

2022-2023 Kentucky White Tailed Deer Harvest and Population Report

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources



Photo Credit: James Inman



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Introduction

The Deer Program is administered under the Wildlife Division of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR). It is overseen by a nine-member commission who are nominated by Kentucky’s sportsmen and sportswomen and appointed by the Governor. The department employs about 450 full-time staff, which includes conservation officers, wildlife and fisheries biologists, conservation educators, and information and technology, public relations, customer service and administrative professionals.

KDFWR funding is provided primarily by the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, boating registration fees and federal funds, including grants based on the number of licenses sold in the state.

The Deer Program is tasked with managing the white-tailed deer herd in the state to provide ample hunting opportunity while balancing the needs of consumptive and non-consumptive user groups. The Deer Program is comprised of the Program Coordinator, Joe McDermott, and two Deer Program Biologists, David Yancy and Tommy Apostolopoulos. Deer Program staff are based out of the KDFWR Headquarters in Frankfort.

History of Deer in Kentucky

White tailed deer are native to Kentucky and were first reported by Dr. Thomas Walker in 1750 that the deer were “plentiful” in portions of what is now southeastern Kentucky. This report was corroborated in 1773 by explorer Robert McAfee, stating that the number of deer around Henry County was “astonishing.” However, due to unregulated harvest, the deer population began to decline rapidly in subsequent years. By 1810, naturalist John James Audubon noted that the vast numbers of deer that once roamed the Ohio River valley of Kentucky had already “ceased to exist.” In 1946, KDFWR (known then as the Division of Game and Fish) initiated a comprehensive three-pronged white tailed deer project to facilitate the restoration of this important species. Components of this project consisted of refuge establishment, trapping and translocation of live deer, and habitat improvement work across the entire Commonwealth. Active restoration efforts concluded in March of 1999 and, after 52 years of trapping and translocation, 10,096 white-tailed deer had been stocked around the state. Kentucky now has a high-quality deer population and ranks sixth for all time Boone & Crockett buck production.

General Information about the 2022-23 Season

License and Permit Fees

License	Resident	Nonresident
Annual Hunting License	\$27	\$150
Senior/Disabled License	\$12	N/A
Sportsman’s License	\$95	N/A
Youth Sportsman’s License	\$30	N/A
Statewide Deer Permit	\$35	\$120
Bonus Antlerless Permit	\$15	\$15
Youth Deer Permit	\$10	\$15



Season Dates and Bag Limits

	Early Season	Late Season
Archery	Sept. 3, 2022 – Jan. 16, 2023	
Youth/Senior Crossbow		
Crossbow	Sept. 17, 2022 – Jan. 16, 2023	
Youth-only Gun	Oct. 8 – 9, 2022	
Muzzle-loader	Oct. 15 – 16, 2022	Dec. 10 – 18, 2022
Modern Gun	Nov. 12 – 27, 2022	
Free Youth Weekend	Dec. 31, 2022 – Jan. 1, 2023	

	Antlerless Bag Limit	Antlered Bag Limit
Zone 1	Unlimited with statewide and additional deer permits	1 statewide
Zone 2		
Zone 3		
Zone 4		



Figure 1

Changes for the 2022-23 Season

- No zone changes occurred for the 2022-23 deer season.

Population Status

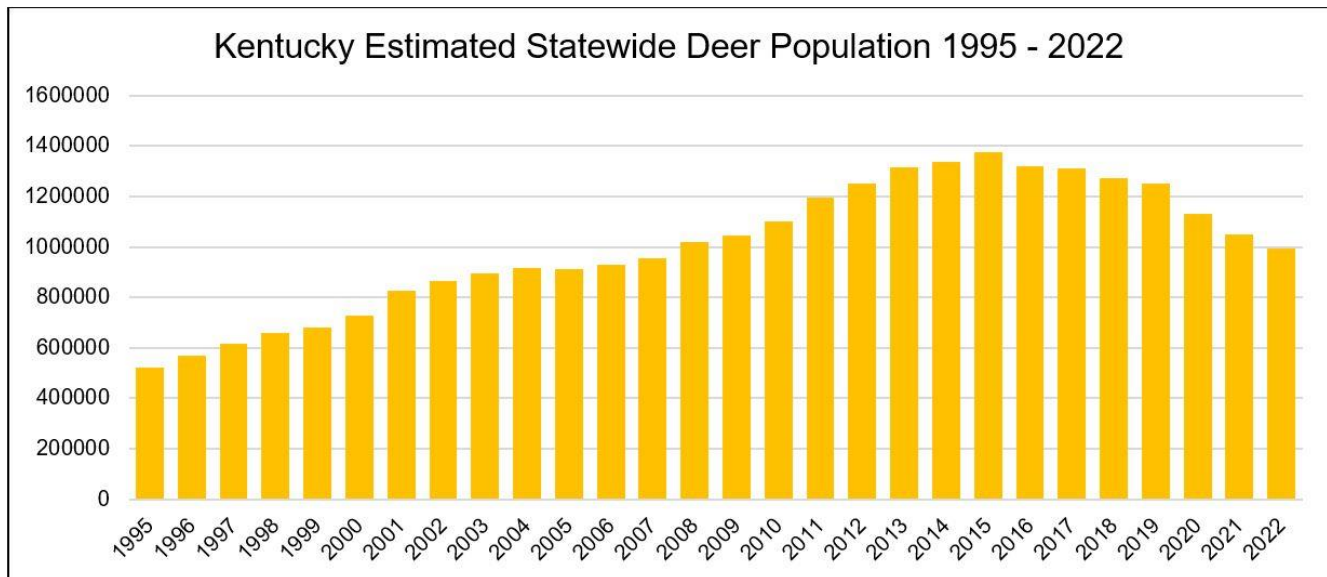


Figure 2

Overall, the statewide deer population estimate shows a stable to slightly decreasing trend, which is in line with the current management strategy for much of the state, particularly Zone 1 counties (**Figure 2**). The 2022 statewide estimate was 994,356 deer at the start of the 2022-23 hunting season, which is a 5% decrease from 2021-22 (1,049,217). Most of the population decline is in Zone 1 counties, where deer densities are unsustainably high. This population estimate is generated from harvest and age structure data, which is collected through tele-check reporting and by KDFWR staff.

Deer management techniques have varied greatly across the state over the last decade. Of the 120 counties in Kentucky, 51 are designated as Zone 1, 34 as Zone 2, 13 as Zone 3, and 22 as Zone 4. Zone 1 counties have the highest deer densities in the state, are considered reduction zones, and have an unlimited bag limit on antlerless deer. At the other end of the spectrum are Zone 4 counties where the deer densities are the lowest and antlerless take is very limited. Zone 2 and 3 counties are at or near population goals and bag limits aim to maintain the densities present in those counties.

Statewide and county deer population trends are important; however, it is also important to acknowledge that deer populations can vary considerably within a region and even within a county. Regional and local diversity in deer numbers can be a result of differences in land cover and use, harvest regulations, hunter objectives and density, and disease events. Therefore, statewide and county information should be considered as a starting point when evaluating deer populations within a localized area.

2022 - 2023 Total Harvest Summary

The total number of deer harvested during the 2022-23 deer season (**Figure 3**) was 144,493, which is the fourth highest harvest on record. We observed a 9.2% increase from the 2020-21 season (132,328) and the 2022-23 season was nearly 2,000 deer over the 10-year average (142,708). An early mast drop coupled with exceptional hunting weather during most of the season likely determined why the 2022-23 season saw such a great harvest; deer were on their feet looking for forage while the weather encouraged more hunters to spend time afield.

