2018 SOUTH CAROLINA DEER HARVEST REPORT

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DEER RESEARCH & MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Submitted by

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INTRODUCTION

The white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) is the most popular, sought after, economically important, and controversial game animal in South Carolina. The 2018 Deer Hunter Survey represents the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources' (SCDNR), Wildlife Section's ongoing commitment to conduct pertinent research related to the state's white-tailed deer resource. The primary objectives of this survey research were to obtain valid estimates of: (1) the statewide deer harvest in 2018, (2) the harvest of deer in the constituent counties of the state, (3) hunting effort related to deer, (4) resident and nonresident hunter activities, and (5) weapons use, weapons preference, and harvest rates by weapon type. Information on hunter opinion related to certain aspects of the deer resource as well as estimates of the wild hog and coyote harvest in the state is also presented.

Due to the importance of deer as a state resource, SCDNR believes that accurately assessing the harvest of deer, as well as hunter participation in deer hunting, is key to the management of this species. Proposed changes in deer-related laws and regulations should have foundations in biology, therefore, the population dynamics associated with annual hunting mortality cannot be ignored. Similarly, when issues arise that do not involve biological parameters, it is important to have information related to deer hunter activities afield because they too form an important basis for managing deer.

Since the inception of the Statewide Deer Research and Management Project (Deer Project) the methods used to document the state's deer harvest have changed. Historically, deer harvest figures were developed using a system of mandatory deer check stations in the 18 county Upstate (Game Zones 1 and 2) in conjunction with reported harvests from properties enrolled in the Antlerless Deer Quota Program (ADQP) in the 28 county Coastal Plain (Game Zones 3 and 4). This system yielded an actual count of harvested deer and was, therefore, an absolute minimum harvest figure. Shortcomings in this system included deterioration of check station compliance in the Upstate and failure to report by ADQP cooperators in the Coastal Plain. Also, since the acreage enrolled in the ADQP tends to be about one-half of the deer habitat in the Coastal Plain, past harvest figures have not documented deer harvests on non-quota lands (+- 3.1 million acres) because there

was no legal requirement to report harvested deer in the Coastal Plain. Therefore, it is suspected that historic deer harvest figures only accounted for about one-half of the total deer harvest that occurred annually in the state.

Survey Methodology

The 2018 Deer Hunter Survey represents a random mail survey that involved a single mail-out. The questionnaire for the 2018 Deer Hunter Survey was developed by Wildlife Section personnel (Figure 1). The mailing list database was constructed by randomly selecting 30,000 known Big Game Permit holders that included 8 license types. The license types included: (1) Resident Sportsman's, (2) 3-year Resident Sportsman's, (3) Resident Combination, (4) 3-year Resident Combination, (5) Resident Junior Sportsman's, (6) Resident Big Game Permit, (7) 3-year Resident Big Game Permit, and (8) Nonresident Big Game Permit. The number of individuals associated with each license type was based on an attempted sampling rate of approximately 15 percent for licenses purchased through December of 2018. Since deer seasons statewide end on January 1 there was no need to sample individuals that were licensed thereafter.

Data entry was completed by Priority Data, Inc., Omaha, Nebraska. Statistical analysis was conducted using Statistix 7 (Analytical Software, Tallahassee, FL).

Acknowledgments

Thanks to South Carolina deer hunters. Funding for this report, as well as all activities related to the Statewide Deer Research and Management Project, is made possible through hunters' participation in antlerless deer tag programs. Thanks to Julie Jarrett, SCDNR License Section Supervisor, for assistance in constructing the mailing list database.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As with any mail survey, a portion of the attempted sample (30,000) was returned as undeliverable mail (224). Therefore, the actual attempted sample was 29,776 representing 18.3 percent of the entire population (162,386) of license holders. A total of 5,850 completed surveys were returned yielding a 19.6 percent response rate and 3.6 percent sampling rate on the entire licensee population.

Deer Harvest

During the 2018 deer season it is estimated that a total of 109,208 bucks and 85,778 does were harvested for a statewide total of 194,986 deer (Table 1). This represents a 5 percent increase in harvest from 2017 (185,286) and a 13 percent increase since 2016 (172,315). The 2018 harvest is 39 percent below the record harvest established in 2002 (319,902). After many years of rapidly increasing during the 1970's and 1980's, the deer population in South Carolina exhibited relative stability between 1995 and 2002. Since 2002, however, the population has trended down. The overall reduction in harvest seen since 2002 can likely be attributable to a number of factors, including habitat change. Although forest management activities stimulated significant growth in South Carolina's deer population in the 1970's and 1980's, considerable acreage is currently in even-aged stands that are greater than 15 years old. According to forest inventory data, during the period 1994 to 2014 the states' timberlands in the 0 to 15 year age class decreased 34 percent while timberlands in the 16 to 30 year age class increased 104 percent. This situation simply does not support deer densities at the same level as younger stands in which understory food and cover is more available.

Also, coyotes are a recent addition to the landscape and are another piece of the puzzle. SCDNR has recently completed a major long-term study with researchers from the United States Forest Service Southern Research Station at the Savannah River Site investigating the affects coyotes can have on the survival of deer fawns. This research demonstrates that coyotes can be a significant predator of deer fawns, that predation by coyotes can be an additive source of mortality, and that efforts to increase fawn recruitment via coyote control provided only modest results and at

high cost. Obviously, one cannot apply these results uniformly across the state because habitats, coyote densities, deer densities, etc. vary. However, coyotes are now well established in South Carolina so they should be expected to play a role in deer population dynamics at some level. That being the case, this "new mortality factor" combined with extremely liberal deer harvests that have been the norm in South Carolina are clearly involved in the reduction in deer numbers in the last 15 years. Given this and the difficulty and high cost of coyote control, it seems apparent that making adjustments to how we manage deer, particularly female deer, is more important now than prior to the colonization of the state by coyotes.

As it relates specifically to 2018, the modest increase in harvest is likely due to some level of remaining "carry-over" of deer from 2015 and 2016. The 1,000-year flood spawned by hurricane Joaquin in 2015 and hurricane Matthew in 2016 each resulted in temporary season closures in some coastal counties and general access problems or decreased opportunity for hunters across much of the state. Also, each of these years saw unseasonably warm fall temperatures and there was what many called a record acorn crop in 2016. This resulted in back to back decreases in harvest. That being the case, there were likely deer that would have otherwise been harvested during those years that were carried over and reproduced, thereby increasing the harvest in 2017 and 2018.

The fall of 2018 was the second season of the "all deer" tagging system and statewide limit on antlered deer. Interestingly, the 13 percent increase in harvest since 2016 is primarily a result of an increase in doe harvest (18.0%) rather than an increase in the harvest of bucks (9.5%). Increases in harvest are normally the result of increases in the buck harvest or a more equal increase in buck and doe harvest. This disproportionate harvest may be indicative of the new buck limit having the desired effect of decreasing pressure on bucks. It will likely take a few years for this to become clearer.

Harvest Per Unit Area County Rankings

Comparisons can be made between deer harvests from the various counties in South Carolina if a harvest per unit area is established. Harvest per unit area standardizes the harvest among counties regardless of the size of individual counties. One measure of harvest rate is the number of deer taken per square mile (640ac. = 1 mile^2). When considering the estimated deer

habitat that is available in South Carolina, the deer harvest rate in 2018 was 9.2 deer per square mile over the entire state (Table 2). Although the deer harvest in the state has generally declined in recent years, South Carolina remains at the top among southeastern states, many of which have also noted a declining trend. The top 5 counties for harvest per unit area were Bamberg (20.4 deer/mile^2), Anderson (17.0 deer/mile^2), Spartanburg (15.7 deer/mile^2), Hampton (15.8 deer/mile^2), and Orangeburg (14.9 deer/mile^2).

Deer Harvest Rankings by County

Total deer harvest by county is not comparable among counties because counties vary in size and are, therefore, not directly comparable. However, it has become customary to rank the counties based on number of deer harvested (Table 3). The top 5 counties during 2018 were Orangeburg, Hampton, Colleton, Fairfield, and Spartanburg.

Deer Harvest on Wildlife Management Areas

Deer hunting on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) remains popular in South Carolina with approximately 60,000 licensees having a WMA Permit. Wildlife Management Areas represent lands owned by SCDNR, other state-owned lands enrolled in the WMA Program, US Forest Service lands enrolled in the WMA Program, and private and/or corporate lands that are leased by SCDNR as part of the WMA Program. Deer harvest figures for coastal WMAs are from check stations and are presented only for those WMA properties that have a deer check-in requirement. Deer harvest figures for upstate WMAs (Mountain and Central and Western Piedmont Hunt Units) were estimated by extrapolating the county deer harvest rates (deer/mi^2) to the acreage of WMA land that falls within the respective counties comprising the WMA. This assumes that hunters on WMA lands exhibit effort and deer harvest patterns similar to those of the general licensee database that was surveyed. Finally, the estimated deer harvest on WMA lands is included in, not additive to, the county and statewide estimates found throughout this report.

During the 2018 season it is estimated that 4,287 bucks, 3,008 does, and 18 deer if unknown sex were harvested for a total deer harvest on Wildlife Management Areas of 7,313 (Table 4). This figure represents an 8 percent increase from 2017.

Hunter Opinion Regarding the Deer Population

The 2018 Deer Hunter Survey asked participants their opinion regarding the following question. Compared to past years, how would you rate the number of deer in the area that you hunt most often? Survey participants were given 3 choices; increasing, about the same, or decreasing. Most hunters (58%) indicated that the number of deer in the area they hunted most often was about the same as in past years (Table 5). More hunters (23%) believed that the deer population was decreasing than increasing (19%). On a scale of 1 to 3 with 1 being increasing, 2 being neutral, and 3 being decreasing, the overall mean rating of 2.0 suggests that hunters viewed the deer population about the same as past years.

Number of Deer Hunters

Even though all individuals receiving a survey were licensed to hunt deer, only 90 percent actually hunted deer. For residents, 89 percent of sampled licensees hunted deer and for nonresidents 96 percent hunted deer. Extrapolating to the respective licensee populations yields 129,477 residents (Table 6) and 15,757 nonresidents (Table 7) for a total of 145,234 deer hunters statewide during 2018. This figure represents a less than one percent decrease from the 146,044 hunters in 2017. Counties with the highest estimates for individual hunters include Orangeburg, Spartanburg, Colleton, Laurens, and Anderson for resident hunters (Table 6) and Hampton, Allendale, Union, Bamberg, and Chester for nonresidents (Table 7).

