



QDMA's Whitetail Report 2019

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

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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 in the harvest remain 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, 2 percent more antlered bucks (those 1½ years or older) were shot last season than the year before, and last season's buck harvest was 6 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 slightly from the prior year, and it was 9 percent below the five-year average. The antlerless harvest has now declined 18 percent in the past decade. Michigan hunters shot the most antlered bucks per square mile (PSM), and Maryland hunters shot the most antlerless deer PSM. An average of 41 percent of hunters were successful in 2017, and 15 percent of hunters shot more than one deer. New Jersey hunters had over half of the total deer harvest in the freezer prior to the opening of the primary firearms (rifle/shotgun) season, while Minnesota hunters shot more than a quarter of the entire deer harvest on opening day of the primary firearms season! The average hunter spent 12 days pursuing deer last year, and 13 percent of hunting licenses went to non-resident hunters. Regarding the 2017-18 total harvest, 66 percent of deer were shot with a firearm, followed by 23 percent with a bow, 10 percent by muzzleloader, 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 the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Mississippi, Tennessee and Finland in

Outlook for 2018-19 Deer Season

At the time of writing this *Whitetail Report*, many 2018-19 deer seasons were still underway, so the statistics highlighted in this report are all from the most recent hunting season that is complete (2017-18). However, some states have already issued press releases on the 2018-19 deer season and we've included five 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 2018 was a good year for many deer hunters.

Kentucky

Deer harvest up from 2017.

Missouri

Deer harvest reached near record numbers in 2018.

New England

Record deer harvests reported across New England.

New York

2018 marked the third consecutive year the deer kill increased.

Wisconsin

Gun deer season harvest up seven percent from 2017.

2018. Pennsylvania led the nation with total number of deer-vehicle accidents (DVA) and DVAs per road mile. The Keystone State also led the country with the total number of bowhunters and number of bowhunters PSM. Eight states now prohibit the use of natural deer/elk urine, and at least two others prohibit it in disease zones. Finally, nearly three quarters of states allow the use of tracking dogs to retrieve wounded big game animals.

All of this information and much more is included in the following pages. I hope you enjoy the data, interpretations, and QDMA's recommendations as you read this report. Each annual report is different as they cover the most pressing issues of that year, so if you enjoy this one be sure to check out the other reports going back to 2009 at qdma.com/about/whitetail-reports. Here's to a productive 2019 and a great deer season this fall.

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 2018-19 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 *2019 Whitetail Report*, QDMA compared harvest data from the three most recent seasons available: 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18. We acquired some harvest data from all 48 states in the contiguous U.S. and from six of eight Canadian provinces. Alabama was able to provide age structure and other data but not total harvest numbers. 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 tables. 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" (PSM) 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



During the New York Field to Fork event, Ryan Hancy (left) was able to harvest his first deer with mentor Bob Rose.



2017 was a great year for hunters. The total buck harvest was 2,878,998, and that was two percent higher than in 2016 (even without Alabama's data). More antlered bucks (those 1½ years or older) were shot in 23 of 36 states (64 percent) in the 2017-18 deer season than during the 2016-17 season. Ten of 13 states in the Northeast, eight of 13 states in the Midwest, and five of 10 states in the Southeast shot more bucks in 2017 than 2016. Southeast hunters shot a similar percentage of bucks as the prior year, while Midwest and Northeast

hunters shot 4 to 5 percent more.

Overall, Texas shot the most bucks (506,809) and Rhode Island shot the fewest (782). Maryland, Michigan, and Pennsylvania more than doubled the national average and shot 3.3 to 4.0 bucks PSM, while North Dakota shot the fewest (0.3 PSM).

Comparing the 2017 buck harvest to the previous five-year average shows hunters had a great year. Twenty-three of 36 states (64 percent) shot more bucks in 2017 than their prior five-year average, and the

Top States Antlered Buck Harvest	
State	2017 Harvest
Texas	506,809
Michigan	226,656
Pennsylvania	163,750
Wisconsin	158,812
Georgia	139,424

Top States Antlered Buck Harvest Per Square Mile	
State	2017 Harvest PSM
Michigan	4.0
Pennsylvania	3.7
Maryland	3.3
South Carolina	3.1
Wisconsin	2.9

Top States With Greatest Antlered Buck Harvest Increase 2017 vs. Five-Year Average	
State	% Increase
Texas	+54
Connecticut	+27
Delaware	+24
Massachusetts	+23
Pennsylvania	+21

Top States With Greatest Antlered Buck Harvest per 100 Deer Hunters	
State	2017 Antlered Harvest
Texas	69
South Carolina	68
Mississippi	67
Florida	62
Maryland	54

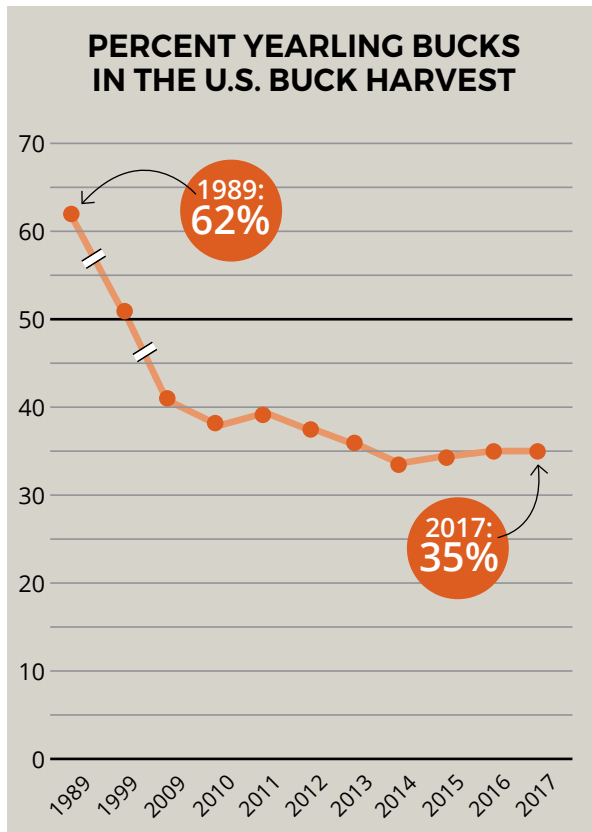
overall buck harvest was up six percent. The Southeast's 2017 buck harvest was three percent above its five-year average, the Northeast's was up six percent, and the Midwest's was eight percent above its five-year average. Notables include Texas shot 54 percent more bucks than its five-year average, Michigan shot nearly three times the national average of bucks PSM, Texas alone shot nearly as many bucks as the entire Northeast region, and the Southeast region dominated the buck harvest per 100 deer hunters category.

ANTLERED BUCK HARVEST

State/Province	2015	2016	2017	% Change 2016-17	2017 Bucks PSM	2012-16 Average	% Change 2017 to 5yr Avg	2017 Buck Harvest/100 Deer Hunters
Alabama	103,877	103,445	*	*	*	105,367	*	*
Arkansas	90,655	94,794	93,625	-1	1.8	92,631	1	27
Florida	61,492	57,403	61,216	7	1.1	67,500	-9	62
Georgia	142,346	134,456	139,424	4	2.4	138,690	1	39
Louisiana	84,416	78,831	74,305	-6	1.7	86,810	-14	40
Mississippi	109,732	100,158	95,112	-5	2.0	109,244	-13	67
North Carolina	82,144	76,206	85,137	12	1.8	79,846	7	34
Oklahoma	51,495	62,595	64,728	3	0.9	56,091	15	18
South Carolina	101,435	99,678	94,561	-5	3.1	106,443	-11	68
Tennessee	78,821	85,977	77,408	-10	1.9	88,683	-13	*
Texas	290,590	399,487	506,809	27	1.9	329,931	54	69
Southeast Total	1,197,003	1,293,030	1,292,325	0	1.7	1,251,289	3	46
Connecticut	4,574	6,092	6,923	14	1.4	5,456	27	14
Delaware	4,218	4,729	5,164	9	2.6	4,172	24	32
Maine	14,907	16,711	18,255	9	0.6	15,945	14	8
Maryland	29,855	30,326	31,670	4	3.3	30,214	5	54
Massachusetts	5,833	7,043	7,943	13	1.0	6,439	23	16
New Hampshire	6,153	6,629	7,708	16	0.9	6,671	16	13
New Jersey	15,290	19,889	20,082	1	2.7	16,851	19	26
New York	99,572	107,006	107,804	1	2.3	109,778	-2	19
Pennsylvania	137,580	149,460	163,750	10	3.7	134,888	21	23
Rhode Island	762	951	782	-18	0.7	944	-17	9
Vermont	8,330	9,995	9,477	-5	1.0	8,637	10	17
Virginia	103,522	89,675	95,563	7	2.4	96,942	-1	48
West Virginia	81,219	62,862	61,400	-2	2.5	68,288	-10	26
Northeast Total	511,815	511,368	536,521	5	2.3	504,841	6	23
Illinois	67,193	65,534	68,293	4	1.2	64,180	6	28
Indiana	50,379	51,783	45,095	-13	1.3	48,005	-6	24
Iowa	46,889	45,379	48,492	7	0.9	44,836	8	28
Kansas	42,434	42,287	40,749	-4	0.5	42,291	-4	35
Kentucky	75,720	71,041	66,994	-6	1.7	68,957	-3	19
Michigan	191,608	196,233	226,656	16	4.0	198,353	14	39
Minnesota	98,318	100,921	101,242	0	1.3	93,055	9	17
Missouri	122,524	128,173	136,223	6	2.0	118,062	15	27
Nebraska	28,505	27,241	28,786	6	0.4	26,308	9	21
North Dakota	20,300	22,660	22,852	1	0.3	20,920	9	38
Ohio	79,176	78,132	78,099	0	1.9	75,414	4	17
South Dakota	30,700	27,869	27,859	0	0.4	27,952	0	41
Wisconsin	152,701	156,920	158,812	1	2.9	152,443	4	25
Midwest Total	1,006,447	1,014,173	1,050,152	4	1.3	972,426	8	25
3-Region Total	2,715,265	2,818,571	2,878,998	2	1.6	2,728,555	6	31
Arizona	16,210	7,623	9,522	25	0.1	11,917	-20	16
California	*	32,029	28,126	-12	0.2	32,029	-12	*
Colorado	26,234	28,769	29,865	4	0.3	27,502	9	37
Idaho	18,868	18,498	15,895	-14	0.2	18,683	-15	11
Montana	68,242	31,475	29,843	-5	0.2	49,859	-40	*
Nevada	*	6,750	3,704	-45	0.0	6,750	-45	21
New Mexico	10,635	10,756	11,220	4	0.1	10,696	5	36
Oregon	*	*	26,235	*	0.3	*	*	*
Utah	*	*	29,926	*	0.4	*	*	*
Washington	10,112	27,929	21,243	-24	0.3	19,021	12	18
Wyoming	8,573	9,187	9,375	2	0.1	8,880	6	34
West Total	158,874	173,016	214,954	24	0.2	165,945	30	45
Alberta	21,575	22,275	22,350	0	0.1	21,925	2	*
British Columbia	8,600	*	*	*	*	8,600	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	3,647	4,769	5,499	15	0.2	4,208	31	14
Nova Scotia	5,551	6,523	6,812	4	0.3	5,551	23	*
Ontario	33,661	40,592	35,937	-11	0.1	37,127	-3	18
Quebec	26,458	31,531	32,076	2	0.1	28,995	11	22
Saskatchewan	16,000	17,253	19,780	15	0.1	16,000	24	*
Canada Total	115,492	122,943	122,454	0	0.1	115,492	6	32

*Data not provided/available

AGE STRUCTURE OF THE BUCK HARVEST



The QDMA also acquired the age structure of the buck harvest for most states. Twenty-nine states and one province reported the percentage of their antlered buck harvest that was 1½ years old, and 25 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 two-thirds of the states in the Midwest do. Conversely, no states in the West and few Canadian provinces collect age data.

In 2017, 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. The fact that only about one in three antlered bucks shot today is

1½ years old is amazing, and the line graph on this page shows how the yearling percentage of the antlered buck harvest in the U.S. has changed during the past 29 years.

In 2017, Arkansas averaged the fewest yearlings (7 percent of antlered buck harvest) and Wisconsin reported the most (65 percent of antlered buck harvest). Arkansas was the only state in single digits, and Wisconsin was one of only two

Top States With Lowest Percentage of Yearling Bucks in Buck Harvest

State	2017 Percentage
Arkansas	7
Mississippi	11
Louisiana	13
Alabama	14
Florida	17

Top States With Highest Percentage of Yearling Bucks in Buck Harvest

State	2017 Percentage
Wisconsin	65
New Hampshire	52
Maryland	48
New York	47
Virginia	47

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

State	2017 Percentage
Mississippi	77
Arkansas	74
Louisiana	73
Oklahoma	66
Texas	61

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

State	2017 Percentage
Wisconsin	12
New York	19
Vermont	20
Tennessee	20
Michigan	22

QDMA member Jake Reinagel of Missouri killed this buck and doe in December 2017 on the River Aux Vases QDM Cooperative.



states above 50 percent. As a region, the Southeast averaged the fewest yearlings (23 percent), followed by the Midwest (39 percent) and the Northeast (42 percent). Alabama and Kentucky both had the largest year-to-year decline in harvest percentage by dropping from 20 to 14 and 30 to 24 percent yearling bucks, respectively. Missouri had the largest year-to-year rise

in harvest percentage by increasing from 22 to 36 percent yearling bucks.

Twenty-five of 29 states (86 percent) that we received age structure data from were able to also provide the percentage of bucks 3½ years and older in the harvest; kudos to these states for their data collection efforts. The average percentage of the antlered buck harvest that was 3½

years and older was 34 percent in 2017. 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 12 percent in Wisconsin to 77 percent in Mississippi.

PERCENTAGE OF BUCK HARVEST BY AGE CLASS

State/Province	1½ Years Old			2½ Years Old			3½ and Older		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Alabama**	21	20	14	28	24	28	51	56	58
Arkansas	7	5	7	19	18	19	74	77	74
Florida	17	19	17	45	46	45	38	35	38
Georgia	45	33	36	27	32	28	28	35	36
Louisiana	16	13	13	17	15	14	67	72	73
Mississippi	14	10	11	9	13	12	77	78	77
North Carolina	39	39	35	37	36	36	24	25	29
Oklahoma	25	17	19	15	13	15	60	59	66
South Carolina	*	*	36	*	*	29	*	*	35
Tennessee	37	37	40	43	46	40	20	16	20
Texas	14	23	22	11	18	17	75	59	61
Southeast Average	24	22	23	25	26	26	51	51	51
Connecticut	42	36	39	*	*	*	*	*	*
Delaware	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Maine	48	47	*	24	26	*	27	27	*
Maryland	51	47	48	*	*	*	*	*	*
Massachusetts	45	44	45	27	26	25	29	30	30
New Hampshire	43	51	52	28	25	23	29	24	25
New Jersey	36	*	*	43	*	*	21	*	*
New York	47	49	47	33	31	34	20	19	19
Pennsylvania	41	44	43	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rhode Island	33	35	42	32	37	30	35	23	28
Vermont	26	34	34	52	46	46	22	20	20
Virginia	46	49	47	28	27	27	26	25	26
West Virginia	*	*	30	*	*	45	*	*	25
Northeast Average	41	44	42	33	31	33	26	24	25
Illinois	42	39	40	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indiana	*	*	27	*	*	35	*	*	38
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kentucky	33	30	24	41	41	45	26	29	31
Michigan	44	47	46	29	26	32	27	27	22
Minnesota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Missouri	24	22	36	41	48	39	35	30	25
Nebraska	30	28	27	35	37	38	35	35	35
North Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ohio	41	43	44	33	32	32	26	25	24
South Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wisconsin	55	65	65	28	18	23	17	16	12
Midwest Average	38	39	39	34	34	35	28	27	26
3-Region Average	34	35	35	31	31	31	35	34	34
Alberta	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	44	51	54	29	23	17	26	26	29
Nova Scotia	35	*	*	36	*	*	29	*	*
Ontario	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Quebec	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Canada Average	40	*	*	33	*	*	28	*	*

*Data not provided/ available ** Data from check stations and/or DMAP areas

ANTLERLESS DEER HARVEST

Antlerless harvests vary widely among states and years due to differences in deer density, productivity, a state's goals (reducing, stabilizing, or increasing the deer population), weather, disease and other factors. However, we can learn much about an agency's management program by comparing the antlerless and antlered buck harvests. Continuing with the analysis of states in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast, hunters from these regions (minus Alabama) harvested 2,827,269 antlerless deer in 2017. This was nearly identical to the 2016 antlerless harvest and nine percent below the five-year average. Overall, Texas topped the list with 411,200 antlerless deer, Georgia followed with 242,205, and Pennsylvania was third with 203,409. The antlerless harvest has now declined nearly 20 percent in these regions since 2007. This is a difference of approximately 700,000 deer and 140 million venison meals. In fact, in 2017 hunters shot 51,732 more antlered bucks than antlerless deer. This doesn't include data from Alabama (which typically shoots 70-90,000 more antlerless deer than bucks), but if hunters

from the "Heart of Dixie" changed course in 2017 it will mark the first time since 1998 the national deer harvest includes more antlered bucks than antlerless deer.

Maryland harvested the most antlerless deer per square mile (PSM; 5.7), followed by Delaware (5.2), and Pennsylvania (4.5). Regionally, the Northeast (2.4) averaged shooting the most antlerless deer PSM, followed by the Southeast (1.6) and the Midwest (1.3).

Antlerless harvest was down in the Southeast (-4 percent), while the Northeast (+2 percent) and Midwest (+4 percent) both shot more antlerless deer in 2017 than 2016. In total, 27 of 36 states (75 percent) shot more antlerless deer in 2017 than the prior year, but 28 of 36 states (78 percent) shot fewer antlerless deer than their five-year average.

Seven of 13 (54 percent) Midwest states shot more antlerless deer than antlered bucks, five of 13 (38 percent) Northeastern states shot more antlerless deer, and three of 10 (30 percent) Southeastern states shot more antlerless deer than antlered bucks in

2017. Reduced antlerless harvests are necessary in areas where deer herds have been balanced with the habitat and/or when other mortality factors (such as predation or disease) are increasing. However, few states should be harvesting more antlered bucks than antlerless deer on a regular basis.



Sylvain Caron, president of the Northern New Brunswick QDMA Branch, with a big mature antlerless deer.

Top States Antlerless Harvest

State	2017 Harvest
Texas	411,200
Georgia	242,205
Pennsylvania	203,409
Wisconsin	161,227
Michigan	150,709

Top States Antlerless Harvest Per Square Mile

State	2017 Harvest PSM
Maryland	5.7
Delaware	5.2
Pennsylvania	4.5
Georgia	4.2
New Jersey	3.9

Top States With Greatest Antlerless Harvest per 100 Deer Hunters

State	2017 Harvest
Maryland	93
Mississippi	70
Georgia	68
South Carolina	65
Delaware	63

Top States Antlerless Deer Per Antlered Buck Harvested

State	2017 Ratio
Delaware	2.0
Georgia	1.7
Maryland	1.7
Indiana	1.5
New Jersey	1.4
Ohio	1.4
Rhode Island	1.4

ANTLERLESS DEER HARVEST

State/Province	2015	2016	2017	% Change 2016-17	2012-16 Average	% Change 2017 to 5yr Avg	2017 Antlerless PSM	2017 Antlerless per Antlered	2017 Antlerless Harvest/100 Deer Hunters
Alabama	171,123	191,555	*	*	169,965	*	*	*	*
Arkansas	122,255	107,276	111,685	4	117,317	-5	2.1	1.2	32
Florida	36,497	32,024	35,811	12	39,469	-9	0.7	0.6	36
Georgia	220,503	181,998	242,205	33	247,458	-2	4.2	1.7	68
Louisiana	68,684	59,469	60,795	2	66,240	-8	1.4	0.8	33
Mississippi	144,514	144,622	99,449	-31	146,705	-32	2.1	1.0	70
North Carolina	80,414	73,605	76,717	4	84,429	-9	1.6	0.9	31
Oklahoma	36,972	36,428	43,186	19	40,031	8	0.6	0.7	12
South Carolina	93,593	72,637	90,725	25	96,348	-6	3.0	1.0	65
Tennessee	88,518	71,650	66,597	-7	78,376	-15	1.6	0.9	*
Texas	257,247	322,557	411,200	27	276,455	49	1.6	0.8	56
Southeast Total	1,320,320	1,293,821	1,238,370	-4	1,378,346	-10	1.6	1.0	44
Connecticut	4,947	4,320	4,476	4	6,003	-25	0.9	0.6	9
Delaware	10,463	10,064	10,140	1	10,083	1	5.2	2.0	63
Maine	5,418	6,685	8,978	34	6,516	38	0.3	0.5	4
Maryland	54,167	54,867	54,872	0	57,687	-5	5.7	1.7	93
Massachusetts	4,269	5,206	5,362	3	4,745	13	0.7	0.7	11
New Hampshire	4,742	4,047	4,601	14	4,753	-3	0.5	0.6	8
New Jersey	26,149	29,357	28,463	-3	31,214	-9	3.9	1.4	36
New York	103,401	106,055	95,623	-10	118,468	-19	2.0	0.9	17
Pennsylvania	178,233	183,794	203,409	11	194,926	4	4.5	1.2	29
Rhode Island	891	985	1,102	12	1,151	-4	1.1	1.4	12
Vermont	4,417	6,225	6,507	5	5,447	19	0.7	0.7	12
Virginia	107,065	90,986	95,060	4	111,635	-15	2.4	1.0	48
West Virginia	57,274	49,467	46,742	-6	58,979	-21	1.9	0.8	20
Northeast Total	561,436	552,058	565,335	2	626,495	-10	2.4	1.1	25
Illinois	88,036	78,769	79,396	1	90,756	-13	1.4	1.2	32
Indiana	45,686	67,694	68,500	1	71,495	-4	1.9	1.5	36
Iowa	58,512	56,018	57,086	2	59,843	-5	1.0	1.2	33
Kansas	51,031	41,738	36,925	-12	48,198	-23	0.5	0.9	32
Kentucky	80,008	69,301	69,024	0	73,198	-6	1.7	1.0	20
Michigan	137,073	145,054	150,709	4	158,673	-5	2.7	0.7	26
Minnesota	61,027	72,292	96,526	34	73,228	32	1.2	1.0	16
Missouri	152,042	138,071	147,947	7	153,821	-4	2.2	1.1	29
Nebraska	19,537	19,701	18,059	-8	19,431	-7	0.2	0.6	13
North Dakota	12,100	13,195	13,249	0	14,525	-9	0.2	0.6	22
Ohio	109,159	104,037	108,148	4	115,749	-7	2.6	1.4	23
South Dakota	16,000	18,661	16,768	-10	20,889	-20	0.2	0.6	25
Wisconsin	159,034	159,854	161,227	1	175,260	-8	3.0	1.0	25
Midwest Total	989,245	984,385	1,023,564	4	1,097,736	-7	1.3	1.0	25
3-Region Total	2,871,001	2,830,264	2,827,269	0	3,102,577	-9	1.6	1.0	31
Arizona	315	*	*	*	158	*	0.0	0.0	0
California	*	485	467	-4	485	-4	0.0	0.0	*
Colorado	7,771	8,055	7,896	-2	7,913	0	0.1	0.3	10
Idaho	11,476	9,657	10,607	10	10,567	0	0.1	0.7	7
Montana	17,610	18,044	19,112	6	17,827	7	0.1	0.6	*
Nevada	*	1,000	446	-55	1,000	-55	0.0	0.1	2
New Mexico	138	142	96	-32	140	-31	0.0	0.0	0
Oregon	*	*	2,833	*	*	*	0.0	0.1	*
Utah	*	*	3,637	*	*	*	0.0	0.1	*
Washington	3,398	5,565	5,294	-5	4,482	18	0.1	0.2	5
Wyoming	8,089	8,427	8,581	2	8,258	4	0.1	0.9	31
West Total	48,797	51,375	58,969	15	53,047	11	0.1	0.3	12
Alberta	13,500	18,331	18,000	-2	15,916	13	0.1	0.8	*
British Columbia	5,700	*	*	*	5,700	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	714	609	942	55	662	42	0.0	0.2	2
Nova Scotia	2,234	1,806	2,287	27	2,020	13	0.1	0.3	*
Ontario	24,371	24,195	24,945	3	24,283	3	0.1	0.7	12
Quebec	21,162	21,311	21,622	1	21,237	2	0.0	0.7	15
Saskatchewan	3,500	4,215	3,650	-13	3,500	4	0.0	0.2	*
Canada Total	71,181	70,467	71,446	1	71,181	0	0.0	0.6	19

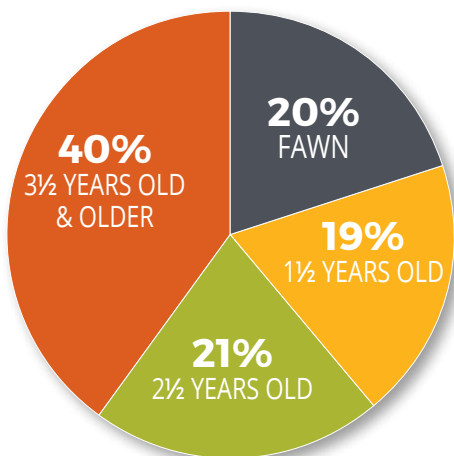
*Data not provided/available

AGE STRUCTURE OF THE ANTLERLESS HARVEST

The QDMA also acquired age structure data of the antlerless harvest data for most states. Twenty-nine states and two provinces reported the percentage of their antlerless harvest that was 0.5 years old. Twenty-seven states and one province reported the percentage that was 1½ years, and 24 states and one province reported the percentage that was 2½ and 3½ years or older. In 2017, the average antlerless harvest that was a fawn was 20 percent; thus, one in five antlerless deer harvested was a fawn for the three main U.S. regions. The Southeast averaged the lowest percentage of fawns (13 percent) and the Northeast averaged the most (27 percent of the antlerless harvest). Individually Texas (3 percent) shot the fewest fawns and Ohio (38 percent) shot the most. Texas historically shoots a very small percentage of fawns. 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 2015 to 2017 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 years and older age class. This age class includes mature animals and they typically are also the most productive

2017 PERCENTAGE OF ANTLERLESS HARVEST BY AGE CLASS



Jimmy Martin of Florida got his first deer ever, a doe, at QDMA's 2018 National Youth Hunt. Jimmy's guide and mentor was Ronnie "Cuz" Strickland of Mossy Oak.

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.

individuals and most successful mothers. Nationally, over a third (40 percent) of the antlerless deer shot in 2017 reached the 3½ year and older age class. The Southeast leads the regions with 46 percent of antlerless deer in this age class, and Texas led all states with 61 percent being 3.5 years and older.

Age structure data is the backbone of deer management programs. Monitoring the age structure of the harvest is key for managers to make wise management decisions including the appropriate number of antlerless deer to harvest annually in each management unit. Good age data helps managers from under harvesting and from overharvesting deer herds. Many hunters learn how to estimate the age of deer they harvest, and all hunters should provide every piece of data requested by their wildlife agency.

