

2017 Pennsylvania Deer Hunter Survey



Statewide Results

June 2018

Conducted by Pennsylvania Game Commission's Deer and Elk Section and Bureau of Wildlife Management

www.pgc.state.pa.us

INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

We completed this survey to quantify hunter behaviors and attitudes regarding deer hunting and management in Pennsylvania. This survey was modeled after the 1995, 2011, and 2014 deer hunter surveys conducted by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. We randomly selected hunters who purchased 2016-17 hunting licenses.

RESPONSE RATES

We sent surveys to 6,000 individual hunters. Our 4 mailings included 2 mailings that provided instructions to complete the survey online and 2 mailings that contained a hard copy of the survey. A total of 179 surveys were non-deliverable (i.e., moved with no forwarding address, death, etc.) and 3,264 usable responses for a response rate of 56%. We present results as an estimate (e.g., 55%). These estimates have an associated 95% confidence interval of approximately $\pm 2\%$. For example, if 55% of the respondents agreed with a statement, statistically, the interval from 53% (55 - 2) to 57% (55 + 2) would include the actual percent of hunters who agreed with the statement 95% of the time.

REPRESENTATIVENESS OF THIS SURVEY

Participants in this survey represented a random sample of Pennsylvania hunters. Distribution of respondents closely matched license sales with adults constituting 73% of survey respondents and 72% of age-specific license sales. Nonresidents represented 7% of survey respondents and 5% of license sales.

RESULTS

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PART 1. GENERAL DEER HUNTING QUESTIONS

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

Average 31 years of deer hunting
Average 51 years old

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

1 year 4%
2 years 5%
3 years 7%
4 years 7%
5 years 75%

3. Did you hunt deer in Pennsylvania during the 2016-17 hunting season?

91% Yes

4. Did you harvest an antlered deer in Pennsylvania during the 2016-17 hunting season?

19% Yes

5. Did you take your antlered deer to a taxidermist in Pennsylvania during the 2016-17 hunting seasons?

21% Yes, for hunters who harvested an antlered deer

6. Who processed your antlered deer from the 2016-17 hunting seasons? (Circle only one)

2% I gave the antlered deer away
40% I took it to a processor
8% I skinned the antlered deer, then took the meat to a processor
50% I processed the entire deer myself or had a friend or family member process it for me.

7. How many antlerless deer did you harvest in Pennsylvania during the 2016-17 seasons?

0 deer 77%
1 deer 18%
2 deer 4%
>2 deer 1%

8. How many total deer did you pay someone to process during the 2016-17 seasons?

0 deer 83%
1 deer 12%
2 deer 3%
>2 deer 1%

9. On what kind of land did you hunt deer in Pennsylvania during the 2016-17 seasons? (Circle only one)

56% Privately owned land (ex. Owned by private citizens and companies)
16% Publicly owned land (ex. Government-owned lands like State Game Lands and State Forests)
28% Both privately and publicly owned land

10. During the 2016-17 seasons, did you pay a fee to access land for deer hunting?

6% Yes

11. During the 2016-17 seasons, how many trail cameras did you use for deer scouting?

0 cameras 69%
 1 camera 13%
 2 cameras 8%
 >2 cameras 10%

12. Did you hunt deer in another state during the 2016-17 hunting seasons?

12% Yes

Top States

New York
 Ohio
 Maryland
 West Virginia
 New Jersey

13. Did you hunt bears in Pennsylvania during the 2016 archery bear season?

6% Yes

14. In the last year, did you hunt deer on a high-fenced facility in Pennsylvania that charged a fee?

0.27% Yes

PART 2. DEER HUNTING MOTIVATIONS AND INTEREST

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

	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
15. I hunt with the goal of harvesting an antlered deer only.	38%	27%	35%
16. I do not care if I harvest an antlered or antlerless deer, as long as I get a deer.	49%	23%	28%

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

31% I am less interested now than 5 years ago
 52% My interest has not changed in the last 5 years
 13% I am more interested now than 5 years ago
 4% I did not hunt deer in Pennsylvania 5 years ago

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

20% Time to hunt
 14% Place to hunt
 5% Personal health
 14% Age
 4% Hunting expenses (ex. gas, equipment, licenses)
 6% Hunting partner(s)
 19% Number of antlered deer seen or harvested
 7% Number of antlerless deer seen or harvested
 6% Quality of antlered deer seen or harvested
 6% Antler restrictions

PART 3. WMU HUNTED DURING THE 2016-17 ARCHERY SEASON

In which Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) did you hunt deer the most during the 2016-17 FALL ARCHERY SEASON (i.e., October to mid-November)?