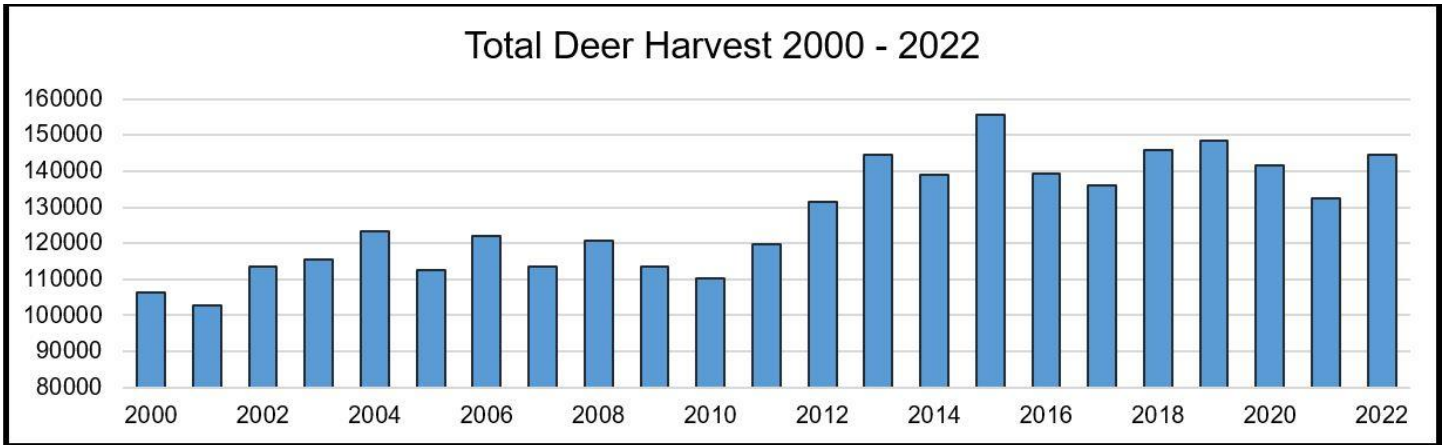


Figure 3

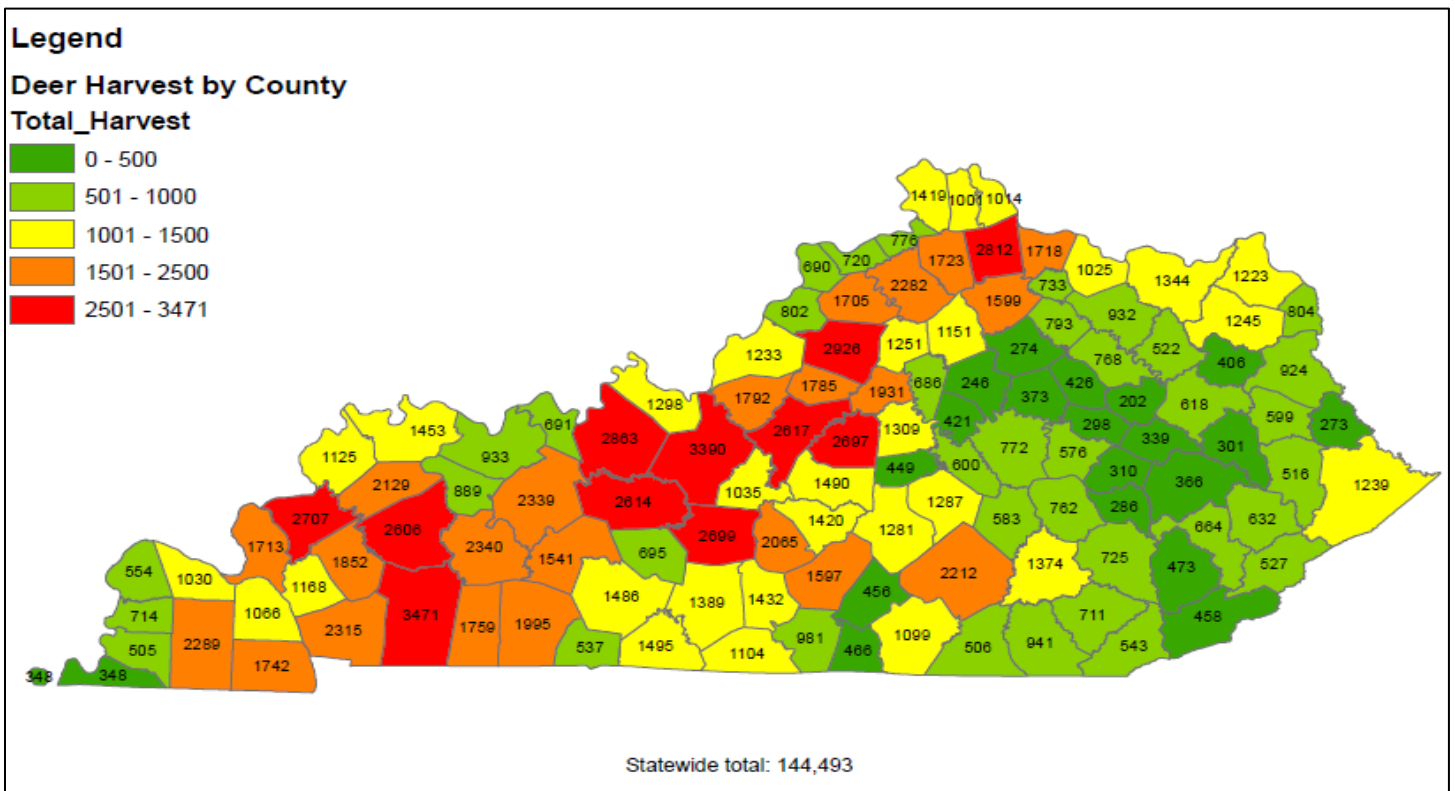


Figure 4

Antlered Buck Harvest

The total antlered deer harvest (**Figure 5**) was 71,144 during the 2022-23 season, which is 2% above the ten-year average and the second highest antlered buck harvest on record. When comparing antlered deer harvested per square mile of habitat, Spencer County (5.21 antlered deer/sq. mi.) harvested the most antlered bucks with Anderson County (5.09 antlered deer/sq. mi.) coming in second, and Pendleton County (4.71 antlered deer/sq. mi.) coming in third. Breathitt County (0.62 antlered deer/sq. mi.) harvested the fewest antlered bucks per square mile during the 2022-23 season (**Figure 6**).

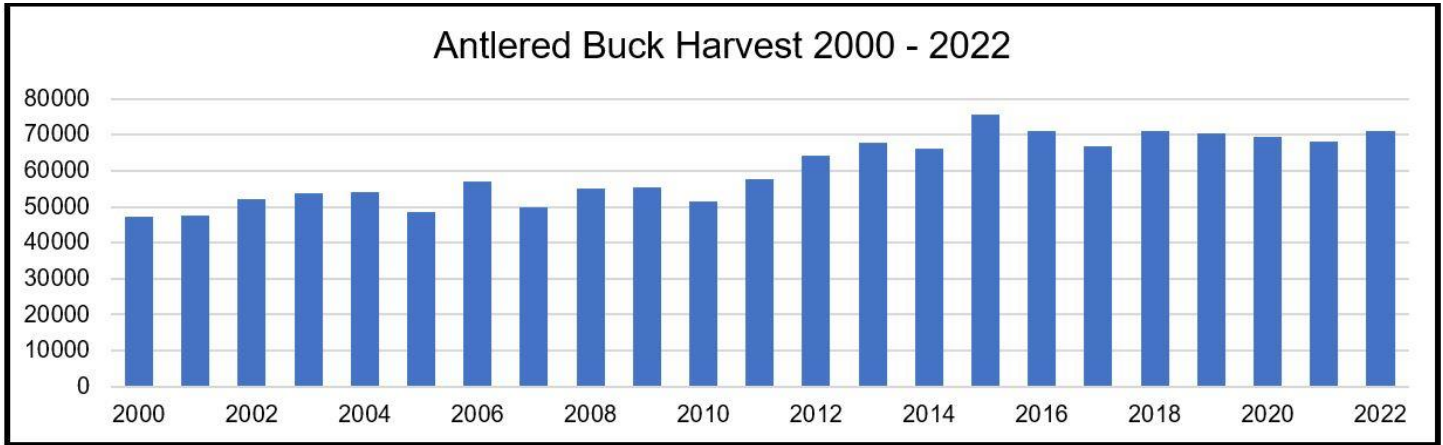


Figure 5

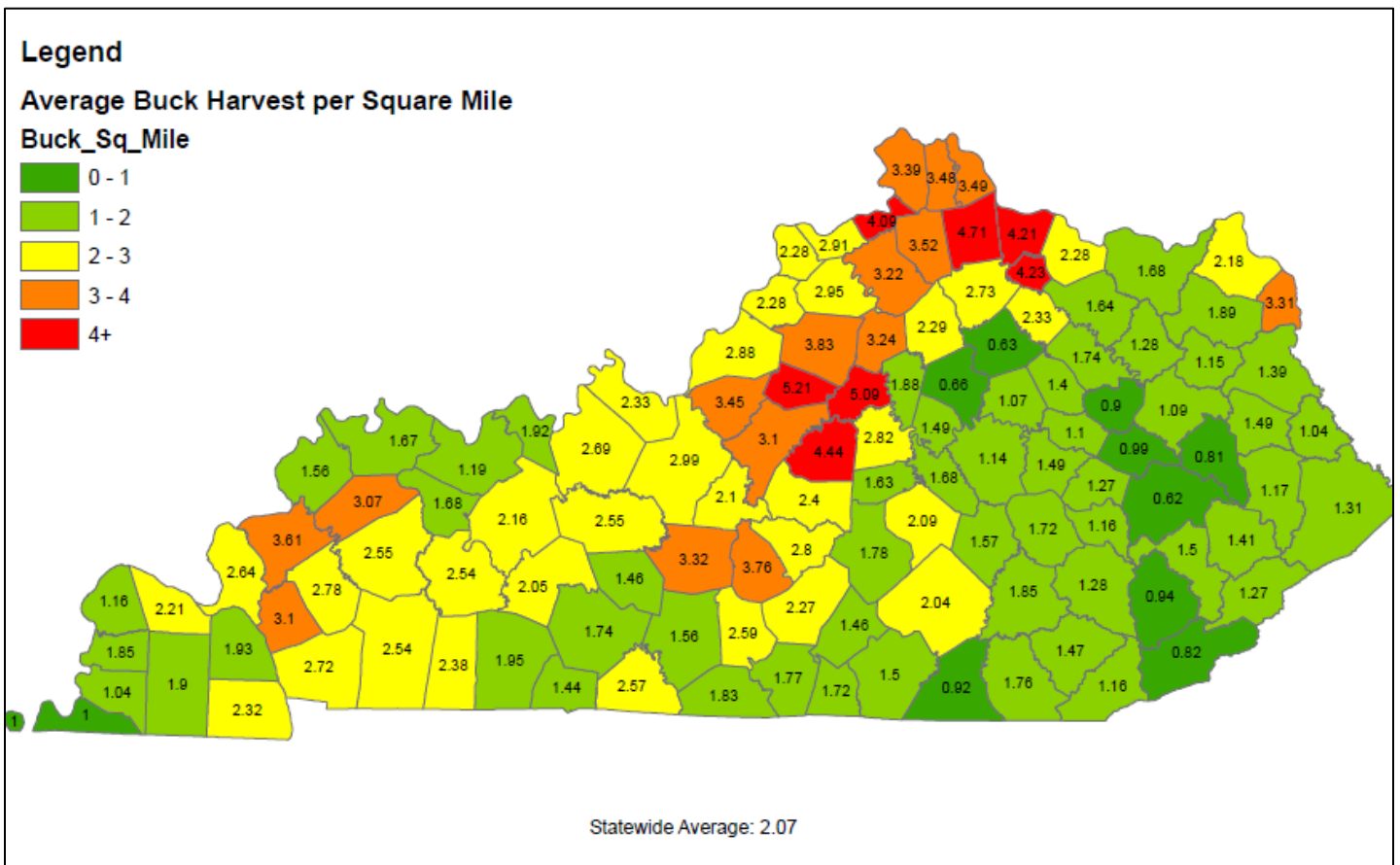


Figure 6

Female Harvest

The total number of female deer harvested (**Figure 7**) during the 2022-23 season was 65,334 deer. This is 1.2% above the ten-year average and an 14.4% increase from the 2021-22 season (57,126). However, the percentage of female deer harvested has been relatively stable over the last decade (**Figure 7**). When comparing female deer harvested per square mile of habitat, Pendleton County (5.52 female deer/sq. mi.) harvested the most female deer followed by Anderson County (4.72 female deer/sq. mi.) and Washington County (4.69 female deer/sq. mi.). Menifee County (0.12 female deer/sq. mi.) harvested the fewest female deer per square mile during the 2022-23 season (**Figure 8**).

