentage of fawns,

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

### 2016 PERCENTAGE OF ANTLERLESS HARVEST BY AGE CLASS



and the 2016 harvest percentage equaled the state's estimate from 2015. **Monitoring the percentage of fawns in the antlerless harvest is one method for estimating the fawn recruitment rate, and this statistic 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 2014 to 2016 that was 1½, 2½ and 3½ years or older. 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

### Top States

#### With Lowest Percentage of Fawns in Antlerless Harvest

State	2016 Percentage
Texas	1
Louisiana	8
Mississippi	8
Oklahoma	8
Arkansas	12
Kentucky	12

### Top-5 States

#### With Highest Percentage of Fawns in Antlerless Harvest

State	2016 Percentage
Ohio	45
Pennsylvania	36
Maryland	35
Massachusetts	34
Illinois	32

### Top-5 States

#### With Highest Percentage of 3½-Plus in Antlerless Harvest

State	2016 Percentage
Texas	60
Mississippi	57
Oklahoma	56
Arkansas	55
Louisiana	55



individuals and most successful mothers. Nationally, over a third (38 percent) of the antlerless deer shot in 2016 reached the 3½-and-older age class. The Southeast leads the regions with 47 percent of antlerless deer in this age class, and Texas leads all states with 60 percent being 3½ years

and older.

Age structure data is the backbone of deer management programs. Monitoring the age structure of the harvest is key for deer managers to make wise management decisions including the appropriate number of antlerless deer to harvest annually

in each deer management unit. Good age data helps managers avoid under- or over-harvesting 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.

## PERCENTAGE OF ANTLERLESS HARVEST BY AGE CLASS

State/Province	Fawn			1½ Years Old			2½ Years Old			3½ and Older		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
Alabama	16	15	*	20	18	*	20	18	*	44	49	*
Arkansas	12	7	12	18	17	13	23	21	20	47	55	55
Florida	6	15	18	18	19	14	30	23	25	46	43	42
Georgia	19	23	23	25	23	27	25	24	33	31	30	17
Louisiana	13	11	8	20	20	18	22	22	19	45	47	55
Mississippi	7	7	8	23	20	16	18	19	19	52	54	57
North Carolina	23	14	24	21	23	18	25	27	25	31	36	33
Oklahoma	18	16	8	18	19	17	15	15	27	49	50	56
South Carolina	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Tennessee	26	18	*	24	26	*	28	31	*	22	25	*
Texas	7	1	1	18	17	16	22	17	23	53	65	60
<b>Southeast Average</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>47</b>
Connecticut	*	20	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Delaware	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Maine	18	21	25	15	17	18	13	*	6	53	*	51
Maryland	31	31	35	24	24	23	*	*	*	*	*	*
Massachusetts	40	35	34	19	13	16	18	18	18	23	34	32
New Hampshire	16	30	29	19	11	21	16	16	10	49	43	40
New Jersey	19	14	*	28	29	*	32	32	*	22	25	*
New York	31	27	26	19	19	19	20	21	19	30	33	36
Pennsylvania	39	37	36	19	18	20	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rhode Island	14	6	19	16	5	6	39	*	55	31	*	20
Vermont	28	18	20	12	16	14	15	14	15	45	52	51
Virginia	24	24	24	21	21	20	23	21	21	32	34	35
West Virginia	15	*	*	19	*	*	28	*	*	38	*	*
<b>Northeast Average</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>
Illinois	33	33	32	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indiana	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	15	*	*	13	*	*	38	*	*	34	*	*
Kentucky	25	32	12	20	23	25	32	21	34	23	24	29
Michigan	28	25	26	18	19	18	19	18	17	35	38	38
Minnesota	33	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Missouri	27	34	15	24	18	23	17	16	25	32	32	37
Nebraska	28	22	22	21	26	26	26	25	27	25	27	25
North Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ohio	42	39	45	16	18	16	22	*	*	20	*	*
South Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wisconsin	45	36	21	18	21	24	17	20	24	20	23	31
<b>Midwest Average</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>3 Region Average</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>38</b>
Alberta	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	*	20	15	*	15	16	*	20	15	*	46	53
Nova Scotia	*	17	*	*	17	*	*	24	*	*	42	*
Ontario	*	34	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Quebec	*	32	32	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

\*Data not provided/available

## AGE DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

All states and provinces have some means to estimate the number of deer harvested in their jurisdictions during the hunting season. Some require physical registration at a station, some offer online reporting, and others use telephone reporting (telecheck) or mail-in report cards. Regardless of the technique used, it is important for deer managers to collect biological data such as age, weight, antler parameters, and lactation status from a representative sample of the total harvest. Commonly referred to as check stations or “biocheck” stations, biologists, technicians and conservation officers collect data that is used to assess herd and habitat health. This data is the backbone of many deer management programs.

The age of harvested deer is a critical piece of data for deer managers. It's also highly sought after by a growing number of deer hunters. Hunters are learning to estimate age and requesting to have their deer aged at unprecedented levels. That's one reason why the age structure chapters (pages 6-7 and 10-11) are among the most popular chapters in our annual *Whitetail Report*.

However, the age chapters draw skepticism from some hunters and deer managers. Thus, we asked each state and provincial deer project leader how they collect age-structure data in their jurisdiction. Check stations are used less frequently than in prior years, but they are still the predominant way for wildlife agencies to collect age data. Eight of 11 states (73 percent) in the Southeast, and eight of 13 states (62 percent) in the Northeast employ check stations, while only four of 13 states (31 percent) in the Midwest do.

Collecting data from meat processors was the next most popular method, followed by deer management assistance program (DMAP) participants and taxidermists. In these cases, trained wildlife agency personnel visit meat processors and taxidermists or receive the data from DMAP participants to estimate age of the harvests. Regionally, the Southeast used the most collection points, followed by the Northeast and Midwest.

## BY STATE/PROVINCE

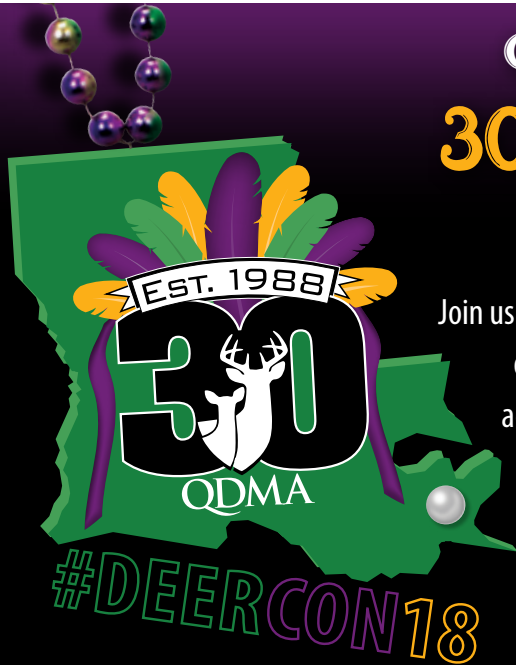
State/Province	Check Stations	Taxidermists	Processors	DMAP	Other
Alabama	x			x	
Arkansas	x		x	x	
Florida	x <sup>1</sup>			x	
Georgia			x		
Louisiana				x	
Mississippi	x <sup>1</sup>			x	
North Carolina	x	x	x	x	multiple voluntary avenues
Oklahoma	x	x	x	x	optional online submission
South Carolina					None
Tennessee	x		x		
Texas	x	x	x	x	
<b>Southeast Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	
Connecticut					*
Delaware	x <sup>2</sup>				
Maine	x	x	x		roadkill
Maryland			x		
Massachusetts	x				
New Hampshire	x				
New Jersey					None
New York	x		x		
Pennsylvania			x		
Rhode Island	x				
Vermont	x				voluntary submissions
Virginia				x	
West Virginia	x				
<b>Northeast Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	
Illinois	x				electronic harvest reporting
Indiana					None
Iowa					None
Kansas					None
Kentucky		x	x		
Michigan	x				
Minnesota	x <sup>3</sup>				online registration, phone
Missouri			x		
Nebraska	x				
North Dakota					None
Ohio			x		
South Dakota					None
Wisconsin			x	x	CWD samples
<b>Midwest Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	
Arizona					None
California					*
Colorado					None
Idaho					None
Montana					*
Nevada					None
New Mexico					None
Oregon					*
Utah					*
Washington					*
Wyoming					None
<b>West Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
Alberta					None
British Columbia					*
Manitoba					*
New Brunswick	x				
Nova Scotia					*
Ontario					None
Quebec	x <sup>4</sup>				
Saskatchewan					*
<b>Canada Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

\* Data not provided/available

<sup>1</sup> Public lands only <sup>2</sup> Collects age data every five years <sup>3</sup> Fawn vs older <sup>4</sup> Only for APR project



# QDMA'S NATIONAL CONVENTION 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY JULY 19-22, 2018



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## DEER HARVEST BY WEAPON TYPE



This past October, QDMA partnered with the Scholastic 3D Archery program to host its first National Archery Youth Hunt in Kentucky, introducing six young archers to the thrill of bowhunting.

The average hunter today has much longer seasons and more weapon opportunities than he/she had in the past. To assess how hunters take advantage of these, we surveyed state wildlife agencies to determine the percentage of the total deer harvest taken with a bow/crossbow, rifle/shotgun, muzzleloader, or other weapon (pistol, etc.) during the 2014, 2015 and 2016 seasons.

Nationally, muzzleloader hunters took 11 percent of the total deer harvest, bow/crossbow hunters took 23 percent, and firearm (rifle/shotgun) hunters took 65 percent of the total deer harvest in 2016.

Regionally, bow hunters averaged the highest percentage of the harvest in the Northeast (30 percent). Muzzleloader hunters also averaged their highest percentage in the Northeast (16 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 2016 (76 percent) were with a rifle or shotgun. Muzzleloading (9 percent) and bowhunting (15 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 66 percent was far above the Northeast's and close to the Southeast's.

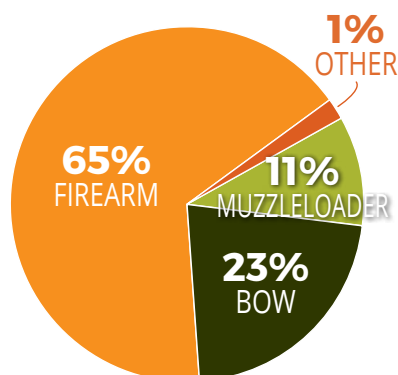
Individually, New Jersey leads the U.S. in the percentage of total harvest taken by

archers (58 percent), Idaho had the highest percentage taken by firearms hunters (94 percent), and Rhode Island tops the list with percentage taken by muzzleloader hunters (45 percent). In Canada, bowhunting was most popular in Quebec (24 percent of harvest), muzzleloading was also most popular in Quebec (16 percent of harvest), and firearms hunting

was most popular in New Brunswick (93 percent of harvest).

More hunters take advantage of bows, crossbows and muzzleloaders today and that's great for the future of hunting. More seasons to go afield help even "occasional" hunters stay engaged, and it 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.

### TOTAL 2016 U.S. DEER HARVEST BY WEAPON



### Top States

#### Percentage of Harvest by Bow

State	2016 Percentage
New Jersey	58
Connecticut	50
Ohio	45
Massachusetts	42
Illinois	37
Kansas	37
Michigan	37

### Top States

#### Percentage of Harvest by Rifle/Shotgun

State	2016 Percentage
Idaho	94
Wyoming	93
Montana	92
Texas	91
Maine	89
South Carolina	89

### Top States

#### Percentage of Harvest by Muzzleloader

State	2016 Percentage
Rhode Island	45
Virginia	27
New Hampshire	23
Tennessee	23
Massachusetts	22
Vermont	22



## PERCENTAGE OF DEER HARVEST BY WEAPON TYPE

State/Province	Bow			Rifle/Shotgun			Muzzleloader			Other		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
Alabama	12	16	15	86	82	83	2	2	2	0	0	*
Arkansas	12	10	14	77	74	75	10	11	11	0	4	0
Florida	28	28	28	63	64	62	8	7	9	1	1	1
Georgia	16	18	16	82	79	82	2	3	2	0	0	*
Louisiana	6	8	9	83	81	80	11	11	11	0	0	0
Mississippi	17	17	18	66	69	68	17	14	14	0	0	*
North Carolina	11	7	10	78	79	80	11	10	10	0	4	0
Oklahoma	27	26	26	58	58	62	15	16	12	0	0	*
South Carolina	8	7	9	89	90	89	3	2	3	0	1	<1
Tennessee	13	12	11	59	66	66	27	22	23	0	0	*
Texas	10	9	8	89	90	91	1	1	1	0	0	1
<b>Southeast Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>&lt;1</b>
Connecticut	48	50	50	36	37	36	7	5	6	10	8	9
Delaware	20	20	20	63	61	62	16	19	17	1	1	1
Maine	9	11	7	86	85	89	5	4	3	0	0	1
Maryland	34	34	34	49	47	51	17	19	15	0	0	*
Massachusetts	43	45	42	37	37	36	20	18	22	0	0	0
New Hampshire	28	29	24	46	48	53	23	19	23	3	0	*
New Jersey	57	57	58	32	32	31	11	11	11	0	0	*
New York	22	24	26	67	63	65	10	9	9	1	4	<1
Pennsylvania	31	31	33	62	62	61	7	7	6	0	0	*
Rhode Island	34	34	31	24	22	23	42	44	45	0	0	0
Vermont	23	27	21	45	52	48	20	11	22	12	10	9
Virginia	14	13	15	61	67	58	25	20	27	0	0	0
West Virginia	21	13	24	74	74	72	5	4	4	0	9	*
<b>Northeast Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Illinois	39	37	37	59	53	53	2	10	10	0	0	<1
Indiana	29	16	24	51	54	61	20	20	14	1	10	<1
Iowa	21	23	22	68	57	53	11	14	13	0	6	12
Kansas	34	34	37	61	62	60	4	4	3	0	0	<1
Kentucky	15	15	17	74	70	75	11	12	8	0	3	0
Michigan	36	34	37	57	60	48	7	6	15	0	0	*
Minnesota	3	13	12	84	83	83	12	4	5	1	0	*
Missouri	19	18	18	77	78	78	4	4	4	0	0	*
Nebraska	*	9	11	*	82	81	*	7	8	*	2	*
North Dakota	18	21	26	76	78	73	1	1	1	5	0	*
Ohio	46	44	45	42	49	45	12	7	9	0	0	1
South Dakota	13	14	15	85	84	83	2	2	2	0	0	*
Wisconsin	27	17	28	71	70	70	2	2	2	0	11	0
<b>Midwest Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3 Region Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Arizona	*	13	8	*	85	87	*	2	1	*	0	5
California	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Colorado	*	8	8	*	86	85	*	6	6	*	0	0
Idaho	*	4	4	*	94	94	*	2	2	*	0	0
Montana	*	*	8	*	*	92	*	*	*	*	*	*
Nevada	*	*	5	*	*	85	*	*	10	*	*	0
New Mexico	*	12	14	*	75	73	*	13	13	*	0	0
Oregon	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Utah	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Washington	*	15	15	*	74	79	*	7	6	*	4	0
Wyoming	*	7	7	*	93	93	*	0	*	*	0	*
<b>West Total</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Alberta	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	*	4	7	*	96	93	*	0	0	*	0	0
Nova Scotia	*	4	*	*	69	*	*	22	*	*	5	*
Ontario	*	16	18	*	72	71	*	9	8	*	3	3
Quebec	*	2	24	*	61	60	*	16	16	*	21	0
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>Canada Total</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>

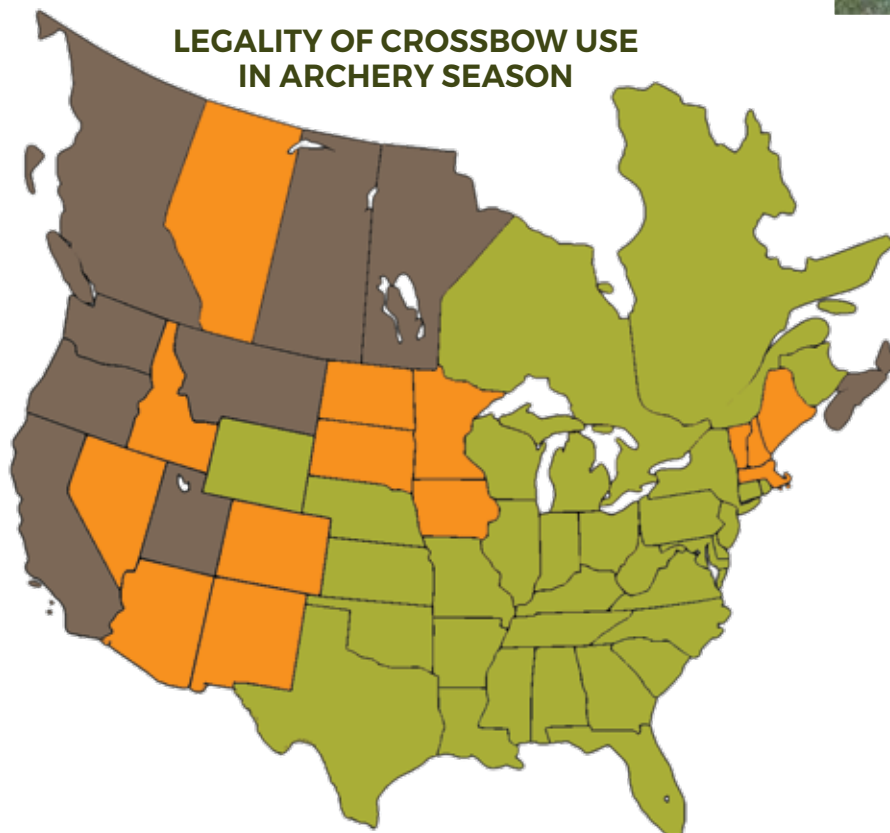
\*Data not provided/available

## CROSSBOW USE



The East Central Ohio Branch uses crossbows for their annual youth hunt to get participants in the field during the early season when deer are less pressured and the temperatures are more comfortable.

Crossbows can be a polarizing topic in the archery world, but their use during deer season continues to expand. To gauge the extent of the expansion, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies and asked whether crossbows could be used by all hunters during archery season. We asked the same question for our 2012 *Whitetail Report*, and at that time crossbows were legal in 21 of 37 states (57 percent) in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast for at least a portion of the archery season. Today, that number has increased to 29 of 37 states (78 percent).



LEGALITY OF CROSSBOW USE  
IN ARCHERY SEASON

All states in the Southeast allow crossbows during archery season. With the exception of Connecticut and Rhode Island, crossbows aren't permitted in the New England region of the Northeast. All other Northeastern states allow them. Just over half of Midwest states allow them, with the upper Midwest being most restrictive. Since 2012, crossbows can now be used in archery season in Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, New York, Rhode Island, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

### QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The QDMA is dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. As such, we are more interested in managing deer and habitat appropriately and protecting our hunting heritage than debating use of specific weapons. If the use of crossbows positively impacts a deer management program and helps recruit and retain more hunters, then we fully support it.



## TRAIL-CAMERAS AND DRONES

Deer hunters today are more willing to take an active role in management to improve a property and their success rate. Modern deer hunters are also incredibly tech-savvy compared to the past and desire to learn about their quarry more than ever before. Some technologies available today have drastically impacted the way many of us spend our time outdoors for the better. They also, in some cases, challenge the concept of fair-chase.

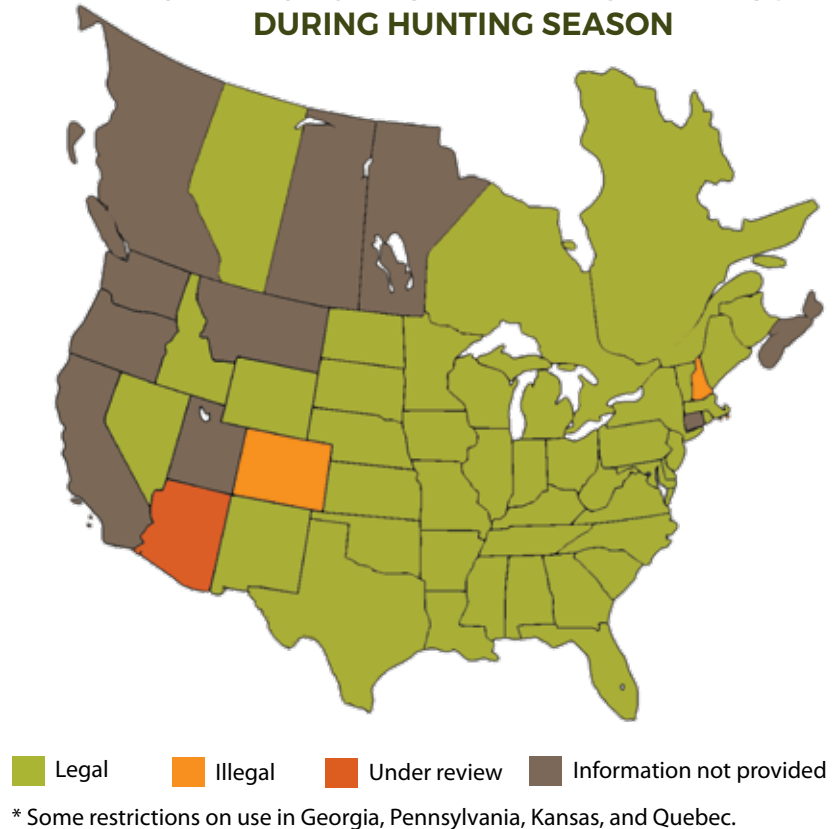
Over the last 30 years, probably no other piece of technology has changed the way we deer hunt more than the trail-camera. Deer hunters love their trail-cameras, and advancing technology has resulted in models that are smaller, higher in resolution, with longer battery life than ever before. There are even cameras on the market now that can instantly send pictures to you in the form of a text or e-mail. Another, more recent technology available to hunters are remote-controlled drones. Originally developed for military applications, drones have gotten smaller and much more affordable for the average person and allow for real-time aerial surveillance from a distance.

Both of these new technologies have the potential to cross ethical boundaries, so we asked state and provincial wildlife agencies if non-texting or text-capable trail-cameras and/or drones were legal to use during the hunting season. Forty-one of 42 states (98 percent) that responded to our survey allow non-texting trail-cameras. Arizona is currently the lone exception. Thirty-nine of 42 (93 percent) allow texting cameras, and 16 of 42 (38 percent) allow drones for scouting but not hunting. In Canada, all of the provinces that responded allow trail-cameras regardless of texting abilities, while Alberta, New Brunswick and Ontario prohibit drones. Several agencies specified hunting versus scouting intent regarding these devices within their current regulations and others cited impending changes.

### QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

QDMA supports pursuits that are ethical, sportsmanlike and lawful, and allow harvest of white-tailed deer in a manner that does not give the hunter an improper or unfair advantage. While we are not opposed to these technologies when used for scouting, we do recognize these tools could be abused and give hunters an unfair advantage. As these types of technologies advance further, we will evaluate them on a case-by-case basis and will always fight for standards and regulations that ensure fair-chase hunting.

### LEGALITY OF CELLULAR TRAIL-CAMERA USE DURING HUNTING SEASON



### LEGALITY OF DRONE USE DURING HUNTING SEASON



## CWD SAMPLES AND COST



One of QDMA's new 5-Year Goals is to donate \$1 million to whitetail research and on-the-ground management to help combat diseases like CWD.

ANNA MITTERLING

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is an always-fatal neurological disease that affects deer, elk and moose. There is no vaccine or cure for CWD, and this contagious disease can be spread via urine, feces, saliva, blood, and possibly other vectors. See page 20 for a current update on CWD and other diseases found in white-tails.

Regardless of whether CWD has been identified in your area, it impacts deer and other wildlife by drawing from your wildlife agency's financial and personnel resources. Collecting tissue samples from harvested deer is time consuming, and having them tested costs agencies millions of dollars annually; valuable funds that could be used for other wildlife projects. In addition, while prevalence rates appear to be climbing in areas that have had CWD the longest, like Wisconsin and Wyoming, rumors are that less deer are being tested.

Thus, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to determine the number of deer they sampled for CWD and the cost per sample in 2008 and 2016. Thirty-two states reported testing 59,565 samples in

2008 and 40 states reported testing 97,090 samples in 2016 (see table on next page). In the three regions where whitetails are most common in the U.S., the Midwest realized the largest increase in testing (141 percent) while the Northeast saw the biggest decline (-29 percent). The average cost per sample has not changed considerably between 2008 (\$25) and 2016 (\$28), but has ranged widely from \$10 to nearly \$100 per sample. Notably, four of seven states in the Midwest, six of 10 in the Southeast, eight of 11 in the Northeast, and two of two in the West all tested fewer deer in 2016 than in 2008.

### QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Every aspect of CWD is costly to state and provincial wildlife agencies, whitetail populations and the future of hunting. While not all funds spent on CWD testing come from agency general operating budgets, much of it does, as federal sources are limited compared to the past. Moreover, these dollars could have been spent on other more productive projects if not for the presence of CWD for many agencies, including those with increased testing vol-

### 5 States

With Lowest Number of CWD Samples Tested

State	2016 Totals
Vermont	0
Massachusetts	<10
North Carolina	73
Oklahoma*	79
South Dakota*	82

### Top-5 States

With Highest Number of CWD Samples Tested

State	2016 Totals
Missouri*	25,659
Texas*	9,830
Illinois*	7,839
Michigan*	7,750
Wisconsin*	6,130

### Top-5 States

With Largest % Increase in Samples Tested from 2008-2016

State	% Increase
Tennessee	+7,627
Missouri*	+2,003
Minnesota*	+1,900
Arkansas*	+461
Texas*	+148

### 5 States

With Largest % Decrease in Samples Tested from 2008-2016

State	% Decrease
Vermont	-100
Massachusetts	-98
South Dakota*	-94
North Carolina	-93
Oklahoma*	-92

\* State with CWD in wild and/or captive deer.

umes. As sportsmen, it's clearly in our best interest to protect the herds we hunt from this dreaded disease and to do our part to control it anywhere it is identified.



## CWD SAMPLES AND COST

State/Province	2008		2016		% Change (# Samples) 2008 to 2016	Comments (2016)
	# Samples	Cost/ Sample	# Samples	Cost/ Sample		
Alabama	625	\$25	588	\$25	-6	
Arkansas	888	\$20	4,983	\$12	461	
Florida	*	*	652	\$10	*	
Georgia	593	\$12	250	\$80	-58	
Louisiana	437	\$12	360	\$40	-18	
Mississippi	1,215	\$12	444	\$17 / \$40	-63	Costs depends on test type
North Carolina	1,000	\$12	73	\$20 / \$30	-93	Costs depends on test type
Oklahoma	986	\$25	79	\$17	-92	
South Carolina	528	\$90	*	*	*	Targeted surveillance only. Contract with SCWDS
Tennessee	26	*	2,009	\$17	7,627	
Texas	3,963	\$20	9,830	\$30	148	Total cost \$100/sample, including time, equip, and lab fees
<b>Southeast Total</b>	<b>10,261</b>		<b>19,268</b>		<b>88</b>	
Connecticut	*	*	*	*	*	
Delaware	599	\$10	529	\$11	-12	
Maine	848	\$15	472	\$21	-44	
Maryland	1,015	\$12	319	\$11	-69	
Massachusetts	487	\$40	< 10	\$25-50	-98	Costs depends on test type
New Hampshire	405	\$21	268	\$11	-34	
New Jersey	339	*	570	\$11	68	
New York	7,450	\$28	2,565	\$28	-66	
Pennsylvania	3,810	\$10	5,707	\$25	50	
Rhode Island	*	*	193	\$12	*	
Vermont	400	*	0	*	-100	
Virginia	1,200	*	1,525	\$20	27	
West Virginia	2,102	24	1,173	\$22	*	
<b>Northeast Total</b>	<b>18,655</b>		<b>13,331</b>		<b>-29</b>	
Illinois	7,758	\$13	7,839	\$15	1	
Indiana	*	*	837	\$14	*	
Iowa	4,232	\$14	1,919	\$25	-55	
Kansas	*	*	474	\$28	*	
Kentucky	*	*	1,469	\$20	*	
Michigan	*	*	7,750	*	*	
Minnesota	200	\$25	4,000	\$17	1,900	
Missouri	1,220	\$25	25,659	\$89	2,003	
Nebraska	*	*	753	*	*	
North Dakota	*	*	1,513	*	*	
Ohio	1,469	\$51	1,381	unknown	-6	
South Dakota	1,465	\$96	82	unknown	-94	
Wisconsin	8,507	\$19	6,130	\$80	-28	
<b>Midwest Total</b>	<b>24,851</b>		<b>59,806</b>		<b>141</b>	
Arizona	2,157	\$17	1,327	unknown	-38	
California	*	*	*	*	*	
Colorado	*	*	740	\$75	*	Whitetail and mule deer
Idaho	500	*	*	*	*	
Montana	*	*	*	\$17	*	
Nevada	*	*	200	\$17	*	
New Mexico	*	*	139	*	*	
Oregon	31	\$18	*	*	*	
Utah	*	*	*	*	*	
Washington	*	*	*	*	*	
Wyoming	3,110	\$15	2,279	\$15	-27	Whitetail and mule only
<b>West Total</b>	<b>5,798</b>		<b>4,685</b>		<b>-19</b>	
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>59,565</b>		<b>97,090</b>		<b>63</b>	
Alberta	*	*	5,000	\$1,000	*	All species, cost includes all phases of the process
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*	
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	
New Brunswick	*	*	0	*	*	
Nova Scotia	*	*	*	*	*	
Ontario	*	*	460	\$24	*	Canadian dollars
Quebec	*	*	1,000	\$56	*	Canadian dollars
Saskatchewan						
<b>Canada Total</b>			<b>6,460</b>			

\*Data not provided/available

## 2017 DEER DISEASE UPDATE

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 other diseases you may have heard of. Below is a run-down of some of the biggest issues regarding white-tailed deer diseases that hit the headlines in 2017, 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 2017 and some of the biggest included:

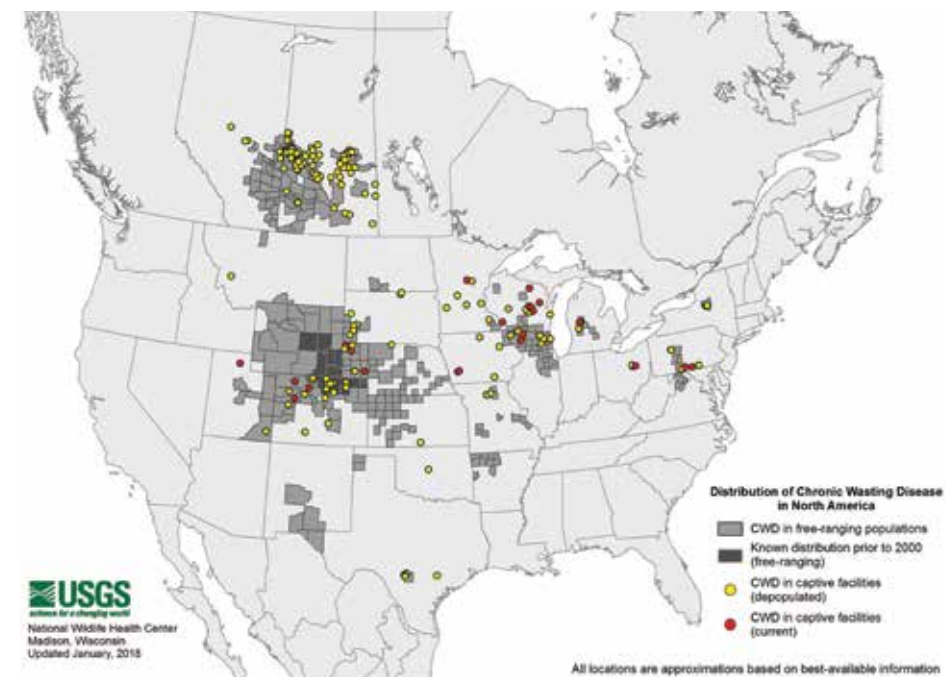
#### Positive Cases

- As of late October 2017, the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (SCWDS) confirmed HD in 18 states. Most notable was a locally severe outbreak that occurred in the Appalachian Plateau physiographic region, with Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and West Virginia being hit hardest. For example, Kentucky received reports of more than 4,500 sick or dead deer, mostly in the eastern portion of the state. SCWDS also isolated HD viruses from deer in parts of Alabama, Maryland, North Carolina, and Virginia that are adjacent to affected areas in the above states.

- An additional noteworthy finding from 2017 was that two HD-positive white-tail bucks were discovered in Ontario, representing the first ever detection in Canada. Also for the first time, HD was found in a single deer in Connecticut. These new locations add to existing concerns of a gradual northern expansion of HD over time, potentially associated with climate change.

### BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS

Bovine tuberculosis (TB) 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 TB. Since then, it has been discovered in Montana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and Indiana. With the exception of Michigan, TB appears to be eradicated in the other states. The key is quickly reducing/eliminating the reservoir or host (e.g., cattle or captive elk).

Bovine TB made no big headlines in 2017.

### NEW WORLD SCREWORM

New World screwworm is 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.

Screwworm made a single big headline in 2017:

- A 2016 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. Eradication efforts included a declared agricultural emergency, establishing an Animal Health Checkpoint at the northern-most Key, releasing sterile adult screwworm flies (a scientifically proven method), enhanced surveillance, and extensive public outreach. With no new screwworm finds by spring, the checkpoint was closed on March 18, 2017 and sterile fly releases were discontinued by April 25, 2017. For more info visit:

[freshfromflorida.com/screwworm](http://freshfromflorida.com/screwworm)

### CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

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 24 U.S. states, three Canadian provinces, Korea (from an elk imported from Canada in 1997) and in free-ranging reindeer, moose and red deer in Norway. Contagions spread through urine, feces, saliva, blood, deer parts, and especially via live deer. Importantly, there is no vaccine or cure.

Research shows variances in infectivity among prion transport systems (for example, saliva may be ten times as infec-



tious as urine), that plants can bind, uptake and transport prions from infected soil, and hamsters that ate the plants contracted the disease. CWD has also been shown to experimentally infect squirrel monkeys, pigs and laboratory mice that carry some human genes. In addition, and perhaps most frightening, ongoing research provides some evidence of potential infection when primates closely related to humans consume infected venison (more below). These results do not cast a favorable light for CWD, deer, American agriculture, our hunting heritage and conservation.

CWD made numerous other headlines in 2017 and some of the biggest included:

#### Positive Cases

- Last fall, and for the first time ever, CWD was found in wild deer in Montana. At the time of this writing six deer, four mule deer bucks, one mule deer doe and one white-tailed doe, had tested positive. As a result, agency officials formed an incident command team, implemented their CWD response plan and initiated a quota hunt in the infected area.

- From 2015 to 2016, a total of nine free-ranging deer tested positive for CWD in Michigan in two counties, Clinton and Ingham. In 2017, at least 47 new cases had been identified, including 36 confirmed positives in Montcalm County and 10 in Kent County.

- In December 2017, Arkansas had confirmed 70 new cases of CWD since the 2017 deer season opened. Although the number of positive cases was high, no samples from new areas of the state had been found by the time of this writing. By the end 2016, the first year CWD was discovered in Arkansas, the total number of free-ranging positive samples included 132 deer and five elk.

- Preliminary tests showed that seven deer harvested in Minnesota's disease management zone during 2017 may have been infected with CWD. Minnesota confirmed CWD again in wild deer in 2016, the first found since 2010.

- Confirmation of CWD in two Wisconsin deer shot on a hunting ranch in Waupaca County led to an additional Iowa County property being quarantined. The two 4-year-old bucks were killed on the 84-acre Waupaca hunting ranch, but originated from a 15-acre breeding farm in

Mineral Point, Wisconsin that contained 110 white-tailed deer, according to the owner's most recent registration records. Both deer were additions to the breeding farm and were moved to the Waupaca hunting ranch in September.

- Though well established in each state, Missouri and Wyoming officials found CWD in new deer hunting areas.

#### Research

- A study initiated in 2009 by Canadian and German scientists evaluating whether CWD can be transmitted to macaques, a type of monkey that is genetically closer to people than any other animal previously infected with CWD, has begun to shed some light on possible human susceptibility. On July 10, 2017 a summary of the study's progress was presented to the public, in which lead scientists showed that CWD was successfully transmitted to study animals when fed raw meat (muscle tissue) or brain tissue from CWD-infected deer and elk. CWD was also able to spread to macaques that had the infectious material placed directly into their brains.

- Another completed research project confirmed positive results in pigs orally inoculated with CWD, suggesting that it may be possible for swine to serve as a prion reservoir. The results have raised concerns regarding the potential for feral hogs to further complicate the epidemiology and management of CWD in wild populations, as well as the potential for swine to represent a source of CWD exposure through domestic animal and human food chains.

#### Other

- In 2017, the "CWD Management Act" was introduced, both initiated and supported by QDMA, along with several other key sportsman's groups. If passed, this bipartisan bill would support efforts to develop and implement management strategies, research and methods to control the further spread of the disease. It has three main components:

1. Authorizing funding to state and tribal agencies responsible for wildlife management to implement management strategies to address CWD.

2. Directing USDA to make grants to expand and accelerate applied research on CWD.

3. Directing the USDA and Department of Interior to work cooperatively with states to conduct research and implement state CWD response plans to reduce the spread and prevalence of the disease.

- Wildlife scientists, QDMA and other experts from across the country gathered in Michigan for a CWD Symposium in October.

#### QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

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. The QDMA recommends a continued and strengthened effort by wildlife professionals to study, monitor and evaluate solutions for minimizing the spread of CWD, Bovine TB 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 primary authority over captive deer facilities and regulations to the state/provincial wildlife agencies. Currently, some states/provinces have this authority while the Department of Agriculture shares it or maintains sole possession in others (see the *2017 Whitetail Report*).

We strongly recommend a moratorium on the interstate movement of all live deer and elk by individuals as well as state and federal wildlife agencies, at least until such time as a practical live animal test becomes available. We also support a prohibition on the transport of high-risk parts such as the brain, eyes, spleen and backbone. These two actions would do more to suppress the spread of CWD than any other actions that could be taken.

Regarding HD, although its national impact on deer populations was minor in 2017, it can be locally severe, especially in areas where the disease is relatively new. The QDMA recommends hunters who experience significant losses should 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 their state/provincial wildlife agency or to SCWDS.

## ANTLER RESTRICTIONS

Antler restrictions are a hot topic among deer hunters. Whether you love or hate them, you can be sure your state or provincial wildlife agency has discussed them. In fact, at least 23 states and one province had some form of antler restrictions implemented in 2017. Antler restrictions are not synonymous with Quality Deer Management. Rather, antler restrictions are a strategy to protect a specific age class (generally yearlings) or classes of bucks. Many antler restrictions have been used, including point, spread and beam length requirements, as well as Boone & Crockett score. All restrictions have advantages and disadvantages. The key is to implement a strategy devised from local data, and then educate local sportsmen and women on the benefits.

Twelve states have statewide restrictions for at least one buck in the bag limit, while 11 states and Quebec use them in some wildlife management areas, units, regions and/or military bases. The most commonly-used restriction was the number of antler points. Fifteen states and the

one province employ this technique, and depending on the state, the number varies from one to four points on a single antler.

Three states use an antler spread restriction. Antler spread is a better predictor of whether a buck is 1½ or 2½ years old or older and is therefore a more biologically sound approach to protecting yearlings. Five states use a combination of antler points and spread, or antler points and main beam length, or antler spread and main beam length. The combination approaches allow hunters to harvest bucks that meet one of the two criteria. Combination approaches are generally more biologically sound, flexible, and preferred to single restriction strategies.

Modern-day deer management certainly differs from that of a decade or two ago. Today's hunters are more knowledgeable than ever and are demanding more intensive management programs from their state and provincial wildlife agencies. This has proven to be very healthy for deer herds and for the future of deer hunting.

## QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, QDMA prefers the voluntary passing of yearling bucks to mandatory antler regulations. However, we recognize that mandated antler restrictions may be justified in some situations to achieve specific deer management objectives. Regarding our position on specific antler restriction proposals, QDMA examines each on a case-by-case basis and applies a three-part test.

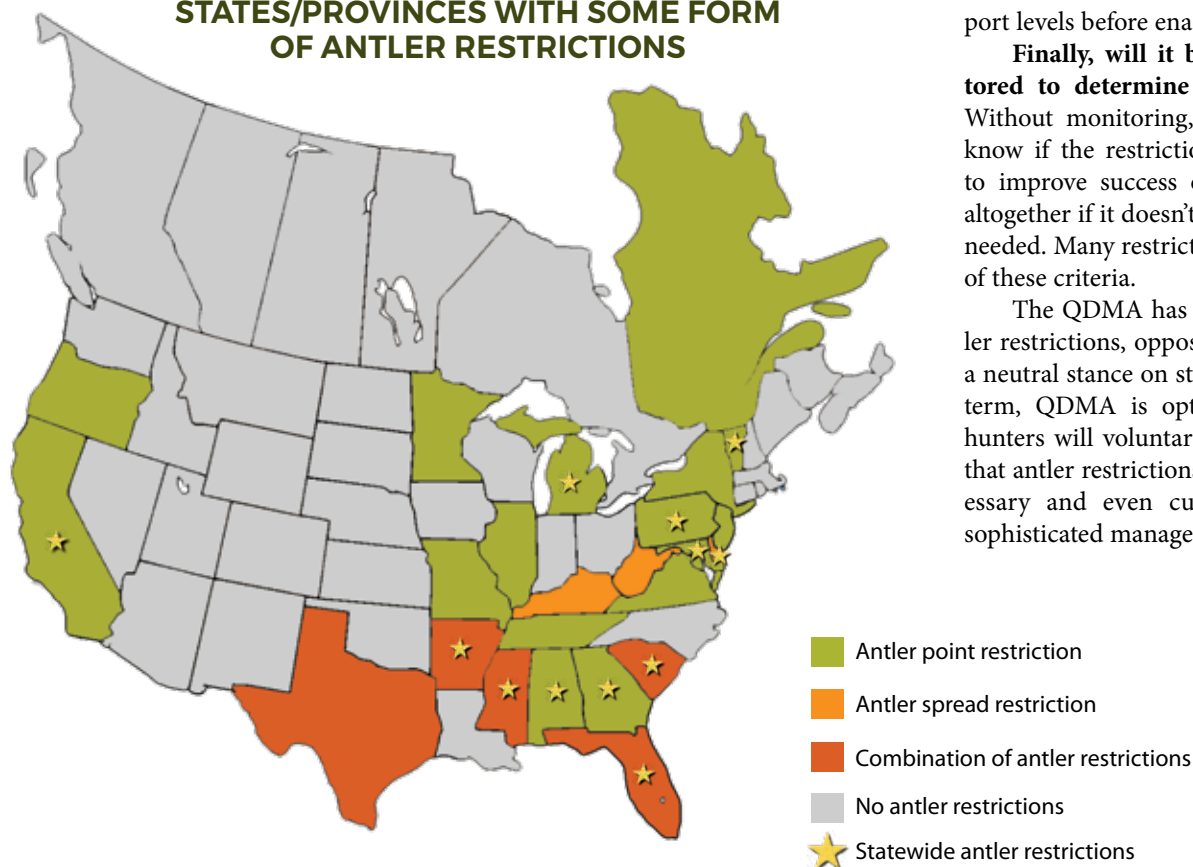
**First, is the restriction biologically sound?** This means the proposed restriction will protect the majority of yearlings while allowing the majority of bucks 2½ years old and older to be eligible for harvest. This is always the goal of state-mandated restrictions, though voluntary antler restrictions on private lands may seek to protect some older age classes as well. In either case, the antler restriction criteria must be based on data collected from the affected deer population to ensure the correct bucks are protected.

**Second, is it supported by the majority of affected hunters and landowners?** Agencies considering an antler restriction should conduct surveys to determine support levels before enacting the restriction.

**Finally, will it be objectively monitored to determine success or failure?** Without monitoring, there is no way to know if the restriction should be altered to improve success or possibly removed altogether if it doesn't work or is no longer needed. Many restrictions fail one or more of these criteria.

The QDMA has supported some antler restrictions, opposed others, and taken a neutral stance on still others. In the long term, QDMA is optimistic that enough hunters will voluntarily pass young bucks that antler restrictions will become unnecessary and even cumbersome to more sophisticated management.

STATES/PROVINCES WITH SOME FORM OF ANTLER RESTRICTIONS





## FOOD PLOTS LEAD THE WAY



While roughly three out of 10 surveyed hunters are actually involved in managing or attracting wildlife on the land where they hunt, of those who do, more than 80 percent of their efforts are spent on creating food plots. In fact, a 2017 survey conducted by Southwick Associates, a market research and economics firm specializing in the hunting, shooting, sportfishing, and outdoor recreation markets, found that food plots were the leading practice by nearly double most other practices.

The following are the top five management practices as revealed by the survey:

- Food plots = 81 percent
- Mineral sites = 49 percent
- Timber management = 45 percent
- Plant management = 42 percent
- Feeders = 39 percent

Other practices measured included creating man-made water sources (17 percent), controlled burns (15 percent), maintaining water level or flow (11 percent) and “other” (6 percent).

