

QDMA's Whitetail Report 2020



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

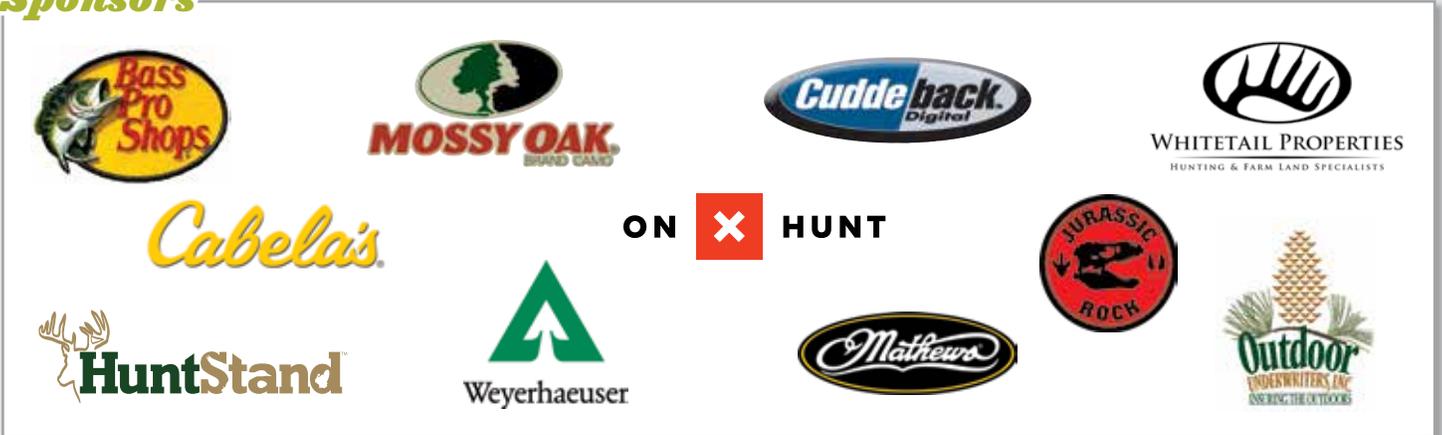


Field to Fork mentor Charles Evans (right) congratulates Andy Cunningham on his first deer.

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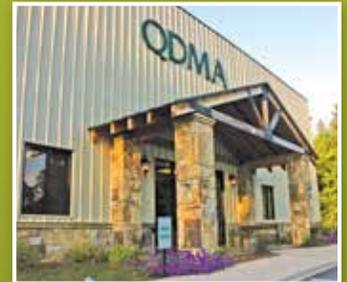
THURSDAY, MARCH 12:

Charity Sporting Clays Tournament (Optional)
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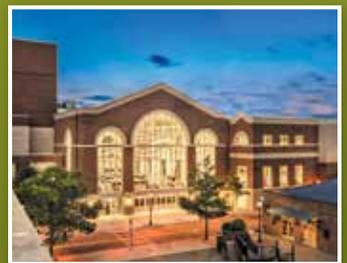
FRIDAY, MARCH 13:

QDMA Headquarters - Bogart, GA
 Classroom Sessions
 Hands-on/Field Seminars
 Awards Luncheon
 Cocktail Reception
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SATURDAY, MARCH 14:

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 University of Georgia Deer Lab Tours
 Brothers-Hamilton Cocktail Reception
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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CHECK OUT QDMA.COM/WHITETAILWEEKEND



QDMA MISSION:

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

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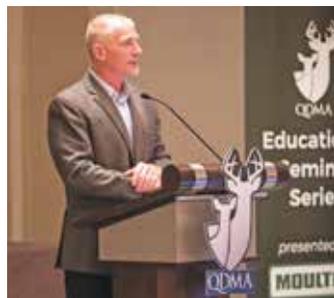
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INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE

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



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INTRODUCTION

BY KIP ADAMS



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

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

So, how are whitetails and deer hunters doing? There are some very positive trends occurring. Yearling buck harvest rates are at the lowest ever recorded, and the percentage of 3½-year-old and older bucks in the harvest is 37% of the total antlered buck harvest, which is the high-

est percentage ever recorded. Hunters are clearly reaping the benefits of more naturally balanced age structures in herds across the whitetail's range.

In addition, the antlered buck harvest (those 1½ years or older) is at near record level, and last season's buck harvest 5% above the previous 5-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 4% below the 5-year average. The antlerless harvest has now declined nearly 20 percent in the past decade. Michigan hunters shot the most antlered bucks per square mile (PSM), and Delaware hunters shot the most antlerless deer PSM.

Crossbow harvest exceeds the vertical bow harvest in 11 of 25 states (44%). Thirty-one states collect age data from deer harvested on public and private land, while only two states collect it exclusively from private land and one from public land. Twenty-six states are able to calculate in-season deer harvest estimates for their hunters and deer managers. Less than one hunting related death occurred for every 100,000 deer hunters. Over half of the wildlife management units east of the Rocky Mountains have deer densities at the established goals, while 23% have densities above goals and 22% have deer densities below goals. Regarding the 2018-19 total harvest, 66% of deer were shot with a firearm, followed by 23% with a bow, 10% by muzzleloader, and 1% by other means.

The biggest issues and trends include the continued spread of chronic wasting disease (CWD). CWD made major headlines in 2019. State wildlife agencies collected over 175,000 CWD samples in 2018. This is up from 53,000 a decade

Outlook for 2019-20 Deer Season

At the time of writing this *Whitetail Report*, many 2019-20 deer seasons were still underway, so the statistics highlighted in this report are all from the most recent hunting season that is complete (2018-19). However, some states have already issued press releases on the 2019-20 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, 2019 was a good year for many deer hunters.

Kentucky

Record gun deer harvest.

Missouri

Harvest down 2% but still near record numbers.

Vermont

Fourth highest deer harvest in last two decades.

Louisiana

Deer harvest through January 5 was up 9% from a year ago.

Wisconsin

Deer kill down 14%.

ago. The average wait time for a CWD test result was 36 days, and this ranged from four days in Minnesota to seven months in Connecticut. Twenty-eight states reported a combined CWD budget of just under \$11 million. This ranged from \$500 in Massachusetts to \$3 million in Pennsylvania. Finally, state wildlife agency deer project leaders reported spending more time on CWD (22%) than deer management proposals (20%) or education and outreach (14%).

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 2020 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 2019-20 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 2020 *Whitetail Report*, QDMA compared harvest data from the three most recent seasons available: 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19. We acquired some harvest data from all 48 states in the contiguous U.S., and from six of eight Canadian provinces. Arizona was unable to provide total harvest numbers so we listed numbers from the 2017-18 season. To allow comparisons across years we analyzed data from the 37 states in the Midwest, Northeast and

Southeast, and also included data from the West and Canada in the harvest table. In future years we will also conduct analyses on data from these latter two regions as it's available. Finally, some western states harvest data included both whitetails and mule deer. Therefore, we chose to separate harvest data from the West from the total of other regions.

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

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

ANTLERED BUCK HARVEST

2018 was a great year for hunters. The total buck harvest was 2,908,155 and that was within 2% of the record harvest in 2017. More antlered bucks (those 1½ years or older) were shot in 18 of 36 states (50%) in the 2018-19 deer season than during the 2017-18 season. Seven of 13 states in the Northeast, seven of 13 states in the Midwest, and four of 11 states in the Southeast shot more bucks in 2018 than 2017. All regions shot a similar percentage of bucks as the prior year.

Overall, Texas shot the most bucks (508,155) and Rhode Island shot the fewest (994). Michigan, South Carolina and Pennsylvania more than doubled

the national average and shot 3.3 to 3.7 bucks per square mile (PSM), while North Dakota shot the fewest (0.3 PSM).

Comparing the 2018 buck harvest to the previous five-year average shows hunters had a great year. 2017 had a historically high buck harvest, and 23 of 37 states (62%) shot more bucks in 2018 than their prior five-year average. The Southeast's 2018 buck harvest was 5% above its five-year average, the Northeast's was up 3%, and the Midwest's was 5% above its five-year average. Notably, Texas shot 37% more and Alabama shot 25% fewer bucks than their five-year averages, Michigan shot nearly 2½ 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 deer hunter category.

Top States Antlered Buck Harvest

State	2018 Harvest
Texas	508,155
Michigan	211,754
Wisconsin	160,075
Pennsylvania	147,750
Missouri	136,851

Top States Antlered Buck Harvest Per Square Mile

State	2018 Harvest PSM
Michigan	3.7
South Carolina	3.6
Pennsylvania	3.3
Maryland	3.1
Wisconsin	3.0

Top States With Greatest Antlered Buck Harvest Increase 2018 vs. Five-Year Average

State	% Increase
Texas	+37
Nebraska	+36
New Jersey	+24
Oklahoma	+24
Massachusetts	+22

Top States With Greatest Antlered Buck Harvest per 100 Deer Hunters

State	2018 Harvest
South Carolina	79
Texas	69
Mississippi	64
Maryland	50
Florida	49



Field to Fork mentor David Kidd (left) and Joerg Mayer with Joerg's first deer.

WHITETAIL REPORT REGIONS



ANTLERED BUCK HARVEST

State/Province	2016	2017	2018	% Change 2017-18	2018 Bucks PSM	2013-17 Average	% Change 2018 to 5yr Avg	2018 Buck Harvest/100 Deer Hunters
Alabama	103,445	85,084	73,000	-14	1.4	97,904	-25	38
Arkansas	94,794	93,625	97,607	4	1.9	91,965	6	28
Florida	57,403	61,216	48,250	-21	0.9	61,938	-22	49
Georgia	134,456	139,424	129,284	-7	2.2	140,552	-8	37
Louisiana	78,831	74,305	71,272	-4	1.6	83,584	-15	39
Mississippi	100,158	95,112	90,697	-5	1.9	103,666	-13	64
North Carolina	76,206	85,137	73,925	-13	1.5	80,697	-8	30
Oklahoma	62,595	64,728	69,851	8	1.0	56,558	24	19
South Carolina	99,678	94,561	109,208	15	3.6	102,020	7	79
Tennessee	85,977	77,408	74,592	-4	1.8	86,454	-14	*
Texas	399,487	506,809	508,155	0	1.9	370,486	37	69
Southeast Total	1,293,030	1,377,409	1,345,841	-2	1.8	1,275,874	5	48
Connecticut	6,092	6,923	5,911	-15	1.2	5,553	6	12
Delaware	4,729	5,164	4,505	-13	2.3	4,464	1	28
Maine	16,711	18,255	18,241	0	0.6	16,519	10	8
Maryland	30,326	31,670	29,699	-6	3.1	30,449	-2	50
Massachusetts	7,043	7,943	8,199	3	1.1	6,748	22	16
New Hampshire	6,629	7,708	8,029	4	0.9	6,881	17	14
New Jersey	19,889	20,082	21,545	7	2.9	17,317	24	28
New York	107,006	107,804	113,385	5	2.4	107,540	5	20
Pennsylvania	149,460	163,750	147,750	-10	3.3	140,866	5	21
Rhode Island	951	782	994	27	1.0	887	12	11
Vermont	9,995	9,477	10,028	6	1.1	8,917	12	18
Virginia	89,675	95,563	96,442	1	2.4	96,684	0	48
West Virginia	62,862	61,400	61,392	0	2.5	66,243	-7	26
Northeast Total	511,368	536,521	526,120	-2	2.2	509,068	3	23
Illinois	65,534	68,293	69,777	2	1.3	63,906	9	29
Indiana	51,783	45,095	47,256	5	1.3	47,837	-1	25
Iowa	45,379	48,492	46,198	-5	0.8	44,949	3	27
Kansas	42,287	40,749	41,056	1	0.5	41,777	-2	36
Kentucky	71,041	66,994	70,952	6	1.8	69,519	2	20
Michigan	196,233	226,656	211,754	-7	3.7	199,156	6	36
Minnesota	100,921	101,242	94,594	-7	1.2	93,876	1	16
Missouri	128,173	136,223	136,851	0	2.0	121,197	13	27
Nebraska	27,241	28,786	36,444	27	0.5	26,803	36	27
North Dakota	22,660	22,852	22,657	-1	0.3	20,545	10	38
Ohio	78,132	78,099	71,369	-9	1.7	74,804	-5	15
South Dakota	27,869	27,859	27,211	-2	0.4	27,666	-2	40
Wisconsin	156,920	158,812	160,075	1	3.0	151,114	6	25
Midwest Total	1,014,173	1,050,152	1,036,194	-1	1.3	983,149	5	25
3-Region Total	2,818,571	2,964,082	2,908,155	-2	1.6	2,768,091	5	31
Arizona ^a	7,623	9,522	9,522 ^a			11,118		
California	32,029	28,126	28,196	0	0.2	30,078	-6	*
Colorado	28,769	29,865	30,114	1	0.3	28,289	6	37
Idaho	18,498	15,895	15,162	-5	0.2	17,754	-15	10
Montana	31,475	29,843	26,323	-12	0.2	43,187	-39	*
Nevada	6,750	3,704	7,124	92	0.1	5,227	36	40
New Mexico	10,756	11,220	10,568	-6	0.1	10,870	-3	34
Oregon	*	26,235	31,525	20	0.3	26,235	20	*
Utah	*	29,926	29,926	0	0.4	29,926	0	*
Washington	27,929	21,243	23,955	13	0.4	19,761	21	21
Wyoming	9,187	9,375	9,405	0	0.1	9,045	4	34
West Total	173,016	214,954	221,820	3	0.2	231,490	-4	29
Alberta	22,275	22,350	24,198	8	0.1	22,067	10	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*	8,600	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	4,769	5,499	5,094	-7	0.2	4,638	10	13
Nova Scotia	6,523	6,812	7,204	6	0.4	6,182	17	*
Ontario	40,592	35,937	33,630	-6	0.1	36,730	-8	17
Quebec	31,531	32,076	29,654	-8	0.1	30,022	-1	21
Saskatchewan	22,177	23,252	24,468	5	0.1	17,453	40	*
Canada Total	127,807	125,926	124,248	-1	0.1	125,692	-1	17

*Data not provided/available

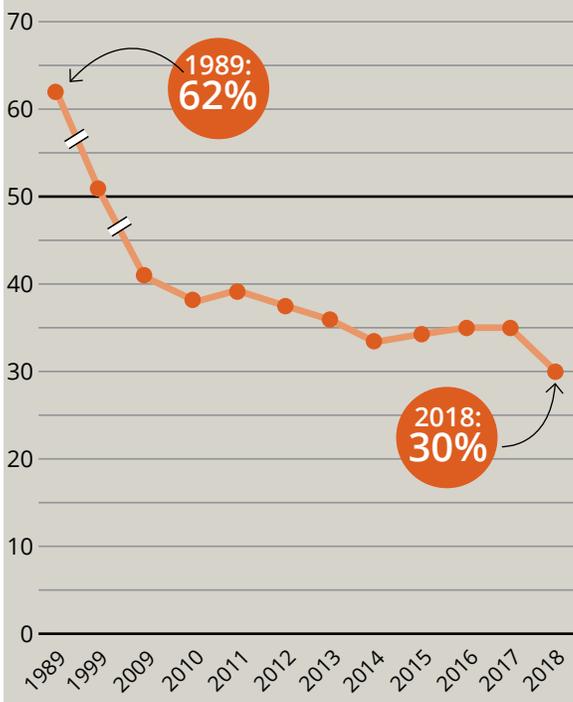
^a2018 data not available at press time, so we substituted 2017 data for regional/national discussion.The 2018 data will be added to the online version of the 2020 *Whitetail Report* as soon as it is provided.

AGE STRUCTURE OF THE BUCK HARVEST



Ten year-old Hudson Poe took this fine Kentucky buck with the help of West Kentucky QDMA Branch volunteer Jesse Maupin, who enjoys using his property to mentor new hunters.

PERCENT YEARLING BUCKS IN THE U.S. BUCK HARVEST



The QDMA also acquired the age structure of the buck harvest for most states. Twenty-seven states and one province reported the percentage of their antlered buck harvest that was 1½ years old, and 21 states and one province also reported the percentage that was 2½ and 3½ years or older. Most states in the Northeast and Southeast collect age data, and about half of the states in the Midwest do. Conversely, no states in the West and few Canadian provinces collect age data.

In 2018, the average percentage of the antlered buck harvest that was 1½ years old was 30%. This is the lowest national percentage ever reported! The fact that less than 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

Top States With Lowest percentage of Yearling Bucks in Buck Harvest

State	2018 Percentage
Arkansas	9
Florida	11
Mississippi	11
Louisiana	13
Alabama	15

Top States With Highest percentage of Yearling Bucks in Buck Harvest

State	2018 Percentage
Wisconsin	53
Maryland	42
Massachusetts	41
New York	41
Illinois	40

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

State	2018 Percentage
Mississippi	77
Louisiana	75
Arkansas	72
Oklahoma	66
Texas	65

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

State	2018 Percentage
Wisconsin	16
New York	20
Missouri	22
West Virginia	24
North Carolina	28
Ohio	28

the antlered buck harvest in the U.S. has changed during the past 30 years.

In 2018, Arkansas averaged the fewest yearlings (9% of antlered buck harvest) and Wisconsin reported the most (53% of antlered buck harvest). Arkansas was the only state in single digits, and Wisconsin was the only state above 50%. It's noteworthy that even with this distinction, Wisconsin dramatically reduced its percentage of year-

PERCENTAGE OF BUCK HARVEST BY AGE CLASS

State/Province	1½ Years Old			2½ Years Old			3½ and Older		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Alabama	20	14	15	24	28	28	56	58	57
Arkansas	5	7	9	18	19	19	77	74	72
Florida	19	17	11	46	45	46	35	38	44
Georgia	33	36	31	32	28	32	35	36	38
Louisiana	13	13	13	15	14	13	72	73	75
Mississippi	10	11	11	13	12	12	78	77	77
North Carolina	39	35	33	36	36	39	25	29	28
Oklahoma	17	19	18	13	15	16	59	66	66
South Carolina	*	36	36	*	29	29	*	35	35
Tennessee	37	40	29	46	40	46	16	20	25
Texas	23	22	18	18	17	17	59	61	65
Southeast Average	22	23	20	26	26	27	51	51	53
Connecticut	36	36	39	*	*	*	*	*	*
Delaware	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Maine	47	44	39	26	33	*	27	23	*
Maryland	47	48	42	*	*	*	*	*	*
Massachusetts	44	44	41	26	26	28	30	30	31
New Hampshire	51	52	*	25	23	*	*	*	*
New Jersey	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New York	49	47	41	31	34	39	19	19	20
Pennsylvania	44	43	36	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rhode Island	35	42	33	37	30	31	23	28	36
Vermont	34	34	*	46	46	*	20	20	*
Virginia	37	37	39	28	27	26	35	36	35
West Virginia	*	30	29	*	45	47	*	25	24
Northeast Average	42	42	38	31	33	34	26	25	29
Illinois	39	40	40	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indiana	*	27	18	*	35	40	*	38	42
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kentucky	30	24	22	41	45	43	29	31	35
Michigan	47	46	*	26	32	*	27	22	*
Minnesota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Missouri	22	36	37	48	39	41	30	25	22
Nebraska	28	27	23	37	38	40	35	35	37
North Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ohio	43	44	39	32	32	33	25	24	28
South Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wisconsin	65	65	53	18	23	31	16	12	16
Midwest Average	39	39	33	34	35	38	27	27	30
3-Region Average	34	34	30	30	31	33	35	35	37
Alberta	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	51	54	52	23	17	20	26	29	28
Nova Scotia	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ontario	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Quebec	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Canada Average	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

*Data not provided/ available

ling bucks from the prior year. As a region, the Southeast averaged the fewest yearlings (20%), followed by the Midwest (33%) and the Northeast (38%). Wisconsin had the largest year-to-year decline in harvest percentage by dropping from 65 to 53% yearling bucks. Connecticut had the largest year-to-year rise in harvest percentage by

increasing from 36 to 39% yearling bucks.

Twenty-two of 27 states (81%) 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 37% in 2018. This is by far the highest percentage ever reported, and it's amazing to realize that more than one of every three antlered bucks shot in the U.S. is at least 3½ years old. This is a testament to how far we've come as hunters and deer managers. This statistic ranged from 16% in Wisconsin to 77% in Mississippi.

ANTLERLESS DEER HARVEST



Savannah Stiltner took this mature doe in 2019 during an organized youth hunt put on by the Lake Murray QDMA Branch of South Carolina.

Antlerless harvests vary widely among states and years due to differences in deer density, productivity, a state's goals (reducing, stabilizing, or increasing the deer population), weather, disease and other factors. However, we can learn much about an agency's management program by comparing the antlerless and antlered buck harvests. Continuing with the analysis of states in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast, hunters from these regions harvested 2,881,168 antlerless deer in 2018. This was slightly lower than the 2017 antlerless harvest and 4% below the five-year average. Overall, Texas topped the list with 375,408 antlerless deer, Pennsylvania followed with 226,940, and Wisconsin was third with 175,813. The antlerless harvest has now declined nearly 20% in these regions since 2007. This is a difference of approximately 700,000 deer and 140 million venison meals. In fact, in 2018 hunters shot 26,987 more antlered bucks than antlerless deer. This marks only the second

time since 1998 the national deer harvest included more antlered bucks than antlerless deer. In 2017 hunters shot 9,453 more antlered bucks than antlerless deer.