Hunting Success

For determination of hunting success only those individuals that actually hunted deer were included in the analysis and similarly, success was defined as harvesting at least one deer. Overall hunting success in 2018 was 67 percent, which should be considered very good. Success rates for residents (67%, Table 6) were slightly higher than nonresidents (65%, Table 7). Estimates for resident and nonresident success rates for all counties are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Hunter Effort

For the purposes of this survey hunter effort was measured in days with one day being defined as any portion of the day spent afield. Resident hunters averaged 15 days afield for a total of 1,893,499 days deer hunting and nonresidents averaged 12 days for a total of 190,229 days (Table 8). Total effort expended deer hunting in South Carolina during 2018 was estimated at 2,083,728 days (Table 8), down less than one percent from 2017. The number of days devoted to deer hunting in South Carolina is very significant and points not only to the availability and popularity of deer as a game species, but to the obvious economic benefits related to this important natural resource. Previous surveys conducted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service indicate that approximately 200 million dollars in direct retail sales are related to deer hunting in South Carolina annually.

The top 5 South Carolina counties for overall days of deer hunting during 2018 were Orangeburg, Colleton, Fairfield, Spartanburg, and Newberry (Table 8). Resident hunters expended the most hunting effort in Orangeburg, Colleton, Spartanburg, Anderson, and Aiken counties. Nonresidents hunted the most in Hampton, Allendale, Chester, Union, and Bamberg counties and these 5 counties totaled 45 percent of all the nonresident deer hunting effort that took place in South Carolina in 2017.

Resident hunters who were successful at harvesting at least one deer averaged nearly twice as many days (17 days) afield as unsuccessful residents (9 days) (Table 8). Similarly, successful nonresidents (12 days) averaged more days afield when compared with unsuccessful nonresidents (9 days).

The amount of effort required to harvest a deer varied between residents and nonresidents and by the county hunted. On the average it took less time for nonresidents to harvest a deer (9 days, Table 7) compared to residents (11 days, Table 6). This may be due to the fact that many nonresidents hunt commercially where considerable preparation is done prior to the hunter's arrival. Also, there may be less selectivity with respect to deer harvested by nonresidents. Counties requiring the least effort to harvest a deer included Dillon, Beaufort, Bamberg, Hampton, and Orangeburg counties for resident hunters (Table 6). On the other hand, nonresidents spent less time to harvest a deer in Darlington, Williamsburg, Greenwood, Dillon, and York counties (Table 7),

however, none of these counties experienced what should be considered a high level of nonresident hunting activity.

Deer Harvest by Weapon Type and Weapons Utilization and Preference

All areas of South Carolina have long and liberal firearms seasons and the majority (81%) of deer were harvested with centerfire rifles (Table 9). Shotguns (8.3%) and archery equipment (6.8%) also contribute significantly to the overall deer harvest in the state, whereas, muzzleloaders, crossbows, and handguns combine to contribute less than 5 percent to the total harvest (Table 9).

Although rifles are used by over 90 percent of hunters, nearly 80 percent of hunters use multiple weapons during the course of the deer season (Table 10, Table 11). Resident hunters appear to be more flexible than nonresidents in their use of multiple weapons and significantly more residents use archery equipment (22%) and shotguns (20%) than nonresidents (12% archery and 6% shotguns) (Table 11). This finding has been consistent for many years and two points can likely be made. First, since most aspects of deer hunting (travel, accommodations, etc.) are typically more convenient for residents, they may have more time to devote to becoming comfortable or proficient with additional weapons, in this case archery equipment. Second, shotguns are the customary weapon related to hunting deer with dogs and the argument can be made that dog hunting is being practiced more by residents than nonresidents. The weapons utilization data supports this contention.

On the other hand, nonresidents (14%) used muzzleloaders more frequently than residents (10%). Keep in mind that muzzleloader or primitive weapons seasons on private land are only available in Game Zones 1 and 2 (the Upstate). It is suspected that the high utilization of muzzleloaders by nonresidents is related to the availability of this special season at an earlier date in South Carolina than in neighboring states. Also, the argument can be made that muzzleloaders require less commitment than archery equipment and would allow nonresidents a comparatively easy method of harvesting deer during the special season. This finding has been consistent for many years.

Unlike weapons utilization, weapons preference is the single weapon that a hunter prefers. Obviously, a majority (79%) of deer hunters prefer rifles (Table 12). Bows (12%) are the second most preferred weapon which is interesting because compared to other states, there are limited

exclusive opportunities for bow hunters in South Carolina. Nonetheless, the number of hunters indicating that bows are their preferred weapon has increased over time. Finally, there are several interesting points that can be made about preferences for other weapons based on residency. Shotguns are preferred significantly more by residents (6%) than nonresidents (2%) and muzzleloaders are preferred more by nonresidents (3%) than by residents (1%) (Table 12) . The explanation of this situation is likely similar to that for weapons utilization in that, (1) residents do most of the dog hunting in the state and tend to use shotguns, and (2) nonresidents use muzzleloaders to take advantage of a special season that is not available as early in their home state.

Deer Harvest by Month of Season

The 2018 Deer Hunter Survey asked hunters to provide information on the month of kill for deer taken during the 2018 season. Although South Carolina is noted to have the longest firearms deer season in the country, the relationship between season length and deer harvest is often misunderstood. Deer naturally increase their movements during the breeding season or rut making them more susceptible to being seen and harvested by hunters. In contrast, outside of the breeding season deer movements are reduced, therefore the chances of hunters seeing and harvesting deer are reduced.

Deer harvest by month of season demonstrates this phenomenon (Figure 2). Although firearms seasons are not open in all parts of the state in late August and early September, relatively few deer are harvested during that time where the season is open. On the other hand, a disproportionately high number of deer are taken during October and November. October and November encompass the majority of the breeding season in South Carolina with over 80 percent of does conceiving during that period (Figure 3). Ultimately, timing of the season is a more important factor in determining deer harvest and quality hunting than the length of the season. Although South Carolina offers early opening seasons, there may be negative consequences as it relates to deer harvest. Hunters should understand that hunting pressure that builds prior to the breeding season can suppress daytime movements of deer during the breeding season when deer movements and hunter harvests should be greatest.

Wild Hog Harvest

The 2018 Deer Hunter Survey also asked hunters to provide information on their wild hog and coyote harvesting activities. Documenting the hog harvest became customary several years ago because wild hogs are commonly taken incidental to deer hunting. Wild or feral hogs are often thought of as "game" and there is a certain amount of sport associated with harvesting hogs. Wild hogs provide quality meat for the hunter and mature hogs can make a highly sought-after "trophy". Wild hogs are not native to South Carolina or any part of the North American continent. They are descendants of European domestic hogs that escaped or were released dating back as far as the early Spanish explorers. Also, closed-range or fencing requirements for livestock did not arise until the 1900's and letting hogs "free-range" was common prior to fencing laws. Wild hogs were historically associated with the major river flood plain systems in Coastal South Carolina. Unfortunately, recent relocations of wild hogs by hunters appear to be responsible for the species populating areas where they were not found in the past. Wild hogs directly compete with native species like deer and wild turkey for habitat and food, and hogs can do significant damage to the habitat and agricultural production through their rooting activities. Legislation passed during the 2005 session of the South Carolina General Assembly prohibits the release of hogs in the state and legislation passed in 2010 prohibits the removal of a live hog from the woods without a permit (SC Code Section 50-16-25).

During 2018 an estimated 39,347 wild hogs were harvested by deer hunters in South Carolina (Table 13), a 4 percent increase from 2017 (37,858 hogs). Hog numbers and thus harvest, can vary substantially from year to year due to bottomland flooding during the fall and winter farrowing season which can cause mortality in piglets (and some adults), as well as, increasing vulnerability to hunters as hogs move to higher ground. With major flooding in both 2015 and 2016 the harvest was down considerably in 2016. The dramatic increase in harvest in 2017 is likely related to hog populations recovering following these two flooding events. Evidence of the presence of hogs in 46 of 46 counties was made by hunter harvest activities (46 of 46 counties in 2017). Statewide, approximately 1.8 hogs/mile^2 were harvested, however, this figure is deceiving because hogs only inhabit a relatively small portion of the state as a whole. The top 5 counties for wild hog harvest per unit area were Allendale (7.0 hogs/mile^2), Hampton (4.5 hogs/mile^2), Calhoun (4.4 hogs/mile^2), and Abbeville (4.2 hogs/mile^2).

Coyote Harvest

Unlike wild hogs which are treated like game to some degree, coyotes are typically thought of as varmints that pose a threat to native game species. Like wild hogs, coyotes are a non-native species in South Carolina. Although a popular notion among hunters is that SCDNR released coyotes, the agency has never released coyotes in South Carolina. The occurrence of coyotes in the state is more recent than hogs and they appear to have gotten to the state by two methods, (1) natural movements from western states and (2) illegal importation. Coyotes were first documented in Oconee and Pickens Counties in 1978 and were thought to be linked to animals that were illegally imported for hunting purposes. Evidence for this includes an illegal importation case that was made and the fact that coyotes had not been documented in adjacent counties in Georgia and North Carolina. Within a few years coyotes began to appear in the western piedmont counties of Anderson, Abbeville, McCormick, etc. indicating a southeastern expansion from the original site. In the early 1980's coyotes were documented in Allendale County and were thought to be natural immigrants from Georgia since they had previously been documented in the adjacent Georgia counties. Coyotes from this source apparently populated to the Northeast until they encountered the Santee Cooper Lakes. In the late 1980's coyotes were documented in the Pee Dee Region, again associated with illegal imports. In any event, by the mid-1990's coyotes had been documented in all South Carolina counties.

