

2022 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 2022 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 2022, (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 Deer Quota Program (DQP) 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 DQP cooperators in the Coastal Plain. Also, since the acreage enrolled in the DQP 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 2022 Deer Hunter Survey represents a random mail survey that involved a single mail-out. The questionnaire for the 2022 Deer Hunter Survey was developed by Wildlife Section personnel (Figure 1). The mailing list database was constructed by randomly selecting 35,000 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 2022. Since deer seasons statewide end on January 1 there was no need to sample individuals that were licensed thereafter.

Data entry was completed by Success Staffing, LLC, Seabrook, SC. Statistical analysis was conducted using Statistix 10 (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 deer tag programs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As with any mail survey, a portion of the attempted sample (35,000) was returned as undeliverable mail (377). Therefore, the actual attempted sample was 34,623 representing 22.7 percent of the entire population (159,549) of license holders. A total of 4,686 completed surveys were returned yielding a 14 percent response rate and 3 percent sample on the entire licensee population.

Deer Harvest

During the 2022 deer season it is estimated that a total of 98,539 bucks and 80,875 does were harvested for a statewide total of 179,414 deer (Table 1). This represents a modest 3 percent increase in harvest from 2021 (174,569) and is 44 percent below the record harvest established in 2002 (319,902). After many years of rapidly increasing from the 1970's to the mid-1990's, the deer population in South Carolina exhibited relative stability between 1995 and 2002. Between 2003 and 2015, however, the population trended down with the overall reduction in harvest likely attributable to a number of factors, including habitat change, two decades of aggressive antlerless deer harvest, and the complete colonization of the state by coyotes and their impact on fawn survival. Although the harvest in 2022 increased slightly, since 2015 the states' deer harvest has been stable varying between about 175,000 and 195,000 annually.

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 mile²). When considering the estimated deer habitat that is available in South Carolina, the deer harvest rate in 2022 was 8.5 deer per square mile over the entire state (Table 2). Although the deer harvest in the state is lower now than many years ago, 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 (17.8 deer/mile²), Anderson (14.8 deer/mile²), Hampton (14.8 deer/mile²), Spartanburg (14.7 deer/mile²), and Orangeburg (12.9 deer/mile²). These same 5 counties were in the top 5 in 2021.

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 2022 were Orangeburg, Hampton, Williamsburg, Spartanburg, and Laurens.

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/mi²) 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 2022 season it is estimated that 4,211 bucks, 3,390 does, and 20 deer of unknown sex were harvested for a total deer harvest on Wildlife Management Areas of 7,621 (Table 4). This figure represents a 16 percent increase from 2021.

Hunter Opinion Regarding the Deer Population

The 2022 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 (60%) 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 (24%) believed that the deer population was decreasing than increasing (16%). On a scale of 1 to 3 with 1 being increasing, 2 being neutral, and 3 being decreasing, the overall mean rating of 2.1 suggests that hunters viewed the deer population about the same to slightly decreasing compared to past years.

Number of Deer Hunters

Even though all individuals receiving a survey were licensed to hunt deer, only 86 percent actually hunted deer. For residents, 84 percent of sampled licensees hunted deer and for nonresidents 95 percent hunted deer. Extrapolating to the respective licensee populations yields 121,156 residents (Table 6) and 15,200 nonresidents (Table 7) for a total of 136,356 deer hunters statewide during 2022. This figure represents a 5 percent increase from the 129,591 hunters in 2021. Counties with the highest estimates for individual hunters include Orangeburg, Laurens, Newberry, Spartanburg, and Union for resident hunters (Table 6) and Hampton, Allendale, Chester, Bamberg, and Union for nonresidents (Table 7). There were more nonresident hunters in Hampton County than resident hunters.