Top States

With Lowest Percentage of Fawns in Antlerless Harvest

State	2017 Percentage
Texas	3
Louisiana	8
Mississippi	8
Alabama	9
North Carolina	11

Top States

With Highest Percentage of Fawns in Antlerless Harvest

State	2017 Percentage
Ohio	38
Pennsylvania	36
New Hampshire	35
Maryland	33
Massachusetts	33

Top States

With Highest Percentage of 3½-Plus in Antlerless Harvest

State	2017 Percentage
Texas	61
Louisiana	55
Mississippi	54
Oklahoma	52
Arkansas	51

PERCENTAGE OF ANTLERLESS HARVEST BY AGE CLASS

State/Province	Fawn			1½ Years Old			2½ Years Old			3½ and Older		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Alabama	15	*	9	18	*	18	18	*	23	49	*	50
Arkansas	7	12	13	17	13	17	21	20	19	55	55	51
Florida	15	18	19	19	14	16	23	25	23	43	42	42
Georgia	23	23	21	23	27	19	24	33	30	30	17	30
Louisiana	11	8	8	20	18	19	22	19	18	47	55	55
Mississippi	7	8	8	20	16	21	19	19	17	54	57	54
North Carolina	14	24	11	23	18	20	27	25	28	36	33	41
Oklahoma	16	8	12	19	17	19	15	27	17	50	56	52
South Carolina	*	*	17	*	*	18	*	*	21	*	*	44
Tennessee	18	*	25	26	*	25	31	*	28	25	*	22
Texas	1	1	3	17	16	15	17	23	21	65	60	61
Southeast Average	13	13	13	20	17	19	22	24	22	45	47	46
Connecticut	20	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Delaware	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Maine	21	33	*	17	15	*	*	12	*	*	40	*
Maryland	31	35	33	24	23	25	*	*	*	*	*	*
Massachusetts	34	34	33	13	16	18	18	18	21	34	32	28
New Hampshire	30	29	35	11	21	14	16	10	17	43	40	34
New Jersey	14	*	*	29	*	*	32	*	*	25	*	*
New York	27	26	29	19	19	22	21	19	20	33	36	29
Pennsylvania	37	36	36	18	20	19	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rhode Island	6	19	19	5	6	8	*	55	24	*	20	49
Vermont	18	20	20	16	14	19	14	15	16	52	51	45
Virginia	24	24	25	21	20	21	21	21	20	34	35	34
West Virginia	*	*	13	*	*	26	*	*	29	*	*	32
Northeast Average	24	28	27	17	17	18	20	21	20	37	36	35
Illinois	33	32	31	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indiana	*	*	16	*	*	25	*	*	36	*	*	23
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	*	*	13	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kentucky	32	12	19	23	25	20	21	34	37	24	29	24
Michigan	25	26	24	19	18	20	18	17	20	38	38	36
Minnesota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Missouri	34	15	26	18	23	24	16	25	17	32	37	33
Nebraska	22	22	23	26	26	24	25	27	28	27	25	25
North Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ohio	39	45	38	18	16	19	*	*	*	*	*	*
South Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wisconsin	36	21	19	21	24	25	20	24	25	23	31	31
Midwest Average	32	25	23	21	22	22	20	25	27	29	32	28
3-Region Average	19	21	20	19	17	19	21	23	21	41	41	40
Alberta	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	20	15	18	15	16	19	20	15	12	46	53	52
Nova Scotia	17	*	*	17	*	*	24	*	*	42	*	*
Ontario	34	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Quebec	32	13	30	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Canada Average	26	14	24	16	*	*	22	*	*	44	*	*

*Data not provided/available

DEER HARVEST BY WEAPON TYPE



Katie Adams of Pennsylvania killed her first buck ever in November 2017. In that year, 66 percent of the deer harvest was taken with modern firearms.

The average hunter today has much longer seasons and more weapon opportunities than he or she had in the past. To assess how hunters take advantage of these, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to determine the percentage of the total deer harvest taken with a bow/crossbow, rifle/shotgun, muzzleloader, or other weapon (pistol, etc.) during the 2015, 2016 and 2017 seasons. Nationally, muzzleloader hunters took 10 percent of the total deer harvest, bow/crossbow hunters took 23 percent, and firearm (rifle/shotgun) hunters took 66 percent of the total deer harvest in 2017.

Regionally, bowhunters averaged the highest percentage of the harvest in the Northeast (28 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 2017 (75 percent) were with a rifle or shotgun. Muzzleloading (10 percent) and bowhunting (15 percent) paled in comparison to the firearms harvest. In the Midwest muzzleloading was

least popular at only five percent of the harvest, and a firearms harvest of 69 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 and Wyoming had the highest percentage taken by firearms hunters (95 percent), and Rhode Island tops the list with percentage taken by muzzleloader hunters (42 percent). In Canada, bowhunting was most popular in Quebec (23 percent), muzzleloading was also most popular in Quebec (13 percent), and firearms hunting was most popular in New Brunswick (91 percent) in 2017.

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.

Top States Percentage of Harvest by Bow/Crossbow

State	2017 Percentage
New Jersey	58
Massachusetts	43
Ohio	43
Illinois	39
Kansas	37

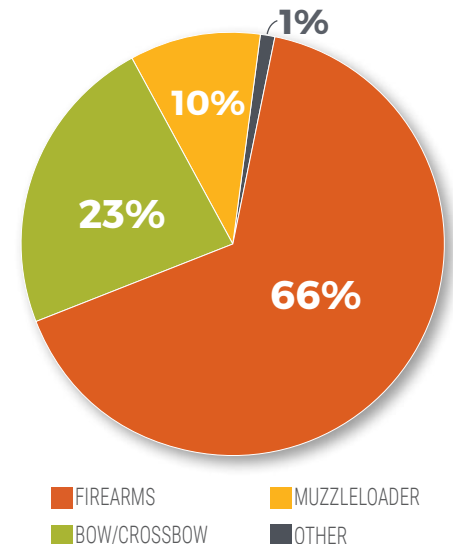
Top States Percentage of Harvest by Rifle/Shotgun

State	2017 Percentage
Idaho	95
Wyoming	95
Nebraska	90
South Carolina	89
Maine	88
North Dakota	88
Texas	88

Top States Percentage of Harvest by Muzzleloader

State	2017 Percentage
Rhode Island	42
Virginia	26
Utah	23
Vermont	23
Massachusetts	22
New Hampshire	22

TOTAL 2017 DEER HARVEST BY WEAPON TYPE



PERCENTAGE OF DEER HARVEST BY WEAPON TYPE												
	Bow/Crossbow			Rifle/Shotgun			Muzzleloader			Other		
State/Province	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Alabama	16	15	*	82	83	*	2	2	*	0	*	*
Arkansas	10	14	13	74	75	74	11	11	13	4	0	0
Florida	28	28	27	64	62	65	7	9	8	1	1	<1
Georgia	18	16	17	79	82	81	3	2	2	0	*	0
Louisiana	8	9	7	81	80	81	11	11	12	0	0	0
Mississippi	17	18	18	69	68	69	14	14	13	0	*	0
North Carolina	11	10	12	79	80	79	10	10	9	0	0	0
Oklahoma	26	26	27	58	62	58	16	12	16	0	*	0
South Carolina	7	9	9	90	89	89	2	3	3	1	<1	<1
Tennessee	12	11	11	66	66	69	22	23	20	0	*	0
Texas	9	8	11	90	91	88	1	1	1	0	1	<1
Southeast Average	15	15	15	76	76	75	9	9	10	<1	<1	<1
Connecticut	50	50	*	37	36	*	5	6	*	8	9	*
Delaware	20	20	20	61	62	66	19	17	13	1	1	1
Maine	11	7	8	85	89	88	4	3	4	0	1	0
Maryland	34	34	34	47	51	48	19	15	18	0	*	0
Massachusetts	45	42	43	37	36	35	18	22	22	0	0	0
New Hampshire	29	24	25	48	53	51	19	23	22	0	*	2
New Jersey	57	58	58	32	31	31	11	11	11	0	*	0
New York	24	26	26	63	65	65	9	9	9	4	<1	<1
Pennsylvania	31	33	32	62	61	61	7	6	6	0	*	0
Rhode Island	34	31	36	22	23	22	44	45	42	0	0	0
Vermont	27	21	22	52	48	46	11	22	23	10	9	9
Virginia	13	15	15	67	58	60	20	27	26	0	0	0
West Virginia	13	24	24	74	72	72	4	4	4	9	*	0
Northeast Average	30	30	28	53	53	53	15	16	16	2	3	3
Illinois	37	37	39	53	53	51	10	10	9	0	<1	<1
Indiana	16	24	28	54	61	67	20	14	4	10	<1	1
Iowa	23	22	21	57	53	55	14	13	12	6	12	11
Kansas	34	37	37	62	60	60	4	3	3	0	<1	0
Kentucky	15	17	17	70	75	74	12	8	9	3	0	0
Michigan	34	37	36	60	48	58	6	15	6	0	*	0
Minnesota	13	12	11	83	83	85	4	5	4	0	*	0
Missouri	18	18	18	78	78	78	4	4	4	0	*	0
Nebraska	9	11	7	82	81	90	7	8	3	2	*	0
North Dakota	21	26	21	78	73	88	1	1	1	0	*	0
Ohio	44	45	43	49	45	44	7	9	13	0	1	0
South Dakota	14	15	15	84	83	82	2	2	3	0	*	0
Wisconsin	17	28	29	70	70	69	2	2	2	11	0	0
Midwest Average	23	25	25	68	66	69	7	7	5	2	2	1
3-Region Average	22	23	23	66	65	66	10	11	10	2	1	1
Arizona	13	8	6	85	87	*	2	1	*	0	5	*
California	*	*	10	*	*	82	*	*	8	*	*	0
Colorado	8	8	*	86	85	*	6	6	*	0	0	*
Idaho	4	4	4	94	94	95	2	2	1	0	0	0
Montana	*	8	*	*	92	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Nevada	*	5	*	*	85	*	*	10	*	*	0	*
New Mexico	12	14	14	75	73	74	13	13	12	0	0	0
Oregon	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Utah	*	*	15	*	*	62	*	*	23	*	*	0
Washington	15	15	*	74	79	*	7	6	*	4	0	*
Wyoming	7	7	5	93	93	95	0	*	0	0	*	0
West Average	10	9	9	85	86	82	5	6	9	1	<1	0
Alberta	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	4	7	9	96	93	91	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nova Scotia	4	*	*	69	*	*	22	*	*	5	*	*
Ontario	16	18	17	72	71	75	9	8	8	3	3	0
Quebec	23	24	23	61	60	64	16	16	13	0	0	0
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Canada Average	12	16	16	75	75	77	12	8	7	2	1	0

*Data not provided/available

PRE-FIREARMS (RIFLE/SHOTGUN) DEER HARVEST

Looking at the deer harvest by weapon type provides some insight to hunter motivations but not always to harvest timing. For example, in most states hunters can use a bow or muzzleloader during the firearms season. Thus, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to determine the percentage of the total deer harvest that occurred prior to opening day of the primary firearms season and to see how that percentage changed during the past 16 seasons.

In 2002, 23 percent of the harvest occurred before the firearms season and

this increased to 27 percent in 2007 and 28 percent in 2012 before dropping back to 26 percent in 2017. That equates to a lot of hunters taking advantage of earlier and warmer hunting seasons.

In the Southeast the pre-firearms harvest jumped from 21 to 30 percent from 2002 to 2007, declined to 26 percent in 2012, and dropped back to 21 percent in 2017. Oklahoma led the Southeast with over a third (38 percent) of the harvest in the freezer before firearms season in 2017, while Alabama, Georgia and Texas all shot over 90 percent of their total harvest after

Top States

With Highest Percentage of Pre-Firearms Deer Harvest

State	2017 Percentage
New Jersey	52
New Hampshire	49
Maryland	45
Massachusetts	40
Ohio	39

Top States

With Lowest Percentage of Pre-Firearms Deer Harvest

State	2017 Percentage
Minnesota	8
Alabama	9
Georgia	9
Maine	9
Nebraska	9
Texas	9

PERCENTAGE OF HARVEST PRIOR TO OPENING DAY

State/Province	2002	2007	2012	2017
Alabama	*	*	*	9
Arkansas	*	*	30	27
Florida	*	*	*	*
Georgia	16	14	18	9
Louisiana	*	*	*	*
Mississippi	15	12	17	*
North Carolina	15	15	17	20
Oklahoma	38	34	36	38
South Carolina	*	*	*	*
Tennessee	*	74	39	36
Texas	*	*	*	9
Southeast Average	21	30	26	21
Connecticut	*	*	*	*
Delaware	28	28	29	27
Maine	7	12	11	9
Maryland	38	35	43	45
Massachusetts	23	29	36	40
New Hampshire	44	48	52	49
New Jersey	*	41	50	52
New York	*	19	22	15
Pennsylvania	*	24	31	37
Rhode Island	*	*	*	18
Vermont	31	32	37	31
Virginia	*	28	34	37
West Virginia	15	19	22	25
Northeast Average	27	29	33	32
Illinois	28	26	28	33
Indiana	*	*	*	25
Iowa	19	25	27	27
Kansas	18	21	37	38
Kentucky	19	17	19	17
Michigan	*	*	*	35
Minnesota	<7	10	9	8
Missouri	*	*	*	21
Nebraska	*	*	9	9
North Dakota	*	*	*	*
Ohio	23	33	38	39
South Dakota	*	*	*	*
Wisconsin	15	22	26	29
Midwest Average	20	22	24	26
3-Region Average	23	27	28	26
Alberta	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	<1	2	2	10
Nova Scotia	*	*	*	*
Ontario	*	*	*	*
Quebec	73	69	64	24
Saskatchewan	7	8	*	*
Canada Average	27	26	33	17

*Data not provided/available

firearms season opened. From 2002 to 2017 the percentage of deer shot pre-firearms decreased nearly 50 percent in Georgia, and it dropped over 50 percent in Tennessee since 2007.

In the Northeast, the pre-firearms harvest climbed steadily from 27 to 29 to 33 percent from 2002 to 2007 to 2012, and remained similar at 32 percent in 2017. Nearly a third of the deer taken in the Northeast are now tagged pre-firearms. New Jersey (52 percent) and New Hampshire (49 percent) top the list. This is no surprise as New Jersey leads the U.S. with over half of their total harvest taken by archers, and much of New Hampshire has limited antlerless harvest opportunity during firearm season. Plus, New Hampshire's muzzleloader season opens the week before firearms, so it's in essence their "opener." From 2002 to 2017 the percentage of deer shot pre-firearms nearly doubled in Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania had a big increase since 2007.

In the Midwest, the pre-firearms harvest climbed steadily from 20 to 22 to 24 to 26 percent from 2002 to 2017. Minnesota and Nebraska shot the fewest pre-firearms (8 and 9 percent, respectively) while Ohio and Kansas shot the most (39 and 38 percent, respectively). From 2002 to 2017 the percentage of deer shot pre-firearms nearly doubled in Ohio and Wisconsin and more than doubled in Kansas.

OPENING DAY FIREARMS (RIFLE/SHOTGUN) DEER HARVEST



David Goodwin, a U.S. Air Force medic, volunteered to help with a QDMA military youth hunt in 2017, but he had never hunted deer himself. With the assistance of other volunteers, he ended up getting his first deer ever on the hunt.

The opening day of firearms season is akin to a national holiday for many deer hunters across the country. It's so popular in Pennsylvania that many public schools are closed so students (and teachers) can go hunting. The intensity of "opening day" from a participation and deer harvest perspective is often directly related to season length. Shorter seasons generally dictate increased hunter participation, higher "opening day" harvests, and a lot of excitement for sportsmen and women.

QDMA surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to determine the percentage of the total 2009 and 2017 deer harvests that occurred on the opening day of the primary firearms season. This statistic was 11 percent in 2009 and remained unchanged in 2017. Thus, across the whitetail's range about 1 in 10 deer harvested throughout the entire season are taken on opening day of the primary firearms season.

The Southeast averaged 8 percent in 2009 but that dropped to 5 percent in 2017. Seventy-nine percent of the total 2017 deer harvest in this region occurred after the firearm's opener, but little of it was on opening day. Southeastern states tend to have much longer seasons than other regions and, therefore, a diluted opening day effect. As noted in the table on this page, many states in the Southeast can't or don't estimate the percentage shot on opening day.

The Northeast averaged 10 percent in 2009 and 11 percent in 2017. Sixty-eight percent of this region's total 2017 deer harvest occurred either on or after the firearm opener. West Virginia led the region with nearly one in five deer shot on opening day.

The Midwest averaged 15 percent in 2009 and 16 percent in 2017. This led all regions, and Minnesota led the country in this statistic as Gopher State hunters shot 27 percent of the entire 2017 deer harvest on opening day. Nebraska had the largest increase from 2009 to 2017 by jumping from 5 to 23 percent of the total harvest on this special day. Indiana's 11 percent was impacted by severe weather as DNR officials reported it's been closer to 30 percent during the past few seasons.

The eastern Canada average was 9 percent in 2009 and 11 percent in 2017, although only New Brunswick and Quebec reported their 2017 values. Hunters in these provinces produce similar numbers to their counterparts in neighboring states to the south (Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont).

Top States

With Highest Percentage of Opening Day Deer Harvest

State	2017 Percentage
Minnesota	27
Nebraska	23
Missouri	21
West Virginia	19
Wisconsin	19

Top States

With Lowest Percentage of Opening Day Deer Harvest

State	2017 Percentage
Alabama	2
Rhode Island	3
Tennessee	3
Texas	3
Georgia	4

OPENING DAY HARVEST

State/Province	2009 %	2017 %
Alabama	*	2
Arkansas	11	12
Florida	*	*
Georgia	*	4
Louisiana	*	*
Mississippi	*	*
North Carolina	6	5
Oklahoma	*	8
South Carolina	*	*
Tennessee	7	3
Texas	*	3
Southeast Average	8	5

Connecticut	*	*
Delaware	8	11
Maine	9	11
Maryland	13	12
Massachusetts	12	11
New Hampshire	11	9
New Jersey	1	5
New York	18	15
Pennsylvania	18	14
Rhode Island	9	3
Vermont	8	12
Virginia	4	6
West Virginia	*	19
Northeast Average	10	11

Illinois	14	15
Indiana	19	11
Iowa	7	8
Kansas	*	7
Kentucky	16	18
Michigan	*	*
Minnesota	29	27
Missouri	18	21
Nebraska	5	23
North Dakota	8	*
Ohio	13	12
South Dakota	*	*
Wisconsin	23	19
Midwest Average	15	16

3-Region Average	11	11
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Alberta	*	*
British Columbia	*	*
Manitoba	*	*
New Brunswick	8	7
Nova Scotia	10	*
Ontario	*	*
Quebec	8	14
Saskatchewan	*	*
Canada Average	9	11

*Data not provided/available

2018 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 impacted by it every year. However, there are other disease threats to deer populations. Below is a run-down of some of the biggest issues regarding white-tailed deer diseases that hit the headlines in 2018, starting with hemorrhagic disease.

HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE

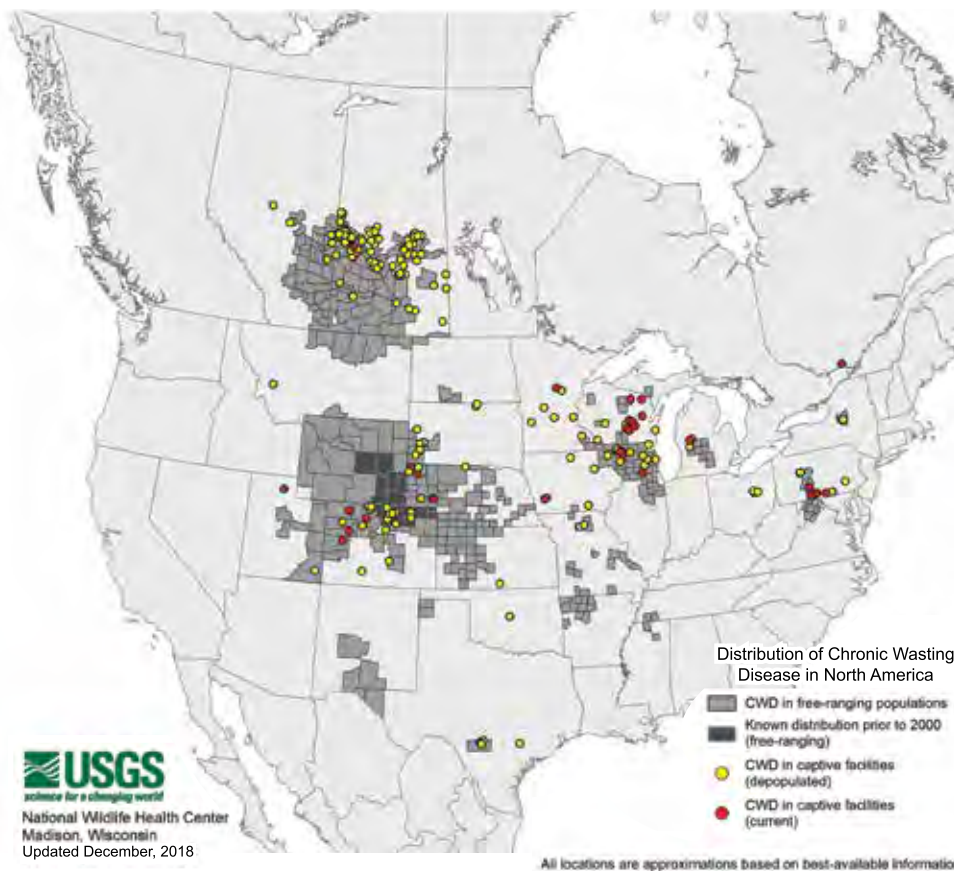
Hemorrhagic Disease (HD) is an infectious, blood-borne disease of deer and elk transmitted by biting midges or flies; it is caused by either of two closely related viruses, epizootic hemorrhagic disease virus (EHDV) or bluetongue virus (BTV). Since the symptoms and disease features produced by both viruses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

As of November 21, 2018, the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (SCWDS) confirmed HD in free-ranging deer in 14 states. EHDV-2 was isolated from white-tailed deer in Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. EHDV-2 also was isolated from mule deer from Nebraska, Montana, and North Dakota. EHDV-6 was isolated from a white-tailed deer in Kentucky and a BTV-1 from a white-tailed deer in West Virginia.

BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS

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

As of late November 2018, over 21,000 samples had been tested in Michigan with five new positives that year.



All locations are approximations based on best-available information

TICKS AND TICK-BORNE ILLNESSES

Ticks and tick-borne illnesses are the second most important vector of human pathogens (after mosquitos) regarding the number and virulence of pathogens transmitted. Ticks also are important vectors of domestic and wild animal pathogens, including deer. Numerous well-known tick-borne pathogens have been recognized that cause human disease, including anaplasmosis, babesiosis, ehrlichiosis, Lyme disease, Powassan disease, STARI, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, tularemia, as well as some newcomers like Heartland virus, Bourbon virus, and two *Borrelia* species, *B. miyamotoi* and *B. mayoni*, that share the same vector as *B. burgdorferi*, the causative agent of Lyme disease.

In November 2017 USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed the identification of a brand new, exotic tick called the Asian long-horned tick, *Haemaphysalis longicornis*, collected in large numbers from a domestic sheep in New Jersey. During spring 2018 it was discovered in and around the sheep paddock as well as on wild opossum, raccoon and white-tailed deer nearby. As of

August 2018, the exotic tick was subsequently discovered in eight other states besides New Jersey, including Arkansas, Connecticut, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

Though still relatively rare, the number of cases of Alpha-Gal in humans, or the red meat allergy, which is associated with bites from the lone star tick, appears to be increasing annually.

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

Chronic Wasting Disease is an always fatal disease found in most deer species, including elk, reindeer, moose, mule, red and white-tailed deer, and CWD has now been identified in 26 U.S. states, four Canadian provinces, Korea (from an elk imported from Canada in 1997), Norway (in free-ranging reindeer, moose and red deer), and Finland (free-ranging moose). 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 10 times as infectious as urine), that plants can bind, uptake and transport prions from infected soil, and hamsters that ate the plants contracted the disease. CWD has also been shown to experimentally infect squirrel and macaque monkeys. Pigs and laboratory mice that carry some human genes can also carry prions, but are asymptomatic. In addition, and perhaps most frightening, ongoing research provides some evidence of potential infection when primates closely related to humans consume infected venison.

CWD made numerous other headlines in 2018 and some of the biggest included:

Positive Cases

- In February 2018 and for the first time ever CWD was found in a free-ranging white-tailed deer in western Mississippi. In October a CWD-positive second deer was confirmed in Pontotoc County, on the other side of the state; and then a third was discovered back in Issaquena County, just 6 miles north of the original case. In December, a case was confirmed in Marshall County on the Tennessee border.

- A hunter-harvested adult doe killed in December 2017 in southern Iowa, tested positive for CWD. This was the first wild deer outside of northeast Iowa to test positive.

- In March 2018 the first case of CWD ever in Finland was discovered in a wild moose.

- In June 2018 CWD was identified in a captive reindeer in northern Illinois.

- In September 2018, the first case of CWD ever found in Quebec, Canada was discovered in a captive deer. Following that discovery, the province put their CWD response plan into action, which included prohibiting any legal hunting and trapping within a designated control area.

- In October 2018 Michigan DNR discovered its first case in the Upper Peninsula, just across the border from Wisconsin. Additionally, two bucks suspected to be CWD-positive were harvested in late November in Gratiot and Eaton counties, where CWD has not previously been found.

- In Missouri an adult doe was found dead on a farm in Oregon County in October, and a young buck was harvested in Stone County late November, both near the Arkansas border. The doe was the first

deer in Missouri to be found dead with the disease.

- In December 2018, the first cases of CWD were discovered in Tennessee, in Hardeman and Fayette counties.

Research

- Preliminary results were reported from the first of a 5-year study from Wisconsin investigating the differences in the survival of wild deer with or without CWD; so far investigators found that CWD-positive deer died at three times the rate of deer without the disease.

- Researchers from Colorado and Wyoming published the results of a 10-year study showing the risk of CWD transmission to cattle is low.

- Another Wisconsin-based study showed that mineral licks can serve as reservoirs of CWD prions and thus facilitate disease transmission.

- New research shows CWD likely influences activity and behavior in white-tailed deer. Results showed deer that were CWD-negative were more active than their CWD-positive cohabitants.

- Researchers at the National Institute of Health published results from a 13-year study showing there was no clinical, pathological, or biochemical evidence that CWD could be transmitted to macaque monkeys. These results contrast the preliminary results from a Canadian study that we reported on last year. In that study (unpublished and ongoing) macaques developed clinical signs. Differences in the experimental design could account for the dissimilar results. We will continue to monitor this study, and will report following its completion.