The survey also examined the interaction of hunters around their feeding

sites. Of those hunters who do use feeders (where legal) to enhance opportunities, 86 percent monitor those sites with trail-cameras, 67 percent of them do so year-round, 33 percent run feeders year-round, and 83 percent hunt over them or near them.

“This survey shows that food plots and other means of attracting and hold-

**Although food plots aren't for everybody, the QDMA feels they are a critical part of the conservation dialogue for both public and private landowners and managers.**

ing game in an area or on a particular property are important management tools among a third of today's hunters,” said Rob Southwick, president of Southwick Associates, which designs and conducts the surveys at HunterSurvey.com, ShooterSurvey.com and AnglerSurvey.com.

### QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the Four Cornerstones of QDM is habitat management, which of course includes food plots, along with numerous other habitat enhancement strategies. Certainly, food plots can serve to both improve year-round nutritional capacity and increase harvest opportunity; however, they are much more than that. We know that not everyone has access or the means to put in food plots, but as indicated by this survey, food plots are extremely popular and we believe are one of the primary gateways in which the average deer hunter transforms from consumer to manager. It gets them through the door and on the path to thinking about habitat improvement. Let's face it, improving habitat has become an essential part of the modern deer hunter's vocabulary and management efforts, which is clear from the general availability of information and merchandise on the market. Although food plots aren't for everybody, the QDMA feels they are a critical part of the conservation dialogue for both public and private landowners and managers.

## HUNTER NUMBERS AND HUNTER SPENDING DECLINES

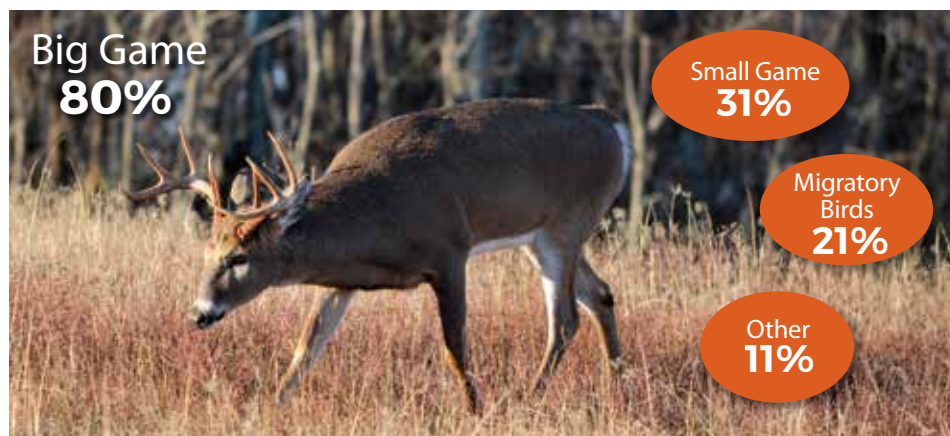
Every five years since 1955, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has conducted a National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation to report on the number of people who fished, hunted and watched wildlife. The survey also reports on the specific activities sportsmen and women engaged in (such as big game hunting, waterfowl hunting, etc.), the money they spent on those activities, and how that data compared to prior years. The most recent survey was conducted in 2016, and the preliminary results were released in August 2017. At the time of this writing the full report had not been released, but the preliminary report included some very interesting data. The USFWS used similar survey methods in 2011, 2006, 2001, 1996 and 1991, so the results are very comparable over the past 25 years.

### AND THE SURVEY SAYS

In 2016, 11.5 million people 16 years of age and older went hunting (5 percent of total U.S. population), averaging 16 days afield each. Eighty percent of those 11.5 million hunters pursued big game like deer and elk, 31 percent pursued small game like squirrels and rabbits, 21 percent pursued migratory birds like geese and ducks, and 11 percent hunted other animals such as coyotes, groundhogs and raccoons.

In total, hunters spent \$25.6 billion on hunting in 2016. The bulk of this was on hunting equipment (see pie chart), while only 3 percent was for hunting licenses and

### WHAT SPECIES DO ACTIVE U.S. HUNTERS TYPICALLY HUNT?



According to QDMA's 2017 *Whitetail Report* hunters averaged 13 days afield in pursuit of deer during the 2015-16 season. Given that USFWS estimates the total days hunting averaged 16 days per hunter per year that season, and our survey estimated 13 of those were spent deer hunting, this is yet another measure showing deer hunting dominates the hunting industry.

fees. This is important as an excise tax on guns, ammunition and other hunting items funds a large portion of most state wildlife agency budgets, and thus most wildlife management programs.

### COMPARATIVELY SPEAKING

11.5 million hunters and \$25.6 billion in expenditures sounds like a lot, but what's most important is how those numbers compare to prior surveys. Unfortunately, they don't compare favorably at all. From 2006 to 2011 hunter numbers increased by over one million, but during the past five years we lost 2.2 million hunters. That means hunter numbers decreased by 16 percent from 2011 to 2016! With regard

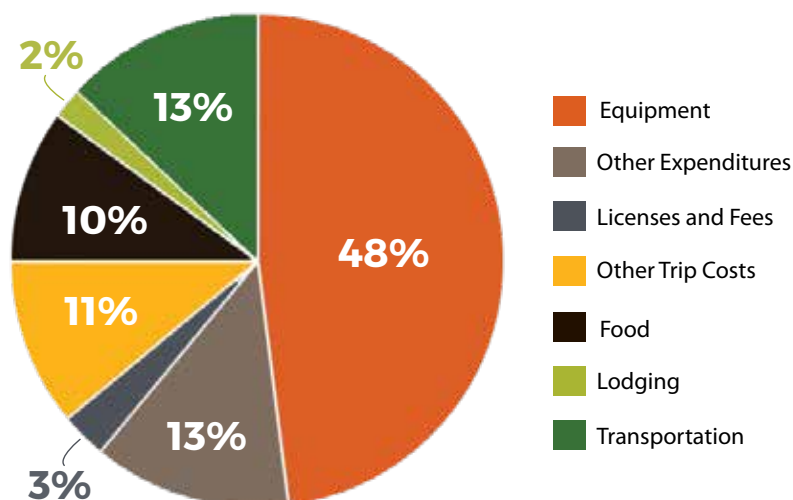
to expenditures, hunter spending dropped nearly \$11 billion dollars or 30 percent. Adding insult to injury, the number of hunters is expected to continue declining as Baby Boomers exit the sport.

Fewer hunters mean fewer advocates for hunting and fewer dollars for our wildlife management programs. Our current system of funding for the vast majority of state wildlife agencies will fail in the near future given these predicted hunter and spending declines.

### QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Public support for hunting has never been higher, but because only 5 percent of American adults hunt we have a tremendous pool of hunting supporters to draw from to increase our ranks. QDMA's Share Your Hunt™, Rack Pack, and Field to Fork Programs are all designed to increase hunter numbers. Importantly, QDMA recently established a five-year goal aimed at recruiting new youth or adult hunters by challenging our members to mentor more than 200,000 new hunters annually (see page 36). A 2017 QDMA survey showed our members mentored 160,000 new hunters in 2016, and with your help we are confident we can hit the 200,000 mark in 2018; without your help our hunting heritage is in real jeopardy. We encourage you to give some of your time and resources to mentor at least one new hunter this year.

### 2016 HUNTING EXPENDITURES





## DEER HUNTER NUMBERS

Most sportsmen and women realize that hunters are the backbone of wildlife management programs and that they fund the lion's share of our state wildlife agencies. Most also know that overall hunter numbers are in a steady decline (see page 24), but few truly realize just how popular deer hunting is compared to other sources of hunting. For example, the wild turkey is the next most sought-after species, yet deer hunters outnumber turkey hunters nearly four to one. That's why it is so critical to keep very close tabs on deer hunter trends and recruitment efforts, because that is where the stakes are greatest for conservation.

Thus, we asked state and provincial wildlife agencies how many deer hunters they have today and how this estimate has changed from a decade ago. Forty-four of the lower 48 states responded with an estimate of just over 10 million deer hunters and 0 percent change over that time. For comparison, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) assessed during their 2011 survey (5 years ago) that of the then 13.7 million hunters, 10.9 million (79 percent) were deer hunters. Astute readers will note that preliminary results of the USFWS survey estimates there are only 9.2 million (80 percent of 11.5 million) big game (deer, elk, etc.) hunters today. So, why the discrepancy? Mostly because the data are collected differently. The latest USFWS results are based on data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, where 22,416 households were contacted for screening interviews and included over 5,000 samples; the methodology used in all of the USFWS surveys was the same, so the estimates are comparable to each other. The data in our report comes directly from the state and provincial wildlife agencies and is based on various estimates, including deer hunting license sales.

Interestingly, the Northeast saw the largest decrease (-6 percent) in our survey when seven of 13 states found themselves losing deer hunters over the past 10 years, while the Southeast realized the largest growth (9 percent) with only two of 11 states experiencing a decline. Overall, 18 of the 42 states (43 percent) and two of the four provinces (50 percent) that responded have seen a loss.

### 5 States With the Lowest Number of Deer Hunters

State	2016 Number
Rhode Island	9,000
Nevada	18,000
Wyoming	27,814
New Mexico	31,000
Connecticut	47,958

### Top-5 States With Highest Number of Deer Hunters

State	2016 Number
Texas	738,713
Pennsylvania	700,000
Wisconsin	642,517
Minnesota	600,000
Michigan	586,000

### Top-5 States With Largest Increase in Deer Hunter Numbers Last 10 yrs

State	% Increase
Tennessee	+35
Texas	+28
Georgia	+21
Idaho	+17
Oklahoma	16

### 5 States With the Largest Decrease in Deer Hunter Numbers Last 10 yrs

State	% Decrease
North Dakota	-30
Vermont	-20
Colorado	-17
Virginia	-16
West Virginia	-15

## QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Today, with fewer hunters afield, recruitment efforts like those we are initiating at QDMA have never been more important. Deer hunters are the solution to reverse the trend of overall hunter loss by continuing to support recruitment programs. However, they alone won't be enough to curb hunter declines. It will also require existing hunters to recruit and mentor new hunters in more traditional one-on-one opportunities.

## DEER HUNTER NUMBERS AND % CHANGE

State/ Province	# Deer Hunters in 2017	% Change from 10 Years Ago
Alabama	190,000	-8%
Arkansas	350,000	-5%
Florida	98,577	0%
Georgia	353,620	21%
Louisiana	184,400	0%
Mississippi	142,330	8%
North Carolina	250,000	0%
Oklahoma	367,311	16%
South Carolina	138,997	3%
Tennessee	302,415	35%
Texas	738,713	28%
<b>SE Total/Avg</b>	<b>3,116,363</b>	<b>9%</b>

Connecticut	47,958	-8%
Delaware	15,000 - 17,000	0%
Maine	210,000 - 220,000	4%
Maryland	59,000	-12%
Massachusetts	50,000	0%
New Hampshire	57,500	-12%
New Jersey	78,000	0%
New York	574,606	0%
Pennsylvania	700,000	-5%
Rhode Island	9,000	11%
Vermont	55,000	-20%
Virginia	200,000	-16%
West Virginia	239,563	-15%
<b>NE Total/Avg</b>	<b>2,301,627</b>	<b>-6%</b>

Illinois	244,724	-9%
Indiana	190,300	*
Iowa	170,781	-6%
Kansas	115,635	14%
Kentucky	350,000	10%
Michigan	586,000	-14%
Minnesota	600,000	0%
Missouri	501,576	4%
Nebraska	135,440	9%
North Dakota	60,000	-30%
Ohio	450,000 - 475,000	9%
South Dakota	67,615	-13%
Wisconsin	642,517	-4%
<b>MW Total/Avg</b>	<b>4,127,088</b>	<b>-3%</b>

<b>3 Reg. Total/Avg</b>	<b>9,545,078</b>	<b>0%</b>
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Arizona	61,172	-11%
California	*	*
Colorado	81,253	-17%
Idaho	147,541	17%
Montana	*	*
Nevada	18,000	-10%
New Mexico	31,000	0%
Oregon	*	*
Utah	*	*
Washington	115,901	*
Wyoming	27,814	11%
<b>West Total/Avg</b>	<b>482,681</b>	<b>-2%</b>

<b>U.S. Total/Avg</b>	<b>10,027,759</b>	<b>0%</b>
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Alberta	*	Increasing
British Columbia	*	*
Manitoba	*	*
New Brunswick	40,350	-12%
Nova Scotia	*	*
Ontario	200,000	0%
Quebec	142,865	-26%
Saskatchewan	*	*
<b>Canada Total/Avg</b>	<b>383,215</b>	<b>-13%</b>

\*Data not provided/available

## CAPTIVE DEER CLASSIFICATION

The QDMA supports the legal, ethical pursuit and taking of wild deer living in adequate native/naturalized habitat in a manner that does not give the hunter an unfair advantage and provides the hunted animals with a reasonable opportunity to escape the hunter. We do not oppose high-fence operations that meet those conditions. However, the QDMA is well known for our concerns with several aspects of the captive deer breeding industry, including artificially retaining and manipulating white-tailed deer and the threats these activities place on animal welfare, human health/safety, disease, compliance with game laws and our overall hunting heritage (see the *2013 Whitetail Report* for more info). In addition, policy and the regulations associated with white-tailed deer in captivity change constantly, so we like to keep track of the legality of these types of practices, how they are viewed within their jurisdiction and who oversees them.

We asked state and provincial wildlife agencies how captive whitetails are currently classified (wildlife, livestock or

other). Overall, 36 of 42 states offered some form of classification, and five states (Nebraska, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Wyoming) stated

**Given the potential for disease transmission and the threat to our \$87 billion hunting industry, QDMA advocates for captive deer to be categorized as wildlife and that primary regulatory authority of captive deer facilities stay with state/provincial wildlife agencies.**

that either the industry didn't exist or it was illegal. Of the 36 states that responded to our survey, the category of livestock was used nearly two to one compared to the term wildlife. Today, 20 of 36 states (56 percent) consider captive deer as livestock,

and only 12 (33 percent) consider them wildlife. This is a major shift in classification since our *2013 Whitetail Report*. At that time 12 of 22 states (55 percent) providing data reported captive deer were wildlife, while only eight (36 percent) considered them livestock.

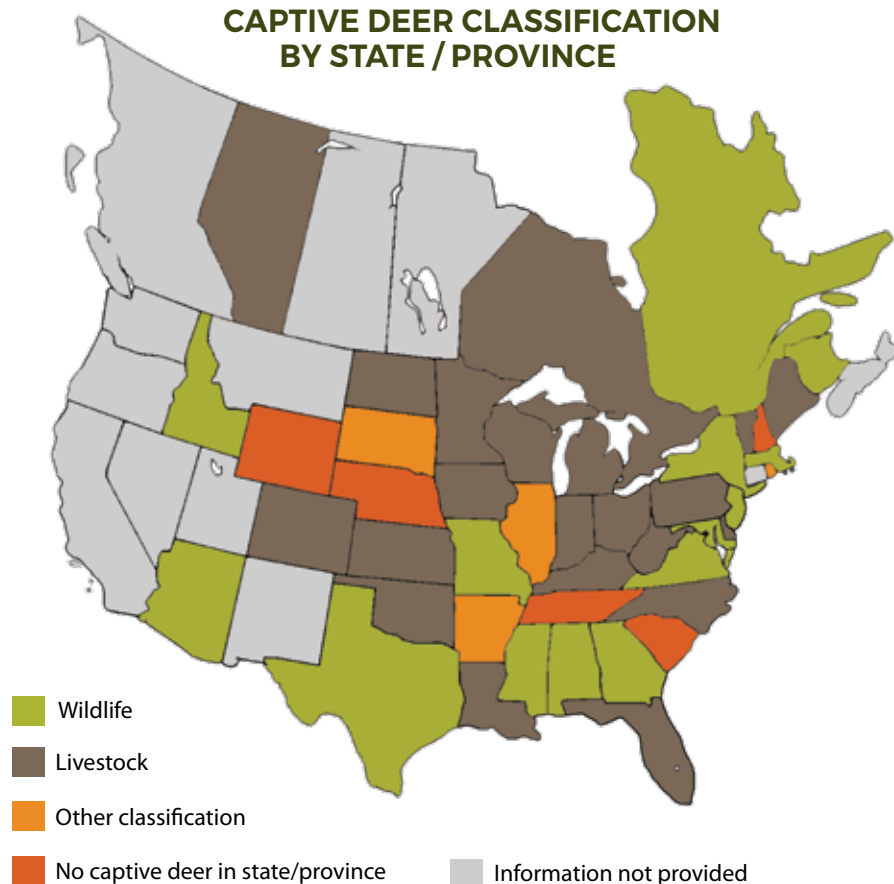
Regionally speaking, four of nine states in the Southeast consider captive whitetails as wildlife, four consider them livestock, and Arkansas considers them as either, depending on the situation. In the Northeast, five of 11 categorize them as wildlife, five consider them as livestock, and Rhode Island labels them as "captive (wild) cervids." In the Midwest, only one of 12 states consider captive whitetails as wildlife, nine classify them as livestock, Illinois considers them as either, and South Dakota considers them as a "captive non-domestic." Only four states in the West and four Canadian provinces responded to this question, with roughly split categories for wildlife/livestock in each.

### QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

In most cases, this regulatory matrix is a direct result of lobbied and enacted law, with heavy efforts from special-interest groups to move captive deer to the livestock category. The problem is that this inconsistency across state or provincial boundaries possibly creates missed opportunities for communication between agencies controlling and regulating captive deer facilities and certainly limits management efforts. There are also fundamental differences between wildlife and agricultural departments regarding captive deer issues and free-ranging wildlife populations, and when a public-trust resource like whitetails is legally considered livestock, ultimately control moves to the latter.

Given the potential for disease transmission and the threat to our \$87 billion hunting industry, QDMA advocates for captive deer to be categorized as wildlife and that primary regulatory authority of captive deer facilities stay with 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 DEER CLASSIFICATION  
BY STATE / PROVINCE**





## CARCASS TAG REQUIREMENTS



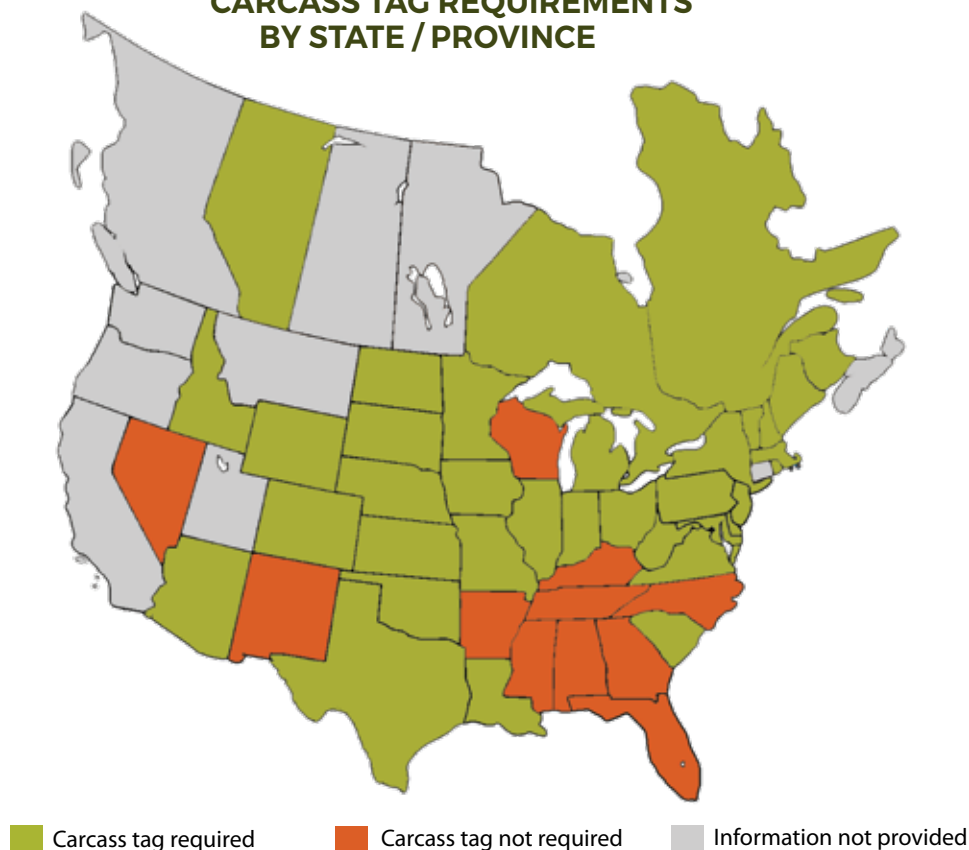
We've all seen photos of harvested deer tagged in various locations. Some tags are placed around an antler, others are in an ear, and some are through a back leg. Ever wonder how many states and provinces require tagging? We did, so we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to determine whether deer had to be physically tagged within their jurisdictions. A similar survey for our 2014 *Whitetail Report* provides a comparison to tagging requirements four years ago.

**Thirty-one of 42 states (74 percent) required physical tagging, which is virtually the exact proportion (73 percent) that mandated it in 2014.** However, there have been some changes. Tagging is most prominent in the Northeast, where all states that responded required it. New Jersey did not require carcass tags for the 2013-14 season but does now. The Midwest was a close second as 11 states (85 percent) required it, with Wisconsin changing their tagging requirements since our last survey. The Southeast was much more lenient as only four of 11 states (36 percent) required physical tagging. Notably, both Arkansas and South Carolina reversed their carcass tagging regulation since 2014. In the West, four states (67 percent) required it, while all provinces that provided data required tagging in Canada.

### QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The days of agency-manned check stations are behind us as less than one third of states and only one of five provinces employ them. However, we feel it is still critically important to link a harvested deer to the successful hunter in a way that's as effective and practical as possible for the hunter and state or provincial wildlife agency. This may be through a physical tag placed on the animal or a confirmation number from a "telechecked" deer. Declining agency budgets and an increase in online license purchasing by hunters makes the printing and distributing of carcass tags more problematic. Given the regional variability in carcass tags, the issue is likely as culturally based as biologically important.

### CARCASS TAG REQUIREMENTS BY STATE / PROVINCE



## NEW HUNTER AND VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Declining hunter participation is one of the single most important issues impacting deer hunting and management today. In fact, it has been a major issue for years. It is the primary reason Families Afield was launched in 2004, and it's why the National R3 (Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation) Plan was initiated by the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports (CAHSS) much more recently.