Hunting Success

For determination of hunting success only those individuals who actually hunted deer were included in the analysis and similarly, success was defined as harvesting at least one deer. Overall hunting success in 2022 was 71 percent, which should be considered very good. Success rates for residents (70%, Table 6) were lower than nonresidents (76%, Table 7) likely since many nonresidents hunt commercially where considerable preparation is done for them. 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 1,783,188 days deer hunting. Nonresidents also averaged 15 days for a total of 225,530 days (Table 8). Total effort expended deer hunting in South Carolina during 2022 was estimated at 2,008,718 days (Table 8), a 7 percent increase from 2021. 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 2022 were Orangeburg, Laurens, Aiken, Fairfield, and Newberry (Table 8). Resident hunters expended the most hunting effort in Orangeburg, Aiken, Laurens, Berkeley, and Newberry counties. Nonresidents hunted the most in Hampton, Chester, Allendale, Bamber, and Chesterfield counties and these 5 counties totaled 44 percent of all the nonresident deer hunting effort that took place in South Carolina in 2022. There was more hunting effort in Hampton County by nonresidents than by residents.

Resident hunters who were successful at harvesting at least one deer averaged more days (17 days) afield than unsuccessful residents (10 days) (Table 8). Similarly, successful nonresidents (16 days) averaged more days afield when compared with unsuccessful nonresidents (10 days).

The amount of effort required to harvest a deer varied between residents and nonresidents and by the county hunted. On 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 Beaufort, Bamberg, Barnwell, Georgetown, Orangeburg counties for resident hunters (Table 6). On the other hand, nonresidents spent less time to harvest a deer in Abbeville, Florence, and Horry 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 (83%) of deer were harvested with centerfire rifles (Table 9). Shotguns (7.2%) and bows (5.1%) 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 about 92 percent of hunters, nearly 80 percent of hunters use multiple weapons during 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 (31%) and shotguns (17%) than nonresidents (21% archery and 5% 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.

Unlike weapons utilization, weapons preference is the single weapon that a hunter prefers. Obviously, a majority (80%) of deer hunters prefer rifles (Table 12). Bows (11%) 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 (2.2%) than by residents (0.9%) (Table 12). The explanation of this for shotguns is similar to that for weapons utilization in that residents do most of the dog hunting in the state and tend to use shotguns. With respect to muzzleloaders, nonresidents may use muzzleloaders to take advantage of a special season that is available in South Carolina earlier than in their home state.

Deer Harvest by Month of Season

The 2022 Deer Hunter Survey asked hunters to provide information on the month of kill for deer taken during the 2022 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 2022 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). Hogs are not protected animals in South Carolina and hunters can harvest them throughout the year during daylight hours and at night by registering their property.

During 2022 an estimated 26,945 wild hogs were incidentally harvested by deer hunters in South Carolina (Table 13), a modest 3.7 percent decrease from 2021 (27,964 hogs). Evidence of the presence of hogs in 46 of 46 counties was made by hunter harvest activities. Statewide, approximately 1.2 hogs/mile² were harvested, however, this figure is deceiving because hogs only inhabit a relatively small portion of the states' land area. The top 5 counties for wild hog harvest per unit area were Anderson (5.8 hogs/mile²), Calhoun (4.4 hogs/mile²), Abbeville (4.0 hogs/mile²), Hampton (2.8 hogs/mile²), and Oconee (2.4 hogs/mile²).

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 has completed two major studies with researchers investigating the affects coyotes are having on the survival of deer fawns. One study was conducted at the Savannah River Site (2005-2012) collaborating with the US Forest Service-Southern Research Station and the other on private land in McCormick County with researchers at Clemson University (2018-2022). Data from both studies revealed 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.

As part of the Savannah River Site project 3 years 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 than 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

2022 it is estimated that approximately 21,750 coyotes were harvested incidental to deer hunting in South Carolina (Table 13), an increase of 33 percent from 2021 (16,298 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 decreased over 35 percent in recent years likely indicating a moderation in coyote populations across the state which is typical of a species following colonization. Statewide approximately 1.0 coyotes/mile² were harvested and the top 5 counties for coyote harvest per unit area included Spartanburg (2.8 coyotes/mile²), Lee (2.8 coyotes/mile²), York (2.4 coyotes/mile²), Saluda (2.2 coyotes/mile²), and Calhoun (2.2 coyotes/mile²).