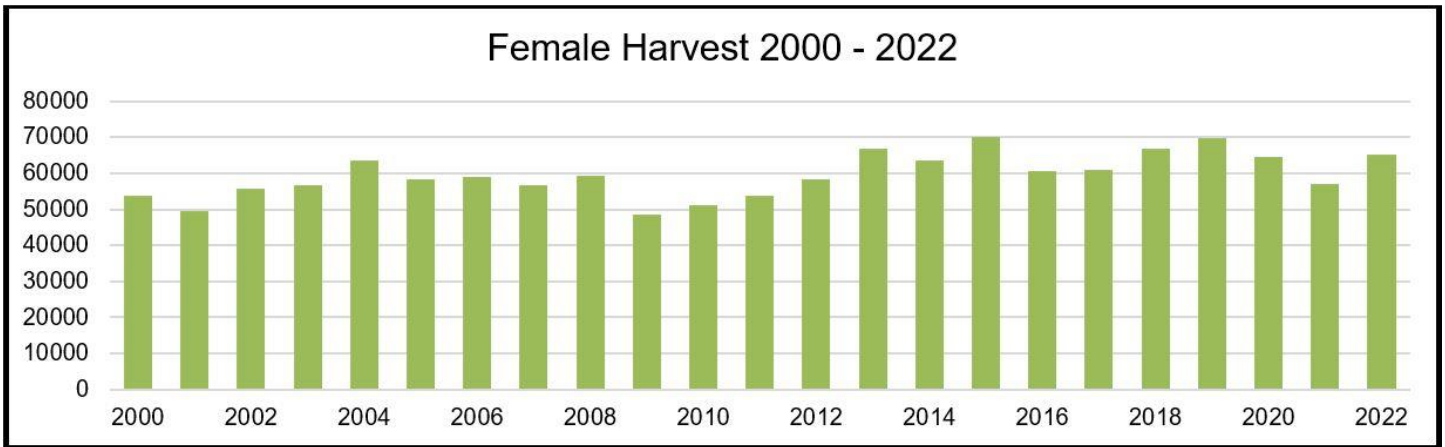


Figure 7

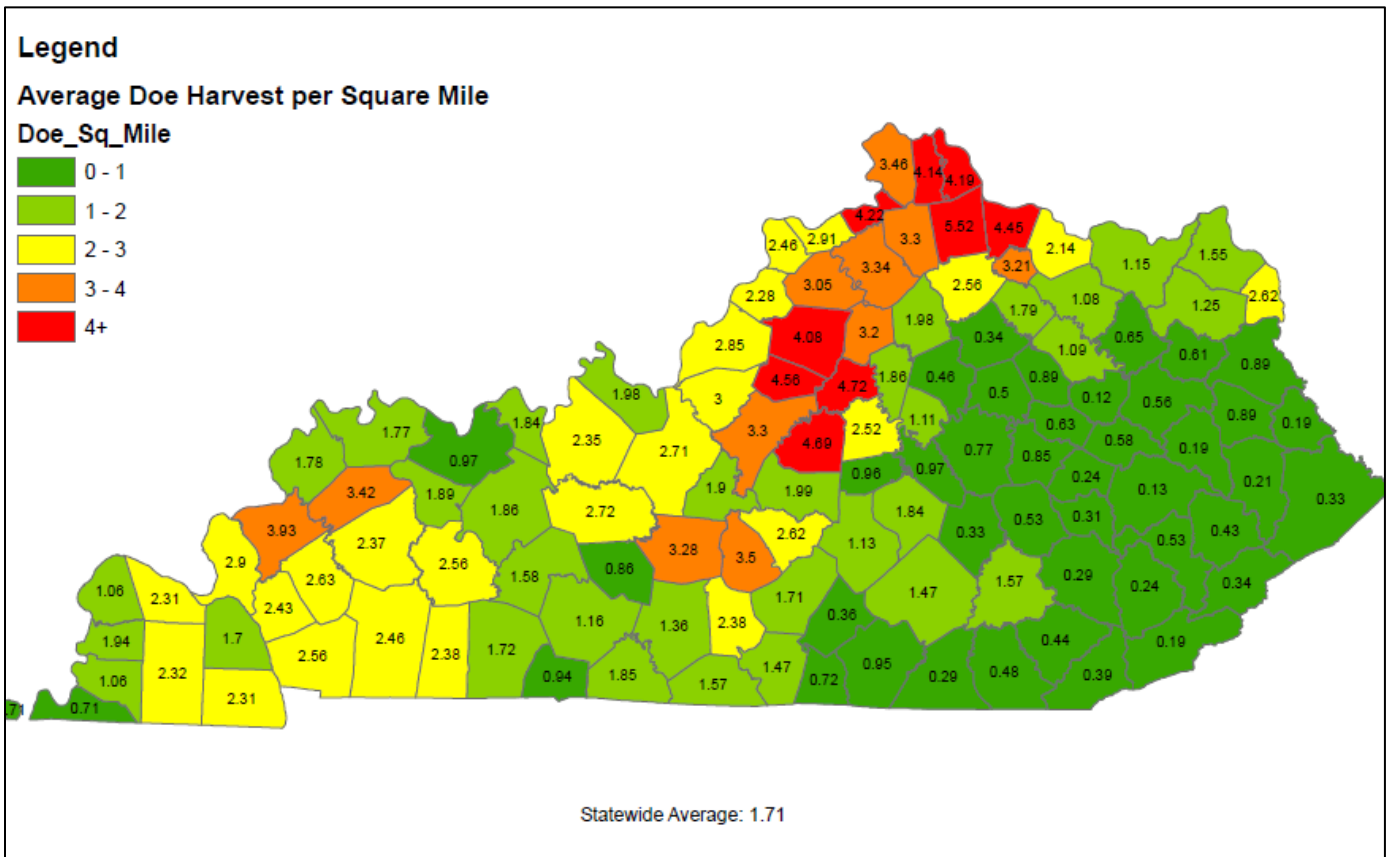


Figure 8

Male Fawn Harvest

The total male fawn harvest (**Figure 9**) was 8,015 during the 2022-23 season which is 4.4% below the ten-year average. The harvest in 2022-23 saw a 11.9% increase from the 2021-22 season (7,161), but the percentage of the harvest that male fawns make up has remained relatively stable (around 5.5%) for the last decade. When comparing male fawn deer harvested per square mile of habitat, Spencer County (0.83 male fawns/sq. mi.) harvested the most male fawns with Pendleton County (0.74 male fawns/sq. mi.) coming in second, and Kenton County (0.69 male fawns/sq. mi.) coming in third. Harlan County saw the lowest number of male fawns harvested during the 2022-23 season (0.007 male fawns/ sq. mile; **Figure 10**).

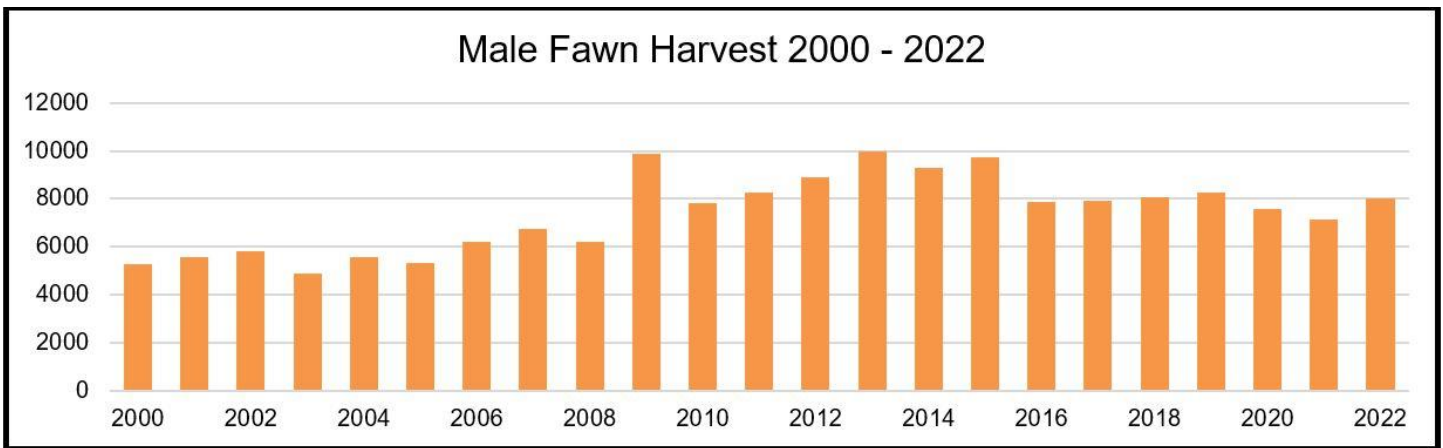


Figure 9

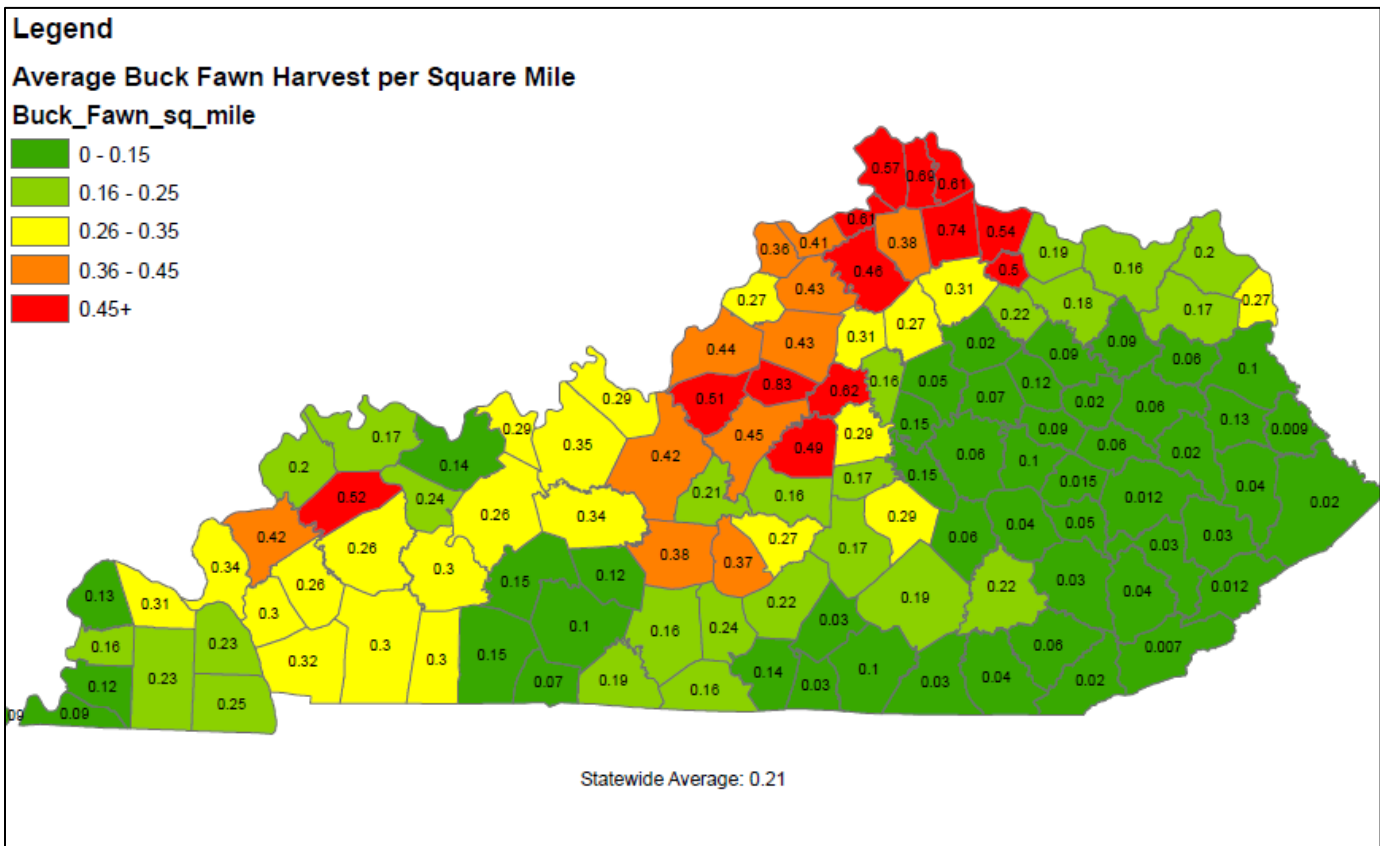


Figure 10

Male Age Class Comparison

Deer hunters have been asked to include whether the outside spread of their antlered deer is greater or less than 11 inches when checking their deer since 2016. Male fawn information was already being collected, but yearling and adult male information was needed to better understand the distribution of the varying age classes of males within the total harvest (**Figure 11**). In addition to providing this information to hunters, these data strengthen our population model and improves trend data used to manage deer populations. Hunters do a great job of letting younger age class males walk in hopes of seeing them reach their antler potential in older age classes.