Sportsmen often voice concern over the presence of coyotes and the potential impact they have on game species such as deer. Though coyotes are one of the most adaptable animals, they are not designed to prey on big game. The coyote's diet is chiefly composed of small mammals (rats and mice), insects, and a variety of vegetable matter including fruits. On the other hand, coyotes will take deer fawns and deer that are sick or injured. SCDNR completed a major study with researchers at the Savannah River Site investigating the affects coyotes are having on the survival of deer fawns. Cumulative data through the first 3 years of the study indicated approximately 70 percent total fawn mortality with coyotes being responsible for approximately 80 percent of these mortalities. If these findings even moderately represent a statewide situation, this "new mortality factor" is clearly involved in the reduction in deer numbers. This is especially true when combined with extremely liberal deer harvests that have been the norm in South Carolina.

The last 3 years of the study were for the purpose of determining if reducing coyote density through trapping increases fawn survival. It seems logical that if coyotes are preying on fawns, then significantly reducing coyote densities should increase fawn survival. Over the course of the 3-year coyote "control" phase, 474 coyotes were trapped/killed on the study areas. Overall, results showed only modest increases in fawn survival following these efforts with an overall average of about 35 percent increase in survival. Also, trapping seemed to help in some years but have little effect on predation in others. This "year" effect may have something to do with the availability of coyote food sources that may change in abundance annually. Given these results and the difficulty and high cost of coyote control, it seems apparent that making adjustments to how we manage deer, particularly female deer, is more important now that prior to the colonization of the state by coyotes.

Coyotes are not protected animals in South Carolina and hunters are allowed to harvest them throughout the year during daylight hours and at night by registering their property. During 2018 it is estimated that approximately 22,731 coyotes were harvested incidental to deer hunting in South Carolina (Table 13), an increase of 1.3 percent from 2017 (22,441 coyotes). As in past years, there was evidence of coyotes being harvested in all counties. Although the number of coyotes killed by deer hunters increased exponentially from the late 1990's to 2014 pointing to the expansion of this species in South Carolina, the harvest has been lower in recent years perhaps indicating a moderation in coyote populations across the South Carolina. Statewide approximately 1.0 coyotes/mile^2 were harvested and the top 5 counties for coyote harvest per unit area included Anderson (3.4 coyotes/mile^2), Abbeville (2.3 coyotes/mile^2), Spartanburg (2.0 coyotes/mile^2), Edgefield (1.8 coyotes/mile^2), and Aiken (1.7 coyotes/mile^2).

Supplementary Information

The following section is not related to the 2018 Big Game Hunter Survey but is offered as information relevant to the state's deer population.

Based on data provided by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) the number of reported deer-vehicle collisions for 2018 was 2,923 (Table 14). Since reporting of deer vehicle collisions is contingent upon notification of some law enforcement agency and then SCDOT, this figure should be considered a minimum. Also, the reader should bear in mind that reporting criteria have changed over time.

Average body weights and antler characteristic of deer vary among the constituent counties in South Carolina and are dependent on deer density and available nutrition (Tables 15 and 16). Statewide averages for male deer indicate that 1.5 year old bucks average about 107 lbs. and 3.6 antler points while bucks 2.5 years old and older average about 138 lbs. and 6.5 antler points. Yearling (1.5 years old) females average approximately 88 lbs. while does 2.5 years old and older average nearly 101 lbs. This information is based on sampling completed between 1987 and 1994.

The history of the deer population and harvest in South Carolina demonstrates a trend typical of a species that initially expands into available habitat, stabilizes, and begins to decline as habitat changes (Figures 4 and 5). It is important to recognize that habitat is the primary factor controlling deer density in South Carolina, though regulated harvest is important as well. Keep in mind that between 1750 and 1900 the deer population in South Carolina experienced a tremendous decline as it did in most of North America. Although unrestricted subsistence and commercial harvest of deer was important in the decline, major changes in habitat related to clearing of land for agriculture was the controlling factor.

By 1900 deer numbers in the State were very low, perhaps 20,000. However, in the 1920's, significant drought and the cotton boll weevil had devastating consequences for farming. With the decline in farming, reforestation of the state began and was largely complete by the 1970's. Timber harvest activities that followed into and throughout the 1980's created vast areas of early successional habitat that allowed for a dramatic increase in the State's deer population. South Carolina's deer population peaked in the mid to late 1990's at just over 1,000,000 deer.

Over time, deer hunters gained a better understanding of the relationship between deer numbers, habitat, and deer quality leading to more aggressive female harvests in many parts of the state. This increased emphasis on harvesting female deer as a means to control deer densities has played a role in the stabilization and ultimate reduction in the State's deer population. Habitat is also very important. Keep in mind that the same forest management activities that stimulated the growth in South Carolina's deer population in the 1980s have resulted in considerable acreage currently being in even-aged stands that are greater than 15 years old. This habitat type simply does not support deer densities at the same level as habitat in early stages of ecological succession. As a result, a combination of habitat change, high deer harvests, and the establishment of coyotes has caused the deer population to trend down since 2000. Currently the statewide population is estimated at about 730,000 deer.

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Table 1. Estimated statewide deer harvest in South Carolina in 2018.

County	Acres*	Square Miles	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest	Harvest Rates		% Change from 2017
						Ac/Deer	Deer/Mi.^{2}	
Abbeville	223,113	349	2,244	1,723	3,967	56.2	11.4	-6.0
Aiken	500,546	782	3,073	1,941	5,014	99.8	6.4	2.4
Allendale	216,455	338	2,435	2,169	4,604	47.0	13.6	25.1
Anderson	219,068	342	3,405	2,426	5,831	37.6	17.0	-11.7
Bamberg	196,573	307	2,874	3,381	6,255	31.4	20.4	20.0
Barnwell	281,764	440	2,444	2,067	4,511	62.5	10.2	-7.8
Beaufort	147,441	230	1,277	1,092	2,369	62.2	10.3	28.2
Berkeley	567,530	887	3,424	1,805	5,229	108.5	5.9	-10.6
Calhoun	190,584	298	2,100	1,735	3,835	49.7	12.9	-7.0
Charleston	288,732	451	1,723	2,177	3,900	74.0	8.6	-11.4
Cherokee	156,664	245	1,645	822	2,467	63.5	10.1	8.6
Chester	300,589	470	2,428	1,668	4,096	73.4	8.7	-13.2
Chesterfield	372,478	582	2,123	1,330	3,453	107.9	5.9	-3.7
Clarendon	298,087	466	1,640	1,477	3,117	95.6	6.7	-4.1
Colleton	502,666	785	4,008	3,792	7,800	64.4	9.9	4.5
Darlington	286,228	447	1,329	1,114	2,443	117.2	5.5	2.0
Dillon	214,069	334	884	721	1,605	133.4	4.8	38.6
Dorchester	302,717	473	2,807	2,242	5,049	60.0	10.7	13.3
Edgefield	246,543	385	1,956	1,292	3,248	75.9	8.4	17.8
Fairfield	384,607	601	4,026	2,612	6,638	57.9	11.0	11.3
Florence	397,888	622	2,252	2,440	4,692	84.8	7.5	16.0
Georgetown	399,638	624	2,151	1,867	4,018	99.5	6.4	42.3
Greenville	294,257	460	2,242	1,150	3,392	86.8	7.4	5.2
Greenwood	204,400	319	1,517	1,505	3,022	67.6	9.5	2.9
Hampton	324,840	508	3,910	4,048	7,958	40.8	15.7	5.7
Horry	533,336	833	2,308	1,215	3,523	151.4	4.2	-10.4
Jasper	309,889	484	1,417	1,284	2,701	114.7	5.6	-2.0
Kershaw	360,485	563	2,856	1,947	4,803	75.1	8.5	43.2
Lancaster	266,382	416	1,802	1,247	3,049	87.4	7.3	-0.1
Laurens	317,916	497	2,637	2,221	4,858	65.4	9.8	-1.3
Lee	220,106	344	1,386	1,369	2,755	79.9	8.0	-9.8
Lexington	280,742	439	2,098	1,224	3,322	84.5	7.6	13.3
McCormick	212,021	331	1,715	897	2,612	81.2	7.9	-6.5
Marion	216,907	339	673	349	1,022	212.2	3.0	-47.4
Marlboro	281,271	439	944	953	1,897	148.3	4.3	-18.0
Newberry	317,761	497	3,275	2,400	5,675	56.0	11.4	9.4
Oconee	284,348	444	983	459	1,442	197.2	3.2	-37.8
Orangeburg	504,516	788	6,415	5,356	11,771	42.9	14.9	26.3
Pickens	219,926	344	1,976	1,180	3,156	69.7	9.2	62.5
Richland	340,121	531	1,962	1,372	3,334	102.0	6.3	4.3
Saluda	192,173	300	1,858	1,421	3,279	58.6	10.9	-7.8
Spartanburg	265,939	416	3,642	2,880	6,522	40.8	15.7	24.0
Sumter	338,968	530	2,658	1,976	4,634	73.1	8.7	19.8
Union	258,111	403	2,736	2,310	5,046	51.2	12.5	36.7
Williamsburg	513,851	803	2,983	2,913	5,896	87.2	7.3	-16.9
York	276,650	432	2,969	2,209	5,178	53.4	12.0	14.9
Total	**14,028,896**	**21,920**	**109,208**	**85,778**	**194,986**	**82.4**	**9.2**	**5.2**
95% Confidence Interval for harvest			**(+ -) 3,558**	**(+ -) 3,776**	**(+ -) 5,867**			

* Acreage shown represents the acreage of forested land and acreage of row crops considered to be significant deer habitat within each county.

Table 2. County rankings based on deer harvested per unit area in South Carolina in 2018.