Delaware harvested the most antlerless deer per square mile (PSM; 5.3), followed by Pennsylvania (5.1), and Maryland (4.6). These are astounding harvest rates. Regionally, the Northeast (2.6) 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 (-11%), while the Northeast (+2%) and Midwest (+3%) both shot more antlerless deer in 2018 than 2017. In total, 26 of 37 states (70%) shot more antlerless deer in 2018 than the prior year, but 21 of 37 states (57%) shot fewer antlerless deer than their five-year average.

Seven of 13 (54%) Midwest states shot more antlerless deer than antlered bucks, six of 13 (46%) Northeastern states shot more antlerless deer, and four of 11 (36%)

Top States Antlerless Harvest

State	2018 Harvest
Texas	375,408
Pennsylvania	226,940
Wisconsin	175,168
Michigan	155,898
Missouri	153,373

Top States Antlerless Harvest Per Square Mile

State	2018 Harvest PSM
Delaware	5.3
Pennsylvania	5.1
Maryland	4.6
New Jersey	4.0
Wisconsin	3.2

Top States With Greatest Antlerless Harvest per 100 Deer Hunters

State	2018 Harvest
Maryland	75
Mississippi	75
Alabama	68
Delaware	65
South Carolina	62

Top States Antlerless Deer Per Antlered Buck Harvested

State	2018 Ratio
Delaware	2.3
Alabama	1.5
Maryland	1.5
Pennsylvania	1.5
Indiana	1.4
New Jersey	1.4
Ohio	1.4

Southeastern states shot more antlerless deer than antlered bucks in 2018. 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.

ANTLERLESS DEER HARVEST

State/Province	2016	2017	2018	% Change 2017-18	2013-17 Average	% Change 2018 to 5yr Avg	2018 Antlerless PSM	2018 Antlerless per Antlered	2018 Antlerless Harvest/100 Deer Hunters
Alabama	191,555	127,360	130,040	2	166,577	-22	2.6	1.5	68
Arkansas	107,276	111,685	112,458	1	116,348	-3	2.2	1.2	32
Florida	32,024	35,811	26,724	-25	35,971	-26	0.5	0.6	27
Georgia	181,998	242,205	149,119	-38	244,841	-39	2.6	1.2	42
Louisiana	59,469	60,795	49,528	-19	64,992	-24	1.1	0.7	27
Mississippi	144,622	99,449	106,200	7	137,195	-23	2.3	1.2	75
North Carolina	73,605	76,717	69,606	-9	82,500	-16	1.4	0.9	28
Oklahoma	36,428	43,186	39,409	-9	39,578	0	0.6	0.6	11
South Carolina	72,637	90,725	85,778	-5	94,257	-9	2.9	0.8	62
Tennessee	71,650	66,597	72,473	9	74,014	-2	1.8	1.0	*
Texas	322,557	411,200	375,408	-9	310,230	21	1.4	0.7	51
Southeast Total	1,293,821	1,365,730	1,216,743	-11	1,366,503	-11	1.6	0.9	43
Connecticut	4,320	4,476	5,434	21	5,502	-1	1.1	0.9	11
Delaware	10,064	10,140	10,378	2	10,192	2	5.3	2.3	65
Maine	6,685	8,978	14,210	58	7,088	100	0.5	0.8	7
Maryland	54,867	54,872	44,249	-19	57,251	-23	4.6	1.5	75
Massachusetts	5,206	5,362	6,532	22	4,896	33	0.8	0.8	13
New Hampshire	4,047	4,601	6,084	32	4,682	30	0.7	0.8	11
New Jersey	29,357	28,463	29,316	3	30,469	-4	4.0	1.4	38
New York	106,055	95,623	114,402	20	112,800	1	2.4	1.0	20
Pennsylvania	183,794	203,409	226,940	12	193,758	17	5.1	1.5	32
Rhode Island	985	1,102	1,131	3	1,140	-1	1.1	1.1	13
Vermont	6,225	6,507	8,983	38	5,612	60	1.0	0.9	16
Virginia	90,986	95,060	95,505	0	106,978	-11	2.4	1.0	48
West Virginia	49,467	46,742	47,464	2	56,370	-16	2.0	0.8	20
Northeast Total	552,058	565,335	610,628	8	596,738	2	2.6	1.2	27
Illinois	78,769	79,396	81,932	3	84,409	-3	1.5	1.2	33
Indiana	67,694	68,500	63,995	-7	67,132	-5	1.8	1.4	34
Iowa	56,018	57,086	61,659	8	57,724	7	1.1	1.3	36
Kansas	41,738	36,925	38,902	5	45,976	-15	0.5	0.9	34
Kentucky	69,301	69,024	74,793	8	73,560	2	1.9	1.1	21
Michigan	145,054	150,709	155,898	3	150,542	4	2.8	0.7	27
Minnesota	72,292	96,526	94,112	-3	74,633	26	1.2	1.0	16
Missouri	138,071	147,947	153,373	4	145,534	5	2.2	1.1	31
Nebraska	19,701	18,059	21,904	21	18,048	21	0.3	0.6	16
North Dakota	13,195	13,249	14,124	7	13,319	6	0.2	0.6	24
Ohio	104,037	108,148	100,680	-7	109,827	-8	2.5	1.4	22
South Dakota	18,661	16,768	17,257	3	17,886	-4	0.2	0.6	26
Wisconsin	159,854	161,227	175,168	9	167,539	5	3.2	1.1	27
Midwest Total	984,385	1,023,564	1,053,797	3	1,026,129	3	1.3	1.0	26
3-Region Total	2,830,264	2,954,629	2,881,168	-2	2,989,370	-4	1.6	1.0	31
Arizona ^a	0	0	0 ^a	0	105		0.0	0.0	0
California	485	467	486	4	476	2	0.0	0.0	*
Colorado	8,055	7,896	7,574	-4	7,907	-4	0.1	0.3	9
Idaho	9,657	10,607	9,969	-6	10,580	-6	0.1	0.7	7
Montana	18,044	19,112	18,211	-5	18,255	0	0.1	0.7	*
Nevada	1,000	446	905	103	723	25	0.0	0.1	5
New Mexico	142	96	133	39	125	6	0.0	0.0	0
Oregon	*	2833	2213	-22	2,833	-22	0.0	0.1	*
Utah	*	3637	3775	4	3,637	4	0.0	0.1	*
Washington	5,565	5,294	4,092	-23	4,752	-14	0.1	0.2	4
Wyoming	8,427	8,581	9,733	13	8,366	16	0.1	1.0	35
West Total	51,375	58,969	57,091	-3	57,759	-1	0.0	0.3	9
Alberta	18,331	18,000	19,603	9	16,610	18	0.1	0.9	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	5,700	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	609	942	1,129	20	755	50	0.0	*	3
Nova Scotia	1,806	2,287	2,490	9	2,109	18	0.1	*	*
Ontario	24,195	24,945	24,703	-1	24,504	1	0.1	4.8	12
Quebec	21,311	21,622	24,402	13	21,365	14	0.0	3.4	17
Saskatchewan	5,286	5,031	4,495	-11	3,575	26	0.0	0.1	*
Canada Total	71,538	72,827	76,822	5	74,618	3	0.0	2.6	11

*Data not provided/available

^a2018 data not available at press time, so we substituted 2017 data for regional/national discussion.The 2018 data will be added to the online version of the 2020 *Whitetail Report* as soon as it is provided.

AGE STRUCTURE OF THE ANTLERLESS HARVEST

The QDMA also acquired the age structure of the antlerless harvest data for most states. Twenty-nine states and two provinces reported the percentage of their antlerless harvest represented by fawns (deer around 6 months old in fall). Twenty-six states and one province reported the percentage that was 1½ years, and 22 states and one province reported the percentage that was 2½ and 3½ years or older. In 2018, the average antlerless harvest that was a fawn was 20%; 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%) and the Northeast averaged the most (27% of the antlerless harvest). Individually Texas (2%) shot the fewest fawns and Ohio (41%) shot the most. Texas historically shoots a very small percentage of fawns. Monitoring the percentage of fawns in the



Youth hunter Zubin (far right), age 13, poses with a mature doe (his first-ever deer) that he harvested at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge while mentored by Derek Stoner, Hunter Outreach Manager for the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Top States

With Lowest percentage of Fawns in Antlerless Harvest

State	2018 Percentage
Texas	2
Louisiana	7
Mississippi	7
Oklahoma	10
West Virginia	10

Top States

With Highest percentage of Fawns in Antlerless Harvest

State	2018 Percentage
Ohio	41
Massachusetts	38
Georgia	37
Pennsylvania	34
Virginia	33

Top States

With Highest percentage of 3½-Plus in Antlerless Harvest

State	2018 Percentage
Texas	60
Oklahoma	55
Louisiana	54
Mississippi	54
Arkansas	52

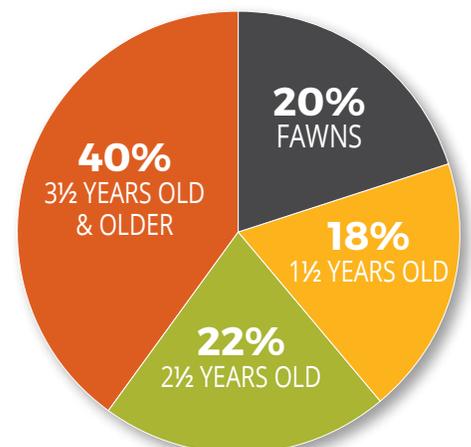
antlerless harvest is one method for estimating the fawn recruitment rate, and this statistic is one of the most important pieces of data a deer manager needs when assessing a herd's growth potential and applying a prescribed antlerless harvest.

The accompanying table also includes a state-by-state look at the percentage of the antlerless harvest from 2016 to 2018 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 individuals and most successful mothers. Nationally, over a third (40%) of the antlerless deer shot in 2018 reached the 3½ year and older age class. The Southeast leads the regions with 46% of antlerless deer in this age class, and Texas lead all states with 60% being 3½ years and older.

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

of antlerless deer to harvest annually in each management unit. Good age data keeps managers from under harvesting or overharvesting deer herds. Many hunters learn how to estimate the age of deer they harvest, and all hunters should provide every piece of data requested by their wildlife agency.

2018 PERCENTAGE OF ANTLERLESS HARVEST BY AGE CLASS



PERCENTAGE OF ANTLERLESS HARVEST BY AGE CLASS

State/Province	Fawns			1½ Years Old			2½ Years Old			3½ and Older		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Alabama	*	9	14	*	18	16	*	23	24	*	50	46
Arkansas	12	13	11	13	17	18	20	19	19	55	51	52
Florida	18	19	18	14	16	23	25	23	24	42	42	35
Georgia	23	21	37	27	19	18	33	30	23	17	30	23
Louisiana	8	8	7	18	19	20	19	18	20	55	55	54
Mississippi	8	8	7	16	21	21	19	17	18	57	54	54
North Carolina	24	11	11	18	20	21	25	28	29	33	41	40
Oklahoma	8	12	10	17	19	17	27	17	18	56	52	55
South Carolina	*	17	17	*	18	18	*	21	21	*	44	44
Tennessee	*	25	18	*	25	28	*	28	31	*	22	23
Texas	1	3	2	16	15	15	23	21	23	60	61	60
Southeast Average	13	13	14	17	19	20	24	22	23	47	46	44
Connecticut	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Delaware	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Maine	33	*	32	15	*	12	12	*	*	40	*	*
Maryland	35	33	26	23	25	26	*	*	*	*	*	*
Massachusetts	34	33	38	16	18	19	18	18	18	32	24	25
New Hampshire	29	35	*	21	14	*	10	17	*	40	34	*
New Jersey	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New York	26	29	29	19	22	19	19	20	21	36	29	31
Pennsylvania	36	36	34	20	19	19	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rhode Island	19	19	25	6	8	12	55	24	17	20	49	46
Vermont	20	20	19	14	19	13	15	16	18	51	45	50
Virginia	36	37	34	17	17	18	18	17	18	29	28	30
West Virginia	*	13	10	*	26	25	*	29	21	*	32	44
Northeast Average	30	28	27	17	19	18	21	20	19	36	34	35
Illinois	32	31	31	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indiana	*	16	15	*	25	26	*	36	33	*	23	26
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	*	13	12	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kentucky	12	19	18	25	20	17	34	37	35	29	24	30
Michigan	26	24	21	18	20	19	17	20	22	38	36	38
Minnesota	*	*	30	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Missouri	15	26	32	23	24	24	25	17	17	37	33	27
Nebraska	22	22	23	26	26	24	25	27	28	27	25	25
North Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ohio	45	38	41	16	19	19	*	*	*	*	*	*
South Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wisconsin	21	19	30	24	25	19	24	25	21	31	31	30
Midwest Average	25	23	25	22	22	21	25	27	26	32	29	29
3-Region Average	22	20	20	17	19	18	23	22	22	41	41	40
Alberta	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	15	18	8	16	19	21	15	12	17	53	52	54
Nova Scotia	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ontario	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Quebec	13	30	12	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Canada Average	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

*Data not provided/available

ANTLERLESS HARVEST PREFERENCE RELATIVE TO BUCK HARVEST



Mentor Hank Forester (right) with Danielle Bennett, better known as DivaQBBQ, with her first deer.

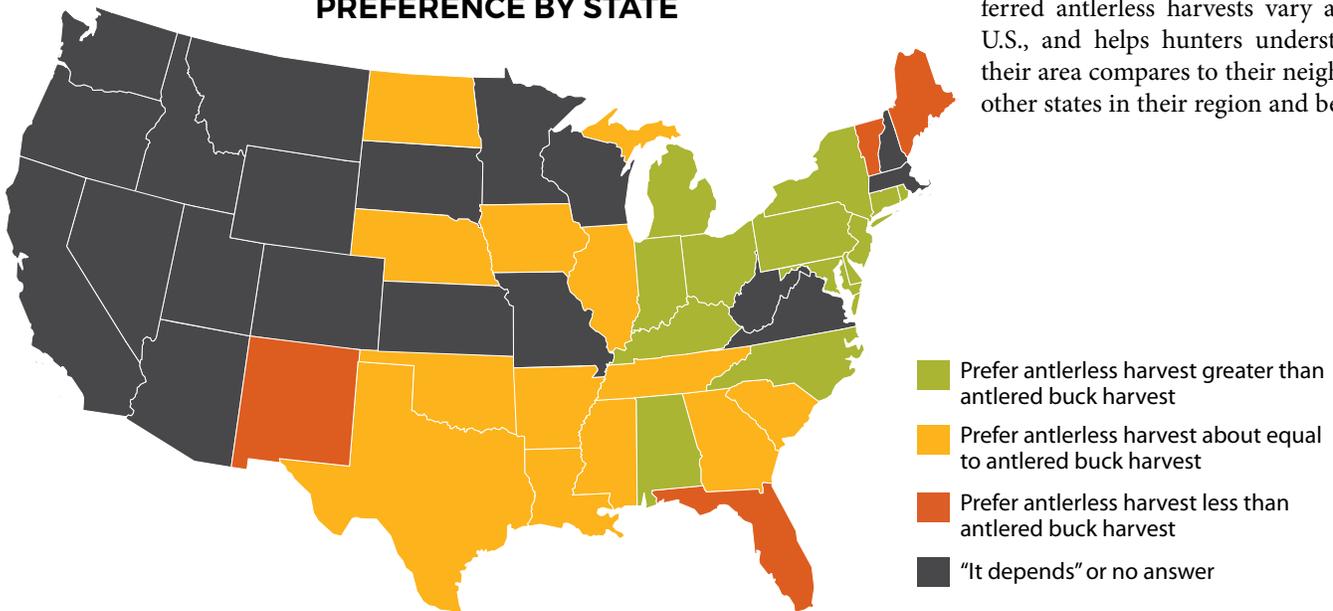
Appropriate antlerless harvests can make or break deer management programs. Repeatedly harvesting too few antlerless deer allows deer herds to become overabundant. Repeatedly harvesting too many drives populations too low. Fortunately, we have trained biologists who can determine the biologically appropriate number to harvest annually in each deer management unit. The problem is often convincing hunters to execute the plan – whether that is to shoot fewer or more antlerless deer.

There is tremendous variability in managing whitetails across their range. There are vast differences in annual temperature, precipitation, forest cover, deer density, and more that necessitate site specific antlerless harvest rates. To highlight some of this variability we asked state and provincial deer project leaders whether they preferred the annual antlerless harvest to be greater than, about equal to, or less than the antlered deer harvest.

Regional differences are immediately apparent as the vast majority of Southeast states (73%) prefer the antlerless harvest to be about equal to the antlered buck harvest. Conversely, the vast majority of Northeast states (78%) want to shoot more antlerless deer than antlered bucks, while the Midwest states fall in between those two. Six states responded with an “it depends” answer and we realize it varies across any state.

The associated map shows how preferred antlerless harvests vary across the U.S., and helps hunters understand how their area compares to their neighbors and other states in their region and beyond.

2018 ANTLERLESS HARVEST PREFERENCE BY STATE



AGE DATA SOURCES – PRIVATE VS. PUBLIC LANDS

The age of harvested deer is a critical piece of data for deer managers. It's also highly sought after by a growing number of deer hunters. Hunters are learning to estimate age and requesting to have their deer aged at unprecedented levels. That's one reason why the age structure chapters (pages 8 and 12) are among the most popular chapters in our annual *Whitetail Report*.

Estimating the age structure of the annual deer harvest provides important information about the age structure of the deer herd. This data can be used to assess herd health and progress toward management plan goals.

However, the age chapters draw skepticism from some hunters and deer managers. Thus, we asked each state and provincial deer project leader whether their age-structure data comes from private land, public land, or both.

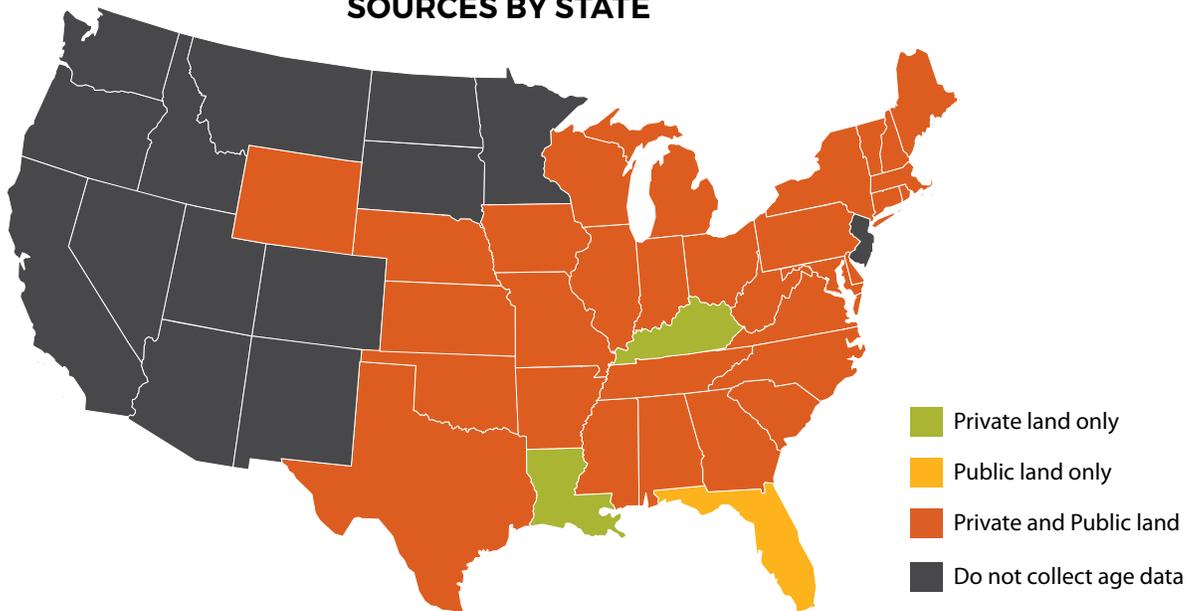
Thirty-one states collect age data from deer harvested on private and public lands. Two states collect age data only on private lands, and one collects it only on public lands. States collect this data in a myriad of ways including check stations, DMAP programs, crop damage permits, deer processors, taxidermists, roadkills and more. See



page 12 in our 2018 *Whitetail Report* for a state-by-state list of age data collection tech-

niques, and see page 18 for a state-by-state list of how states collect deer harvest data.

2018 AGE DATA SOURCES BY STATE



DEER HARVEST BY WEAPON TYPE

The average hunter today enjoys much longer seasons and more weapon opportunities than he/she had in the past. To assess how hunters take advantage of these, we surveyed state wildlife agencies to determine the percentage of the total deer harvest taken with a bow/crossbow, rifle/shotgun, muzzleloader, or other weapon (pistol, etc.) during the 2016, 2017 and 2018 seasons. Nationally, muzzleloader hunters took 10% of the total deer harvest, bow/crossbow hunters took 23%, and firearm (rifle/shotgun) hunters took 66% of the total deer harvest in 2018.

Regionally, bow hunters averaged the highest percentage of the harvest in the Northeast (29%). Muzzleloader hunters also averaged their highest percentage in the Northeast (16%). Surprisingly, firearm hunters in the Northeast took just over half of the deer (54%). In the Southeast, firearms reign supreme as three of four deer taken in 2018 (76%) were with a rifle or shotgun. Muzzleloading (9%) and bow hunting (16%) paled in comparison to the firearm harvest. In the Midwest muzzle-

loading was least popular at only 7% of the harvest, and a firearm harvest of 68% was far above the Northeast's and close to the Southeast's.