Though R3 programs abound (over 450 state and national programs are available today), they have been met with limited success. Experts believe it's because most focus on children and/or entice participants from families with pre-existing hunting experience. CAHSS and other conservation partners feel that to increase the number of hunters from new and existing audiences, multi-pronged marketing and outreach efforts are needed, and those efforts should focus more on non-traditional user groups.

So, to gain a better understanding of these types of opportunities available today, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies and asked whether they currently offered any programs for engaging new, non-traditional audiences for deer hunting. We also asked if they offered formal programs that encouraged volunteerism on government-owned lands that allow deer hunting, as a means to bridge the gap between introducing newcomers

to hunting while building opportunities to improve hunter-agency relationships, habitat, access, and community involvement.

### NEW HUNTER PROGRAMS

Thirty-two of 41 states (78 percent) have new hunter programs, some of which are geared for non-traditional audiences. These include programs that teach participants to shoot, hunt and cook wild game. There are several aimed at getting more women in the outdoors and others that offer apprentice hunting licenses for individuals interested in trying hunting. According to wildlife agency officials, nine of 11 states (82 percent) in the Southeast, seven of 12 states (58 percent) in the Northeast, 11 of 12 states (92 percent) in the Midwest and five of six (83 percent) in the West have some form of new hunter program in place. No programs were reported in Canada.

### VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Far fewer states have similar opportunities for volunteers to help out on publicly accessible lands, as only 14 of 41 states (34 percent) offer a formalized program. One of 11 states (9 percent) in the Southeast has a program, five of 12 states (42 percent) in both the Northeast and the Midwest have a program, and only three of six states (50 percent) in the West have a formal volunteer engagement program available. No programs were reported in Canada.

### QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Although we're pleased to see that new hunter programs exist in nearly every region in the United States, there is room for improvement for both new hunter and volunteer engagement. We encourage all state and provincial agencies that currently do not offer a formal new hunter program which specifically targets non-traditional audiences (urban/suburban, locavores, women and minorities) to make them available in the future.

In addition, QDMA is a strong proponent for public involvement in deer management, and we were pleased to see several states taking advantage of formal volunteer programs. We also recognize the budgetary constraints many state and provincial wildlife agencies operate under today. Thus, we recommend more agencies engage sportsmen and women at an even higher level in the future through volunteerism, forging strong working relationships and maintaining open and effective lines of communication with the public.

Many nonprofit organizations like QDMA want to help, and our network of members, Branches and State Advisory Councils can be of great financial, organizational and physical support if asked. In fact, one aspect of our new mission goals specifically challenges QDMA members to get involved by helping out on local government lands (see page 36). Ideally, they would and should be welcomed with open arms.

**STATES / PROVINCES WITH  
NEW HUNTER PROGRAMS**



**STATES / PROVINCES WITH  
VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS**



## STATE AND PROVINCIAL WILDLIFE AGENCY LOGOS



White-tailed deer are the foundation of our hunting industry and wildlife management system. More hunters pursue deer than all other game species combined. In fact, nearly 80 percent of all hunters pursue deer (see page 25). In the West, mule deer are favored, but approximately 97 percent of hunters and whitetails in the United States live east of the Rocky Mountains, so in most of the country whitetails reign supreme.

As such, we thought it would be interesting to see the influence whitetails have on state and provincial logos so we surveyed each wildlife agency in the contiguous U.S. and Canada and asked for a copy of their agency's logo. Overall, birds were represented on 26 of 48 state logos (54 percent), followed by fish (25 states, 52 percent) and whitetails (17 states, 35 percent). However, there was a lot of regional variability.

In the Southeast, whitetails were on 64 percent of agency logos, and in the Northeast they were on 54 percent of logos. Conversely, whitetails were only depicted on 15 percent of Midwestern and 9 percent of Western state wildlife agency logos. Big game other than whitetails dominated West logos, as 64 percent included a bear, bighorn sheep, elk, mule deer or pronghorn. In Canada, wildlife was scarce on agency logos. Whitetails, birds and/or fish didn't appear on a single logo. In fact, Manitoba was the only province to display an animal, and it included a bison.

## WILDLIFE AGENCY LOGOS BY STATE

State/Province	White-tailed Deer	Other Big Game Mammal	Bird	Fish	Other
Alabama	x		x	x	
Arkansas	x		x	x	
Florida	x		x	x	
Georgia	x		x	x	
Louisiana	x		x	x	
Mississippi	x				Fishing boat, camping
North Carolina					Text
Oklahoma					Native American artifacts
South Carolina	x		x	x	Fishing boat
Tennessee				x	Raccoon
Texas					Text
<b>Southeast Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	
Connecticut					Sun
Delaware			x	x	
Maine	x		x	x	
Maryland			x		Landscape
Massachusetts			x	x	
New Hampshire	x		x	x	
New Jersey	x		x	x	
New York					Text and state outline
Pennsylvania	x		x		Landscape
Rhode Island			x	x	Plant
Vermont	x		x	x	
Virginia	x		x	x	
West Virginia	x		x	x	
<b>Northeast Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	
Illinois			x		Landscape
Indiana					Text
Iowa					Text
Kansas					Text and graphic designs
Kentucky	x		x	x	
Michigan					Text and state outline
Minnesota					Text
Missouri				x	Raccoon, oak leaf
Nebraska			x	x	Tree
North Dakota		x	x	x	Mule deer
Ohio	x		x	x	
South Dakota			x		
Wisconsin					Landscape
<b>Midwest Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	
Arizona			x		
California		x			Bear
Colorado		x			Bighorn sheep
Idaho		x		x	Elk, landscape
Montana					Mountains
Nevada		x	x	x	Bighorn sheep
New Mexico		x			Bear
Oregon		x		x	Mule deer
Utah					
Washington	x		x	x	Crab
Wyoming		x			Pronghorn
<b>West Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>17 of 48</b>	<b>8 of 48</b>	<b>26 of 48</b>	<b>25 of 48</b>	



## VENISON DONATION PROGRAMS



The Midlands QDMA Branch of South Carolina is just one of many that work with local food shelters to provide venison meals to those in need. Last year QDMA Branches and members donated approximately 6.9 million meals to charities or individuals not residing in their households.

Hunters have been sharing their venison with family, friends, and neighbors for generations. Fortunately, beginning in the 1990s, organized programs started to become readily available to handle hunter-donated venison and provide it to needy individuals. Today there are literally hundreds of venison donation programs in existence, and we reported in our 2011 *Whitetail Report* that a minimum of 2,603,263 pounds of hunter-donated meat were provided for the needy across North America during the 2009-2010 hunting season. That translated to 10,445,512 meals (note: one deer will produce an average of 50 pounds of ground venison and approximately 200 meals)! Elk, moose, antelope,

pheasants, and waterfowl were included in this total, but the bulk of the meat was from whitetails.

Formalized venison donation programs are known by a variety of names (e.g., Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry, Sportsmen Against Hunger, Hunters for the Hungry, and Hunters Sharing the Harvest), and they range in abundance from zero to six per state/province. These programs are cooperative efforts among hunters, farmers, sportsmen's associations, meat processors, state meat inspectors, and hunger relief organizations to provide quality, high protein, and low fat wild game meat for the needy.

The National Rifle Association's Hunters for the Hungry Information Clearinghouse (NRA-HHIC) maintains detailed records of donated hunter-harvested meat from official venison donation programs, primarily from white-tailed deer, on an annual basis. These data are comparable across years, and the table on the facing page includes an estimate per state from the 2009-2010 and 2014-2015 hunting seasons. We also surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies and asked if they kept track of venison donations and, if so, to provide an estimate from the 2016-2017 season.

Overall 19 of 41 states (46 percent) and zero of three provinces that replied to our survey maintain records of venison donations within their jurisdictional boundaries. Also, according to both NRA-HHIC and our data, the Midwest region donates the most venison, followed by the Northeast, the Southeast and the West. Perhaps most obvious, however, is that an apparent decrease of nearly 800,000 pounds of donated venison occurred between 2010 and 2015 when evaluating analogous data from NRA-HHIC, which was a drop of more than 30 percent in five years. This occurred at a time when the national deer harvest also declined appreciably, and was attributed to multiple factors including, but not limited to, disease, weather, habitat loss, fawn recruitment declines and intentional reductions by wildlife agencies (see the 2015 *Whitetail Report* for more info).

Through our new five-year mission goals, QDMA has prioritized providing for our food-insecure neighbors, strongly encouraging our 60,000 members and network of 220 Branches to support venison donation programs in their respective areas or neighborhoods.

**QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

In 2016, over 40 million people (15.6 million households or 12.3 percent of all U.S. households) struggled to put enough food on their tables. The need for donated venison is obvious, and the availability of funding is the primary limiting factor preventing these programs from reaching their potential. Funding comes from a variety of sources such as individuals, churches, civic groups, hunt clubs, outdoor organizations, businesses, foundations, corporations, and local fundraising events.

Through our new five-year mission goals (see page 36), QDMA has prioritized providing for our food-insecure neighbors, strongly encouraging our 60,000 members and network of 220 Branches to support venison donation programs in their respective areas or neighborhoods. Currently QDMA members donate 6.9 million meals or 1.73 million pounds of bulk venison to charities or individuals not residing in their household annually. Our goal is to donate 40 million meals, or 10 million pounds, by 2022. We hope that our involvement in this invaluable effort will dramatically increase the availability of quality venison to the needy.

**Top-5 States**

**With the Most Pounds of  
Venison Donated 2016-2017**

State	Lbs. Venison
Virginia	283,200
Missouri	198,277
Tennessee	147,000
Iowa	137,500
Pennsylvania	110,000

**Top-5 States**

**With the Most Pounds of Venison  
Donated Per Hunter 2016-2017**

State	Lbs./Hunter
Virginia	1.42
Delaware	1.13
Iowa	0.81
Tennessee	0.49
Missouri	0.40

**VENISON DONATIONS BY STATE / PROVINCE**

State/Province	Agency Tracks Donations?	2014-2015**			2016-2017	
		2009-2010**	2014-2015**	2016-2017	lbs/hunter	lbs/hunter
Alabama	N	44,156	24,610	*	0.13	*
Arkansas	Y	68,000	50,000	51,000	0.14	0.15
Florida	N	1,784	560	*	0.01	*
Georgia	N	35,693	19,905	*	0.06	*
Louisiana	N	*	28,724	*	0.16	*
Mississippi	N	*	8,096	*	0.06	*
North Carolina	N	7,973	39,885	*	0.16	*
Oklahoma	Y	39,765	*	20,393	*	0.06
South Carolina	N	28,716	30,995	*	0.22	*
Tennessee	Y	103,755	128,199	147,000	0.42	0.49
Texas	N	186,540	100,000	*	0.14	*
<b>SE Total/Avg</b>	<b>3 of 11</b>	<b>516,382</b>	<b>430,974</b>	<b>218,393</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>0.23</b>
Connecticut		4,000	*	*	*	*
Delaware	Y	30,000	18,016	18,154	1.13	1.13
Maine	N	739	5,649	*	0.03	*
Maryland	N	144,350	135,040	*	2.29	*
Massachusetts	N	*	*	*	*	*
New Hampshire	Y	*	*	420	*	0.01
New Jersey	Y	15,020	24,019	20,270	0.31	0.26
New York	Y	10,267	*	76,000	*	0.13
Pennsylvania	Y	52,705	102,300	110,000	0.15	0.16
Rhode Island	Y	*	*	150	*	0.02
Vermont	N	*	*	*	*	*
Virginia	Y	405,340	238,972	283,200	1.19	1.42
West Virginia	Y	50,007	17,725	23,716	0.07	0.10
<b>NE Total/Avg</b>	<b>8 of 12</b>	<b>712,428</b>	<b>541,721</b>	<b>531,910</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>0.40</b>
Illinois	N	106,951	4,672	*	0.02	*
Indiana	Y	91,924	172,785	66,000	0.91	0.35
Iowa	Y	308,995	139,450	137,500	0.82	0.81
Kansas	N	4,500	36,660	*	0.32	*
Kentucky	Y	91,000	75,193	35,707	0.21	0.10
Michigan	N	34,350	*	*	*	*
Minnesota	N	400	5,166	*	0.01	*
Missouri	Y	237,363	212,993	198,277	0.42	0.40
Nebraska	Y	2,797	17,062	28,000	0.13	0.21
North Dakota	*	15,885	9,063	*	0.15	*
Ohio	Y	181,725	63,389	102,894	0.14	0.22
South Dakota	Y	97,752	37,643	24,376	0.56	0.36
Wisconsin	Y	176,445	23,250	50,320	0.04	0.08
<b>MW Total/Avg</b>	<b>8 of 12</b>	<b>1,350,087</b>	<b>797,326</b>	<b>643,074</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>0.32</b>
Arizona	N	3,136	3,126	*	0.05	*
California	*	6,350	*	*	*	*
Colorado	N	5,410	140	*	0.00	*
Idaho	N	3,000	1,500	*	0.01	*
Montana	*	1,450	38,280	*	*	*
Nevada	N	*	*	*	*	*
New Mexico	N	*	*	*	*	*
Oregon	*	40	*	*	*	*
Utah	*	3,680	1,600	*	*	*
Washington	*	1,300	*	*	*	*
Wyoming	N	*	*	*	*	*
<b>West Total/Avg</b>	<b>0 of 6</b>	<b>24,366</b>	<b>44,646</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>*</b>
<b>U.S. Total/Avg</b>	<b>19 of 41</b>	<b>2,603,263</b>	<b>1,814,667</b>	<b>1,393,377</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>0.32</b>
Alberta	N	*	*	565	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	N	*	*	*	*	*
Nova Scotia	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ontario	*	*	*	*	*	*
Quebec	N	*	*	*	*	*
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>Canada Total/Avg</b>	<b>0 of 3</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>

\*Data not provided/available

\*\*Data from NRA's Hunters for the Hungry information clearinghouse

## DEER MANAGEMENT PLANS

An important component of the highly successful North American Model of Wildlife Conservation is that wildlife is held in trust by each state and province for its citizens to enjoy. Sportsmen and women are becoming increasingly engaged in deer management programs, and this is important as white-tailed deer are the most popular big game animal in the United States. Approximately three of every four hunters pursue whitetails, and whitetail hunters are the foundation of the \$87 billion hunting industry. Given the whitetail's importance, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to determine the number that had published deer management plans.

Management plans are written documents that establish specific goals, strategies and timelines to achieve desired outcomes. While the written plan is important, the process of stakeholder collaboration and articulation of specific outcomes is often equally, if not more, important. Thus, plans exist for managing a wide variety of natural resources.

Surprisingly, only 24 of 41 states (59 percent) had a published deer management plan. Plans were most prevalent in the Northeast where 10 of 12 states (83 per-

cent) had one. Few states in the Midwest (5 of 12; 42 percent) or Southeast (5 of 11; 45 percent) had plans, and this is concerning given the importance of deer hunting to those regions. Four of six states (67 percent) in the West had plans, and three of four Canadian provinces (75 percent) had a published plan. For states with published deer plans, 13 (54 percent) have updated them within the past five years, and 20 (83 percent) have updated them within the past 10 years. Alabama, Minnesota, Ohio and West Virginia will publish new plans in 2018, while Alberta's plan was last updated in 1995.

### QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the whitetail's importance to the entire hunting industry and wildlife management system, QDMA strongly recommends all states and provinces have a published deer management plan created with input from all key deer stakeholder groups. QDMA staff has provided input to numerous states' management plans, served on several states' steering committees, and we look forward to working closely with states and provinces on future plans.

### DEER MANAGEMENT PLANS BY STATE / PROVINCE



### PLANS BY STATE / PROVINCE

State/Province	Published Deer Plan	Year Published
Alabama	N	
Arkansas	Y	2013
Florida	Y	2008
Georgia	Y	2015
Louisiana	Y	2017
Mississippi	N	
North Carolina	N	
Oklahoma	Y	2016
South Carolina	N	
Tennessee	N	
Texas	N	
<b>Southeast Total</b>	<b>5</b>	
Connecticut	*	
Delaware	Y	2010
Maine	Y	2007
Maryland	Y	2009
Massachusetts	Y	2017
New Hampshire	Y	2016
New Jersey	N	
New York	Y	2011
Pennsylvania	Y	2009
Rhode Island	N	
Vermont	Y	2008
Virginia	Y	2015
West Virginia	Y	Being revised
<b>Northeast Total</b>	<b>10</b>	
Illinois	Y	2014
Indiana	N	
Iowa	Y	2009
Kansas	N	
Kentucky	N	
Michigan	Y	2016
Minnesota	N	
Missouri	Y	2014
Nebraska	N	
North Dakota	*	
Ohio	N	
South Dakota	Y	2017
Wisconsin	N	
<b>Midwest Total</b>	<b>5</b>	
Arizona	Y	2016
California	*	
Colorado	Y	
Idaho	Y	2005
Montana	*	
Nevada	Y	2006
New Mexico	N	
Oregon	*	
Utah	*	
Washington	*	
Wyoming	N	
<b>West Total</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>24</b>	
Alberta	Y	1995
British Columbia	*	
Manitoba	*	
New Brunswick	N	
Nova Scotia	*	
Ontario	Y	2017
Quebec	Y	2010
Saskatchewan	*	
<b>Canada Total</b>	<b>3</b>	

\*Data not provided/available



## EVALUATIONS, AUDITS AND LAWSUITS

Evaluations, audits and lawsuits are three words that wildlife agency deer managers never want to hear associated with their deer management program. However, disgruntled hunters and anti-hunters routinely threaten these actions, so we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies and asked whether their deer management program had been subjected to a formal evaluation, audit or lawsuit.

### FORMAL EVALUATIONS

A formal evaluation is an assessment of an agency's deer management program. Ten of 38 states (26 percent) have been subjected to a formal deer program evaluation. Nearly half (40 percent) were in the Midwest, while only one was in the West. Six of the evaluations (60 percent) occurred within the past five years, and eight (80 percent) were within the past 10 years. In Canada, one of three provinces providing data has been subjected to a formal evaluation, and it has occurred twice in the province since 2009.

### AUDITS

An audit is an official inspection of an agency's deer management program, typically by an independent body. Four of 36 states (11 percent) have been subjected to an audit. Half (50 percent) were in the Midwest, while none were in the West. Two audits occurred within the past five years, and all were within the last 10 years. Some audits were extremely high profile such as when Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker appointed Dr. James Kroll as the Deer Trustee in 2012 to review the DNR's deer management program. In Canada, one of three provinces providing data has been subjected to an audit.

### LAWSUITS

A lawsuit is a claim or dispute brought to a court of law with regard to an agency's deer management program. Four of 36 states (11 percent) have also been subjected to a lawsuit. Two of these (50 percent) were in the Northeast, while, again, none were in the West. Two lawsuits occurred within the past five years, and three were within the past 10 years. In Canada, one of three provinces providing data has been subjected to a lawsuit, and like the formal evaluation, it has occurred twice in the province since 2009.

### QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Few states have been subjected to these actions, but for those that have, much of the activity has occurred within the past five years, and nearly all has taken place within the past decade. As hunter numbers continue declining, and as we continue becoming more of an urbanized society, non-traditional stakeholders take more seats at the proverbial deer management table. Therefore, it's crucial for state and provincial wildlife agencies and hunters to work more closely together and forge strong relationships for a productive deer hunting future.

QDMA is a strong proponent of public involvement in deer management programs. While formal evaluations and audits can strengthen management programs and provide transparency to the public, their net effect is not always positive for the sportsmen and women of the state/province. Thus, extreme caution should be exercised before putting these programs under public scrutiny. Lawsuits are rarely productive as they typically drain precious time and resources from our state and provincial deer managers.

### BY STATE / PROVINCE

State/ Province	Formal Evaluation (Y/N)	Year	Audit (Y/N)	Year	Lawsuit (Y/N)	Year
Alabama	*		*		*	
Arkansas	N		N		N	
Florida	N		N		N	
Georgia	*		Y	2016	*	
Louisiana	N		N		N	
Mississippi	Y	2013	N		N	
North Carolina	Y	2010	N		N	
Oklahoma	N		N		N	
South Carolina	N		N		Y	1999-2001
Tennessee	*		*		*	
Texas	Y	2005	N		N	
<b>Southeast Total</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>	
Connecticut	*		*		*	
Delaware	N		N		N	
Maine	N		N		N	
Maryland	N		N		N	
Massachusetts	N		N		N	
New Hampshire	N		N		N	
New Jersey	N		N		N	
New York	Y	1990	*		Y	2014
Pennsylvania	Y	2009-2010	N		Y	2007-11
Rhode Island	N		N		N	
Vermont	N		N		N	
Virginia	N		N		N	
West Virginia	N		Y	2010	N	
<b>Northeast Total</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>	
Illinois	N		N		N	
Indiana	Y	2017	*		*	
Iowa	Y	2017	*		*	
Kansas	N		N		N	
Kentucky	N		N		N	
Michigan	N		N		N	
Minnesota	N		Y	2016	N	
Missouri	Y	2014-15	N		Y	2015
Nebraska	N		N		N	
North Dakota	*		*		*	
Ohio	N		N		N	
South Dakota	Y	2013	N		N	
Wisconsin	N		Y	2012	N	
<b>Midwest Total</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>	
Arizona	Y	2017	N		N	
California	*		*		*	
Colorado	N		N		N	
Idaho	N		N		N	
Montana	*		*		*	
Nevada	N		N		N	
New Mexico	N		N		N	
Oregon	*		*		*	
Utah	*		*		*	
Washington	*		*		*	
Wyoming	N		N		N	
<b>West Total</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>	
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>4</b>	
Alberta	N		N		N	
British Columbia	*		*		*	
Manitoba	*		*		*	
New Brunswick	N		N		N	
Nova Scotia	*		*		*	
Ontario	*		*		*	
Quebec	Y	2009/2013	Y		Y	2009/2013
Saskatchewan						
<b>Canada Total</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>	

\*Data not provided/available

DEER MANAGEMENT GOALS



State and provincial wildlife agencies manage deer using a myriad of variables and goals. To better understand the most commonly used parameters, we surveyed each state and provincial wildlife agency and asked which of the following goals were included in their deer management program.

Hunting opportunity ranked highest as 28 of 40 states (70 percent) used this variable. Herd density was next in 27 states (68 percent), followed by herd health (65 percent), and hunter satisfaction and agricultural damage (both 63 percent). Herd age structure (12 states; 30 percent) and deer-vehicle accidents (14 states; 35 percent) were the least used parameters.