Other

- In March 2018, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) proposed changes to the CWD Herd Certification Program standards. Through this voluntary program, captive cervid herds can currently be certified as at low risk for CWD, which allows the animals to be moved between some states.

- In April 2018, the Office of the Legislative Auditor in Minnesota found the Board of Health failed to enforce some laws related to deer and elk farms.

- In October 2018, The Norwegian

Food Safety Authority placed new import restrictions on hay and straw for animal feed from countries outside the European Economic Area (EEA).

- Also in October, The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) adopted CWD Best Management Practices, which are a set of recommendations for agencies to consider as they develop or revise CWD prevention, surveillance, and management programs.

- The Chronic Wasting Disease Transmission in Cervidae Study Act (S. 3644) was introduced in 2018 and authorizes a study to determine how CWD spreads and how that spread could be prevented. This new legislation joins two other bills that were introduced in 2017, all of which are aimed at increasing the ability of wildlife managers to keep cervid populations healthy.

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, bTB and other communicable diseases.

The QDMA also recommends maintaining or enhancing strict movement restrictions (like border closings, etc.) and testing protocols on captive deer, as well as returning/maintaining full authority over captive deer facilities and regulations with the state/provincial wildlife agencies. Currently, some state/provinces have this authority while the Department of Agriculture shares it or maintains sole possession in others (See the 2017 *Whitetail Report*).

Regarding HD, although its national impact on deer populations was minor in 2018, it can be locally severe especially in areas where the disease is relatively new or occurs infrequently. The QDMA recommends hunters who experience significant losses closely monitor population indicators to determine if reducing the local antlerless harvest is necessary; and, if any hunter identifies a sick or malnourished deer, to please report it immediately to your state/provincial agency or to SCWDS.

TRENDS IN NUMBER OF DEER-VEHICLE ACCIDENTS (DVA)

Many areas within the whitetail's range have abundant deer herds. As amazing as whitetails are, they can unfortunately cause damage to forests, agricultural crops, landscaping and especially to vehicles. State Farm Insurance provides estimates on the number of annual claims involving accidents with deer, elk and moose. The vast majority of these involve whitetails, and the highest number of accidents (1.34 million) in the last decade was reported in 2016-17.

So, we compared the number of accidents in the most recent year of data (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018) to that of six and 15 years prior to assess any long-term trends that may be apparent. State Farm did not provide data for any provinces, so our analysis is limited to the continental U.S. The following State Farm data is a conservative estimate as it is based on comprehensive and collision claims only and does not include claims involving policy holders with only liability insurance. However, the trends in the data are what are truly valuable.

From July 2017 to June 2018 there were 1,222,936 claims in the three main whitetail regions, and 1.33 million in the entire U.S. This latest statistic was eight



percent higher than 2011-12 and 32 percent higher than 2002-03. Much of this increase was in the Southeast (72 percent) and the West (45 percent). The Northeast also increased 24 percent from 2002-03 to 2017-18, followed by the Midwest (14 percent). Two of 11 (18 percent) states in the Southeast more than doubled the number of claims over those 15 years. A look at the greatest trend increases per region shows that Oklahoma's claims increased 139 percent, Massachusetts' claims increased 126 percent, and Idaho, North Carolina and Mississippi's increased 111 percent. There were only five states (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, North Dakota and West Virginia) with fewer claims in 2017-18 than 2002-03, and most were fluctuating back to normal following outlying levels in 2011-12.

Numerically, Pennsylvania led the nation with 141,777 claims. Michigan was next with 87,959 and New York was third with 72,314. North Carolina led the Southeast with 64,200 claims. Obviously some states have more deer-vehicle accidents due to their size, number of road miles and human population. Thus, a good way to assess this data is to compare it to the number taken during the deer season, since that is the primary source of mortality for deer and the one we have the most control over as managers when manipulating population size. Ideally the number hit by vehicles would be a small percentage of the number taken by hunters. In the Southeast, the number hit during 2017-18

was 14 percent of the 2017 deer harvest. Thus, approximately one deer was hit on the road for every eight taken by hunters. This seems high, but it is far worse in the Midwest (22 percent), Northeast (36 percent) and West (39 percent). Motorists in the Northeast and West hit nearly four deer for every 10 taken by hunters, and nationally the three worst offenders were Connecticut (87 percent), California and Massachusetts (81 percent)! Talk about a waste of the resource and a personal safety factor for drivers and their passengers in those states. Across the U.S. motorists hit over 1.33 million deer in 2017-18; that's 22 percent of the deer harvest. It would be far better to take more deer during the season and fewer on our roads. Texas and Louisiana led the nation with fewest accidents at only seven and eight percent of the hunter harvest.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The majority of deer-vehicle accidents occur during the spring (fawning) and fall (breeding). The best techniques for reducing deer-vehicle accidents are to balance deer herds with the habitat and make motorists aware of high-risk time periods and areas. The QDMA recommends private, state and federal deer managers use regulated hunting to manage deer herds at levels that are in balance with the habitat. Balanced populations reduce the number of animals available for accidents, and knowledgeable motorists can drive more defensively.

Top States

With Deer-Vehicle Accidents

State	2017-18 Accidents
Pennsylvania	141,777
Michigan	87,959
New York	72,314
North Carolina	64,200
Texas	60,857

Top States

With Deer-Vehicle Accidents per Road Mile

State	Per Road Mile
Pennsylvania	0.57
Maryland	0.43
Delaware	0.39
Virginia	0.37
Michigan	0.34

ESTIMATED INDUSTRY CLAIMS COUNTS

State	2002-03	2011-12	2017-18	% Change 2012-18	% Change 2003-18	2017 Total Harvest	DVA Percentage of 2017 Harvest	*DVA/ Road Mile
Alabama	19,753	26,050	28,966	11	47	*	*	0.14
Arkansas	13,751	20,281	22,531	11	64	205,310	11	0.11
Florida	10,939	14,082	17,653	25	61	97,027	18	0.07
Georgia	38,122	42,996	53,242	24	40	381,629	14	0.20
Louisiana	9,249	10,182	10,793	6	17	135,100	8	0.08
Mississippi	10,480	16,004	22,155	38	111	194,561	11	0.14
North Carolina	32,218	48,362	64,200	33	99	161,854	40	0.29
Oklahoma	6,347	12,056	15,169	26	139	107,914	14	0.06
South Carolina	20,534	26,408	38,292	45	86	185,286	21	0.27
Tennessee	16,873	24,098	30,128	25	79	144,005	21	0.15
Texas	33,072	45,418	60,857	34	84	918,009	7	0.09
Southeast Total/Average	211,338	285,937	363,986	27	72	2,530,695	14	0.13
Connecticut	7,955	9,800	9,930	1	25	11,399	87	0.22
Delaware	3,055	4,963	5,455	10	79	15,304	36	0.39
Maine	4,671	4,924	7,581	54	62	27,233	28	0.16
Maryland	26,169	34,112	30,933	-9	18	86,542	36	0.43
Massachusetts	4,750	8,750	10,750	23	126	13,305	81	0.14
New Hampshire	2,973	3,705	4,529	22	52	12,309	37	0.14
New Jersey	22,574	31,192	26,859	-14	19	48,545	55	0.31
New York	65,293	80,262	72,314	-10	11	203,427	36	0.30
Pennsylvania	111,142	115,571	141,777	23	28	367,159	39	0.57
Rhode Island	750	2,000	1,400	-30	87	1,884	74	0.11
Vermont	2,310	2,848	3,205	13	39	15,984	20	0.11
Virginia	41,072	52,369	59,610	14	45	190,623	31	0.37
West Virginia	28,802	30,203	25,176	-17	-13	108,142	23	0.32
Northeast Total/Average	321,516	380,699	399,519	5	24	1,101,856	36	0.35
Illinois	46,361	51,627	42,618	-17	-8	147,695	29	0.14
Indiana	31,444	34,000	31,015	-9	-1	113,595	27	0.15
Iowa	28,292	30,117	30,684	2	8	105,578	29	0.13
Kansas	8,715	15,887	15,640	-2	79	77,674	20	0.05
Kentucky	16,969	22,650	28,274	25	67	136,018	21	0.17
Michigan	92,134	97,856	87,959	-10	-5	377,365	23	0.34
Minnesota	28,547	41,165	43,689	6	53	197,768	22	0.15
Missouri	28,158	36,592	38,603	5	37	284,170	14	0.14
Nebraska	7,782	12,707	9,412	-26	21	46,845	20	0.05
North Dakota	6,229	4,586	5,402	18	-13	36,101	15	0.03
Ohio	54,459	67,699	59,396	-12	9	186,247	32	0.23
South Dakota	7,031	8,863	8,304	-6	18	44,627	19	0.05
Wisconsin	47,519	52,525	58,435	11	23	320,039	18	0.25
Midwest Total/Average	403,640	476,274	459,431	-4	14	2,073,722	22	0.15
3-Region Total/Average	936,494	1,142,910	1,222,936	7	31	5,706,273	21	0.18
Arizona	2,410	2,681	4,738	77	97	9,522	50	0.03
California	21,286	25,278	23,280	-8	9	28,593	81	0.06
Colorado	9,691	11,485	14,659	28	51	37,761	39	0.08
Idaho	3,556	4,602	7,066	54	99	26,502	27	0.07
Montana	7,184	9,576	14,098	47	96	48,955	29	0.09
Nevada	973	1,184	1,721	45	77	4,150	41	0.02
New Mexico	1,897	2,474	3,358	36	77	11,316	30	0.02
Oregon	10,101	9,159	11,138	22	10	29,068	38	0.08
Utah	4,852	6,062	8,202	35	69	33,563	24	0.08
Washington	9,589	10,700	14,268	33	49	26,537	54	0.08
Wyoming	2,740	3,716	4,812	29	76	17,956	27	0.08
West Total/Average	74,279	86,917	107,340	23	45	273,923	39	0.06
U.S. Total/Average	1,010,773	1,229,827	1,330,276	8	32	5,980,196	22	0.15

*DVA means Deer-Vehicle Accidents

BOWHUNTER NUMBERS, LIGHTED NOCKS AND EXPANDABLE BROADHEADS

Bowhunting opportunity and harvest has dramatically increased during the past two decades. In 2002, only 15 percent of the total deer harvest was taken with archery equipment, and that increased to 23 percent in 2017 (see page 12); amazingly, New Jersey archers take nearly 60 percent of the total deer harvest. There has also been tremendous advancement in archery products and gear including crossbows, specialized sights and more.

Due to this increased popularity in

archery hunting we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies and asked for their number of bowhunters and whether lighted nocks and expandable broadheads were permitted. Thirty-four states provided their number of archers, and the total was just shy of 3 million. Seven states responded but were unable to provide their number of bowhunters, and the remaining seven states did not respond to our survey.

The Midwest has the most archers, but the Northeast has the most archers per

square mile (PSM). In fact, the Northeast has nearly twice as many archers PSM as the Midwest, three to four times as many PSM as the Southeast, and nearly 20 times as many PSM as the West! Pennsylvania leads all states with total number and number PSM.

Lighted nocks come in a range of models and colors and are used by bowhunters throughout (most of) the whitetail's range. Lighted nocks make for easier retrieval of arrows, more accurate shot placement esti-



NUMBER OF BOWHUNTERS

State/Province	#Bowhunters Total	#Bowhunters PSM	Lighted Nocks (y/n)	Exp. Broadheads (y/n)
Alabama	*	*	y	y
Arkansas	*	*	y	y
Florida	16,573	0.3	y	y
Georgia	152,327	2.6	y	y
Louisiana	40,300	0.9	y	y
Mississippi	52,212	1.1	y	y
North Carolina	*	*	n	y
Oklahoma	97,837	1.4	y	y
South Carolina	46,943	1.6	y	y
Tennessee	*	*	y	y
Texas	219,032	0.8	y	y
Southeast Total/Avg	625,224	1.1	10/11	11/11
Connecticut	*	*	y	y
Delaware	2,128	1.1	y	y
Maine	14,500	0.5	y	y
Maryland	34,000	3.5	y	y
Massachusetts	30,000	3.8	y	y
New Hampshire	19,584	2.2	y	y
New Jersey	43,387	5.9	y	y
New York	231,100	4.9	y	y
Pennsylvania	339,600	7.6	y	y
Rhode Island	*	*	y	y
Vermont	25,400	2.7	y	y
Virginia	60,245	1.5	y	y
West Virginia	72,000	3.0	y	y
Northeast Total/Avg	871,944	3.8	13/13	13/13
Illinois	*	*	y	y
Indiana	76,000	2.1	y	y
Iowa	59,430	1.1	y	y
Kansas	57,919	0.7	y	y
Kentucky	*	*	y	y
Michigan	311,000	5.5	y	y
Minnesota	103,852	1.3	y	y
Missouri	222,717	3.2	y	y
Nebraska	16,998	0.2	y	y
North Dakota	28,000	0.4	some	y
Ohio	185,000	4.5	y	y
South Dakota	23,000	0.3	y	y
Wisconsin	246,211	4.5	y	y
Midwest Total/Avg	1,330,127	1.9	13/13	13/13
Arizona	16,494	0.1	y	y
California	*	*	y	y
Colorado	59,732	0.6	y	y
Idaho	*	*	n	n
Montana	*	*	y	y
Nevada	*	*	y	y
New Mexico	7,383	0.1	y	y
Oregon	*	*	y	n
Utah	15,000	0.2	y	y
Washington	*	*	y	y
Wyoming	21,000	0.2	y	y
West Total/Avg	119,609	0.2	10/11	9/11
U.S. Total/Avg	2,946,904	1.5	46/48	46/48
Alberta	22,000	0.1	y	y
British Columbia	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	8	0.0	y	y
Nova Scotia	*	*	*	*
Ontario	35,533	0.1	y	y
Quebec	*	*	y	y
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*
Canada Total/Avg	57,541	0.1	4/4	4/4

*Data not provided/available
PSM means per square mile

mates, and great video footage. Forty-six of 48 states (96 percent) allow the use of lighted nocks. Idaho and North Carolina are the only states that do not permit them. In Canada, all four provinces that responded to our survey allow them.

Expandable or mechanical broadheads receive equal promotion today. These broadheads are more compact, are touted to fly more similar to field points, and expand upon contact with the animal. Many archers continue using fixed blade broadheads, but 46 of 48 states (96 percent) allow the use of expandable broadheads. Idaho and Oregon are the only states to outlaw them. In Canada, all four provinces that responded to our survey permit their use.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Some hunters welcome these hunting accessories while others prefer more traditional gear. In the end 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. As these types of technologies advance further, we will evaluate them on a case-by-case basis, but will always fight for standards and regulations that ensure fair-chase hunting.

Top States With Highest Number of Bowhunters

State	2017 Number
Pennsylvania	339,600
Michigan	311,000
Wisconsin	246,211
New York	231,100
Missouri	222,717

Top States of Bowhunters Per Square Mile (PSM)

State	Bowhunters PSM
Pennsylvania	7.6
New Jersey	5.9
Michigan	5.5
New York	4.9
Ohio	4.5
Wisconsin	4.5

SUCCESSFUL HUNTERS



QDMA's Matt Ross with two does he harvested during a successful November bowhunt in New York.

Which region and state have the most successful hunters? In 2017, the Southeast took top honors with South Carolina leading the way. We determined this by surveying every state and provincial wildlife agency on the percentage of hunters who harvested at least one deer and the percentage who harvested two or more deer during the 2017 hunting season. We had similar data from 2011 and were able to compare changes across the years.

In the U.S., an average of 48 percent of hunters successfully harvested at least one deer in 2011, and that dropped to 41 percent in 2017. The Southeast led the country with

55 percent of hunters successfully taking at least one deer. Half of those hunters (27 percent) took at least one more deer during the season. Both of those statistics were down slightly from 2011.

The Midwest was next with 42 percent of its hunters taking a deer, followed by the West (36 percent) and Northeast (33 percent). The Midwest success rate was unchanged from 2011 while the Northeast's dropped 10 percent. This was driven by large declines in New Jersey and Virginia. Pennsylvania hunters experienced much more success in 2017. In the Midwest, Indiana and Iowa had big declines from 2011 to 2017, while Michigan

and Ohio both increased five percent. In Canada the success rate was similar in 2011 and 2017.

The Southeast also led the country with hunters shooting two or more deer (27 percent), followed by the Northeast (14 percent), Midwest (11 percent) and West (10 percent). An important note about the West though is Arizona only allows one antlered deer and no antlerless deer per year, and New Mexico only allows one deer per year. Thus, this statistic provides a better comparison among the other regions. In Canada very few hunters take more than one deer per year, while in contrast nearly half (47 percent) of

Top States

With Highest Percentage
of Successful Hunters

State	2017 Percentage
South Carolina	69
Mississippi	63
North Dakota	61
Arkansas	60
Virginia	60

Top States

With Lowest Percentage
of Successful Hunters

State	2017 Percentage
Arizona	12
Maine	13
Massachusetts	19
New Hampshire	19
Vermont	20

Delaware's hunters killed two or more deer in 2017.

Multiple deer bag limits are the norm today in many, but not all states. For example, many hunters in Massachusetts do not have the opportunity to take an antlerless deer. Conversely, some states allow an unlimited number of antlerless deer to be taken. Some hunters (and non-hunters) perceive this as assuring an overharvest of deer. However, the reality is a small percentage of hunters actually fill all of their tags. For example, a license in Georgia allows two bucks and 10 antlerless deer, but nearly half of Georgia's hunters do not harvest a single whitetail.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

QDMA recommends balancing deer herds with the available habitat, and this requires harvesting the biologically appropriate number of antlerless deer annually. The appropriate number is determined pre-season using the best available data, and obtaining the target harvest is achieved using the combination of hunter numbers, access, seasons and bag limits. Bag limits by themselves do not make or break a management program, rather they are one piece of a much larger program that can be manipulated to allow for success.

PERCENTAGE OF HUNTERS WHO HARVESTED 1 OR MORE DEER

State/Province	Shot at Least 1 Deer		Shot More Than 1 Deer	
	2011	2017	2011	2017
Alabama	*	*	*	*
Arkansas	*	60	*	30
Florida	*	57	*	24
Georgia	55	51	35	27
Louisiana	41	39	16	17
Mississippi	65	63	*	*
North Carolina	49	50	26	24
Oklahoma	46	53	17	22
South Carolina	70	69	49	42
Tennessee	83	*	36	*
Texas	58	*	*	*
Southeast Average	58	55	30	27
Connecticut	*	*	*	*
Delaware	50	53	*	47
Maine	*	13	*	<1
Maryland	57	50	32	24
Massachusetts	20	19	5	5
New Hampshire	15	19	2	3
New Jersey	63	31	41	14
New York	*	27	*	6
Pennsylvania	26	34	8	11
Rhode Island	*	*	*	*
Vermont	30	20	14	3
Virginia	80	60	26	21
West Virginia	*	32	*	17
Northeast Average	43	33	19	14
Illinois	43	*	15	*
Indiana	56	35	26	10
Iowa	43	30	14	12
Kansas	*	53	*	14
Kentucky	*	30	*	7
Michigan	45	50	14	15
Minnesota	33	37	3	3
Missouri	40	42	11	11
Nebraska	*	*	*	*
North Dakota	*	61	*	20
Ohio	35	40	10	11
South Dakota	*	*	*	*
Wisconsin	39	37	11	10
Midwest Average	42	42	13	11
Arizona	*	12	*	*
California	*	*	*	*
Colorado	*	*	*	*
Idaho	*	44	*	*
Montana	*	*	*	*
Nevada	*	*	*	*
New Mexico	*	35	*	*
Oregon	*	*	*	*
Utah	*	*	*	*
Washington	*	*	*	*
Wyoming	*	54	*	10
West Average	*	36	*	10
U.S. Average	48	41	21	15
Alberta	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	*	14	*	0
Nova Scotia	25	*	*	*
Ontario	*	36	*	2
Quebec	29	34	3	*
Saskatchewan	*	59	*	0
Canada Average	21	36	3	<1

*Data not provided/available

YOUTH AND ADULT APPRENTICE HUNTING LICENSES



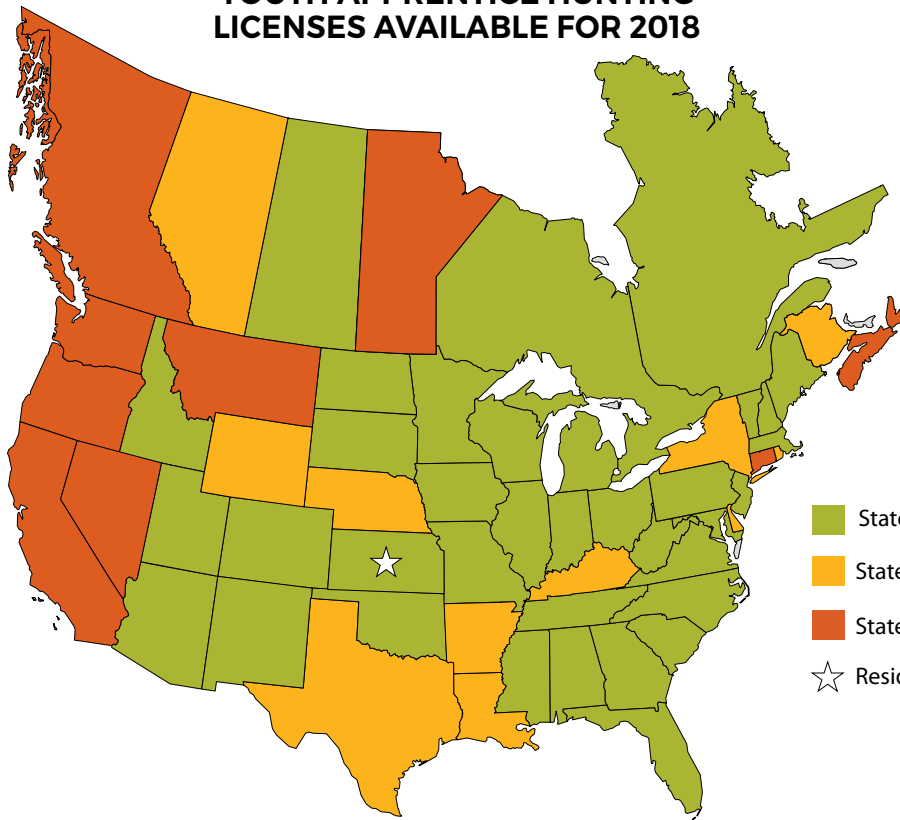
Alexa Crump with her first deer, taken at QDMA's 2018 National Youth Hunt in Georgia.

Hunter numbers are at the lowest level in decades and declining. This decline is expected to accelerate in the future as large numbers of Baby Boomers cease hunting. With deer hunters being the largest component of the hunter population, QDMA has the potential to play a significant role in national hunter recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) efforts; thus, we are investing a lot into R3, including prioritizing these efforts in QDMA's 5-year Mission Goals (see page 42).

Hunter loss has been a major issue for years, and it is the primary reason Families Afield was launched in 2004. Since then numerous states have changed laws and regulations to create additional hunting opportunities for youth, and in doing so sold over one million apprentice licenses in the first decade. However, new insights in the R3 movement have shown significant obstacles to focusing on youth alone, and many agency and industry experts now think equal focus should be put into adult apprentice programs. To gain a better understanding of what states offer these opportunities we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies and asked whether they had an apprentice hunting program for our 2015 *Whitetail Report*; we also asked if there were minimum ages to participate. More recently, and as a comparison to the previous data, we surveyed agencies again and asked if they offered an apprentice hunting license for youth and/or adult hunters.

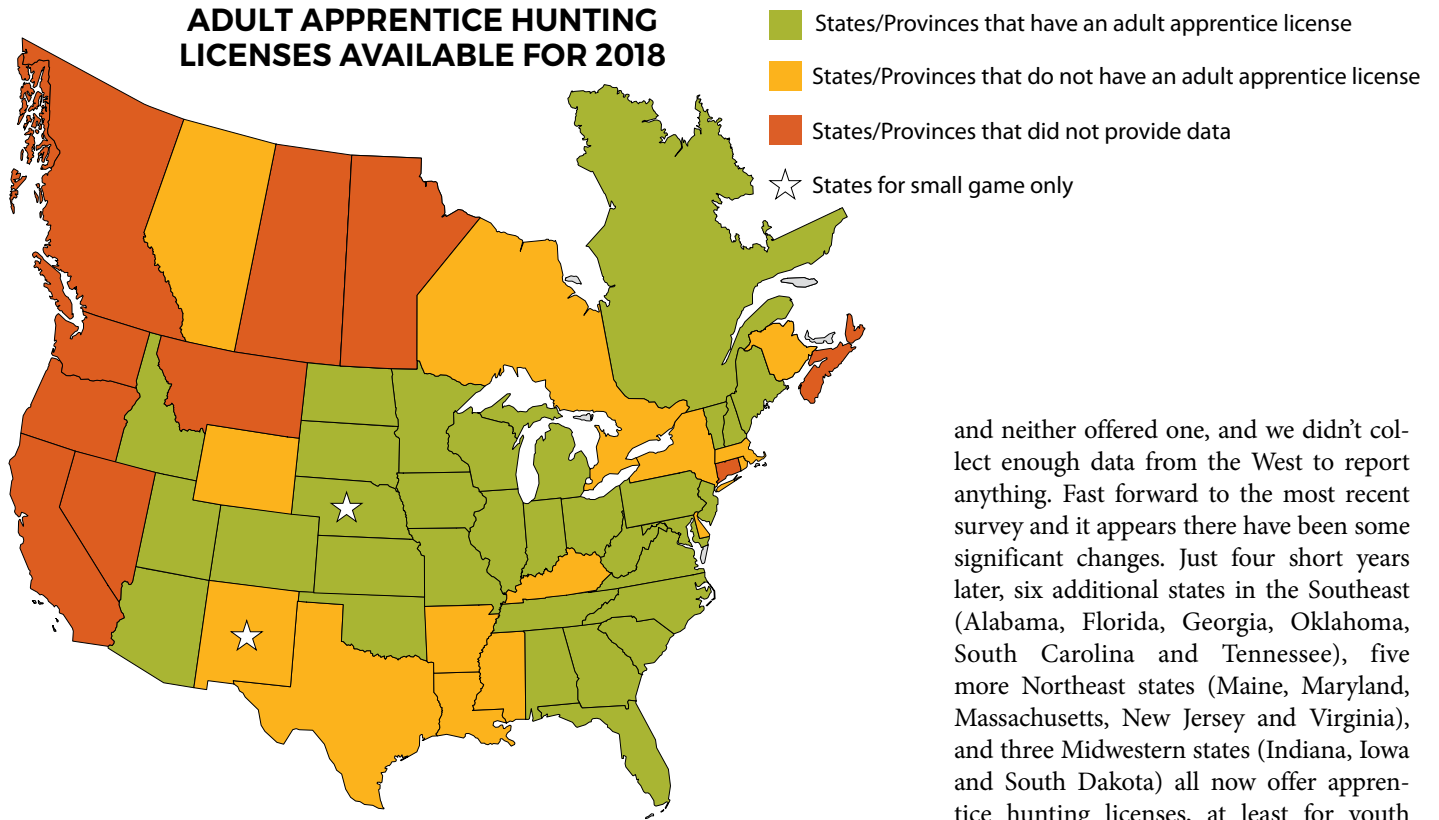
Fourteen of 35 states (40 percent) had an apprentice program in 2014. Eight of 13 states (62 percent) in the Midwest, 4 of 12 states (25 percent) in the Northeast, and only 2 of 10 states (20 percent) in the Southeast had an apprentice program. Only two provinces responded to that survey

YOUTH APPRENTICE HUNTING LICENSES AVAILABLE FOR 2018



- States/Provinces that have a youth apprentice
- States/Provinces that do not have a youth apprentice
- States/Provinces that did not provide data
- ☆ Residents under 16 do not need license

ADULT APPRENTICE HUNTING LICENSES AVAILABLE FOR 2018



and neither offered one, and we didn't collect enough data from the West to report anything. Fast forward to the most recent survey and it appears there have been some significant changes. Just four short years later, six additional states in the Southeast (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Tennessee), five more Northeast states (Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Virginia), and three Midwestern states (Indiana, Iowa and South Dakota) all now offer apprentice hunting licenses, at least for youth hunters. In Canada, Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan offer youth apprentice licenses and Quebec also offers adult apprentice licenses. Clearly state and provincial agencies are beginning to break down some of the previous obstacles for both youth and adults to explore hunting as a new activity by allowing them to try it through an apprentice license.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The QDMA is a big supporter of youth and adult hunting apprentice licenses and programs. We have youth hunting kits for our QDMA Branches to use, a free mentored hunting guide available at QDMA.com, a #FirstDeer campaign, QDMA's Share Your Hunt™ program, Field to Fork program, a free e-Book for new and beginning hunters, and other efforts that encourage our general membership and other hunters to mentor youths and interested adults. As such, we encourage all hunters to take advantage of these programs to help improve hunter recruitment and retention nationally. One of QDMA's goals is to mentor one million new or beginning hunters by 2023, and with your help we're confident we can hit that goal.



