

KDFWR Deer Program

Summary Data: 2025 Deer Harvest

20 January 2026



Season Summary

Kentucky's deer hunting season concluded on Monday, January 19th and proved to be another year of great hunting in the Commonwealth. Kentucky hunters reported harvesting 145,433 deer since the season began on September 6. This total is the second-highest harvest in the last five years, only bested by last season's record number of 149,868 deer. Despite harvesting fewer deer than last season, this year's harvest was over 3,000 deer higher than the 10-year average of 142,412 (Figure 1).

Of the 145,433 deer harvested this season, 74,411 were antlered bucks (Figures 2, 4). This is the second highest antlered buck harvest in the last decade and comprised 51.2% of the total deer harvested this season (Figure 5). Female deer made up only 43.5% of the total harvest and remained below the 10-year average (64,047) for a third straight year with 63,193 does reported harvested (Figure 3). Five percent of the deer taken this season were buck fawns (7,826; Figure 4, 5).

Sixty-nine and a half percent of the total males harvested this season were estimated to be 2.5 years old or older (57,148), 21% were yearlings (17,245), and the remaining 9.5% were buck fawns (Figure 6). This proportion has remained stable since the KDFWR began tracking this metric through telecheck a decade ago, but the proportion of adult bucks in the harvest has increased substantially since the 1980s and 1990s when nearly 80% of the buck harvest were yearling bucks aged 1.5 years old.

Of the 145,433 deer harvested this season, 105,410 (72%) were taken with a firearm, 16,647 (11%) were taken with vertical archery equipment, 14,353 (10%) were taken with crossbows, and 9,021 (6%) were taken with muzzleloaders (Figures 7, 8, 10). There has been little variation in the harvest composition based on weapon type since regulation changes in 2018 allowed for more crossbow opportunity throughout the season (Figure 8).

Kentucky resident hunters harvested 80% of the deer this season, while nonresident harvest comprised 15% of the total harvest (Figure 9). Although there is concern over increased nonresident harvest impacting the deer herd across the Commonwealth, the proportion has seemingly levelled off in the last decade at 15-16% of the total harvest.

Kentucky's public lands experienced another incredible year for deer hunting with 7,364 deer telechecked. Public land harvest accounted for 5% of the season total with 131 areas seeing at least one deer taken on them. The state-maintained Wildlife

Management Areas (WMAs) that saw the most action this season include Peabody (574), Taylorsville Lake (239), Green River Lake (234), Clay (210), and Barren River Lake (192) WMAs (Table 1).

Regionally, the Bluegrass region saw the highest percentage of the statewide harvest with 40,816 deer harvested (28%), followed closely by the Green River Region (39,714; 27%), Southeast (26,878; 18%), Purchase (20,040; 14%), and Northeast (17,985; 12%) wildlife regions. Hardin county finished with the highest harvest of any county across the Commonwealth with 3,543 deer taken, followed by Breckinridge (3,090), Christian (2,998), Hart (2,814), Graves (2,698), and Shelby (2,692) counties (Figure 11, Table 2).

Antlerless Harvest Goals

Deer managers are often quick to call for harvesting additional antlerless deer, particularly in areas that have reached, or are on the cusp of reaching, biological and social carrying capacity. However, deer managers seldom tell hunters how many antlerless deer to harvest or why it is so important to do so. Beginning in the 2025-26 season, the KDFWR established harvest goals for antlerless deer across all of Kentucky's Zone 1 and Zone 2 counties where deer populations have reached or are approaching overabundance. The primary goal of this is to reduce populations where applicable (e.g., Zone 1 counties) and maintain others where deer are at more appropriate levels (e.g., Zone 2 counties).