Top-5  
Deer Management  
Program Goals

Program Goal	% of States Using That Goal
Hunter Opportunity	70
Deer Herd Density	68
Deer Herd Health	65
Hunter Satisfaction	63
Agricultural Damage	63

Regionally, in the Southeast no variable was used in more than 67 percent of the states. Conversely, herd density, herd health and habitat health were used in nearly every Northeast state. Agricultural damage reigned supreme in the Midwest; and herd density, hunter opportunity and hunter satisfaction were used in nearly every state in the West that provided data. In Canada, hunting opportunity and agricultural damage ranked highest, followed by herd density, hunter satisfaction and deer-vehicle accidents.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Deer management is not a one-size-fits-all recipe. Successful deer management requires a scientific approach that is transparent to the public and supported by hunters. The most successful programs include local deer herd demographic data, combined with other local variables including environment, winter severity, annual precipitation, habitat productivity, hunting culture, and more. Thus, it is not surprising that program goals can vary widely by region. The important thing is for state and provincial wildlife agencies to use scientifically sound variables that are measurable and well defined by a public input process. In general, we recommend deer

herd and habitat health be components of all deer management programs.

Notes to Facing Page

States/provinces in blue did not provide data.

A Individual property goals for density, herd health, age structure, habitat, hunter satisfaction, and ag damage. This is through DMAP.

B Work with individual municipalities.

C Acceptable levels of deer-human conflicts however they are defined by the public in a WMU.

D Public outreach and technical assistance, hunter opinion of special deer management areas, hunting access, hunter retention and recruitment.

E Social acceptability is a major goal.

F Take all into account, but don't have benchmarks for each.

G The primary criteria to manage white-tailed deer in Idaho include the percentage of 5+ points (as recorded on one side), hunting opportunity, hunter-days of recreation, buck harvest, and consideration is given to reduce agricultural damage/ conflicts.



## DEER MANAGEMENT GOALS BY STATE / PROVINCE

State/Province	Herd Density	Herd Health	Herd Sge Structure	Habitat Health	Hunter Opportunity	Hunter Satisfaction	Deer-Vehicle Accidents	Agricultural Damage	Other
<b>Alabama</b>									
Arkansas	x	x	x	x	x				
Florida	x	x		x	x	x		x	
Georgia	x								
Louisiana		x		x	x	x		x	
Mississippi									A
North Carolina	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Oklahoma	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
South Carolina	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
<b>Tennessee</b>									
Texas									No set goals
<b>Southeast Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>Connecticut</b>									
Delaware	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Maine	x	x		x	x	x			Carrying capacity
Maryland	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
Massachusetts	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
New Hampshire	x			x					B
New Jersey		x		x	x	x		x	
New York	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Pennsylvania		x		x					C
Rhode Island	x	x		x	x	x	x		
Vermont	x	x		x		x			
Virginia	x			x	x	x	x	x	
West Virginia	x	x		x	x		x	x	D
<b>Northeast Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	
Illinois		x			x		x	x	
Indiana		x			x	x	x	x	
Iowa		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Kansas					x	x	x	x	E
Kentucky	x	x							
Michigan		x		x	x		x	x	
Minnesota	x								
Missouri	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Nebraska	x	x	x		x		x	x	
North Dakota					x			x	
Ohio						x		x	
South Dakota	x					x		x	
Wisconsin	x								F
<b>Midwest Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	
Arizona	x	x	x		x	x			
<b>California</b>									
Colorado		x		x	x	x	x	x	
Idaho	x		x		x			x	G
<b>Montana</b>									
Nevada	x					x			
New Mexico	x	x			x	x			
<b>Oregon</b>									
<b>Utah</b>									
<b>Washington</b>									
Wyoming	x			x	x	x		x	
<b>West Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>25</b>	
Alberta	x				x			x	
<b>British Columbia</b>									
<b>Manitoba</b>									
New Brunswick					x	x	x	x	
<b>Nova Scotia</b>									
Ontario	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
Quebec	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	
<b>Saskatchewan</b>									
<b>Canada Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	

## QDMA UNVEILS AMBITIOUS NEW FIVE-YEAR GOALS

When Joe Hamilton founded the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) in 1988, the deer world was very different than it is today. Trail-cameras, commercial food plot blends, and even modern camouflage were just arriving on the scene. Little did Joe know then the profound impact QDMA would have on whitetails and hunting over the ensuing three decades.

Today, nearly as many 3½-year-old or older bucks are harvested nationwide as 1½-year-olds. Similarly, since 1999 hunters have harvested more antlerless deer than antlered bucks each year. These accomplishments are truly remarkable and reflect a complete paradigm shift from the days of traditional deer management. As further evidence, 82 percent of hunters in a nationwide survey in 2013 reported adhering to QDM principles where they hunt. To say QDMA has changed the face of deer hunting and management would be an understatement.

However, new challenges emerged. Deer hunter numbers fell to the lowest level in decades, chronic wasting disease (CWD) and epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) became more widespread and impactful, and predators and competitors began negatively impacting more deer herds than ever before.

These challenges call for an even stronger, more effective QDMA.

That's why, over the past year, we reviewed QDMA's mission of "ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage" and agreed it was still the best description of our mission – past, present and future. However, it became apparent we had not focused enough on the third "leg" of our mission – hunting heritage. This is a broad topic, but it starts with hunting because we are hunters, first and foremost. It's everything we do that strengthens our ability to hunt today and for generations to come.

Given the above, we are pleased to announce QDMA's ambitious goals for the next five years. While we will continue our work on whitetails and habitat, our focus

will be intensified on hunting heritage. That is why you will notice only one new goal each for whitetails and habitat and five new hunting heritage goals.

### WHITE-TAILED DEER: PROTECT

**Goal:** Contribute \$1 million to research, on-the-ground management, and technical assistance for white-tailed deer.

**Justification:** Diseases such as CWD and EHD as well as predators and competitors threaten many herds.

**Baseline:** The QDMA National Office has contributed \$865,000 to research, management and technical assistance efforts since 2006.



**Challenge:** Double QDMA's annual expenditures to an average of \$200,000 per year over the next five years.

### WILDLIFE HABITAT: CONSERVE

**Goal:** Place 35 million acres into QDM Cooperatives across the whitetail's range.

**Justification:** A growing body of research confirms that cooperatives not only improve deer herd quality and hunting experiences, they also connect critical landscapes and provide broad conservation and ecological benefits.

**Baseline:** Currently, 30 percent, or approximately 17,500 QDMA members,

are involved in a deer management cooperative. These cooperatives average approximately 1,700 acres each, or a collective 29 million acres.

**Challenge:** Increase the number of acres in QDM Cooperatives by 6 million over the next five years.

### HUNTING HERITAGE: ACCESS

**Goal:** Strengthen partnerships with state and federal agencies to enhance deer herds and habitats on public hunting lands.

**Justification:** Lack of access is one of the most significant barriers to hunter recruitment and retention. However, access is more than just a place to hunt. Improving habitat quality on well-distributed public lands improves the quality of the access for many hunters.

**Baseline:** A relatively small number of QDMA Branches, primarily in the Northeast and Midwest, currently partner with their respective wildlife agencies to improve habitat on public lands.

**Challenge:** Double the number of habitat improvement projects on public lands over the next five years.

### HUNTING HERITAGE: RECRUIT

**Goal:** Mentor 1 million new or beginning hunters through QDMA's Share Your Hunt™ program, Field to Fork program, individual mentor program and partnership with Scholastic 3D Archery.

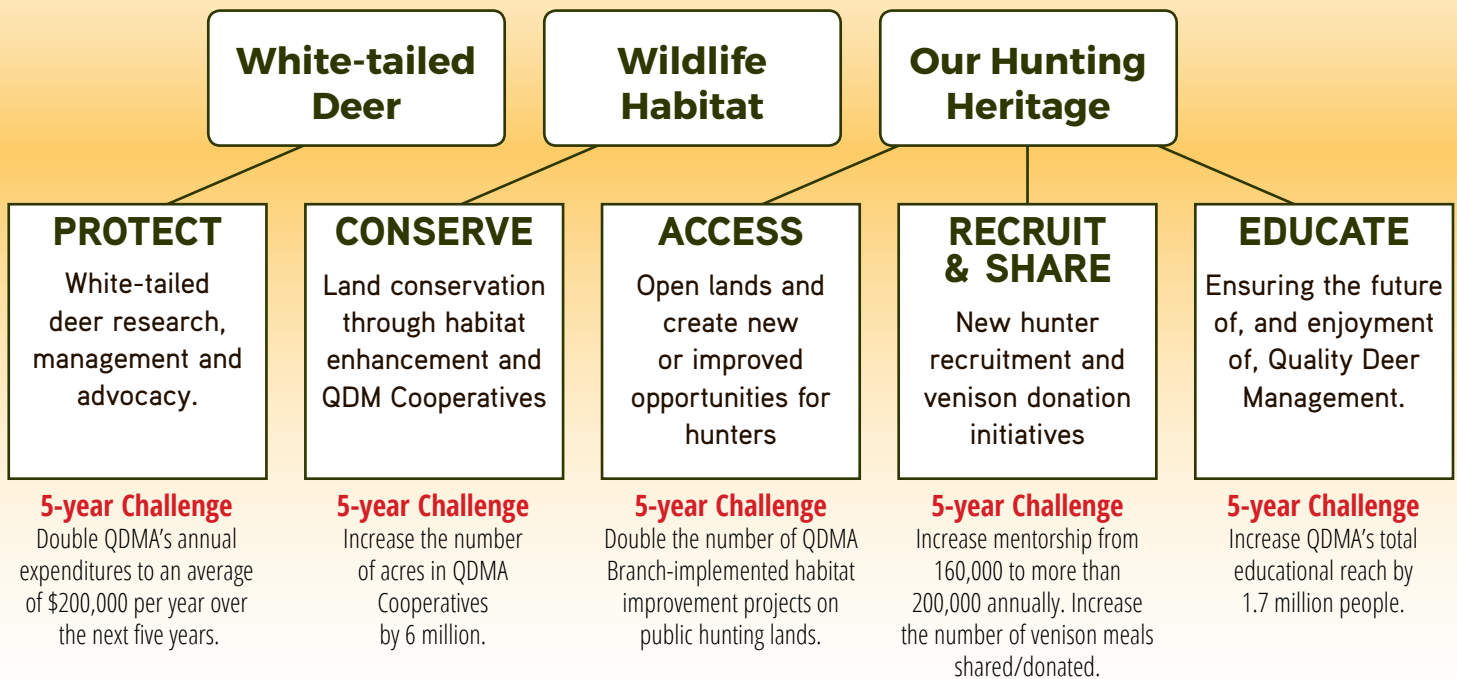
**Justification:** Hunter numbers are at the lowest level in decades and declining.

**Baseline:** Currently, 76 percent of QDMA members, or approximately 43,000, mentored at least one hunter last year, with an average of 3.7 hunters per mentor. Importantly, 58 percent of the new or beginning hunters were not related to the mentor. When combined with QDMA's Share Your Hunt™ program and other mentor initiatives, QDMA mentored approximately 160,000 hunters in 2016.

**Challenge:** Increase current mentorship levels from 160,000 to more than 200,000 annually over the next five years.



QDMA is dedicated to ensuring the future of...



### HUNTING HERITAGE: SHARE

**Goal:** Share 20 million meals, or 5 million pounds of venison, with friends, family and others not residing in the donor's household.

**Justification:** Recent research has revealed that the best way for hunters to connect with non-hunters is through the sharing of wild game.

**Baseline:** Currently, 56 percent of QDMA members, or approximately 33,000, share venison meals with people outside of their household annually. In total, they share 3.4 million meals or 844,480 pounds. This equates to 26 pounds or roughly 100 servings shared by QDMA members with others outside of their home.

**Challenge:** Increase the number of meals shared by QDMA members by 320,000 per year over the next five years.

### HUNTING HERITAGE: DONATE

**Goal:** Donate 40 million meals, or 10 million pounds of venison, or the equivalent processing costs, to charities or others not residing in the donor's household.

**Justification:** One in seven U.S. households is currently food insecure. Each year, American deer hunters harvest roughly 6 million whitetails, with each providing approximately 40 to 50 pounds of edible meat. At four meals per pound, this equates to more than 1 billion venison

meals annually. Even if only a small portion of this total were donated, it would make a measurable impact on the dietary quality of those in need.

**Baseline:** Currently, 44 percent of QDMA members, or approximately 26,000, donate bulk venison to charities or individuals not residing in their household annually. In total, they donate 6.9 million meals or 1.73 million pounds. This equates to 40 pounds each, which is roughly the quantity of venison provided by one deer.

**Challenge:** Increase the number of meals donated by QDMA members by 270,000 per year over the next five years.

### HUNTING HERITAGE: EDUCATE

**Goal:** Introduce five million hunters annually to QDM principles and practices by the end of five years.

**Justification:** Despite the tremendous advancements in knowledge and understanding of whitetail hunting and management, many hunters as well as non-hunters remain uninformed or misinformed regarding the benefits of QDM.

**Baseline:** Currently, QDMA's educational resources, including our website, social media, *Quality Whitetails*, videos, online courses, Deer Steward courses, new e-book and Branch events, reach approximately 3.3 million people annually, the vast majority of which are deer hunters.

**Challenge:** Increase QDMA's total educational reach by 1.7 million people over the next five years.

### WE NEED YOUR HELP

By now, you may be thinking, "Wow, these are some ambitious goals, but exactly how will they be accomplished?" While the details are being provided in *Quality Whitetails*, the short answer is through a strengthened, laser-focused commitment from the QDMA National Office and you, our grassroots members and volunteers. In many of our new goals, your contributions are vital to success. The only way QDMA can accomplish these goals is if our Branches and individual members like you commit to recruiting new hunters, sharing venison, participating in cooperatives and supporting QDMA. Working together, our efforts will directly and measurably impact the future of whitetail hunting, wildlife conservation and our hunting heritage.

As an organization with a proud history of accomplishing great feats, this is simply an evolution in our mission and our next big challenge. We are confident that, with your support, QDMA is up to the task just as we were in 1988 when few believed QDMA would survive, let alone change the face of deer hunting forever.

## QDMA: ENSURING THE FUTURE OF DEER HUNTING



The goal of events like QDMA's National Youth Hunt is to produce more deer hunters and better ambassadors for hunting, not simply to take more kids 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. 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 change, 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, apps, internships, print materials, web-based opportunities and our e-book, *QDMA's Guide to Successful Deer Hunting*. We also 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 at the local, state and national levels. These issues impact everyone who 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. Every day QDMA fights for all deer hunters across North America!

### CERTIFY

In response to member demand, QDMA created both individual and property certification programs. Through Deer Steward and the Land Certification Program, users gain a comprehensive understanding of deer biology, ecology, and management and are provided professional advice/assistance where desired. Though certification is key to each, the primary 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 most 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.

## 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 arguably the busiest for QDMA's advocacy team, and what follows is a look at QDMA's actions on legislation and policy during 2017.

Since 2006, QDMA has engaged in nearly 1,000 major initiatives. In 2017, we engaged in 106 legislative, regulatory or policy issues; 27 at the national level and 78 at the state level in 28 states and one province (see map). Regionally, this included eight states in the Northeast, nine states in the Midwest, eight in the Southeast, and three states in the West. 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 2017:

- Signed MOU on Collective Voice of American Hunters on Global Conservation
- Supported Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's maximum penalty for convicted poachers proposal
- Supported New York's proposed continuation of importation ban on deer/elk susceptible to CWD
- Supported Delaware House Bill 27 to reduce liability for hunters donating venison
- Supported Maine LD109 to allow Sunday hunting
- Encouraged President Trump to

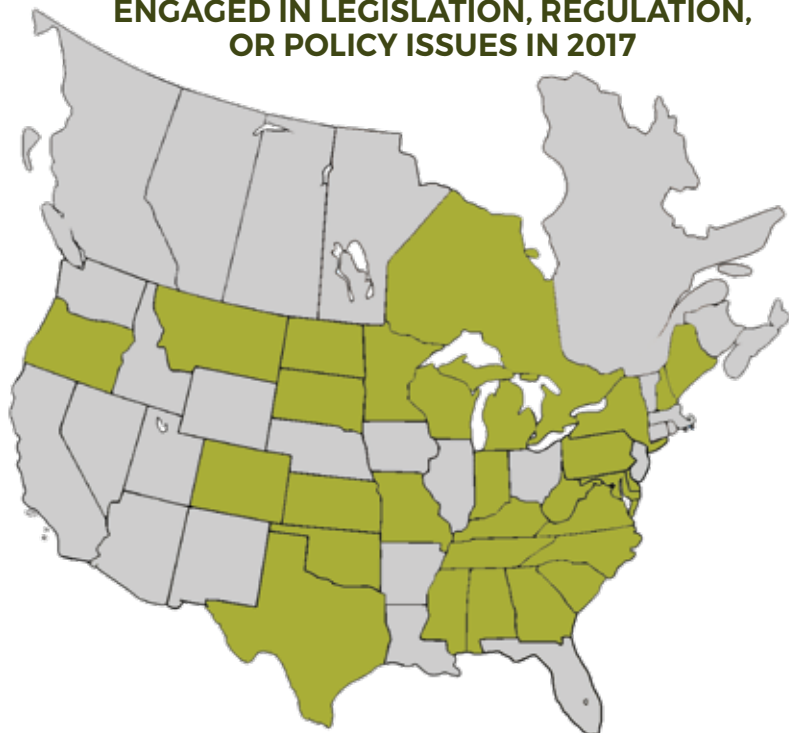
dedicate funds to grow America's Outdoor Economy

- Supported New York Assembly Bill 556 and Senate Bill 387 to increase poaching fines
- Supported Maryland House Bills 312 and 894 to allow Sunday hunting for deer
- Opposed Alabama House Bill 184 to allow baiting for deer and hogs
- Supported New York Assembly Bill 477 and Senate Bill 3156 to lower the hunting age
- Supported West Virginia Senate Bill 473 to allow collection and sale of shed antlers

- Supported West Virginia Senate Bill 278 to allow Sunday hunting on private property
- Supported North Carolina Senate Bill 624 and House Bill 559 to expand Sunday hunting to public lands
- Supported Michigan bill providing the right to hunt, fish and harvest wildlife
- Supported Montana Senate Bill 183 making the Hunters Against the Hungry program permanent
- Supported North Dakota House Bill 1204 to reduce the minimum age to hunt
- Supported Missouri House Bill 488 to authorize a tax credit for donating meat to food pantries
- Supported the North American Wetlands Conservation Act

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 2017





## QDMA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

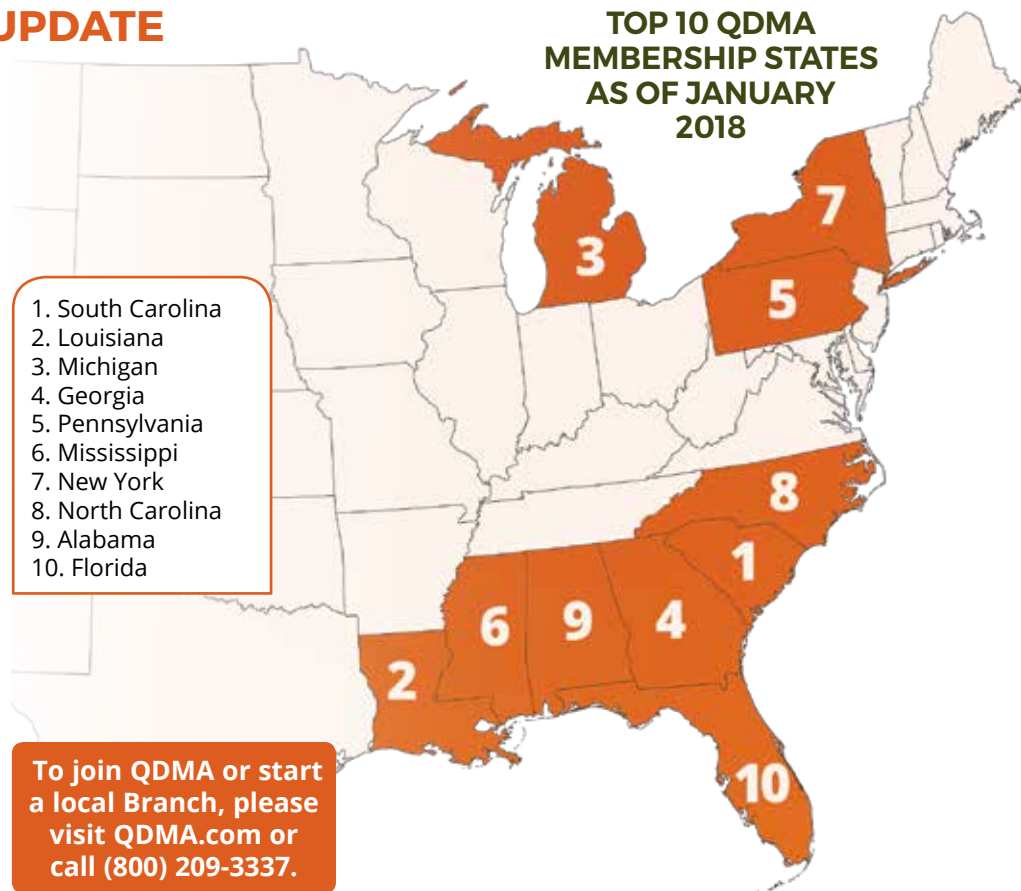
In 2017, QDMA had more than 60,000 members in all 50 states and Canada. Since the beginning, QDMA has worked to educate its members and all deer hunters about the benefits of the Quality Deer Management (QDM) philosophy. This effort – aided by the support of numerous member-volunteers, corporate partners, 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.

1. South Carolina
2. Louisiana
3. Michigan
4. Georgia
5. Pennsylvania
6. Mississippi
7. New York
8. North Carolina
9. Alabama
10. Florida

To join QDMA or start a local Branch, please visit [QDMA.com](http://QDMA.com) or call (800) 209-3337.

### TOP 10 QDMA MEMBERSHIP STATES AS OF JANUARY 2018



QDMA is dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage.



***Where Deer  
Hunters Belong***



## CANADA UPDATE



In response to the discovery of EHD in two Ontario deer, QDMA Canada worked with the Southwestern Ontario and Lanark County Branches to deliver two educational nights featuring presentations on EHD and CWD by University of Guelph and MNRF staff. Approximately 40 people attended each event.

Unfortunately the most noteworthy event regarding deer in Canada this past year was the discovery of epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) in two whitetail bucks found dead near London, in Southwestern Ontario. This discovery marks the first time EHD has been confirmed in a wild deer population in the Province. The timing was somewhat ironic, as QDMA Canada, just this year, supported an EHD-vector monitoring study being conducted by the University of Guelph, which is located in the same region as where the EHD-positive deer were found.

Two Branches of QDMA Canada were quick to respond by facilitating public educational events with presentations on EHD and CWD from experts with the University of Guelph and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. QDMA members and public attendees left knowing what to look for and who to call, as well as sampling kits that could be submitted for testing by both organizations.

