



Chris Danou's Capitol Report

Statewide Deer Harvest Numbers Increase Slightly From 2014

Another nine-day gun deer hunting season is in the books. I've enjoyed seeing photos in the weekly newspapers of men, women and children proudly displaying the deer they harvested, and I'm especially thrilled for those first time hunters. It's encouraging to know that more licenses were sold this year than in 2014 and that more people want to get in the woods to participate in this great tradition.

As every hunter knows, each year brings a different hunting experience based on the weather and whether or not someone gets a deer, but it's always great to spend with family and friends. Last year, harvest numbers were the lowest they had been in 30 years so people were crossing their fingers for the right conditions this year. Throughout the nine-day hunt, we knew numbers were close to last year's totals, but it seemed like there would be more deer harvested this year. Indeed, that was the case and we now know the final numbers.

Last week, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued their annual report that showed hunters statewide harvested more deer than last year. According to that report, deer harvest numbers were up slightly, or about 2,000 more total deer from 2014. The DNR originally said preliminary totals showed hunters killed 204,725 deer, or about 5,000 more animals than the 199,583 they took during the 2014 nine-day season. After a few days of further review, DNR officials said hunters actually killed 201,812 deer during the 2015 nine-day period because they discovered a number of inadvertent duplicate registrations hunters made through the state's new electronic registration system. The agency's information specifically showed hunters killed 107,646 antlerless deer and 94,166 antlered deer.

Despite the fact that the statewide increase is only 1.2% from 2014, numbers for Buffalo, Jackson and Trempealeau counties were down from last year. In 2014, 5,143 deer were harvested in Buffalo County, but this year the number dropped to 4,835, which is a -5.99% change. Jackson County saw the largest drop with 3,181 harvested in 2014 and 2,802 harvested in 2015, which is a change of -11.91%. Trempealeau County's drop was the smallest in comparison with 5,023 harvested in 2014 and 4,894 harvested this year, which is a -2.57% change. Marathon County once again had the highest number of deer harvested with 8,014, which is a 0.11% increase from 8,005 in 2014.

Even though numbers increased for the state as a whole, it's disappointing that numbers for the counties in the 92 Assembly District dropped from last year. I don't mean to sound like a Cubs fan when I say this, but there's "always next year" and I know those who had a successful harvest are thrilled for the opportunity. If you'd like to see final numbers broken down by county, deer and region, please feel free to visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/hunt/documents/dailysummary2.pdf> for more information.