Field to Fork participant Evan Greller (left) and QDMA Hunting Heritage Programs Manager Hank Forester with Greller's first deer.

ONLINE HUNTING LICENSE SALES AND PERCENT NON-RESIDENTS



Nearly everyone has a computer, tablet or smartphone today, and conducting business “online” is now necessary for most companies to survive. State and provincial agencies are no exception, so we surveyed them to determine whether they offered an online option for permit/license sales. We

also asked what percentage of their 2017 license sales went to non-residents, because many hunters travel out of state or province to hunt each year, pursuing different game, testing their skill within a different landscape or simply looking for adventure.

ONLINE SALES

Forty of 42 states (95 percent) and four of five provinces (80 percent) offered online sales. The Southeast and the Midwest were the most tech-savvy as all states offered online permit/license sales. The Northeast followed with 11 of 12 states (92 percent) offering online sales; only New Jersey did not provide any online purchase options. The West was close as five of six states (83 percent) offered online license sales as well. We asked this same question for our 2014 *Whitetail Report*, and since that survey both Rhode

Island and the province of New Brunswick in Canada have each gone online.

NON-RESIDENT HUNTERS

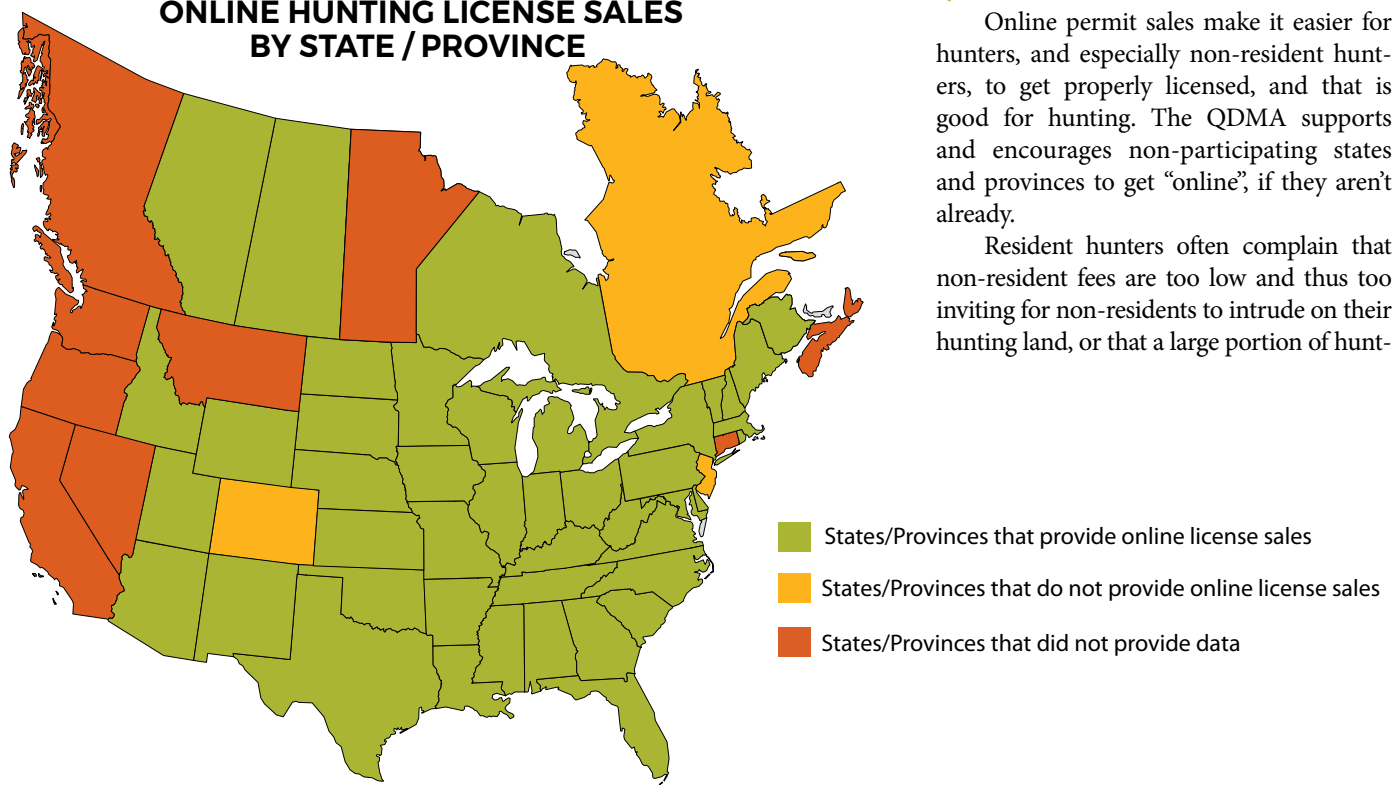
In 2017, 13 percent of U.S. national hunting license sales went to non-residents. These ranged from eight percent in the Midwest to 19 percent in the West; both the Northeast and the Southeast realized 11 percent of license sales going to non-residents that year. Nine of 39 states (23 percent) and all four of the provinces that provided data were under 5 percent non-resident sales. In fact, only seven states listed a value greater than 15 percent of total license sales going to non-residents, so for most agencies non-resident make up a pretty small proportion of overall license buyers. Two of the top three states were found in the West with Colorado (35 percent) and Wyoming (30 percent) taking first and second place, and Arkansas (29 percent) coming in third. Although West Virginia didn't provide a statistic, they commented that 43 percent of hunting license dollars came from non-residents in 2017.

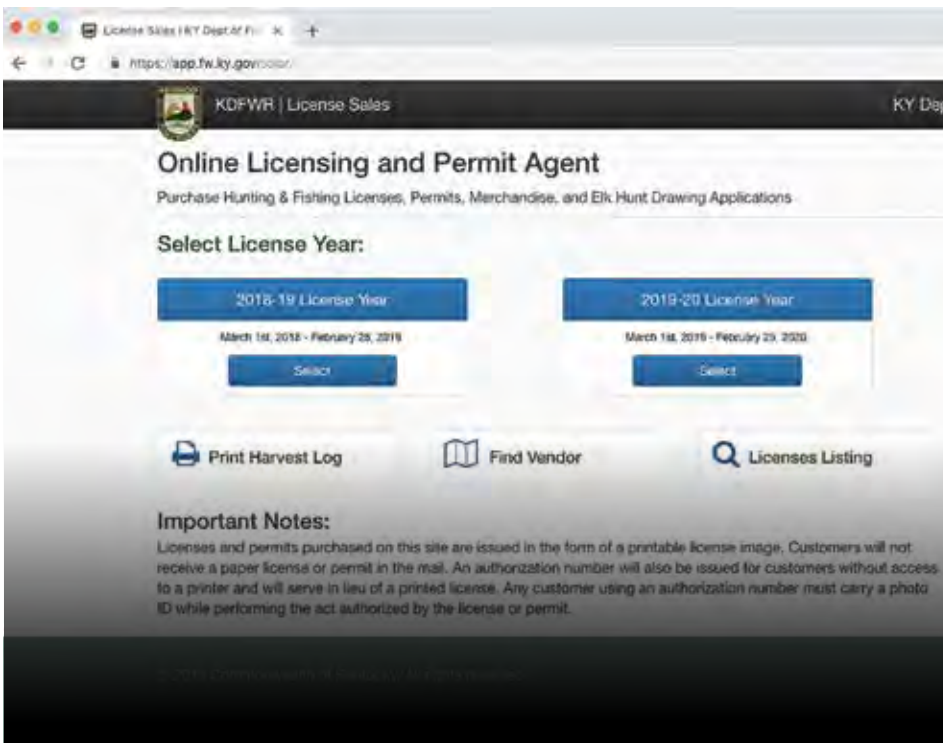
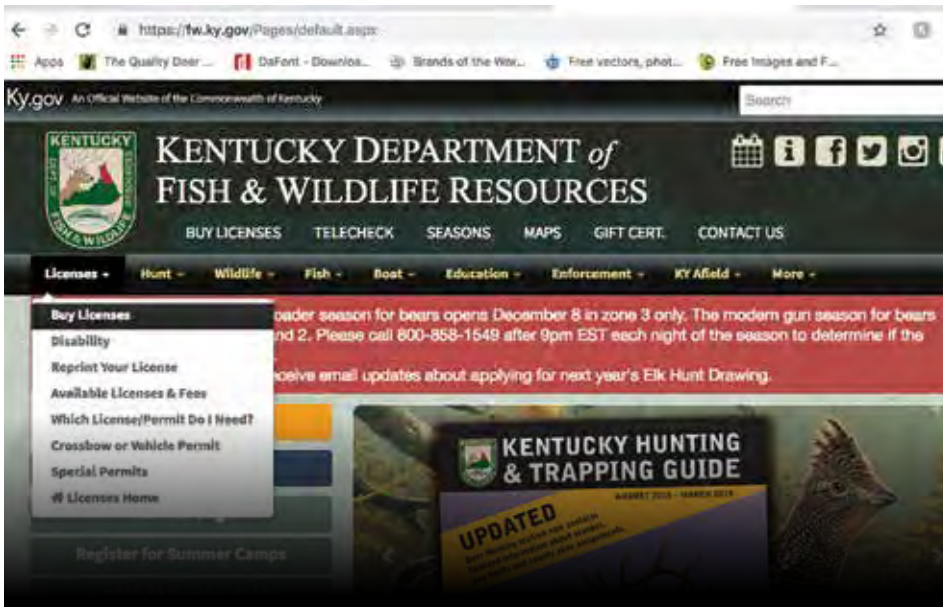
QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Online permit sales make it easier for hunters, and especially non-resident hunters, to get properly licensed, and that is good for hunting. The QDMA supports and encourages non-participating states and provinces to get “online”, if they aren't already.

Resident hunters often complain that non-resident fees are too low and thus too inviting for non-residents to intrude on their hunting land, or that a large portion of hunt-

ONLINE HUNTING LICENSE SALES BY STATE / PROVINCE





ers in the woods are from other states or provinces. Non-resident hunters often complain their fees are too high and thus uninviting for them to pump dollars into rural economies. Regardless of which side of this discussion you sit on, realize most state agencies are funded primarily by license revenues. Wildlife is a public resource to be enjoyed by all, but unfortunately not funded by all. Hunters are the backbone of wildlife management programs and they (we) fund the lion's share of our wildlife agency budgets.

**Top States
With Highest Percentage
of Non-Resident License Sales**

State	2017 Percentage
Colorado	35
Wyoming	30
Arkansas	29
Kansas	27
Mississippi	18
Rhode Island	18

**PERCENTAGE OF
NON-RESIDENT HUNTERS**

State/Province	2017
Alabama	13
Arkansas	29
Florida	2
Georgia	12
Louisiana	4
Mississippi	18
North Carolina	6
Oklahoma	13
South Carolina	10
Tennessee	*
Texas	3
Southeast Average	11
Connecticut	*
Delaware	12
Maine	12
Maryland	17
Massachusetts	4
New Hampshire	14
New Jersey	7
New York	7
Pennsylvania	6
Rhode Island	18
Vermont	13
Virginia	7
West Virginia	*
Northeast Average	11
Illinois	7
Indiana	7
Iowa	4
Kansas	27
Kentucky	9
Michigan	2
Minnesota	3
Missouri	3
Nebraska	13
North Dakota	1
Ohio	12
South Dakota	8
Wisconsin	6
Midwest Average	8
Arizona	*
California	*
Colorado	35
Idaho	13
Montana	*
Nevada	*
New Mexico	6
Oregon	*
Utah	10
Washington	*
Wyoming	30
West Average	19
U.S. Average	13
Alberta	4
British Columbia	*
Manitoba	*
New Brunswick	1
Nova Scotia	*
Ontario	2
Quebec	1
Saskatchewan	*
Canada Average	2

*State/province did not provide data

WILDLIFE, HABITAT AND HUNTER EFFORT SURVEYS

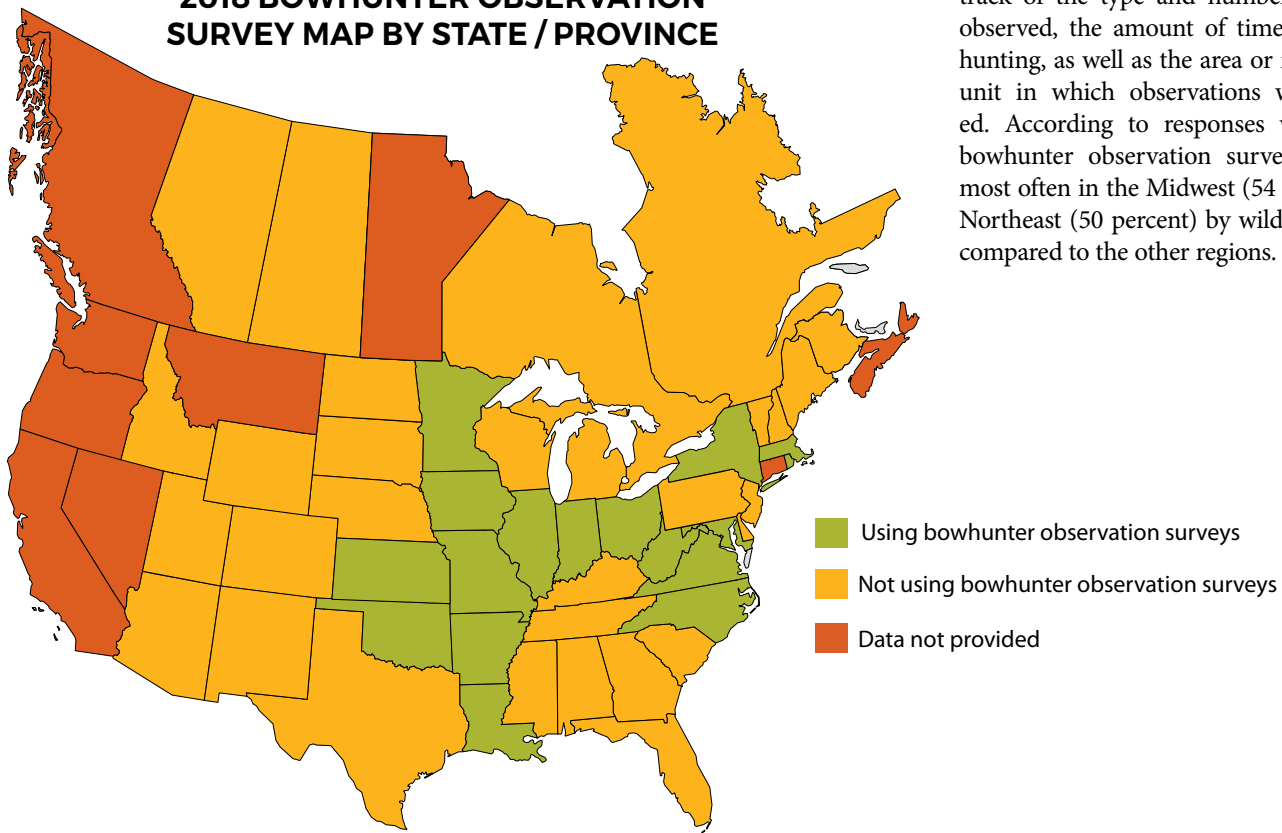


Annually, state and provincial agencies are tasked with estimating population size and health for numerous game species, including white-tailed deer, and prescribe a harvest goal for those species in every huntable management unit within their jurisdiction. The parameters used to set harvest goals vary widely (see 2018 *Whitetail Report*), and are influenced by both biological and cultural considerations. However, to help determine how many animals to remove, many agencies track year-to-year changes in herd size and habitat, and they do so through a variety of methods – including surveys collected by agency staff, hunters, and other volunteers. So, we surveyed each state and provincial agency and asked if they conducted bowhunter observation surveys, mast surveys or other hunter observation surveys on a regular basis.

BOWHUNTER OBSERVATION SURVEY

Bowhunters typically spend many hours in the field observing wildlife, and this group of hunters provides some of the best information on certain wildlife species that are difficult to monitor using other survey methods. Participating hunters keep track of the type and number of animals observed, the amount of time spent bowhunting, as well as the area or management unit in which observations were recorded. According to responses we received, bowhunter observation surveys are used most often in the Midwest (54 percent) and Northeast (50 percent) by wildlife agencies, compared to the other regions.

2018 BOWHUNTER OBSERVATION SURVEY MAP BY STATE / PROVINCE



MAST SURVEY

Many wildlife species are highly dependent upon mast crops produced by trees and shrubs, and factors in the animal's life history, like survival and fecundity, can be affected by mast availability. Wildlife biologists and managers are able to predict hunting prospects and population dynamics for black bear, squirrels, deer, turkey and other game and non-game species by using trends in mast quality and quantity. Mast surveys are used most often in the Northeast (67 percent), followed by the Southeast (45 percent), Midwest (31 percent), Canada (20 percent) and the West (16 percent).

OTHER HUNTER OBSERVATION SURVEYS

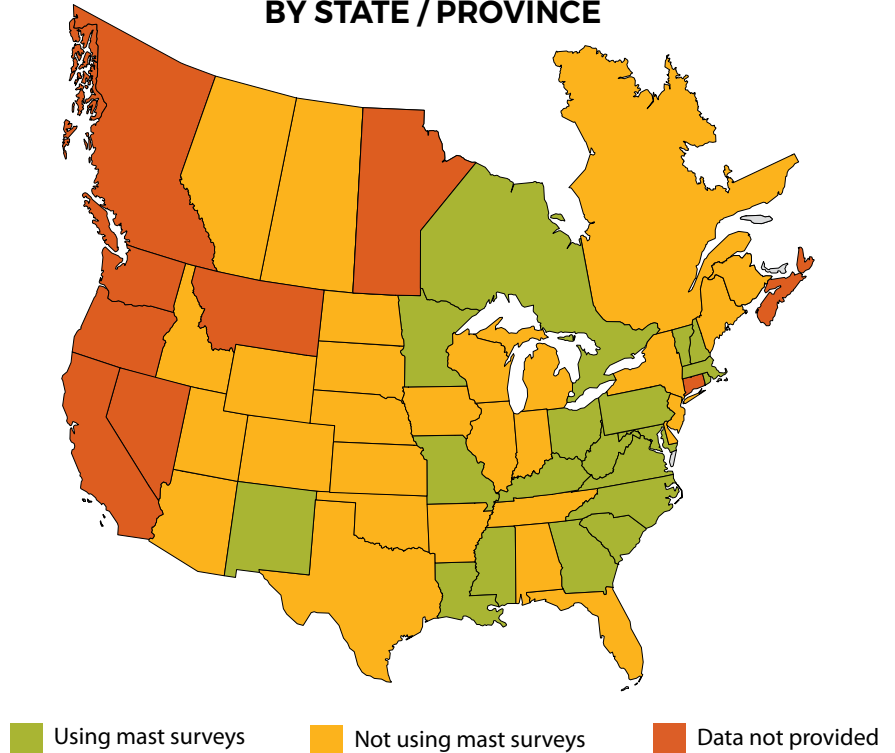
Other citizen-science survey methods exist for hunters and/or the public to collect, including data on birds, bees and bears (or other animals) observed, heard or documented (dead or alive). Also, several states and provinces now have enlisted the help of their constituents to record all kinds of information on habitat health and other environmental factors. This type of data can be collected through use of trail cameras, phone apps, or good ol' fashioned note-taking. Currently, Canadian agencies (60 percent) and the Northeast region utilize these other survey methods (67 percent) most often.

Notably, only five states (Massachusetts, Ohio, Rhode Island, Virginia and West Virginia) reported they conduct surveys in all three categories we asked about. Kudos to these agencies and their data collection efforts.

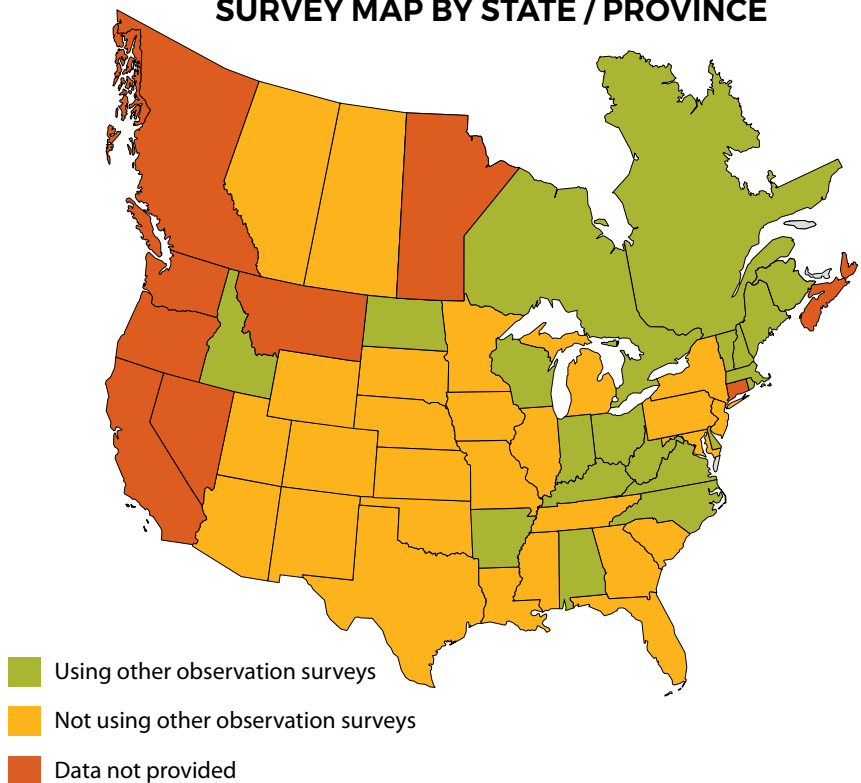
QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

QDMA is a strong proponent for public involvement in deer management as well as using long-term trends in localized units to help make management decisions. The most successful programs include local deer herd demographic data, combined with other local variables including weather, habitat productivity, and more. Regarding involving hunters in this process, we recommend states and provinces engage sportsmen and women at the highest level possible to forge strong relationships, offer transparency, provide maximum engagement and maintain open and effective lines of communication.

2018 MAST SURVEY MAP BY STATE / PROVINCE



2018 OTHER HUNTER OBSERVATION SURVEY MAP BY STATE / PROVINCE



AVERAGE NUMBER OF DEER HUNTER DAYS AFIELD

Around 10 million hunters pursue deer annually, and they spend nearly 168 million days afield doing so. Season lengths and bag limits, deer densities, hunter numbers, and other variables impact the average number of days hunters spend afield. QDMA surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies and determined the average number of days each deer hunter spends pursuing deer annually. We had similar data from 2016 and are able to provide state-by-state comparisons between years.

In 2016 hunters spent an average of 13 days afield in pursuit of deer. That statistic dropped to 12 days in 2018. This varied from three days in Indiana to 25 days annually in Mississippi. Regionally, the Southeast averages 19 days afield per deer hunter per year, followed by the Northeast (13 days), Midwest (10 days), and West (7 days). Notably, the Northeast, Southeast and West regions had similar values in 2016 and 2018, but the Midwest average dropped from 17 to 10 days afield annually. That's a 41 percent drop in two years, but it's partly resulting from Illinois reporting a large number in 2016 and no estimate in 2018. In Canada hunters averaged eight days per year.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The number of days spent afield annually can have a large impact on an agency's management programs and on its budget from the associated Pittman-Robertson funds obtained from specific hunting gear. More time afield equates to more needed

Top States With Highest Average Number of Days Afield Per Deer Hunter Per Year	
State	2018 Average
Mississippi	25
Florida	22
Georgia	21
Louisiana	21
Arkansas	20
Virginia	20

Top States With Fewest Average Number of Days Afield Per Deer Hunter Per Year	
State	2018 Average
Indiana	3
Nebraska	4
New Mexico	4
Colorado	5
South Dakota	5
Vermont	5

supplies which is good for the hunting industry and our wildlife management programs. More time afield also affords additional mentoring opportunities which is good for the future of hunting. The QDMA favors enhanced opportunities where wildlife populations can support them.