Now for the good news: QDMA Canada continues to grow with four

new Branches chartered in Ontario and Quebec, and our membership is showing steady growth to another all-time high of over 1,500 members. Our Branch network and committed volunteers continue to offer youth programs, educational events, Branch banquets and seminars, continually exposing our message and philosophy to new audiences.

QDMA Canada was proud to be a major sponsor of the 2017 North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association (NAWEOA) annual convention, which was held in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario this past summer. Meeting with natural resources law enforcement officers from across North America was very rewarding and gave the opportunity to share how we can support each other in the common goal of deterring poaching and promoting safe and ethical hunting practices. The relationships made have already proven beneficial, with more officers attending our banquets and supporting our youth events with their presence as mentors, presenters or simply attendees. A positive relationship between

law enforcement and hunters should be fostered, as we all want to see our hunting heritage and wildlife populations protected for the future.

On a broad and very general scale, many of Canada's deer populations enjoyed another relatively easy to normal winter last year with the end result being more fawns observed in the spring, giving hope that populations will continue to increase again this year. Record high rainfalls in eastern Canada caused flooding and severely impacted the growing of crops in many areas, which may have a negative effect on deer in those regions.

We were happy to once again work with our Corporate Sponsor Valley Guiding and Outfitting this year and are very thankful for their continued support.

We're looking forward to another year of growth in Canada with a target membership goal of 2,000 members by the end of 2018. All indications are that we will achieve this goal and continue making a positive impact for deer and deer hunting in Canada.



## QDMA COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

QDMA's 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 – continues to drive growth of our audience. While more hunters than ever are receiving *Quality Whitetails* magazine as members of the organization, many more are learning about QDMA and its mission through online content and social media.

Here's a rundown of the top-10 most widely read articles posted on QDMA.com in 2017.

**10. Nine Ways to Conceal Your Movement While Deer Hunting.** Considering new research into deer vision capabilities, Matt Ross looks at effective ways for hunters to dodge those eyes.

**9. How Many Does Should You Harvest? Ask Yourself These 24 Questions.** Matt Ross helps guide hunters through answering this common question.

**8. Forage Rape for Deer.** Every issue of *Quality Whitetails* magazine includes a food plot species profile written by Ryan

Basinger of Westervelt Wildlife Services. Here, Ryan takes an online look at forage rape.

**7. Five Clues You Might Be Hinge-Cutting Too Much.** Lindsay Thomas Jr. explains, using expert input, why hinge-cutting should be used sparingly and with the right planning.

**6. Eight Winter Projects for Better Fall Deer Hunting.** University of Tennessee professor Dr. Craig Harper gives you your winter work-list for better deer habitat.

**5. Five Herbicides Every Deer Steward Should Know.** Brian Grossman takes the complexity out of herbicide use by breaking things down to simple groups and simple concepts.

**4. Something Big is Eating Feral Hogs and Hawking Up Hair Balls.** Wildlife biologist Dave Edwards thought he knew what had produced the giant ball of undigested feral hog hair, but a little more investigation revealed the surprising truth.

**3. What Should I Plant in My Food Plot?** It's the most common question QDMA receives from food plotters, so Brian Grossman broke the answer down into the most common, simple and productive options.

**2. Minerals for Whitetails.** What are the benefits of supplying minerals for whitetails, if any? Brian Murphy reviews the science.

**1. Someone Tossed a Bottle in the Woods and Killed a Nice Buck.** Lindsay Thomas Jr. shares a story from a QDMA member about the mysterious death of a buck – caused by litter.

### QDMA'S E-NEWSLETTER

These 10 articles were just a few of the dozens posted on QDMA.com in 2017. Did you miss any or all of them? One way to be sure you don't is to sign up for QDMA's free e-newsletter. Distributed on a weekly basis for most of the year, the e-newsletter includes links to new and featured content, tips, events, product spotlights, QDMA news, and an "Age This" buck survey in each edition. To sign up, call 800-209-3337 or visit [www.qdma.com/newsletter](http://www.qdma.com/newsletter).

### SOCIAL MEDIA

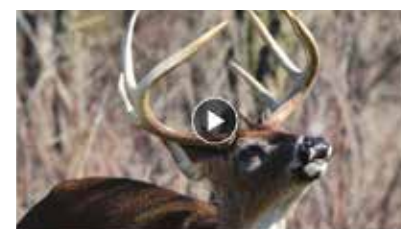
QDMA continued to grow its social media fanbase in 2017, interacting with



The Quality Deer Management Association: Don't Shoot Bucks Just Because They Have Weird Antlers



The Quality Deer Management Association: White-tailed Deer Shot Placement



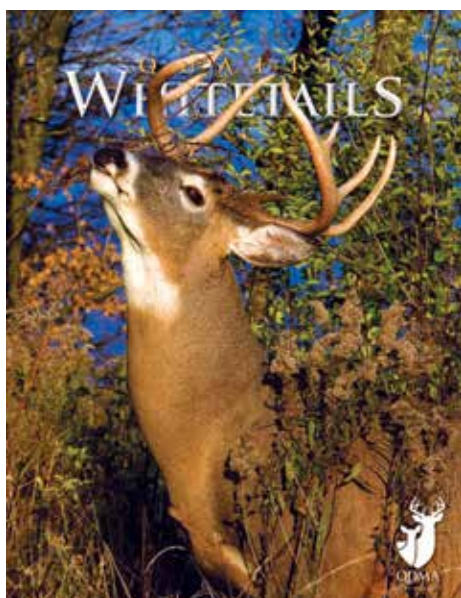
The Quality Deer Management Association: How Bucks Use the Vomeronasal Organ During the Rut

"Don't Shoot Bucks Just Because They Have Weird Antlers" (top) was the most popular new QDMA video on Facebook in 2017, followed by a video on effective shot placement (center) and one about a buck's vomeronasal organ and how it functions (bottom). QDMA videos received over 4.1 million views in 2017, double the previous year.

and engaging millions with educational content about deer hunting and whitetail conservation. QDMA grew its Facebook following 11.2 percent to 270,000 fans, Instagram 19.3 percent to 60,000 followers, and Twitter 16.7 percent to 28,000 followers.

Videos continued to be a popular way to share useful information about deer hunting and QDMA's mission, and QDMA produced 38 new live or pre-recorded videos in 2017 for social media. Those 38 videos received over 4.1 million views last year, double the viewership of the previous year. Three of the most popular videos from 2017 are highlighted on this page.

[facebook.com/theqdma](https://facebook.com/theqdma)  
[instagram.com/theqdma](https://instagram.com/theqdma)  
[twitter.com/theqdma](https://twitter.com/theqdma)



*Quality Whitetails* magazine is QDMA's flagship publication for members with a mission of sharing educational information that can help them produce better deer hunting in their neighborhood. All live deer images in the magazine or on its cover, like this shot by Wisconsin photographer Linda Arndt, are of 100 percent wild, free-ranging whitetails. QDMA does not use images of captive or farmed deer to represent wild animals.



## QDMA RECEIVES 132-ACRE LAND DONATION

In October 2017, a man walked unannounced into the QDMA National Office and told receptionist Sherri Marsh that he wanted to speak to the person in charge. When Marsh asked for his name, the man replied “Santa Claus.” True to that name, Santa Claus delivered the most significant gift QDMA has ever received: 132 acres of land adjoining the QDMA Headquarters site worth \$3.5 million.

“Santa Claus” was actually Ricky Chastain of Athens, Ga., co-owner along with Russ Crump of RC-Coggins LLC. Chastain and Crump’s donation of 132 acres will increase the National Headquarters site to 155 acres in a single tract. QDMA’s original 23-acre Headquarters property was donated to the organization in 2003 by businessman Frank Coggins of Elberton, Ga.

“When we acquired this property and realized a portion of it was right next door to QDMA, Russ and I knew what we were going to do with it,” said Chastain. “Russ had attended QDMA’s educational events in the past and was familiar with their accomplishments. We knew that as a non-profit they’d be able to use this resource to do great things for wildlife conservation and hunting.”

“On behalf of QDMA and our members everywhere, I want to thank Ricky and Russ for this incredibly generous gift, the largest in QDMA’s history,” said QDMA CEO Brian Murphy. “It was an unexpected Christmas present that we will value and use wisely to advance our mission for



On January 9, QDMA staff members toured the new acreage, along with foresters from the Georgia Forestry Commission. The GFC will be providing a Forest Stewardship plan to help guide initial habitat improvements on the tract, which will be used for education and hunter recruitment.

decades to come.”

Like the Headquarters site, the new addition is wooded and holds a strong deer population. Despite being located on the suburban edge of Athens near subdivisions, businesses and developments, the property contains beautiful hardwood forests and large white oak trees along rocky creeks. More open uplands present space for food plots, tree planting, timber stand improvements and other habitat demonstration opportunities.

“Ricky and Russ’s donation gives us 155 acres, which is about the size property that many of our members hunt,” said

Murphy. “We have the opportunity to use the new land as an educational exhibit, to show our members and all deer hunters that you don’t have to have thousands of acres or lots of money to produce great deer habitat and hunting opportunities.”

Additionally, the new acreage will be very useful to QDMA’s local Field to Fork and Share Your Hunt programs, which help introduce new participants to deer hunting. Previously, a handful of Field to Fork participants were able to go hunting with archery equipment on the 23-acre Headquarters property, but the expanded acreage will allow for much more hunting opportunity.

QDMA has already approached the Georgia Forestry Commission, the Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division and the nearby University of Georgia Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources to explore potential partnerships on the new land, including educational field exhibits and events. All plans and efforts to improve deer habitat on the 155 acres will be documented and shared with QDMA members through *Quality Whitetails* magazine.

“Ricky and I could not think of a better group to make this donation to,” said Russ Crump. “It is a beautiful piece of property, and we hope QDMA is able to put the land to good use for many years to come.”



QDMA Senior Director of Operations John Eastman (left) and CEO Brian Murphy (right) officially receive the gift of 132 acres of land from donor Ricky Chastain of Athens. Not pictured is co-donor and Ricky’s business partner Russ Crump. Valued at \$3.5 million, the land is the single largest gift ever presented to QDMA.



## QDMA INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The QDMA has selected interns to assist with specific projects in past years, and in 2016, we developed an official internship program. 2017 marked the first full year for internships, and we had some outstanding interns. The Conservation Department chose Nick Conway, Jackie Rosenberger, Moriah Boggess, and Torin Miller to assist with projects during their internships from January through June and July through December. The six-month positions focused on research, education, advocacy and certification program issues.

Some of their duties included:

- Identifying research funding opportunities
- Recording QDMA Facebook videos
- Writing QDMA.com blogs and *Quality Whitetails* articles
- Researching facial recognition technology for use in trail-camera surveys
- Editing and finalizing a deer management plan template
- Assisting with the creation of new online courses
- Researching shot placement educational materials
- Reviewing CWD literature and CWD Alliance materials
- Assisting with the 2018 *Whitetail Report*
- Helping with QDMA's certifications program

The Communications Department intern was Marina Bach, a senior at Lindenwood University in Missouri pursuing a degree in Mass Communication. Marina's work focused on researching, writing and distributing press releases and assisting with public relations, media outreach and improving awareness of QDMA among the hunting industry and the public.

QDMA Canada's intern was Ben Williams of Upstate New York. Ben assisted with a direct mail piece focusing on renewing expired Canadian members, adding content to the QDMA Canada Facebook page, searching out potential funding sources and, most importantly, was involved in filming a series of educational segments which will be available for viewing in early 2018. Ben's knowledge as a Deer Steward I and II graduate and positive attitude were great assets to QDMA Canada.

The internship program is ongoing with new interns selected for 2018. If you're interested in being involved contact Kip Adams at [Kadams@QDMA.com](mailto:Kadams@QDMA.com) or (814) 326-4023.

## CONSERVATION



Nick Conway, Kentucky



Jackie Rosenberger, Pennsylvania



Moriah Boggess, North Carolina



Torin Miller, Pennsylvania

## COMMUNICATIONS



Marina Bach, Missouri

## QDMA CANADA



Ben Williams, New York

## DEER MANAGEMENT COOPERATIVES RESEARCH UPDATE



Over the past 20 years, involvement in deer management Cooperatives has increased significantly, spurred by the increasing popularity of Quality Deer Management. Deer management Cooperatives are made up of landowners and hunters voluntarily working together to improve the quality of wildlife (white-tailed deer), habitat, and hunting experiences on their collective acreage. Landowners quickly realized that linking multiple properties together under common deer management goals allows smaller properties to gain the management advantages of a larger landowner. These voluntary partnerships between landowners and/or hunters not only can improve deer herd quality and hunting opportunities, but they also can provide significant conservation benefits to other species. By connecting multiple properties to function as one larger property under common habitat and deer management goals, these Cooperatives can spur many inadvertent

benefits for other game and non-game species. However, until now there has been almost no research to quantify these potential benefits.

**Landowners quickly realized that linking multiple properties together, under common deer management goals, allows smaller properties to gain the management advantages of a larger landowner.**

The University of Georgia, the QDMA, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have partnered to quantify the wildlife conservation benefits of deer management Cooperatives and determine what factors make Cooperatives successful. If we can determine the blueprint

to successful Cooperatives, deer management Cooperatives can be used as practical conservation implementation tool for state agencies, while creating satisfied deer hunters. This research is taking place in five states — Georgia, Michigan, Missouri, New York, and Texas — and may put deer management Cooperatives at the forefront of current and future deer management across the United States, while positively impacting landscape conservation for other wildlife. We are currently a little over a year into this research project. With over 550 survey responses from 48 deer management Cooperatives in five states, covering 600,000 acres, preliminary data are coming in. We are currently completing land cover analysis on all Cooperatives to quantify the differences in habitat within Cooperatives compared to the adjacent landscape. The initial research for this project will be complete in 2018. We look forward to sharing the results of this research with you very soon!



## QDMA CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS UPDATE



### DEER STEWARD PROGRAM

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 comprehensive, property-specific deer management plan. Level III is an honor earned after giving back to the resource over a long period of time rather than a course.

To date, 1,856 individuals have completed the Deer Steward program, with 1,222 Level I, 582 Level II, and 52 Level III graduates, representing 45 states and the nation's Capitol, seven 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, bring-

ing the total to nearly 2,000 individuals! Since 2007, QDMA has held 23 Level I classes and 20 Level II classes in the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, 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 2017, and after five years of availability, over 1,000 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 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

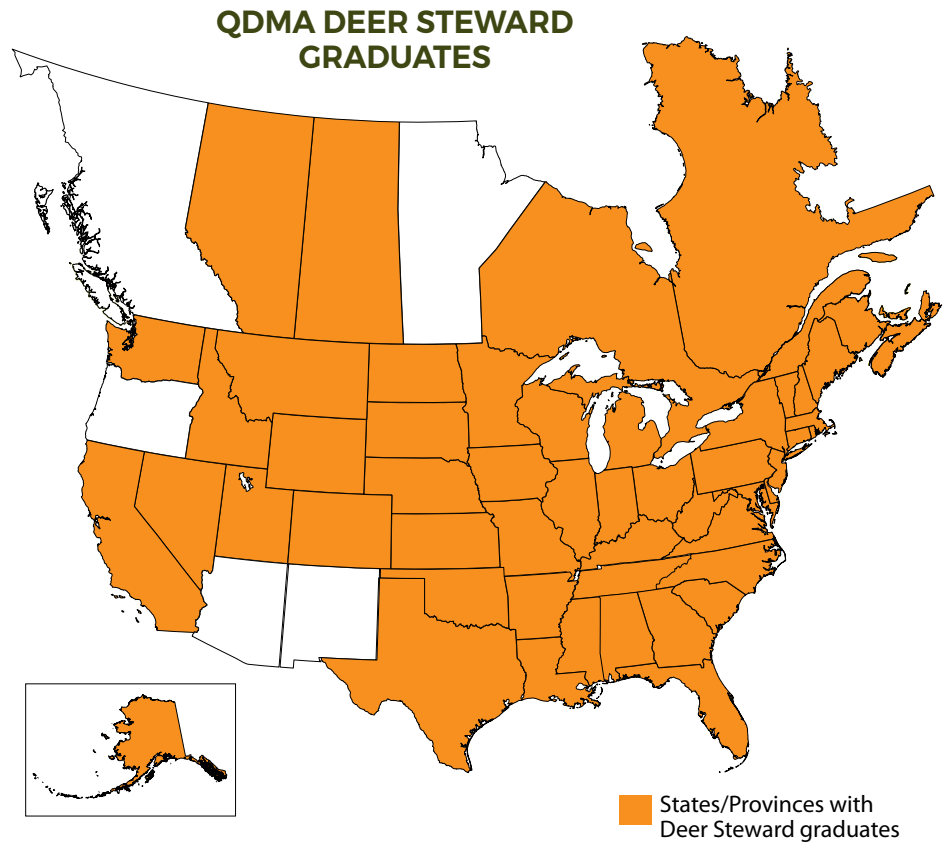
To expand on our traditional delivery methods of education, we launched a new, more intensive, topic-specific training to our members and interested hunters in 2015. This new series was called the Deer Steward Modules, and it addresses only one aspect or management technique of QDM, instead of all Four Cornerstones that we cover in Deer Steward Level I and II. In 2017, we offered Modules on Habitat Enhancement, Predator Management, and Deer and Habitat Survey Techniques. 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. Six 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, over 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 2018, visit [QDMA.com](http://QDMA.com) or contact Matt Ross at [mross@qdma.com](mailto:mross@qdma.com) or by calling (518) 886-1732.

## TEXAS, LOUISIANA AND PENNSYLVANIA AMONG 2018 DEER STEWARD LOCATIONS



### Level 1

Online Only!

### Level 2

May 18-21

Lufkin, Texas  
Nature's Eye  
showcase farm

September 8-11

Indiana, Pennsylvania  
The Bearded Buck  
showcase farm

### Modules

June 22-24

Habitat Enhancement  
Dr. Craig Harper  
Knoxville, Pennsylvania

National Convention

Identifying and Investing  
in a QDM Fixer-Upper  
Dan Perez  
New Orleans, Louisiana



## 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.

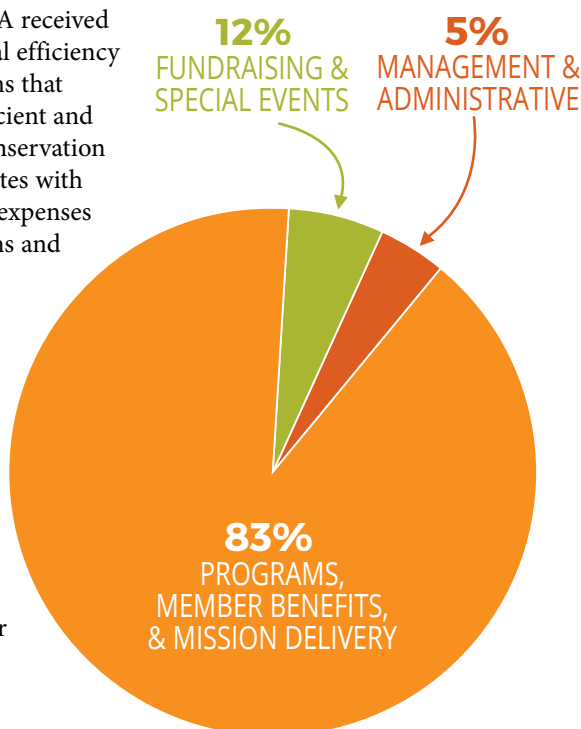


### WHERE DOES YOUR MONEY GO?

QDMA recently received a perfect 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, the premier independent rating service for nonprofit organizations. QDMA received this distinction due to our fiscal efficiency and transparency. This confirms that QDMA is among the most efficient and effective non-profit wildlife conservation organizations in the United States with nearly 85 percent of operating expenses going toward member programs and mission delivery. This includes advocating for sound deer management policy, securing our hunting heritage, supporting practical whitetail research, and improving deer management and hunter education 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 nonprofit conservation organizations, with nearly 85 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	2016
Advertising & Corporate Support	\$583,948
Member Program Services	\$2,505,092
Fundraising & Donations	\$1,507,529
Membership Dues	\$855,687
Other Income	\$36,607
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$5,488,863</b>
Expenses	2016
Cost of Goods Sold	\$1,910,109
Total Functional Expenses	\$3,945,724
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$5,855,833</b>
<b>Net Assets at End of Year</b>	<b>\$1,795,730</b>

### Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS	
<b>Current Assets</b>	<b>Dec 31, 2016</b>
Cash Accounts	\$320,720
Accounts Receivable	\$210,626
Inventory	\$543,859
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$1,075,205</b>
<b>Property &amp; Equipment</b>	<b>\$1,118,826</b>
Net of Accumulated Depreciation	\$993,525
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$3,187,556</b>
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
Accounts Payable	\$441,233
Other Current Liabilities	\$146,564
Long-term Debt	\$804,029
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$1,391,826</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$1,795,730
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$3,187,556</b>



## QDMA 2016 HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

QDMA would like to thank and recognize those who were generous donors to QDMA in 2016. 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

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 Brian Murphy, CEO (bmurphy@qdma.com or 800-209-3337) or Joe Hamilton, QDMA Founder & Senior Advisor (jhamilton@qdma.com or 843-844-8610), to learn more about the various options for Planned Giving.

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## QDMA's SHARE YOUR HUNT™ PROGRAM

Share Your Hunt™ is QDMA's Branch support program for our volunteers hosting hunts, whether they are intended for adult or youth first-time hunters. QDMA Branches set a new record for taking advantage of our Share Your Hunt™ program in 2017 hosting over 50 events. Through the generosity of QDMA members and our sponsors Bass Pro Shops, YETI, Tactacam and Weyerhaeuser, QDMA covers the cost of membership, insurance, mentor background checks and a blaze orange hat and vest for each new hunter.