Individually, New Jersey leads the U.S. in the percentage of total harvest taken by archers (57%), Idaho had the highest percentage taken by firearms hunters (94%), and Rhode Island tops the list with percentage taken by muzzleloader hunters (46%). In Canada, bowhunting was most popular in Quebec (23% of harvest), muzzleloading was also most popular in Quebec (15% of harvest), and firearms hunting was most popular in New Brunswick (91% of harvest) in 2018.

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.



Field to Fork mentor Ivan Gissendaner with participant Daniel Easter and his first deer.

Top States Percentage of Harvest by Bow/Crossbow

State	2018 Percentage
New Jersey	57
Connecticut	47
Ohio	46
Illinois	41
Massachusetts	40

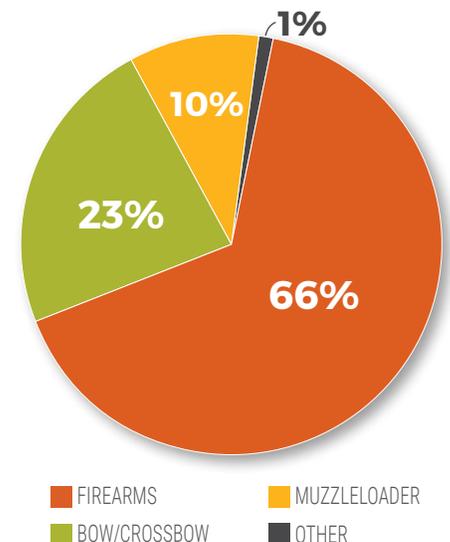
Top States Percentage of Harvest by Rifle/Shotgun

State	2018 Percentage
Idaho	94
Wyoming	93
Nebraska	90
Texas	90
South Carolina	89

Top States Percentage of Harvest by Muzzleloader

State	2018 Percentage
Rhode Island	46
Vermont	33
Virginia	23
Massachusetts	21
Tennessee	19

TOTAL 2018 DEER HARVEST BY WEAPON TYPE



PERCENTAGE OF DEER HARVEST BY WEAPON TYPE												
	Bow/Crossbow			Rifle/Shotgun			Muzzleloader			Other		
State/Province	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Alabama	15	*	23	83	*	73	2	*	4	*	*	0
Arkansas	14	13	14	75	74	75	11	13	12	0	0	0
Florida	28	27	29	62	65	63	9	8	8	1	<1	0
Georgia	16	17	19	82	81	79	2	2	2	*	0	0
Louisiana	9	7	5	80	81	83	11	12	12	0	0	0
Mississippi	18	18	19	68	69	68	14	13	13	*	0	0
North Carolina	10	12	11	80	79	81	10	9	8	0	0	0
Oklahoma	26	27	26	62	58	61	12	16	13	*	0	0
South Carolina	9	9	9	89	89	89	3	3	2	<1	<1	<1
Tennessee	11	11	10	66	69	70	23	20	19	*	0	0
Texas	8	11	9	91	88	90	1	1	1	1	<1	0
Southeast Average	15	15	16	76	75	76	9	10	9	0	<1	0
Connecticut	50	*	47	36	*	38	6	*	6	9	*	9
Delaware	20	20	20	62	66	67	17	13	13	1	1	<1
Maine	7	8	8	89	88	86	3	4	6	1	0	0
Maryland	34	34	31	51	48	51	15	18	18	*	0	0
Massachusetts	42	43	40	36	35	39	22	22	21	0	0	0
New Hampshire	24	25	*	53	51	*	23	22	*	*	2	*
New Jersey	58	58	57	31	31	33	11	11	6	*	0	0
New York	26	26	23	65	65	68	9	9	9	<1	<1	<1
Pennsylvania	33	32	30	61	61	64	6	6	6	*	0	0
Rhode Island	31	36	36	23	22	18	45	42	46	0	0	0
Vermont	21	22	21	48	46	46	22	23	33	9	9	0
Virginia	15	15	14	58	60	63	27	26	23	0	0	0
West Virginia	24	24	24	72	72	71	4	4	5	*	0	0
Northeast Average	30	29	29	53	54	54	16	17	16	3	3	1
Illinois	37	39	41	53	51	50	10	9	9	<1	1	1
Indiana	24	28	28	61	67	58	14	4	13	<1	1	0
Iowa	22	21	20	53	55	55	13	12	12	12	11	13
Kansas	37	37	37	60	60	60	3	3	3	<1	0	0
Kentucky	17	17	15	75	74	75	8	9	10	0	0	0
Michigan	37	36	*	48	58	*	15	6	*	*	0	*
Minnesota	12	11	12	83	85	83	5	4	5	*	0	0
Missouri	18	18	18	78	78	77	4	4	4	*	0	0
Nebraska	11	7	6	81	90	90	8	3	4	*	0	0
North Dakota	26	21	21	73	88	69	1	1	1	*	0	8
Ohio	45	43	46	45	44	41	9	13	13	1	0	<1
South Dakota	15	15	15	83	82	83	2	3	2	*	0	0
Wisconsin	28	29	26	70	69	72	2	2	2	0	0	0
Midwest Average	25	25	24	66	69	68	7	6	7	2	1	2
3-Region Average	23	23	23	65	66	66	11	10	10	1	1	1
Arizona	8	6	*	87	*	*	1	*	*	5	*	*
California	*	10	*	*	82	*	*	8	*	*	0	*
Colorado	8	*	*	85	*	*	6	*	*	0	*	*
Idaho	4	4	4	94	95	94	2	1	2	0	0	0
Montana	8	*	*	92	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Nevada	5	*	*	85	*	*	10	*	*	0	*	*
New Mexico	14	14	15	73	74	72	13	12	13	0	0	0
Oregon	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Utah	*	15	*	*	62	*	*	23	*	*	0	*
Washington	15	*	*	79	*	*	6	*	*	0	*	*
Wyoming	7	5	7	93	95	93	*	0	0	*	0	0
West Average	9	9	9	86	82	86	5	9	5	1	0	0
Alberta	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	7	9	9	93	91	91	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nova Scotia	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ontario	18	17	20	71	75	68	8	8	9	3	0	0
Quebec	24	23	23	60	64	62	16	13	15	0	0	0
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Canada Average	16	16	17	75	77	74	8	7	8	1	0	0

*Data not provided/available

HARVEST DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES



All states and provinces have some means to collect harvest data in their jurisdictions during the hunting season. Some require physical registration at a station, some offer online reporting, and others use telephone reporting (telecheck) or mail-in report cards. Check stations used to be the gold standard, but times have changed. Thus, we asked each state and provincial deer project leader how they collect their deer harvest data.

The internet is by far the most commonly used technique (34 states and one province) for reporting harvested deer, followed by telephone reporting (27 states), and post-season hunter surveys (20 states and one province). Check stations continue to decline, but the increased spread of chronic wasting disease (CWD) is giving them a resurgence. The new kid on the block is a smart phone app. This is a great move by wildlife agencies, and this technique is likely to be used by even more agencies in the future.

How do you collect deer harvest data?						
State/Province	Internet	Telephone	Check St.	Report Card	Hunter Survey	Other
Alabama	x		x		x	app
Arkansas	x	x				app
Florida	x	x	x		x	app
Georgia	x	x			x	app
Louisiana	x	x	x		x	
Mississippi					x	DMAP
North Carolina	x	x	x		x	see "a" below
Oklahoma	x			x		
South Carolina					x	
Tennessee	x		x		x	app
Texas					x	
Southeast Total	8	5	5	1	9	
Connecticut	x	x			x	
Delaware	x	x				
Maine	x	x	x		x	
Maryland	x	x				app
Massachusetts	x		x			
New Hampshire						
New Jersey	x	x				
New York	x	x				app, deer processors
Pennsylvania	x	x		x	x	deer processors
Rhode Island	x	x	x			
Vermont			x			
Virginia	x	x	x		x	app
West Virginia	x	x	x			
Northeast Total	11	10	6	1	4	
Illinois	x	x	x			
Indiana	x	x		x		
Iowa	x	x				
Kansas					x	
Kentucky	x	x				
Michigan	x					
Minnesota	x	x	x			
Missouri	x	x			x	app
Nebraska	x	x	x			
North Dakota					x	
Ohio	x	x				
South Dakota	x				x	
Wisconsin	x	x				
Midwest Total	11	9	3	1	4	
Arizona	x				x	
California						
Colorado						
Idaho	x	x	x		x	
Montana						
Nevada						
New Mexico	x	x				
Oregon	x	x	x			mandatory reports
Utah						
Washington						
Wyoming			x		x	
West Total	4	3	3	0	3	
Alberta						
British Columbia						
Manitoba						
New Brunswick			x			
Nova Scotia					x	
Ontario	x	x				
Quebec			x			
Saskatchewan						
Canada Total	1	1	2	0	1	

a – jawbone mail survey, deer processors, taxidermists, DMAP, and other voluntary submissions

CURRENT LOOK AT CROSSBOW USE



Few discussions engage as many hunters as which rifle is the best – Remington or Winchester, .243 or .270, wood or laminate stock? One discussion that can rival it is crossbow use. Crossbows can be a polarizing topic in the archery world, but their use during deer season continues to expand. We've monitored crossbow use since 2002. The following removes the emotion from this issue and highlights the facts about crossbow use today.

Of the 37 states east of the Rocky Mountains that are home to approximately 97% of whitetails in the U.S., 29 (78%) allow crossbows to be used by all hunters during at least a portion of the archery season (see map). All states in the Southeast allow crossbows during archery season. Conversely, with the exception of Connecticut and Rhode Island, crossbows aren't permitted in the New England region of the Northeast.

All other Northeast states allow them, and just over half of the Midwest states allow them with the upper Midwest being most restrictive.

In 2002 the percentage of the total deer harvest taken with a bow was 15%. By 2012 the percentage taken with a bow/crossbow increased to 21%, but has increased only slightly since. Last season it was 23% (see page 16). Rifles and shotguns still take two-thirds of the total harvest annually, and this hasn't changed much during the past decade. What has changed is the percentage of the archery harvest taken by crossbows.

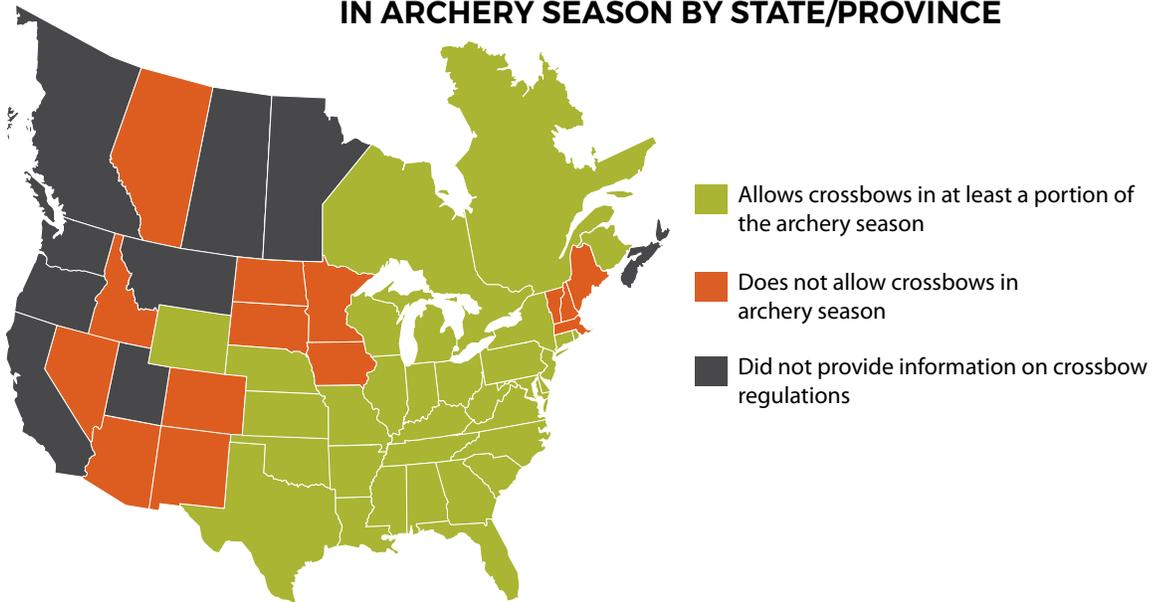
Of the 29 states east of the Rockies that allow crossbows in archery season, 25 can separate crossbow from vertical bow harvest. In 11 of those states (44%) the crossbow harvest now exceeds that of vertical bows (see map). Interestingly, all states in the Southeast allow crossbows, but vertical

bow harvest still dominates. The Northeast is entirely different as nine states allow them and crossbow harvest exceeds vertical bows in eight (89%). Nine Midwest states also allow them, but crossbows exceed vertical bow harvest in only three states (33%).

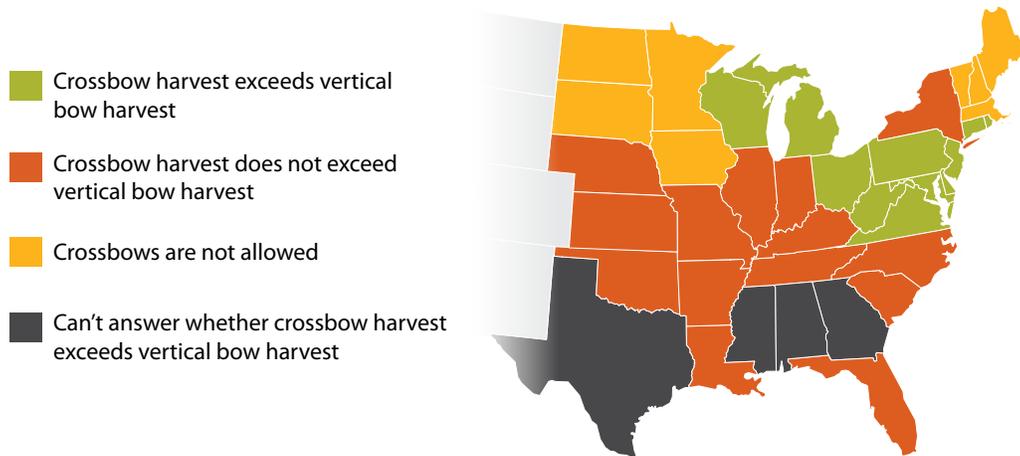
QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

We recognize the opportunities crossbows provide and fully acknowledge some of our Field to Fork hunter recruitment events would not be possible without the use of crossbows. We also recognize some avid bowhunters despise their use during archery season. Many QDMA staff are avid bowhunters, but we realize how the current decline in hunter numbers is hurting our wildlife management programs and threatens the future of our beloved pastime, so we're fine sharing the woods with crossbow hunters during archery season.

**2018 LEGALITY OF CROSSBOW USE
IN ARCHERY SEASON BY STATE/PROVINCE**



**2018 COMPARISON OF CROSSBOW
AND VERTICAL BOW HARVEST BY STATE**



This is especially true given crossbows haven't produced any measurable biological impacts on deer herds in states that use them, and no states that allow crossbows have shortened their seasons or restricted crossbow use from the original laws. The QDMA is dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. As such, we are more interested in managing deer and habitat appropriately and protecting our hunting heritage than debating use of specific sporting arms. If the use of crossbows positively impacts a deer management program and helps recruit and retain more hunters, then we fully support it.



Crossbows provide a relatively easy entry point for new adult hunters, like these participants in QDMA's Field to Fork training.

TRENDS IN NUMBER OF HUNTER FATALITIES

Hunting is purportedly one of the safest forms of recreation in the United States, contributing to less than 1% of all sports related injuries nationwide, and ranking below other activities such as golf, tennis and jogging. In fact, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) estimates that 11½ million Americans aged 16 or older hunted 184 million days in 2016; yet, even with all of that time spent afield, safety experts routinely report less than 100 total hunting fatalities annually, according to the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA). It should go without saying that these losses come from a variety of sources, too, including treestand accidents, heart attacks from strenuous activity, mishandling of firearms and even lacerations while field-dressing game.

Thanks to extensive hunter education programs available in most places, hunting accidents in general have been declining the past 20 plus years. We were curious if there also has been a declining trend in the number of fatalities per jurisdiction, so we asked state and provincial wildlife agencies how many hunting-related fatalities they had in 2008 and 2018.

According to the survey responses only 57 hunting related deaths occurred in 2018; that's less than 1 out of every 100,000 deer hunters (0.6). Moreover, each region individually, as well as the entire U.S., experienced a decline of total fatalities over the last decade. That's good news.

Of the state wildlife agencies that provided data for both years, six of nine (67%) in the Southeast, 10 of 10 (100%) in the Northeast, seven of 11 (64%) in the Midwest and three of four (75%) in the West all observed a stable or decreasing trend from 2008 to 2018.

Luckily from 2013-2017, more than \$670 million from excise taxes was granted to states specifically to support safety training and hunter education, so funding to endorse such efforts is in place. Now it is up to hunters to heed the warnings of such groups and continue being as safe as possible, and refrain from being a fatality statistic in 2020 or beyond.

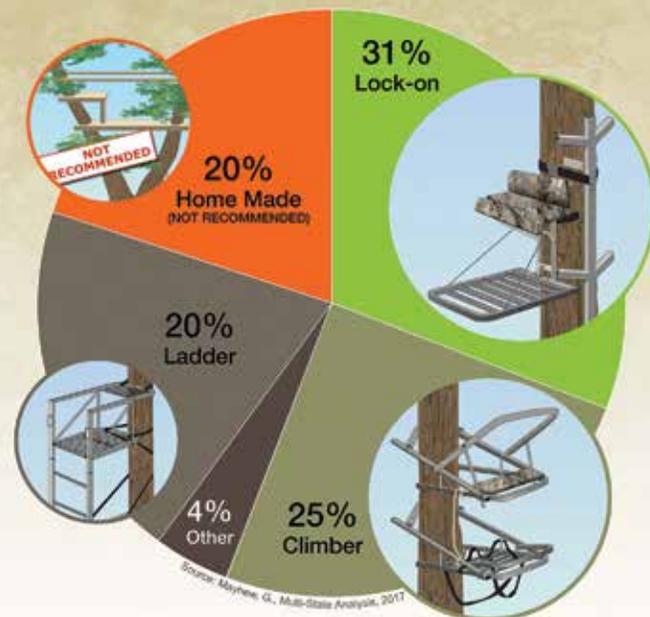
QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Regardless that so few hunting-related fatalities happen in a given year, the majority are still preventable. The QDMA applauds all



Always remain attached to the tree from the time you start your climb, until the time your feet return to the ground. A high percentage of treestand falls takes place while the hunter is stepping onto or off of the stand.

INCIDENTS BY STAND TYPE



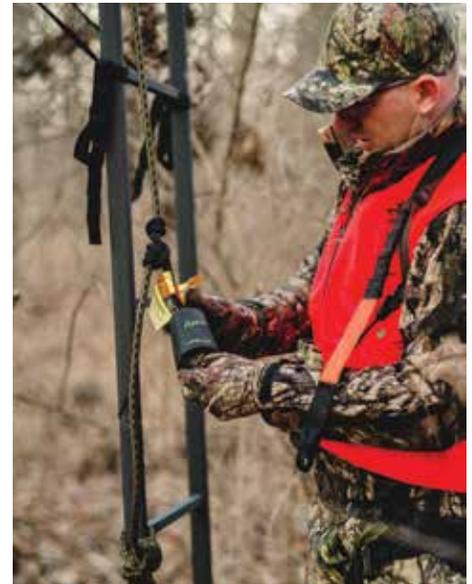
You can fall from any stand, including ladder stands which account for 20% of treestand incidents. That's why it's important to always wear and properly use a safety harness regardless of the type of stand you use. Graphic courtesy of Tree Stand Safety Awareness Foundation.

TRENDS IN NUMBER OF HUNTER FATALITIES

State/Province	2008	2018	2018 Fatalities/100k Deer Hunters
Alabama	3	6	3.2
Arkansas	2	3	0.9
Florida	4	0	0.0
Georgia	1	0	0.0
Louisiana	1	2	1.1
Mississippi	3	3	2.1
North Carolina	3	2	0.8
Oklahoma	*	*	*
South Carolina	2	1	0.7
Tennessee	*	*	*
Texas	6	3	0.4
Southeast Total/Avg	25	20	0.7
Connecticut	0	0	0.0
Delaware	0	0	0.0
Maine	1	1	0.5
Maryland	1	0	0.0
Massachusetts	0	0	0.0
New Hampshire	*	*	*
New Jersey	*	0	0.0
New York	4	3	0.5
Pennsylvania	3	1	0.1
Rhode Island	*	0	0.0
Vermont	0	0	0.0
Virginia	1	1	0.5
West Virginia	6	5	2.1
Northeast Total/Avg	16	11	0.5
Illinois	7	1	0.4
Indiana	3	2	1.1
Iowa	1	1	0.6
Kansas	3	0	0.0
Kentucky	3	5	1.4
Michigan	*	3	0.5
Minnesota	2	3	0.5
Missouri	0	3	0.6
Nebraska	1	2	1.5
North Dakota	*	0	0.0
Ohio	2	1	0.2
South Dakota	3	3	4.4
Wisconsin	2	0	0.0
Midwest Total/Avg	27	24	0.6
3-Region Total/Avg	68	55	0.6
Arizona	0	0	0.0
California	*	*	*
Colorado	*	*	*
Idaho	1	2	1.4
Montana	*	*	*
Nevada	*	*	*
New Mexico	*	*	*
Oregon	1	0	0.0
Utah	*	*	*
Washington	*	*	*
Wyoming	0	0	0.0
West Total/Avg	2	2	0.4

*Data not provided/available

wildlife agencies' commitment to safety and recommends continued support of efforts made by groups like IHEA, the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), the Tree Stand Safety Awareness (TSSA) Foundation and several federal and state government agencies that promote sound safety protocols, the importance of hunter education and technological advancement such as hunter-orange clothing and firearm locking devices.