In the 2025-26 season, 104,595 hunters saw success in harvesting at least one deer (1.39 deer/successful hunter). Of those successful hunters, 74% (77,837) harvested only one deer and less than half (43%) were successful in harvesting a female. Seventy-three percent (32,496) of the hunters that harvested a doe only harvested one, and less than 3,000 people filled their 4-deer statewide bag (2,904; 2.8%). Simpson county was the only county in the 2025-26 deer season that met its female harvest goal, with ten counties reaching at least 80% of their goal: Breckinridge (88%), Green (86%), Taylor (86%), Monroe (86%), Hart (85%), Adair (84%), Meade (84%), Hardin (82%), Lincoln (81%), and Barren (81%; Figure 12, Table 3). Without adequate harvest of female deer – the primary driver of population growth – populations become overabundant and unbalanced, which results in habitat degradation, increased risk of disease, elevated levels of crop damage and vehicle collisions, and reduced antler development and overall buck hunting quality.

Fig 1. Total Harvest 2016-2025

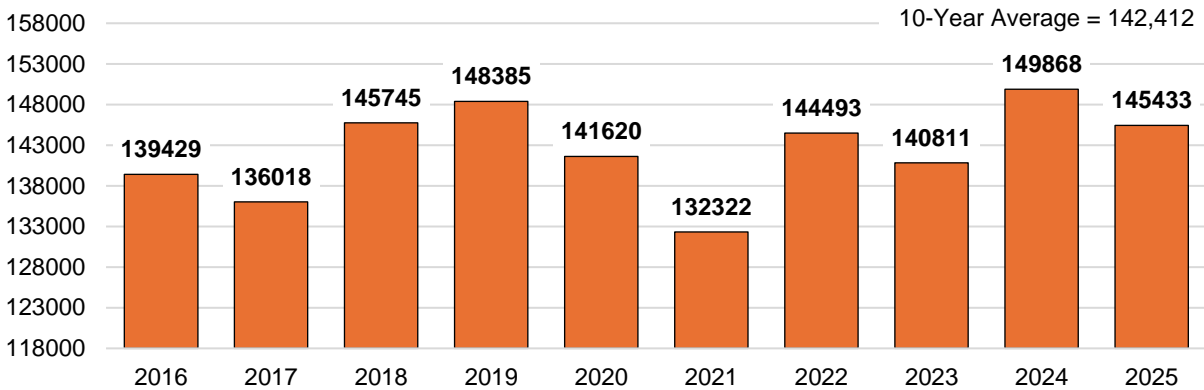


Fig 2. Antlered Buck Harvest 2016-2025

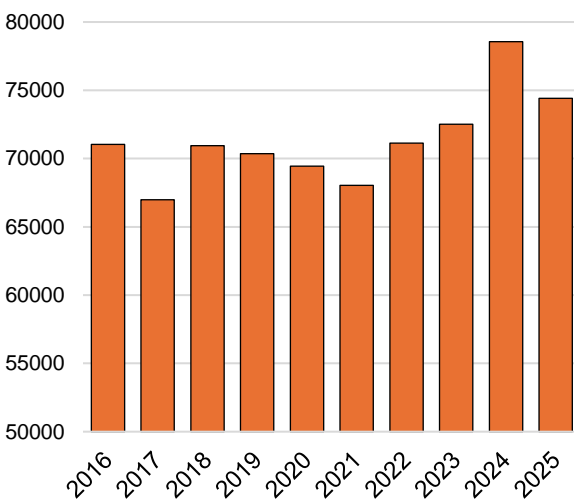