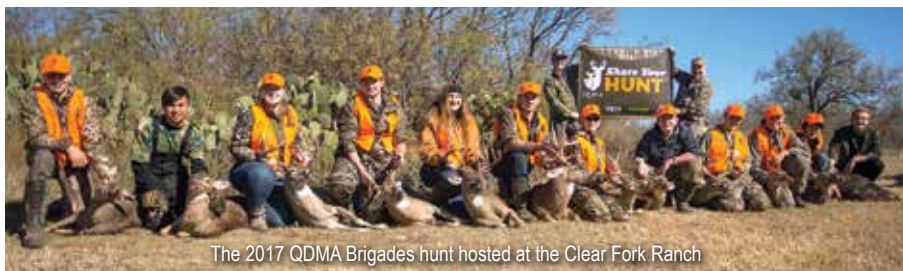
The Kentucky DNR Field to Fork Program hosted by the Owensboro and Derby City Branches



The 2017 South Carolina State Rack Pack Hunt supported by all South Carolina Branches



The Eastern Ontario Youth Hunting Collaborative hosted by the Eastern Ontario Branch



The 2017 QDMA Brigades hunt hosted at the Clear Fork Ranch



The South Carolina DNR Take One Make One hunt hosted by the Lowcountry Branch



The Scholastic 3D Archery National Youth Hunt hosted by QDMA



The 2017 QDMA National Youth Hunt



The 2017 Athens Field to Fork Program hosted by the Athens Branch



The 2017 QDMA Kentucky Military Youth Hunt, Derby City and Kentucky Heartland Branches



The South Dakota Fish and Game Youth Deer Hunt hosted by the Southeastern South Dakota Branch





# 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](http://OneLessThing.net)**





BY CHARLES EVANS

Hank Forester, QDMA's Hunting Heritage Programs Manager, and I had quite the experience in Georgia last year with a pilot program we named "Field to Fork" after an existing model in Kentucky. Field to Fork spawned from a realization that an exponentially increasing percentage of Americans are becoming more concerned with where their food comes from, commonly called the locavore movement. We wanted to provide a program to offer people of this mindset a chance to take ownership of their protein source and increase the relevance of hunting in this segment of society in the process.

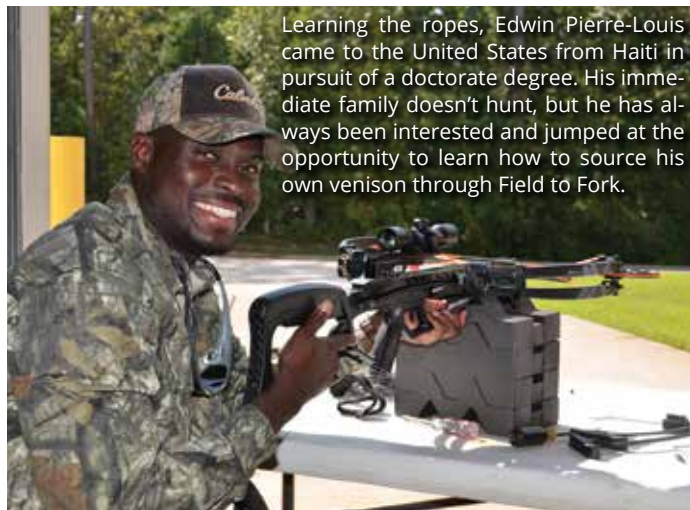
The first iteration of Field to Fork in Georgia involved Hank and me recruiting participants from the local farmer's market in Athens. We had overwhelming interest with demand substantially exceeding our capacity. The final roster of participants, ages 18 to 47, came from all walks of life including a school teacher, organic farmer, chef, nutritionist, and a landscape planner just to name a few. We provided the participants training and field time resulting in a fairly holistic view of deer hunting. The program received excellent feedback, involved a few harvests, and resulted in the majority of participants going hunting again afterwards. Only time will tell if any of the them will become lifelong hunters, but initial survey responses from participants and data from other states with similar programs look promising.

Field to Fork is certainly a program we want to replicate in other areas of Georgia, but first we needed to focus on sustainability of the Athens program. To do this, additional equipment and increased volunteer involvement were a requirement. Thankfully, we were able to use part of a grant from the Cabela's Outdoor Fund to cover equipment that will last for years to come. As far as the volunteer component, we didn't have to look any further than the Athens Branch of QDMA. This is a relatively young Branch led by Aaron Whiting, but he has already successfully filled it with a passionate group of deer hunters. When we approached Aaron's Branch about being involved in the program, they agreed without hesitation. While the Athens Branch planned to take on the majority the on-the-ground implementation, the program was still a truly cooperative effort with additional resources coming from the Georgia Wildlife Federation, Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division, and the National Wild

Turkey Federation.

Similar to last year, we recruited participants by setting up a booth at the Athens Farmers Market. We offered an impressive spread of fair-chase venison including sliced backstrap, sausage, jerky, and distributed a fact sheet entitled "Why YOU Should Hunt Deer." The reception was once again overwhelming, and everyone was interested in trying venison. Interestingly enough, each year we have quite a number of vegetarians who are open to eating wild game considering it lived a life free of confinement and welfare concerns.

The participants in this year's program, ages 28 to 54, and including nine men and one woman, once again covered



Learning the ropes, Edwin Pierre-Louis came to the United States from Haiti in pursuit of a doctorate degree. His immediate family doesn't hunt, but he has always been interested and jumped at the opportunity to learn how to source his own venison through Field to Fork.



a fairly diverse span of careers including a roofer, chiropractor, racecar engineer, business consultant, and quite a few University of Georgia researchers. The common theme among them was they all wanted to learn how to hunt deer for food but have never had an avenue to do so. Keeping their desire for free-range, additive-free meat in mind, we were sure to include venison meals with both training sessions.

We held the trainings on weekday evenings. 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 it allowed us to access local urban properties and, for some locavores, archery equipment is initially more palatable than firearms. For the field component of training we discussed hunting strategies and provided ample shooting opportunity both on the range and from simulated hunting situations.

The hunt weekend was held on the second weekend of archery season, and it was certainly warm, but that didn't stop us from having a good time! Jon Hallemeier, an anthropology graduate student, was the first participant to harvest. His mentor Justin Turner, Chief Engineer at the EPA and active Athens Branch member, was eager to be involved in this program. Justin didn't come from a hunting family and remembers how steep the learning curve was without someone to show you the ropes. He had the perfect spot picked out for him and Jon in a box stand overlooking a group of persimmon trees.

Immediately after Jon and Justin settled in, deer starting coming out of the woodwork. Before long, six deer were in view with one doe working her way toward the stand. She closed the distance and settled in under a persimmon tree seven yards from their position. After they exchanged some whispers, Jon decided he wanted to try to take the shot. He slowly raised his crossbow to the window with shaking hands from the adrenaline all bow hunters are so familiar with. By the time Jon was in position and calm enough for an ethical shot, the doe had worked her way out to 35 yards. Justin waited for her to turn broadside and gave



The author (right) with Hank Forester, QDMA's Hunting Heritage Programs Manager, set up a table at the local farmer's market and used venison to lure in participants for the Field to Fork program.

Jon the green light to squeeze the trigger. The bolt landed a little far back, but well within the vitals. Jon looked over at Justin, who was speechless and trembling from excitement. They brought the doe back to QDMA Headquarters, and I gave Jon his first deer-cleaning lesson.

This year's Field to Fork ended with a culinary social involving the participants, guides, and representatives from the partnering organizations. The dinner was a potluck format with a plethora of venison dishes, and everyone certainly left a few pounds heavier than when they arrived. There were some excellent hunting stories told, and everyone gave their input on their experience. While this was the end of the official program, it was certainly not the end of the adventure. The involve-



At the follow-up culinary social, hunters, mentors and representatives from partnering organizations enjoyed a potluck with many tasty dishes including fair-chase venison, wild boar and alpaca.

ment of the Athens Branch of QDMA has led to members offering Field to Fork participants substantial follow-up opportunities resulting in multiple deer harvests.

Hunting participation is down across America. If we as hunters do not stand up and welcome people who are interested in hunting, who think differently and come from different backgrounds than us, we will be left behind. You do not have to be part of a program like Field to Fork to have an impact, and we strongly encourage you to take someone new afield with you this year. One-on-one mentorship will play a vital role in securing the future of wildlife conservation and our hunting heritage. However, 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 Fork, please contact Hank Forester (hforester@qdma.com).



The author (right) teaches Jon Hallemeier, graduate student in the UGA Department of Anthropology, how to clean his first deer.

Charles S. Evans works for the Georgia Wildlife Federation as the Georgia R3 Coordinator. His position – which is also supported by the Georgia DNR, QDMA, NWTF, and Safari Club International – was created to increase hunting participation and societal acceptance of hunting in Georgia.



## QDMA BRANCH HIGHLIGHTS



No doubt, the heart and soul of QDMA are 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).

### 2017 BRANCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- QDMA Branches raised over \$3.2 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's range.
- QDMA Branches enrolled over 14,000 QDMA members - including over 1,000 sponsor members.
- QDMA Branches hosted 118 fundraising events across the United States and Canada.
- QDMA Regional Directors formed 26 new Branches.
- QDMA Regional Directors maintained 220 active Branches in the United States and Canada.
- QDMA Branches or Branch members were directly involved in at least 70 advocacy issues in their locales involving white-tailed deer legislation or regulations.

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.

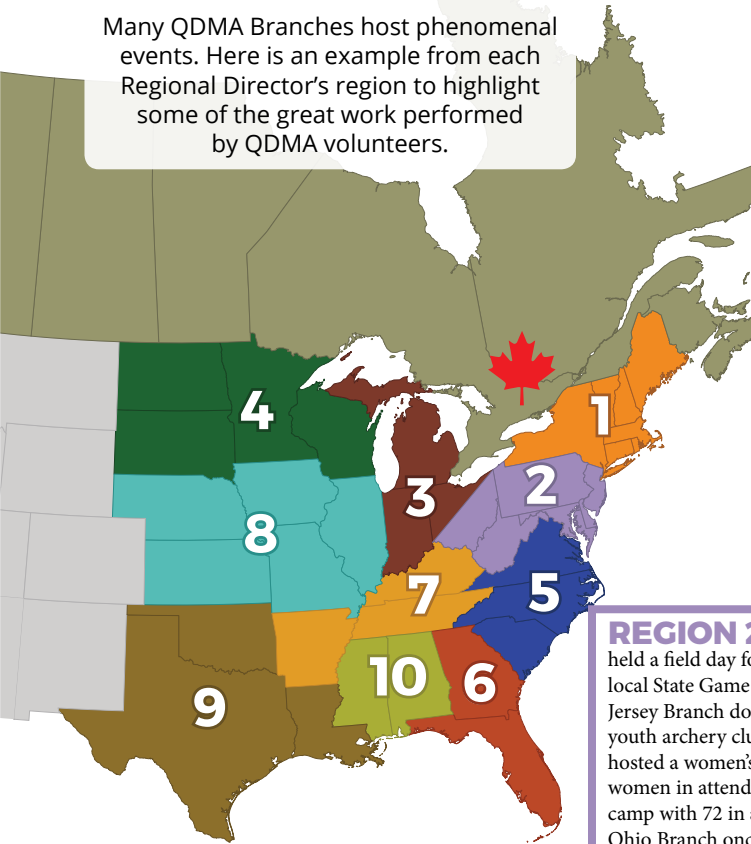
QDMA needs volunteer leaders like you! Join the fun by sending an e-mail to [backyard@qdma.com](mailto:backyard@qdma.com) and letting us know you would be willing to help form or grow a QDMA Branch in your area. We look forward to working with you to ensure the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat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

It was a great year for QDMA Branches and for those impacted by their efforts. Importantly, we look forward to an even better 2018.



## SPECIAL BRANCH EVENTS IN 2017

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** In response to the 2017 discovery of EHD in two Ontario deer, the Southwestern Ontario and Lanark County Branches worked with QDMA Canada to deliver two education seminars featuring presentations on CWD and EHD. The Southwestern Ontario Branch also assisted with the 2017 Youth Hunting and Conservation Course and hosted a field day. The Lanark County Branch helped administer the Hunters Safety and Canadian Firearms Handling courses to area youth and later took the youth on a guided goose hunt. The Northern New Brunswick Branch hosted a food plot field day for elementary school students.

**REGION 1** The Upper Hudson River Valley Branch and the New York State Advisory Council provided both money and manpower to assist the Department of Environmental Conservation with habitat work on public game lands. The Upper Hudson River Valley Branch also awarded a \$500 scholarship to a local student. The First New Hampshire Branch held a workshop on managing the eastern coyote, donated \$600 to the Becoming an Outdoors Woman program, and attended a state conservation meeting with Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. The Jefferson Lewis Branch held its annual Ice Fishing Derby, signing up 90 QDMA members.

**REGION 2** The Susquehanna Branch held a field day for habitat improvement on local State Game Lands. The Southern New Jersey Branch donated archery targets to a local youth archery club. The North Mountain Branch hosted a women's outdoor skills camp with 19 women in attendance and a youth outdoor skills camp with 72 in attendance. The East Central Ohio Branch once again hosted a very successful youth deer hunt.

**REGION 3** The West Shore Branch held a field day in June featuring ways to attract and hold mature deer. There were 50 people in attendance. The Mid-Michigan Branch attended a prescribed fire training and later conducted their first prescribed burn. The Michiana Branch assisted Michigan DNR with a youth rabbit hunt, with 35 youth participating. The Tip of the Mitt Branch hosted a predator hunt competition that resulted in 30 coyotes harvested.

**REGION 4** The Southeastern South Dakota Branch sponsored a youth hunt put on by the South Dakota Game and Fish Department. The Rum River Branch of Minnesota hosted their annual youth outdoor event in August with 15 kids and their parents in attendance. The Prairie to Woods Whitetails Branch continued to support trap-shooting programs in the local high schools, donating more than \$5,000 to date. The Branch also donated a scissor-lift deer stand to the Disabled American Veterans of Minnesota to provide more hunting opportunities to disabled veterans. The Farm Country Whitetails Branch held a predator hunt with 16 participants harvesting 23 coyotes.

**REGION 7** Over 75 volunteers hosted 38 military youth on the 2017 QDMA Kentucky Military Youth Hunt October 12-15, 2017. Participants were hosted by three Branches — Derby City Branch, Kentucky Heartland Branch and the Owensboro Branch. The Wolf River Branch of Tennessee partnered with the Tennessee Wildlife Federation for a youth deer hunt in west Tennessee. The Branch provided \$750 and manpower for the event.

**REGION 5** The Lakelands Branch hosted a Wild Creatures camp for 4-H students, as well as a fishing rodeo and multiple youth hunts in 2017. The Lake Murray, Midlands and Mid-Carolina Branches all pitched in to donate funds to the White Knoll High School archery team. The Midlands Branch continued their venison donation project again in 2017, donating over 800 pounds to Harvest Hope Food Bank and also hosted a Wounded Warrior veterans hunt. The Sea Island Branch hosted an Outdoor Dream Foundation hunt at Whitehall Plantation. The Sandy Run Creek Branch of North Carolina hosted a coyote tournament which yielded 56 participants and 10 coyotes. The River City Branch of Virginia hosted their annual youth hunt with over 35 youth in attendance.

**REGION 6** At their April banquet, the Georgia Foothills Branch raised over \$800 to donate to the nonprofit organization Hunting for a Cure, which helps families and children suffering from cancer by taking them on outdoor adventures. The Branch also donated \$1,400 worth of Leupold optics to the Georgia DNR Law Enforcement Division. The Ocmulgee Branch of Georgia held its first field day in April at the Hyco Plantation in Roberta. The event had 47 people in attendance and covered topics such as prescribed fire and food plots.

**REGION 8** The Southeast Missouri Branch received a grant from the Missouri Department of Conservation to purchase a no-till drill for the River Aux Vase Cooperative that will service nearly 10,000 acres. The Branch also held a Rack Pack event.

**REGION 9** The South Louisiana, Bayou, Southwest Louisiana, and Central Louisiana Branches each received a custom Palmetto State Armory 5.56 Freedom Rifle with a special Louisiana QDMA logo engraved in the receiver. The rifles were auctioned off at each Branch's fundraising banquet and the proceeds went to help the victims of Louisiana's devastating floods. The Louisiana State Advisory Council was recognized as the 2016 Conservation Organization of the Year at the 53rd Governor's State Conservation Achievements Awards Program.

**REGION 10** The Neshoba Branch of Mississippi donated \$500 to the Neshoba County 4-H Shooting Sports program. The donation was used to assist the program in its efforts to offer gun and archery opportunities to youth in the area. The Heart of Dixie Branch of Alabama hosted a booth at the Rick and Bubba Outdoor Expo in Birmingham. The Branch shared information about many QDM principles including herd and habitat management, herd monitoring, aging deer, and new hunter recruitment. The Branch also held a hands-on field day focused on prescribed burning.



## QDMA's WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT COOPERATIVE COORDINATOR – MICHIGAN UPDATE



It has been a wild ride in Michigan this year for deer enthusiasts. Among regulation changes, increases in bovine tuberculosis (TB) in the northeast part of the state, and new and significant increases in chronic wasting disease (CWD) cases, there has been a lot to keep deer managers up on their toes. Regardless, hunting season was a success, and there were many happy hunters in 2017. This is a testament to the strong drive and care we have for white-tailed deer and how deeply we treasure our time in the woods and fields.

This year the Michigan Wildlife Cooperatives program partnered with local QDMA Branches, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, the National Wild Turkey Federation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Conservation Districts, Michigan DNR, and Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) to organize and fund the first annual Michigan Habitat Day! It was a great success, with over 100 participants and rave reviews from attendees. Dr. Craig Harper provided an overview of managing early successional habitat for wildlife and was a valuable draw for the event. Special thanks to the Michigan QDMA Branches who contributed time, money and sweat into making this event happen!

In August, we held our third annual Deer Rendezvous. The Rendezvous is a highlight for many of the Cooperative and QDMA Branch leaders. This event provides an opportunity for like-minded deer leaders to come together, get to know each other, share ideas, and brainstorm to solve problems. This year the theme of the event was on forest management. We had the honor of having QDMA Assistant Director of Conservation Matt Ross help with habitat tours and forest-related seminars. The first day of the event was structured in a habitat-touring style, while day two focused more on classroom-style learning. We have great participation every year, and look forward to continuing this great annual tradition.

What impressed our staff most this year was the Cooperative leaders here in Michigan, and their response to the increasing challenges of CWD. They are a group of positive, hard working, motivated individuals who want to step up their game to the next level and do what they can to take on this disease. CWD is serious and a huge threat to the future of deer hunting. Having strong leaders like those who focus on moving forward with good information is vital to protecting our deer herds. Thank

you to the Michigan and National QDMA for your continued support in providing hunters with the best information we have on CWD.

For more information on what is going on with Michigan Cooperatives, please feel free to contact Anna Mitterling, Wildlife Cooperative Coordinator, MUCC at [amitterling@mucc.org](mailto:amitterling@mucc.org) or visit the program website at [www.mucc.org/cooperatives](http://www.mucc.org/cooperatives). This program is jointly funded and supported by QDMA, Pheasants Forever, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and Michigan United Conservation Clubs.





## QDMA's WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT COOPERATIVE SPECIALISTS – MISSOURI UPDATE



The River Aux Vasse Cooperative held its first property tour in 2017, with 75 people in attendance.

To sum it up in a word, *growth* is a good description of the Cooperative program in Missouri. Growth in the program came through the addition of new Cooperatives, a reported 10,300 acres added to existing ones, and growth in mindset. This growth is proof of successful Cooperatives reaching out to more of their neighbors to improve habitat and herd health.

Two new Cooperatives in south Missouri and one in the north jumped headfirst into habitat management and herd monitoring. The groups reported performing prescribed burns on 56 acres of open-land habitat and trail-camera surveys on 5,200 acres. That was in addition to over 2,500 acres of prescribed burning and 17,500 acres of trail-camera monitoring performed by existing Cooperatives.

A couple of benefits to developing a QDM Cooperative are the improvements in deer herd health and communication among neighbors, two very important aspects in a year that saw some strains on Missouri's whitetail herd. Similar to a number of areas in the whitetail's range, disease played a role in Missouri.

New portions of the state were added to existing CWD zones. This led to fewer Cooperatives being able to collect trail-camera survey data, as attractants were banned in an increased number of locations. We also saw a late drought leading to reports of potential hemorrhagic disease in localized regions.

Members of Cooperatives worked to ensure that others in their area were aware of these potential situations. This was done through meetings, social media, and pamphlet distribution. While hemor-

rhagic disease outbreaks are nothing new to Cooperative members, their ability to quantify the impact in their area and adjust their harvest plan accordingly was a new concept. This will allow local populations to more effectively recover from such an incident.

The Missouri Department of Conservation awarded the River Aux Vasse QDM Cooperative grant monies to aid in the purchase of a no-till drill (pictured below). The drill, purchased in late spring, planted over 70 acres of food plots in 2017. The Great Plains drill is a huge benefit for the group and a great tool to aid in soil health, with less tillage being required. Other groups made bulk seed purchases for the establishment of forbs for pollinators, and some purchased burn equipment.

Formal meetings to review data and workshops to educate on improving habitat and herd health are key components to the program's success. However, one of the greatest benefits to promoting and cultivating each group is the socialization. Providing opportunities for interaction aids in building trust and ultimately a kinship.

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





## QDMA ADVANCEMENT



QDMA has set an aggressive five-year goal to mentor 1 million new hunters through QDMA programs such as Share Your Hunt™ and Field to Fork. The success of those programs depends on the hard work and generosity of our Branches and members.

### BY JOE HAMILTON

Probably the most often asked question I receive as founder of the QDMA is this: “Did you ever dream that the organization would grow to the current membership or make such a difference in deer hunting/management?” Well, even though the justification for a whitetail support organization appeared rock solid and the approach was steeped in optimism, my dreams have been paled by the tangible accomplishments that have been made throughout our 30-year history. It is humbling to be referred to as the founder without giving full recognition for our success. Once the seed was planted it was the staff under the direction of Brian Murphy as CEO, our Board of Directors, and, most important, our dedicated members who created an influential organization.

From my vantage point I find it heartwarming to track the growth, progress and influence of our organization. This is important because the future holds challenges unlike we’ve encountered before. We’re poised to face these challenges by adopting this optimistic and aggressive 5-year plan:

- Mentor 1 million new hunters through QDMA programs
- Donate \$1 million to deer research and management
- Share 20 million venison meals with neighbors, friends and family
- Donate 35 million venison meals to needy families
- Place 35 million acres in QDMA Cooperatives across the whitetail’s range

The QDMA remains steadfast in fulfilling our mission: To ensure the future of the white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. The QDMA’s activities and accomplishments are a direct result of the financial support provided each year by our faithful and dedicated members. Please stand behind us with your continued financial support to accomplish these necessary goals. There are numerous ways to donate to the QDMA including:

- Land Gifts
- Brothers-Hamilton Legacy Society
- Donation of Appreciated Assets
- Bequests
- Planned Giving
- Life Insurance
- Grants
- Sponsorships

Since many of our members have reached the ripe old age of 70½ there is a tax-efficient way for us baby boomers to support the QDMA. If you own an individual retirement account (IRA), you can donate up to \$100,000 from your IRA to a qualified charity and have the donation count toward your required minimum donation (RMD). With few exceptions, owners of traditional IRAs must begin taking a RMD after age 70½, or face a tax penalty.