Field to Fork participants are taught the importance of treestand safety and are required to wear a harness and use a lifeline while participating in organized hunts.

Top States With Fatalities per 100,000 Deer Hunters	
State	2018 Fatalities
South Dakota	4.4
Alabama	3.2
Mississippi	2.1
West Virginia	2.1
Nebraska	1.5

FIREARMS SEASON START TIME



Whitetails are crepuscular, so their major daily movement periods are at dawn and dusk. Hunters try to capitalize on this by being afield at these times, and wildlife agencies try to ensure safety by providing specific times that shooting is allowed. Since “sunrise” and “sunset” are measured daily, and this information is easily acquired by hunters, the vast majority of wildlife agencies use them as starting and stopping reference points.

We surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies and asked what time shooting hours started during firearms season. Thirty-five of 37 states (95%) in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast allow shooting to begin half an hour before sunrise. The exceptions are South Carolina hunters can shoot one hour before sunrise, New York hunters have to wait until sunrise, and North Dakota hunters have to wait until 12 p.m. on opening day. North Dakota hunters can start half an hour before sunrise on all other days.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The QDMA closely monitors shooting accident rates and believes starting half an hour before sunrise is safe and appropriate for all hunters. As such, we don't believe New York should be the only state requiring hunters to wait until sunrise.

SHOOTING HOURS

State/Province	Firearms Season Shooting Hours Start Time
Alabama	½ hour before sunrise
Arkansas	½ hour before sunrise
Florida	½ hour before sunrise
Georgia	½ hour before sunrise
Louisiana	½ hour before sunrise
Mississippi	½ hour before sunrise
North Carolina	½ hour before sunrise
Oklahoma	½ hour before sunrise
South Carolina	1 hour before sunrise
Tennessee	½ hour before sunrise
Texas	½ hour before sunrise
Southeast Total	10 of 11 = ½ hour before sunrise
Connecticut	½ hour before sunrise
Delaware	½ hour before sunrise
Maine	½ hour before sunrise
Maryland	½ hour before sunrise
Massachusetts	½ hour before sunrise
New Hampshire	½ hour before sunrise
New Jersey	½ hour before sunrise
New York	sunrise
Pennsylvania	½ hour before sunrise
Rhode Island	½ hour before sunrise
Vermont	½ hour before sunrise
Virginia	½ hour before sunrise
West Virginia	½ hour before sunrise
Northeast Total	12 of 13 = ½ hour before sunrise
Illinois	½ hour before sunrise
Indiana	½ hour before sunrise
Iowa	½ hour before sunrise
Kansas	½ hour before sunrise
Kentucky	½ hour before sunrise
Michigan	½ hour before sunrise
Minnesota	½ hour before sunrise
Missouri	½ hour before sunrise
Nebraska	½ hour before sunrise
North Dakota ^a	½ hour before sunrise
Ohio	½ hour before sunrise
South Dakota	½ hour before sunrise
Wisconsin	½ hour before sunrise
Midwest Total	13 of 13 = ½ hour before sunrise
3-Region Total	35 of 37 = ½ hour before sunrise
Arizona	"daylight hours"
California	*
Colorado	*
Idaho	½ hour before sunrise
Montana	*
Nevada	*
New Mexico	½ hour before sunrise
Oregon	½ hour before sunrise
Utah	*
Washington	*
Wyoming	½ hour before sunrise
West Total	4 of 5 = ½ hour before sunrise
Alberta	*
British Columbia	*
Manitoba	*
New Brunswick	20 min before sunrise
Nova Scotia	*
Ontario	½ hour before sunrise
Quebec	½ hour before sunrise
Saskatchewan	*
Canada Total	2 of 3 = ½ hour before sunrise

*Data not provided/available
^a 12pm on opening day only

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT UNITS AT DEER DENSITY GOALS

Hunters routinely discuss antlerless harvests as being too high or too low. These hunters' opinions generally relate to the antlerless harvest in the area(s) they hunt. Many hunters fail to realize their state or provincial wildlife agency manages deer, and therefore establishes target antlerless harvest goals, on a wildlife management unit (WMU) or deer management unit level. Agencies cannot and do not manage deer at the individual private property level, and thus the target antlerless harvest they establish for the unit you live or hunt in may be too low, just right, or too high for the property you hunt.

We surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies and collected data on the percentage of WMUs that were at, above, and below established deer density goals. We did not ask what variables were used to establish those goals, and we are not comparing goals between or among states in this analysis. Our goal was simply to assess the relative percentage of WMUs at, above and below goal for each jurisdiction.

Just over half (54%) of WMUs in the survey responses have deer densities at goal, while just under a quarter are above (24%) and below (22%) goal. Regionally, the Southeast has the highest percentage at goal (59%). The Northeast has the highest percentage above goal (36%), and the West has the highest percentage below goal (59%).

We have similar data from 2010 and a lot has changed in the past decade (see pages 46-48 in our *2010 Whitetail Report*). For example, in 2010 Kansas led the U.S. with 90% of its WMUs at deer density goal, and that's down to 47% today. South Carolina had 80% at goal, and that's down to 25% today. Conversely, in 2010, 91% of Maryland's WMUs were above goal, and that's improved to only 50% today. Kudos to the Maryland DNR and hunters.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Whitetails affect many stakeholders and each has a different desired deer density. Fortunately, most wildlife agencies establish, with assistance from stakeholders, target deer densities or goals for their WMUs. These goals may be based on estimated deer numbers or densities, herd or habitat health indices, deer damage levels, or other variables. By comparing your wildlife agency's estimate for the current deer herd to the

established goal for the WMU you live or hunt in, you can gain a better understanding of the agency's deer seasons, bag limits and target antlerless harvest. The QDMA

encourages all state and provincial wildlife agencies to engage the public at a high level when establishing deer management goals.

PERCENTAGE OF WMUs

State/Province	At Goal	Above Goal	Below Goal
Alabama	*	*	*
Arkansas	70	25	5
Florida	58	0	42
Georgia	84	8	8
Louisiana	40	20	40
Mississippi	*	*	*
North Carolina	77	10	13
Oklahoma	*	*	*
South Carolina	25	50	25
Tennessee	*	*	*
Texas	*	*	*
Southeast Average	59	19	22
Connecticut	60	20	20
Delaware	83	17	0
Maine	21	21	58
Maryland	50	50	0
Massachusetts	72	28	0
New Hampshire	*	*	*
New Jersey	13	67	20
New York	*	*	*
Pennsylvania	57	43	0
Rhode Island	25	75	0
Vermont	62	33	5
Virginia	52	38	10
West Virginia	88	0	12
Northeast Average	53	36	11
Illinois	36	27	37
Indiana	*	*	*
Iowa	63	12	25
Kansas	47	21	32
Kentucky	38	43	19
Michigan	*	*	*
Minnesota	*	*	*
Missouri	88	1	11
Nebraska	70	10	20
North Dakota	40	20	40
Ohio	35	0	65
South Dakota	32	2	66
Wisconsin	58	24	18
Midwest Average	51	16	33
3-Region Average	54	24	22
Arizona	*	*	*
California	*	*	*
Colorado	*	*	*
Idaho	*	*	*
Montana	*	*	*
Nevada	*	*	*
New Mexico	50	0	50
Oregon	6	0	94
Utah	*	*	*
Washington	*	*	*
Wyoming	33	33	33
West Average	30	11	59
Alberta	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*
New Brunswick	11	7	82
Nova Scotia	*	*	*
Ontario	*	*	*
Quebec	16	42	42
Saskatchewan	*	*	*
Canada Average	14	25	62

*Data not provided/available

TRAVELING REQUIREMENTS FOR BOWS AND FIREARMS



Whether planning on hunting public or private land, it's not uncommon to have to drive some distance from home to head afield in pursuit of North America's favorite game species – the white-tailed deer. Few are blessed to simply walk out their back door to hunt.

Many states, provinces and localities have laws governing the transportation of firearms and bows. Thus, deer hunters must be aware of these laws when traveling to and from where they hunt, especially if they cross state or provincial boundaries, and comply with legal requirements in each jurisdiction.

We surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies and asked if firearms or bows have to be cased and/or disabled while being transported in a vehicle or all-terrain vehicle/utility-task vehicle (ATV/UTV). We also asked if hunters can have a loaded rifle/shotgun in a vehicle or shells in the magazine of a firearm.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

As you can tell from the accompanying table, there is no uniform transportation procedure across states/provinces. If in doubt, a traveler should always carry firearms unloaded and stored in an area

(such as a trunk or attached toolbox) where they are inaccessible from a vehicle's passenger compartment and not visible from outside the vehicle. Ammunition should be stored separately, and archery equipment should be cased.

The QDMA recommends always being safe and following all applicable laws. To determine the applicability of these laws to specific situations which you may encounter, hunters are strongly urged to consult their wildlife agency's regulations or the law enforcement division.

TRAVELING REQUIREMENTS FOR BOWS AND FIREARMS

State/Province	Cased Firearm (y/n)	Cased Bow (y/n)	Loaded Firearm in Vehicle (y/n)	Shells in Magazine (y/n)
Alabama	n	n	y public roads/private lands, n WMA's	y public roads/private lands, n WMA's
Arkansas	n	n	y	y
Florida	n	n	y	y
Georgia	n	n	y	y
Louisiana	y	n	n	y public roads/private lands, n WMA's
Mississippi	n, y on public	n	y	y
North Carolina	n	n	y	y
Oklahoma	n	n	n	*
South Carolina	n, y on WMA's	n	y, no on WMA's	y, no on WMA's
Tennessee	n	n	y, no on WMA's	y, no on WMA's
Texas	n	n	y	y
Southeast Total	3	0	9	10
Connecticut	n	n	n	n
Delaware	n	n	n	n
Maine	n	n	n	y, not attached to gun
Maryland	n	n	n	n
Massachusetts	y	n	n	y, not attached to gun
New Hampshire	*	*	*	*
New Jersey	y	y	n	*
New York	n	n	n	n
Pennsylvania	n	n	n	n
Rhode Island	n	n	n	n
Vermont	n	n	n	n
Virginia	private n, public y	private n, public y	private y, public n	*
West Virginia	y, if after shooting hours	y	n	y, not attached to gun
Northeast Total	4	3	1	3
Illinois	y	y	n	n
Indiana	n	n	y	y
Iowa	y	n	n	y, not attached to gun
Kansas	n	n	n	y
Kentucky	n	n	y	y
Michigan	y	n	n	n
Minnesota	y	n	n	n
Missouri	n	n	y	y
Nebraska	n	n	n shotgun, y rifle	n shotgun, y rifle
North Dakota	n	n	n	n
Ohio	n	y	n	y
South Dakota	n for vehicle, y for ATV	n	y	y
Wisconsin	n	n	n	n
Midwest Total	5	2	5	8
Arizona	n	n	*	*
California	*	*	*	*
Colorado	*	*	*	*
Idaho	n	n	y	y
Montana	*	*	*	*
Nevada	*	*	*	*
New Mexico	n	n	y	y
Oregon	n	n	n	y
Utah	*	*	*	*
Washington	*	*	*	*
Wyoming	n	n	y	y
West Total	0	0	3	4
Alberta	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	y	n	n	y
Nova Scotia	*	*	*	*
Ontario	n	n	n	n
Quebec	n	n, but disabled	n	n
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*
Canada Total	1	0	0	1

*Data not provided/available

CAUTION: This summary is not to be considered legal advice or a restatement of law.

WILD GAME PROCESSING FACILITY REGULATIONS

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is an always fatal neurological disease that affects deer, elk and moose. There is no vaccine or cure for CWD, it can sustain itself in the environment for years, and this contagious disease can be spread via urine, feces, saliva, blood, semen and possibly other vectors. See page 32 for a current update on CWD and other diseases found in whitetails.

The bounty of wild venison is a primary motivation for most of the nearly 10 million deer hunters who head afield each fall. Regardless of whether CWD has been identified in your area, the fact it can be passed on through bodily fluids, waste and is present in other high risk parts like the deer's brain, eyes, spleen, lymph nodes and spinal cord makes locations where these items are concentrated a hazard to potentially spread it further. This is especially true for venison processing facilities, where harvested wild game animals from different regions of the country come in contact with each other.

Thus, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to determine if such facilities are licensed and/or regulated in their jurisdiction, and whether they can accept wild game and livestock for processing at the same facility.

Nationally, just over 40% of states require at least some of the processing facilities found in their area to be either licensed (16 of 38) or regulated (17 of 39). The Midwest is much stricter than the Northeast and Southeast with this oversight. It should be noted, too, that most states in the Southeast, about half in the Northeast and only two of 13 states in the Midwest that listed no regulation or license requirement allow mixing with livestock.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

There have been no reported cases of CWD infection in humans, however the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the QDMA recommend hunters in CWD zones have all deer, moose and elk tested for the disease and wait for satisfactory results before consuming the venison.

In addition, a major concern with CWD is that standard sanitizing methods fail to kill the prions that cause the illness. However, a recent study confirmed that household bleach can be used as a surface decontaminant on stainless steel surfaces (it failed to penetrate infected tissue), such as those found in processing facilities. For hunters who want to be cautious when handling potentially infected deer harvested in CWD management zones, the ability to neutralize stainless steel knives, saws and other equipment is one approach to reducing potential exposure.

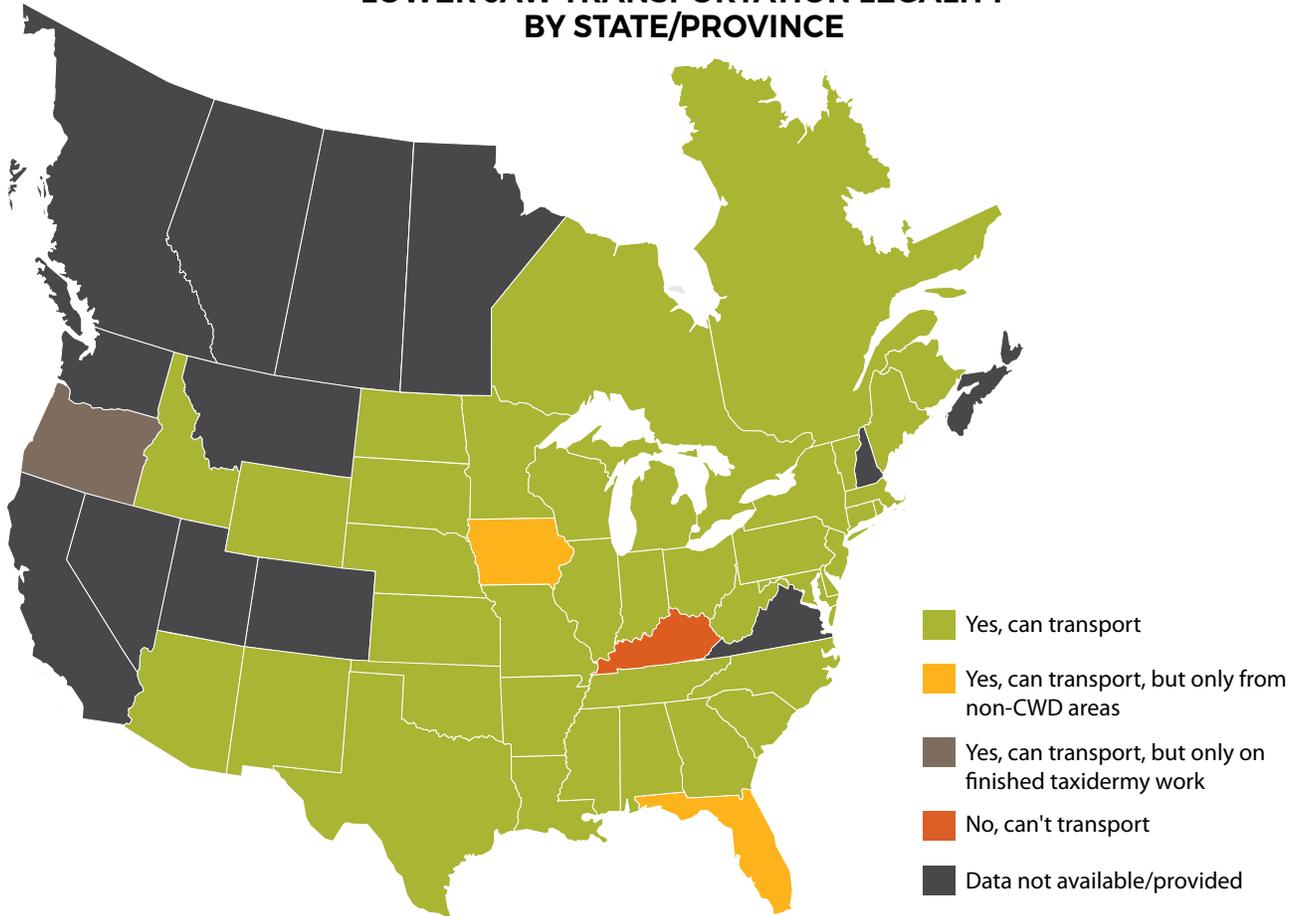
PROCESSING FACILITY REGULATIONS

State/Province	Are wild game processing facilities:		Wild game and livestock at same facility? (y/n) y, but must meet USDA standards
	Licensed? (y/n)	Regulated? (y/n)	
Alabama	n	n	y, but must meet USDA standards
Arkansas	n	n	y
Florida	n	n	y
Georgia	y	y	n
Louisiana	n	n	y
Mississippi	n	n	n
North Carolina	n	n	y
Oklahoma	*	n	*
South Carolina	n	n	y, but must be separated & livestock side is regulated
Tennessee	y	y	y
Texas	n	n	y, but they must meet USDA standards
Southeast Total	2	2	8
Connecticut	n	n	y
Delaware	n	n	y
Maine	n	n	y
Maryland	n	n	some, county specific
Massachusetts	n	n	*
New Hampshire	*	*	*
New Jersey	n	n	*
New York	n	n	y
Pennsylvania	n	n	y
Rhode Island	n	n	*
Vermont	n	n	y, but regulated if they process livestock
Virginia	n	n	*
West Virginia	some	some	n
Northeast Total	1	1	7
Illinois	n	n	n, but y for few larger operations with separate facilities
Indiana	y	y	*
Iowa	y	y	y
Kansas	some	some	unknown
Kentucky	y	y	*
Michigan	y	y	y
Minnesota	some	y, for those licensed	y
Missouri	y	y	y
Nebraska	y	y	y
North Dakota	*	y	y
Ohio	n	n	y, but kept separate
South Dakota	some	y, for those licensed	y
Wisconsin	n	y	n
Midwest Total	9	11	9
3-Region Total	12	14	24
Arizona	y	*	unknown
California	*	*	*
Colorado	*	*	*
Idaho	y	y	y
Montana	*	*	*
Nevada	*	*	*
New Mexico	*	*	*
Oregon	y	y	*
Utah	*	*	*
Washington	*	*	*
Wyoming	y	y	y
West Total	4	3	2
Alberta	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*
New Brunswick	n	y	n
Nova Scotia	*	*	*
Ontario	*	*	*
Quebec	y	y	y
Saskatchewan	*	*	*
Canada Total	1	2	1

*Data not provided/available

LOWER JAW TRANSPORTATION LEGALITY

LOWER JAW TRANSPORTATION LEGALITY BY STATE/PROVINCE



Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a reality today in more areas than ever before. Deer hunters should know where CWD has been confirmed to ensure they have an animal tested following a successful hunt, and so they follow all carcass transport regulations with respect to moving high-risk parts of harvested animals.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, high-risk parts include the brain, eyes, spleen, spinal cord and lymph glands, and multiple wildlife agencies restrict high-risk parts from entering from states or provinces that have confirmed CWD. Additional agencies prohibit some hunters from bringing these parts, including bone material from the skull or skeleton of a deer, into their jurisdiction from any other state or province – regardless if the place of origin has confirmed CWD or not. In many cases only boned-out meat and clean skull plates off harvested bucks are acceptable to travel with.

One item often overlooked by hunters and agency staff alike with regard to car-

cass transport restrictions is a deer's lower jawbone. Millions of deer hunters practice Quality Deer Management; and, within that context, many pay close attention to the age of the animals they harvest and how that changes over time at a property or local landscape scale. Lots of hunters also find joy in the challenge of harvesting older age-class bucks and does, so the age, and by default the jawbone, becomes a large part of the memorable experience.

Because the lower jawbone is the lone part of a deer that holds the clue to the exact age of an animal, more hunters today are saving and traveling with it as a keepsake or to track age-structure data. Some may even mail jawbone samples away to a lab for closer analysis. This may be considered an illegal act by some government institutions, so we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to determine if a cleaned lower jawbone from a deer could be transported into their state/province.

Currently, 36 of 40 states (90%) and all

provinces that responded to the survey allow the unrestricted transport of a lower jaw into their borders. Kentucky is the only location that completely prohibits it, Oregon only allows it on finished taxidermy work, and both Florida and Iowa only allow them from non-CWD areas.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Other than moving live animals, moving high-risk parts from infected deer is the most likely way to move the disease, and that's why most agencies restrict or prohibit all movement of these parts. Fortunately, a cleaned jawbone is not considered to be a major source of prions, so travel is allowed by most states. The QDMA supports this allowance. Where movement is restricted, by taking a few high-resolution pictures of the lower jawbone you can still use the tooth replacement and wear technique to assess the age of any deer with enough accuracy for management goals.