AVERAGE NUMBER OF DEER HUNTER DAYS AFIELD

State/Province	2016	2018
Alabama	*	*
Arkansas	16	20
Florida	22	22
Georgia	20	21
Louisiana	20	21
Mississippi	26	25
North Carolina	16	15
Oklahoma	19	18
South Carolina	16	19
Tennessee	*	*
Texas	10	12
Southeast Average	18	19
Connecticut	*	*
Delaware	*	13
Maine	4	8
Maryland	15	14
Massachusetts	13	16
New Hampshire	9	*
New Jersey	*	*
New York	*	18
Pennsylvania	11	10
Rhode Island	11	*
Vermont	10	5
Virginia	20	20
West Virginia	*	11
Northeast Average	12	13
Illinois	30	*
Indiana	*	3
Iowa	*	*
Kansas	19	11
Kentucky	14	*
Michigan	15	15
Minnesota	*	*
Missouri	5	8
Nebraska	*	4
North Dakota	*	*
Ohio	20	17
South Dakota	9	5
Wisconsin	22	18
Midwest Average	17	10
Arizona	5	8
California	*	*
Colorado	5	5
Idaho	6	6
Montana	*	*
Nevada	*	*
New Mexico	4	4
Oregon	*	*
Utah	5	10
Washington	6	*
Wyoming	8	7
West Average	6	7
U.S. Average	13	12
Alberta	*	11
British Columbia	*	*
Manitoba	*	*
New Brunswick	*	8
Nova Scotia	4	*
Ontario	*	6
Quebec	*	*
Saskatchewan	*	*
Canada Average	4	8

*Data not provided/available

DEER PROCESSORS

Considering that around six million whitetails are killed annually by deer hunters in the United States, it stands to reason that volume equates to a lot of healthy meals made with wild venison in kitchens from Savannah to Seattle. However, an increasing occurrence of chronic wasting disease (CWD) across the landscape has created a significant complication for hunters traveling with a whole deer after the harvest, both within and between states and provinces. Namely, in many cases they can't, and in some cases where they can the deer must be completely boned out. Hunters should always be aware of and abide by any carcass transport restriction policies where they live and/or hunt. One way to easily do that is to use a commercial processor. So, in this year's survey we asked the estimated number of deer processors in each state and province to create a baseline of what was available to hunters.

Georgia responded with the most (406), followed by Pennsylvania (400), Michigan (324) and Missouri (256). Unfortunately, many states, particularly in the West, and all provinces returned the survey with little information.

One reason for the lack of data may be that most wild game is not subject to mandatory United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspection under the Federal Meat Inspection Act and, therefore, products made entirely from wild game are not "meat" under those laws. USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) actually has the authority to provide voluntary inspection under the Agricultural Marketing Act, but inspected processors are required to provide assurance that all ingredients, including non-amenable animal tissues, are clean, sound, healthful, wholesome, and properly identified. Such assurance is generally not possible with an animal killed by a hunter and then transported to the establishment by the hunter; there isn't sufficient knowledge about the animal to conclude that the meat from it is not contaminated. Therefore, in most cases, hunter-killed wild game can only be harvested for personal consumption and may not be sold (see 2015 *Whitetail Report*). This lack of commerce potentially forces a lack of oversight.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Although some agencies closely track

NUMBER OF DEER PROCESSORS

State/Province	Number	Processors per 100 mi ²
Alabama	*	*
Arkansas	*	*
Florida	*	*
Georgia	406	0.71
Louisiana	*	*
Mississippi	*	*
North Carolina	75	0.15
Oklahoma	*	*
South Carolina	180	0.60
Tennessee	138	0.33
Texas	*	*
Southeast Total/Average	200	0.03
Connecticut	*	*
Delaware	15	0.77
Maine	*	*
Maryland	100	1.03
Massachusetts	<30	0.38
New Hampshire	*	*
New Jersey	*	*
New York	231	0.49
Pennsylvania	400	0.89
Rhode Island	<10	0.96
Vermont	*	*
Virginia	*	*
West Virginia	80	0.33
Northeast Total/Average	124	0.05
Illinois	*	*
Indiana	137	0.38
Iowa	148	0.26
Kansas	*	*
Kentucky	*	*
Michigan	324	0.57
Minnesota	*	*
Missouri	256	0.37
Nebraska	30	0.04
North Dakota	100	0.14
Ohio	*	*
South Dakota	*	*
Wisconsin	*	*
Midwest Total/Average	166	0.02
3-Region Total/Average	156	0.03

*Data not provided/available

the number of deer processors for the purposes of bio-checking (see 2012 *Whitetail Report*), CWD testing (See 2018 *Whitetail Report*) or other reasons, QDMA would like to see more states and provinces develop a better system to catalog operators within their boundaries. Most game processors are as interested in protecting the resource as hunters and/or wildlife managers are and can be used to further the agencies' management decisions and mission. More importantly, a better system to catalog processors would provide a helpful resource for hunters, especially in light of increasing travel restrictions on harvested deer.

Top States Deer Processors per 100 Square Miles

State	Processors
Maryland	1.03
Rhode Island	0.96
Pennsylvania	0.89
Delaware	0.77
Georgia	0.71

USE OF DEER/ELK URINE AND ELECTRONIC CALLS



Deer hunters spend a lot of time and money pursuing their hobby. According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation the average person spent \$2,363 on retail hunting purchases in 2016. Because of this effort, being successful is one obvious and understandable goal when heading afield, and some hunters want to use as many tools as possible to improve their success rate. There are many technologies available to hunters today intended to raise our advantage. In some cases, they may challenge the concept of fair-chase. Moreover,

just because a hunting-related product is advertised and/or available on store shelves does not necessarily mean their use is legal. Two such products include natural deer/elk urine products and electronic calls. Therefore, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to gain a better understanding of where natural urine and electronic calls are allowed.

NATURAL URINE PRODUCTS

Natural deer/elk urine has been an often-used and heavily touted accessory for hunters for decades. However, with the discovery of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in more and more areas, along with knowledge that one way it likely spreads is via deer urine, an increasing number of agencies are prohibiting its use each year. However, you can find these types of products pretty much anywhere, from mom-and-pop operations to big box stores, even in states/provinces that exclude their use.

Nationally 85 percent of U.S. states (41 of 48) currently allow natural deer urine,

with the Midwest (100 percent) being the least restrictive at 13 of 13 states. The most restrictive region is the West (73 percent, or 8 of 11 states), while some CWD-positive states only prohibit its use within restricted areas (see map). Four of five provinces that responded to our survey allow the use of natural deer/elk urine. If you follow CWD-related news and legislation, the list of locations that do not allow natural urine changes regularly, so check with your agency before buying some in the future to ensure you don't receive an unwanted visit from a conservation officer.

ELECTRONIC CALLS

For some, ethical boundaries appear a little more "out-of-focus" when it comes to the use of electronic deer/elk calls. These devices allow the operator to exactly mimic the sound of an animal via remote and amplified applications. Currently, the West is the most stingy with electronic deer/elk calls, as only one of five states (20 percent) allow it. Conversely, the Southeast is the most liberal in the U.S. as four of 11 states (36 percent) allow their use, and four of five provinces allow them in their jurisdiction. Twelve states (Alabama, Delaware, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Texas and Wyoming) and three provinces (New Brunswick, Quebec and Saskatchewan) allow both deer/elk electronic calls and natural deer urine.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

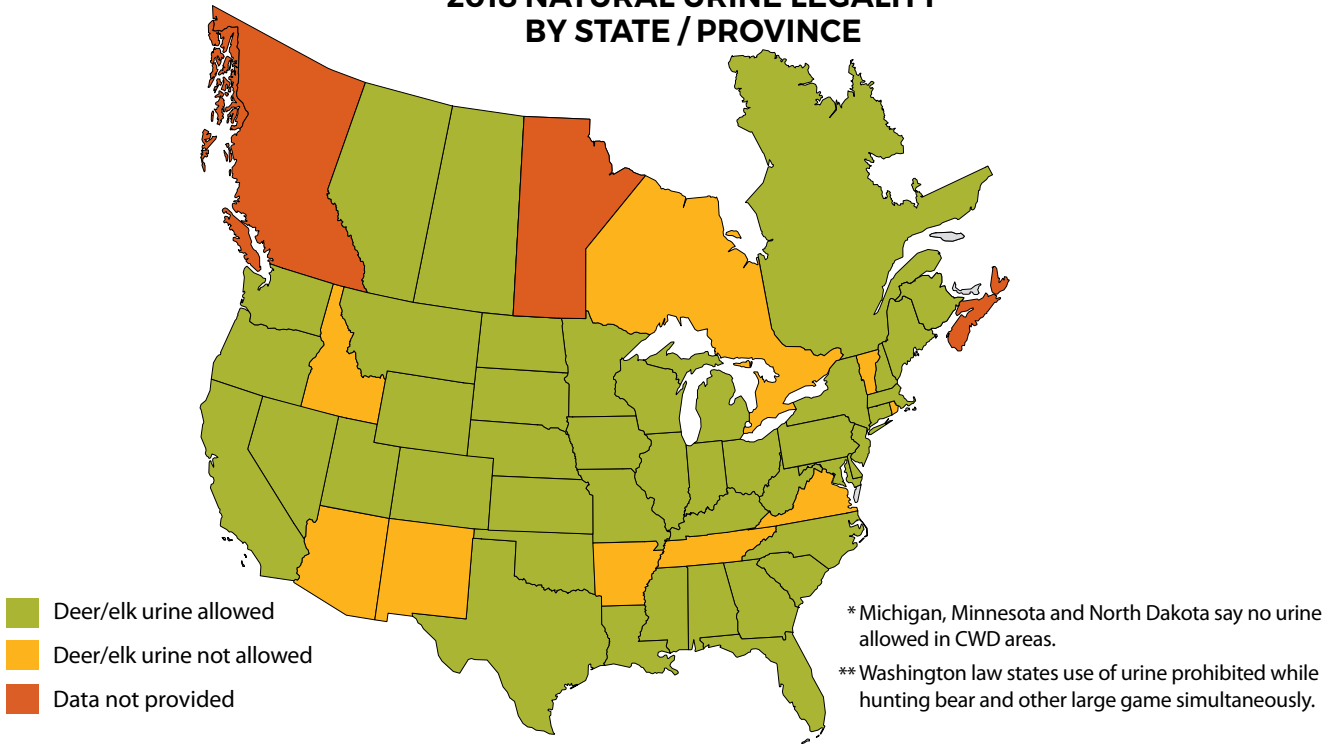
Some hunters welcome these forms of hunting accessories and embrace any gadget that increases their odds of success, while others feel it is ruining the experience and taking away from the skills that hunters once relied on to be successful. In the end QDMA supports pursuits that are ethical, sportsmanlike, lawful, and allow harvest of white-tailed deer in a manner that does not give the hunter an improper or unfair advantage. As these types of technologies advance further, we will evaluate them on a case-by-case basis. We will always fight for standards and regulations that ensure fair-chase hunting, and that are proven to limit the spread of diseases such as CWD.

States

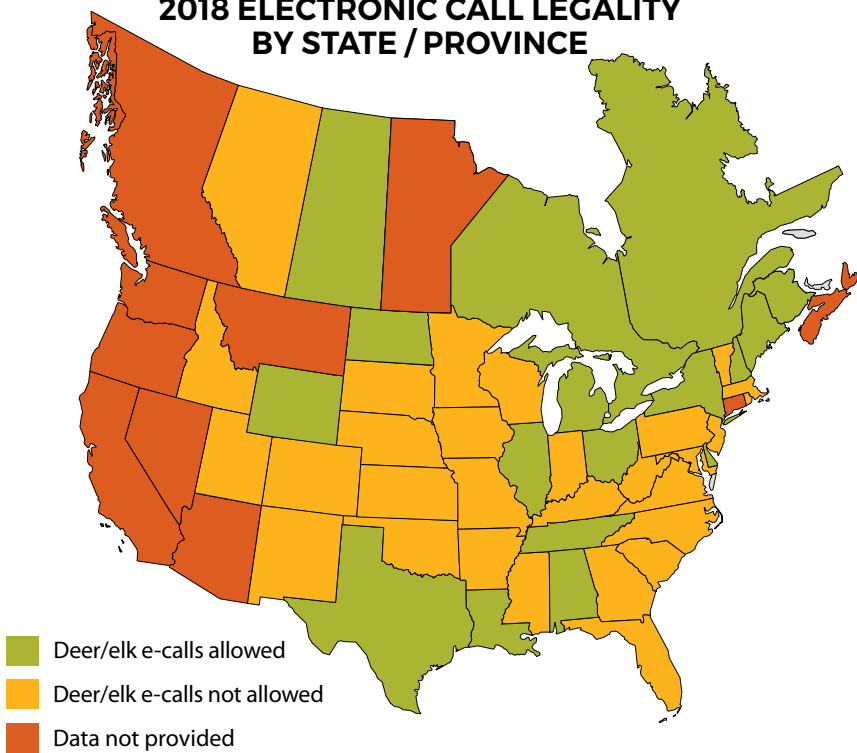
Where BOTH Natural Urine & Electronic Calls are Prohibited

Idaho
New Mexico
Rhode Island
Vermont
Virginia

2018 NATURAL URINE LEGALITY BY STATE / PROVINCE



2018 ELECTRONIC CALL LEGALITY BY STATE / PROVINCE



One option for hunters who enjoy using deer/elk urine while hunting is to reconsider use of natural deer urine products as research suggests a risk of CWD transmission, albeit very low. As an alter-

native, use synthetic deer urine products. If synthetics are unavailable and the legality of use remains open where you hunt, buy only products with the ATA blue check mark. This is the Archery Trade

Association's Deer Protection Program, which requires urine producers to adhere to more stringent measures intended to prevent the spread of CWD through infected urine.

TRACKING DOGS

QDMA members David (pictured) and Cindy Helmly trained their dog Savoy to recover deer on their Georgia hunting lease.

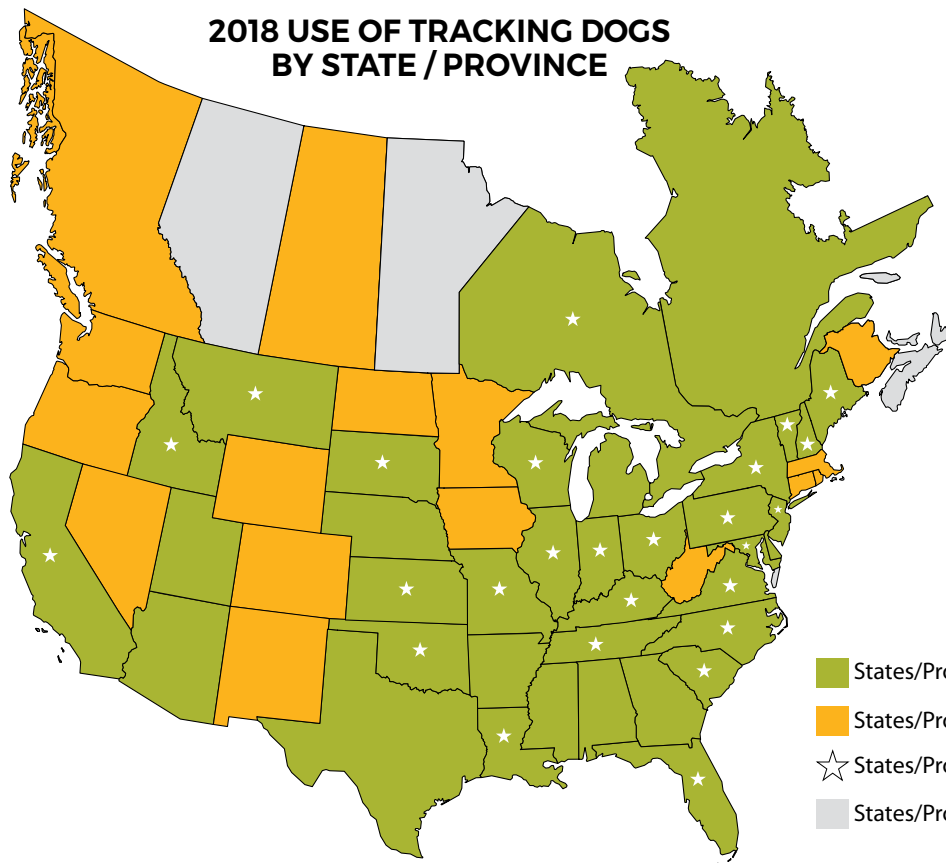


The inability to locate a wounded game animal is devastating to a hunter. Irrespective of skill level, most hunters will at some point in their hunting career be unable to find an animal they have wounded. Rain, terrain and several other factors can play a role in these unfortunate situations. Regardless of cause, hunters and policy makers have a moral and ethical responsibility to do everything in their power to make sure every wounded animal is recovered.

We surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to learn where tracking dogs are allowed to locate wounded game, and, if they are permitted, whether they had to be on a leash. Their use ranges from about half of the states in the West to all states in the Southeast. In total, 35 of 48 states (73 percent) allow tracking dogs, and 25 of those states (74 percent) require the dog to be on a leash in at least some situations. A few notes include South Carolina requires a leash in some areas but not others, tracking dogs are allowed in all of Texas except 10 counties, and Maine requires a permit to use a tracking dog.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Trained dogs can be extremely effective at locating wounded or dead game and thus can help reduce the rate that wounded animals are not recovered. Tracking dogs locate specific animals by following blood and scent of the wounded individual rather than haphazardly searching for other animals, and their use has received overwhelming support in many states. This common-sense measure has also helped improve hunting's public image by providing ethical hunters with another tool to demonstrate their dedication to and appreciation of the wildlife resource. QDMA supports their use and encourages all states and provinces to provide this opportunity to sportsmen and women.





the **WHITETAIL** Weekend

SAVE THE DATE

APRIL 12-13, 2019

THE WHITETAIL WEEKEND

QDMA is revamping the National Convention model to be revealed in April 2020 in Athens, GA!

Due to this change we invite you to join us for a special Whitetail Weekend at QDMA headquarters in April 2019.



Deer & Beer Welcome Social

Hands-on/Field Seminars

Classroom Sessions

Celebration Dinner

Sporting Clays Tournament

(Optional)



Cabela's

YETI



f i t For more information check out qdma.com/whitetailweekend

FAWN RECRUITMENT RATES



The fawn recruitment rate (FRR) is one of the most important measures of herd productivity, and it directly impacts the number of antlerless deer that can be harvested annually as well as the number of bucks you can realistically expect to have available for harvest. It also alerts managers to potential problems such as high fawn predation rates. The fawn recruitment rate is a measure of the number of fawns per adult doe alive in the fall pre-hunt population. Basically, this

index records the number of fawns that survive to approximately six months of age and expresses that number in relation to the number of adult does in the population. The fawn recruitment rate is lower than the number of fetuses per doe and the number of fawns born in the spring, since not all fetuses survive to become fawns and not all fawns survive until fall. Many hunters feel the fawn recruitment rate is higher than it actually is because they assume all adult does have twin fawns each year; many may give birth to twins but the actual recruitment rate is usually far less than two fawns per adult doe.

QDMA surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies in the U.S. and Canada and asked them to provide their estimated fawn recruitment rate for 2017. We conducted similar surveys in 2011 and 2014, so we already had state-by-state fawn recruitment rates for 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2014. Our new data allowed us to compare regional fawn recruitment rates and see if/how the average recruitment rates changed during the past 18 years. This analysis is especially

Top States With Highest Number of Fawns per Adult Doe	
State	2017 Number
Illinois	1.18
Kentucky	1.00
Missouri	0.94
Wisconsin	0.90
South Carolina	0.88

timely given recent predator population increases.

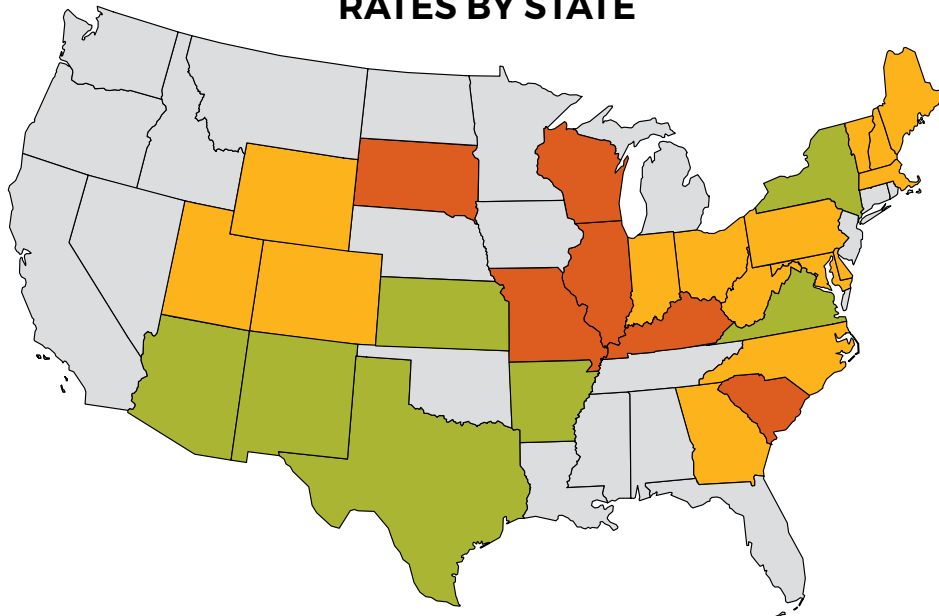
Nationally, the average fawn recruitment rate declined significantly from 2000 to 2005, dropped again from 2005 to 2010, and remained similar from 2010 to 2017. The Midwest recruited significantly more fawns per doe (0.81) than the Northeast (0.56) or Southeast (0.57 fawns per doe), but the national average (0.65) meant that on average it took three does to recruit two fawns in 2017!

Midwestern states had the highest fawn recruitment rate in the U.S. by averaging 0.81 fawns per adult doe in 2017. This was nearly identical to the region's 2010 and 2014 averages, and it ranged from 0.47 in Kansas to 1.18 in Illinois. Notably, Illinois and Kentucky were the only states in the country to average at least one fawn per adult doe. Interestingly, four of six states (67 percent) that provided data for 2014 and 2017 experienced reduced recruitment rates across the years. Wisconsin's large increase returned them to pre-2014 levels, while Illinois' FRR more than doubled from 2014. The Midwest's current fawn recruitment rate means, on average, three does will recruit approximately 2.5 fawns.

In the Northeast, the average fawn recruitment rate in 2017 was 0.56 fawns per doe, and this equaled the region's average in 2010 and 2014 but was lower than in 2005 and 2000. The rate ranged from 0.41 in New York to 0.73 fawns per doe in Vermont. Five of seven Northeastern states (71 percent) that provided data for 2014 and 2017 had reduced fawn recruitment rates in 2017. The Northeast's current fawn recruitment rate means, on average, it will take approximately two does to recruit one fawn.

In the Southeast, the average fawn

2017 FAWN RECRUITMENT RATES BY STATE



- States that recruit less than 0.5 fawns/doe
- States that recruit 0.5 to 0.75 fawns/doe
- States that recruit more than 0.75 fawns/doe
- States that did not provide data

recruitment rate was 0.57 fawns per doe. This represents a slight increase from 2014. The fawn recruitment rate ranged from 0.41 in Texas to 0.88 in South Carolina. Only three states provided data for 2014 and 2017 and two had decreased fawn recruitment rates in 2017. The Southeast's current fawn recruitment rate means, on average, it will take approximately two does to recruit one fawn.

We were pleased to also collect FRRs for five states in the West. We do not have data from other years for this region so the only analysis we can provide is the West's average FRR is slightly lower than the Northeast and Southeast and much lower than the Midwest. We look forward to receiving additional data from western states in the coming years that will allow additional analyses and comparisons in future Whitetail Reports.

In Canada, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan were the only provinces to report FRRs and they were 0.21 and 0.79 fawns per doe in 2017, respectively.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

There are multiple ways to estimate the fawn recruitment rate. Some states use hunter observation rates, some use fawn:doe harvest ratios, and others use a combination of these and/or other techniques. Given this variety, the data in the following table is not directly comparable among states. However, it is very comparable across years for any given state. Surprisingly, several states do not estimate their fawn recruitment rate. Given the importance of this index, the QDMA encourages all deer managers (large and small, public and private) to collect fall/winter observation and harvest data to estimate the fawn recruitment rate. This statistic should be estimated annually and compared across years to identify changes in herd health and/or predation rates.



ESTIMATED FAWN RECRUITMENT RATE					
State/Province	2000	2005	2010	2014	2017
Alabama	*	*	*	*	*
Arkansas	*	*	*	0.47	0.45
Florida	*	*	*	0.40	*
Georgia	0.71	0.37	0.52	0.59	0.54
Louisiana	0.74	0.60	0.58	0.58	*
Mississippi	*	0.60	0.47	0.66	*
North Carolina	*	*	*	*	0.55
Oklahoma	*	*	*	0.30	*
South Carolina	1.23	1.09	0.88	0.88	0.88
Tennessee	*	*	*	*	*
Texas	*	0.54	0.53	*	0.41
Southeast Average	0.89	0.64	0.60	0.55	0.57
Connecticut	*	*	0.50	*	*
Delaware	*	*	*	*	0.54
Maine	0.91	0.81	0.75	0.65	0.64
Maryland	0.74	0.68	0.60	0.50	0.50
Massachusetts	*	*	*	*	0.70
New Hampshire	0.70	0.68	0.63	0.59	0.61
New Jersey	*	*	*	*	*
New York	*	*	*	0.45	0.41
Pennsylvania	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.62	0.57
Rhode Island	*	*	0.40	0.40	*
Vermont	*	*	*	0.80	0.73
Virginia	0.42	0.47	0.44	*	0.42
West Virginia	*	*	*	0.58	0.51
Northeast Average	0.69	0.67	0.57	0.57	0.56
Illinois	0.79	0.65	0.55	0.54	1.18
Indiana	*	*	*	*	0.60
Iowa	*	*	1.30	1.60	*
Kansas	*	0.71	0.64	0.55	0.47
Kentucky	*	*	*	1.25	1.00
Michigan	0.57	0.53	0.39	0.47	*
Minnesota	*	*	*	*	*
Missouri	*	*	*	*	0.94
Nebraska	*	*	*	*	*
North Dakota	*	*	*	*	*
Ohio	1.00	0.84	0.81	0.70	0.60
South Dakota	*	*	0.95	0.86	0.78
Wisconsin	1.06	1.07	1.07	0.70	0.90
Midwest Average	0.86	0.76	0.82	0.83	0.81
3-Region Average	0.81	0.69	0.66	0.66	0.65
Arizona	*	*	*	*	0.38
California	*	*	*	*	*
Colorado	*	*	*	*	0.54
Idaho	*	*	*	*	*
Montana	*	*	*	*	*
Nevada	*	*	*	*	*
New Mexico	*	*	*	*	0.34
Oregon	*	*	*	*	*
Utah	*	*	*	*	0.59
Washington	*	*	*	*	*
Wyoming	*	*	*	*	0.70
West Average	*	*	*	*	0.51

*Data not provided/available

CWD – A BREAKDOWN BY SEX

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is an always fatal neurological disease that affects deer, elk, moose and other cervids. 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 16 for a current update on CWD and other diseases found in whitetails.

Regardless of whether CWD has been identified in your area, it impacts deer hunters everywhere by restricting what hunters can do. For example, it limits freedoms such as traveling with whole carcasses after a successful hunt, as well as using a variety of hunting products and/or management tools. It also removes the possibility, in some cases, for hunters to advance buck age structure because research suggests that bucks are more at-risk to contract CWD than does. As a result, some agencies have removed and/or restricted use of regulations that move bucks into older age classes. In contrast, other agencies argue the removal and/or discontinuation of such regulations will not result in a positive outcome toward slowing CWD spread and have decided to continue their use due to their popularity and net impact on hunter engagement. Because this disparity is inherently confusing to hunters and the public, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to determine the percent buck and doe (see table) of all positive CWD samples from within their jurisdiction.