While there is no deduction for this donation, it also does not count toward the donor’s adjusted gross income (AGI), which can help lower or even avoid the 3.8 percent surtax on net investment income, payments for Medicare premiums and even taxes on Social Security payments. As such, this is a highly tax-efficient way for

many “boomers” to support their favorite charities.

If you are interested in donating to the QDMA and would like to discuss your options, please contact Brian Murphy ([bmurphy@qdma.com](mailto:bmurphy@qdma.com) or 800-209-3337) or Joe Hamilton ([jhamilton@qdma.com](mailto:jhamilton@qdma.com) or 843-844-8610). Thank you!

### We Need Your Help

QDMA has set ambitious five-year mission goals, outlined on pages 36-37. Throughout the campaign, we will be asking you to help in specific ways, such as mentoring a new hunter. Here are several other ways you can get behind our efforts and help us reach, and go beyond, our goals:

- Set your membership for auto-renewal. This helps us save by reducing renewal notice expenditures. Call 800-209-DEER for more information.
- Recruit new QDMA members.
- Attend your local QDMA Branch event and support their work, which is a major part of the mission efforts.
- Donate by visiting [QDMA.com](http://QDMA.com) and browsing the “Support” menu to see the wide range of options.
- Update your e-mail address with us so you can receive news of local Branch events and national initiatives on a regular basis.

## THE BROTHERS-HAMILTON LEGACY SOCIETY

The Brothers-Hamilton Legacy Society (BHLS) continues to grow. Membership in the BHLS is a reflection of support for the QDMA. The 38 inductees at the 2017 National Convention brought the total membership to 55. Membership in the BHLS includes 51 individuals, three foundations, and one company, representing 17 states.

Three of the original members and a pledge for 2018 recently shared their thoughts about the significance of the BHLS to themselves and the QDMA.

### DR. CHARLIE SHIELDS



"The Brothers-Hamilton Legacy Society is a great way to support QDMA. The Deer Steward program teaches how to advance from hunters to managers

of our whitetail resource. Youth programs help recruit new hunters with a better understanding of hunter ethics and the value and enjoyment of deer hunting and our natural resources. QDMA is essential to sustaining the white-tailed deer and our hunting heritage and deserves our support."

Dr. Shields from Paducah, Kentucky has attained the Gold Level of membership in the BHLS, and gifted three memberships in 2017. He has pledged to gift another membership in 2018.

### NICOLE GARRIS & JOE HOLT

"When I look at what QDMA is today, I continue to be awed by all it has accomplished. Brian, the staff, and the volunteers have

built a strong organization dedicated to the white-tailed deer and its future.

"I am hopeful that in the coming decades QDMA can build on this success to expand its reach, do more for the resource, and grow. As a board member, it has become increasingly clear to me that to do so will require the organization to embrace charitable giving. QDMA is a non-profit organization — a charity, not just a membership group.



"When QDMA announced the Brothers-Hamilton Legacy Society, my husband and I both felt we should join to demonstrate our commitment to ensuring a future where our children can hunt wild, healthy whitetails. I can't think of a better way to help ensure a legacy."

National board member Nicole Garrison from Williams, South Carolina has become a Silver Level in the BHLS. Her husband Joe was inducted into the Society at the 2017 National Convention.

### JUDGE HOLDFORD

"As a former banker, I know a little about investments, and I have to say the investments I've made through the years in QDMA have yielded the best returns — the knowledge gained, the travel to all the conventions across this country and even a trip halfway around the world to Australia. By far the best returns have come from the friendships I have made with fellow members in the USA, Canada and Australia."

"The Brothers-Hamilton Legacy Society is another way to expand your horizons with like-minded individuals who share the same respect for the wonderful whitetail"

Judge Holdford from Halifax, North Carolina is a Gold Level member of the BHLS. Through a surplus wildlife seed program which he operates on a seasonal basis from his hardware store in Enfield, North Carolina, Judge has generated tens of thousands of dollars for the QDMA. He is one of three QDMA Ambassadors and has the distinction of being the highest donating individual of the QDMA.



### ROBERT KREBS

"I had been a 'silent' member of QDMA for several years, occasionally reading an article online or flipping through *Quality Whitetails* when it arrived in the mail. But I stopped there. Then my friend, fellow Missourian and QDMA board member



Rick Dahl, opened my eyes to what I was missing.

"We took the Deer Steward Level I course together in 2016 and enrolled in the Level II course in 2017. That weekend was overwhelming. For nearly 25 years I have been trying to improve my property for white-tailed deer, and I finally realized I could've gotten there much faster and more efficiently with the help of QDMA.

"I was most impressed by the dedication and professionalism of my instructors, and soon after completing my Level II course, I became a QDMA Life Member. Then I pledged to join the Brothers-Hamilton Legacy Society.

"Matt Ross and Joe Hamilton visited my farm in Indiana, and we spent two days touring the property and discussing management options for maximizing quality habitat and healthy wildlife populations. My knowledge as a wildlife steward and the habitat I've been working to enrich have both improved exponentially since I committed to the QDMA community, and I look forward to their continued growth.

"Here's the bottom line: I like the QDMA folks and the good work they're doing, and I want to be a part of it."

Robert Krebs of Saint Louis, Missouri has become quite an asset to the QDMA over the few years he has been a member. He will join others at the QDMA's National Convention in 2018 to be inducted into the BHLS. Additionally, he has pledged to support a gift membership for a QDMA employee in 2018.

### ELIGIBILITY FOR INDUCTION INTO THE BROTHERS-HAMILTON LEGACY SOCIETY

Gifts of \$10,000\* or more. Only one individual per family can become a member of the Brothers-Hamilton Legacy Society 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 Founder & Senior Advisor Joe Hamilton at [jhamilton@qdma.com](mailto:jhamilton@qdma.com) or (843) 844-8610.



## NATIONAL CONVENTION

## 2017 QDMA CONSERVATION &



Jimmy Bullock, Senior Vice President of Forest Sustainability for the Resource Management Service, received the **Joe Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award**. Through his service, Bullock (left) has invested more than 35 years in the advancement of sustainable forest practices and restoration. The award was bestowed by QDMA Founder Joe Hamilton.



QDMA named Dave Bastow (right) and Tom Bastow (left) of Pennsylvania as recipients of the **Al Brothers Deer Manager of the Year** award. The father/son duo are QDMA Life Members and members of the Brothers-Hamilton Legacy Society. They have also hosted a Deer Steward II course on their Legacy Lands certified family farm.



Blake Hamilton, founder of Nature's Eye consulting firm, was named the **Al Brothers Professional Deer Manager of the Year**. Hamilton's company manages approximately 53,000 acres of habitat in nine states, and he has supported and promoted the QDMA on a regular basis. Blake (right) received the award from QDMA Founder Joe Hamilton.



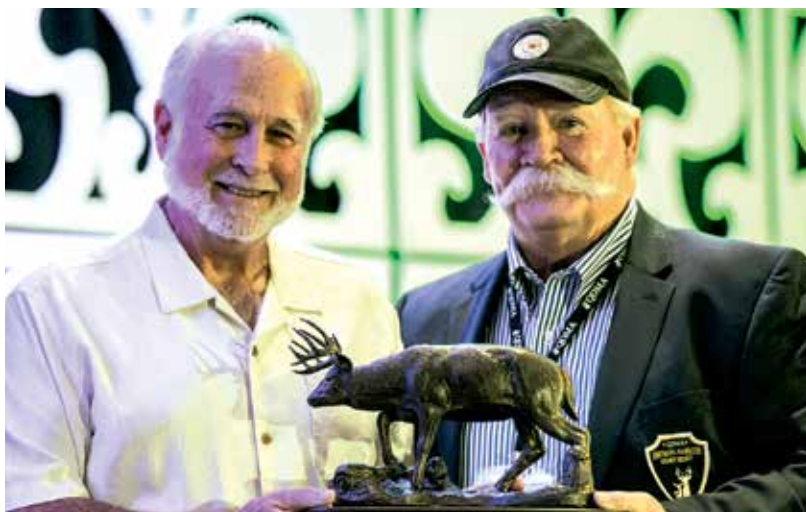
The 2017 recipient of QDMA's **Agency of the Year** Award was the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. The agency's signature deer management program has been so successful that its 80 wildlife biologists work with over 10,000 properties on 25 million acres, including nearly 200 Cooperatives. Accepting the award from QDMA's Director of Education and Outreach Kip Adams (right), was deer project leader Alan Cain.



The 2017 **Hunting Heritage Award** went to both Primos Hunting and Kalkomey. The award recognizes significant contributions to our hunting heritage – those with the potential to make lasting impacts for current and future generations of hunters. Both companies were recognized for their contributions to the award-winning e-book *QDMA's Guide to Successful Deer Hunting*. Will Primos (left) accepted the award from QDMA CEO Brian Murphy.



QDMA named Cabela's as the recipient of its 2017 **Corporate Achievement Award** in recognition of almost 10 years of outstanding support of QDMA and wildlife conservation. A QDMA corporate sponsor since 2008, Cabela's cumulative financial support and product donations to QDMA now total over \$100,000. Additionally, Cabela's Outdoor Fund has donated over \$10 million to worthy causes consisting of advocacy, education, conservation and helping others. Accepting the award from QDMA's Director of Corporate Relations Steve Levi (right), was Cabela's Brand Partnership Program Manager Jared Wire.



QDMA Life Member Stu Lewis was recognized at the National Convention as a **QDMA Ambassador**. This prestigious recognition is not granted annually, and only three others have received this distinction. There is no strict set of guidelines for qualification since there are many ways to serve diplomatically. In this case, Stu is a Life Member and the holder of certificates in all three levels of the Deer Steward program. He hosted a Deer Steward II course on his property, and he is a generous donor. These are admirable and noteworthy accomplishments, but there was something more that caught our attention — his charisma. Attend any function or event with this gentleman and he is the spark plug that incites enthusiasm, dedication, and support for the QDMA. He is the caliber of person we treasure as a teammate, and one whom we recognize as a true QDMA Ambassador.



## BRANCH ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



While there are dozens of new QDMA Branches deserving of recognition, Alabama's Heart of Dixie Branch ultimately rose to the top, earning the **New Branch of the Year** award. Its inaugural banquet netted over \$23,000 and captured more than 100 members. Senior Regional Director Ryan Furrer (right) presented the award to Branch President Chris Guest.



Ben Caillouet of the Bayou Branch in Louisiana was named the **Branch President of the Year**. Ben (right) has been the president of his local Branch since its inception a decade ago, and his tireless efforts have been instrumental in his Branch receiving countless awards during that time, including the 2017 Membership and Fundraising Branch of the Year.



This year's **Volunteer of the Year** award went to David Matthews of Vermont. David (right) has been a QDMA member for nearly 15 years and formerly served as president of his local Branch. He is also a Deer Steward III graduate and a hunting mentor. He and his wife Roxanne are seen here receiving the award from QDMA CEO Brian Murphy.



The Lowcountry Branch of South Carolina was named the **Sponsor Membership Branch of the Year**, having recruited 86 sponsor memberships and hosting a banquet with nearly 600 attendees. The Branch has won the award multiple times. Branch President Michael Cochran accepted the award from QDMA board member Nicole Garriss.



The **Event of the Year** was the River City Branch of Virginia's seventh annual youth hunt. With 28 kids in attendance, it was the largest event in the Branch's history, and 13 of those kids were able to harvest deer. Accepting the award from QDMA's Senior Regional Director Ryan Furrer (center) was Branch President Jon Ranck (right) and Rudy Elder.



The Southwestern Wisconsin Branch was named the **Branch of the Year** for their community involvement and impact. The Branch made multiple donations, including two robotic deer decoys to local DNR conservation wardens, a \$2,300 donation to a local QDMA member injured in a farming accident, over 100 QDMA memberships to high schools, public libraries and area businesses with waiting rooms, and a \$3,000 donation to local high schools for their National Archery in the Schools programs. Accepting the award from QDMA Senior Regional Director Ryan Furrer (left) was Branch President Brian Ruesch.



Louisiana's Bayou Branch took the honors of both **Fundraising Branch of the Year** as well as the **Membership Branch of the Year**. The Branch has long been known for hosting some of the largest QDMA banquets in the country, and this year was no exception. Their fundraising event grossed over \$103,000, and the Branch recruited over 500 new QDMA members. Pictured (L-R) are QDMA Regional Director J.B. Wynn, Branch Vice President Jonathan Scallan, his wife Lyndsey Scallan, Branch Secretary Beau Schexnaildre, Branch President Ben Caillouet, and QDMA national board member Nicole Garriss.



## CONTACT A QDMA BRANCH NEAR YOU



Branch Name	Town	State	Branch Contact	Phone	Email
Auburn University Toomer's Branch	Auburn	Alabama	Logan Bailly	(334) 494-5288	lgb0010@tigermail.auburn.edu
Blackbelt Branch	Mathews	Alabama	Mike O'Malley	(334) 462--1300	omalley@mtb-group.com
Conecuh River Branch	Andalusia	Alabama	Clayton Wood	(334) 313-9113	bushhogbowhunter@yahoo.com
Five Rivers Delta Branch	Mobile	Alabama	Daryl Bell	(850) 982-3554	darylbell7041@gmail.com
Gulf Coast Branch	Mobile	Alabama	Natalie Howard	(251) 366-1325	nathoward12@yahoo.com
Heart of Dixie Branch	Vestavia Hills	Alabama	Chris Guest	(205) 540-6633	chris.guest@mckinnycapital.net
Post Oak Branch	Mathews	Alabama	Hunter Smith	(334) 391-2008	hunter@collegiateoutdoors.com
Timber Belt Branch	Jackson	Alabama	Russ Sims	(251) 509-9313	rsims@nationalland.com
Weevil Creek Branch	Enterprise	Alabama	Cary Coles	(334) 464-5427	colespressurewashing@gmail.com
Central Arkansas Branch	Little Rock	Arkansas	Rob Mynatt	(901) 581-2363	rob.mynatt@ustrust.com
Delta Droptine Branch	Lake Village	Arkansas	Joey Williamson	(870) 265-1206	sales@southernaquaculturesupply.com
Northeast Arkansas Branch	Jonesboro	Arkansas	Lorne Shive	(901) 598-6111	lorneshive22@gmail.com
Northwest Arkansas Branch	Rogers	Arkansas	Bill Miller	(636)300-7227	whmiller1s@gmail.com
Saline-Bartholomew Branch	Monticello	Arkansas	Brisson Reed	(870) 723-5125	huntershed13@yahoo.com
Delaware Branch	Georgetown	Delaware	Andrew Martin	(302) 934-8310	amartin@dewildlands.org
Delaware State Chapter	Millsboro	Delaware	Chip West	(302) 238-0137	degdma@gmail.com
Devil's Garden Branch	Clewiston	Florida	Marc Proudfoot	(863) 673-2034	marc.proudfoot@gmail.com
Escambia Branch	Walnut Hill	Florida	Philip Eubanks	(850) 418-5615	philip.eubanks56@gmail.com
Longleaf Branch	Tallahassee	Florida	Jim McConnaughay	(850) 545-2381	jnmconnaughay@mcconnaughay.com
Northeast Florida	Jacksonville	Florida	Evan Tucker	(904) 338-5327	etucker@infinityaviation.biz
Panhandle Branch	Panama City	Florida	Jimmy Higgins	(850) 867-8053	jimmyhiggins@bellsouth.net
Tri-County Branch of Northwest Florida	Bonifay	Florida	Larry Morris	850-268-1009	idm.clg@gmail.com
Athens Branch	Stephens	Georgia	Aaron Whiting	(770) 530-4722	awhit300@yahoo.com
Augusta Branch	Augusta	Georgia	John Wallace Hadden	(706) 306-2042	johnwallaceh@phoenixprintinggroup.com
Coastal Empire	Pooler	Georgia	Branhm Gay	(706) 871-6497	bgay@soeagle.net
Georgia Foothills Branch	Clarksville	Georgia	Mark Lovell	(706) 499-2432	landman@hemc.net
Griffin G2 Branch	Williamson	Georgia	Cameron Perdichizzi	(404) 427-3519	Cameronp@snjindustrial.com
Morgan County Branch	Madison	Georgia	James Ball	(404) 580-7155	samball@madisonrealtyinc.com
Ocmulgee Branch	Kathleen	Georgia	Terry Peavy	(478) 256-0266	hunterjpeavy@cox.net

Peach State Branch	Cumming	Georgia	Christopher Thurman	(404) 414-8835	csthurman@earthlink.net
Sowega Branch	Thomasville	Georgia	Austin Walters	(229) 561-2226	walterslrconsultation@gmail.com
UGA Branch	Athens	Georgia	Zach Grifenhagen	(706) 681-2734	zachgrif@gmail.com
Valdosta State Branch	Valdosta	Georgia	Taylor Hawthorne	(678) 446-5249	tehawthorne3@gmail.com
Heart of Illinois Branch	Bloomington	Illinois	Ross Fogle	(309) 310-7958	hoiqdma@gmail.com
Illinois State Chapter	North Henderson	Illinois	Chase Burns	(309) 368-0370	wci_qdma@frontier.com
Kaskaskia River Watershed Branch	Carlyle	Illinois	Joel Tucker	(618) 444-9327	joel.a.tucker@hotmail.com
Rock River Branch	Hillsdale	Illinois	Scott Searl	(563) 529-2787	scott.searl@mcshi.com
South Central Illinois Branch	Iuka	Illinois	Grant Green	(618) 339-7625	g_green1990@yahoo.com
Southern Illinois Branch	Murphysboro	Illinois	Matt Duffy	(618) 806-1405	matthew.duffy@countryfinancial.com
Southern Illinois University Branch	Carbondale	Illinois	Mitchell Niccolai	(724) 747-5117	Mitchniccolai@siu.edu
Spoon River Branch	Canton	Illinois	Bruce Reinmann	(309) 332-6075	reinmann.w@sbcbglobal.net
West-Central Branch	North Henderson	Illinois	Chase Burns	(309) 368-0370	wci_qdma@frontier.com
Indiana Heartland Branch	New Castle	Indiana	Tony Wright	(765) 529-6138	sunnyridgefarm@hotmail.com
Northwest Indiana Branch	Valparaiso	Indiana	Bryan McFadden	(219) 263-9283	urbandeerhunt@comcast.net
Purdue University Branch	W.Lafayette	Indiana	John Wogoman	(574) 377-2659	jwogoman@purdue.edu
Mid Iowa Branch	Granger	Iowa	Terry Sedivec	(515) 999-2184	tsedivec@netzero.com
Bluestem Branch	EL Dorado	Kansas	Timothy Donges	(316) 641-0011	tim.donges@hotmail.com
Barren River Branch	Bowling Green	Kentucky	Kraig Moore	(270) 781-5265	kraigmoore@bellsouth.net
Bluegrass Branch	Dry Ridge	Kentucky	Eldon Maddox	(513) 502-3760	eldonmaddox01@aol.com
Derby City Branch	Prospect	Kentucky	Steve Daniels	(502) 548-8517	steve@tcky.biz
Kentucky Heartland	East View	Kentucky	Tony Lawson	(502) 710-1912	bigdeerhuntertony@gmail.com
Kentucky State Advisory Council	Louisville	Kentucky	Pete Blandford	(502) 231-2625	pete_blandford@yahoo.com
Northern KY Tri-State Branch	Butler	Kentucky	Phil Griffin	(859) 866-4602	phil.griffin@griffincr.com
Owensboro Branch	Whitesville	Kentucky	Jeremy Russelburg	(270) 314-2494	jeremyruss24@yahoo.com
West Kentucky Branch	South Murray	Kentucky	Jesse Maupin	(270) 970-9453	jmaupin@consolidatedbuildings.com
Bayou Branch	Thibodaux	Louisiana	Ben Caillouet	(985) 859-6270	qdmabayoubranch@gmail.com
Central Louisiana Branch	Mansura	Louisiana	Tammy Lemoine	(318) 359-3003	tammylemoine50@yahoo.com
Louisiana State Chapter	New Roads	Louisiana	Darren Boudreaux	(225) 573-2035	dboudr5@hotmail.com
Northeast Louisiana Branch	Calhoun	Louisiana	Bobby Aulds	(318) 355-8974	baulds@bsnsports.com
Red River Branch	Shreveport	Louisiana	Jackie Raines	(318) 453-2686	jrainesdrilling@bellsouth.net
South Louisiana Branch	Port Allen	Louisiana	Donald Schexnader	(225) 627-5464	dmschexnyder@cox.net
Southwest Louisiana Branch	Iowa	Louisiana	Kyle Bennett	(337) 515-3198	kbennett0016@gmail.com
Downeast Branch	East Machias	Maine	Mike Look	(207) 255-4167	michaellook501@hotmail.com
The County Branch	Fairfield	Maine	Chuck Ainsworth	(207) 999-1795	chuckainsworth@hotmail.com
Bachman Valley Branch	Westminster	Maryland	Barry Harden	(410) 346-0990	bharden@marylandqdma.com
Frostburg State University Branch	Frostburg	Maryland	Thomas Lambert	(301) 687-4167	tdlambert@frostburg.edu
Maryland State Chapter	Westminster	Maryland	E.W. Grimes	(410) 984-3356	ewgrimes@marylandqdma.com
Mountain Maryland Branch	Swanton	Maryland	A.J. Fleming	(301) 387-5465	a.j.qdmwildlifephotography@gmail.com
Barry County Branch	Hasting	Michigan	Mike Flohr	(269) 838-6268	mikeflohr@hotmail.com
Bluewater Branch	Clyde	Michigan	Dan Snyder	(586) 524-8812	snyderperformance@gmail.com
Cadillac Area Branch	Tustin	Michigan	Timothy Liponoga	(231) 878-9245	gamehunrr@gmail.com
Capital Area Branch	Mason	Michigan	Dick Seehase	(517) 993-8475	dseehase@partsplacenapa.com
Central Michigan Branch	Sumner	Michigan	Jarred Waldron	(517) 403-9328	headhunter01jarred@yahoo.com
Clinton/Ionia County Branch	St. Johns	Michigan	Chad Thelen	(517) 819-6344	cthelen8@hotmail.com
Costabella Branch	Clare	Michigan	Kasey Thren	(231) 598-3200	mecostacountyqdma@gmail.com
Eaton County Branch	Vermontville	Michigan	Tony Smith	(517) 231-9107	qdmaman@yahoo.com
Mackinac Branch	Mulliken	Michigan	Billy Keiper	(906) 322-5425	keiperw@mail.gvsu.edu
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# WhitetailReport

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## NOTES



*QDMA is dedicated to ensuring  
the future of white-tailed deer,  
wildlife habitat and our  
hunting heritage.*



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**WhitetailReport 2018**

