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# HOWARD MARKLEIN

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STATE SENATOR • 17<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

## **Capitol Update By Senator Howard Marklein December 4, 2015**

### ***Gun Deer Hunt Data Tells Many Stories***

The 2015 Gun Deer Season ended on Sunday, November 29, 2015. Within days, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was able to tell us a lot about the hunt.

This year, the DNR introduced an online and telephone registration process that enabled us to receive a lot of data quickly as we look at the results of the hunting season. This modernization is a significant change to 164 years of tradition, but it is a great way for us to better understand and analyze deer population, hunting trends and other factors while the experience is still fresh in our minds.

Statewide, hunters harvested 201,812 deer, which is a 1.12% increase over last year. While this may seem like a small percentage, the raw numbers tell us that hunters harvested 2,229 more deer this year! In total, 612,377 gun deer licenses were sold in 2015, up from 608,711 last year. However, this tells us that only 33% of hunters harvested deer this year during the gun deer season.

In the counties of the 17<sup>th</sup> Senate District, we harvested 35,969 deer, which is 3,276 more than last year. Southwestern Wisconsin is a great place to hunt.

On opening weekend (November 21-22), we harvested 19% of the 119,495 deer registered statewide during these two days. Half of all deer harvested in the 17<sup>th</sup> District were taken during opening weekend. Our counties experienced an overall increase of 27.65% on opening weekend over 2014 with individual counties seeing increases between 13% (Lafayette – Southern Farmland) and 106.11% (Monroe – Central Forest) over last year!

For the season, the 17<sup>th</sup> District registered 18% of the deer statewide with 35,969 total deer. This is impressive and tells us that our herd management is effective and positive for the hunters in our communities. The largest harvest occurred in Vernon county with 5,899 deer, which is an increase of 3.98% for Vernon county over last year. Sauk county came in next with 5,429 deer and a 11.01% increase over 2014 and Grant county followed close behind with 5,363 deer and an impressive 16.87% increase.

In the coming weeks, we will know more details about the harvest, such as whether the deer were taken on private versus public land, the time of day of the harvest, how many deer the hunter saw before taking their deer and more. However, these preliminary results are a great indicator of successful management in our zones.

Wisconsin is divided into several management units that help the DNR and those of us interested in the future of our sporting heritage, to organize and analyze the trends in animal populations and hunting.

Most of the 17<sup>th</sup> Senate District is in the Southern Farmland zone. We also have two counties, Juneau and Monroe, that contain Central Farmland and Central Forest zones.

It is important to note the trends in each of these zones to understand the status of the deer population and hunting activity in each area. The deer population impacts our crop land. Spending during the hunting season impacts our economies. Analyzing the trends provide an overall indicator of wildlife conservation and management efforts.

Overall, the counties of the 17<sup>th</sup> Senate District each saw an increase in the deer harvest this season. This cannot be said for other parts of the state where trends indicate that we have a significant problem with herd management. Throughout the Northern Forest zone counties, the harvest numbers decreased from last year; some of them significantly.

<b>17th Senate District Gun Deer Season Results</b>						
	<b>Opening Weekend</b>			<b>Season</b>		
<b><u>County</u></b>	<b><u>2014</u></b>	<b><u>2015</u></b>	<b><u>% Change</u></b>	<b><u>2014</u></b>	<b><u>2015</u></b>	<b><u>% Change</u></b>
Grant	2,190	3,227	47.35%	4,458	5,363	20.30%
Green	590	768	30.17%	1,474	1,652	12.08%
Iowa	1,494	2,011	34.61%	3,312	3,608	8.94%
Juneau (Farm)	1,001	1,242	24.08%	1,771	1,840	3.90%
Juneau (Forest)	512	744	45.31%	824	1,108	34.47%
Lafayette	823	934	13.49%	1,733	1,869	7.85%
Monroe (Farm)	2,381	3,034	27.43%	4,417	4,103	-7.11%
Monroe (Forest)	229	472	106.11%	408	700	71.57%
Richland	1,912	2,844	48.74%	3,792	4,398	15.98%
Sauk	2,413	3,498	44.96%	4,831	5,429	12.38%
Vernon	2,834	3,865	36.38%	5,673	5,899	3.98%
<b>17th District Totals</b>	<b>16,379</b>	<b>22,639</b>	<b>27.65%</b>	<b>32,693</b>	<b>35,969</b>	<b>9.00%</b>
<b>Statewide Totals</b>	<b>103,428</b>	<b>119,495</b>	<b>13.00%</b>	<b>199,583</b>	<b>201,812</b>	<b>1.12%</b>

Herd management includes everything from the number of tags made available to managing predatory species to the impact of weather and food resources. The DNR will continue to use this new data to assess the herd management throughout the state and recommend changes to current practices. Analyzing the data we collected this year will be combined with anecdotal evidence to improve our practices and hunting in Wisconsin.

As your State Senator, I think the new registration process has been a positive change for hunting in Wisconsin. I found the registration process to be very straightforward and easy. Registering online, from the field, on my phone, saved time and miles.

I also appreciate that we are able to know a lot about the hunt very quickly because all of the data was submitted electronically to the DNR. For people like me, this information is extremely interesting and helpful as we work to improve our practices and programs throughout the state.

There are several limited deer hunting seasons that are still open this winter for bow, muzzleloader and a 4-day antlerless hunt. For more information, please visit the DNR's website for more information:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/hunt/dates.html>

For more information and to connect with me, visit my website

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/17/marklein> and subscribe to my weekly E-Update by sending an email to [Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov). Do not hesitate to call 800-978-8008 if you have input, ideas or need assistance with any state-related matters.