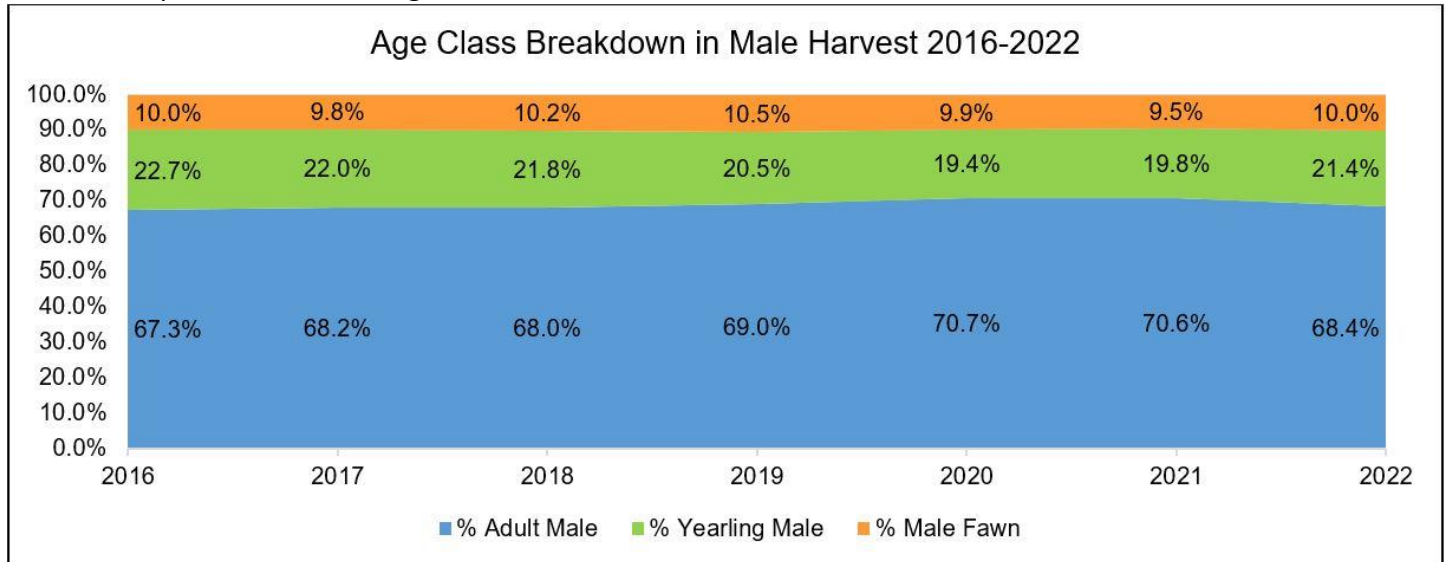


Figure 11

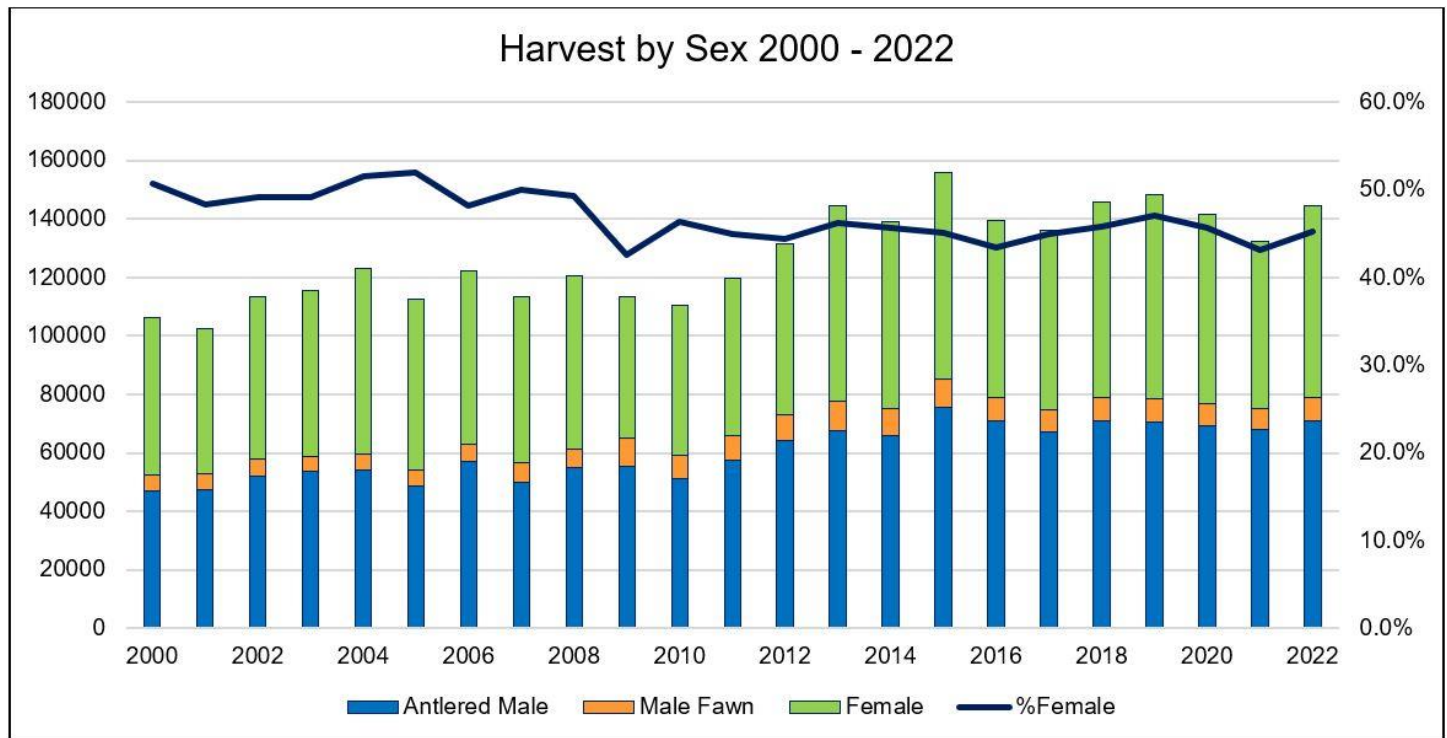


Figure 12

Harvest Summary by Weapon Type

Weapon	Female	Male Fawn	Male	Total
Archery	9,012	690	5,965	15,667
Crossbow	7,445	849	4,972	13,266
Firearm	42,278	5,744	56,854	104,876
Muzzle-loader	6,599	732	3,353	10,684
Total	65,334	8,015	71,144	144,493

Table 1

Despite a statewide bag limit that allows hunters to shoot more than one deer per year statewide, there appears to be a limit on the number of deer that hunters are willing to, or able to harvest, as 73.6% (75,841) of all successful hunters only harvest one deer. A smaller percentage of successful hunters (18.0%) harvested two or more deer. Of the 103,041 total successful hunters in the 2022-23 season, the average hunter harvested 1.40 deer, which was a slight increase from last season (1.34). However, this rate usually does not fluctuate statewide between years and has remained stable over time.

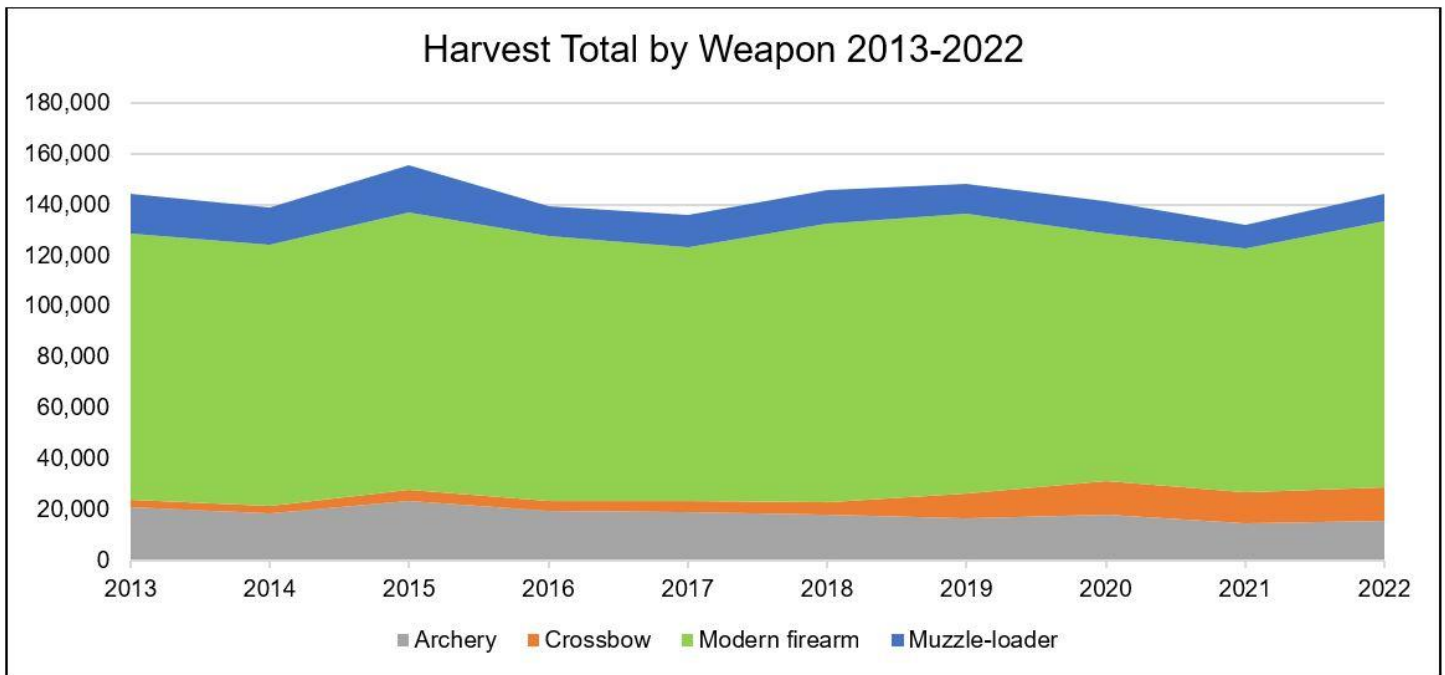


Figure 13

There were significant changes in the percentage of the 2022-23 harvest by weapon type (**Table 1; Figures 13 - 14**) compared to the 2021-22 season. The archery harvest was 11% of the total harvest, identical when compared to the 2021-22 season, but 5.9% below the five-year average. The muzzleloader harvest (10,684) was 7% of the total harvest, increased 15.6% from the 2021-22 season (9,246), and was 7.5% below the five-year average. Crossbows represented 9% of the 2022-23 total deer harvest (13,266), which increased 8.7% from the 2021-22 season (12,202) and was 24.8% above the five-year average. Crossbow harvest has steadily increased in the last decade, particularly after crossbow season was liberalized in 2018. Interestingly, more antlerless deer were taken with crossbows, muzzle-loaders, and archery equipment than antlered males. The modern gun harvest (104,876) saw a 9.2% increase from the 2021-22 season (97,607) and was 1.1% above

the five-year average (103,699). Seventy-one percent of the overall harvest occurred during modern gun season (**Figure 14**), which is when most Kentucky deer hunters go afield. On average, 15% of the total harvest occurs on the opening day of modern gun season (**Table 2**).

Modern Gun Season Harvest by Day				
Date	Day	Harvest	% of Modern Gun Harvest	% of Deer Season Harvest
12-Nov	Sat	17136	17%	12%
13-Nov	Sun	14402	14%	10%
14-Nov	Mon	9024	9%	6%
15-Nov	Tue	5088	5%	4%
16-Nov	Wed	4722	5%	3%
17-Nov	Thu	4765	5%	3%
18-Nov	Fri	5296	5%	4%
19-Nov	Sat	10130	10%	7%
20-Nov	Sun	6722	7%	5%
21-Nov	Mon	3383	3%	2%
22-Nov	Tue	3125	3%	2%
23-Nov	Wed	3398	3%	2%
24-Nov	Thu	2795	3%	2%
25-Nov	Fri	3854	4%	3%
26-Nov	Sat	5346	5%	4%
27-Nov	Sun	3137	3%	2%
Total		102323	100%	71%

Table 2

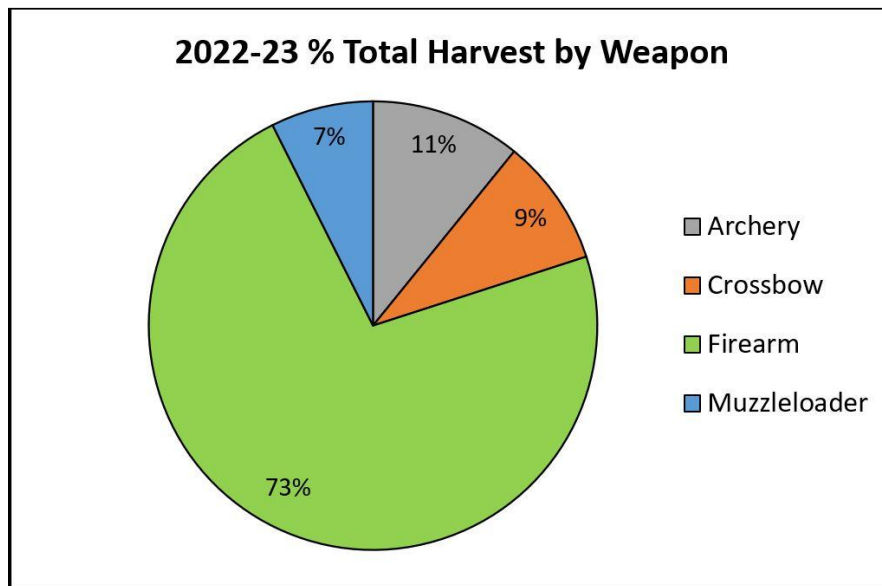


Figure 14

Monthly Harvest Results

The 7,119 deer harvested in September is the second-highest harvest for September since 2012. Fifty-one percent (3,645) of the deer harvested in September were female, and this year’s September harvest was over 1,000 animals and 18% higher than the 10-year average. October’s harvest of 16,072 deer was the fifth-most since 2012 and nearly 4,000 deer more than last year’s 12,278. The 2022-23 season’s October harvest was within 2.5% of the 10-year average (15,696). Hunters harvested 106,548 deer during November, most of which occurred during the statewide modern gun season (102,323). This ranks as the fourth highest November harvest on record. December’s harvest witnessed an extreme bounce-back from the weather-related low total of 2021 (7,349) with 11,126 deer, a 51% increase from last year and 6% increase in from the 5-year average (10,506). January’s harvest (3,629) was 27% above the 10-year average (2,862) and saw only a 4% decline from 2021-22’s record January harvest.