48% of deer hunters hunted in archery season.

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

19. **During fall archery season, approximately how many days did you hunt in the WMU where you hunted the most during fall archery? (Circle only one)**
- 8% 1-2 days
 24% 2-5 days
 30% 6-10 days
 18% 11-15 days
 20% More than 15 days
20. **Did you start or return to archery hunting because you could use a crossbow?**
- 33% Yes
21. **Did you harvest an antlered deer in the WMU where you hunted the most during the fall archery season?**
- 18% Yes
22. **How many antlerless deer did you harvest in the WMU where you hunted the most during the fall archery season?**
- 0 deer 82%
 1 deer 14%
 2 deer 2%
 >2 deer 2%
23. **Based on your experience during the fall archery season, the deer population in the WMU where you hunted the most during the fall archery season is: (Circle only one)**
- 10% Increasing
 53% Staying the same
 37% Decreasing
24. **Based on your experience during the fall archery season, the deer population in the WMU where you hunted the most during the fall archery season is: (Circle only one)**
- 49% Too low
 47% About right
 4% Too high
25. **On what kind of land did you hunt deer during the fall archery season in the WMU where you hunted the most during the fall archery season? (Circle only one)**
- 64% Privately owned land (ex. Owned by private citizens and companies)
 14% Publicly owned land (ex. Government-owned lands like State Game Lands and State Forests)
 22% Both privately and publicly owned land

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

- 60% Too low for me to be satisfied
- 38% Enough for me to be satisfied
- 2% More than enough for me to be satisfied

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

- 45% Too low for me to be satisfied
- 47% Enough for me to be satisfied
- 7% More than enough for me to be satisfied

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

- 47% I only used a crossbow
- 40% I only used a vertical bow
- 14% I used both a crossbow and vertical bow

For the 2016-17 fall archery season in the WMU where you hunted the most during the fall archery season:

- 29. Did you hunt as part of a hunting camp? 13% Yes
- 30. Did you hunt with a portable treestand? 60% Yes
- 31. Did you hunt from a permanent treestand? 49% Yes
- 32. Did you hunt using natural deer urine-based lures? 41% Yes
- 33. Is your primary residence in the WMU hunted most? 67% Yes
- 34. How many miles do you travel one-way to hunt in the WMU hunted most? Average 31 Miles Driven to Hunt

PART 4. WMU HUNTED DURING THE 2016-17 REGULAR FIREARMS SEASON

In which Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) did you hunt deer the most during the 2016-17 REGULAR FIREARMS hunting season (i.e., the firearms season after Thanksgiving)?

80% of hunters hunted opening day of firearms season.
91% of hunters hunted firearms season.

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

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

- 15% Yes

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

- 0 deer 80%
- 1 deer 15%
- 2 deer 2%
- >2 deer 2%

37. **The deer population in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season is: (Circle only one)**
- 9% Increasing
49% Staying the same
43% Decreasing
38. **The deer population in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season is: (Circle only one)**
- 56% Too low
42% About right
2% Too high
39. **In the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season, antlerless allocations should: (Circle only one)**
- 15% Increase
51% Stay the same
28% Decrease
6% Be eliminated
40. **In the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season, how many days did you spend in the woods scouting for deer before the season? Median 2 Days**
41. **On what land did you hunt deer in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season? (Circle one)**
- 59% Privately owned land (ex. Owned by private citizens and companies)
20% Publicly owned land (ex. Government-owned lands like State Game Lands and State Forests)
20% Both privately and publicly owned land
42. **In the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season, the number of antlered deer you saw last year during the firearms season was: (Circle only one)**
- 73% Too low for me to be satisfied
26% Enough for me to be satisfied
1% More than enough for me to be satisfied
43. **In the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season, the number of antlerless deer you saw last year during the firearms season was: (Circle only one)**
- 53% Too low for me to be satisfied
42% Enough for me to be satisfied
5% More than enough for me to be satisfied