Fig 3. Female Harvest 2016-2025

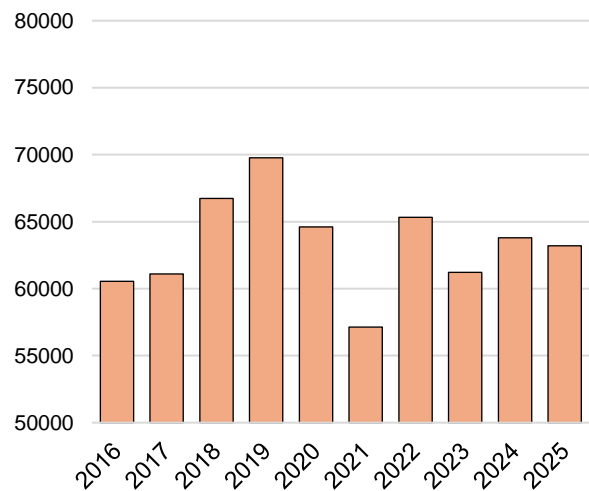


Fig 4. Harvest by Sex

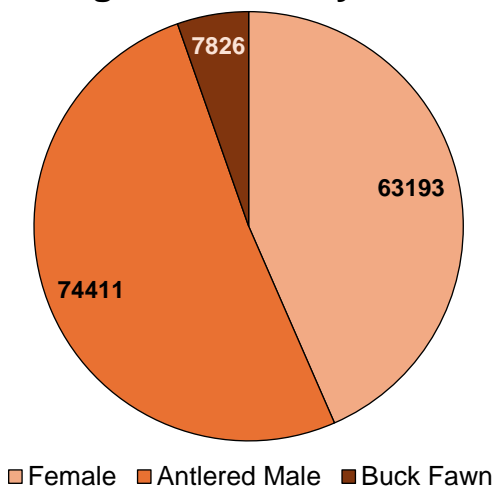


Fig 5. Historic Harvest by Sex

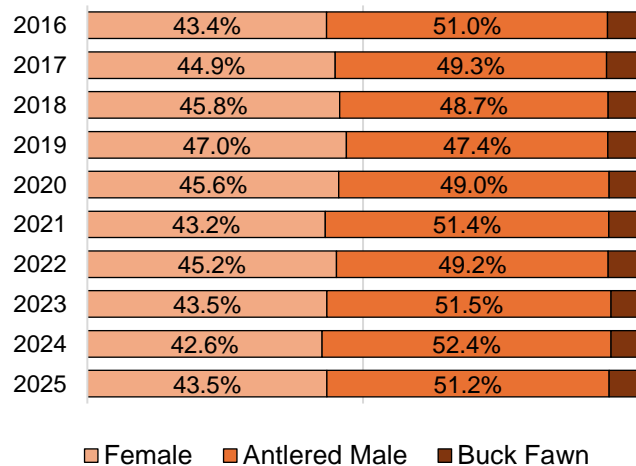


Fig 6. Male Harvest Age Structure

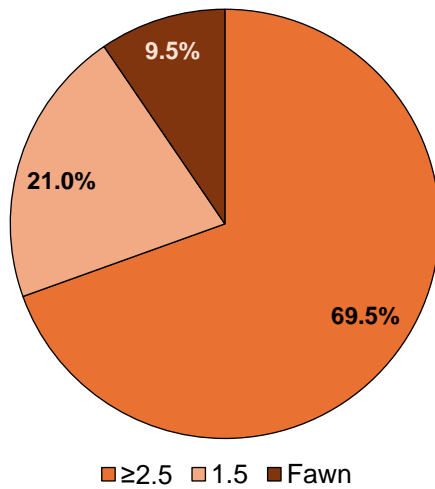


Fig 7. Harvest by Weapon Type

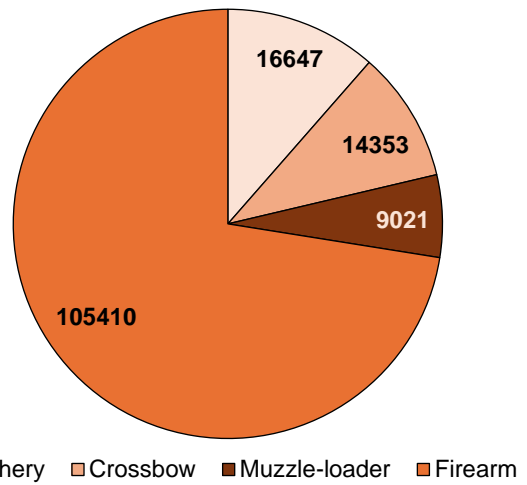


Fig 8. Historic Harvest by Weapon Type

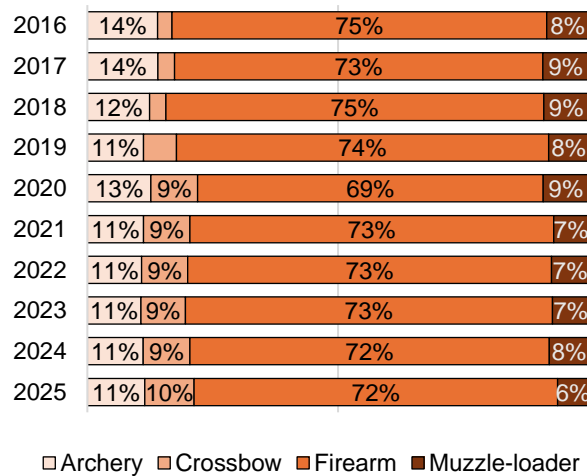


Fig 9. Historic Harvest by Residency

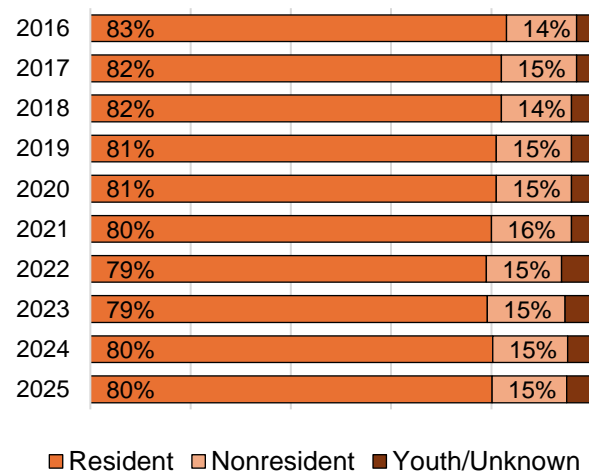
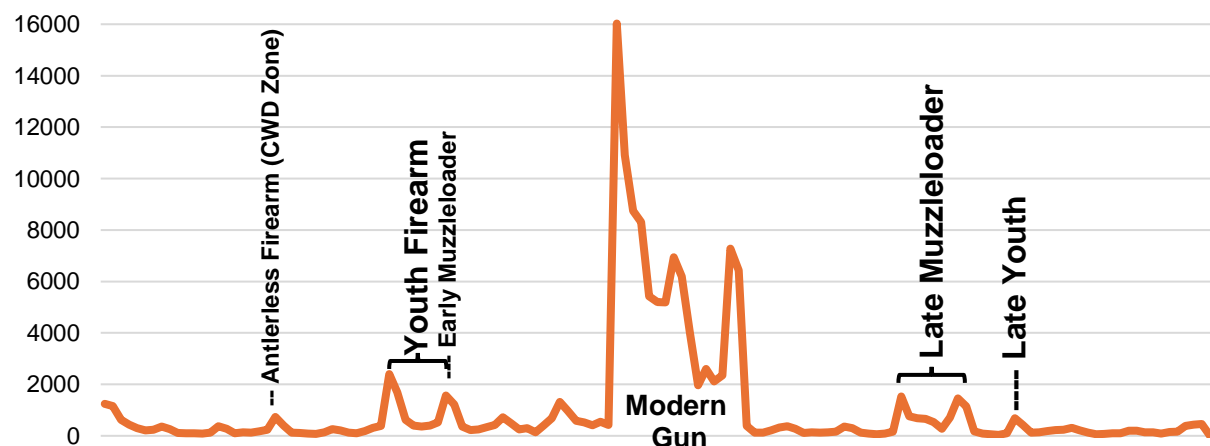