2022-23 Harvest Results by Permit Type

The percentage of deer telechecked by permit type (**Figure 15**) has remained stable over the years. However, with the increasing number of senior/disabled licenses sold, we would expect to see the senior/disabled harvest increase and the statewide permit harvest to decrease over time. Landowners are not required to purchase a hunting license or deer permit if they are hunting deer on their own property but are still required to telecheck any harvested deer. Deer control tags are used to mitigate deer damage issues and have remained stable over the past six years.

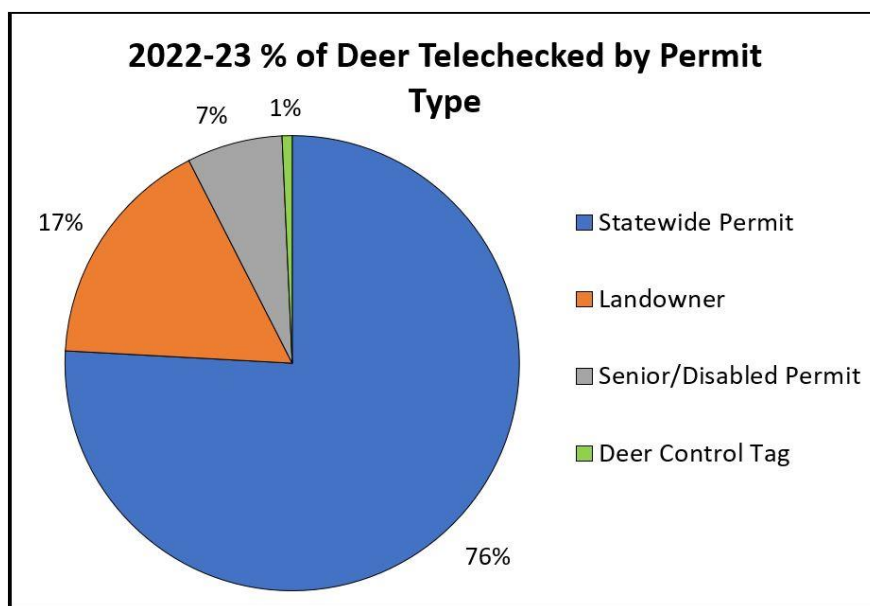


Figure 15

Public Land Deer Harvest

KDFWR owns, leases, or manages more than 120 Wildlife Management Area’s (WMA), Hunting Access Areas (HAA), and Outdoor Recreation Areas (ORA) across the state for public use (**Table 3**). Exceptions exist on some properties, but most of Kentucky’s public areas are open to public hunting through quota hunts or under statewide regulations. The public areas are separated between five wildlife regions and are managed by regional staff in the Wildlife Division. The number of deer harvested on public land in Kentucky has been stable to increasing over the last decade, except for the Southeast Region (**Figure 16**) where the harvest has been stable to slightly decreasing. Deer numbers in the southeast region are on the rebound from the 2017

hemorrhagic disease outbreak after KDFWR reduced the antlerless bag limit to one deer via archery/crossbow season or the last three days of late muzzleloader season. However, because southeastern Kentucky is predominately forested, population growth is expected to be slower in this less-productive, mast-driven area.

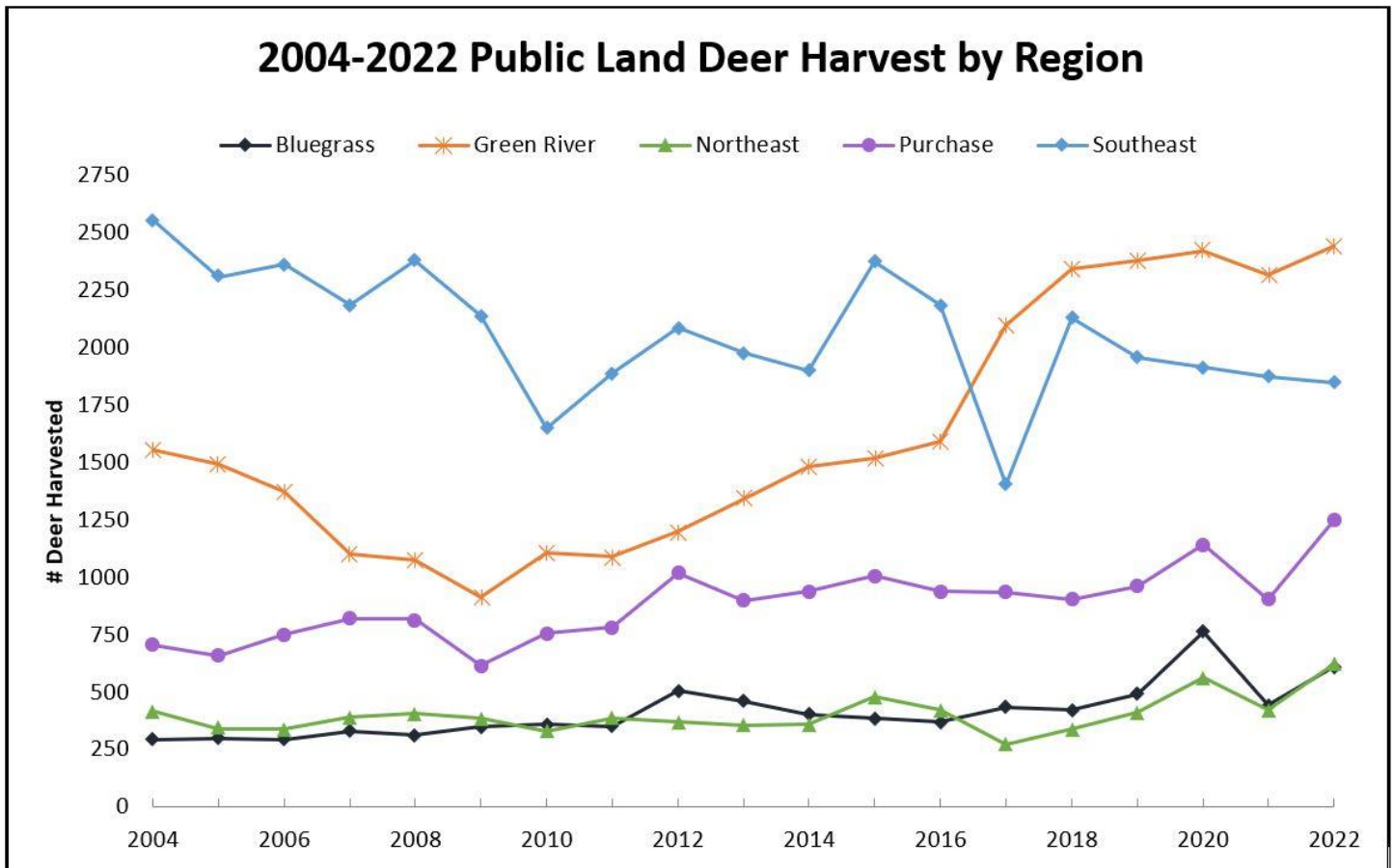


Figure 16

Acres of Public Hunting Areas by Wildlife Region	
Wildlife Region	Public Land Hunting Acres
Bluegrass	70,142
Green River	169,663
Northeast	314,303
Purchase	211,852
Southeast	869,560

Table 3



Deer Quota Hunts

KDFWR offers 38 deer quota hunts on Kentucky WMAs. Any resident or nonresident hunter may apply for a deer quota hunt in Kentucky, but only the persons successfully drawn for quota hunt may participate. The application period for KDFWR deer quota hunts is the month of September when applicants can apply online at <https://fw.ky.gov/Hunt/Pages/Quota-Hunts.aspx>. Applicants will be given the option to pick a first and second hunt choice but may be drawn to participate in only one quota hunt. The non-refundable fee is \$3 per hunter to apply. Each hunter who applies correctly, but is not selected, will receive a preference point that increases the odds of being drawn the next year. Unselected hunters who do not apply the following year will lose all previously credited preference points. Applicants are selected based on individual preference points. Up to five people can apply together, but individuals within the group will have their preference points averaged (total number of points divided by total number of applicants). However, there is a 10% maximum allowance on non-residents to be drawn for each quota hunt. If any one of the group's Social Security numbers is drawn, the others in the group are automatically drawn. The exception applies to hunt parties that have one or more non-resident applicants and where the quota hunt may have already reached the 10% maximum limit of non-resident hunters. If this is the case, then no member of that party will be drawn.

7,319 hunters applied for the 3,896 available spots at the 38 KDFWR deer quota hunts held in the 2022-23 season. Fifty percent of applicants were drawn for a Kentucky quota deer hunt but drawing success varied from 14% to 100% depending on the property. There are quota hunts for general hunters (i.e., residents or non-residents with a statewide license), mobility impaired hunters, archery/crossbow hunters, and youth hunters. There are at least two deer quota hunts in each of the five wildlife regions across the state.

2022 Quota Deer Hunts	Harvest		Deer Seen/ Hour Hunted	Observed Antlered Deer:
	Female	Male		Antlerless Deer Ratio
Ballard WMA	40	25	1.10	1: 3.2
Beaver Creek WMA	0	10	0.11	1: 1.6
Big Rivers WMA and State Forest #1	4	13	*	*
Big Rivers WMA and State Forest #2	5	22	0.74	1: 1.7
Clay WMA	21	20	0.21	1: 2
Dale Hollow Lake State Resort Park	4	6	*	*
Dewey Lake WMA	9	23	0.45	1: 1.5
Fishtrap Lake WMA	13	21	0.36	1: 1.8
Greenbo Lake State Resort Park	6	1	*	*
Green River Lake and Dennis-Gray WMA	31	29	0.36	1: 3.3
Green River Lake and Dennis-Gray WMA				
Mobility-impaired	0	1	0.2	1: 1.5
Green River Lake State Park	15	2	*	*
Higginson-Henry WMA #1	10	13	*	*
Higginson-Henry WMA #2	9	11	0.78	1: 2.4
Kenlake State Resort Park	6	3	*	*
Kentucky River WMA	3	3	0.2	1: 3.5
Kincaid Lake State Park	10	2	*	*
Kleber and Rich WMA #1	4	18	0.24	1: 1.2
Kleber and Rich WMA #2	8	7	0.2	1: 4.6
Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area	2	1	0.4	1: 6.7

Paintsville Lake WMA	2	15	0.2	1: 2.8
Pennyrile State Forest and Tradewater WMA	2	26	0.29	1: 1.6
Taylorsville Lake WMA #1	36	24	0.3	1: 1.8
Taylorsville Lake WMA #1 Mobility-impaired	**			
Taylorsville Lake WMA #2	22	19	0.20	1: 3.2
Taylorsville Lake WMA #2 Mobility-impaired	**			
Zilpo Mobility-impaired	1	0	0.2	0: 4
Veterans Memorial WMA #1	0	2	0.1	1: 1.5
Veterans Memorial WMA #2	5	1	0.1	1: 1.23
West Kentucky WMA	6	4	0.6	1: 2.9
West Kentucky WMA Youth Mentor	0	1	0.44	1: 1.4

Table 3

* Hunters not required to submit a check card during these hunts.