The following table includes data from the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast only, as no western states or Canadian provinces provided this information. Across the three regions, approximately two-thirds of CWD-positive animals were bucks, and the average percentages were similar across the regions. The included table also shows that in all cases for agencies that responded and/or collect the data, buck positives make up a greater proportion of the total than doe positives. However, some of this buck bias is due to sample size. For example, Mississippi (fortunately) has only confirmed four CWD-positive deer, and some states test far more bucks than does, thus increasing the likelihood of finding more in bucks. The science is pretty clear that bucks are more susceptible than does, and some managers focus almost entirely on bucks. We feel this singular focus is a mistake, and our interest in this chapter is to highlight the importance of continuing

to also manage the antlerless half of the deer herd. This is clearly justified in states like Illinois, Pennsylvania and Texas where nearly half of the CWD-positive animals were does.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Chronic wasting disease in deer is a serious matter. While the long-term implications are concerning to QDMA, to other wildlife conservation organizations, and to the majority of wildlife disease experts, the situa-

tion is not hopeless. Each day we learn more about this fatal disease, and this knowledge will ultimately help us find solutions that are not yet in our grasp. To buy time, we must prevent the further spread of CWD, and the good news is there are many steps that every hunter can take now, whether or not they are already affected by the disease. To learn more visit QDMA's website where we have posted a clearinghouse of information about this terrible disease.

CWD - SEX RATIO		
CWD Positive Deer		
State/Province	% Bucks	% Does
<i>Alabama</i>		
Arkansas	68	32
<i>Florida</i>		
<i>Georgia</i>		
<i>Louisiana</i>		
Mississippi	75	25
<i>North Carolina</i>		
Oklahoma	*	*
<i>South Carolina</i>		
Tennessee	*	*
Texas	53	47
Southeast Average	65	35
<i>Connecticut</i>		
<i>Delaware</i>		
<i>Maine</i>		
Maryland	82	18
<i>Massachusetts</i>		
<i>New Hampshire</i>		
<i>New Jersey</i>		
New York	*	*
Pennsylvania	58	42
<i>Rhode Island</i>		
<i>Vermont</i>		
Virginia	67	33
West Virginia	67	33
Northeast Average	69	31
Illinois	52	48
<i>Indiana</i>		
Iowa	57	43
Kansas	84	17
<i>Kentucky</i>		
Michigan	*	*
Minnesota	60	40
Missouri	73	27
Nebraska	*	*
North Dakota	58	42
Ohio	*	*
South Dakota	56	44
Wisconsin	68	32
Midwest Average	65	35
3-Region Average	66	34

*Data not available
 Highlight identifies state as having confirmed CWD

CWD - A BREAKDOWN BY AGE

In addition, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to determine the age structure of all positive CWD samples for each sex from within their jurisdiction. Not all agencies collect this data the same way, some lump age classes, and others separate them based on available resources; so, we've presented it in a way to compare among regions. The table includes the three major age-class groupings (fawn, yearling and 2½ plus) on the left where tooth replacement still provides the greatest accuracy for younger individuals – this is based on the tooth replacement and wear method. We have also included each age class beyond that for those that collect it, on the right. This data is solely from the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast, as no Canadian provinces and only Colorado (2017 results) provided information.

Across the three regions, approximately 80 percent of CWD-positive animals are 2½ years old and older. This isn't overly surprising. The science shows the longer an animal lives in a CWD-positive area the longer it is exposed and at risk of contracting the disease, which is why prevalence rates continue to climb in areas where CWD has been the longest. Looking by region, the Southeast and Midwest both reported extremely high proportions of their CWD-positives in these advanced age classes, while Northeast states were lower (66 percent).

When comparing between sexes per age class, most were similar in each region, with the exception of yearlings in the Northeast and Southeast, as nearly twice the percentage of CWD positives were bucks compared to does. However, for 2½ and older deer in the same regions the pendulum swung the other way with a higher percentage of CWD-positive deer in this age class being does. Certainly, there are some state-specific examples in the data where buck positives are greater than does. However, similar to the last chapter our focus here is to highlight the importance of continuing to harvest antlerless deer when fighting CWD.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Deer are very social with a lot of interaction among related individuals. Research shows does are 10 times more likely to be CWD-positive when there is an infected relative nearby. This has huge implications for how we manage CWD. Rather than being solely focused on buck harvest for fear of yearling bucks spreading the disease, we

CWD - AGE STRUCTURE														
CWD Positive Deer														
	% fawns		% 1½ yrs		% 2½ yrs [*]		% 2½ yrs		% 3½ yrs		% 4½ yrs		% 5½ yrs ⁺	
State/Province	Buck	Doe	Buck	Doe	Buck	Doe	Buck	Doe	Buck	Doe	Buck	Doe	Buck	Doe
Alabama														
Arkansas	8	7	14	10	79	83	39	30	31	34	8	9	1	10
Florida														
Georgia														
Louisiana														
Mississippi	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
North Carolina														
Oklahoma	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
South Carolina														
Tennessee	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Texas	5	3	7	1	89	95	5	49	36	16	18	13	30	17
Southeast Average (by sex)	6	5	10	6	84	89								
Southeast Average (by age)	6		8		86									
Connecticut														
Delaware														
Maine														
Maryland	0	0	57	20	43	80	43 ⁺	80 ⁺						
Massachusetts														
New Hampshire														
New Jersey														
New York	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Pennsylvania	2	3	40	33	58	64	58 ⁺	64 ⁺						
Rhode Island														
Vermont														
Virginia	0	0	28	23	72	78	48	54	16	8	8	8	0	8
West Virginia ^a	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Northeast Average (by sex)	1	1	41	25	58	74								
Northeast Average (by age)	1		33		66									
Illinois	6	7	30	20	65	74	39	38	17	21	7	9	2	6
Indiana														
Iowa	*	*	*	8	100	92	100 ⁺	92 ⁺						
Kansas	0	0	4	37	93	63	17	42	76 ⁺	21 ⁺				
Kentucky														
Michigan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Minnesota	0	0	20	0	80	100	30	29	10	14	30	0	10	57
Missouri	2	5	3	10	95	85	95 ⁺	85 ⁺						
Nebraska	*	*	*	*	100	100	100 ⁺	100 ⁺						
North Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ohio	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
South Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wisconsin	1	1	16	18	82	80	34	32	36	5	12 ⁺	23 ⁺		
Midwest Average (by sex)	1	2	13	15	86	83								
Midwest Average (by age)	2		14		84									
3-Region Average (by sex)	3	3	21	15	76	82								
3-Region Average (by age)	3		18		79									

Highlight suggests CWD-positive + all ages at/above combined ^ only sampled deer in this age class and above
 * data not available ^a Samples collected year round and do not test fawns prior to January

believe we need an equal focus on antlerless harvest to keep deer herds in balance with the habitat and to keep doe family groups from becoming reservoirs for CWD.

It is QDMA's opinion that as long as hunters continue hunting, shooting antlerless deer, and helping keep deer herds in check, then it is more beneficial to have some adult bucks in the population than to shoot all

bucks at a young age. If mature bucks are scarce, some hunters will become less active and shoot fewer antlerless deer. Thus, our recommendation in areas where CWD is established in the deer population is for hunters to harvest antlerless deer to help reduce deer density, continue protecting yearling bucks if they desire, and apply increased harvest pressure to all bucks 3½ years of age or older.

QDMA: ENSURING THE FUTURE OF DEER HUNTING



QDMA's National Youth Hunt is just one of many mentored hunting events held across the country every year.

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 Heritage.

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 changes, and QDMA is keeping pace. QDMA con-

tinues with traditional educational activities such as seminars, field days, and the ever-popular *Quality Whitetails* magazine, but also delivers outreach via television, DVDs, apps, internships, print and web-based materials, a thriving social media platform 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 that pursues white-tailed deer. Due to QDMA's growth and strong support from the professional wildlife community, it is considered the most respected and influential whitetail organization in North America. As a result, QDMA serves as the leading advocate for the wise management of white-tailed deer and the protection of our deer-hunting heritage. QDMA also maintains strong ties with its members, other conservation organizations, state and federal agencies, and other groups with an interest in whitetail hunting and management. In fact, QDMA helped launch and became a principal partner organization of the National Deer Alliance to help address the biggest advocacy issues affecting deer annually. 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; are provided professional advice/assistance where desired; and, are recognized for their efforts in the larger context of deer and land management across North America. 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 many states hunter numbers have declined, and existing hunter recruitment programs are proving only marginally effective. In response, QDMA developed an innovative youth and new hunter education and outreach program, and it is comprised of the following components: Share Your Hunt™, #FirstDeer Campaign, Field-to-Fork, QDMA in the Classroom, QDMA's Rack Pack, and our Mentored Hunting Guide, to name a few. The collective goal of these programs is to produce more deer hunters and better ambassadors for hunting, not simply to take more kids deer hunting.

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

2018 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 2018.

Since 2006 QDMA has engaged in nearly 1,000 major initiatives. In 2018 we engaged in over 100 legislation, regulation or policy issues; 42 at the national level and 59 at the state level in 23 states and one province (see map). Regionally, this included seven states in the Northeast, eight states in the Midwest, seven in the Southeast, and one state in the West. The QDMA's engagement ranged from comments on state deer management plans, to chronic wasting disease (CWD) research and funding, Sunday hunting, ensuring the right to hunt, and more. Below is a sample of some of the advocacy issues QDMA was involved with during 2018:

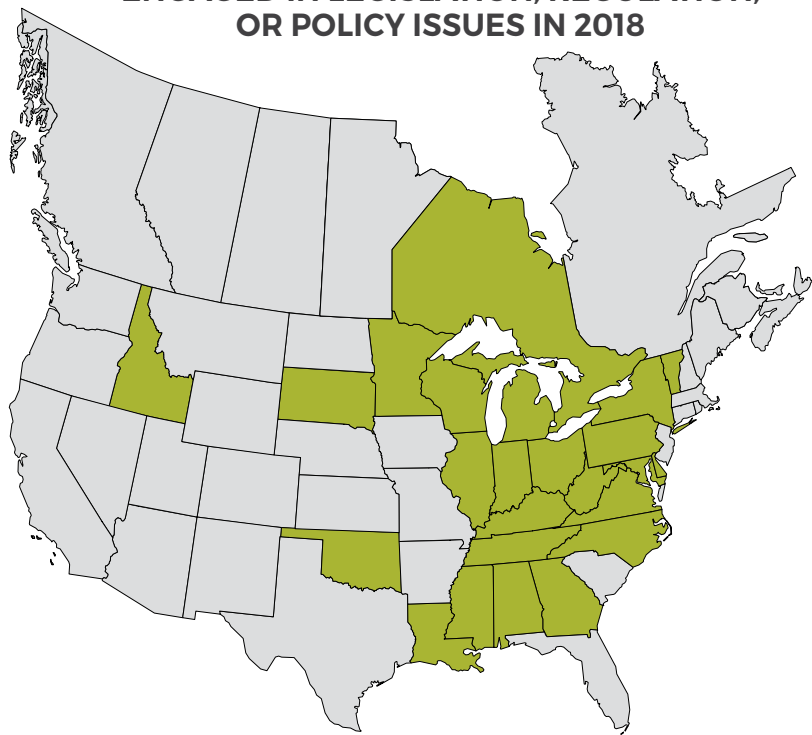
- Supported Farm Bill conservation programs
- Supported Georgia's Outdoor Stewardship Amendment
- Supported Sunday hunting in Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina and Pennsylvania
- Supported hemlock woolly adelgid biological control program in Canada

- Supported Recovering America's Wildlife Act (S.3223)
- Supported CWD legislation on research, funding and management strategies
 - CWD Support for States Act (S.2252)
 - CWD Transmission in Cervidae Study Act (S.3644, H.R.6272)
 - CWD fund in Michigan State Treasury (HB5772)
- Supported Land and Water Conservation Funding
 - Provided comments on APHIS' CWD herd certification program
 - Supported allowing deer hunting in 10 West Virginia state parks
 - Supported dove hunting in New York (AB7778, SB7202)
 - Supported Governor Walker's CWD proposals in Wisconsin
 - Supported expansion of hunting and fishing on National Wildlife Refuges
 - Supported the Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act (H.R.788)
 - Supported public land in Isle of Wight County, Virginia being open to all public rather than leasing to a hunt club

- Supported North American Wetlands Conservation Act
 - Supported legislation providing tax credits for venison donation in Maryland (HB7, SB182)
 - Supported feral hog transport restrictions in Louisiana
 - Supported expanding South Dakota's mentored hunting program (SB137)
 - Supported HB356 to protect landowner liability in Idaho
 - Supported SB81 to enhance landowner liability protection in Virginia
 - Supported HB1274 to increase poaching penalties in Indiana

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 at kadams@qdma.com or 814-326-4023. 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 2018



QDMA Mission: PROGRESS REPORT

In 2017 in *Quality Whitetails*, QDMA CEO Brian Murphy unveiled our ambitious new five-year goals for the organization, its Branch volunteers and its members. The goals were designed to extend our achievements in protecting whitetails and improving habitat while intensifying our focus on hunting heritage. After surveys were completed and data gathered to determine the current annual baselines of accomplishment in each area, seven specific goals were set that would significantly challenge the organization to increase those achievements. At the QDMA National Convention in July 2018, Brian provided attendees with an update on our progress based on National Office activities, Branch accomplishments, and a new survey of QDMA members.

“Of the seven goals, we have data for six of them at the end of the first year, and in five of those areas we met or exceeded our goal,” said Brian.

Here’s the year-one report card.

WHITE-TAILED DEER: **PROTECT**

Year 1 Goal: Contribute \$200,000 to research, on-the-ground management, and technical assistance for white-tailed deer.

2018 Update: the QDMA National Office contributed \$285,000 to research and management. ✓

WILDLIFE HABITAT: **CONSERVE**

Year 1 Goal: In 2017, QDMA members indicated they were involved in QDM Cooperatives totalling 29 million acres, and the goal was to increase this figure by 1.2 million to 30.2 million acres.

2018 Update: Survey of members indicates Cooperative acreage declined by 900,000 to 28.1 million acres. ✗

HUNTING HERITAGE: **ACCESS**

Year 1 Goal: Double the number of projects that increase access or improve habitat on public lands.

2018 Update: To be determined following the completion of a QDMA Branch survey. ?

HUNTING HERITAGE: **RECRUIT**

Year 1 Goal: Mentor 200,000 new or beginning hunters through QDMA’s Share Your Hunt™ program, Field to Fork program, individual mentoring and partnership with Scholastic 3D Archery.

2018 Update: QDMA members and National Office programs mentored 200,376 hunters in the 2017-18 season. ✓

HUNTING HERITAGE: **SHARE**

Year 1 Goal: Share 4 million meals with friends, family and others not residing in the donor’s household.

2018 Update: QDMA members shared 5.23 million meals or 1.31 million pounds of venison. ✓

HUNTING HERITAGE: **DONATE**

Year 1 Goal: Donate 7 million meals worth of bulk venison, or the equivalent processing costs, to charities or others not residing in the donor’s household.

2018 Update: QDMA members donated 8.7 million meals, or 2.17 million pounds of venison. ✓

HUNTING HERITAGE: **EDUCATE**

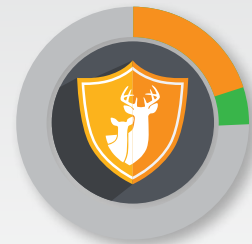
Year 1 Goal: Increase QDMA’s educational reach by 300,000 hunters.

2018 Update: Reach increased by 833,000 to 4.3 million. ✓

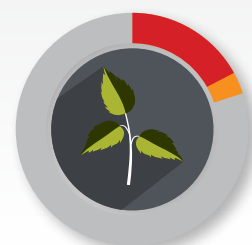
QDMA will continue to keep our members informed of progress as well as ways that each member can contribute to attaining these important goals. Stay connected and updated through *Quality Whitetails*, the QDMA e-newsletter, social media and the QDMA website. To all those who already have a hand in the effort, whether through mentoring a new hunter, sharing venison, or forming a Cooperative – keep up the great work! Together, we are achieving great things for the future of whitetails and hunting!



WHITE-TAILED DEER: **PROTECT**



WILDLIFE HABITAT: **CONSERVE**



HUNTING HERITAGE: **RECRUIT**



HUNTING HERITAGE: **SHARE**



HUNTING HERITAGE: **DONATE**



HUNTING HERITAGE: **EDUCATE**



QDMA COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

FIGHT CWD

QDMA is committed to providing hunters with reliable, science-based guidance on deer hunting, management and conservation. We achieve this goal through a number of communications channels, including print, web, e-mail and social media. And while we cover a broad range of topics of interest to deer hunters, in 2018 we put extra effort into one particular area with a very specific mission: to inform deer hunters about the facts of chronic wasting disease (CWD) and what they can do to help fight it.

CWD is a complex disease that is still the subject of many unanswered questions. It is a source of confusion and fear for many deer hunters, and there are even some people who intentionally spread misinformation and tell hunters that CWD is nothing to worry about. QDMA and the majority of wildlife disease experts believe we should be concerned about CWD, but we must be informed with the facts, and we

should all know that there are steps we can take to slow or stop the spread of the disease until scientists can discover solutions.

With that in mind, in 2018 QDMA launched two communications campaigns. The first centered on the hashtag #KnowCWD and involved an effort to share basic, reliable facts about the disease and its effects on deer. The second, using #FightCWD, provided a number of specific steps every deer hunter can take to help combat the disease.

From March to October, QDMA used social media, its website, its e-newsletter and its magazine *Quality Whitetails* to promote CWD facts. The #KnowCWD campaign achieved over 700,000 impressions on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. From October to December, the #FightCWD campaign reached the same level of exposure with action items such as reporting sick deer, stopping interstate transfer of deer carcasses, and voluntary testing of harvested deer in CWD management

zones. In all, the two campaigns produced nearly 1.5 million impressions on social media alone. The infographic on this page is just one example of dozens of distinct infographics used in the #FightCWD campaign.

In addition to social media, new articles were posted on the QDMA website to support these campaigns, including one titled “Every Deer Hunter Can Take These Steps to Fight CWD,” which is available online (If you haven’t read it yet, please do so, and share it with your own social networks). These articles were viewed over 175,000 times in 2018.

These campaigns will continue into 2019 and beyond to ensure an ever-increasing number of well informed hunters who are contributing to the fight against CWD. The more hunters who become engaged in the fight, the sooner we can slow the spread of the disease and buy time for science to find solutions. You can help us in these campaigns by sharing our articles and social media messages on CWD.



Report sick deer quickly!

If you see or harvest a deer that acts strangely or appears sick, quickly report it to your state wildlife agency. The sooner CWD is discovered in a new area, the higher the chance it can be prevented from becoming established at that site.



QDMA

QDMA'S NEWSLETTER

One way to be sure you don't miss any of our information 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.

SOCIAL MEDIA

QDMA continued to grow its social media fanbase in 2018, interacting with and engaging millions with educational content about deer hunting and whitetail conservation. Be sure to follow us on these platforms if you use them:

 [Facebook.com/TheQDMA](https://www.facebook.com/TheQDMA)

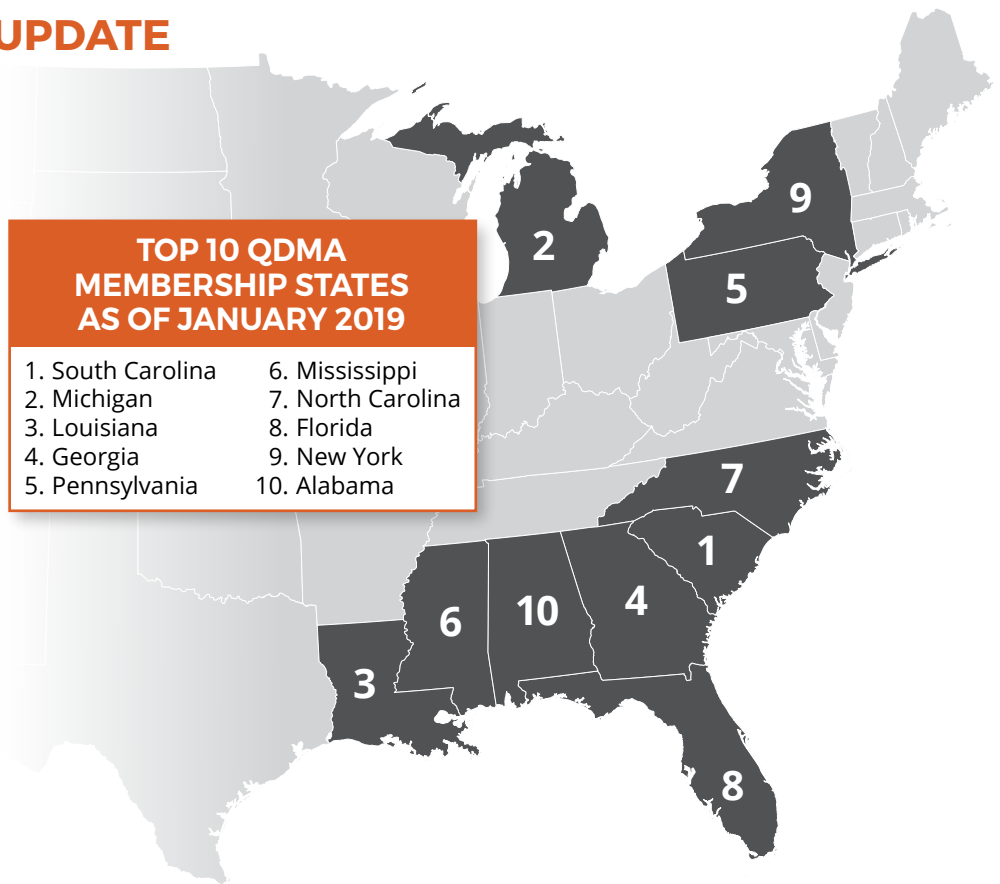
 [@TheQDMA](https://twitter.com/TheQDMA)

 [Instagram.com/TheQDMA](https://www.instagram.com/TheQDMA)

QDMA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

In 2018, QDMA had 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.



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



Where Deer Hunters Belong

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

QDMA CANADA UPDATE



QDMA Canada Branches hosted two educational seminars featuring presentations on EHD and CWD.

The past twelve months have been very productive for QDMA Canada. In Branch development, three new Branches were chartered (Rideau/St. Lawrence Branch and Grey/Bruce Branch in Ontario, and the Mighty Peace Branch in Alberta) bringing the total number of Branches in Canada to 19; also, volunteers held eight local fundraising banquets (Lanark County, Southwestern Ontario, Prescott-Russell, Greater Montreal, Northern New Brunswick, Rideau/St. Lawrence, Grey-Bruce and Renfrew County), which was an all-time high. With memberships generat-

ed from these events we expect to end 2018 with nearly 2,000 members in Canada.

Regarding educational events, there were many seminars, field days and Branch-lead initiatives in 2018 but highlights included QDMA Canada attending the Montreal Sportsman show with members of Chaudiere-Appalaches and Greater Montreal Branches, as well as the Southwestern Ontario Branch again sponsoring a two week-long youth hunter education class and multi-step youth hunt.

In 2018 QDMA Canada committed to provide \$1,500 toward a new video

project, where over a dozen segments on deer management will be filmed and produced in Quebec for French viewers. Also, we maintained a Corporate sponsorship with Valley Guiding and Outfitting for the second year in a row and acquired Vortex-Canada as a new national Sponsor. We were happy to work with our Corporate Sponsors and are very thankful for their continued support.

Finally, we welcomed three new National Board members (Tom Brooke, Fred Zink and Paul Plantinga) in 2018.

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. One downside in 2018 was the discovery of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in a farm-raised deer within the province of Quebec in late summer.

We're looking forward to another year of growth in Canada with a target membership goal of 2,500 members by the end of 2019. All indications are that we will achieve this goal and continue making a positive impact for deer and deer hunting in Canada.



The Lanark County Branch of QDMA Canada hosted its third and largest annual banquet to-date in March 2018.



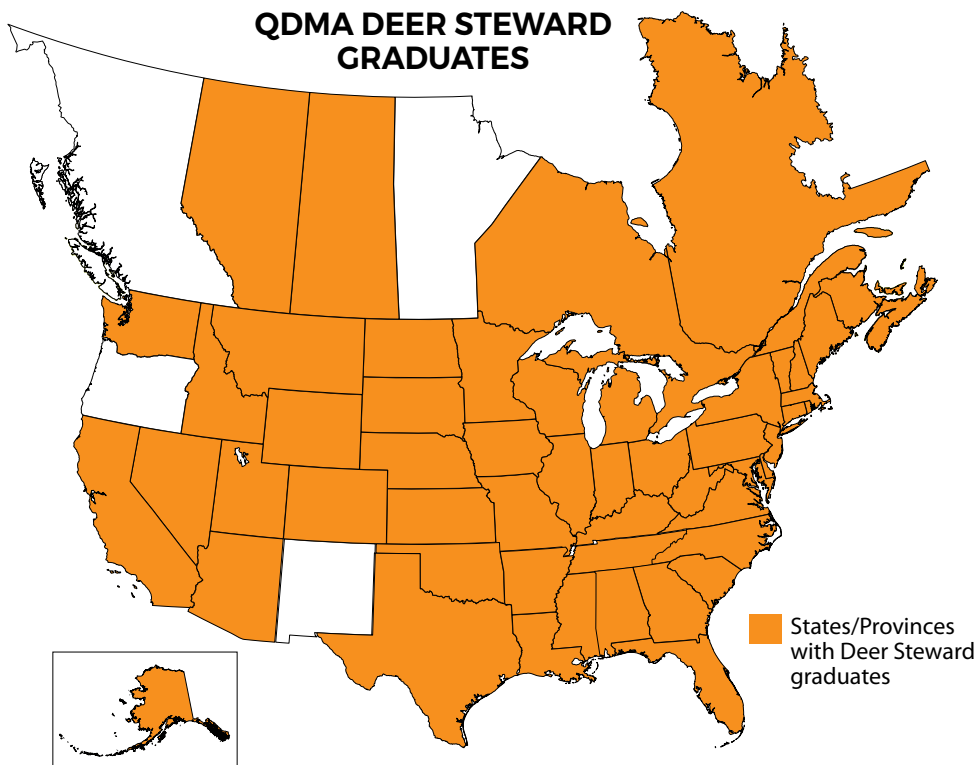
The Greater Montreal Branch hosted its inaugural banquet in April, where about 150 people enjoyed a four-course meal, incredible prizes and an introduction to QDMA Canada.

QDMA CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS UPDATE

DEER STEWARD PROGRAM

The 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 3 is an application; all three need to be taken in succession. By taking Levels 1 and 2, graduates are able to design and implement their personal comprehensive property-specific white-tailed deer management plan. Level 3 is an honor earned after giving back to the resource over a long period of time, rather than something you can learn in a course.