Fig 10. Harvest through the Season 9/6/25 - 1/19/26



Daniel Boone National Forest	1269	Yellowbank WMA	94	Rolling Fork WMA	46	Dale Hollow Lake SRP	27
Fort Knox Military Reservation	812	Kentucky Lake WMA	89	John A. Kleber WMA	45	Lloyd WMA	26
Peabody WMA	574	Wendell H. Ford RTC	86	Fishtrap Lake WMA	42	Beaver Creek WMA	25
Land Between The Lakes NRA	455	Higginson-Henry WMA	80	Kentucky Ridge Forest WMA	40	Czar Hunting Access Area	25
Taylorsville Lake WMA	239	Ballard WMA	73	Pocahontas WMA	38	Hensley-Pine Mountain WMA	24
Green River Lake WMA	234	Boone Forestlands WMA	72	Fleming WMA	38	Kentucky Ridge State Forest	24
Clay WMA	210	Lake Barkley WMA	71	Green River State Forest	37	Cranks Creek WMA	23
Barren River Lake WMA	192	Wells Hunting Access Area	67	Obion Creek WMA	35	Grayson Lake WMA	23
Big Rivers WMA & State Forest	160	Kentucky River WMA	66	Paintsville Lake WMA	35	Simon Kenton WMA	22
Sloughs WMA	156	Yatesville Lake WMA	60	Redbird WMA	34	Jones-Keeney WMA	22
Lake Cumberland WMA	155	Elk Horn Coal HAA	58	Veterans Memorial WMA	34	Carr Creek Lake WMA	21
Clarks River NWR	119	Cumberland Forest WMA	56	Asher HAA	32	Doug Travis WMA	21
Blue Grass Army Depot	115	West Kentucky WMA	53	Continental HAA	32	Cane Creek WMA	21
Pennyrile State Forest	98	Livingston County WMA and SNA	50	Boatwright WMA	31	Tygarts State Forest	21
Nolin River Lake WMA	94	Rough River Lake WMA	49	Dewey Lake WMA	30	RH Group HAA	20
*totals include Quota Hunt harvests **all other areas <20 total harvests							

Table 1. Public land deer harvest totals 2025-26.

Hardin	3543	Grant	1850	Casey	1426	Campbell	996	Simpson	744	Letcher	549
Breckinridge	3090	Harrison	1813	Franklin	1377	Mason	990	Johnson	737	Rowan	543
Christian	2998	Calloway	1811	Mercer	1371	Nicholas	984	Rockcastle	737	Boyle	521
Hart	2814	Trigg	1804	Warren	1335	Lawrence	978	Carroll	726	Harlan	508
Graves	2698	Henry	1796	Lewis	1289	Scott	959	Morgan	715	Clinton	483
Shelby	2692	Bracken	1741	Henderson	1274	Madison	957	Knott	713	Clark	464
Washington	2662	Bullitt	1732	Todd	1265	Jackson	930	Hancock	684	Magoffin	450
Pendleton	2642	Caldwell	1698	Monroe	1262	Clay	926	Garrard	673	Montgomery	450
Nelson	2590	Marion	1673	Boone	1256	Union	914	Bell	661	McCreary	440
Hopkins	2484	Allen	1670	Carter	1240	Kenton	913	Boyd	646	Elliott	429
Crittenden	2394	Webster	1629	Marshall	1201	McLean	882	Estill	643	Gallatin	425
Pulaski	2358	Pike	1629	Jefferson	1169	Floyd	881	Breathitt	633	Martin	392
Grayson	2317	Barren	1609	Whitley	1086	McCracken	862	Carlisle	628	Powell	381
Owen	2200	Livingston	1597	Daviess	1060	Lyon	852	Woodford	618	Wolfe	373
Green	2116	Laurel	1591	Larue	1059	Bath	821	Edmonson	602	Fulton	372
Anderson	2040	Meade	1571	Wayne	1057	Oldham	818	Russell	596	Bourbon	329
Spencer	1986	Metcalfe	1545	Fleming	1050	Perry	818	Ballard	573	Lee	311
Muhlenberg	1986	Lincoln	1491	Butler	1048	Knox	804	Leslie	564	Owsley	283
Adair	1921	Taylor	1481	Greenup	1007	Robertson	795	Hickman	552	Fayette	245
Ohio	1877	Logan	1450	Cumberland	998	Trimble	774	Jessamine	549	Menifee	218