County	Acres*	Square Miles	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest	Harvest Rates		% Change from 2017
						Ac/Deer	Deer/Mi.^{2}	
Bamberg	196,573	307	2,874	3,381	6,255	31.4	20.4	20.0
Anderson	219,068	342	3,405	2,426	5,831	37.6	17.0	-11.7
Spartanburg	265,939	416	3,642	2,880	6,522	40.8	15.7	24.0
Hampton	324,840	508	3,910	4,048	7,958	40.8	15.7	5.7
Orangeburg	504,516	788	6,415	5,356	11,771	42.9	14.9	26.3
Allendale	216,455	338	2,435	2,169	4,604	47.0	13.6	25.1
Calhoun	190,584	298	2,100	1,735	3,835	49.7	12.9	-7.0
Union	258,111	403	2,736	2,310	5,046	51.2	12.5	36.7
York	276,650	432	2,969	2,209	5,178	53.4	12.0	14.9
Newberry	317,761	497	3,275	2,400	5,675	56.0	11.4	9.4
Abbeville	223,113	349	2,244	1,723	3,967	56.2	11.4	-6.0
Fairfield	384,607	601	4,026	2,612	6,638	57.9	11.0	11.3
Saluda	192,173	300	1,858	1,421	3,279	58.6	10.9	-7.8
Dorchester	302,717	473	2,807	2,242	5,049	60.0	10.7	13.3
Beaufort	147,441	230	1,277	1,092	2,369	62.2	10.3	28.2
Barnwell	281,764	440	2,444	2,067	4,511	62.5	10.2	-7.8
Cherokee	156,664	245	1,645	822	2,467	63.5	10.1	8.6
Colleton	502,666	785	4,008	3,792	7,800	64.4	9.9	4.5
Laurens	317,916	497	2,637	2,221	4,858	65.4	9.8	-1.3
Greenwood	204,400	319	1,517	1,505	3,022	67.6	9.5	2.9
Pickens	219,926	344	1,976	1,180	3,156	69.7	9.2	62.5
Sumter	338,968	530	2,658	1,976	4,634	73.1	8.7	19.8
Chester	300,589	470	2,428	1,668	4,096	73.4	8.7	-13.2
Charleston	288,732	451	1,723	2,177	3,900	74.0	8.6	-11.4
Kershaw	360,485	563	2,856	1,947	4,803	75.1	8.5	43.2
Edgefield	246,543	385	1,956	1,292	3,248	75.9	8.4	17.8
Lee	220,106	344	1,386	1,369	2,755	79.9	8.0	-9.8
McCormick	212,021	331	1,715	897	2,612	81.2	7.9	-6.5
Lexington	280,742	439	2,098	1,224	3,322	84.5	7.6	13.3
Florence	397,888	622	2,252	2,440	4,692	84.8	7.5	16.0
Greenville	294,257	460	2,242	1,150	3,392	86.8	7.4	5.2
Williamsburg	513,851	803	2,983	2,913	5,896	87.2	7.3	-16.9
Lancaster	266,382	416	1,802	1,247	3,049	87.4	7.3	-0.1
Clarendon	298,087	466	1,640	1,477	3,117	95.6	6.7	-4.1
Georgetown	399,638	624	2,151	1,867	4,018	99.5	6.4	42.3
Aiken	500,546	782	3,073	1,941	5,014	99.8	6.4	2.4
Richland	340,121	531	1,962	1,372	3,334	102.0	6.3	4.3
Chesterfield	372,478	582	2,123	1,330	3,453	107.9	5.9	-3.7
Berkeley	567,530	887	3,424	1,805	5,229	108.5	5.9	-10.6
Jasper	309,889	484	1,417	1,284	2,701	114.7	5.6	-2.0
Darlington	286,228	447	1,329	1,114	2,443	117.2	5.5	2.0
Dillon	214,069	334	884	721	1,605	133.4	4.8	38.6
Marlboro	281,271	439	944	953	1,897	148.3	4.3	-18.0
Horry	533,336	833	2,308	1,215	3,523	151.4	4.2	-10.4
Oconee	284,348	444	983	459	1,442	197.2	3.2	-37.8
Marion	216,907	339	673	349	1,022	212.2	3.0	-47.4
Total	**14,028,896**	**21,920**	**109,208**	**85,778**	**194,986**	**82.4**	**9.2**	**5.2**

* Acreage shown represents the acreage of forested land and acreage of row crops considered to be significant deer habitat within each county.

Table 3. County rankings based on total deer harvested in South Carolina in 2018.

County	Acres*	Square Miles	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest	Harvest Rates		% Change from 2017
						Ac/Deer	Deer/Mi.^{2}	
Orangeburg	504,516	788	6,415	5,356	11,771	42.9	14.9	26.3
Hampton	324,840	508	3,910	4,048	7,958	40.8	15.7	5.7
Colleton	502,666	785	4,008	3,792	7,800	64.4	9.9	4.5
Fairfield	384,607	601	4,026	2,612	6,638	57.9	11.0	11.3
Spartanburg	265,939	416	3,642	2,880	6,522	40.8	15.7	24.0
Bamberg	196,573	307	2,874	3,381	6,255	31.4	20.4	20.0
Williamsburg	513,851	803	2,983	2,913	5,896	87.2	7.3	-16.9
Anderson	219,068	342	3,405	2,426	5,831	37.6	17.0	-11.7
Newberry	317,761	497	3,275	2,400	5,675	56.0	11.4	9.4
Berkeley	567,530	887	3,424	1,805	5,229	108.5	5.9	-10.6
York	276,650	432	2,969	2,209	5,178	53.4	12.0	14.9
Dorchester	302,717	473	2,807	2,242	5,049	60.0	10.7	13.3
Union	258,111	403	2,736	2,310	5,046	51.2	12.5	36.7
Aiken	500,546	782	3,073	1,941	5,014	99.8	6.4	2.4
Laurens	317,916	497	2,637	2,221	4,858	65.4	9.8	-1.3
Kershaw	360,485	563	2,856	1,947	4,803	75.1	8.5	43.2
Florence	397,888	622	2,252	2,440	4,692	84.8	7.5	16.0
Sumter	338,968	530	2,658	1,976	4,634	73.1	8.7	19.8
Allendale	216,455	338	2,435	2,169	4,604	47.0	13.6	25.1
Barnwell	281,764	440	2,444	2,067	4,511	62.5	10.2	-7.8
Chester	300,589	470	2,428	1,668	4,096	73.4	8.7	-13.2
Georgetown	399,638	624	2,151	1,867	4,018	99.5	6.4	42.3
Abbeville	223,113	349	2,244	1,723	3,967	56.2	11.4	-6.0
Charleston	288,732	451	1,723	2,177	3,900	74.0	8.6	-11.4
Calhoun	190,584	298	2,100	1,735	3,835	49.7	12.9	-7.0
Horry	533,336	833	2,308	1,215	3,523	151.4	4.2	-10.4
Chesterfield	372,478	582	2,123	1,330	3,453	107.9	5.9	-3.7
Greenville	294,257	460	2,242	1,150	3,392	86.8	7.4	5.2
Richland	340,121	531	1,962	1,372	3,334	102.0	6.3	4.3
Lexington	280,742	439	2,098	1,224	3,322	84.5	7.6	13.3
Saluda	192,173	300	1,858	1,421	3,279	58.6	10.9	-7.8
Edgefield	246,543	385	1,956	1,292	3,248	75.9	8.4	17.8
Pickens	219,926	344	1,976	1,180	3,156	69.7	9.2	62.5
Clarendon	298,087	466	1,640	1,477	3,117	95.6	6.7	-4.1
Lancaster	266,382	416	1,802	1,247	3,049	87.4	7.3	-0.1
Greenwood	204,400	319	1,517	1,505	3,022	67.6	9.5	2.9
Lee	220,106	344	1,386	1,369	2,755	79.9	8.0	-9.8
Jasper	309,889	484	1,417	1,284	2,701	114.7	5.6	-2.0
McCormick	212,021	331	1,715	897	2,612	81.2	7.9	-6.5
Cherokee	156,664	245	1,645	822	2,467	63.5	10.1	8.6
Darlington	286,228	447	1,329	1,114	2,443	117.2	5.5	2.0
Beaufort	147,441	230	1,277	1,092	2,369	62.2	10.3	28.2
Marlboro	281,271	439	944	953	1,897	148.3	4.3	-18.0
Dillon	214,069	334	884	721	1,605	133.4	4.8	38.6
Oconee	284,348	444	983	459	1,442	197.2	3.2	-37.8
Marion	216,907	339	673	349	1,022	212.2	3.0	-47.4
Total	**14,028,896**	**21,920**	**109,208**	**85,778**	**194,986**	**82.4**	**9.2**	**5.2**

* Acreage shown represents the acreage of forested land and acreage of row crops considered to be significant deer habitat within each county.

Table 4. Estimated deer harvest on Wildlife Management Areas in South Carolina in 2018.

Area	Acreage	Bucks	Does	Total	Deer/Mi.^{2}
Mountain Hunt Unit	193,566	1,163	636	1,799	5.9
Central Piedmont Hunt Unit	159,793	1,597	1,244	2,841	11.4
Western Piedmont Hunt Unit	119,077	979	666	1,645	8.8
Subtotal for Upstate WMA's	**472,436**	**3,739**	**2,546**	**6,285**	**8.5**
Coastal WMA's*					
Bear Island WMA	1,519	9	7	16	6.7
Bonneau Ferry[1]	10,697	44	62	124	7.4
Botany Bay WMA	2,000	12	27	39	12.5
Crackerneck WMA	10,470	32	31	63	3.9
Cross Generating Station WMA	654	3	2	5	4.9
Donnelley WMA	8,048	28	41	69	5.5
Francis Marion WMA	252,578	116	85	201	0.5
Hamilton Ridge	13,281	33	33	66	3.2
Liberty Hill	7,876	15	5	20	1.6
Hickory Top WMA	1,836	10	4	14	4.9
Manchester State Forest WMA	25,505	117	60	177	4.4
Moultrie WMA	9,480	9	10	19	1.3
Oak Lea WMA	2,024	17	13	30	9.5
Palachucola WMA	5,947	36	30	66	7.1
Santee Cooper WMA	2,828	14	6	20	4.5
Wateree River WMA	3,674	5	2	7	1.2
Webb Wildlife Center WMA	5,866	48	44	92	10.0
Subtotal for Coastal WMA's	**364,283**	**548**	**462**	**1,028**	**1.8**
Total	**836,719**	**4,287**	**3,008**	**7,313**	**5.6**

*Check Station data. [1] Total includes deer of unknown sex

Table 5. Hunter opinion (percent) regarding the number of deer in the area hunted most often in South Carolina in 2018 compared to previous years.

	Increasing	About the Same	Decreasing
Residents	19.4	57.5	23.1
Nonresidents	16.9	62.0	20.1
Overall	19.1	58.2	22.7

Table 6. Resident deer hunter and deer harvest statistics in South Carolina in 2018.