TIME SPENT ON FOIL, CWD, DEER PROPOSALS & EDUCATION/OUTREACH

Numerous variables impact a wildlife agencies' ability to manage deer populations. Some are regional, such as severe winter weather in the extreme north, while others are universal throughout the white-tail's range, like disease.

Also, an important component of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation is that wildlife is held in trust by each state and province for its citizens to enjoy. Working with the public is crucial, and sportsmen and women are becoming increasingly engaged in deer management programs; this is important to all conservation efforts as white-tailed deer are the most popular big game animal in the United States. Approximately three of every four hunters pursue whitetails, and white-tail hunters are the foundation of the \$67 billion hunting industry.

Yet, public engagements are often complex, and in a few cases stakeholder involvement can actually lead to ineffective management of deer or other wildlife, such as bad legislation or abuse of the resource managers' time via a misguided individual or group.

With the emergence of CWD in more areas (see page 32) and more political rather than biological influences on our management decisions today (see the 2015 and 2018 *Whitetail Reports*), we surveyed each state and provincial wildlife agency's deer project leader and asked them to estimate their time spent on things such as CWD, Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests, deer management proposals and general education/outreach.

Of the four categories listed, managers on average spent most of their time on CWD in the U.S. (22%), followed by deer management proposals (20%), education/outreach (14%), and FOIL requests (3%). There was tremendous variability in these categories as time spent on CWD ranged from 1-59%, FOIL requests ranged 0-10%, deer management proposals 0-50%, and education/outreach ranged 1-50%.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

QDMA is a strong proponent of public involvement in deer management programs. As hunter numbers continue declining, and as we continue becoming more of an urbanized society, non-traditional

stakeholders take more seats at the proverbial deer management table. Therefore, it's vital for state and provincial wildlife agencies and hunters to work more closely together and forge strong relationships for a productive deer hunting future. Moreover,

it's important to also better understand how agency biologists' time have been reallocated when something like CWD appears. CWD steals a lot of things from hunters and agencies, and time is certainly on the list of items.



Officials with the South Carolina Forestry Commission collect data on a buck harvested during the 2019 South Carolina Military Appreciation Hunt.

TIME SPENT BY DEER PROJECT LEADERS

State/Province	CWD	FOIL	Deer Mgt. Proposals	Ed/Outreach
Alabama	35%	0%	20%	10%
Arkansas	5%	1%	10%	15%
Florida	30%	1%	25%	20%
Georgia	20%	1%	30%	20%
Louisiana	25%	10%	15%	5%
Mississippi	40%	1%	10%	15%
North Carolina	12%	1%	5%	10%
Oklahoma	30%	10%	40%	10%
South Carolina	10%	2%	15%	15%
Tennessee	*	*	*	*
Texas	22%	0%	7%	5%
Southeast Average	23%	3%	18%	13%
Connecticut	30%	1%	34%	34%
Delaware	25%	1%	15%	5%
Maine	7%	10%	7%	12%
Maryland	10%	1%	20%	10%
Massachusetts	1%	1%	30%	20%
New Hampshire	*	*	*	*
New Jersey	*	*	*	*
New York	8%	10%	7%	17%
Pennsylvania	59%	1%	30%	10%
Rhode Island	15%	1%	0%	5%
Vermont	5%	<1%	10%	10%
Virginia	5%	<1%	10%	50%
West Virginia	*	*	*	*
Northeast Average	17%	3%	167%	17%
Illinois	40%	<1%	5%	5%
Indiana	40%	0%	10%	20%
Iowa	40%	1%	40%	9%
Kansas	40%	5%	1%	5%
Kentucky	25%	5%	20%	15%
Michigan	35%	1%	30%	10%
Minnesota	30%	1%	44%	25%
Missouri	25%	2%	50%	23%
Nebraska	20%	0%	50%	5%
North Dakota	*	*	*	*
Ohio	35%	1%	30%	30%
South Dakota	*	*	*	*
Wisconsin	*	*	*	*
Midwest Average	33%	2%	28%	15%
3-Region Average	24%	3%	21%	15%
Arizona	*	*	*	*
California	*	*	*	*
Colorado	*	*	*	*
Idaho	*	*	*	*
Montana	*	*	*	*
Nevada	*	*	*	*
New Mexico	5%	1%	10%	1%
Oregon	10%	5%	15%	*
Utah	*	*	*	*
Washington	*	*	*	*
Wyoming	2%	1%	5%	3%
West Average	6%	2%	10%	2%
U.S. Average	22%	3%	20%	14%
Alberta	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	0%	10%	30%	10%
Nova Scotia	*	*	*	*
Ontario	*	*	*	*
Quebec	30%	10%	50%	10%
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*
Canada Average	15%	10%	40%	10%

*Data not provided/available

2019 DEER DISEASE UPDATE

By now nearly every deer hunter has heard of chronic wasting disease (CWD), and unfortunately an increasing number of deer herds is being directly impacted by it every year. However, there are other disease threats to deer populations that you may or may not have heard of; below is a run-down of some of the biggest issues regarding white-tailed deer diseases that hit the headlines in 2019, starting with hemorrhagic disease.

HEMORRHAGIC DISEASE

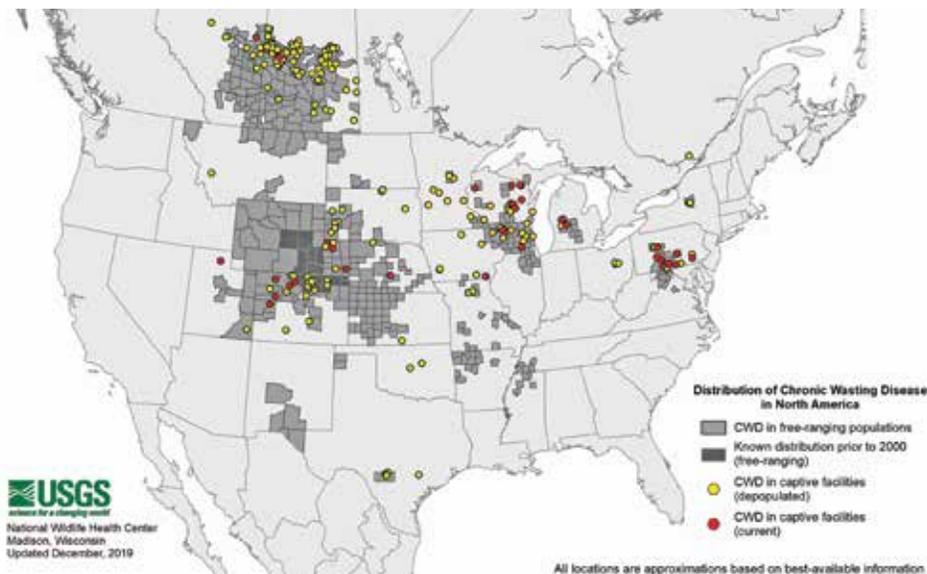
Hemorrhagic disease (HD) is an infectious, blood-borne disease of deer and elk that is transmitted by biting midges or flies; it is caused by either of two closely related viruses, epizootic hemorrhagic disease virus (EHDV) or bluetongue virus (BTV). Since the symptoms and disease features produced by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

As of October 2019, the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study (SCWDS) confirmed HD in free-ranging white-tailed deer in 15 states. The majority of virus strains isolated were EHDV-2, but strains EHDV-1 and BTV-2 were also detected. SCWDS confirmed HD from deer in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, North Carolina, North Dakota, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin and for the first time ever, Minnesota. Newsworthy outbreaks also occurred in Oregon and south central Iowa, both non-members of SCWDS, where over 3,800 suspected deaths were reported. Overall, the activity in 2019 was consistent with two regional trends that deserve attention; HD was detected in more northerly locations than in the past, and more frequently in states where it is historically rare.

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 exception of Michigan, bTB appears to be eradicated in the other states. The key is quickly reducing/eliminating the reservoir or host (such as cattle or captive elk).

A September 2019 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) touched off a wave of nationwide headlines about deer hunters and tuberculosis, but most news coverage failed to provide details about its eradication everywhere except Michigan. The CDC case involved a 77-year-old Michigan hunter who



contracted tuberculosis in 2017, allegedly while field-dressing a deer.

As of late December 2019, nearly 21,000 samples had been tested in Michigan with 5 additional new positives discovered; the samples tested and prevalence in 2019 were nearly identical to those in 2018. Even in the historical detection area that includes 13 counties in northeast Michigan, bovine TB continues to be rare in deer.

TICKS AND TICK-BORNE ILLNESSES

Ticks and tick-borne illnesses are the second most important vector of human pathogens (after mosquitoes) 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 an exotic tick called the Asian Longhorned Tick (ALHT), *Haemaphysalis longicornis*, collected in large numbers from a domestic sheep in New Jersey. Subsequent investigations revealed that specimens of ALHT collected as early as 2010 had been misidentified. Today we now understand ALHT to be found in 12 other states besides New Jersey, including Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. SCWDS now maintains a county-

level web map which displays the origin of ALHT positive hosts and locations.

Though still relatively rare, the number of cases of Alpha-Gal, or the Red Meat Allergy, which is associated with bites from the lone star tick, appear to be increasing annually.

EASTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS

Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) is an infectious, often fatal disease of horses, humans, and pigs. Wild ruminants like deer can also become infected. The virus is maintained in temperate areas by wild bird reservoirs and mosquito vectors.

In 2019, EEE was discovered in white-tailed deer in Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. As of December 17, 2019, the CDC had received reports of 38 confirmed cases of EEE, including 15 human deaths. Cases included: Alabama (1), Connecticut (4), Georgia (1), Indiana (1), Massachusetts (12), Michigan (10), North Carolina (1), New Jersey (4), Rhode Island (3), and Tennessee (1).

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 (including the Toronto Zoo), 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, semen, deer parts, and especially via live deer. Importantly, there is no vaccine or cure.

Research shows variances in infectivity among prion transport systems (for example, saliva may be ten times as infectious as urine),

that plants can bind, uptake and transport prions from infected soil, and hamsters that ate the plants contracted the disease. One study found that mineral licks can serve as reservoirs of CWD prions and thus facilitate disease transmission. CWD has also been shown to experimentally infect squirrel monkeys, pigs and laboratory mice that carry some human genes. There is currently conflicting evidence of potential infection (clinical, pathological, or biochemical) to primates closely related to humans (macaque monkeys) when they consume infected venison.

In addition, CWD-positive deer are two to three times more likely to die of other causes and are considerably less active than deer that are negative, and adult does are ten times more likely to be CWD-positive if they have a CWD-positive relative nearby.

CWD made numerous other headlines in 2019 and some of the biggest included:

Positive Cases

- An obvious and alarming uptick of new CWD positives occurred in the past 24 months. In fact, in April SCWDS wrote in their spring 2019 quarterly newsletter: “CWD has been detected in so many new areas (over the past 16 months) that we cannot concisely provide details on all the new cases”. It went on to read, “Two concerning trends (have emerged): 1) the continued expansion of known CWD (outbreak areas), and 2) the detection of CWD in new areas”.

- Between January 2018 and April 2019, CWD was detected in free-ranging cervids in 54 new counties in 16 states. Of these, 72% (39) were adjacent to counties with prior detection and 28% (15) were not; the former likely represented expansion of the disease and the latter newly recognized spots of CWD on the landscape. Over the same time period CWD was detected in 21 new U.S.-based captive cervid facilities, as well as in a Quebec facility in September 2018, which marked the first time ever in that province. Notably, Wisconsin captive cervid facilities reported 100 new cases in 2019, which comprises 25% of the total (over 400) captive positives in a single year since 2002.

- This rate of new discoveries of CWD positives extended well to the end of 2019, including in May when an adult, yet severely emaciated and sick-looking white-tailed doe was euthanized in Libby, Montana which marked the first time CWD had been detected in the wild, west of the Continental Divide. Wyoming then duplicated a similar discovery in October from a hunter-harvested mule deer buck.

- Between April and December 2019, an additional 27 new U.S. counties (out of 309 total positive counties at that time) became CWD positive.

Research

- In May 2019, researchers at Colorado State University released findings of a new gene-targeted approach to study CWD in mice, allowing scientists to more readily understand the routes used by prions to access the central nervous system and spread disease, known as peripheral pathogenesis. They also specifically detected a difference in prion strain properties in deer and elk, which is significant because these properties control the ability of whether prions can transmit a disease between species.

- In June 2019, a Penn State University study revealed some subpopulations of deer are more susceptible to CWD than others, and that those found in the Mid-Atlantic U.S. are more vulnerable than some western herds.

- In October 2019, scientists at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) found that a 5-minute soak in household bleach neutralizes CWD prions on stainless steel. However, bleach only worked as a surface decontaminant; it failed to penetrate infected tissue.

Other

- In May 2019 the Chronic Wasting Disease Research Act (S. 1326) was introduced, joining three other significant and active CWD-related bills in the Senate. The CWD Research Act would authorize up to \$15 million annually for CWD research, such as: 1) detection and decontamination of disease in deer; 2) long-term suppression and eradication of CWD; and 3) determining markers for genetic resistance. Entities eligible for the research grants include universities, state and tribal departments of agriculture, research facilities conducting CWD research, as well as tribal research facilities.

- CWD Response Plans were released and/or finalized in Tennessee, Colorado and Ontario in 2019. Colorado’s was noteworthy because it strives to suppress individual herd-level CWD prevalence below a realistic management threshold (5%), accepting that CWD is likely there to live with. Central to the strategy is a 15-year monitoring plan that relies on mandatory testing of adult, male deer in a 5-year testing rotation schedule.

- In June 2019, the Wisconsin Legislature’s Joint Finance Committee adopted a motion to spend \$100,000 of hunter-generated fees into research aimed at creating a strain of white-tailed deer that’s genetically immune to CWD.

- Minnesota proposed and approved legislation that enforces double gates (not double fences) at captive deer facilities, appropriates nearly \$2 million toward developing a new CWD test and \$50,000 for installing deer carcass dumpsters in the endemic area, as well as mandatory depopulation in captive cervid facilities that discover CWD going forward.

- In October, Florida proposed closing their borders and in November, New York closed its borders to any deer or other cervids, live, carcasses or parts, regardless of the state’s CWD status.

NOT A DISEASE, BUT NOTEWORTHY

In October 2018, Michigan departments of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and Natural Resources (DNR) issued a “Do Not Eat” advisory for any white-tailed deer taken within five miles of Clark’s Marsh in Oscoda Township due to high levels of PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonic acid), the most common PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) that bioaccumulate in fish and wild game. One deer out of twenty tested in that area, which borders the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base, was found to have high levels of PFOS. The level of PFOS in the muscle of the deer was 547 parts per billion (ppb), exceeding the level of 300 ppb at which action is recommended. PFAS was either not found or was at low levels in muscle samples from the other 19 deer.

In 2019 the area covered by the advisory was then refined, taking into account section boundaries rather than roads and more closely approximating the 5-mile travel range of deer living in or near the marsh. MDHHS and DNR have plans to test more deer from this area through 2020.

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, preventable 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 2019, it can be locally severe especially in areas where the disease is relatively new. 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 report it immediately to your state/provincial agency or to SCWDS.

CWD SAMPLES AND GOALS



A free, self-service, drop-off container in Arkansas where hunters can submit deer for CWD testing. The Arkansas Game & Fish Commission contacts hunters with results within two weeks.

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is an always fatal neurological disease that affects deer, elk and moose. There is no vaccine or cure for CWD, and this contagious disease can be spread via urine, feces, saliva, blood, semen and possibly other vectors. See page 32 for a current update on CWD and other diseases found in whitetails.

Early detection is critical to managing CWD effectively. While prevalence rates appear to be climbing in areas that have had CWD the longest, like Wisconsin and Colorado, several new states and one province have discovered it within captive or free-ranging deer in the last few years, and as a result have been forced to enact their CWD response plans. This typically involves a comprehensive, spatially-influenced surveillance effort with intense sampling of target animals via risk assessments based on proximity to previously affected herds, unmonitored populations, captive cervids, or other risk factors. Ultimately what this means, though, is a whole lot of sampling.

Thus, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to determine the number of deer they sampled for CWD and whether they met their sampling goals in 2018. We also acquired testing intensity data in 2008 and 2016 for a comparison.

Thirty-two states reported testing 59,046 samples in 2008 and 41 states reported testing 175,478 samples in 2018. In the three regions where whitetails reside most in the U.S., there was a 223% increase in testing over the last 10 years. However, one of seven states in the Midwest, three of 10 in the Southeast, six of 10 in the Northeast, and two of four in the West all tested fewer deer in 2018 compared to 2008.

Over half of the states in the Southeast (60%), most in the Midwest (83%) and all Northeast and West states and all provinces that responded to our survey met their sampling goals in 2018.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The harsh reality is that as CWD continues to spread we can expect the average number of national samples required for testing annually to climb; at least for the foreseeable future. Because eradication of CWD after it has become established in a wild deer population currently does not appear feasible, the QDMA recommends those currently living in areas void of CWD to practice staunch preventative measures.

Wildlife agencies should prepare for the need to increase testing in the future and adapt surveillance measures as new cases are discovered. This includes,

Top States

Highest Number of CWD Samples Tested

State	2018 Highest No.
Missouri★	32,010
Michigan★	30,751
Wisconsin★	17,235
Texas★	10,421
Pennsylvania★	9,631

Top States

Lowest Number of CWD Samples Tested

State	2018 Lowest No.
Vermont	5
Massachusetts	<10
South Carolina	25
New Mexico★	~100
Oklahoma★	>120

Top States

Largest Percentage Increase in Sample Testing from 2008-2018

State	Largest % Increase
Tennessee★	+21,592%
Minnesota★	+3,920%
Missouri★	+2,524%
Oregon	+1,619%
Virginia★	+1,022%

Top States

Largest Percentage Decrease in Sample Testing from 2008-2018

State	Largest % Decrease
Vermont	-99%
Massachusetts	-98%
South Carolina	-95%
Oklahoma★	-88%
Wyoming★	-70%

★States with CWD in wild and/or captive deer

but is not independent of, following the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agency's Best Management Practices for Prevention, Surveillance and Management of CWD. Deer hunters should abide by similar policies, including refraining from traveling with high-risk parts of any deer harvested within or near CWD positive areas.

CWD SAMPLES AND GOALS

State/Province	2008	# Samples Tested		% Change (# Samples) 2008 to 2018	Met Goal (y/n) in 2018?
		2016	2018		
Alabama	625	588	1,087	74	n
Arkansas	888	4,983	6,271	606	y
Florida	*	652	2,400	*	n
Georgia	593	250	300	-49	y
Louisiana	437	360	1,249	186	n
Mississippi	1,215	444	8,297	583	y
North Carolina	1,395	73	3,240	224	y
Oklahoma	986	79	>120	-88	*
South Carolina	528	*	25	-95	y (a)
Tennessee	26	2,009	5,640	21,592	n
Texas	3,963	9,830	10,421	163	y
Southeast Total/Avg	10,656	19,268	39,050	281	6 of 10
Connecticut	*	*	350	*	y
Delaware	599	529	613	2	y
Maine	848	472	512	-40	y
Maryland	1,015	319	561	-45	y
Massachusetts	487	<10	<10	-98	* (a)
New Hampshire	405	268	*	*	*
New Jersey	339	570	698	106	y
New York	7,450	2,565	2,483	-67	y
Pennsylvania	3,810	5,707	9,631	153	y
Rhode Island	*	193	254	*	y
Vermont	400	0	5	-99	y
Virginia	286	1,525	3,210	1,022	y
West Virginia	2,102	1,173	1,259	-40	*
Northeast Total/Avg	17,741	13,331	19,586	10	10 of 10
Illinois	7,758	7,839	8,824	14	y
Indiana	*	837	1,000	*	y
Iowa	4,232	1,919	7,240	71	y
Kansas	*	474	544	*	n
Kentucky	*	1,469	1,759	*	n
Michigan	*	7,750	30,751	*	y
Minnesota	200	4,000	8,040	3,920	y
Missouri	1,220	25,659	32,010	2,524	y
Nebraska	*	753	1,201	*	y
North Dakota	*	1,513	1,500	*	y
Ohio	1,469	1,381	2,648	80	y
South Dakota	1,465	82	525	-64	*
Wisconsin	8,507	6,130	17,235	103	y
Midwest Total/Avg	24,851	59,806	113,277	356	10 of 12
3-Region Total/Avg	53,248	92,405	171,913	223	26 of 32
Arizona	2,157	1,327	1,297	-40	y
California	*	*	*	*	*
Colorado	*	740	*	*	*
Idaho	500	*	717	43	y
Montana	*	*	*	*	*
Nevada	*	200	*	*	*
New Mexico	*	139	~100	*	y
Oregon	31	*	533	1,619	y
Utah	*	*	*	*	*
Washington	*	*	*	*	*
Wyoming	3,110	2,279	918	-70	*
West Total/Avg	5,798	4,685	3,565	-39	4 of 4
U.S. Total/Avg	59,046	97,090	175,478	197	30 of 36
Alberta	*	5,000	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	*	0	0	*	*
Nova Scotia	*	*	*	*	*
Ontario	*	460	765	*	y
Quebec	*	1,000	3,589	*	y
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*	*
Canada Total/Avg		6,460	4,354		2 of 2

*Data not provided/available

(a) Only sampled clinical animals

States in bold have CWD in wild and/or captive deer

CWD RESULTS WAIT TIME



Technicians with Michigan DNR collect samples from hunter-harvested deer for CWD testing.