For questions 43 to 45, about how many days did you hunt during the 2016-17 deer seasons in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season? (If none, write in 0)

44. **October Muzzleloader** Average <1 Day
45. **Archery and Flintlock after Christmas** Average 2 Days
46. **Firearms after Christmas (only in WMUs 2B, 5C, and 5D)** Average <1 Day
47. **In the WMU marked above, which days of the firearms season did you hunt? (Circle all that apply)**

<u>1st Week Day</u>	<u>% Hunters Hunting</u>	<u>2nd Week Day</u>	<u>% Hunters Hunting</u>
Monday	69	Monday	22
Tuesday	47	Tuesday	18
Wednesday	31	Wednesday	16
Thursday	23	Thursday	18
Friday	29	Friday	29
Saturday	60	Saturday	59

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

66% Agree
16% Neither Agree nor Disagree
19% Disagree

49. Please indicate your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with you deer hunting experience in 2016-17 in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season

39% Satisfied
28% Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
33% Dissatisfied

For the 2016-17 regular firearms season in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season:

50. Did you hunt as part of a hunting camp? 24% Yes
51. Did you hunt from a portable treestand? 32% Yes
52. Did you hunt from a permanent treestand? 35% Yes
53. Did you hunt using natural deer urine-based lures? 16% Yes
54. Did you hunt as part of a drive? 23% Yes
55. Is your primary residence in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season?
58% Yes
56. How many miles do you travel one-way to hunt in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season?
Average 46 Miles Driven to Hunt
57. If the deer population remained the same in the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season, I would prefer the regular firearms season to be: (Circle only one)
46% 12-day antlered and antlerless concurrent
54% 5-day antlered followed by a 7-day antlered and antlerless concurrent
58. In the WMU where you hunted the most during the firearms season, I would prefer the regular firearms season to start on: (Circle only one)
35% The Saturday after Thanksgiving
65% The Monday after Thanksgiving
59. Given the following examples of antlerless allocations and antlerless firearms season lengths needed to maintain a stable deer population, I would prefer: (Circle only one)
60% Same antlerless licenses and a 12-day concurrent antlered and antlerless season
26% 15 percent more antlerless licenses and a 5-day antlered only followed by a 7-day concurrent antlerless and antlered season
14% 40 percent more antlerless licenses and a 12-day antlered season followed by a separate 3-day antlerless season

PART 5. DEER HARVEST REPORTING AND DEER HUNTING REGULATIONS

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

	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
60. Current methods to report deer harvests (e.g., report card, Internet, toll-free phone number) are easy and convenient	83%	14%	3%
61. Deer harvest estimates based on field checked deer and hunter reporting rates are acceptable to me.	55%	30%	15%
62. Deer harvest estimates based on a mail survey of hunters are acceptable to me.	48%	32%	20%
63. All deer should be checked through mandatory check stations.	16%	21%	63%
64. Report cards are the only method I can use to report my deer harvest.	30%	32%	39%
65. Accurate reporting of each deer harvested is the hunter's ethical responsibility.	87%	10%	3%

PART 6. CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE (CWD)