** Data compiled with the main (i.e., Taylorsville 1 and 2) hunts since they operate concurrently.

Deer Permit Sales

The number of deer permits sold had been declining since its peak in 2015 (**Figure 17-18**). Reversing this trend, the 2022-23 season saw a dramatic increase in total deer permits sold (97,797) compared to the 2021-22 season (80,622). When looking at the long-term outlook on deer hunting in Kentucky, the 2022-23 season is 4% above the 10-year average (93,802). When including the license bundles (Sportsman’s, Jr. Sportsman’s, Jr. Deer Permit, Resident and Non-Resident Deer Permit, and Additional Deer Permit) in the total deer permit numbers, the 2022-23 season (312,270) is 5% above the 10-year average (298,027; **Figure 17**). No information is available regarding how many landowners hunted deer, as they are not required to purchase a permit if hunting on their own property. However, deer harvested by private landowners on their own property make up about 15-20% of the total harvest annually.

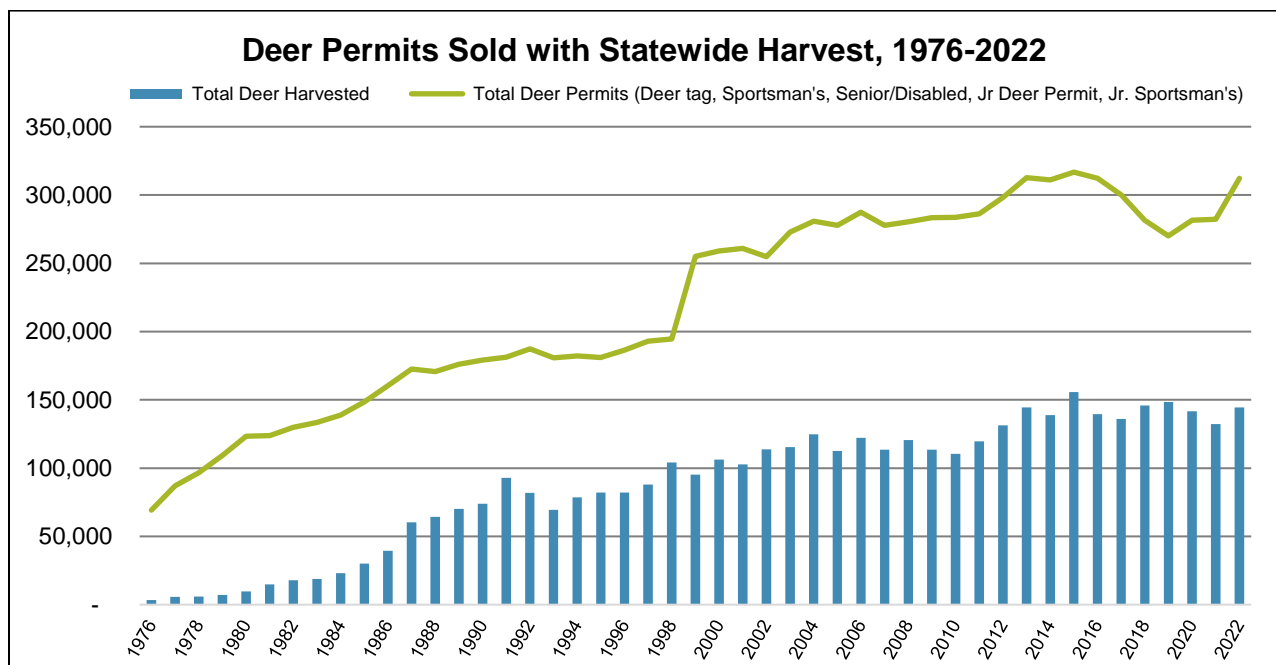


Figure 17

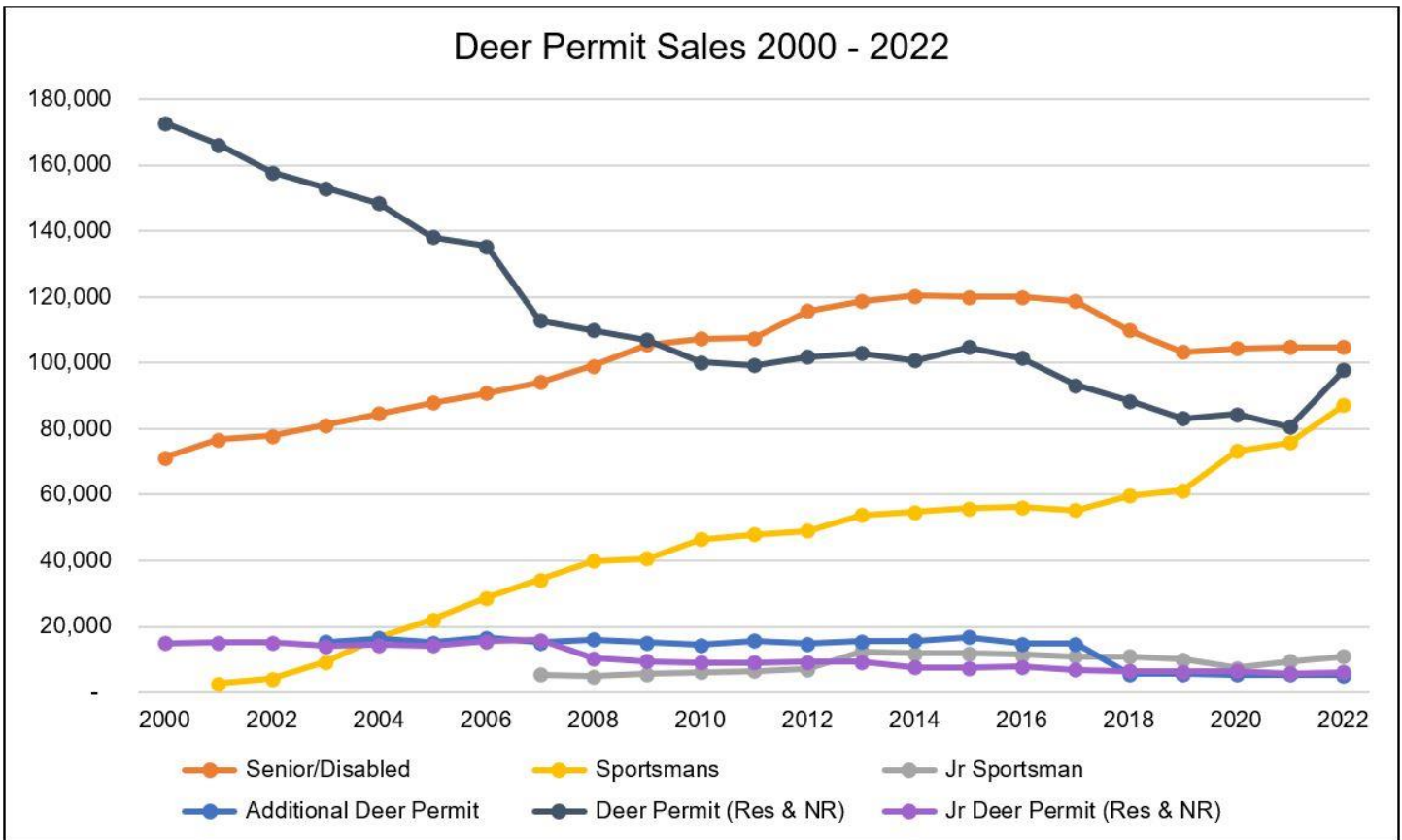


Figure 18

Upon further examination of license sales (**Figure 19**), the majority of deer permits are purchased by senior/disabled hunters (34%) followed closely by Sportsman License (28%) and resident deer permit buyers (19%). Although senior/disabled permit holder make up the majority of deer permits purchased, only 7% of the total deer harvest is made by senior/disabled hunters. This is likely because most senior/disabled permit holders are primarily purchasing this license type to fish and choose not to hunt deer or are not deer hunters.

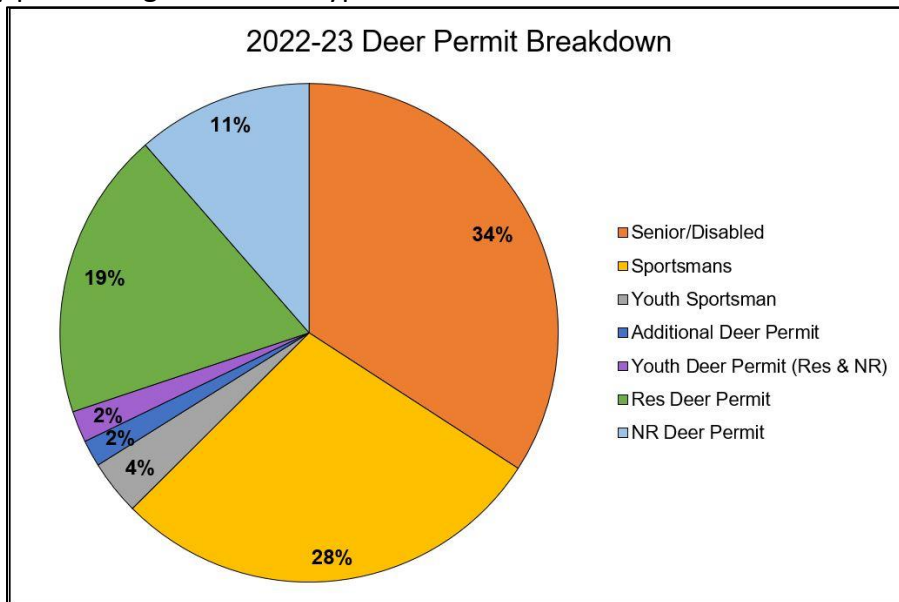


Figure 19

Habitat Management

The Department’s East Kentucky Habitat Initiative (EKHI) entered its second year during the fall of 2022. This initiative utilizes prescribed fire to help reduce exotic and invasive species from overtaking the open areas of reclaimed mine land. Specifically, KDFWR focused efforts on large blocks of reclaimed mine areas on public and private lands where autumn olive has begun to completely overtake the grassland community. In addition, prescribed fire was utilized in the adjacent woodlands to reduce non-desirable species and stimulate oak regeneration. These habitat practices will benefit many species, including deer and elk, by allowing a more diverse grassland and forb community to flourish, increasing nutrition along with creating more productive bedding and fawning cover for deer in these areas. More than 3,000 acres were burned during the winter/spring of 2023. Across the Commonwealth, KDFWR staff burned over 10,000 acres in 2022-23.

Damage Issues

An overpopulation of deer can have a negative impact on the environment and humans alike. Overabundant deer populations may result in agricultural and landscape damage, be detrimental to forest health and regeneration, pose safety risks due to deer-vehicle collisions, and serve as vectors for the transmission of diseases. State, local, and private groups all have a role in helping to manage the state's deer population. The primary tool for deer management in Kentucky is hunting, but sometimes this framework alone may not be enough to curtail the issues that some stakeholders experience. Deer populations have the ability to outgrow what their habitat can reasonably sustain, known as exceeding ecological carrying capacity. However, a much less understood issue in modern deer management is social carrying capacity, which is essentially the number or density of deer that is socially acceptable in a given area. KDFWR staff can offer their assistance once this threshold has been reached in an area (see Contacts map on page 23). A local Regional Biologist or Conservation Officer will schedule an on-site visit to document the damage and provide technical guidance on potential solutions. Technical guidance can be offered in many ways, but the best damage mitigation strategy is a dedicated, long-term hunting regiment. In addition to hunting, assistance from KDFWR may come in the form of Deer Control Tags (DCTs), Deer Destruction Permits, and the use of KRS 150.170 (Tables 4).