Hunters must consider many factors when determining whether to eat meat from deer, elk or moose harvested from areas with CWD, including the level of risk they are willing to accept. In areas where CWD is known to be present, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that hunters strongly consider having those animals tested before consuming the venison.

One potential negative aspect of having more samples tested every year at a national level (see previous page), particularly for the individual hunter, is awaiting test results. Currently, the diagnostic tests available to hunters are not food safety tests and the intent of any testing is not to certify a deer as “safe for consumption.” So, extended turnaround times may present an inconvenience for some. In addition, we recognize

that the number of labs qualified to test for CWD are limited, sometimes experiencing oversaturation of samples – which also may result in potential lag times.

Thus, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to determine the average length of time a hunter has to wait for the results of a CWD test. Based on the surveys we collected, the average wait time in the U.S. is just over a month; however,

CWD RESULTS WAIT TIME

Northeast deer hunters experience the longest average turnaround to get their CWD test results back at 65 days. Minnesota hunters have the shortest wait time at four business days, while Connecticut hunters have to wait seven months. Fourteen of 36 states (39%) provide results in two weeks or less, while at least five states do not offer general testing to hunters within their jurisdiction.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Deer can carry CWD for months to years before symptoms become obvious. The QDMA concurs with the CDC – hunters in or near CWD-positive areas should test their deer and wait for the results before eating the meat; this could mean a waiting period of up to several weeks for results, but it is important to have the test results in hand before venison consumption. Though there is no evidence CWD can cross the species barrier, the CDC is actively looking for the disease in humans and no one is certain how the disease may manifest itself in other mammals. Hunters in non-CWD areas can hunt responsibly when traveling in CWD areas by processing game appropriately and transporting the meat responsibly.

Top States
Longest Minimum Wait
Time for CWD Results

State	Days
Connecticut	210
Delaware	120
Kentucky	90
New Mexico★	90
Rhode Island	90

Top States
Shortest Minimum Wait
Time for CWD Results

State	Days
Minnesota★	4
Michigan★	>7
Alabama	7
Wyoming★	7
South Dakota	7-14
Wisconsin★	7-14
West Virginia★	7-14

★States with CWD in wild and/or captive deer

State/Province	CWD Test Result Length
Alabama	1 week
Arkansas	2 weeks
Florida	2-3 months (a)
Georgia	2 weeks
Louisiana	2 weeks
Mississippi	8 days
North Carolina	3-4 weeks
Oklahoma	*
South Carolina	(a)
Tennessee	2-3 weeks
Texas	3 weeks
Southeast Average	22 days
Connecticut	7 months
Delaware	3-4 months
Maine	3-4 weeks (a)
Maryland	2-3 months (a)
Massachusetts	*
New Hampshire	*
New Jersey	*
New York	2-3 weeks
Pennsylvania	3 weeks
Rhode Island	3 months
Vermont	(a)
Virginia	~4 weeks
West Virginia	1-2 weeks
Northeast Average	65 days
Illinois	4-6 weeks
Indiana	8 weeks
Iowa	2 weeks
Kansas	2-3 weeks
Kentucky	3 months
Michigan	< 1 week
Minnesota	4 business days
Missouri	9 days
Nebraska	2-3 weeks
North Dakota	2 weeks
Ohio	3 weeks
South Dakota	1-2 weeks
Wisconsin	1-2 weeks
Midwest Average	24 days
3-Region Average	35 days
Arizona	*
California	*
Colorado	*
Idaho	4-6 weeks
Montana	*
Nevada	*
New Mexico	3 months
Oregon	3-5 weeks
Utah	*
Washington	*
Wyoming	1 week
West Average	40 days
U.S. Average	36 days
Alberta	*
British Columbia	*
Manitoba	*
New Brunswick	*
Nova Scotia	*
Ontario	*
Quebec	2 weeks
Saskatchewan	*
Canada Average	14 days

*Data not provided/available
(a) Do not offer general testing to hunters
States in **bold** have CWD in wild and/or captive deer

CWD BUDGETS

Regardless of whether CWD has been identified in your area, it impacts deer and other wildlife by drawing from your wildlife agency's financial and personnel resources. Collecting tissue samples from harvested deer is time consuming, and having them tested costs agencies millions of dollars annually; valuable funds that could be used for other wildlife projects.

Thus, we surveyed state and provincial wildlife agencies to determine their 2019 budget dedicated to CWD surveillance, monitoring and testing. Some states only provided testing costs, while others included all management efforts. In most cases these figures do not include staff time and/or targeted removal efforts (see next chapter). As an example, if estimated labor costs were included for Missouri, the amount they spent last year on CWD becomes \$1,884,714. For that reason, comparisons among regions aren't prudent.

Of the 28 states that provided data, the total national budget dedicated toward CWD surveillance and monitoring was at least \$10,099,475 in 2019. This ranged from \$500 in Massachusetts to \$3,000,000 in Pennsylvania.

QDMA'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Every aspect of CWD is costly to state and provincial wildlife agencies, whitetail populations and the future of hunting. While not all funds spent on CWD testing come from agency general operating budgets, much of it is as federal sources are extremely limited. While ideally these dollars could have been spent on other more hunter-friendly projects such as habitat enhancement and hunter access programs, it is critical to the future of deer herds and our hunting opportunities that our state and provincial wildlife agencies adequately monitor for CWD presence and rate of spread. As sportsmen, it's in our best interest to protect the herds we hunt from this dreaded disease and to do our part to control it anywhere it is identified.

Top States

2019 Budget

Dedicated to CWD

State	Budget
Pennsylvania★	\$3,000,000
Minnesota★	\$1,200,000
Missouri★	\$844,755
Illinois★	\$842,082
Tennessee★	\$750,000

★States with CWD in wild and/or captive deer

State/Province	2019 CWD Budget	Comments
Alabama	\$50,000	only testing costs
Arkansas	\$304,000	
Florida	\$225,000	
Georgia	\$125,000	
Louisiana	\$40,000	only testing costs
Mississippi	\$500,000	
North Carolina	\$295,638	
Oklahoma	*	
South Carolina	(a)	
Tennessee	\$750,000	all CWD mgt. efforts, doesn't include employee time
Texas	\$350,000	
Southeast Total	\$2,639,638	
Connecticut	*	3% of total budget
Delaware	\$15,000	
Maine	\$12,000	
Maryland	\$25,000+	
Massachusetts	\$500	
New Hampshire	*	
New Jersey	*	
New York	*	
Pennsylvania	\$3,000,000	all CWD management efforts
Rhode Island	\$32,000	
Vermont	\$12,000	
Virginia	\$235,000	does not include employee time
West Virginia	*	
Northeast Total	\$3,331,500	
Illinois	\$842,082	FY 2020
Indiana	\$180,000	
Iowa	\$300,000	
Kansas	\$50,000	
Kentucky	\$250,000	
Michigan	*	
Minnesota	\$1,200,000	
Missouri	\$844,755	does not include employee time
Nebraska	*	
North Dakota	\$200,000	
Ohio	\$67,000	
South Dakota	\$175,000	
Wisconsin	*	
Midwest Total	\$4,108,837	
3-Region Total	\$10,079,975	
Arizona	*	
California	*	
Colorado	*	
Idaho	*	
Montana	*	
Nevada	*	
New Mexico	*	
Oregon	\$20,000	
Utah	*	
Washington	*	
Wyoming	*	
West Total	\$20,000	
U.S. Total	\$10,099,975	
Alberta	*	
British Columbia	*	
Manitoba	*	
New Brunswick	0	
Nova Scotia	*	
Ontario	*	
Quebec	*	
Saskatchewan	*	
Canada Total	0	

*Data not provided/available

(a) N/A surveillance of clinical animals is part of normal operations
States in **bold** have CWD in wild and/or captive deer

QDMA: ENSURING THE FUTURE OF DEER HUNTING



QDMA is the leading whitetail organization dedicated to conserving North America's favorite game animal. We are hunters from all walks of life who share a passion for white-tailed deer. We believe it is our responsibility to ensure the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. As the authority on all things whitetail, we blend the art of hunting with the science of management to create better deer and better deer hunting. We accomplish our mission by focusing efforts in five key areas: Research, Education, Advocacy, Certification and Hunting 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 continues 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 as the local, state and national levels. These issues impact everyone who pursues white-tailed deer. Due to QDMA's growth and strong support from the professional wildlife community, it is considered the most respected and influential whitetail organization in North America. As a result, QDMA serves as the leading advocate for the wise management of white-tailed deer and the protection of our deer-hunting heritage. QDMA also maintains strong ties with its members, other conservation organizations, state and federal agencies, and other groups with an interest in whitetail hunting and management. 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, 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.

2019 ADVOCACY UPDATE



QDMA 2019 Policy Intern, Jacob Pries.

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 by far the busiest for QDMA’s advocacy team, and what follows is a look at QDMA’s actions on legislation and policy during 2019.

Since 2006 QDMA has engaged in over 1,000 major initiatives. In 2019 we engaged in 167 legislation, regulation or policy issues; 47 at the national level and 120 at the state level in all 50 states and one province. Our expanded advocacy work was greatly assisted by policy intern Jacob Pries (above). 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 2019:

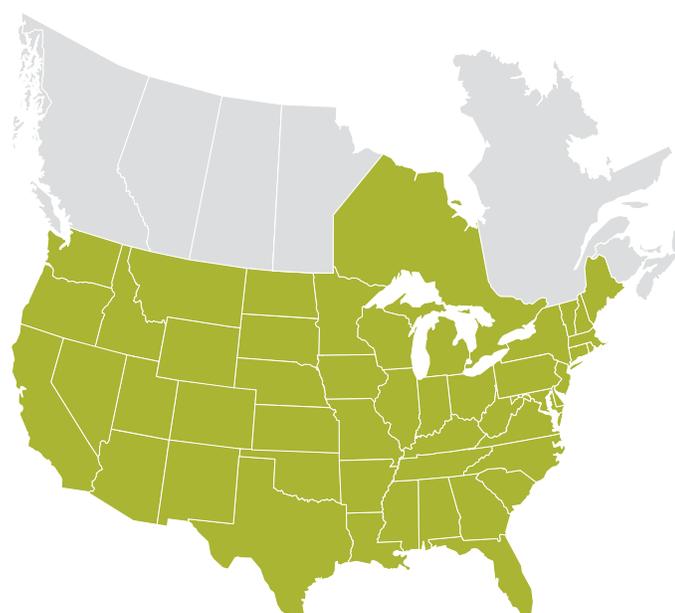
- Supported several CWD and hunting-related proposals in Oklahoma
- Provided comments to the Bureau of Land Management regarding mineral leases on National Forests
- Supported a national public lands package
- Supported CWD research project in Michigan
- Supported Indiana HB1376 to establish an Outdoor Stewardship program
- Opposed New Hampshire HB442 to prohibit coyote harvest from April to August
- Supported Sunday hunting in

- Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Pennsylvania
- Opposed New York AB1413 which prohibits firearms as prizes for games of chance
- Supported HR837 the CWD Transmission in Cervidae Study Act
- Supported South Carolina HB3750 to provide two free antlerless tags to resident hunters
- Supported Rhode Island HB5130 to prohibit canned hunting
- Supported Minnesota HB553 to transfer authority of captive cervids to the DNR
- Supported Oregon HB2294 requiring cervid urine to come from CWD-free herds
- Opposed West Virginia SB577 and SB586 regarding seasons and bag limits
- Urged Congress to increase CWD funding
- Supported Missouri HB260 to increase penalties for poaching deer
- Supported Wisconsin AB39 to increase penalties for poaching deer
- Supported Ohio SB1081 for land and water conservation funding
- Provided comments on Ontario’s

- CWD surveillance and deer management plans
- Supported Illinois HB3623 to expand hunter apprenticeship opportunities
- Supported South Dakota’s CWD carcass transport regulations
- Provided comments on numerous deer proposals in Florida
- Supported MOU for partnerships for responsible forest management in Arkansas
- Supported Pine Creek Forest restoration project in Kentucky
- Supported Mississippi HB768 on CWD
- Supported active forest management in Mount Rogers National Recreation Area in Virginia

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 2019



QDMA Mission: PROGRESS REPORT

In fall 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 annual baselines of accomplishment in each area at the start, specific goals were set that would significantly challenge the organization to increase those achievements. We're two years into those goals, and QDMA recently completed new surveys of our members and reviewed data in all areas to produce a year-two progress report.

At this report, we are tracking behind schedule in two areas. Total acreage in QDM Cooperatives indicated by our members has declined, so renewed focus will be needed in this area. Also, the total estimated number of new hunters mentored through various programs and by our members fell just short of the second-year mark, putting us slightly behind schedule for meeting the five-year goal.

Meanwhile, we are tracking ahead of the two-year mark in four other areas – including Education, where we've already met the five-year goal!

WHITE-TAILED DEER: **PROTECT**

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

2019 Update: the QDMA National Office contributed \$351,917 to research and management. ✓

WILDLIFE HABITAT: **CONSERVE**

Annual 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 annually.

2019 Update: Survey of QDMA members indicates Cooperative acreage declined to 26 million acres. ✗

HUNTING HERITAGE: **RECRUIT**

Annual 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.

2019 Update: QDMA members and National Office programs mentored 148,307 hunters in the 2017-18 season. ✗

HUNTING HERITAGE: **SHARE**

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

2019 Update: QDMA members shared 5.82 million meals or 1.45 million pounds of venison. ✓

HUNTING HERITAGE: **DONATE**

Annual 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.

2019 Update: QDMA members donated 7.38 million meals, or 1.85 million pounds of venison. ✓

HUNTING HERITAGE: **EDUCATE**

Annual Goal: Increase QDMA's educational reach by 300,000 hunters.

2019 Update: Reach increased by 2.4 million to 6.76 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

QDMA is committed to providing hunters with reliable, science-based guidance on deer hunting, management and conservation. Our Communications Department also bears the responsibility for making members and other hunters aware of QDMA's mission work and achievements toward ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. The Department achieves this goal through a number of communications channels, including print, web, e-mail and social media.

QDMA.COM

For 2019, the Communications Department set a goal of reaching 2 million unique visitors at the QDMA website, a goal that was exceeded before the end of the year and eventually reached 2.15 million. Visitors learned about QDMA's mission work and its volunteer network and Branch events, signed up for Deer Steward advanced training, engaged with the expanding Field to Fork program, purchased QDMA merchandise, and learned about deer by consuming the more than 500 educational blog posts and videos on the site.

The Communications Department continued progress toward the goal of providing web content to the broadest range of deer hunters possible, including assistance for beginning hunters as well as advanced guidance for experienced hunters and habitat managers. QDMA is "where deer hunters belong," and that means every deer hunter, whether they are pursuing their first deer or their fiftieth, whether they hunt public or private land.

QDMA'S E-NEWSLETTER

New content on the QDMA website is announced weekly in 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, visit www.qdma.com/newsletter or call 800-209-3337.

SOCIAL MEDIA

QDMA continued to grow its social media fanbase in 2019, interacting with and engaging millions with educational content about deer hunting and whitetail conserva-

tion. Be sure to follow us on these platforms if you use them:

-  facebook.com/theqdma
-  instagram.com/theqdma
-  twitter.com/theqdma

QUALITY WHITETAILS MAGAZINE

This year, *Quality Whitetails* magazine will switch to a new publication schedule that includes five annual issues: Winter (arriving in January), Spring (March), Summer (July), Early Fall (September) and Late Fall (November). The move is a response to ongoing increases in production and postage costs as a way to ensure efficient use of member dollars toward QDMA's mission work, as well as rapidly increasing demand for QDMA's digital content. The five issues will be timed to remain focused on the seasons of most importance to QDMA members and deer hunters, including winter and spring

habitat work, summer preparation for hunting season, and the peak months of interest in deer hunting in fall. To compensate for the reduction from six to five issues, fall issues will be expanded to include more pages than normal, and QDMA is also exploring the addition of members-only digital content. Stay tuned!

ADVERTISING

Businesses that cater to deer hunters can reach QDMA's audience while supporting the organization's non-profit mission at the same time through advertising. QDMA offers a range of options, including print ads in *Quality Whitetails* magazine, banner ads in the weekly e-newsletter, and new in 2020, website advertising that targets blog content related to the product or service being advertised. For more information, contact Cindy Compton at ccompton@qdma.com or 800-209-3337

TOP 10 ARTICLES* on QDMA.com by Pageviews

- 1** QDM Works, Culling Doesn't
- 2** This Strange Buck was a Throwback to Extinct Whitetail Ancestors
- 3** Why We Don't Recommend Antler Traps
- 4** What Determines a Buck's Antler Color
- 5** Easy No-Till Food Plots: Watch Our Whitetail Weekend Seminar
- 6** 10 Weird Whitetails Join the Freak Deer Collection
- 7** Which Deer Visit Feeders and When? New Research is Out
- 8** Stand Placement Tips for Mature Bucks
- 9** Watch Your Ash: These Trees Can Be Dangerous
- 10** The Trick to Finding Quality Public Hunting Land

*Among new articles posted in 2019.

QDMA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

In 2019, QDMA had 50,000 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 non-profit 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 is pleased to announce that in May 2019, Stephen Saunders (above) joined the organization as Regional Director for QDMA Canada. A native of Ontario, Stephen received his Bachelor of Science degree with honors from Carleton University. He has served as a senior executive with technology companies for over 30 years, giving him significant insight on supporting diverse and geographically dispersed teams. Stephen has also been a QDMA volunteer for four years as well as a supporter of multiple Branches through the donation of his custom wood carvings.

Hunter recruitment, and supporting the education and training of youth continues to be the major focus for many Canadian Branches: This year more than 1,000 youth were supported by QDMA Canada Branches. The Renfrew County Branch funded 50% of the investment necessary to implement the National Archery in the Schools Program throughout Renfrew County. Almost all Branches funded youth hunter and firearms course cost subsidies and, the Southwestern Ontario Branch, and the Lanark Branch and Rideau St. Lawrence Branches in Eastern Ontario participated in hands-on youth hunter training camps in partnership with other organizations with all graduates receiving membership in QDMA and a subscription to *Quality Whitetails* magazine. Throughout Quebec and Northern New Brunswick, the primary focus in training new hunters has been in one-on-one mentorship.

Canadian Branches are also preparing to deliver Field to Fork training for new adult hunters; including in securing and sub-letting lands to hunters who may not have the benefit of family, friends or neighbors who are not already supportive of hunting. These initiatives in part have helped QDMA Canada to charter the GTA Top Gun Branch



in Scarborough, Ontario; this is Canada's first new inner-city urban Branch. The principle mission for this new Branch will be in recruiting, licensing, training new urban hunters and helping to secure locations for hunting and hunter training. Creating urban/inner city QDMA Branches is key to supporting hunter recruitment in Canada.

2019 has been a transition year for QDMA Canada; we established several new key conservation priorities that provide direct benefits to deer, deer hunting, QDMA members and the public. Examples include supporting wildlife habitat improvement projects, investing in wildlife sanctuaries, and developing educational materials and curricula for wildlife education centers, schools and hunter education courses. Some of our hands-on activities included planting trees, improving waterways and wildlife sanctuaries, and investing in pilot projects to better understand winter survival, nutrition and fawn recruitment.

Our mission to improve the hunter experience in New Brunswick continues to grow. The Northern New Brunswick Branch has been meeting with the Minister of Natural Resources who supports our efforts to improve the local deer population that is greatly reduced. The mission in Zone 6, Quebec to demonstrate the benefit of balancing the buck-to-doe ratio is also working. Fawn recruitment as measured by the number of fawns that survive the winter has increased 50%, and increased harvest rates of mature bucks have greatly improved the hunter experience. In Renfrew County, the mission has expanded to include developing a base line of the age class of bucks entered into the regions' big buck contests using the cementum annuli process. This program has received broad media coverage in the county.

Our first annual spring tree planting pilot program was very successful thanks in no small part to Paul Richardson at Richardson's Pineneedle Farms, Pontypool, Ontario. Paul deeply discounted both his native soft and hard mast trees to support our pilot. He and his team supported our mission as they view hunters as the new stewards of the land. We are looking forward to expanding this program in 2020.

With the support of committed donors such as Canvas n' Decor Canada, we have assembled material, vinyl sign and silk-screen printing equipment as well as art printing, laminating and framing equipment. This will greatly reduce costs associated with getting signs in the ground, logos in the field and educational materials in the hands of educators, QDMA Branch leaders and others who may not be able to afford them.

There were many local field day and educational seminars. The most comprehensive this year was co-hosted by three Branches in Quebec: the Greater Montreal Branch, Branche Bas St-Laurent and Branche Chaudiere-Appalaches. This all-day event included canine blood trailing demonstrations, food plot demonstrations, forestry demonstrations and a well attended archery competition. Another similarly well-attended event hosted by the Lanark Branch also provided opportunities for some of our sponsors to demonstrate their products.