County	Number Hunters	Man/Days Hunted	Percent Success	Deer/ Hunter	Days/ Deer	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest
Abbeville	3,147	41,308	74	1.2	11.3	2,033	1,617	3,650
Aiken	3,912	65,022	67	1.2	13.3	3,038	1,836	4,874
Allendale	1,508	22,294	74	1.4	10.5	1,290	831	2,120
Anderson	4,328	65,437	68	1.3	11.3	3,388	2,426	5,814
Bamberg	2,688	36,542	78	1.7	7.9	2,098	2,535	4,634
Barnwell	1,836	28,523	72	1.8	8.5	1,880	1,486	3,366
Beaufort	1,268	17,856	82	1.8	7.7	1,224	1,093	2,317
Berkeley	3,890	61,613	71	1.3	12.2	3,300	1,771	5,071
Calhoun	2,426	37,352	80	1.6	9.9	2,098	1,683	3,781
Charleston	3,125	39,037	67	1.2	10.1	1,705	2,142	3,847
Cherokee	1,639	23,954	68	1.4	10.5	1,486	787	2,273
Chester	2,885	43,734	64	1.0	15.3	1,617	1,246	2,863
Chesterfield	1,727	31,254	69	1.7	10.8	1,770	1,136	2,907
Clarendon	2,382	26,206	69	1.3	8.8	1,552	1,443	2,994
Colleton	4,546	69,283	71	1.5	9.9	3,497	3,475	6,972
Darlington	1,508	31,255	68	1.6	12.9	1,311	1,115	2,426
Dillon	743	10,229	79	2.0	7.0	743	721	1,464
Dorchester	3,410	57,417	73	1.5	11.6	2,754	2,207	4,961
Edgefield	2,448	37,113	67	1.1	13.9	1,727	940	2,667
Fairfield	4,262	59,186	73	1.3	10.4	3,497	2,207	5,704
Florence	2,994	50,903	68	1.5	11.6	2,164	2,229	4,393
Georgetown	2,907	45,417	60	1.3	11.6	2,098	1,814	3,912
Greenville	3,104	35,583	68	1.1	10.7	2,208	1,115	3,322
Greenwood	2,448	33,943	67	1.1	12.6	1,377	1,311	2,688
Hampton	2,448	35,015	75	1.7	8.3	1,989	2,251	4,240
Horry	2,535	44,282	64	1.4	12.8	2,273	1,180	3,453
Jasper	1,224	14,796	68	1.3	9.4	765	809	1,574
Kershaw	3,366	55,342	76	1.3	13.1	2,557	1,683	4,240
Lancaster	2,011	37,177	65	1.3	14.1	1,574	1,071	2,645
Laurens	4,393	51,843	66	1.0	11.5	2,426	2,098	4,524
Lee	1,552	24,807	78	1.7	9.6	1,333	1,246	2,579
Lexington	3,082	42,380	72	1.1	12.8	2,098	1,224	3,322
McCormick	1,989	21,922	76	1.1	9.9	1,486	721	2,208
Marion	1,180	17,878	65	0.9	17.8	656	350	1,005
Marlboro	874	17,638	70	2.1	9.8	874	918	1,792
Newberry	4,196	61,305	72	1.3	11.4	3,082	2,295	5,377
Oconee	1,989	21,419	59	0.7	14.8	984	459	1,443
Orangeburg	6,360	94,137	74	1.7	8.5	6,010	5,093	11,103
Pickens	2,601	31,559	71	1.2	10.2	1,923	1,180	3,104
Richland	3,278	44,498	72	1.0	13.5	1,945	1,355	3,300
Saluda	2,645	36,390	71	1.2	11.7	1,770	1,333	3,103
Spartanburg	4,765	68,583	69	1.3	10.7	3,519	2,863	6,382
Sumter	3,453	53,854	75	1.3	12.1	2,535	1,923	4,459
Union	3,475	49,417	67	1.2	11.7	2,207	2,011	4,218
Williamsburg	3,584	46,555	70	1.5	8.7	2,754	2,579	5,333
York	3,344	52,237	70	1.4	11.1	2,776	1,945	4,721
Total	**129,477**	**1,893,499**	**67**	**1.4**	**10.9**	**97,392**	**75,754**	**173,145**
% Change from 2017	**-1.4**	**-2.0**	**-2.8**	**7.6**	**-7.6**	**7.0**	**3.8**	**5.6**

Table 7. Nonresident deer hunter and deer harvest statistics in South Carolina in 2018.

County	Number Hunters	Man/Days Hunted	Percent Success	Deer/ Hunter	Days/ Deer	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest
Abbeville	212	2,767	75	1.5	8.7	212	106	317
Aiken	300	1,269	41	0.5	9.0	35	106	141
Allendale	1,498	17,308	70	1.7	7.0	1,146	1,339	2,485
Anderson	53	282	33	0.3	16.0	18	0	18
Bamberg	881	12,532	82	1.8	7.7	776	846	1,622
Barnwell	529	8,037	83	2.2	7.0	564	582	1,146
Beaufort	106	670	33	0.5	12.7	53	0	53
Berkeley	88	1,234	60	1.8	7.8	123	35	159
Calhoun	123	1,199	71	1.4	21.9	2	53	55
Charleston	53	300	67	1.0	5.7	18	35	53
Cherokee	194	3,895	64	1.0	20.1	159	35	194
Chester	846	13,800	67	1.5	11.2	811	423	1,234
Chesterfield	476	5,939	59	1.1	10.9	352	194	546
Clarendon	71	969	75	1.8	7.9	88	35	123
Colleton	529	7,191	80	1.6	8.7	511	317	828
Darlington	18	53	100	1.0	3.0	18	0	18
Dillon	71	546	100	2.0	3.9	141	0	141
Dorchester	141	864	37	0.6	9.8	53	35	88
Edgefield	476	3,120	59	1.2	5.4	229	352	582
Fairfield	793	10,452	64	1.2	11.2	529	405	934
Florence	194	2,097	81	1.5	7.0	88	212	300
Georgetown	141	582	63	0.8	5.5	53	53	106
Greenville	71	582	75	1.0	8.3	35	35	71
Greenwood	159	1,251	67	2.1	3.7	141	194	335
Hampton	1,992	27,901	74	1.9	7.5	1,921	1,798	3,719
Horry	123	511	57	0.6	7.3	35	35	70
Jasper	546	9,007	71	2.1	8.0	652	476	1,128
Kershaw	458	6,997	81	1.2	12.4	300	264	564
Lancaster	494	4,565	64	0.8	11.3	229	176	405
Laurens	335	3,331	79	1.0	9.9	212	123	335
Lee	159	934	88	1.1	5.3	53	123	176
Lexington	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
McCormick	405	3,754	69	1.0	9.3	229	176	405
Marion	35	123	50	0.5	0.0	18	0	18
Marlboro	194	2,820	36	0.5	26.7	70	35	106
Newberry	335	5,852	58	0.9	19.5	194	106	300
Oconee	53	159	33	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
Orangeburg	335	4,706	84	2.0	7.0	405	264	670
Pickens	88	828	80	0.6	15.7	53	0	53
Richland	159	1,040	44	0.2	29.5	18	18	35
Saluda	159	1,110	77	1.1	6.3	88	88	176
Spartanburg	159	899	100	0.9	6.4	123	18	141
Sumter	141	1,216	62	1.3	6.9	123	53	176
Union	1,022	13,236	57	0.8	16.0	529	300	828
Williamsburg	282	1,921	81	2.0	3.4	229	335	564
York	264	2,379	73	1.7	5.2	194	264	458
Total	**15,757**	**190,229**	**65**	**1.3**	**8.7**	**11,828**	**10,046**	**21,875**
% Change from 2017	**7.3**	**-0.1**	**-8.0**	**-1.3**	**-3.3**	**5.3**	**16.7**	**-0.1**

Table 8. Hunting effort (man/days) by county for successful and unsuccessful resident and nonresident deer hunters in South Carolina in 2018.