Supplementary Information

The following section is not related to the 2022 Deer Hunter Survey but is offered as information relevant to the state's deer population.

Based on preliminary data provided by the South Carolina Department of Public Safety (SCDPS) the number of reported deer-vehicle collisions for 2022 was 6,114 (Table 14). The reader should bear in mind that many types of deer-vehicle collisions are self-reported by the driver. Additionally, 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 habitat conditions (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 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 2003. Currently the statewide population is estimated at about 675,000 deer.

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Table 1. Estimated statewide deer harvest in South Carolina in 2022.

County	Acres*	Square Miles	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest	Harvest Rates		% Change from 2021
						Ac/Deer	Deer/Mi. ²	
Abbeville	223,113	349	1,870	1,331	3,201	69.7	9.2	-4.4
Aiken	500,546	782	3,228	2,117	5,345	93.6	6.8	24.5
Allendale	216,455	338	1,664	1,625	3,289	65.8	9.7	3.2
Anderson	219,068	342	2,773	2,298	5,071	43.2	14.8	0.4
Bamberg	196,573	307	2,424	3,038	5,462	36.0	17.8	21.4
Barnwell	281,764	440	1,522	1,720	3,242	86.9	7.4	-18.1
Beaufort	147,441	230	1,037	1,224	2,261	65.2	9.8	18.8
Berkeley	567,530	887	2,322	2,386	4,708	120.5	5.3	-15.5
Calhoun	190,584	298	1,897	1,350	3,247	58.7	10.9	38.1
Charleston	288,732	451	1,993	1,931	3,924	73.6	8.7	-10.1
Cherokee	156,664	245	1,521	928	2,449	64.0	10.0	28.0
Chester	300,589	470	2,652	2,312	4,964	60.6	10.6	16.4
Chesterfield	372,478	582	2,792	1,763	4,555	81.8	7.8	20.9
Clarendon	298,087	466	1,368	1,369	2,737	108.9	5.9	-14.9
Colleton	502,666	785	2,481	2,864	5,345	94.1	6.8	-3.0
Darlington	286,228	447	1,757	1,060	2,817	101.6	6.3	-10.0
Dillon	214,069	334	821	450	1,271	168.4	3.8	-19.8
Dorchester	302,717	473	2,080	1,350	3,430	88.3	7.3	-4.4
Edgefield	246,543	385	2,201	1,560	3,761	65.6	9.8	27.7
Fairfield	384,607	601	3,332	1,955	5,287	72.7	8.8	-9.8
Florence	397,888	622	2,444	2,084	4,528	87.9	7.3	18.7
Georgetown	399,638	624	1,746	1,090	2,836	140.9	4.5	-20.7
Greenville	294,257	460	2,662	1,395	4,057	72.5	8.8	4.5
Greenwood	204,400	319	1,835	1,429	3,264	62.6	10.2	68.2
Hampton	324,840	508	3,870	3,620	7,490	43.4	14.8	-5.6
Horry	533,336	833	1,066	680	1,746	305.5	2.1	-53.7
Jasper	309,889	484	787	824	1,611	192.4	3.3	-30.8
Kershaw	360,485	563	1,959	1,507	3,466	104.0	6.2	-27.6
Lancaster	266,382	416	2,000	1,171	3,171	84.0	7.6	-24.8
Laurens	317,916	497	3,681	2,446	6,127	51.9	12.3	31.3
Lee	220,106	344	1,838	1,835	3,673	59.9	10.7	53.2
Lexington	280,742	439	2,158	1,328	3,486	80.5	7.9	-18.7
McCormick	212,021	331	1,638	1,122	2,760	76.8	8.3	14.8
Marion	216,907	339	600	420	1,020	212.7	3.0	-30.1
Marlboro	281,271	439	1,381	1,239	2,620	107.4	6.0	50.7
Newberry	317,761	497	3,070	2,434	5,504	57.7	11.1	2.0
Oconee	284,348	444	1,216	1,170	2,386	119.2	5.4	63.8
Orangeburg	504,516	788	5,089	5,081	10,170	49.6	12.9	5.2
Pickens	219,926	344	1,816	1,252	3,068	71.7	8.9	10.2
Richland	340,121	531	1,518	1,438	2,956	115.1	5.6	-12.4
Saluda	192,173	300	1,449	1,200	2,649	72.5	8.8	-19.2
Spartanburg	265,939	416	3,913	2,214	6,127	43.4	14.7	15.4
Sumter	338,968	530	1,334	1,422	2,756	123.0	5.2	-23.0
Union	258,111	403	2,296	2,357	4,653	55.5	11.5	42.3
Williamsburg	513,851	803	2,882	3,353	6,235	82.4	7.8	21.1
York	276,650	432	2,557	2,133	4,690	59.0	10.8	24.4
Total	14,028,896	21,920	98,539	80,875	179,414	90.2	8.5	2.8