Table 2. Total harvest by county 2025-26. Blue = Bluegrass, Green = Green River, Yellow = Northeast, Purple = Southeast, Orange = Purchase wildlife regions.

Figure 11. Total Harvest by County, 2025-26

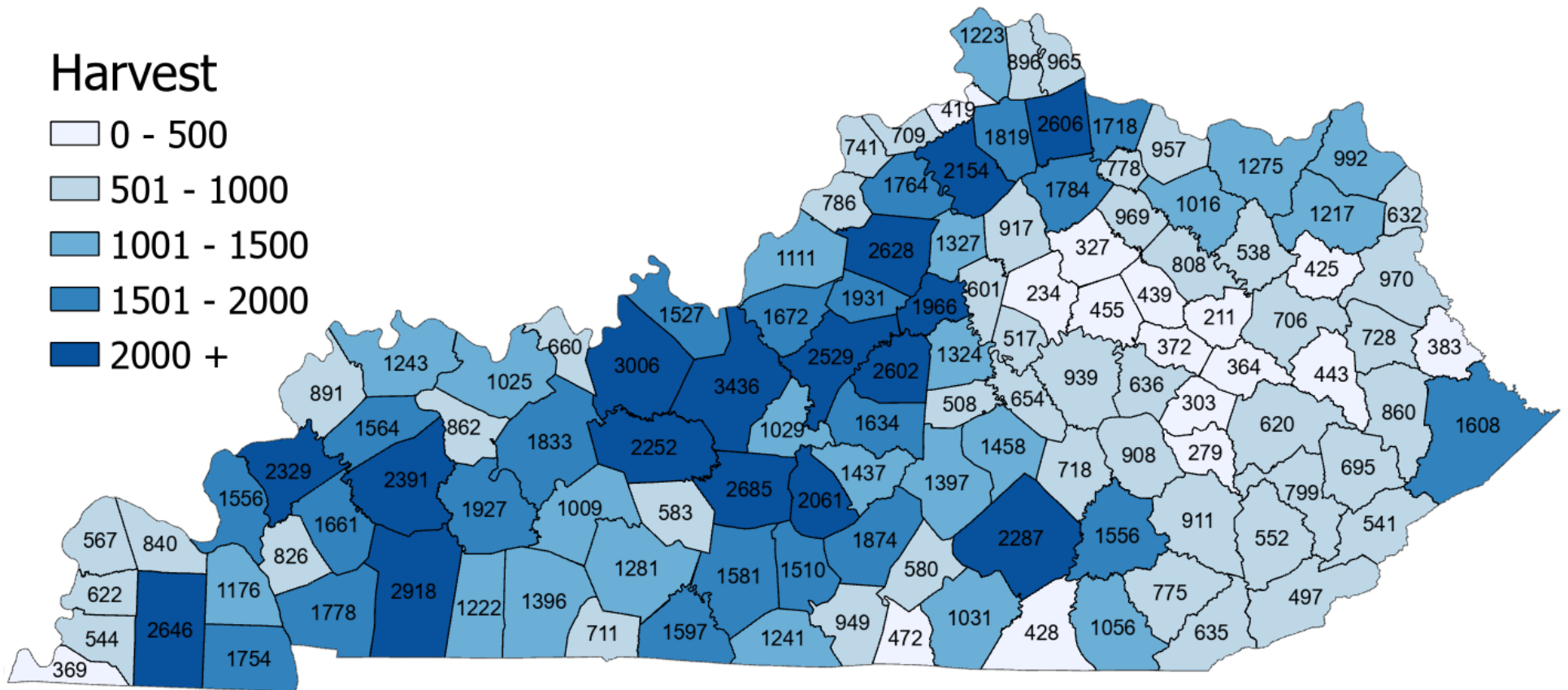
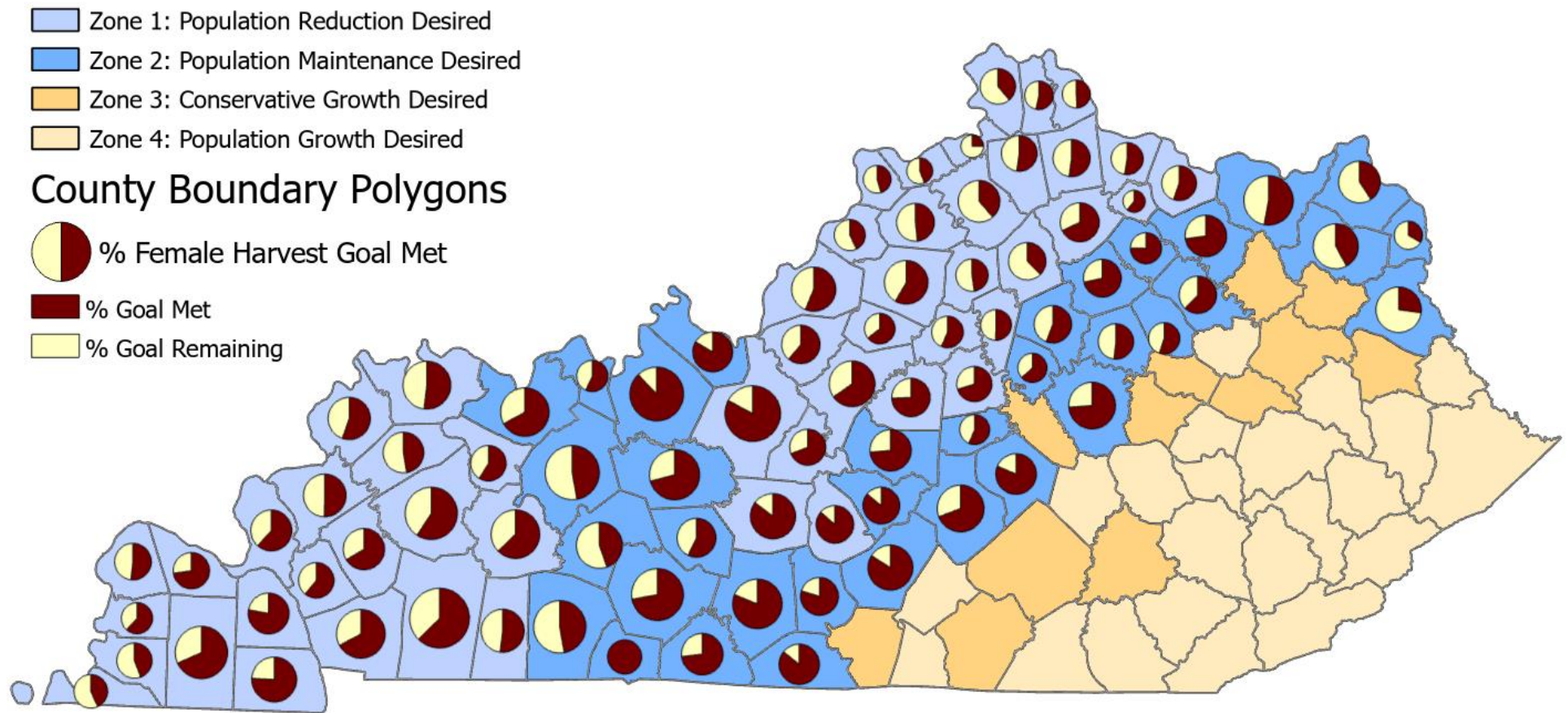