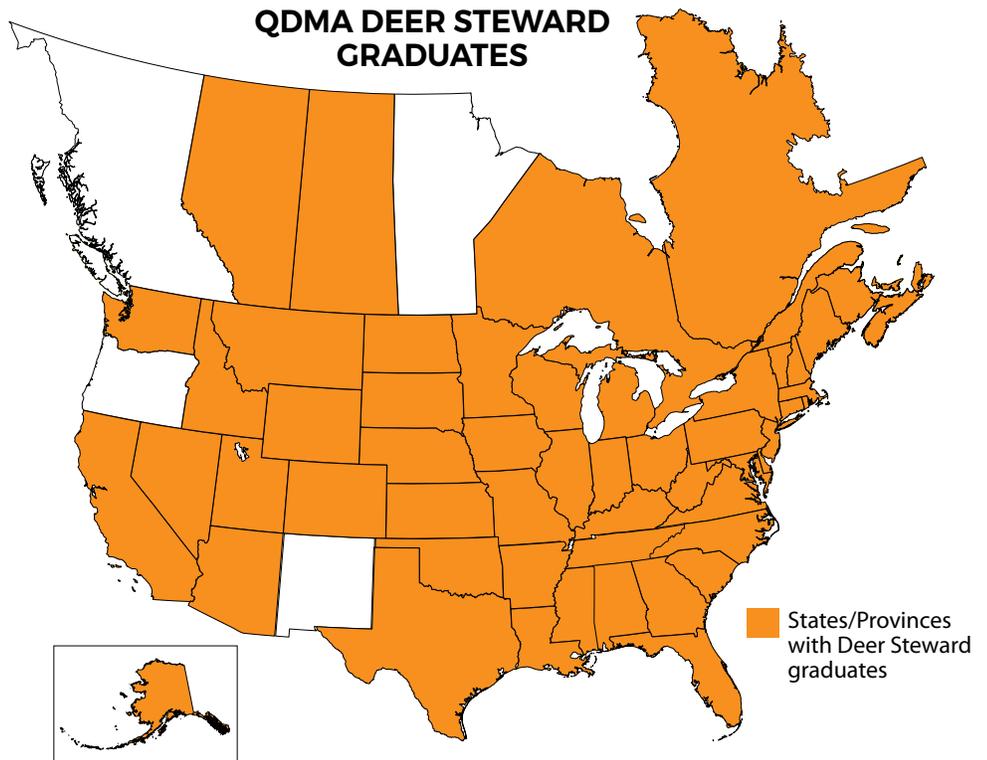
This year would not have been a success without our corporate sponsors: Valley Guiding and Outfitting, Rack Stacker, Bolyca Cameras, ZoneT3, Bear Archery, Vortex Canada, Altan Tree Stands Canada and Stephen Coyne, the Chainsaw Carver of Carleton Place.

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.

To date, 2,447 individuals have completed the Deer Steward program, with 1,640 Level 1, 750 Level 2, and 57 Level 3 graduates, representing 48 states and the nation's capitol, seven Canadian provinces, one of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Japan and Australia. Nearly 300 more were also enrolled and engaged in the Level 1 class (which is online) at the time of this printing, bringing the total to roughly 2,700 individuals! Since 2007, the QDMA has held 23 Level 1 classes and 24 Level 2 classes in the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, North



Carolina, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas, 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. It's available both online and in-person as well. In 2019 we offered an in-person Module on Habitat Enhancement, as well as 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 Georgia, Louisiana, Kentucky,

Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, South Carolina and in New Brunswick, Canada. Six of those (Kentucky, Missouri, Minnesota, New York and South Carolina) 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.



ALABAMA AND PENNSYLVANIA AMONG 2020 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

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Habitat Enhancement
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The Bearded Buck Showcase Farm
Mahaffey, Pennsylvania

HUNTING HERITAGE UPDATE



TODAY'S HUNTER DEER 101 COURSE

QDMA and Kalkomey Enterprises, LLC have partnered to deliver the Today's Hunter Deer 101 course, the first-ever online course of its kind, developed to teach prospective deer hunters everything they need to know to be safe and successful. The Today's Hunter Deer 101 course includes 15 chapters and covers deer biology and behavior, hunting methods, shot placement, field care of venison and much more. Topics are supported with text, photographs, graphics and videos in an engaging and educational format.

DEER HUNTING 101 YOUTUBE SERIES

Whether you're repairing home appliances or skinning a deer, YouTube has become the search engine of choice for beginners and do-it-yourselfers, and QDMA is there for new and aspiring deer hunters. A new YouTube series, QDMA's Deer Hunting 101, went live in October with how-to videos that provide all the reliable information a new hunter needs for success. With financial support from Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's, and backed by the video production expertise of Mossy Oak, QDMA wrote a 17-video series covering the full range of deer-hunting knowledge, from scouting to skinning, from biology to backstraps.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Put Down the Kombucha and Pick Up a Crossbow: Hipsters Are the New Hunters

Want organic, sustainable meat? Kill it yourself, say veteran hunters trying to appeal to the next generation of recruits to keep the sport alive

FIELD TO FORK IN THE NEWS

2019 started with a bang when Field to Fork made the cover of *The Wall Street Journal* in an article titled "Put Down the Kombucha and Pick Up a Crossbow: Hipsters Are the New Hunters," on January 10 and was subsequently picked up by Fox News, The TimesUK, and others.





**FIELD TO FORK
MEATEATER HEADQUARTERS VISIT**

Field to Fork also garnered attention from some of the largest podcasts in the industry including the Wired to Hunt and Meateater podcasts.



A few QDMA staff members recently visited MeatEater headquarters in Bozeman, Montana and recorded a podcast episode discussing a variety of deer related topics, including the origins of QDM and QDMA, chronic wasting disease, hunter recruitment and QDMA's Field to Fork program, and much more. Pictured (L-R) are Mark Kenyon, Ryan Furrer, Steven Rinella, Hank Forester, Matt Ross, and Janis Putelis.



FIELD TO FORK UPDATE

Field to Fork continues to grow and replicate around the country with 25 programs in 17 states. Each program is unique to the place and opportunity while the Field

to Fork model continues to prove successful. More resources are being launched in 2020, consider starting a Field to Fork program in your community! Visit QDMA.com/FTF.

FIELD TO FORK VIDEO

QDMA in partnership with the Georgia R3 Initiative released a video highlighting Field to Fork with the support of the National Shooting Sports Foundation.



Our community-based pilot continues strong with many of our past participants mentoring for the program and in their peer groups. One neat evolution was the addition of Academy Sports as a sponsor of Georgia Field to Fork events.



New hunter William Rechner poses with the mature buck he harvested at the John Heinz NWR with mentor James Harbert (middle) and Lamar Gore, refuge manager.



Participant Becky Peter (left) with mentor Krisha Faw at Academy Sports with their gift cards.

QDMA'S NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS UPDATE



It was such a wet winter in most of the country in 2019 that many deer habitat managers struggled to implement their annual prescribed fires. We got lucky at QDMA when fair burning conditions

aligned with a planned work-and-learn weekend at the National Headquarters in Georgia. Numerous volunteers were able to learn about prescribed fire by helping to conduct an actual burn and at the same

time help us bring fire back to a landscape that probably hadn't seen it in decades.

Since early 2018, when QDMA was gifted an additional 132 acres adjoining the original 23-acre National Headquarters site, we've faced the challenge of improving deer habitat that had not seen forest management in years. Low-value tree species, along with non-native invasive plants, have filled open spaces and choked out the understory. Reclaiming the ground for quality vegetation will be an acre-by-acre fight using chainsaws, herbicides and fire as our tools. We see this as a great educational opportunity for all our members and a hands-on education for some of them who are able to volunteer their time to help.

In February 2019 at our second work-and-learn weekend we've held in the past year, 22 QDMA member-volunteers from numerous states joined our staff for two days of work. The volunteers also included wildlife students from Mississippi State University, Auburn University and the



Daylighting woods by killing non-native invasive plants and low-value surplus trees like sweetgums is an ongoing project. Volunteers David Morris and UGA wildlife student Jordan Dyal teamed up as one chainsaw-and-herbicide crew (left). QDMA member Bob Markisen (right) drove up from Florida to help and plans to apply what he learned on his own small hunting property.





New deer hunters participating in QDMA's Field to Fork workshops will be the beneficiaries of our habitat work, as the QDMA National Headquarters acreage is being used for hunter recruitment efforts. Here, Mark Turner of Auburn University (left) and Moriah Boggess of Mississippi State's Deer Lab work on daylighting woods around a ladder stand. The fire will help stimulate understory forage and cover species which will then thrive in the newly available sunlight.



Krishna Faw of Georgia is a volunteer mentor in QDMA's Field to Fork workshop, and she guided the hunter who killed the first deer taken on QDMA's expanded Headquarters site last season. She returned in February to help improve deer habitat in those same woods.

University of Georgia and even the hosts of a couple of hunting podcasts – *Hunt the Land* and *Whitetail Guru*. Dr. Craig Harper of the University of Tennessee was on hand to teach habitat management techniques before wading in side-by-side with volunteers with his own drip torch and chainsaw. Jobs consisted of forest improvement by cutting down or killing invasive or overabundant tree species by applying her-

bicides to girdles or to stumps. Volunteers also got opportunities to handle a drip-torch and light prescribed fire and monitor firebreaks until the fire was out. After the planned burn of several units totalling about 6 acres was complete, the chainsaw work continued even while the ground was still smoking.

Don't worry – there's plenty of work left to do! We've only scratched the surface

of the forest work, and we hope to conduct prescribed fire annually on a planned rotation through pre-determined units, so look for more work-and-learn days very soon. Meanwhile, a huge "thank you" goes out to our latest crew of volunteers! We couldn't have done it without you.



Dr. Craig Harper of the University of Tennessee led instruction on prescribed fire and then turned it over to the volunteers, many of whom got to use a drip-torch and manage an active burn for the first time ever.

QDMA FINANCIAL STATEMENT

As a grassroots member-centric organization, QDMA strives to maximize mission delivery and member value. To achieve this, QDMA exercises extreme fiscal discipline to enable consistent revenue growth and expense containment. This approach has proven successful as QDMA continues to experience sustained

growth while maintaining its reputation as one of the leanest and most efficient nonprofit wildlife conservation organizations in the United States. The Internal Revenue Service has ruled that QDMA qualifies under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization created for charitable,

educational, and scientific purposes and, therefore, is exempt from federal income taxes. Donations to QDMA are deductible by the donor as charitable contributions for federal tax income purposes. QDMA's Federal Employer Identification Number is 57-0941892.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Assets	12-31-2017	12-31-2018
Cash Accounts	\$ 236,328	\$ 137,792
Accounts Receivable	\$ 212,857	\$ 412,322
Inventory	\$ 167,754	\$ 250,521
Prepaid Expenses	\$ 22,972	\$ 11,946
Investments	\$ 51,076	\$ 51,380
Total Current Assets	\$ 690,987	\$ 863,961
Property and Equipment	\$ 5,716,862	\$ 5,701,403
Net of Accumulated Depreciation	\$ (749,102)	\$ (789,101)
Total Property and Equipment	\$ 4,967,760	\$ 4,912,302
Total Assets	\$ 5,658,747	\$ 5,776,263
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current Liabilities	\$ 1,261,625	\$ 166,170
Accounts Payable	\$ 485,727	\$ 553,066
Accrued Expenses	\$ 185,441	\$ 197,745
Other Long Term Liabilities	\$ 1,735,162	\$ 798,507
Total Liabilities	\$ 3,667,955	\$ 1,715,488
Net Assets		
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 883,420	\$ 4,094,324
Restricted Net Assets	\$	\$ 130,000
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	\$ 1,107,372	\$ (163,549)
Total Net Assets	\$ 1,990,792	\$ 4,060,775
Total Assets and Liabilities	\$ 5,658,747	\$ 5,776,263

Note: Financial statements for year ending December 31, 2017 and 2018, were audited by Rhodes, Young, Black, and Duncan, CPA.

WHERE DOES YOUR MONEY GO?

QDMA recently received the highest possible rating, four stars, from Charity Navigator due to our efficient use of the gifts we receive. Charity Navigator is the premier independent organization used in evaluating and rating charities for their transparency and efficiency in handling the gifts they receive. QDMA is among the most efficient and effective non-profit organizations, with 96% of our operating expenses going toward mission delivery and fundraising. This includes advocating for sound deer management in policy and regulation, working to secure our hunting heritage, supporting practical whitetail research to advance our hunting knowledge, and improving deer management and hunter education at the grassroots level throughout North America.

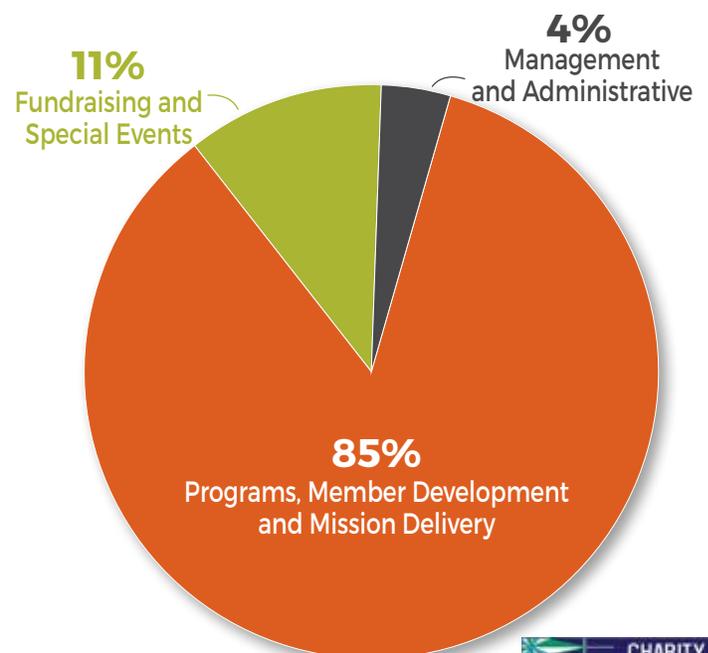
When you donate to QDMA, your support will help ensure a future where deer hunter numbers are stable, deer herds are healthy, and deer hunting is an accepted activity that can be enjoyed by a diverse public.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Revenues	12-31-2017	12-31-2018
Advertising and Corporate Support	\$ 483,630	\$ 1,234,856
Member Program Services	\$ 1,591,140	\$ 1,974,925
Fundraising and Donations	\$ 5,528,490	\$ 1,501,553
Membership Dues	\$ 1,060,965	\$ 774,347
Merchandise Sales	\$ 423,692	\$ 848,294
Investment and Interest Income	\$ 16,573	\$ 1,711
Total Current Assets	\$ 9,104,490	\$ 6,335,686
Cost of Goods Sold	\$ 628,818	\$ 1,241,505
Expenses		
Total Programmatic Expenses	\$ 4,548,567	\$ 4,321,211
Total Fundraising Expenses	\$ 611,668	\$ 755,964
Total Administrative Expenses	\$ 217,272	\$ 180,555
Total Expenses	\$ 5,377,507	\$ 5,257,730
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	\$ 3,098,165	\$ (163,549)
Net Assets at End of Year	\$ 5,658,747	\$ 5,776,263

Note: In 2017, QDMA received a land donation valued at \$3 million. Financial statements for year ending December 31, 2017 and 2018, were audited by Rhodes, Young, Black, and Duncan, CPA.

HOW YOUR DONATIONS TO QDMA ARE DISTRIBUTED



QDMA 2018 HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

QDMA would like to thank and recognize those who were generous donors to QDMA in 2018.

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.

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QDMA's WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT COOPERATIVE COORDINATOR – MICHIGAN UPDATE



The Michigan Wildlife Cooperatives program hit a milestone of 350,000 acres in 2019 – growing over 15,000 acres since the last publication of the *Whitetail Report*. These cooperatives engage 5,000 private landowners in their wildlife management efforts. To put that acreage into perspective, the land being impacted by Cooperatives in Michigan is almost equivalent to the footprint of the state game areas.

Deer hunters have continued their active engagement in disease management and education through Cooperative involvement. Chronic wasting disease (CWD) and bovine tuberculosis (bovine Tb) are both current threats in the state. Each year, Cooperative members host regional and local disease educational meetings to stay informed on regulations and management regarding disease status. These meetings allow for open communication between hunters and agency biologists – an important factor in the success of managing whitetails.

Another highlight of the year was the creation of the Upper Peninsula's (UP) first official Cooperative. Located on the western end of the UP, near Wisconsin, this cooperative is significant because of its position in the CWD zone. Having a connection to local deer hunters that are practicing active (QDM) is an insightful tool for agencies in terms of data collection and outreach. Working with this Cooperative exemplifies Michigan's diversity and how deer management differs based on region.

Cooperatives also work to carry out QDMA's five-year mission goals at a local level. An ongoing survey is working to collect information about the impact these groups are having on the landscape and the community. So far, data shows that Cooperatives have donated 8,500 pounds



The Annual Southern Mecosta Whitetail Management Association's buck pole was a huge success, with 20 registered firearm bucks and 5 bow bucks on the pole.



Michigan's Fish Creek and Bacon Creek cooperatives work together on an annual habitat tour event. Together, they manage over 4,000 acres of private land for deer and other wildlife. These sheds have been collected by co-op members over the years.

of venison since their start and mentored over 300 new youth and adult hunters. The majority of respondents said that Cooperative members feel more comfortable participating in the recruitment, retention and reactivation of hunters because of their involvement with a Cooperative. This is something the program hopes to investigate and utilize more frequently in 2020.

In the new year, Michigan's 130 Cooperatives will be faced with new challenges in deer management that will require hunter participation, knowledge, workshops, on the ground habitat efforts and increased communication. Members will rise to the occasion and grow as conservationists and the program will continue to offer educational opportunities

to help them meet their goals. These collaborative efforts have kept Cooperatives relevant and imperative to local whitetail management. Thank you to all hunters and landowners that dedicate their time to Cooperatives!

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 Jennings, Wildlife Cooperative Coordinator, at mjennings@mucc.org or visit the program website at www.mucc.org/cooperatives.

QDMA's WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT COOPERATIVE SPECIALISTS – MISSOURI UPDATE



A recent Wildlife Cooperative meeting held in Branson, Missouri.

In 2013, QDMA worked in partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) to create a position to engage landowners and establish QDM Cooperatives in Missouri. This Cooperative Specialist position is responsible for establishing new Cooperatives and servicing existing ones, assisting landowners with wildlife and habitat management programs and making them aware of conservation program opportunities. With the demand for these services over such a large landscape, an additional position was needed and in 2016, QDMA partnered with MDC to hire another Cooperative Specialist. This new addition allowed for more focused efforts in both the northern (Missouri River Unit) and the southern portions (Ozark Unit) of the state. Fast forward to 2019, and there are 25 truly active cooperatives statewide managing over 134,000 acres. In the most recent cooperative survey:

- Cooperatives in Missouri average 34 days/year of active management
- 100% of Cooperatives are doing prescribed burns and herbicide treatments, 90% are doing TSI
- At least 70% are collecting some form of population survey data
- 100% of Cooperative presidents mentioned CWD among their primary concerns related to deer in Missouri

A statewide Cooperative survey is conducted every year to get a better grasp on what is being accomplished already, and what is needed in the future to improve the Missouri Cooperatives Program. Along with the survey, an interactive statewide map is continually updated. This map was created to display the distribution and diversity of Cooperatives across the state.

Some 2019 highlights from Cooperatives and QDMA in Missouri include:

QDMA in partnership with MDC conducted a custom Deer Steward course for MDC staff near Columbia, Missouri. This course was designed to provide MDC staff with a comprehensive understanding of the key principles of deer and habitat biology, ecology and management. Presenters included Kip Adams, Wildlife Biologist, QDMA's Director of Conservation; Matt Ross, Wildlife Biologist and Forester, QDMA Assistant Director of Conservation; Alex Foster, former QDMA Missouri Cooperative Specialist; Dr. Craig Harper, Professor and Extension Wildlife Specialist, University of Tennessee; and Kevyn Wiskirchen, MDC Private Lands Deer Biologist.

At the MDC Private Lands Division Conference in Springfield, Missouri, Ted Slinkard, SEMO Trail of Tears Branch of QDMA & President of Mayfield Holler Wildlife Cooperative; and Roger Frazer, MDC Priority Habitat Coordinator & member of Mayfield Holler Wildlife Cooperative, were presented with the Tricia R. Radford Team Award for their work on a research project. For the past three years the Private Land Services and Resource Science Divisions have been conducting a research project entitled the "Seasonal Movements of Whitetail Deer Associated with Small Crop Lands in Forest-Dominated Landscapes". The project involved capturing adult does in bean fields using rocket nets during the summer months. Roger and Ted were always trying to identify ways to improve trapping success and efficiency. One of their improvements was the purchase and design of a system to remotely detonate the rocket net utilizing a wireless detonator and a wireless security camera. This system allowed trappers

to monitor a trap site from over ¼ mile away in the comfort of the truck (AC and no mosquitoes) without the worry of deer seeing or smelling them. The clarity of the system allowed the accurate identification of the type of deer during both day and night. This reduced trapping error which increased both efficiency and effectiveness of the project. The wireless camera and detonator system likely reduced the 2018 trapping season by one month and saved over 500 man hours. The new system also reduced the number of deer captured because of false identification by 25%. The system could potentially be utilized during CWD targeted culling to identify adult deer and to monitor deer usage in fields that we are targeting. This project was a good example how MDC and QDMA worked together to achieve a goal that benefited both organizations and why Roger and Ted are deserving of this award.

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. Folks in attendance left more informed about the disease and management strategies in Missouri.

QDMA worked in partnership with MDC to host the first QDMA Field to Fork event in Missouri. Four traditional non-hunting adults participated in the event. The new hunters participated in the weekend long mentored hunting program, teaching them how to hunt and acquire a wild, healthy, local, sustainable source of food on their own. All four participants were able to harvest their first deer!

Dozens of workshops, Cooperative tours and meetings provided information on creating Cooperatives, habitat management, herd management, CWD and many other topics of interest. Cooperatives in Missouri have been seeing great results for some time now from their intensive habitat and herd management, not only in their deer herds but from other wildlife as well.