Deer Control Tags Used in 2022				Destruction Permit Use from 2022			
Region	DCT's Issued	DCT's Used	% Used	Region	DDPs Issued	DDPs Used	% Used
BG	951	177	19%	BG	475	188*	40%
GR	946	297	31%	GR	5	*	0%
NE	71	40	56%	NE	0	0	0%
PR	509	202	40%	PR	0	0	0%
SE	1130	315	28%	SE	0	0	0%
Total	3607	1031	29%	Total	480	188*	40%
*DDP use data were not complete at the time of publication							

Table 4

Disease Surveillance

Hemorrhagic Disease (HD)

Hemorrhagic disease (HD), which is a vector-borne disease of white-tailed deer, is caused by two related orbiviruses: epizootic hemorrhagic disease virus (EHDV) and bluetongue virus (BTV). HD viruses are considered the most important viral agents affecting deer populations in the United States. The virus is transmitted from animal to animal through the bite of an infected midge which is active in the late summer and early fall. Severe outbreaks are often associated with drought conditions because drought creates an increased amount of breeding habitat for the midges. The midges die off for the year after a hard freeze, eliminating new cases of HD.

HD is reported in localized areas from at least a few counties nearly every year in Kentucky, although outbreaks can be considerably large and widespread. In 2017, a large HD outbreak occurred in the eastern portion of Kentucky and had significant impacts on the deer population. Many of those areas continue to experience lower deer numbers primarily due to the habitat type in east Kentucky being predominately forested, where deer populations exhibit a much slower growth rate. In 2022, KDFWR biologists had 83 suspected HD deer reported throughout the state. When possible, KDFWR will test animals that have died of apparent HD. Only 11 deer from mostly northern Kentucky were clinically diagnosed to be HD positive, but positive deer were found in several areas of the state (Union, Warren, Monroe, Jefferson, Boone, Mason, Kenton, and Campbell counties; **Figure 20**). Estimated EHD mortality in Kentucky’s deer herd was estimated to be 100-500 deer.

While HD does cause mortality among white-tailed deer, there are also animals that survive and produce protective antibodies, which can be passed to offspring. This is an important distinction when discussing this disease compared to chronic wasting disease, which is always fatal and has not been detected in Kentucky.

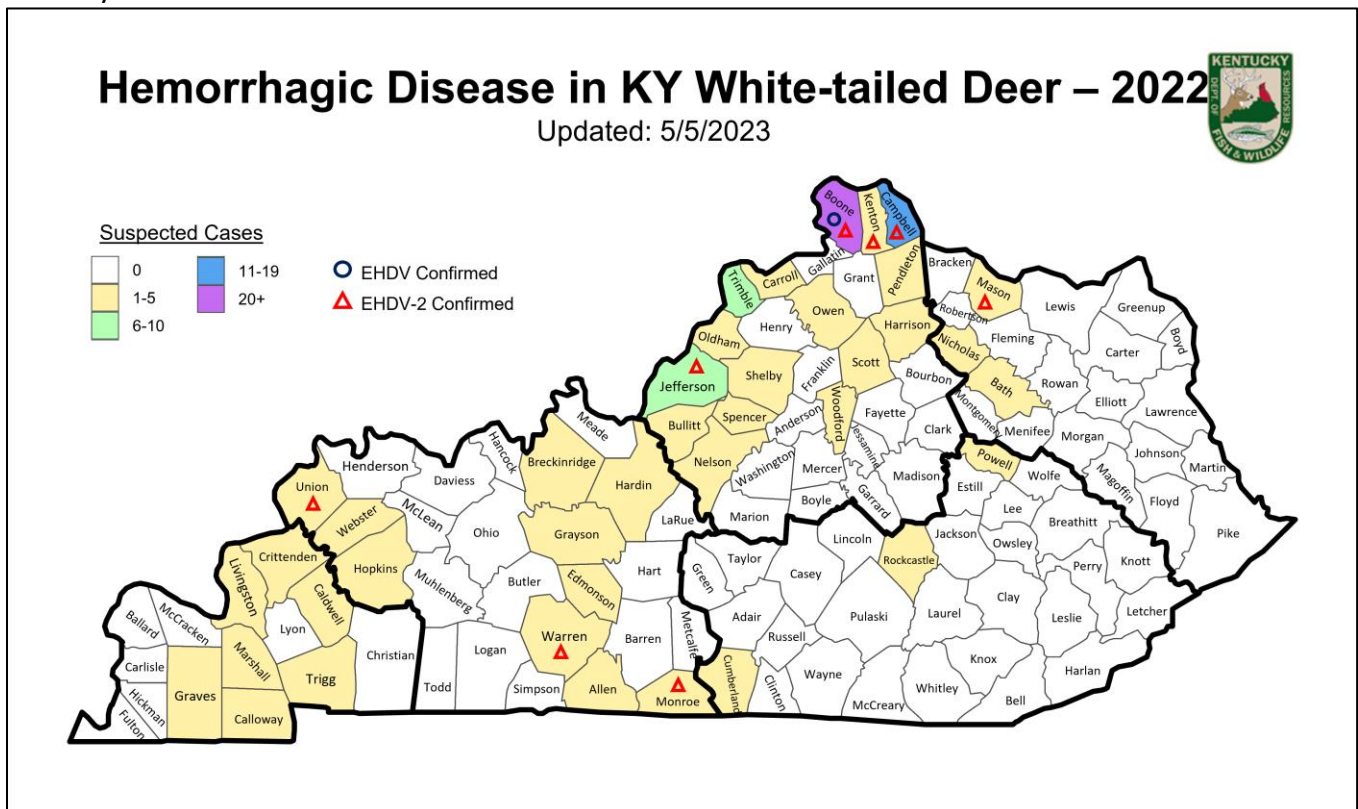


Figure 20

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

CWD is a fatal, neurological disease in white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, moose, and caribou. It causes a characteristic spongy degeneration of the brains of infected animals resulting in emaciation, abnormal behavior, loss of bodily functions, and ultimately death. CWD is categorized as a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE), a group that includes “mad cow” disease in cattle, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans, and scrapie in sheep and goats. CWD has been detected in 32 states, 4 Canadian provinces, Norway, Finland, Sweden, and South Korea. Six states that border Kentucky have CWD present (West Virginia, Virginia, Missouri, Ohio, Illinois, and Tennessee). CWD has not been detected in Kentucky as of July 2023.

KDFWR adopted a CWD monitoring plan in 2002 to detect CWD should it arrive in Kentucky. That plan is a three-part monitoring program to test: 1) a random sampling of hunter-harvested deer, 2) target or suspect animals (i.e., animals that appear ill), and 3) a year-round random sample of roadkill deer. KDFWR works closely with hunters, taxidermists, meat processors, and others to sample and test for CWD. Most samples are taken from hunter-harvested deer. In 2006, KDFWR adopted a CWD response plan to address the disease if it was ever found in Kentucky. Since 2002, more than 48,300 deer and 965 elk have been tested for the disease and CWD has yet to be detected in Kentucky.

The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources encourages hunters who encounter deer acting strangely or that look sick to contact your local regional biologist (**Figure 23**).

2022 CWD Response

Prior to the start of the 2021-2022 deer hunting season, the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency (TWRA) reported the discovery of a CWD positive deer eight miles from the southern border of Calloway County, KY. Due to the CWD positive deer being within 15 miles of the Kentucky border, the Department initiated the beginning steps of the CWD Response Plan. The response plan dramatically increased the CWD sampling efforts within the surveillance zone (**Figure 21**, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, and Marshall counties). During the 2022-23 statewide CWD sampling effort, a total of 5,272 deer and 85 elk were submitted for CWD testing, and CWD was not detected. 2,493 of those deer were tested from within the surveillance zone in 2022. KDFWR has now sampled 6,840 deer inside of the surveillance zone since enacting its response plan.

In 2022, KDFWR enhanced its monitoring for CWD through the addition of voluntary check stations in Bell and Harlan counties during Modern Gun season in response to a “Suspect-Not Confirmed” deer around 7 miles from the state border in Claiborne County, Tennessee. A suspect-not-confirmed case cannot be verified by additional diagnostic testing, but it could indicate an early detection of the disease.