As of January 2019, 2,295 individuals have completed the Deer Steward program, with 1,536 Level 1, 702 Level 2, and 57 Level 3 graduates, representing 45 states and the Nation's capitol, seven Canadian provinces, one of the U.S. Virgin Islands and Australia. Over 400 more were also enrolled and engaged in the Level 1 class (which is online) at the time of this printing, bringing the total to nearly 2,700 individuals! Since 2007, the QDMA has held 23 Level 1 classes and 23 Level 2 classes in the following states: AL, AR, DE, FL, GA, IA, IL, IN, KY, LA, MD, MI, MN, MO, MS, NC, OH, NY, PA, SC, TN, and TX, as well as in the province of Quebec.



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 1 and 2. Its available both online and in-person as well. In 2018 we offered in-person Modules on Habitat Enhancement and



Property Investments, as well as launched a series of online modules about everything from food plots to rutting bucks.

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 will also encourage 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 the states of GA, LA, KY, MI, MN, MO, NY, PA, TN, SC and in New Brunswick, Canada. Six of those (KY, MO, MN, NY and SC)

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 (GA). To date, nearly 40,000 total acres have been enrolled in LCP, and about 250 LCP inspectors are available to QDMA

members to inspect their land.

To learn more about either the Deer Steward or Land Certification Programs, or about registering for an upcoming course in 2019, visit www.QDMA.com and look under the "Conserve" menu heading.



SOUTH CAROLINA AND OHIO AMONG 2019 DEER STEWARD LOCATIONS



For more information, visit QDMA.com or contact QDMA Assistant Director of Conservation Matt Ross by e-mail at mross@qdma.com or by calling (518) 886-1732.

Level 1

Online Only!

Level 2

September 13-16

Gallipolis, Ohio
The Hogan property
with Land & Legacy



Modules

June 21-23

Habitat Enhancement
Dr. Craig Harper
Clarendon Plantation
Beaufort, South Carolina

QDMA BRANCH HIGHLIGHTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS IN 2018

2018 was another great year for our grassroots volunteers! On the fundraising side we held 132 events resulting in over 18,000 memberships which generated over 4 million dollars for whitetail conservation!

Our Branches and National Office use those funds to pursue QDMA's mission and goals. How, you might ask? Well, to date our Branches have held over 150 mission-related events including 50 educational events, 25 expos, 21 Share Your Hunt youth events, around 20 Field to Fork hunts for new adult hunters, and many "pint night" gatherings, sporting clays shoots and golf tournaments.

Also, this past April, Region 10 held the first ever QDMA charity turkey hunt. There were 16 total hunters who hunted for two days in Alabama. Eight of those lucky hunters were successful in harvesting birds. Then in June Region 10 held the first ever QDMA charity fishing tournament which had 31 boats in total!

We also held four leadership conferences out of our eight regions with plans of increasing that number in 2019. Leadership conferences consist of the Regional Directors inviting QDMA Branch officers and volunteers to engage in dialogue about our mission goals, fundraising, education, policy and procedure, but more



The Lakelands Branch, along with the South Carolina DNR Take One Make One Program, hosted four hunters on a youth hunt in Troy. Despite no deer being harvested, everyone had a great time.

importantly to come together for fellowship. In Michigan, we held a sporting clays shoot before the leadership session. Not to be outdone, Alabama kicked off their

round table discussions with a quail hunt. We look forward to engaging our volunteers with more of these types of events in the future!



The Midlands Branch continued their venison donation program in partnership with Campbell's Custom Deer Processing this year. Tom Campbell (right) processed 650 pounds of venison for Harvest Hope Food Bank in Columbia, South Carolina. Also pictured, Snooky McCullar (left) from the Midlands Branch.

QDMA INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



Clinton Armstrong, Tennessee



Autumn Christenson, Michigan



Trey Wall, Texas



Alec Wold, Kansas

The QDMA has selected interns to assist with specific projects in past years, and in 2016 we developed an official internship program. 2018 marked the second full year for internships, and we had some outstanding interns. The Conservation Department chose Clinton Armstrong, Autumn Christenson, Trey Wall and Alec Wold 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:

- Creating an online *Whitetail Report* index
- Recording a list of all counties that have confirmed chronic wasting disease (CWD)
- Recording a list of all state wildlife agency cervid carcass transport regulations
- Developing a promotional strategy to get Deer Steward 1 to interested military personnel
- Assisting with QDMA's 2018 and 2019 *Whitetail Reports*

- Assisting with advocacy items
- Recording a list of all states that employ deer management assistance programs (DMAP) and earn-a-buck regulations
- Helping analyze data from QDMA's annual member survey
- Assessing QDMA's Deer Steward programs and pricing structure
- Developing a list of all state wildlife agency contact information

The internship program is ongoing with new interns selected for 2019. If you're interested in being involved contact Kip Adams at Kadams@QDMA.com or 814.326.4023.

QDMA'S NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

With the help of QDMA member-volunteers, year one of the Headquarters expansion is already a success.

We're making progress turning the new 132-acre addition of land at QDMA Headquarters into a valuable asset for the QDMA mission and our members.

In case you don't recall, QDMA's National Headquarters stood on 23 acres of land near Athens, Georgia from 2005 until late 2017, when the most significant gift QDMA has ever received was finalized: 132 acres of land adjoining the Headquarters worth \$3.5 million. The gift from Ricky Chastain and Russ Crump of Athens, owners of RC-Coggins LLC, gave QDMA more than 150 acres of forested land, complete with a robust deer population. We've been busy putting that new land to use to achieve our mission goals. Here's an update on what's been going on at your National Headquarters.

HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

One of the uses of the expanded National Headquarters will be education for hunters and QDMA members, including workshops, field days, guided tours, and more. The new acreage will provide an excellent before-and-after showcase of deer habitat improvement, but most of it is still in the "before" stage. Because the land was undeveloped for commercial use when QDMA acquired it, no timber harvests or forest management had taken place in years. Low value trees have matured and produced shady woods with no understory, and invasive species like kudzu, Chinese privet, autumn olive, chinaberry and Japanese stiltgrass have infiltrated edges and openings. Access is limited, and the existing roads and trails are deteriorated or overgrown. Trespassing has also been an issue in recent years.

What should any deer hunter do when faced with challenges like these? We're going to answer that question by developing a gradual, affordable, effective strategy that can be replicated almost anywhere.

Already, QDMA has met with the Georgia Forestry Commission, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division and others to acquire free guidance from experts available to any hunter. With their help we're examining cost-share



Professional advice is helping set plans for forest management on the National Headquarters. Above, CEO Brian Murphy talks with Jeff Kastle and Ken Masten of the Georgia Forestry Commission.



QDMA summer intern Tyler Finch, a wildlife student at the University of Georgia, put in many weeks of volunteer work on the National Headquarters this summer.

programs that will potentially help pay for steps like invasive species control, forest management, firebreak creation, and more.

After a new survey of the property boundary was complete, QDMA intern Tyler Finch, who is studying wildlife management at the University of Georgia, spent the summer clearing a perimeter trail that will allow for boundary monitoring and access. He also cleared and opened older

trails and roads.

In August 2018, QDMA held our first-ever habitat workshop and work day on the new land. Volunteers worked alongside and learned from Dr. Craig Harper of the University of Tennessee, who helped develop the initial plan for forest and wildlife management. Craig led a crew carrying chainsaws and squirt bottles filled with herbicide over three days of habitat work,

and significant progress was made toward removing low-value tree species to produce more understory cover and forage.

Meanwhile, volunteers also worked on placing Family Tradition double ladder stands, clearing shooting lanes and marking access trails to get ready for hunting season.

HUNTER RECRUITMENT

Another primary goal for the National Headquarters is hunter recruitment, and there are already some success stories to share. On September 22-23, the first 2018 hunt of the Athens Field to Fork program was held, and several of the new hunters and their mentors climbed into ladder

stands recently put up by QDMA volunteers during the August workshop. On the evening of September 22, new hunter Gary Pomeroy bagged his first deer with a Bear crossbow while hunting with his Field to Fork mentor, Krisha Faw. This was the first deer taken on the new addition to the National Headquarters, and more have been taken by Field to Fork hunters since then. This will be the primary use of hunting opportunity on the site with programs for adult and youth hunter recruitment. While 150 acres is a drop in the bucket of what is needed for new-hunter opportunities, we hope the Headquarters will serve as a model for improving recruitment programs and a training ground for mentors

and leaders from other states as Field to Fork grows.

THE FUTURE IS HERE

When QDMA first learned of the gift coming our way, staff members immediately began to dream about all the ways the new land could be used for education, hunter recruitment and other mission work. With educational events and hunts already underway, those dreams are happening now. More opportunities for mission work will no doubt present themselves as time goes on. We will continue to keep you updated on progress at your National Headquarters, and hopefully you can stop by soon and see it for yourself.



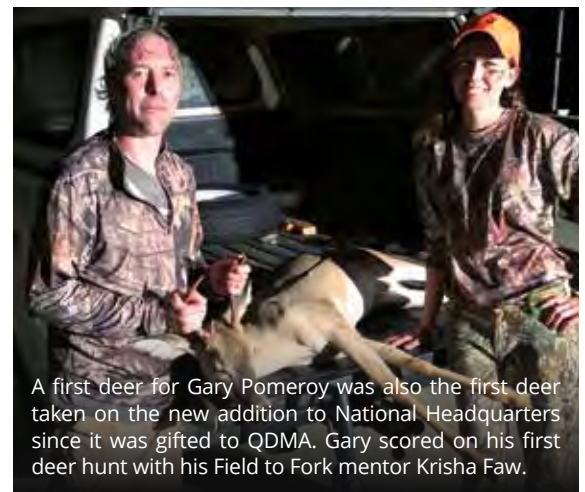
Hunting buddies and QDMA members Cliff Tyler (left) and Tom Ashworth of Georgia contributed two days of volunteer labor at the August field day.



Virginia Tech University sent six wildlife management students on a road trip to Georgia to help at the work day. L-R: Tomas Nocera, Hunter Ellsworth, Garrett Clevinger, Marcelo Jorge, Nina Kappel and Luke Resop put in three full days of work with chainsaws and herbicides, marking property boundaries, clearing trails and putting up deer stands.



Wildlife and forestry students from North Oconee High School in Georgia visited QDMA National Headquarters in September with their teacher, Tim Griffeth, who is a QDMA member.



A first deer for Gary Pomeroy was also the first deer taken on the new addition to National Headquarters since it was gifted to QDMA. Gary scored on his first deer hunt with his Field to Fork mentor Krisha Faw.

QDMA FINANCIAL STATEMENT

QDMA strives to maximize mission delivery and member value as a non-profit, volunteer-driven organization. We advocate for sound deer management policies and regulations, work to secure our hunting heritage, support practical whitetail research to advance hunting knowledge, and work

to improve deer management and hunter education at the grassroots level throughout North America.

With your help in 2017, QDMA was able to enhance 29 million acres of land through QDM Cooperatives, mentor 157,000 new or first-time hunters, donate 6.9 million meals

to those in need, educate 3.4 million hunters on deer biology, deer and habitat management, and share 3.38 million meals outside of the donor household. Only through your continued support can we ensure a bright future for white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Assets	12-31-2016	12-31-2017
Cash Accounts	\$ 317,493	\$ 236,328
Accounts Receivable	\$ 169,537	\$ 212,857
Inventory	\$ 234,133	\$ 167,754
Prepaid Expenses	\$ 119,527	\$ 22,972
Investments	\$ 41,381	\$ 51,076
Total Current Assets	\$ 882,071	\$ 690,987
Property and Equipment	\$ 2,115,225	\$ 5,716,862
Net of Accumulated Depreciation	\$ (701,060)	\$ (749,102)
Total Property and Equipment	\$ 1,414,165	\$ 4,967,760
Total Assets	\$ 2,296,235	\$ 5,658,747
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current Liabilities	\$ 860,963	\$ 1,261,625
Accounts Payable	\$ 423,072	\$ 485,727
Accrued Expenses	\$ 96,091	\$ 185,441
Other Long Term Liabilities	\$ 1,080,109	\$ 1,735,162
Total Liabilities	\$ 2,460,235	\$ 3,667,955
Net Assets		
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 314,705	\$ 883,420
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	\$ (478,705)	\$ 1,107,372
Total Net Assets	\$ (164,000)	\$ 1,990,792
Total Assets and Liabilities	\$ 2,296,235	\$ 5,658,747

Note: 2016 financials are presented on a modified GAAP basis. 2017 financials are presented on a full GAAP basis. Financial statements for year ending December 31, 2017, were audited by Rhodes, Young, Black, and Duncan, CPA.

WHERE DOES YOUR MONEY GO?

QDMA is among the most efficient and effective non-profit organizations in the United States, with 85 percent of our operating expenses going toward programs and mission delivery. For the second year in a row, QDMA received a coveted 4-star Charity Navigator rating for demonstrating strong financial health, and commitment to accountability and transparency, this is the highest possible rating. It verifies that QDMA exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities.

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 income tax purposes. QDMA's Federal Tax Identification number is 57-0941892.

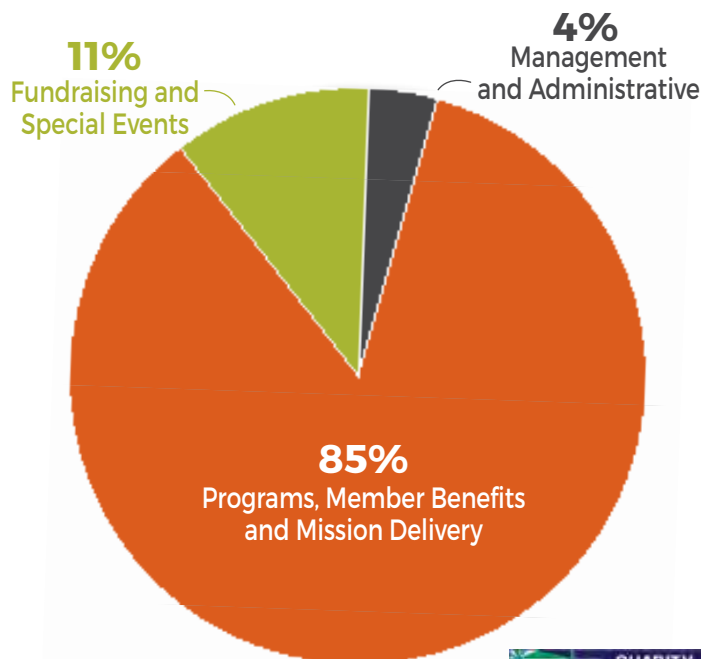
When you donate to QDMA, your support will help ensure a future where deer hunter numbers are stable, deer herds are healthy, and deer hunting is an accepted activity that can be enjoyed by a diverse public.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Revenues	12-31-2016	12-31-2017
Advertising and Corporate Support	\$ 514,419	\$ 483,630
Member Program Services	\$ 1,774,803	\$ 1,591,140
Fundraising and Donations	\$ 1,768,450	\$ 5,528,490
Membership Dues	\$ 1,048,186	\$ 1,060,965
Merchandise Sales	\$ 321,147	\$ 423,692
Investment and Interest Income	\$ 36,607	\$ 16,573
Total Current Assets	\$ 5,463,612	\$ 9,104,490
Cost of Goods Sold	\$ 768,656	\$ 628,818
Expenses		
Total Programmatic Expenses	\$ 4,190,665	\$ 4,548,567
Total Fundraising Expenses	\$ 724,313	\$ 611,668
Total Administrative Expenses	\$ 258,683	\$ 217,272
Total Expenses	\$ 5,173,661	\$ 5,377,507
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	\$ (478,705)	\$ 3,098,165
Net Assets at End of Year	\$ 2,296,235	\$ 5,658,747

Note: In December 2017, QDMA received a one-time land donation of 132 acres valued at \$3.5 million. Financial statements for year ending December 31, 2017, were audited by Rhodes, Young, Black, and Duncan, CPA.

HOW YOUR DONATIONS TO QDMA ARE DISTRIBUTED



QDMA 2017 HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

QDMA would like to thank and recognize those who were generous donors to QDMA in 2017. 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.*

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.

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

FOUNDER'S CIRCLE

Anonymous, Ga.
 Anonymous, La.
 Ceres Foundation, S.C.
 Christopher Asplundh, Jr., Pa.
 Bill D'Alonzo, Fla.
 David Bastow, Pa.
 Community Foundation of the Ozarks, Mo.
 M. Austin Davis Foundation, Inc., Fla.
 Nicole Garris, S.C.
 Judge Holdford, N.C.
 Joe Holt, S.C.
 David Jones, Del.
 Robert Krebs, Mo.
 Leslie Merriken, Md.
 Dwight Pardue, Ga.
 Brian Schafer, Mich.
 Helen and Vincent W. Shiel Private Foundation, Inc., Tex.
 Charles Shields, Ky.
 The Eddie & Jo Allison Smith Family Foundation, Inc., N.C.

CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE

Kip & Amy Adams, Pa.
 Anderson-Tully Lumber Co., Miss.
 Athens Seed Co., Ga.
 Louis Batson, S.C.
 John Bills, Jr., Mich.
 Ben Caillouet, La.
 Camp-Younts Foundation, Va.
 Dan Cason, La.
 Fred Cason, La.
 Christopher B. Asplundh Family Fund, Pa.
 Coastal Community Foundation, S.C.
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Cultivating Field to Fork



FRANK KENNEDY cleans his first deer at QDMA Headquarters. Frank, an avid shooter, had been wanting to learn to hunt for a few years. He was connected to Field to Fork through a Facebook forum and says he wouldn't have hunted this year without the assistance of the program. Frank has gone afield several times since QDMA's organized hunt weekend.

BY CHARLES EVANS

QDMA Hunting Heritage Programs Manager Hank Forester and I just wrapped up our third year of Field to Fork in Athens, Ga. and it was one of the best yet. Over the past few years we have been evaluating and fine tuning the program to better fit the needs of an adult food-focused audience interested in learning to hunt. This year we guided 15 participants, ages 25 to 70, through the process of becoming a hunter to provide them with the ability to source their own high-quality protein. Throughout the first two years we had participants from all walks of life, and this year was no different. There were pro-

fessors, graduate students, organic farmers, construction workers, and chefs, all brought together by their desire to further their connection with nature and where their food comes from.

In previous articles we have described in detail how we recruited participants from the Athens Farmers Market with an offering of venison, provided classroom and field training, took them on a cross-bow deer hunt, and hosted a culinary social afterwards. Given that we have already broken down these steps for you, I want to steer this article more towards an in-depth look at the effect of Field to Fork and the expansion of the program.

Since getting a head start from the

Kentucky Field to Fork program and gathering up partners (the Georgia Wildlife Federation, National Wild Turkey Federation, QDMA, and Georgia DNR) to form a little different approach for our program in Athens, we have caused quite the stir. The Athens version has now been featured across many media outlets including podcasts, radio shows, national magazines, and local newspapers. With the help of this exposure, the Field to Fork program is beginning to reshape the way the hunting community thinks about targeted recruitment and has likely had a wide-reaching ripple effect within local food-focused communities.

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FINISHING UP TRAINING the first night of the classroom portion after shooting cross-bows and enjoying a venison taco bar.



HUNTERS AND THEIR MENTORS from the 2018 Athens Field to Fork program gather for a group photo. Eight new states launched Field to Fork programs this fall as well.



GARY POMEROY rides in with his first deer, and first deer off QDMA's new expanded headquarters, with mentor Krisha Faw.



A CULINARY SOCIAL was held at a University of Georgia facility where QDMA CEO Brian Murphy hosted a class on sausage making.



SARAH THURMAN helps break down a deer while Andrew Skinner and members of QDMA's Athens Branch look on. Sarah has continued hunting and harvested her first deer a week later.



CHARLES EVANS (left) and Hank Forester (right) set up a booth with samples of venison at the Athens Farmers Market asking attendees if they'd "Like to try some venison?"

Let's start with what we are seeing within the hunting community and industry. The Athens Branch of QDMA has been an integral part of Field to Fork the past two years by assisting with setup, training, and, most importantly, serving as mentors for the participants. Several of the Branch volunteers have made telling comments about the impact the program has had on them.

David Kidd stated, in reference to serving as a mentor last year, "I think this was the best season I've ever had, and I didn't even harvest a deer." All of the mentors in the program agree that their experiences are extremely rewarding and many have commented that it changed their outlook on who might become as avid about hunting as they are. We are seeing a similar shift in attitudes across volunteers and the general base of hunters as they become involved in or read about Field to Fork.

Similarly, the hunting industry is starting to buy in and recognize that these new audiences may be an important market segment in the future. Earlier this year the National Shooting Sports Foundation awarded QDMA funding to document Field to Fork to help expand the model and illustrate to industry partners the motivations behind the participants.

The ripple effect within the food-focused community does stem from some of the local publications, but mainly comes from program participants sharing their experiences within their social groups and professional circles. We have numerous examples of this, but I would just like to share a couple. Edwin Pierre Louis is a graduate student who participated in the program last year. Edwin harvested his first deer with a crossbow during a follow-up hunt, proceeded to purchase a rifle, harvested four more deer, took three new people hunting with him, and shared venison with all of his lab mates at the University of Georgia — all within his first deer season!

Brandon White is a racecar engineer who went through the program in the same cohort as Edwin. Brandon also got hooked, purchased his own equipment, and harvested three deer! He has two small children he plans to introduce to hunting once they're older, and he consistently talks about how rewarding it is to put all-natural protein on his family's

table. Edwin and Brandon both came back to help with Field to Fork as mentors this year, with Brandon even offering up property for the program.

You may be thinking, those seem like outliers or extreme examples. However, we have many stories similar to those above when dealing with adults getting into hunting for the first time. In fact, 80 percent of Field to Fork participants hunted on their own within the first year after participating in the program. We recently further surveyed a few past participants and realized that the venison harvested through Field to Fork has been shared

80 percent of Field to Fork participants hunted on their own within the first year after participating in the program.

with hundreds of non-hunters. While it's hard to quantify the effect these people are having on their communities, I think it is safe to say that through the sharing of their experiences and harvest, Field to Fork graduates are having a substantial positive impact on the way hunting is viewed within their circles and likely generating interest in hunting among their peers.

With all of these positive outcomes and the hunting community taking notice,

we are in the process of expanding Field to Fork. The Georgia program just finished its third year, and the Kentucky program continues as well, but this year QDMA Branches and volunteers are launching Field to Fork in eight additional states: Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas and Virginia. Similar to the Athens program, a key to success with these new areas will be partnerships. The QDMA volunteers in the new states are also partnering with other local and national conservation organizations.

I truly believe that Field to Fork has the potential to have a lasting impact on securing the future of hunting and our natural resources. There is something about the authenticity of the message that brings non-hunters and hunters together focusing on common ground rather than what divides us. With programs like this and help from hunters like yourselves, we can ensure that hunting is viewed as an activity for everyone who loves the outdoors or has a passion for natural food; an activity that transcends all societal, political, and religious boundaries, allowing participants to form a deeper connection with each other and their surrounding natural world.

Do your part for hunting and conservation: mentor a new hunter, whether it is through a program like Field to Fork or on your own. Interested in starting a Field to Fork in your area? Contact Hank Forester at hforester@qdma.com or 800-209-3337.



QDMA'S FIRST NEW HAMPSHIRE BRANCH, along with the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), hosted 21 first-time hunters and employees of Ruger and SIG Sauer at the Owl Brook Hunter Education Center for the training portion of their Field to Fork program, which is being documented by Northwoods Collective. New Hampshire is one of eight new states to launch Field to Fork programs in 2018.

QDMA EXPANDS FIELD TO FORK HUNTER RECRUITMENT INTO 8 NEW STATES

Field to Fork, a hunter recruitment program for adults from non-hunting backgrounds, is expanding into seven new states this year after two successful seasons of pilot testing near QDMA Headquarters in Georgia. Of 22 adult participants in the pilot program, 80 percent have continued to hunt on their own within the first year after participation in the workshop.

A modified version of a program created by the Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources, QDMA's Field to Fork pilot started with a unique approach involving recruitment at a local farmer's market. Visitors were asked if they wanted to sample from a spread of venison sausage, grilled backstrap or venison jerky, and they were provided with a handout titled "Why Should You Hunt Deer?" They were then offered the chance to participate in a workshop that would teach

One of the primary advantages of an adult-centered recruitment program is that participants can quickly become independent, hunt on their own, and in turn share their knowledge and enthusiasm with others.

them how to hunt and acquire a wild, healthy, local, sustainable source of food on their own.

"The reception was overwhelming," said Charles Evans, Georgia's R3 Coordinator, who partnered with QDMA's Hunting Heritage Programs Manager Hank Forester to develop and implement Field to Fork. "Everyone was curious, most tried venison, and quite a few signed up to go hunting with us. The first year, we ended up with a diverse group of participants ages 18 to 47 who all shared a common desire to have a connection with the food on their plates."

The 22 participants who completed Field to Fork-Athens in the first two years represent a range of non-traditional backgrounds and had not been hunting before.

That's one of the most important aspects of the program, said Hank Forester: to keep hunting relevant, hunters must reach out to people who do not fit the traditional mold of a "deer hunter."

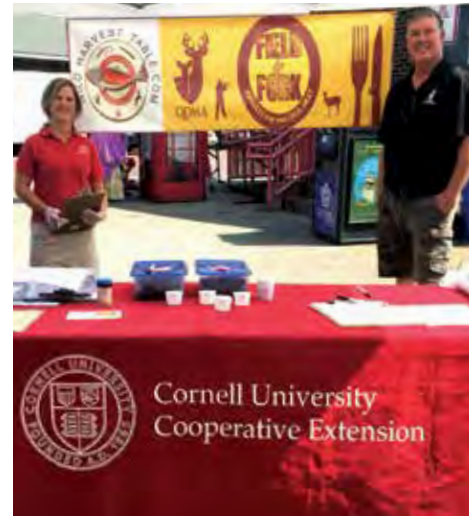
Volunteers with QDMA and Cornell University operated a Field to Fork booth at a recent farmer's market in Rochester, New York.

The Georgia program is now entering its third year, and the Kentucky program continues as well, but this year QDMA Branches and volunteers are launching Field to Fork in eight additional states: Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, New York, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Texas and Virginia.

A key to success with Field to Fork is partnerships. The Georgia program is a joint effort involving QDMA, Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division, the National Wild Turkey Federation and the Georgia Wildlife Federation. QDMA volunteers in the new states are also partnering with other local and national conservation organizations.

One of the primary advantages of an adult-centered recruitment program is that participants can quickly become independent, hunt on their own, and in turn share their knowledge and enthusiasm with others.

"Not only did a lot of our participants continue hunting on their own, many of them shared their venison with friends,



family and co-workers," said Forester. "Some of them tried hunting other species like turkeys and small game. And some of them have even mentored other hunters already. The positive effects of recruiting new adult hunters grow quickly."

Keys to success with Field to Fork include education and training, partnering each participant with a knowledgeable and supportive mentor, and sharing of success and meals after the hunt. QDMA recently received a grant from the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) to document the program and create standardized training for mentors and Field to Fork leaders. For more information about QDMA's Field to Fork program, contact Hank Forester at hforester@qdma.com or 800-209-3337.



VOLUNTEERS with QDMA and the Pennsylvania Game Commission partner to operate a Field to Fork booth at a recent farmer's market in Pennsylvania.