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

88% Yes

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

39% Very concerned

49% Somewhat concerned

13% Not concerned

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

	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
68. Because of CWD, I am concerned about eating venison.	41%	30%	29%
69. Because of CWD, I am concerned about the health of wild deer.	84%	11%	5%
70. Because of CWD, I am concerned about the future of deer hunting.	80%	14%	6%
71. If CWD was detected in the area I hunt most often, I would hunt in a different area.	41%	33%	26%
72. If CWD was detected in the area I hunt most often, my interest in deer hunting would decrease.	40%	28%	32%
73. Reducing the deer population can help control spread of CWD.	24%	44%	32%
74. The Game Commission should eliminate the antler point restrictions in CWD areas.	33%	35%	32%
75. The Game Commission should continue to prohibit deer feeding in CWD areas.	57%	32%	10%
76. The Game Commission should continue to prohibit use of natural deer urine-based lures in CWD areas.	38%	44%	18%
77. To reduce the risk of spreading CWD, the Game Commission should prohibit use of natural deer urine-based lures statewide.	30%	45%	25%
78. The Game Commission should continue to restrict transport of deer carcasses from CWD areas.	61%	30%	8%
79. The Game Commission should continue to use Disease Management Area permits to reduce deer populations.	47%	36%	17%
80. I support use of sharpshooters to control CWD, if hunters are given additional hunting opportunities prior to sharpshooting.	46%	29%	25%

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

22%	Any deer in the area I hunt had CWD
7%	1 out of 100 deer in the area I hunt had CWD
18%	10 out of 100 deer in the area I hunt had CWD
9%	25 out of 100 deer in the area I hunt had CWD
6%	40 out of 100 deer in the area I hunt had CWD
39%	CWD will not reduce my interest in deer hunting

PART 7. DEER MANAGEMENT

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

	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
82. Deer populations should be managed for healthy and sustainable forest habitat.	81%	11%	8%
83. Deer populations should be managed for healthy and sustainable deer populations.	89%	8%	3%
84. Deer populations should be managed for safe and acceptable levels of deer-human conflicts.	66%	20%	14%
85. Crossbows should remain legal statewide for archery deer hunting.	72%	13%	15%
86. Keeping deer in balance with natural food supplies is necessary.	84%	12%	3%
87. There are not enough deer unless some are starving to death each year.	21%	32%	47%
88. Predators are causing deer populations to decline.	55%	27%	17%
89. Bear populations should be reduced to increase deer populations.	23%	38%	38%
90. Coyote populations should be reduced to increase deer populations.	74%	16%	10%
91. If needed to improve deer population health, I would accept lower deer populations and seeing fewer deer when hunting.	37%	31%	32%
92. If needed to improve habitat conditions, I would accept lower deer populations and seeing fewer deer when hunting.	33%	32%	35%
93. If needed to reduce deer-human conflicts, I would accept lower deer populations and seeing fewer deer when hunting.	23%	30%	47%
94. The Game Commission should prohibit deer feeding statewide.	26%	34%	40%
95. Hunters should be allowed to purchase a 2 nd buck tag that could be used in any hunting season.	35%	17%	48%
96. Hunters should be allowed to purchase a 2 nd buck tag that could only be used during the regular firearms season.	23%	22%	55%
97. If available, I would purchase a 2 nd buck tag.	39%	18%	43%
98. If a limited number of 2 nd buck tags were available via a lottery, I would pay to apply for a chance.	24%	19%	57%
99. Archery bear season should occur during the second-to-last of the fall deer archery season.	32%	53%	14%
100. Archery bear season should occur during the last week of the fall deer archery season.	34%	54%	13%

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

	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
101. Archery seasons and regulations	64%	26%	10%
102. October muzzleloader season and regulations	48%	40%	12%
103. Regular firearms season and regulations	70%	17%	13%
104. Late-season flintlock season and regulations	56%	38%	5%
105. Antler restrictions	64%	16%	20%
106. Research and science of deer management	54%	34%	12%
107. Chronic Wasting Disease response and regulations	48%	41%	11%
108. Overall deer management program	51%	28%	20%

PART 8. SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

109. At what age did you begin deer hunting?

Average 15 years old.

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

41% High school or less
33% Some college/vocational training
27% College graduate

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

54% Country/rural
23% Rural town/village
17% Suburban
6% City

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

61% Country/rural
20% Rural town/village
13% Suburban
6% City

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

69% Parent or Grandparent
14% Relative
5% Other adult
9% Friend
3% No one

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

43% Excellent (no health problems or injuries)
40% Good (minor health problems or injuries)
14% Fair (some health problems or injuries that affect my daily life and mobility)
3% Poor (significant health problems or injuries that affect my daily life and mobility)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.