95% Confidence Interval for harvest (+ -3,777) (+ -3,831) (+ -6,040)

* 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 2022.

County	Acres*	Square Miles	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest	Harvest Rates		% Change from 2021
						Ac/Deer	Deer/Mi. ²	
Bamberg	196,573	307	2,424	3,038	5,462	36.0	17.8	21.4
Anderson	219,068	342	2,773	2,298	5,071	43.2	14.8	0.4
Hampton	324,840	508	3,870	3,620	7,490	43.4	14.8	-5.6
Spartanburg	265,939	416	3,913	2,214	6,127	43.4	14.7	15.4
Orangeburg	504,516	788	5,089	5,081	10,170	49.6	12.9	5.2
Laurens	317,916	497	3,681	2,446	6,127	51.9	12.3	31.3
Union	258,111	403	2,296	2,357	4,653	55.5	11.5	42.3
Newberry	317,761	497	3,070	2,434	5,504	57.7	11.1	2.0
Calhoun	190,584	298	1,897	1,350	3,247	58.7	10.9	38.1
York	276,650	432	2,557	2,133	4,690	59.0	10.8	24.4
Lee	220,106	344	1,838	1,835	3,673	59.9	10.7	53.2
Chester	300,589	470	2,652	2,312	4,964	60.6	10.6	16.4
Greenwood	204,400	319	1,835	1,429	3,264	62.6	10.2	68.2
Cherokee	156,664	245	1,521	928	2,449	64.0	10.0	28.0
Beaufort	147,441	230	1,037	1,224	2,261	65.2	9.8	18.8
Edgefield	246,543	385	2,201	1,560	3,761	65.6	9.8	27.7
Allendale	216,455	338	1,664	1,625	3,289	65.8	9.7	3.2
Abbeville	223,113	349	1,870	1,331	3,201	69.7	9.2	-4.4
Pickens	219,926	344	1,816	1,252	3,068	71.7	8.9	10.2
Greenville	294,257	460	2,662	1,395	4,057	72.5	8.8	4.5
Saluda	192,173	300	1,449	1,200	2,649	72.5	8.8	-19.2
Fairfield	384,607	601	3,332	1,955	5,287	72.7	8.8	-9.8
Charleston	288,732	451	1,993	1,931	3,924	73.6	8.7	-10.1
McCormick	212,021	331	1,638	1,122	2,760	76.8	8.3	14.8
Lexington	280,742	439	2,158	1,328	3,486	80.5	7.9	-18.7
Chesterfield	372,478	582	2,792	1,763	4,555	81.8	7.8	20.9
Williamsburg	513,851	803	2,882	3,353	6,235	82.4	7.8	21.1
Lancaster	266,382	416	2,000	1,171	3,171	84.0	7.6	-24.8
Barnwell	281,764	440	1,522	1,720	3,242	86.9	7.4	-18.1
Florence	397,888	622	2,444	2,084	4,528	87.9	7.3	18.7
Dorchester	302,717	473	2,080	1,350	3,430	88.3	7.3	-4.4
Aiken	500,546	782	3,228	2,117	5,345	93.6	6.8	24.5
Colleton	502,666	785	2,481	2,864	5,345	94.1	6.8	-3.0
Darlington	286,228	447	1,757	1,060	2,817	101.6	6.3	-10.0
Kershaw	360,485	563	1,959	1,507	3,466	104.0	6.2	-27.6
Marlboro	281,271	439	1,381	1,239	2,620	107.4	6.0	50.7
Clarendon	298,087	466	1,368	1,369	2,737	108.9	5.9	-14.9
Richland	340,121	531	1,518	1,438	2,956	115.1	5.6	-12.4
Oconee	284,348	444	1,216	1,170	2,386	119.2	5.4	63.8
Berkeley	567,530	887	2,322	2,386	4,708	120.5	5.3	-15.5
Sumter	338,968	530	1,334	1,422	2,756	123.0	5.2	-23.0
Georgetown	399,638	624	1,746	1,090	2,836	140.9	4.5	-20.7
Dillon	214,069	334	821	450	1,271	168.4	3.8	-19.8
Jasper	309,889	484	787	824	1,611	192.4	3.3	-30.8
Marion	216,907	339	600	420	1,020	212.7	3.0	-30.1
Horry	533,336	833	1,066	680	1,746	305.5	2.1	-53.7
Total	14,028,896	21,920	98,539	80,875	179,414	90.2	8.5	2.8