QDMA's WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT COOPERATIVE COORDINATOR – MICHIGAN UPDATE



The year 2018 proved to be an exciting year for the Michigan Wildlife Cooperatives Program. Participants took whitetail management to a new level as they increased the number of acres impacted for wildlife, conducted surveys and attended educational events. Cooperative members also broadened their reach by engaging in regulatory discussion with the Natural Resource Commission.

Michigan deer hunters are not strangers to the looming threat of disease including chronic wasting disease and bovine tuberculosis (bovine Tb). Cooperatives worked diligently throughout the year to spread awareness by hosting meetings in their areas in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources focused on disease management. Their impact was evident by the numerous new cooperatives that were formed because a person connected with an individual at these meetings. The realization that sound deer management becomes landscape-level success through the work of cooperatives has made them a self-sustaining force.

The 4th annual Deer Rendezvous was held in Coopersville, Michigan at the Crockery Creek Deer Cooperative. This event provides cooperative and Branch leaders a chance to collaborate on challenges and celebrate accomplishments together. The theme this year was bridging the gap between the hunting and farming community. There were 45 people in attendance with 15 cooperatives and eight QDMA Branches represented.

We were honored to have Alex Foster (QDMA Cooperative Specialist in Missouri), Josh Hillyard (Region 3



QDMA Branch and Cooperative leaders had the opportunity to participate in several property tours of different commodity producers to see the effect wildlife can have on production, at the annual Michigan Deer Rendezvous.

Director), and Erik Schnelle (Michigan State Chapter President) present throughout the weekend along with DNR and Michigan State University Extension staff to help gain multiple perspectives on the topic. The agenda this year included property management planning, antlerless harvest, trail-camera surveys without bait, relationship building and farm tours. Hot topics like managing deer in disease areas and the captive cervid industry were also discussed. This group proved to be motivated and engaged in conversation. It was refreshing to see so many organizations come together to brainstorm solutions.

QDM Cooperatives also voluntarily participated in a deer browse survey on their properties. Upon analysis, survey results serve as a good starting point to understand how local deer density is influencing habitat. Deer browse surveys offer insight to how much browse pressure there is, what kind of plants are preferred, and how canopy cover is impacting vegetative growth on the forest floor. Cooperatives use this information to decide if they need to increase or decrease antlerless harvest

to balance the herd and see what kind of habitat work should be planned for the upcoming year.

The Michigan Wildlife Cooperatives Program is wrapping up the year with 335,592 acres, and 9,160 of them were added in 2018. Over 3,600 people make up these cooperatives. These individuals prove on a daily basis how dedicated they are to conservation of the whitetail and as cooperative members, to each other. They motivate, strive for expansion every year and challenge themselves to be the positive change to ensure the future of our hunting heritage.

Thank you to Michigan QDMA and its Branches, National QDMA, Michigan DNR, Pheasants Forever and Michigan United Conservation Clubs for their continued support of this program.

For more information on what is going on with Michigan Wildlife Cooperatives, please contact Morgan Warda, Wildlife Cooperative Coordinator, at mwarda@mucc.org or visit the program website at www.mucc.org/cooperatives.

QDMA's WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT COOPERATIVE SPECIALISTS – MISSOURI UPDATE

In 2013, QDMA worked in partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) to hire Brian Towe to engage landowners and establish QDM Cooperatives in Missouri. This position is responsible for establishing new Cooperatives and servicing existing ones, assisting landowners with wildlife and habitat management programs and making them aware of CRP and other NRCS and MDC programs. With the demand for these services over such a large landscape, an additional position was needed. In 2016, QDMA partnered with MDC to hire Alex Foster. This new addition allowed for more focused efforts in both the northern (Missouri River Unit) and southern portions (Ozark Unit) of the state.

Forward to 2018, and there are over 50 cooperatives statewide managing over 200,000 acres of diverse wildlife habitat. Efforts in 2018 resulted in four new cooperatives being developed, and an addition of 7,460 acres to existing cooperatives, 3,530 acres of prescribed burning were imple-

mented, and nearly 300 acres of timbered landscape were managed by timber stand improvement (TSI). Dozens of workshops and meetings provided training on chronic wasting disease (CWD) sample collection, prescribed burning, TSI, aging on the hoof and at harvest, and predator trapping.

A statewide cooperative survey was conducted in September to get a better grasp on what was being accomplished already, and what is needed in the future to improve the Missouri Cooperatives Program. Along with the survey, an interactive statewide map was created displaying the distribution and diversity of cooperatives across the state. The future of this map will provide contact information for specific cooperatives to allow for better communication and engagement amongst different cooperatives.

QDMA worked in partnership with MDC and The Missouri Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers to hold a CWD symposium to address some of the concerns and answer questions about the detrimental disease. There were over 80

Missourians in attendance who left more informed about the disease and management strategies.

QDMA's Conservation team facilitated a meeting with MDC, Drury Outdoors, and Heartland Bowhunter to discuss season timing, deer population trends and harvest statistics, as well as CWD in Missouri and the potential for cooperative efforts to ensure the future of Missouri's deer herd and hunting opportunities.

Cooperatives in Missouri have been seeing great results for some time now from their intensive habitat and herd management, with 2018 being several years out of the 2012/2013 EHD outbreak, it was a great year for several cooperative members to capitalize on mature buck harvest opportunities.

For more information on Cooperative development contact QDMA Cooperative Specialist Alex Foster at afoster@qdma.com and 660-605-0501 or Jake Grages at jgrages@qdma.com and 573-410-5318.



QDMA member Isaac Coy of Missouri had a successful season hunting on a QDM Cooperative.

QDMA & THE YOUNG FOREST INITIATIVE

Across the northeastern United States and Great Lakes region, landowners, foresters and wildlife biologists are taking measures to create, maintain or enhance young forest to provide habitat for the declining wildlife that need it. This concerted effort is called the Young Forest Initiative and, naturally, QDMA is involved.

The remarkable lack of young forest in the Northeast and around the Great Lakes region has resulted from past land use. From the colonial period into the 19th Century, great effort was put into clearing forest for agriculture. Over the course of this era, forested acreage reached an all-time low. Subsequently, much of this farmland was abandoned and allowed to develop into forest again, particularly on marginal growing sites that did not offer suitable crop yields. This trend accelerated drastically during the Great Depression, with many farms being purchased by government and planted with conifers or left to natural succession.

Today, we have much more forest across the Northeast than in days past. However, these regrown forests have become older, and the early stages of forest development are no longer prevalent on the landscape. For whitetails this means that less browse and cover is available, including critical fawning habitat. Other less adaptable species including American woodcock, New England cottontail and golden-winged warbler have suffered serious declines in productivity.

With a landscape consisting predominantly of older even-aged forests, the remedy will be to regenerate many of these stands through heavy tree felling. In some cases, sites that are earlier in their transition from shrub or sapling cover can be “set back.” This may involve releasing native shrubs and other desirable plants like apple trees which are still viable but becoming overtopped by later-successional hardwoods, or clearcutting aspen, a pioneer hardwood that is often among the first to establish on abandoned farm sites. Clearcutting aspen causes it to coppice, or sprout vigorously from its root system, to provide brushy cover.

Along with partners at NWTF, Audubon Society, RGS, WMI, NRCS and others, QDMA is proud to offer assistance to New York landowners who are interested in creating young forest to provide habitat



for the wildlife that need it. Through NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program, financial assistance is available to aid landowners for implementing these projects.

In 2018 alone, QDMA assisted just over 50 New York landowners through the Young Forest Initiative who collectively control over fourteen thousand acres. This included

on-site consultations, and, for some, drafting management plans and assistance in accessing financial aid through NRCS programs.

For more information, contact QDMA Young Forest Specialist Tim Russell at trussell@qdma.com and 315-530-7328.

THE BENEFITS OF QDM COOPERATIVES



The Pipestone Creek QDM Cooperative in Michigan recently held their 5th annual post-season social and deer check. Wildlife biologist Nate DeVries of Michigan DNR was invited, and he aged jawbones from deer harvested on the Cooperative this season and spoke about deer issues in Michigan. A meal, fellowship and antler scoring followed. Cooperatives enhance the social bonds among deer hunters in local areas.

Over the past two years, the University of Georgia conducted research evaluating 45 Quality Deer Management Cooperatives, their members, and land-cover impacts across Georgia, Missouri, Michigan, New York, and Texas. Engaging private landowners to achieve landscape-level conservation is widely practiced. However, established mechanisms to encourage voluntary conservation practices are lacking for conservation planners. Cooperatives represent a novel approach to engage private landowners and hunters to improve deer herd and hunting quality for broader landscape-level conservation use. A Cooperative is a group of landowners and hunters voluntarily working together to improve the quality of wildlife, habitat and hunting experiences on their collective acreage. Our research evaluated 45 Cooperatives and surveyed member attributes and motivations while also comparing land cover to the surrounding landscape in four states.

We reported higher amounts of multiple “wildlife centric” land cover types in Cooperatives across states, and lower amounts of “agriculturally centric” land cover in three of four states. Land cover differences illustrate Cooperative ben-

efits to broader landscape conservation. Voluntary habitat management conducted by Cooperative members, driven by deer management, produced more early successional areas, wildlife openings (food plots), and even thinned forests. Simultaneously, we described decreased amounts of agriculturally centric land cover such as row crop, managed exotic grass (hay or cattle pasture), and developed land. With entire landscape compositions shifting toward wildlife friendly land covers, the conservation implications are enormous for game and non-game species.

We also surveyed over 400 Cooperative members across all five states. We asked questions regarding harvest tendencies, current satisfaction with Cooperatives, member motivations, and the importance and satisfaction of various hunting/deer management attributes. We found a 15.6 percent increase in overall Cooperative member hunting satisfaction with membership. We also performed importance-satisfaction analyses on 22 different hunting/management attributes to determine areas of concern and attributes that Cooperatives adequately provide members. Not only did we analyze these attributes for all members, but we described

four types of Cooperative members based on their answers to the survey’s motivational questions. Our results indicate that motivations for Cooperative membership influence importance and satisfaction ratings further revealing that multiple types of hunters and members exist within Cooperative networks.

Our research provides a basic understanding of motivations that influence Cooperative membership needs and desires for future utilization in Cooperative formation and improvement. These findings have the potential to directly assist the QDMA in mission goal fulfillment and assist deer managers in the use of Cooperatives as a wildlife management tool. Utilization of the results will provide private lands biologist with information about Cooperative membership subgroups to increase Cooperative participation, hunter satisfaction, and active habitat management. Ultimately, our research offers information to aid implementation and viability of new Cooperatives and sustainability of existing Cooperatives to meet hunter and habitat management goals. We look forward to sharing more results in future issues of *Quality Whitetails!*

QDMA ADVANCEMENT



The QDMA is a big supporter of youth and adult apprentice programs designed for recruitment and retention of new hunters. Twenty-seven of 35 eastern states have a mentored youth program. The QDMA has youth hunting kits for 131 QDMA Branches in 31 states, a mentored hunting guide available at QDMA.com, and a #FirstDeer campaign to encourage hunters to mentor youths and interested adults.

With the launch of our Share Your Hunt™ program, QDMA provides insurance, membership, background checks, a blaze-orange hat and vest and educational resources to all new hunters hosted by QDMA Branches. Our QDMA in the Classroom membership already reaches 30,000+ middle and high school students annually teaching sound deer biology and management to the next generation. Our QDMA's *Guide to Successful Deer Hunting* book reaches approximately 350,000 annually.

The QDMA averaged about 90 advocacy issues in local, state, and national arenas over the last three years, and exceeded that level in 2018. Our Deer Steward Level 1 & 2 courses are provided annually at the request and convenience of our members. Participants of our Deer Steward courses have impacted a minimum of 10 million acres in North America since 2007. Our annual *Whitetail Report* is unique in the nation; providing the heartbeat of whitetail-related matters. It was announced in the 2016 report that the percentage of 3½-year-old bucks in the nationwide harvest exceeded that of yearling bucks (1½-year-olds)

for the first time ever, a reflection of education and respect among deer hunters. And, that trend appears to be continuing. The *Quality Whitetails* journal promotes our organization's mission: To ensure the future of the white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat, and our hunting heritage. The QDMA is regarded as the voice of the whitetail throughout the nation.

The QDMA celebrated its 30th Anniversary in 2018, and now it is time to transition into a New Year with a bold approach toward furthering our mission to enhance the future of the white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. There are challenges the likes of which we have not experienced until now. A recent annual report by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service revealed that hunter numbers declined by nearly 2.2 million during the past five years. Chronic wasting disease (CWD) continues to spread and epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD, or HD), still sporadic from year to year, extended its northern range into Ontario, Canada in 2018. Existing deer habitat is compromised by land fragmentation, conversion to other land uses, and residential/commercial development. The QDMA has been and will continue to be vigilant on these national issues and those at the local and state level. As always, our members will be kept abreast of this important information through the *Quality Whitetails* journal and the annual *Whitetail Report*. More than ever we need strong, financial support from our members.

There are numerous ways to donate to the QDMA including:

- Land Gifts
- Brothers-Hamilton 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, QDMA's CEO, at bmurphy@qdma.com and 800-209-3337 or Joe Hamilton, QDMA's Founder & Senior Advisor, at jhamilton@qdma.com and 843-844-8610. Thank you!

QDMA has set ambitious five-year mission goals, outlined on page 40. 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 and browsing the "Support" menu to see the wide range of options.
- Update your email address with us so you can receive news of local Branch events and national initiatives on a regular basis.

THE BROTHERS-HAMILTON SOCIETY



The Brothers-Hamilton Society (BHS) continues to grow a reflection of critical financial support for the QDMA. The 19 inductees at the 2018 National

Convention in New Orleans brought the total membership to 76. Membership in the BHS includes 71 individuals, four foundations, and one company, representing 19 states.

One current member and two inductees for 2019 recently shared their thoughts about the significance of the BHS to themselves and the QDMA.

DR. STEVEN HOMYACK, JR.

“GET INVOLVED AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE. Over the years this has become my modus operandi. Find something that you love and follow the dream. In 1994 at Remington Farms (now Chesapeake Farms) I saw a 35mm slide presentation of shoot/don't shoot deer given by Dr. Larry Marchinton and Dr. Mark Conner. Thus started my QDMA journey. Next thing you know I had three life memberships: myself and each of my professional wildlife biologist children. Their work at WVU introduced me to Dr. Dave Samuels. Tim Smail started the QDMA movement in Pennsylvania and I became the president of the first Pennsylvania Branch. Our first event was a short course in 2000 with Brian Murphy as our featured speaker. Kip Adams was at our first banquet on his first day as a QDMA employee. We've now had 18. At the 2nd National Convention I was introduced to Al Brothers, a friendship I've maintained. I treasure my friendship with Joe Hamilton and so many others as well.



“It's been a journey. The evolution of QDMA has been mapped in *Quality Whitetails*. The organization has achieved many of its goals, but new goals have replaced them. Through my involvement I've met and made many friends throughout the whitetail's range. The DS1 and DS2 courses were great. The greatest honor has been my acceptance into the Brothers-

Hamilton Society. Although the “Brothers” refers to Al Brothers, it could easily also refer to all my QDMA brothers (and sisters). The journey will not end. My involvement will not end. I will continue to make a difference. I hope you will too.”

BOB AND SUE SCHERER



“It is through our association with QDMA and the conservation practices that you 'preach and teach' across this great country that have allowed us to build a quality deer herd and habitat at our 200-acre Westport Farm in Dooly County, Georgia. This is our 'slice of heaven on earth.' We have also been able to develop a wonderfully successful QDM Cooperative with our four surrounding landowners/neighbors to manage around 2,500 acres. We look forward to having our land included in the QDMA Land Certification Program in the near future.

“I have benefited from and enjoyed the educational lessons/programs from the Deer Steward 1 course in Kirksville, Missouri in 2017 as well as the Deer Steward 2 course last spring in Lufkin, Texas. Awesome courses they were, and what a great team of professionals you have who organize and teach these courses!

“While reviewing our personal estate planning, we look forward to discussing and finalizing having our property donated to the QDMA once we become angels on the other side. We are very passionate about what the QDMA organization does to promote ethical hunting practices and preserve our white-tailed deer herds and habitat through your wildlife conservation efforts and programs. We applaud your efforts to ensure the future of our hunting heritage in North America. Our wishes are also to have Westport Farm remain a 'deer haven' for future generations of whitetails!

“Sue and I will be honored to be inducted into the Brothers-Hamilton Society in 2019. And, we will continue to provide financial support for the organization.

“QDMA, where deer hunters and deer lovers belong!”

ROY LEACH

“My introduction to QDMA was with a copy of *Quality Whitetails* magazine. This unique magazine doesn't focus on articles showing big bucks on the ground. Its articles feature a deer's habitat and nutrition. It explains how and what it takes to grow mature bucks while maintaining a healthy deer herd in balance with existing habitat conditions.



“Many hunters in my area have a misconception of QDMA Cooperatives. They see it as an open invitation for co-op participants to hunt their property. I have assured them this is not the case. Participants in a co-op hunt only on their respective property.

“With QDMA's guidance I can do a better job explaining its mission. QDMA is doing it right. QDMA is educating hunters at its conventions, deer steward courses, and education modules. I have had great success implementing land management recommendations taught at QDMA's Deer Steward courses. The more knowledge we have ensures the future of the white-tailed deer, all wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage.

“I am honored to be a QDMA member and I look forward to being inducted into the Brothers-Hamilton Society in 2019. I am committed to supporting the QDMA.”

ELIGIBILITY FOR INDUCTION INTO THE BROTHERS-HAMILTON SOCIETY

Gifts of \$10,000* or more. Only one individual per family can become a member of the Brothers-Hamilton 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 Society or for more information, please contact QDMA's Founder & Senior Advisor Joe Hamilton at jhamilton@qdma.com or 843-844-8610.

NATIONAL CONVENTION



Fred Pape (left) of Kentucky was named the 2018 recipient of the **Joe Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award**. Pape was instrumental in the formation and growth of both National Archery in the Schools and Scholastic 3D Archery. Pape has also been a strong proponent of QDMA for nearly 20 years. The award was bestowed by QDMA Founder Joe Hamilton.



QDMA named Jerry Tibbott (left) of Pennsylvania the **AI Brothers Deer Manager of the Year**. Tibbott is hosting a Deer Steward 2 course at his place, the Bearded Buck, as well as a QDMA Field to Fork hunt. He has hosted countless youth, veteran and disabled hunters on his farm. The award was presented by QDMA's Director of Conservation, Kip Adams.



Darren Boudreaux of Louisiana was named QDMA's 2018 **Professional Deer Manager of the Year**. Darren is a QDMA Life Member, Level 3 Deer Steward, and a 16-year employee of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service where he serves as a program liaison. Presenting the award was QDMA's Director of Communications, Lindsay Thomas Jr.



The Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) was named QDMA's **Agency of the Year**. The PGC has one of the most progressive deer management programs in the country, with a written deer management plan based on science and public input. Accepting the award from QDMA Board Member David Guynn (right), was the Chief of the PGC Game Management Division Ian Gregg.



Outdoor writer, blogger and podcaster Dan Johnson of Iowa was named the QDMA **Signpost Communicator of the Year**. Johnson is the hunter behind the Nine Finger Chronicles blog and podcast, as well as the Sportsmen's Nation podcast network. Johnson has invited QDMA staff members to serve as podcast guests, and has regularly encouraged his listeners to join QDMA.



Jennie Richardson, Executive Director of Scholastic 3D Archery (S3DA), received QDMA's **Hunting Heritage Award** for her contributions to hunter recruitment through youth archery programs. Richardson is a former State Coordinator for the National Archery in the Schools Program and creator of S3DA. Presenting the award to Richardson is QDMA Hunting Heritage Programs Manager Hank Forester.



Mossy Oak CEO and founder Toxey Haas and Senior Vice President Ronnie "Cuz" Strickland accepted QDMA's 2018 **Corporate Achievement Award**. Mossy Oak is the longest-standing corporate sponsor of QDMA, having signed on in 1998 when QDMA was only 10 years old. In Mossy Oak's 20 years of corporate support for QDMA, their cumulative financial contribution to QDMA's non-profit mission now totals in six figures. Pictured (L-R) are Joe Hamilton, Mossy Oak CEO Toxey Haas, Senior VP Ronnie "Cuz" Strickland, and Brian Murphy.



QDMA presented its **Ambassador Award** to Marion Burnside (right) of South Carolina. Since Burnside could not make the National Convention, the award was presented by QDMA Founder Joe Hamilton at a surprise party for Burnside at his Millaree Hunt Club property in South Carolina. Burnside, a QDMA Life Member, is a former chairman of the South Carolina DNR Commission. He has hosted numerous QDMA Branch functions and events at his property, including a Deer Steward 2 course and a Predator Trapping Module. Also pictured is Marion's wife, Blake.

2018 QDMA CONSERVATION &

BRANCH ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

NATIONAL CONVENTION



Mississippi's Pinebelt Branch earned the **New Branch of the Year** award. In their first year, this new QDMA Branch held a banquet that generated over \$57,000 and 200 QDMA memberships. They also held four educational events. Pictured (L-R): Mike Mitchell, Branch President; Justin Thayer, Branch Committee; Ryan Furrer, QDMA Senior Regional Director.



The **Branch President of the Year** award went to Jon Ranck (left) of Virginia. Jon has served as president of the River City Branch for ten years. Jon and the Branch host an annual youth hunt at Jon's farm, hold educational events, do community outreach, provide scholarships and operate a successful venison donation program. Pictured with Regional Director Rick Counts.



South Carolina's Lowcountry Branch took the honors of **Fundraising Branch of the Year** as well as the **Membership Branch of the Year**. Over the years, the Lowcountry Branch has won numerous awards. Pictured (L-R): David Galloway, Branch banquet chairman; Mary Helen Canaday, Branch President; Rick Counts, Regional Director; Matt Meadows, Branch VP.



The **Event of the Year** was a Field to Fork program put on by the Athens Branch of Georgia. The Branch facilitated the event for 10 adult first-time hunters in the Athens area. Branch volunteers educated, mentored and guided the new hunters, then celebrated the hunt with a wild game feast. Accepting the award from QDMA Board Member Hugh Sosebee (left), was Branch committee member David Kidd.



The Neshoba Branch of Mississippi was named the **Sponsor Membership Branch of the Year** for recruiting 112 sponsor memberships in only their second year as a QDMA Branch. They also nominated a youth for QDMA's National Youth Hunt. Accepting on behalf of the Branch was Steve Long, QDMA Regional Director, and Heather Meaker, QDMA Events and Field Operations Manager, presented the award.



The **Branch of the Year** award went to the East Central Ohio Branch. They host a youth hunt every year, securing the properties, guides, and equipment needed to be successful. They give away scholarships, participate in a venison donation program, and they held one of QDMA's highest-earning banquets. Pictured (L-R): QDMA CEO Brian Murphy, Branch President Brian Yoder, and Branch VP Mark Schlabach.



This year's **Volunteer of the Year** award went to David Galloway of South Carolina. David is the banquet chairman for the Lowcountry Branch, as well as the President of the State Advisory Council. David plays a huge role in organizing QDMA membership drives and educational events for the Branch. Pictured with David is QDMA Board member Nicole Garris.



Kyle Bennett (right) of Louisiana was one of two special volunteers to receive the **Volunteer Appreciation Award**. Kyle is a QDMA Life Member and Branch President of the Southwest Louisiana Branch. He's a Level 2 QDMA Deer Steward and is working on Level 3. Presenting the award to Kyle was QDMA Board member Arthur Dick.



The second recipient of this year's **Volunteer Appreciation Award** is Erik Schnelle (right) of Michigan. Erik serves as the Michigan State Advisory Council President and is very active in QDMA's West Central Michigan Branch. Erik is also very active in deer research and management pertaining to CWD in Michigan. Regional Director Josh Hillyard presented the award.

CONTACT A QDMA BRANCH NEAR YOU



Branch Name	Town	State	Branch Contact	Phone	Email
Auburn University Toomer's Branch	Auburn	Alabama	Logan Bailey	(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	Mobile	Alabama	Daryl Bell	(850) 982-3554	darylbell7041@gmail.com
Gulf Coast Branch	Moblie	Alabama	Natalie Howard	(251) 366-1325	nathoward12@yahoo.com
Heart of Dixie	Vestavia Hills	Alabama	Chris Guest	(205) 540-6633	chris.guest@mckinneycapital.net
Heart Pine Branch	Opp	Alabama	Tim Free	(334) 764-3463	timberman66@gmail.com
Post Oak	Mathews	Alabama	Hunter Smith	(334) 391-2008	hunter@collegiateoutdoors.com
Timber Belt Branch	Jackson	Alabama	Russ Sims	(251) 509-9313	rsims@nationalland.com
University of Montevallo	Clanton	Alabama	Garret Deavers	(205) 389-7538	garretdeavers256@gmail.com
Weevil Creek Branch	Enterprise	Alabama	Cary Coles	(334) 464-5427	colespressurewashing@gmail.com
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Delta Droptine	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	Bentonville	Arkansas	Bill Miller	(636) 300-7227	whmiller1s@gmail.com
Saline-Bartholomew Branch	Monticello	Arkansas	Brison 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	deqdma@gmail.com
Central Florida	Summerfield	Florida	Tami Locklear	(352) 816-5755	greyrose12363@aol.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	jnmcconnaughay@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
Swamp Buck Branch	Gainesville	Florida	Bryan Shimeall	(321) 303-2840	bryanshimeall@gmail.com
Tri-County Branch of NW FL	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
Chattahoochee Branch	Columbus	Georgia	Chris Achtziger	(706) 326-0103	cachtziger1@gmail.com
Coastal Empire	Pembroke	Georgia	Cory Parker	(912) 675-5491	cparker@rpiroof.com
Flint River Branch	Temple	Georgia	LaMont Register	(404) 450-5040	bremenuited@att.net
Georgia Foothills	Clarksville	Georgia	Mark Lovell	(706) 499-2432	landman@hemc.net

PART 3: QDMA MISSION & ANNUAL REPORT

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Ocmulgee Branch	Kathleen GA	Georgia	Terry Peavy	(478) 256-0266	hunterjeavy@cox.net
Peach State Branch	Cumming	Georgia	Christopher Thurman	(404) 414-8835	csthurman@earthlink.net
SOWEGA Branch	Thomasville	Georgia	Austin Walters	(229) 561-2226	waltersrconsultation@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@gmail.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@mchsi.com
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West-Central Branch	North Henderson	Illinois	Chase Burns	(309) 368-0370	wci_qdma@gmail.com
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Northwest Indiana Branch	Valparaiso	Indiana	Bryan McFadden	(219) 263-9283	urbandeerhunt@comcast.net
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Bluestem Branch	EL Dorado	Kansas	Timothy Donges	(316) 641-0011	tim.donges@hotmail.com
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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
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Red River Branch	Shereveport	Louisiana	Jackie Raines	(318) 453-2686	jrainesdrilling@bellsouth.net
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WhitetailReport

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

**QDMA's
Whitetail Report 2019**