In 2020, Missouri Cooperative specialists plan to host their first statewide Cooperative/Branch get together. This event will hopefully have every Cooperative and Branch in the state represented and bring all interested Missouri Cooperative and Branch members together in one place for a fun and educational event.

For more information on Cooperative development contact QDMA Cooperative Specialist Jake Grages at jgrages@qdma.com and (573) 410-5318 in northern Missouri or Cheyne Matzenbacher at cmatzenbacher@qdma.com and (417) 332-7258 in southern Missouri.

QDMA's WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT COOPERATIVE SPECIALIST - ALABAMA UPDATE

Throughout the Midwest, interest level and participation in QDM Cooperatives have grown significantly throughout the last few years. As Cooperatives experience increasing success, the awareness and demand for guidance has spread immensely throughout the rest of the country. In March 2019, QDMA partnered with the Alabama Wildlife Federation (AWF) to hire Ben Westfall as a QDM Cooperative specialist in the southwest region of the state. This position is responsible for assisting landowners and hunting clubs to establish and maintain new QDM Cooperatives, service existing ones, assist landowners with wildlife and habitat management programs, and inform them about DMAP and other NRCS, AWF, and ADCNR programs.

The extensiveness of the Alabama deer season and late timing of the rut presents challenges when it comes to scheduling meetings and formally establishing Cooperatives in the early winter months. But don't let that fool you, QDMA is in the process of forming Cooperatives with multiple timber management companies, hunting clubs, and private landowners encompassing tens of thousands of acres throughout Southwest Alabama. In fact, Ben formed his first Cooperative in December 2019 at 19,249 acres.

The primary goal for the first year of the program was to spread awareness of QDM Cooperatives, educate the public on their benefits, and establish relationships with landowners and other conservation professionals. With much success, QDMA has given several presentations to landowners, hunting clubs, DMAP participants, and private land management companies. To gauge the outreach success, a comprehensive Cooperative survey will be conducted in February 2020 to determine hunter satisfaction, interest in Cooperatives, and what the Alabama Cooperatives Program needs to focus on in the future.

With chronic wasting disease (CWD) lurking near the Alabama border in Tennessee and Mississippi, QDMA has also focused efforts on educating the public about CWD, the reason for concern, and preventative measures. As of the 2019



deer season, the ADCNR offers dozens of voluntary CWD sampling drop off locations throughout the state in hopes of obtaining a larger sample size for their mitigation efforts. Through the formation of QDM Cooperatives and involvement in the state Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP), hunters can greatly contribute to the CWD prevention efforts.

QDMA has big things planned for Alabama in 2020. In partnership with the ADCNR, QDMA will provide a custom training to state employees and other conservation professionals relative to deer

management, as well as host a Deer Steward 2 class. QDMA will also have a presence at the Southeast Deer Study Group (SEDSG) meeting in Auburn to learn about the latest research, management strategies, and solutions to problems relating to deer management. This knowledge will be instrumental in the advancement of the Alabama Cooperatives Program and the delivery of the QDMA mission.

For more information on Cooperative development contact QDMA Cooperative Specialist Ben Westfall at bwestfall@qdma.com and 251-753-3040.

QDMA INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The QDMA has selected interns to assist with specific projects in past years, and in 2016 we developed an official internship program. 2019 marked the third full year for internships, and we had some outstanding interns. The Conservation Department chose Leah Bell, Jaden Bjorklund, Nathan Cranata and Tyler Hathaway 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:

- Assisting with QDMA's hunting heritage program educational materials
- Writing articles for *Quality Whitetails*
- Assessing new trail-camera survey technology
- Assisting with QDMA's 2019 and 2020 *Whitetail Reports*
- Assisting with advocacy items
- Developing a national list of states with deer urine and live cervid importation bans
- Researching conservation organization position statements
- Creating a national list of states with constitutional rights to hunt
- Updating QDMA's *Whitetail Report* online index
- Researching grant opportunities



Leah Bell, Wisconsin



Jaden Bjorklund, Minnesota



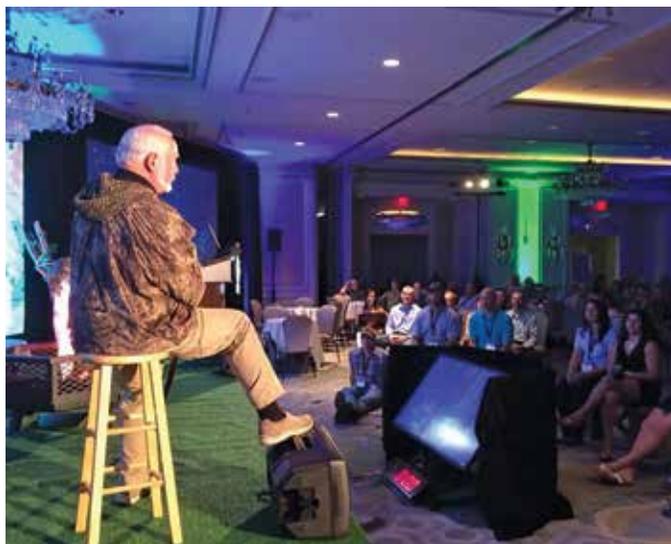
Nathan Cranata, Georgia



Tyler Hathaway, Indiana

The internship program is ongoing with new interns selected for 2020. If you're interested in being involved contact Kip Adams at Kadams@QDMA.com or 814.326.4023.

QDMA ADVANCEMENT



BY JOE HAMILTON

One of the events at the QDMA's 2018 National Convention was the Founder's Firepot Social on Friday night. I had conducted a number of book signings in the year since my *Firepot Stories* book was published, but this was my debut before a large crowd of over 100 convention attendees. My platform was nothing more than a bar stool and a stage. Why the bar stool? Well, as a shy youngster I was impressed by the calm, succinct delivery of Dave Garroway, the first anchorman for NBC's TODAY Show in the mid-1950s. On many occasions Mr. Garroway sat on a bar stool for his dialogue. One day, I hoped, I'd be able to emulate my mentor. And, the bar stool has become my signature platform.

During the Founder's Firepot Social event I talked about the uniqueness of my book and shared some of my favorite, humorous stories with the audience for nearly an hour. The response was heartwarming, and I was encouraged to share this experience with audiences across the whitetail's range. Brian Murphy and I decided to develop an evening VIP event encouraging donor cultivation and advancing financial support for the QDMA. In 2019 we conducted VIP events in Okemos, Michigan on March 22 with 25 attendees; Brutus, Michigan on July 18 with 20 attendees; and, in Columbia, South Carolina on August 28 with 50 attendees. Brian Murphy served as the emcee for the two events in Michigan and John Eastman, from QDMA Headquarters, emceed the event in Columbia, South Carolina. Board Members Leon Hank and Kevin Gillespie attended both Michigan events and Board Member Nicole Garris attended the South Carolina event. They commented on broad-scale activities of the QDMA. QDMA Branch volunteers spoke at each event as well and shared local activities with the audiences. Andrea Bogard, profes-

sional photographer from Kingsley, Michigan was at the first two meetings and captured the moment with photos and video. I served as the after-dinner speaker and told stories from my book while espousing the need for our organization. The objective of such events is to identify local philanthropic-minded individuals as potential donors once they were made aware of the vast array of QDMA activities at the national, state, and local levels. This approach toward garnering additional financial support for the QDMA has been

quite rewarding, and a number of VIP events will be scheduled for 2020.

We have done quite well as a nonprofit wildlife conservation organization for 31 years. Our course to fulfil our mission to *ensure the future of the white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage* has been direct and unwavering. But we can't continue to flourish simply by maintaining the status quo. There are many new challenges that will require our undivided attention and support. We stand poised to face these challenges and, as a measure of our ability, have been granted a 4-star rating, the highest level attainable, by Charity Navigator, the largest and most-utilized evaluator of charities in the United States. In short, our rating has been based on transparency and efficiency at maintaining management and administrative costs at or below the 5% level while distributing 85% to programs, member benefits, and mission delivery. The QDMA has received the 4-star rating for three consecutive years — verification that we exceed industry standards and outperform most charities.

As an integral portion of the acclaimed REACH Program (Research, Educate, Advocate, Certify, and Hunt) the QDMA is a big supporter of youth and adult apprentice programs designed for recruitment and retention of new hunters. Twenty-one of 35 eastern states have a mentored youth program. The QDMA has youth hunting kits for our 131 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* E-book reaches approximately 350,000 annually.

The QDMA averages about 90 advocacy issues in local, state, and national arenas each year. We were engaged in nearly 100 issues in 2018 and 167 in 2019. 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 10-15 million acres in North America since 2007.

As the voice of the whitetail throughout the nation, the QDMA has been and will continue to be vigilant of local, state, and national issues that concern our members and deer hunters in general. Our annual *Whitetail Report* is unique in the nation; providing the heartbeat of whitetail-related matters. The *Quality Whitetails* journal promotes our organization's mission: To ensure the future of the white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat, and our hunting heritage.

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
- Life Membership
- 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% 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, (bmurphy@qdma.com or 800-209-3337) or Joe Hamilton, QDMA's Founder & Senior Advisor, (jhamilton@qdma.com or 843-844-8610). Thank you!

THE BROTHERS-HAMILTON SOCIETY



The Brothers-Hamilton Society (BHS) membership is expected to reach the mid-80s by the 2020 Whitetail Weekend in March. Membership in the BHS includes 79 individuals, four foundations, and one company — a reflection of critical financial support for the QDMA. Here are testimonials of three dedicated BHS members:

SCOTT RHODES

My Dad, Tombo, read *Producing Quality Whitetails* by Al Brothers and Murphy E. Ray, Jr. soon after it was published in 1975. In 1981 at the age of 11, I harvested a legendary, neighborhood whitetail. Shortly thereafter, my Dad told me, 'Now son, it's time to let those young bucks grow up a little.' Young and impressionable, I soaked it up. This event was the catalyst setting into motion the future of deer management on our lowcountry property.



In 1988, my Dad became one of the 37 Charter Life Members of the newly formed South Carolina Quality Deer Management Association. Joe Hamilton is a mentor who was equally as impressionable as my Dad. I attended the UGA Warnell School of Forest Resources where two wildlife professors made powerful impressions upon my young mind, Dr. Karl Miller and Dr. Larry Marchinton.

I had the honor of meeting Al Brothers on our family's property during his visit to South Carolina in the early '90s. During an internship in South Texas I once again crossed paths with Al. For an aspiring wildlife biologist this encounter will remain a cherished memory.

Last spring, my daughter Jane and I accompanied Joe Hamilton and his grandson Baines to Texas for a visit with Al. The memories and impressions made with Baines and Jane were the highlights of a visit with our mentor. Now, Al is theirs, too.

Mentoring and instilling lasting memories into the youthful minds is of upmost importance to me. The very basics of all things wild will leave a lasting impression

upon our youth and I know my support of QDMA helps further this cause. I thank those who mentored and made lasting impressions upon my life and hope the future brings the same to all youth I am fortunate to spend time with afield! I am a Life Member of the QDMA and joined the Brothers-Hamilton Society in 2019.



LESLIE MERRIKEN

QDMA was introduced to me around 2012 by fellow Delaware conservationist Latty Hoch (Charter BHS member and now my husband).

I was managing 1,200 acres in Delaware and Maryland and was in need of whitetail and hunter management tools. He suggested that I join QDMA, attend the National Conventions, and enroll in Deer Steward Level 1 & 2 Courses.

The Level 2 Deer Steward Course taken at Arthur & Desiree Dick's North Carolina property are still coming in handy today. Thanks to Dr. Craig Harper's 'hack & squirt' demonstration, my woodlands now yield more natural vegetation for all wildlife.

Presentations from our local Delaware Branch President Chip West reinforced the QDM approach. Also, it was very much appreciated that I could pick up the phone and talk with Founder Joe Hamilton or CEO Brian Murphy. What other national organization can you say this about?

The Four Cornerstones of Herd, Habitat, and Hunter Management along with Herd Monitoring are complex and have taken years of field studies, research and observations to perfect. QDMA gave me a head start with information via their magazine, website, seminars and expert biologists. Hands-on training from knowledgeable biologists provided me with information to turn my farms into 'local poster properties' for whitetail management.

Funding is mandatory to keep the information flowing.

Thanks to QDMA I have made many lifelong friends, gained practical knowledge and taken 1,200 acres to a new level. Donations to the most efficient & effective non-profit wildlife conservation organization in the United States are my way of

ensuring a legacy. I am proud to be a Life Member of the QDMA and a member of the Brothers-Hamilton Society.

JACK TURNER

I joined QDMA about 15 years ago shortly after purchasing my hunting property and future homestead. Through the knowledge provided by the QDMA, I was able to move from thinking only of habitat to being a deer manager as well. This information along with like-minded, neighboring property owners made my hunting experience much more fulfilling.



A few years ago, the QDMA announced 5-year mission goals - lofty goals indeed but worthwhile to pursue. As a former professional in philanthropy in the conservation community, I encouraged Brian Murphy to simply ask QDMA's membership to financially support the mission. I've been thrilled to see this notion in action. Mission goals can't be fulfilled without adequate funding.

I've gradually become a Life Member, Corporate Sponsor and, most important, we are Planned Givers. When we prepared our will, we gave QDMA a share of our estate equal to that of family members! The immediate result was membership in the Brothers-Hamilton Society. QDMA has enriched my life and I couldn't be more pleased as a donor.

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.

2019 QDMA CONSERVATION & BRANCH ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



QDMA awarded William Yancey (left) with Ranew's Outdoor Equipment, the **Corporate Achievement Award**. Since 2012, Ranew's has supported QDMA and our mission, and their team can always be spotted at QDMA national and local events going beyond the call of corporate sponsorship for whitetails. The award was presented by QDMA's Director of Corporate Relations, Steve Levi.



The **Event of the Year** was the Michigan Military Youth Hunt, hosted by the Eaton County and Capital Area Branches. This second annual event took place in September 2018, with the Eaton County and Capital Areas Branches each hosting a hunting camp for youth from families with one or both parents who are active military or veterans of the armed forces.



The **Branch President of the Year** award went to Bob Rose (right) of New York's Greater Rochester Southern Tier Branch. A QDMA member since 2011, Bob Rose has served as a volunteer, vice president and president of his local QDMA Branch. Bob is pictured above with Ryan Hancy, one of three new hunters he mentored in 2018 for a New York Field to Fork event.



QDMA awarded Dr. Bronson Strickland (left) as the winner of the 2019 **Al Brothers Professional Deer Manager of the Year Award**. Bronson is a professor of wildlife management and the Extension Wildlife Specialist at Mississippi State University. The award was presented by QDMA's CEO, Brian Murphy.



The Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) was named QDMA's 2019 **Agency of the Year** due, in part, to their successful deer management program, efforts to engage and involve Georgia hunters in the planning and management process, as well as their commitment to the R3 (Recruit, Retain, Reactivate) hunter recruitment movement. Pictured (L-R): QDMA Board member Hugh Sosebee of Georgia, QDMA CEO Brian Murphy, WRD Director Rusty Garrison, WRD Deer Project Leader Charlie Killmaster, WRD Game Management Chief John Bowers and QDMA Assistant Director of Conservation Matt Ross.



The Lowcountry Branch of South Carolina took the honors of **Branch of the Year, Membership Branch of the Year, Sponsor Branch of the Year, and Fundraising Branch of the Year**. The Lowcountry Branch has also been one of the strongest QDMA Branches, conducting youth hunts, membership drives and educational events to share the mission of QDMA locally and nationally. Pictured (L-R): QDMA Board Member Nicole Garriss, Lowcountry Branch President Mary Helen Canaday and South Carolina State Advisory Council President David Galloway.



The Coastal Empire Branch of Savannah, Georgia earned the **New Branch of the Year** award. The new Branch held both a successful fundraising banquet and an educational event in their first year, bringing in 110 new QDMA members and 20 sponsor members from the Savannah area. Pictured above (L-R): Branch Treasurer Dan Blazek, President Cory Parker, and Vice President Austin Seals and QDMA Regional Director A.B. Smith.

QDMA BRANCH HIGHLIGHTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS IN 2019

2019 was another great year for our grassroots volunteers. On the fundraising side, we held 108 events resulting in 11,571 memberships, which generated over \$1.05 million dollars for wildlife conservation!

Our Branches and National Office use those funds to pursue QDMA's mission and goals. To date our Branches have held over 273 mission-related events including 45 educational events, 22 expos, 19 Share Your Hunt™ youth events, 26 Field to Fork hunts for new adult hunters, and many “pint night” gatherings, sporting clay shoots and golf tournaments.

Examples of specific events across the whitetail's range include the following:

MINNESOTA/WISCONSIN

The Prairie Highland Branch held two Share Your Hunt™ youth deer hunts on two state parks in southern Minnesota, the Southwest Wisconsin Branch donated over 90 QDMA memberships to high school libraries in the southern part of the state, and the Central Wisconsin Branch continued with their Billboard Program for the second year. This year over 15 billboards could be seen throughout the year.

MICHIGAN

The Capital Area and Eaton County QDMA Branches hosted their annual Michigan Military Youth Hunt in September. Between the two Branches, they hosted 28 new youth hunters, all of whom have one or both parents that are currently in or veterans of The United States Armed Forces. The participants were educated in a wide variety of topics like wildlife management, deer biology, aging, shot placement, gun safety, fishing, archery, tracking, and more. Nearly all of the participants had a chance to harvest deer, and many of them did kill their first deer during the weekend.

MISSISSIPPI

The Neshoba Branch in Philadelphia, Mississippi had a banquet in November that netted \$22,570. This was the 4th straight year that they have netted over \$20,000. They also have given the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks a donation of five chest freezers to put at CWD test sites across Mississippi.

NEW YORK

The Rochester Branch hosted its second Field to Fork event and the class size increased in 2019. The Branch held two deer hunting 101 classes, hunter education, a range day, followed by 1:1 mentored hunts with all the participants on private ground. Five of the eight new hunters were successful in harvesting their first deer,



Youth hunt participants from the Connie Maxwell Children's Home pictured with items purchased with raffle proceeds from The White Store Branch of North Carolina.

and they held two sessions on butchering and processing instruction, and ended the event with a culinary social with the new hunters and mentors enjoying venison dishes.

CANADA

The Lanark County Branch and Renfrew County Branch teamed up in 2019 to initiate QDMA Canada's first ever spring tree planting program. Over 20 different indigenous species were selected including soft mast, hard mast, conifer and winter browsing bushes. In total over 1,000 trees were planted as part of the program.

PENNSYLVANIA

The Cowanesque Valley Branch Youth Day in June was a free event to area youth 5-17 years old. Activities included a rifle range, archery range, shotgun range, trapping demonstration and more. When the day was over kids shot 250 shotgun shells, over 1,000 rounds of .22 ammunition, and over 1,100 arrows. It was hands on, and it was capped off with a lot of prizes and free hot dogs and hamburgers.

LOUISIANA

The South Louisiana Branch located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana had a banquet in October that netted \$25,190 and 250 memberships. The South Louisiana Branch is heavily involved in their local food bank.

KENTUCKY

The huge QDMA Kentucky Military Youth hunt held October was run by the Derby City, Kentucky Heartland, Owensboro and Barren River Branches. Thirty-six kids participated

and they harvested 54 deer over the weekend. A good portion of the venison was donated to Kentucky Hunters for the Hungry.

NEW YORK

The Upper Hudson River Valley Branch hosted its first Field to Fork event with nine participants. Six shot their first deer, and participant ages ranged from 29 to 64 years. The Branch partnered with Cornell Cooperative Extension (Warren and Saratoga Counties), the New York Chapter of Back Country Hunters and Anglers, Slate River Farms as well as the Capital District Branch of QDMA to make it happen.

NORTH CAROLINA

The White Store Branch sponsored a youth hunt for the Connie Maxwell Children's Home. This was the third year for the event and it has continued to improve every year. The Branch raffled off a Kawasaki Mule and used the proceeds to buy school clothes, shoes and other items to give to each of the participants at the hunt. The Branch gets the youth's sizes and buys the clothes, shoes and other items, then gives each child a box with their name on it. Everyone opens the boxes at the same time and it is very rewarding to see the joy and excitement on the kids' faces. This event has brought these youth closer to the Branch volunteers, and the hunt is the icing on the cake.

We look forward to engaging our volunteers with more of these types of events in 2020 and beyond. To get involved with a Branch or a special event go to www.qdma.com/get-involved/start-a-branch/.

CONTACT A QDMA BRANCH NEAR YOU



Branch Name	City	State	Branch Contact	Phone	Email
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
Gulf Coast Branch	Moble	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	timmerman66@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
Delta Droptine	Lake Village	Arkansas	Joey Williamson	(870) 265-1206	sales@southernaquaculturesupply.com
Northeast Arkansas Branch	Peach Orchard	Arkansas	Zack Yancey	(870) 595-4060	zack.yancey@agfc.ar.gov
Northwest Arkansas Branch	Bentonville	Arkansas	Bill Miller	(636) 300-7227	whmiller15@gmail.com
Saline-Bartholomew Branch	Monticello	Arkansas	Brison Reed	(870) 723-5125	huntershed13@yahoo.com
Delaware Branch	Laurel	Delaware	Scott Hudson	(302) 841-0111	shudson900@hotmail.com
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 McConaughay	(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
Tri-County Branch of NW FL	Bonifay	Florida	Larry Morris	(850) 268-1009	idm.clg@gmail.com
Swamp Buck Branch	Gainesville	Florida	Bryan Shimeall	(321) 303-2840	bryanshimeall@gmail.com
Athens Branch	Stephens	Georgia	Aaron Whiting	(770) 530-4722	awhit300@yahoo.com
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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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