* 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 tital harvested in South Carolina in 2022.

County	Acres*	Square Miles	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest	Harvest Rates		% Change from 2021
						Ac/Deer	Deer/Mi. ²	
Orangeburg	504,516	788	5,089	5,081	10,170	49.6	12.9	5.2
Hampton	324,840	508	3,870	3,620	7,490	43.4	14.8	-5.6
Williamsburg	513,851	803	2,882	3,353	6,235	82.4	7.8	21.1
Spartanburg	265,939	416	3,913	2,214	6,127	43.4	14.7	15.4
Laurens	317,916	497	3,681	2,446	6,127	51.9	12.3	31.3
Newberry	317,761	497	3,070	2,434	5,504	57.7	11.1	2.0
Bamberg	196,573	307	2,424	3,038	5,462	36.0	17.8	21.4
Aiken	500,546	782	3,228	2,117	5,345	93.6	6.8	24.5
Colleton	502,666	785	2,481	2,864	5,345	94.1	6.8	-3.0
Fairfield	384,607	601	3,332	1,955	5,287	72.7	8.8	-9.8
Anderson	219,068	342	2,773	2,298	5,071	43.2	14.8	0.4
Chester	300,589	470	2,652	2,312	4,964	60.6	10.6	16.4
Berkeley	567,530	887	2,322	2,386	4,708	120.5	5.3	-15.5
York	276,650	432	2,557	2,133	4,690	59.0	10.8	24.4
Union	258,111	403	2,296	2,357	4,653	55.5	11.5	42.3
Chesterfield	372,478	582	2,792	1,763	4,555	81.8	7.8	20.9
Florence	397,888	622	2,444	2,084	4,528	87.9	7.3	18.7
Greenville	294,257	460	2,662	1,395	4,057	72.5	8.8	4.5
Charleston	288,732	451	1,993	1,931	3,924	73.6	8.7	-10.1
Edgefield	246,543	385	2,201	1,560	3,761	65.6	9.8	27.7
Lee	220,106	344	1,838	1,835	3,673	59.9	10.7	53.2
Lexington	280,742	439	2,158	1,328	3,486	80.5	7.9	-18.7
Kershaw	360,485	563	1,959	1,507	3,466	104.0	6.2	-27.6
Dorchester	302,717	473	2,080	1,350	3,430	88.3	7.3	-4.4
Allendale	216,455	338	1,664	1,625	3,289	65.8	9.7	3.2
Greenwood	204,400	319	1,835	1,429	3,264	62.6	10.2	68.2
Calhoun	190,584	298	1,897	1,350	3,247	58.7	10.9	38.1
Barnwell	281,764	440	1,522	1,720	3,242	86.9	7.4	-18.1
Abbeville	223,113	349	1,870	1,331	3,201	69.7	9.2	-4.4
Lancaster	266,382	416	2,000	1,171	3,171	84.0	7.6	-24.8
Pickens	219,926	344	1,816	1,252	3,068	71.7	8.9	10.2
Richland	340,121	531	1,518	1,438	2,956	115.1	5.6	-12.4
Georgetown	399,638	624	1,746	1,090	2,836	140.9	4.5	-20.7
Darlington	286,228	447	1,757	1,060	2,817	101.6	6.3	-10.0
McCormick	212,021	331	1,638	1,122	2,760	76.8	8.3	14.8
Sumter	338,968	530	1,334	1,422	2,756	123.0	5.2	-23.0
Clarendon	298,087	466	1,368	1,369	2,737	108.9	5.9	-14.9
Saluda	192,173	300	1,449	1,200	2,649	72.5	8.8	-19.2
Marlboro	281,271	439	1,381	1,239	2,620	107.4	6.0	50.7
Cherokee	156,664	245	1,521	928	2,449	64.0	10.0	28.0
Oconee	284,348	444	1,216	1,170	2,386	119.2	5.4	63.8
Beaufort	147,441	230	1,037	1,224	2,261	65.2	9.8	18.8
Horry	533,336	833	1,066	680	1,746	305.5	2.1	-53.7
Jasper	309,889	484	787	824	1,611	192.4	3.3	-30.8
Dillon	214,069	334	821	450	1,271	168.4	3.8	-19.8
Marion	216,907	339	600	420	1,020	212.7	3.0	-30.1
Total	14,028,896	21,920	98,539	80,875	179,414	90.2	8.5	2.8