Figure 12. Female Harvest Goals, 2025-26



Zone	County	Total Female Harvest Goal	Female Harvest	% Goal	Zone	County	Total Female Harvest Goal	Female Harvest	% Goal	Zone	County	Total Female Harvest Goal	Female Harvest	% Goal
1	Anderson	1647	928	56%	1	Livingston	1321	816	62%	2	Boyd	806	269	33%
1	Ballard	496	257	52%	1	Lyon	642	392	61%	2	Boyle	385	217	56%
1	Boone	1602	623	39%	1	Marshall	758	591	78%	2	Breckinridge	1711	1505	88%
1	Bracken	1574	829	53%	1	Mason	803	444	55%	2	Butler	1060	473	45%
1	Bullitt	1363	834	61%	1	McCracken	574	417	73%	2	Carter	1257	529	42%
1	Caldwell	1264	840	66%	1	McLean	788	463	59%	2	Casey	758	525	69%
1	Calloway	1202	911	76%	1	Mercer	882	619	70%	2	Clark	313	162	52%
1	Campbell	1032	508	49%	1	Muhlenberg	1517	951	63%	2	Daviess	696	467	67%
1	Carlisle	497	307	62%	1	Nelson	2002	1309	65%	2	Edmonson	350	200	57%
1	Carroll	740	326	44%	1	Oldham	961	412	43%	2	Fayette	170	95	56%
1	Christian	2224	1391	63%	1	Owen	2894	1119	39%	2	Fleming	606	441	73%
1	Crittenden	2410	1215	50%	1	Pendleton	2500	1305	52%	2	Grayson	1575	1116	71%
1	Franklin	1344	641	48%	1	Robertson	647	396	61%	2	Greenup	949	386	41%
1	Fulton	381	165	43%	1	Scott	1196	451	38%	2	Jessamine	321	204	64%
1	Gallatin	750	187	25%	1	Shelby	2399	1401	58%	2	Lawrence	1343	364	27%
1	Grant	1709	894	52%	1	Spencer	1517	978	64%	2	Lewis	902	477	53%
1	Graves	2019	1380	68%	1	Todd	1148	596	52%	2	Lincoln	803	653	81%
1	Green	1210	1046	86%	1	Trigg	1325	890	67%	2	Madison	513	379	74%
1	Hancock	531	302	57%	1	Trimble	733	334	46%	2	Marion	1083	797	74%
1	Hardin	2090	1732	83%	1	Union	801	444	55%	2	Meade	842	704	84%
1	Harrison	1353	919	68%	1	Washington	1836	1365	74%	2	Metcalfe	907	724	80%
1	Hart	1617	1380	85%	1	Webster	1725	819	47%	2	Monroe	677	581	86%
1	Henderson	1165	605	52%	1	Woodford	598	302	51%	2	Montgomery	289	159	55%
1	Henry	1734	840	48%	2	Logan	1328	628	47%	2	Nicholas	550	413	75%
1	Hickman	568	251	44%	2	Adair	965	811	84%	2	Ohio	1815	857	47%
1	Hopkins	1863	1103	59%	2	Allen	964	705	73%	2	Simpson	324	338	104%
1	Jefferson	1015	571	56%	2	Barren	860	698	81%	2	Taylor	796	684	86%
1	Kenton	825	441	53%	2	Bath	505	314	62%	2	Warren	853	615	72%
1	Larue	723	500	69%	2	Bourbon	183	131	72%	*only Zone 1 and Zone 2 counties included with female harvest goals				

Table 3. Female harvest goals by county, 2025-26