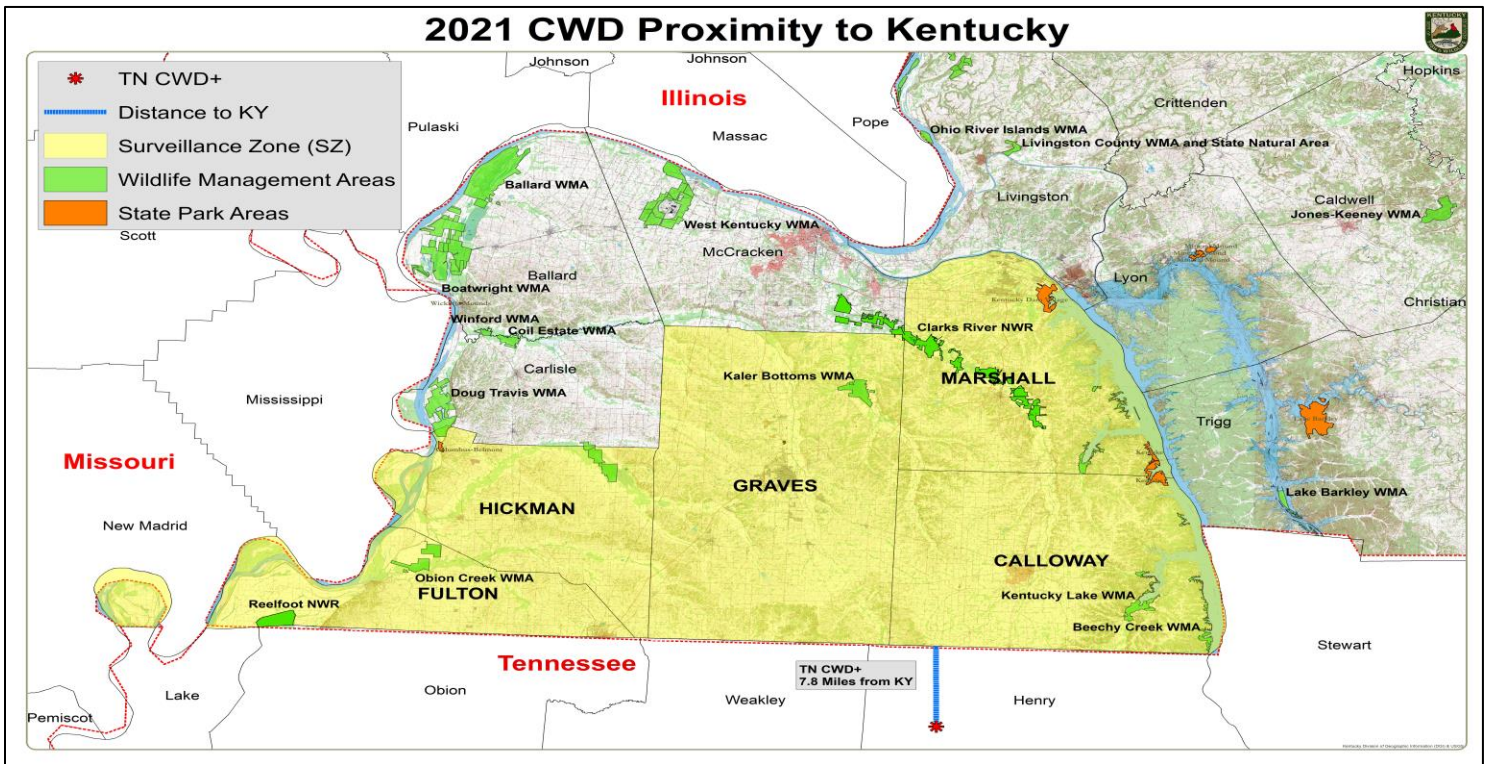


Figure 21

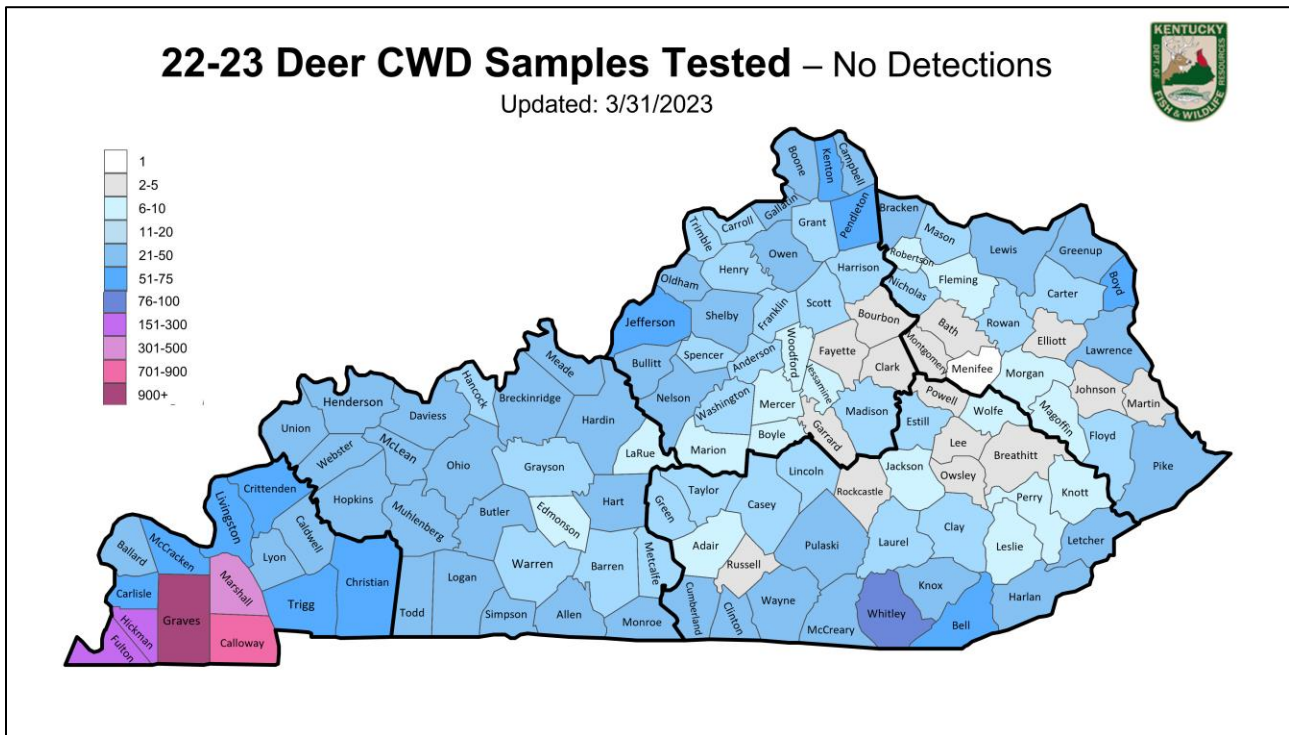


Figure 22

CWD Regulations

Due to the discovery of CWD in close proximity to the Kentucky border the following regulations were put into effect for the surveillance zone in 2021 and remained in place for the 2022-23 season (Figure 21; Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, and Marshall counties). The purpose of these emergency regulations is to provide the

Department the ability to conservatively manage and prevent CWD from entering the state of Kentucky for as long as possible. In addition, by requiring the mandatory checking of harvested deer, the Department can utilize the data collected to inform and guide future deer management decisions.

- No baiting or wildlife feeding
 - Prohibited:
 - Feeders holding or distributing foods or attractants for wildlife ingestion
 - Grain, salt, or mineral shall not be used
 - Allowed:
 - Normal agricultural practices (including mineral blocks in active cattle pastures)
 - Food plots for wildlife
 - Hanging bird feeders used within the curtilage of the home
 - Scents and deer urine-based products
- Mandatory deer check stations
 - During the 2022-23 mandatory check there were 13 check stations
- Carcass tag requirement for all cervids moving through the surveillance zone
- Carcass transportation restrictions
 - Prohibited: Entire carcasses, uncleaned skulls, spines, or bone-in quarters of deer harvested within the 5-county surveillance zone may not be taken outside of the zone, unless in transit to a Kentucky Fish and Wildlife-authorized CWD check station.
 - Allowed: De-boned meat, antlers, antlers attached to a clean skull plate, a clean skull, clean teeth, hides, and finished taxidermy products may be taken out of the surveillance zone. Carcasses of deer or elk harvested elsewhere in Kentucky may be transported into the surveillance zone.

Carcass Importation Law

In reference to 301 KAR 2:095: a person shall not import a cervid carcass or carcass parts that has any part of the spinal column or head. A person importing a legally taken cervid carcass or carcass parts may possess the items listed below:

- Antlers
- Antlers attached to a clean skull plate
- A clean skull
- Clean upper canine teeth
- Finished taxidermy products
- The hide
- Quartered or debone meat

Contacts

Approximately 95% of Kentucky is privately owned. To successfully manage our wildlife resources, the KDFWR works cooperatively with Kentucky's private landowners. One of the essential ingredients in conserving Kentucky's wildlife resources is habitat improvement. Wildlife biologists are available to work with interested individuals or groups on properties that they own or have management rights on.

Contact your local private lands biologist for assistance with wildlife management on your property.



REGIONAL BIOLOGISTS & COORDINATORS

Regional Biologists provide assistance with general wildlife questions/issues including: general wildlife and habitat information, wildlife damage, nuisance wildlife, and sick wildlife.

Purchase Region

FW.PurchaseRegion@ky.gov

- Sarah Christian (270) 285-3809
- Lucas Powell (270) 610-1725
- RC:** John Zimmer (270) 577-6374

Bluegrass Region

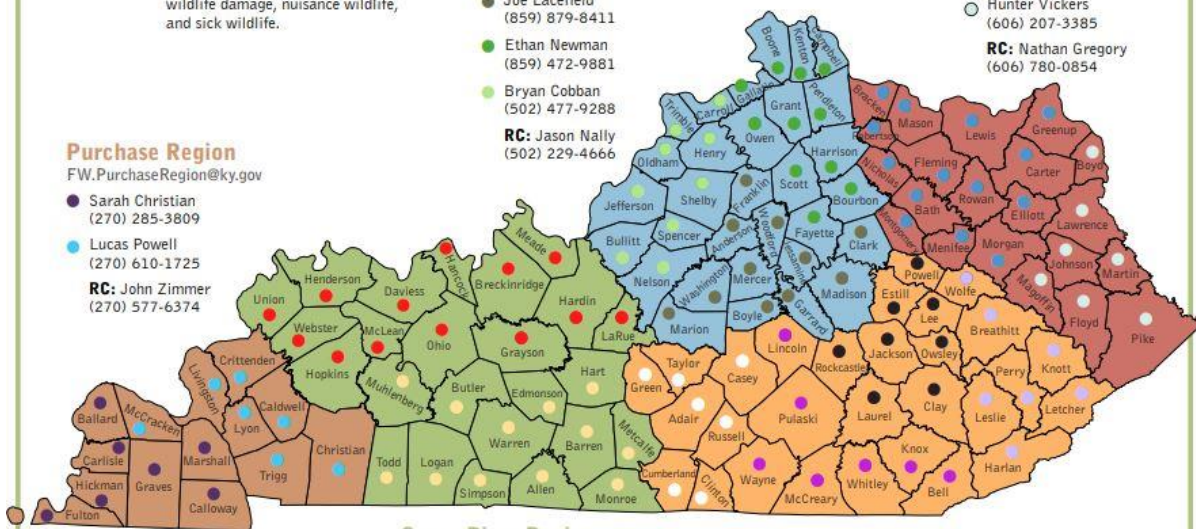
FW.BluegrassRegion@ky.gov

- Joe Lacefield (859) 879-8411
- Ethan Newman (859) 472-9881
- Bryan Cobban (502) 477-9288
- RC:** Jason Nally (502) 229-4666

Northeast Region

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- Wes Mattox (606) 448-1605
- Hunter Vickers (606) 207-3385
- RC:** Nathan Gregory (606) 780-0854



Green River Region

FW.GreenRiverRegion@ky.gov

- Dirk Steenberg (502) 330-2800
- Ryan Harris (270) 792-7630
- RC:** Thomas Young (270) 875-3586

Southeast Region

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- Chris Mason (270) 465-2839
- J.J. Baker (606) 435-6229
- Matt Catron (606) 416-9550
- Merle Hacker (606) 877-8428
- RC:** Mike Strunk (606) 677-1098

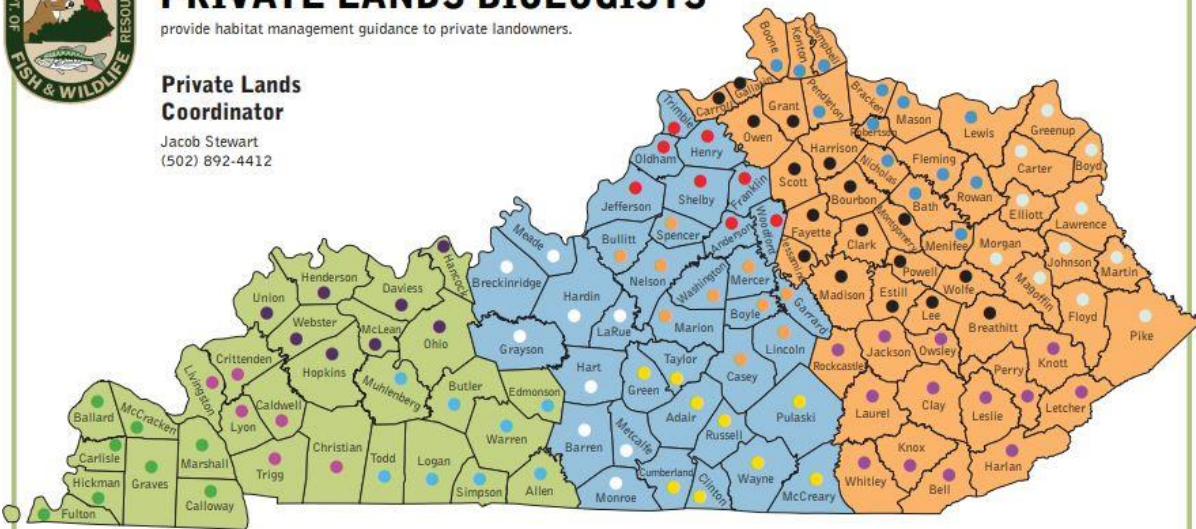


PRIVATE LANDS BIOLOGISTS

provide habitat management guidance to private landowners.

Private Lands Coordinator

Jacob Stewart
(502) 892-4412



AREA 1

Biologists

- Nathan Waltman (270) 836-5724
- Zach Stevens (270) 484-2732
- Zach Coy (270) 936-6331
- Riley Dollenbacher (270) 356-6377

NRCS Liaison

Tyler Reagan
(270) 843-1112

WRE Biologist

Jill Kimmel, Madisonville
(270) 339-0024
Jason Beirman, Mayfield
(270) 705-7483

AREA 2

Biologists

- Matt Stevens (502) 871-0490
- Kiersten Bowling (502) 331-5829
- Jon Anderson (606) 219-7825
- Caleb Miller (270) 589-0712

NRCS Liaison

vacant
(502) 229-3571

WRE Biologist

Cody Jarrett
(270) 283-2826

AREA 3

Biologists

- Randall Alcorn (606) 224-5739
- Andrew Whitaker (502) 892-8822
- Harley Weaver (606) 207-6423
- Daniel Skinner (606) 224-5822

NRCS Liaison

Randall Alcorn
(606) 224-5739

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