* 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 2022.

Area	Acres	Bucks	Does	Total	Deer/Mi.²
Mountain Hunt Unit	193,566	1,223	925	2,148	7.1
Central Piedmont Hunt Unit	159,793	1,516	1,281	2,797	11.2
Western Piedmont Hunt Unit	119,077	955	677	1,632	8.8
Subtotal for Upstate WMA's	472,436	3,694	2,883	6,577	8.9
Coastal WMA's*					
Bear Island WMA	1,519	10	7	17	7.2
Bonneau Ferry WMA ¹	10,697	29	47	95	5.7
Botany Bay WMA	2,000	17	15	32	10.2
Crackerneck WMA	10,470	42	22	64	3.9
Donnelley WMA	8,048	40	57	97	7.7
Francis Marion WMA ¹	252,578	123	93	217	0.5
Hamilton Ridge	13,281	39	58	97	4.7
Liberty Hill WMA	7,876	13	12	25	2.0
McBee WMA	1,213	9	9	18	9.5
Manchester State Forest WMA	25,505	117	78	195	4.9
Moultrie WMA	9,480	6	3	9	0.6
Oak Lea WMA	2,024	4	26	30	9.5
Palachucola WMA	5,947	35	38	73	7.9
Wateree River WMA	3,674	3	7	10	1.7
Webb Wildlife Center WMA	5,866	30	35	65	7.1
Subtotal for Coastal WMA's	360,178	517	507	1,044	1.9
Total	832,614	4,211	3,390	7,621	5.9

*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 2022 compared to previous years.

	Increasing	About the Same	Decreasing
Residents	16.3	59.5	24.2
Non-Residents	14.1	60.0	25.4
Overall	15.9	59.7	24.4

Table 6. Resident deer hunter and deer harvest statistics in South Carolina in 2022.