County	Residents (man/days)			Total Effort	Nonresidents (man/days)			Total Effort	Total
	Successful	Unsuccessful	Average	Residents	Successful	Unsuccessful	Average	Nonresidents	Days
Abbeville	14.8	8.3	13.1	41,308	10.9	19.7	13.1	2,767	44,076
Aiken	20.4	8.7	16.6	65,022	3.0	5.1	4.2	1,269	66,291
Allendale	18.5	4.1	14.8	22,294	14.3	4.9	11.6	17,308	39,602
Anderson	16.8	11.6	15.1	65,437	3.0	6.5	5.3	282	65,719
Bamberg	15.2	7.5	13.6	36,542	14.5	12.9	14.2	12,532	49,074
Barnwell	18.4	7.9	15.5	28,523	16.7	7.6	15.2	8,037	36,560
Beaufort	15.4	7.9	14.1	17,856	12.0	3.5	6.3	670	18,526
Berkeley	18.3	9.7	15.8	61,613	19.3	6.0	14.0	1,234	62,847
Calhoun	16.8	9.8	15.4	37,352	12.6	2.5	9.7	1,199	38,550
Charleston	14.9	7.4	12.5	39,037	7.0	3.0	5.7	300	39,337
Cherokee	17.6	8.3	14.6	23,954	9.3	39.0	20.1	3,895	27,849
Chester	17.5	11.1	15.2	43,734	17.8	13.4	16.3	13,800	57,534
Chesterfield	22.3	8.5	18.1	31,254	15.7	7.8	12.5	5,939	37,194
Clarendon	13.0	6.3	11.0	26,206	17.7	2.0	13.8	969	27,175
Colleton	18.3	7.4	15.2	69,283	15.0	8.2	13.6	7,191	76,474
Darlington	24.1	13.5	20.7	31,255	3.0	0.0	3.0	53	31,308
Dillon	15.1	8.4	13.8	10,229	7.8	0.0	7.8	546	10,775
Dorchester	20.0	8.0	16.8	57,417	11.7	2.8	6.1	864	58,281
Edgefield	17.2	11.0	15.2	37,113	8.8	3.3	6.6	3,120	40,232
Fairfield	15.7	8.8	13.9	59,186	14.0	11.6	13.2	10,452	69,638
Florence	19.7	11.4	17.0	50,903	11.1	9.5	10.8	2,097	53,001
Georgetown	20.0	9.0	15.6	45,417	4.2	4.0	4.1	582	45,999
Greenville	13.4	7.2	11.5	35,583	8.3	8.0	8.3	582	36,164
Greenwood	15.1	11.4	13.9	33,943	8.5	6.7	7.9	1,251	35,194
Hampton	16.4	7.7	14.3	35,015	16.2	7.7	14.0	27,901	62,916
Horry	21.4	10.6	17.5	44,282	5.3	2.7	4.1	511	44,793
Jasper	13.7	8.6	12.1	14,796	20.1	7.7	16.5	9,007	23,803
Kershaw	18.6	9.4	16.4	55,342	17.9	4.2	15.3	6,997	62,339
Lancaster	21.6	12.7	18.5	37,177	9.8	8.2	9.3	4,565	41,742
Laurens	12.6	10.2	11.8	51,843	10.5	8.0	9.9	3,331	55,174
Lee	16.6	13.6	16.0	24,807	4.6	16.0	5.9	934	25,741
Lexington	16.1	7.7	13.8	42,380	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	42,380
McCormick	12.5	6.2	11.0	21,922	10.3	7.0	9.3	3,754	25,676
Marion	19.0	8.1	15.1	17,878	2.0	5.0	3.5	123	18,002
Marlboro	21.6	16.9	20.2	17,638	24.3	9.0	14.5	2,820	20,458
Newberry	16.5	9.5	14.6	61,305	18.5	16.0	17.5	5,852	67,157
Oconee	12.8	7.8	10.8	21,419	5.0	2.0	3.0	159	21,577
Orangeburg	16.5	10.0	14.8	94,137	15.7	5.3	14.1	4,706	98,843
Pickens	13.3	9.2	12.1	31,559	8.3	14.0	9.4	828	32,388
Richland	15.1	9.7	13.6	44,498	8.3	5.2	6.6	1,040	45,538
Saluda	14.4	12.2	13.8	36,390	6.0	10.5	7.0	1,110	37,500
Spartanburg	16.1	10.6	14.4	68,583	5.7	4.7	5.7	899	69,482
Sumter	16.8	11.8	15.6	53,854	11.0	0.0	8.6	1,216	55,070
Union	15.7	11.2	14.2	49,417	12.7	13.3	12.9	13,236	62,653
Williamsburg	15.6	6.8	13.0	46,555	7.5	3.7	6.8	1,921	48,476
York	17.8	10.5	15.6	52,237	11.2	3.0	9.0	2,379	54,616
Total	**16.7**	**9.5**	**14.6**	**1,893,499**	**12.0**	**8.6**	**12.0**	**190,229**	**2,083,728**
% Change from 2017	**-1.7**	**0.0**	**-0.1**	**-2.0**	**-18.9**	**-3.3**	**-3.8**	**-2.6**	**-0.1**

Table 9. Estimated deer harvest by weapon type in South Carolina in 2018.

	Rifle	Bow & Arrow	Shotgun	Muzzle-loader	Crossbow	Handgun	Total
Number of Deer Harvested	158,134	13,259	16,184	3,510	3,705	195	194,986
Percent Total Deer Harvest	81.1	6.8	8.3	1.8	1.9	0.1	100.0
Percent Hunter Success With Weapon	63.6	28.4	32.8	20.9	18.9	20.0	NA*

* Total is not applicable because individual hunters take deer with multiple weapons.

Table 10. Number of hunters using each type of weapon in South Carolina in 2018.

	Rifle	Bow & Arrow	Shotgun	Muzzle-loader	Crossbow	Handgun
Residents	116,918	29,003	25,636	12,689	13,466	3,496
Nonresidents	14,969	1,844	914	2,127	1,198	441
Total	131,887	30,846	26,550	14,816	14,663	3,937

Total across weapons not given because hunters use multiple weapons. Total hunters = 145,234.

Table 11. Weapons utilization (percent) among deer hunters in South Carolina in 2018.

	Rifle	Bow & Arrow	Shotgun	Muzzle-loader	Crossbow	Handgun
Residents	90.3*	22.4*	19.8*	9.8*	10.4	2.7
Nonresidents	95.0	11.7	5.8	13.5	7.6	2.8
Total	91.0	20.7	17.6	10.4	10.0	2.7

* Significant difference in weapons use category based on residency.

Table 12. Weapons preference (percent) among deer hunters in South Carolina in 2018.

	Rifle	Bow & Arrow	Shotgun	Muzzle-loader	Crossbow	Handgun	Total
Residents	77.8*	12.6*	6.3*	0.8*	2.1	0.4	100.0
Nonresidents	88.1	6.5	1.5	2.5	1.2	0.2	100.0
Total	79.4	11.6	5.5	1.2	1.9	0.4	100.0

* Significant difference in weapons preference category based on residency.

Table 13. Estimated wild hog and coyote harvest by deer hunters in South Carolina in 2018. Rank is by per unit area harvested.

County	Hog Harv.	Harv./ Mile^2	% Change from 2017	2018 Rank	2017 Rank	Coyote Harv.	Harv./ Mile^2	% Change from 2017	2018 Rank	2017 Rank
Abbeville	1,479	4.24	-31.7	5	1	802	2.30	38.9	2	7
Aiken	777	0.99	4.2	30	32	1,353	1.73	125.1	5	29
Allendale	2,381	7.04	45.6	1	2	451	1.33	10.3	11	16
Anderson	1,454	4.25	77.8	4	13	1,178	3.44	13.9	1	1
Bamberg	1,103	3.59	69.8	6	17	301	0.98	38.9	24	36
Barnwell	677	1.54	155.8	23	38	551	1.25	14.6	16	19
Beaufort	125	0.54	-25.6	38	37	25	0.11	-73.9	46	42
Berkeley	3,033	3.42	125.1	9	23	827	0.93	164.5	27	45
Calhoun	1,303	4.38	32.2	3	6	351	1.18	-23.2	19	10
Charleston	777	1.72	-53.2	21	4	125	0.28	-25.6	43	44
Cherokee	50	0.20	-47.9	45	40	326	1.33	-3.2	11	12
Chester	627	1.33	53.2	25	34	677	1.44	-21.9	9	5
Chesterfield	727	1.25	25.9	26	31	451	0.78	-6.2	32	26
Clarendon	1,228	2.64	45.9	11	19	476	1.02	41.4	22	34
Colleton	1,078	1.37	-44.0	24	11	551	0.70	43.3	36	40
Darlington	501	1.12	-40.5	28	18	125	0.28	-25.6	43	43
Dillon	301	0.90	78.6	33	39	200	0.60	38.9	37	41
Dorchester	977	2.07	139.0	17	35	226	0.48	-44.8	38	25
Edgefield	351	0.91	264.7	32	42	677	1.76	-6.2	4	4
Fairfield	952	1.58	-12.0	22	20	777	1.29	-31.3	15	3
Florence	1,078	1.73	94.8	19	33	526	0.85	21.6	31	36
Georgetown	1,078	1.73	-41.8	19	8	451	0.72	-10.7	35	28
Greenville	150	0.33	-70.2	43	29	175	0.38	-61.6	39	22
Greenwood	727	2.28	0.7	14	15	426	1.33	-19.5	11	7
Hampton	2,281	4.49	43.7	2	7	601	1.19	-21.8	18	11
Horry	1,002	1.20	-50.4	27	12	251	0.30	-58.3	42	34
Jasper	1,028	2.12	-17.8	16	10	175	0.36	-43.9	41	38
Kershaw	551	0.98	-15.1	31	27	827	1.47	587.7	8	46
Lancaster	276	0.66	-47.9	34	25	426	1.02	-19.5	22	15
Laurens	1,103	2.22	47.9	15	24	576	1.16	-45.5	20	2
Lee	226	0.66	-57.4	34	21	326	0.95	-20.3	26	17
Lexington	150	0.34	240.0	42	46	426	0.97	18.1	25	27
McCormick	927	2.80	4.2	10	9	251	0.76	-25.6	33	21
Marion	1,178	3.48	-2.1	8	5	50	0.15	-73.9	45	39
Marlboro	1,053	2.40	6.7	13	16	326	0.74	-20.3	34	24
Newberry	526	1.06	-4.9	29	28	827	1.67	27.4	6	14
Oconee	200	0.45	-63.8	41	26	401	0.90	19.1	29	32
Orangeburg	376	0.48	42.1	40	41	702	0.89	-35.2	30	13
Pickens	175	0.51	-51.4	39	30	476	1.39	80.0	10	29
Richland	1,403	2.64	-30.5	11	3	551	1.04	34.8	21	29
Saluda	75	0.25	4.2	44	43	276	0.92	-4.5	28	23
Spartanburg	276	0.66	-18.1	34	36	852	2.05	26.5	3	9
Sumter	1,880	3.55	129.9	7	21	200	0.38	-67.9	39	18
Union	226	0.56	212.6	37	44	526	1.30	21.6	14	20
Williamsburg	1,429	1.78	-21.9	18	14	1,002	1.25	66.7	16	33
York	75	0.17	56.3	46	45	652	1.51	-9.7	7	6
Total	**39,347**	**1.80**	**3.9**	**NA**	**NA**	**22,731**	**1.04**	**1.30**	**NA**	**NA**
	(+ -) 2,672					**(+ -) 1,468**				

95% Confidence Interval for harvest

Ranking is based on harvest per square mile

Table 14. Number of deer-vehicle collisions reported by the South Carolina Department of Transportation 2014-2018.

County	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Abbeville	10	3	9	6	8
Aiken	77	62	84	70	69
Allendale	13	9	10	10	7
Anderson	87	86	88	63	104
Bamberg	21	11	12	16	24
Barnwell	17	15	14	16	22
Beaufort	138	112	108	108	108
Berkeley	74	79	57	78	91
Calhoun	28	34	47	43	27
Charleston	185	147	199	235	263
Cherokee	22	25	15	20	23
Chester	16	16	33	24	37
Chesterfield	11	14	33	27	36
Clarendon	26	23	21	20	13
Colleton	85	66	56	75	64
Darlington	49	59	87	104	87
Dillon	25	64	54	73	63
Dorchester	71	77	67	60	64
Edgefield	5	3	8	4	7
Fairfield	15	26	28	23	27
Florence	74	118	113	142	187
Georgetown	28	34	29	61	30
Greenville	139	121	111	154	163
Greenwood	25	17	18	11	17
Hampton	20	15	10	18	14
Horry	131	184	189	254	321
Jasper	55	56	54	65	59
Kershaw	46	37	33	24	39
Lancaster	23	30	31	40	46
Laurens	20	16	16	20	17
Lee	19	21	19	19	32
Lexington	57	34	38	32	33
McCormick	7	3	1	2	2
Marion	31	39	45	57	69
Marlboro	21	21	51	80	80
Newberry	10	7	8	15	15
Oconee	14	15	7	15	17
Orangeburg	152	143	144	149	140
Pickens	23	32	23	28	28
Richland	85	54	77	80	58
Saluda	7	7	6	6	8
Spartanburg	158	136	165	147	163
Sumter	39	43	24	31	18
Union	15	10	18	12	13
Williamsburg	43	58	85	102	74
York	98	96	115	124	136
Total	**2,315**	**2,278**	**2,460**	**2,763**	**2,923**

Table 15. Average live body weights of deer from South Carolina counties, based on historic data.

	Males				Females			
	1.5 Years Old		2.5+ Years Old		1.5 Years Old		2.5+ Years Old	
COUNTY	N	Avg. Wt.	N	Avg. Wt.	N	Avg. Wt.	N	Avg. Wt.
Abbeville	1,390	111.7	484	145.9	466	90.4	747	102.7
Aiken	2,667	121.6	1,485	162.6	808	94.9	1,522	109.6
Allendale	6,175	108.9	3,333	146.0	2,503	87.7	5,606	100.8
Anderson	30	121.9	17	148.1	4	92.5	8	113.0
Bamberg	2,414	111.9	1,113	142.4	884	91.4	1,721	103.9
Barnwell	1,478	119.1	695	156.6	601	94.3	1,071	106.9
Beaufort	952	101.6	1,236	135.2	690	86.7	1,818	99.8
Berkeley	3,162	100.6	4,198	127.3	1,086	83.4	3,991	97.2
Calhoun	1,588	110.2	633	144.1	312	91.4	943	104.6
Charleston	1,256	97.9	2,088	123.3	422	83.3	1,581	95.8
Cherokee	1	80.0	1	139.0	9	77.8	26	89.6
Chester	1,445	105.9	963	140.1	470	87.4	1,091	99.4
Chesterfield	79	119.4	140	152.5	27	93.5	1,128	99.8
Clarendon	13	101.3	29	152.5	42	89.6	87	103.0
Colleton	5,822	105.6	6,908	135.5	3,279	87.9	8,920	100.4
Darlington	334	113.6	273	153.3	216	92.8	573	105.2
Dillon	74	112.8	46	138.5	13	92.8	50	103.9
Dorchester	1,868	107.2	2,205	137.0	653	88.0	2,055	103.0
Edgefield	556	100.9	334	133.4	159	84.6	306	96.9
Fairfield	2,048	102.1	1,444	136.5	761	86.3	2,021	99.2
Florence	696	110.8	459	139.2	198	89.6	621	102.8
Georgetown	1,881	98.7	2,281	126.1	668	85.6	1,961	97.6
Greenville	7	122.1	9	149.9	7	79.3	16	98.4
Greenwood	1,158	111.4	537	145.1	313	90.2	629	103.0
Hampton	6,103	106.7	4,710	140.0	3,034	87.2	7,236	100.5
Horry	302	96.1	311	126.1	129	79.2	301	91.3
Jasper	3,385	101.8	4,691	135.4	2,142	84.6	5,948	96.9
Kershaw	603	108.9	588	144.6	251	89.6	758	102.9
Lancaster	472	113.1	246	153.3	213	91.4	441	105.2
Laurens	240	104.7	181	132.9	107	87.3	238	96.9
Lee	472	119.6	187	151.3	162	96.6	330	108.5
Lexington	20	120.8	9	164.8	6	101.3	15	115.8
McCormick	2,354	101.5	1,056	134.5	877	85.3	1,745	97.3
Marion	690	108.5	501	138.7	256	88.6	630	98.7
Marlboro	106	115.0	62	149.8	30	95.0	70	107.8
Newberry	143	97.1	100	135.6	85	86.0	171	92.7
Oconee	74	113.1	58	152.6	33	85.3	39	99.6
Orangeburg	2,293	112.5	1,375	145.0	686	90.8	1,684	103.4
Pickens	47	109.1	41	145.4	18	79.9	48	100.5
Richland	1,320	106.1	1,274	145.2	651	92.7	1,879	106.3
Saluda	100	115.8	40	148.0	25	93.6	34	105.2
Spartanburg	34	109.3	22	142.2	13	95.0	31	98.8
Sumter	666	111.3	353	142.1	188	94.4	509	105.3
Union	958	101.7	608	135.8	439	87.9	761	97.8
Williamsburg	469	112.5	559	143.3	150	91.4	478	106.0
York	13	96.9	30	143.9	20	78.7	41	93.9
Total	**57,958**	**107.3**	**47,913**	**137.9**	**24,106**	**88.0**	**61,879**	**100.6**

Table 16. Antler characteristics of male deer from South Carolina counties, based on historic data

COUNTY	1.5 Years Old Males			2.5+ Years Old Males			% 1.5 Bucks in Antlered Harvest
	Number Points	Percent Spikes	Outside Spread	Number Points	Percent Spikes	Outside Spread	
Abbeville	4.2	32		7.2	2		74
Aiken	4.4	28	8.7	7.4	1	14.7	64
Allendale	4.0	36	7.7	7.2	3	13.7	65
Anderson	4.7	28		6.8	0		63
Bamberg	4.0	34	7.6	6.7	4	12.5	68
Barnwell	4.6	21	8.7	7.1	2	13.9	68
Beaufort	3.1	58	7.4	6.4	9	13.0	44
Berkeley	3.0	62	6.6	5.8	12	11.5	43
Calhoun	4.0	33	7.4	7.0	3	13.2	72
Charleston	2.8	69	6.2	5.4	15	10.6	38
Cherokee				7.0	0		50
Chester	3.4	47	8.7	6.7	4	13.9	61
Chesterfield	4.5	21	8.6	7.2			61
Clarendon	2.8	58	6.2	7.7	3	12.9	31
Colleton	3.3	50	6.9	6.4	7	11.7	46
Darlington	3.1	57	7.4	6.7	5	13.7	55
Dillon	3.2	54	8.1	5.7	9	11.6	62
Dorchester	3.3	53	6.6	6.0	9	11.1	46
Edgefield	3.3	50		6.6	5		63
Fairfield	3.1	55	7.5	6.4	6	13.8	59
Florence	3.4	47	7.4	6.1	9	12.1	60
Georgetown	2.8	65	6.6	5.6	13	11.0	45
Greenville	4.7	14		7.6	0		44
Greenwood	3.9	34		6.7	3		68
Hampton	3.9	39	7.7	6.9	4	13.0	56
Horry	3.0	58	6.8	6.2	8	12.1	49
Jasper	3.3	52	7.0	6.6	6	12.8	42
Kershaw	3.6	47	7.7	6.9	7	12.3	51
Lancaster	4.3	27	6.7	7.4	0	15.0	66
Laurens	3.2	53	6.7	6.0	10	13.7	57
Lee	4.3	25	8.4	6.7	2	12.9	72
Lexington	4.1	30	9.1	7.3	0	15.7	69
McCormick	3.5	47		6.8	4		69
Marion	3.3	52	7.3	6.2	10	12.4	58
Marlboro	3.1	53	7.0	6.4	10	12.6	63
Newberry	2.8	54		6.3	8	13.3	59
Oconee	3.4	52		7.3	3		56
Orangeburg	3.8	38	7.6	6.8	5	12.6	63
Pickens	4.0	43		7.2	2		53
Richland	3.3	52	7.3	6.8	5	13.5	51
Saluda	4.0	32	9.0	6.9	0	10.8	71
Spartanburg	4.0	33	6.1	7.1	0		61
Sumter	3.7	41	7.7	6.6	5	12.5	65
Union	3.3	51	7.2	6.6	5	13.6	61
Williamsburg	3.6	43	7.6	6.8	5	12.6	46
York	3.1	60	5.3	7.4	0	13.3	30
Total	**3.6**	**44**	**7.4**	**6.5**	**7**	**12.4**	**55**

Figure 1. South Carolina Department of Natural Resources 2018 Deer Hunter Survey

January, 2019

Dear Sportsman:

White-tailed deer are one of the most important game species in South Carolina. Therefore, it is important that this species be monitored for population status and harvesting activities. Wildlife resource managers require current and accurate information about deer harvests to aid in successfully managing this important natural resource and to optimize future hunting potential. To obtain this needed data, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is conducting a survey of licensed Big Game Permit holders.

You are one of a group of randomly selected hunters asked to participate in this survey. To draw accurate conclusions it is very important that you complete the survey and return it. Please take time to read each question. Even if you did not hunt deer last season please indicate this by answering the appropriate questions and moving on to the next set of questions.

In addition to the questions concerning your deer hunting activities, there are questions concerning the weapons that you used to harvest deer and questions concerning the number of wild hogs and coyotes that you may have harvested. Not only is this data important to DNR game biologists, many hunters are interested in this type of information so it is important that you answer these questions too.

Please note that complete confidentiality will be given to you. There is no number on your survey form, therefore, there is no way to link your responses to you. Keep in mind that the primary purpose of the survey is to determine the deer harvest in South Carolina and not to determine whether game laws are observed. By accurately answering the survey questions you will enable DNR biologists to better manage the white-tailed deer resource for you and other citizens of the state.

Please keep in mind that in order to reduce costs, this is the only 2018 Deer Hunter Survey form you will receive. There will be no reminders or second surveys sent to individuals that do not respond to this initial survey. Therefore, it is very important that you take a few minutes to complete this survey and mail it. Return postage is prepaid.

Results of this survey will be posted on the DNR web site once completed (hopefully by June). The results from the 2017 survey can be found at www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/deer/2017/DeerHarvestReport.html

Thank you for your assistance.

Charles Ruth
Wildlife Biologist
Big Game Program Coordinator

PLEASE MAIL YOUR SURVEY AFTER SEPARATING THIS HALF FROM THE SIDE ON WHICH YOUR ANSWERS HAVE BEEN ENTERED. NO POSTAGE IS NECESSARY.

If you have questions regarding this survey, please call 803-734-3886 or write 2018 Deer Hunter Survey, SCDNR, P.O. Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202.

18-11981

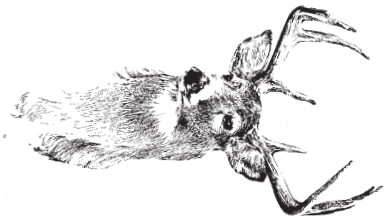

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Figure 1 Cont.

2018 South Carolina Deer Hunter Survey

1. Did you hunt deer in SC this past season (2018)? **1. Yes** **2. No**
   If you answered **No** to this question please **go to question # 9.**

2. Did you harvest any deer in SC this past season? **1. Yes** **2. No**

3. Even if you did not harvest any deer, please record the SC counties you deer hunted and the number of days hunted in each county this past season (2018). Please begin with the county you hunted the most. If you harvested deer please record the number of bucks and does taken in each county. A day of hunting is defined as any portion of the day spent afield. Please do not give ranges (i.e. 5-10), rather provide absolute numbers (i.e. 5). Provide information only for yourself - not friends, relatives, or other hunt club members.

Counties You Deer Hunted	# Days Hunted	Number Deer Harvested	
1		# Bucks	#Does
2		# Bucks	#Does
3		# Bucks	#Does
4		# Bucks	#Does

If you did not harvest any deer in SC in 2018 please go to question # 6.

4. Please record the number of deer taken by month of season in SC last season (2018).

August	September	October	November	December	January

5. Please record the number of deer taken with each weapon in SC last season (2018).

Rifle	Bow	Shotgun	Muzzleloader	Crossbow	Handgun

6. Please circle **all** the weapons that you hunted deer with in 2018.
   1. Rifle 2. Bow 3. Shotgun 4. Muzzleloader 5. Crossbow 6. Handgun

7. Please circle the **one** weapon that you **prefer to hunt deer with**.
   1. Rifle 2. Bow 3. Shotgun 4. Muzzleloader 5. Crossbow 6. Handgun

8. Compared to past years, how would you describe the number of deer in the area that you hunt most often? **Circle one**
   1. Increasing 2. About the same 3. Decreasing

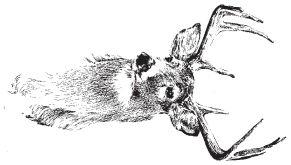
9. If you **harvested** any wild hogs or coyotes while hunting in SC in 2018, please complete the box below.
   If you did not harvest any hogs or coyotes please **go to question # 10.**

County	# Hogs	County	# Coyotes
1		1	
2		2	
3		3	

10. Are you a resident of SC? **1. Yes** **2. No**

11. If yes, which county _____

Separate and return this portion of the survey. Postage is prepaid. Please do not staple this form.



Help Manage SC's Deer Herd

COMPLETE YOUR HUNTER SURVEY

DEER HUNTER SURVEY
SCDNR
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Figure 2. Percent of deer harvested by month of season in South Carolina in 2018. Note that December includes January 1 which is the last day of deer season.

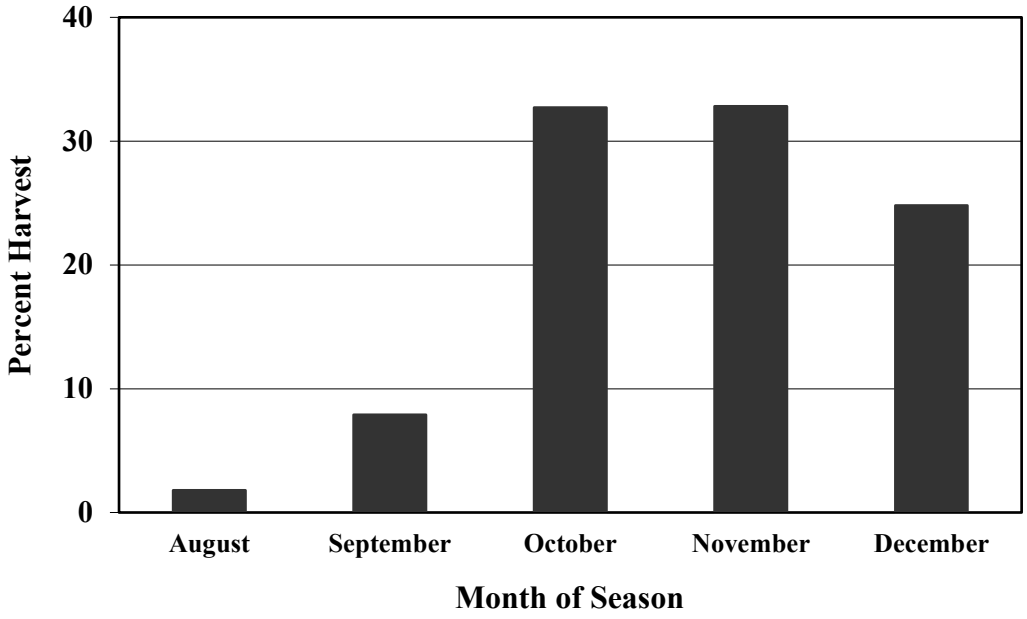

Figure 3. Percent of female deer conceiving by week in South Carolina, based on historic data.

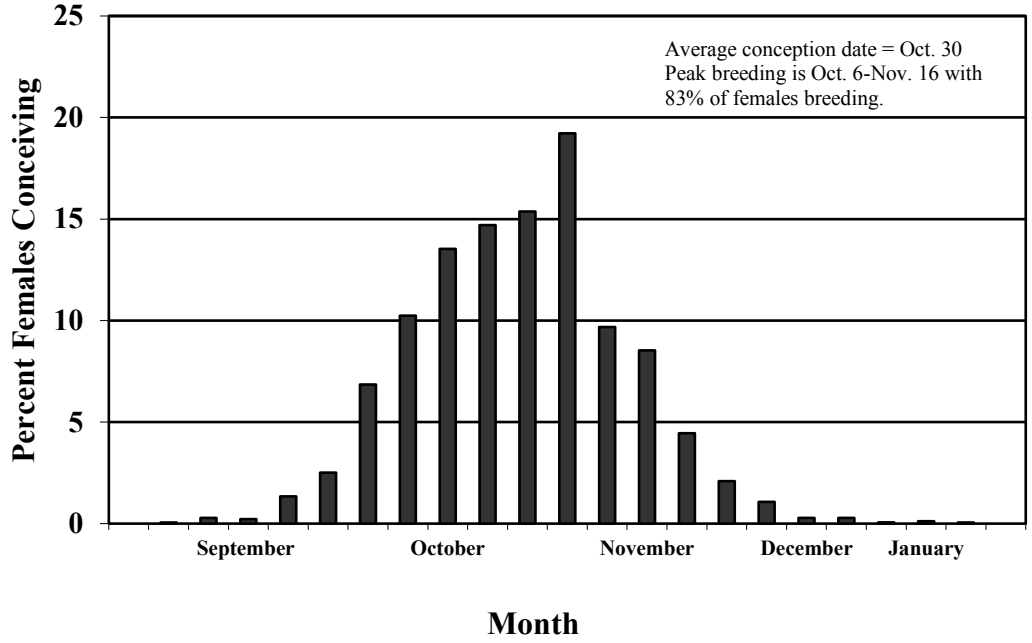

Figure 4. Estimated deer harvest in South Carolina 1972-2018.

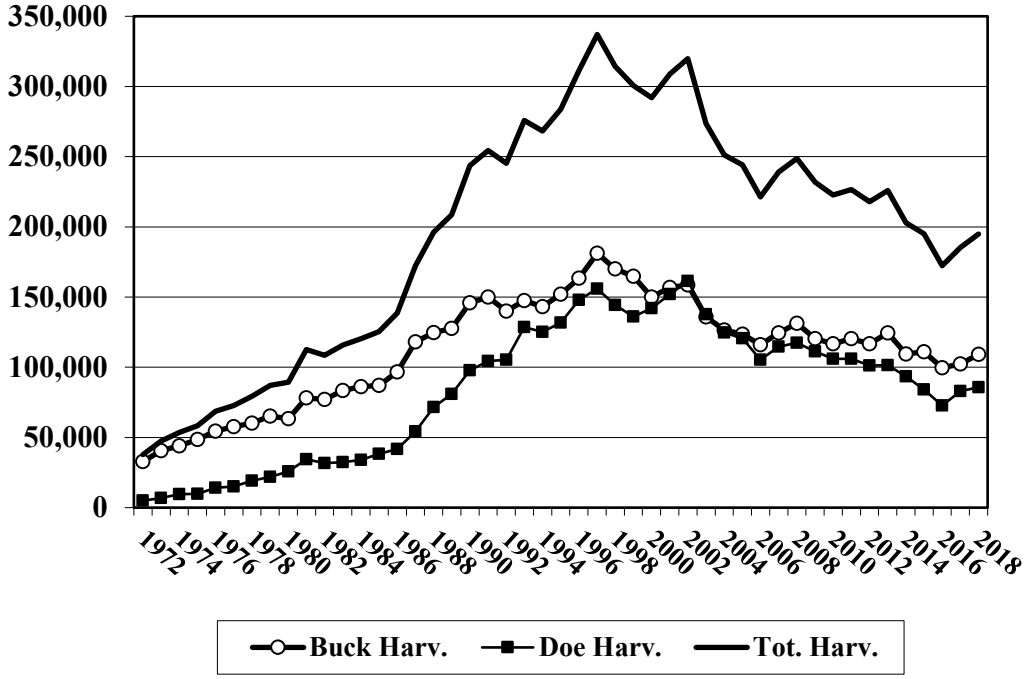

Figure 5. Estimated South Carolina deer population 1972-2018 based on population reconstruction modeling. Note that antlerless deer includes male fawns (button bucks).