County	Number Hunters	Man/Days Hunted	Percent Success	Deer/Hunter	Days/Deer	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest
Abbeville	2,999	37,064	77	1.0	11.9	1,794	1,312	3,107
Aiken	4,124	70,566	67	1.2	13.9	3,133	1,928	5,061
Allendale	1,339	16,042	71	0.9	12.7	696	562	1,259
Anderson	3,990	62,050	70	1.2	12.7	2,678	2,223	4,901
Bamberg	1,687	27,825	82	2.3	7.0	1,741	2,223	3,964
Barnwell	1,312	16,630	84	1.6	7.8	991	1,152	2,143
Beaufort	1,018	14,756	86	2.2	6.6	1,018	1,205	2,223
Berkeley	3,749	63,149	68	1.2	13.6	2,303	2,330	4,633
Calhoun	2,169	35,430	84	1.4	11.3	1,821	1,312	3,133
Charleston	3,294	50,909	67	1.2	13.3	1,955	1,875	3,830
Cherokee	1,714	28,039	73	1.2	13.4	1,312	777	2,089
Chester	2,999	41,590	70	1.1	12.6	1,741	1,553	3,294
Chesterfield	1,982	40,761	85	1.7	11.8	2,223	1,232	3,455
Clarendon	2,116	25,200	77	1.2	10.1	1,178	1,312	2,491
Colleton	3,830	56,024	68	1.2	12.5	2,196	2,276	4,472
Darlington	1,928	36,796	74	1.4	13.2	1,741	1,045	2,785
Dillon	803	13,899	70	1.3	13.3	669	375	1,044
Dorchester	1,901	35,564	77	1.7	11.0	1,928	1,312	3,240
Edgefield	2,892	40,733	68	1.1	12.5	1,821	1,446	3,267
Fairfield	3,964	58,490	71	1.1	13.5	2,839	1,500	4,338
Florence	2,651	47,082	70	1.6	10.9	2,330	2,009	4,339
Georgetown	1,955	25,816	75	1.4	9.3	1,714	1,071	2,785
Greenville	4,071	57,258	66	1.0	14.4	2,624	1,339	3,963
Greenwood	2,544	34,064	74	1.2	11.4	1,741	1,259	2,999
Hampton	2,303	22,709	82	1.2	8.2	1,366	1,419	2,785
Horry	1,607	16,980	58	1.0	10.4	991	643	1,634
Jasper	482	8,436	77	0.9	18.5	295	161	455
Kershaw	2,383	28,442	66	1.1	10.7	1,580	1,071	2,651
Lancaster	2,116	31,788	73	1.1	13.5	1,526	830	2,357
Laurens	4,981	67,057	74	1.1	12.3	3,321	2,142	5,463
Lee	1,875	34,707	78	1.8	10.1	1,687	1,741	3,428
Lexington	2,839	39,717	76	1.2	11.5	2,142	1,312	3,455
McCormick	2,009	26,272	63	1.1	12.4	1,259	857	2,116
Marion	964	17,997	67	1.0	18.7	562	402	964
Marlboro	964	22,710	77	1.8	12.8	964	803	1,767
Newberry	4,338	61,650	71	1.2	12.1	2,919	2,169	5,088
Oconee	2,250	30,129	74	1.0	12.9	1,178	1,152	2,330
Orangeburg	5,570	91,644	78	1.7	9.6	4,767	4,740	9,508
Pickens	3,080	36,289	71	1.0	12.2	1,767	1,205	2,973
Richland	2,437	33,502	72	1.2	11.5	1,500	1,419	2,919
Saluda	2,089	26,727	73	1.2	10.6	1,393	1,125	2,518
Spartanburg	4,312	60,338	75	1.4	10.2	3,856	2,062	5,919
Sumter	2,383	30,182	70	1.1	11.4	1,285	1,366	2,651
Union	4,151	50,588	72	0.9	13.1	1,955	1,902	3,857
Williamsburg	3,615	60,898	77	1.6	10.7	2,598	3,107	5,704
York	3,374	48,689	73	1.3	11.3	2,330	1,982	4,312
Total	121,156	1,783,188	70	1.3	11.6	85,430	68,238	153,668
% Change from 2021	4.6	6.7	0.0	0.0	5.0	2.6	-0.1	1.0

Table 7. Nonresident deer hunter and deer harvest statistics in South Carolina in 2022.

County	Number Hunters	Man/Days Hunted	Percent Success	Deer/Hunter	Days/Deer	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest
Abbeville	171	2,012	55	0.6	21.2	76	19	95
Aiken	209	1,879	90	1.4	6.6	95	190	285
Allendale	1,082	15,523	79	1.9	7.6	968	1,063	2,030
Anderson	114	1,936	67	1.5	11.3	95	76	171
Bamberg	892	12,601	79	1.7	8.4	683	816	1,499
Barnwell	474	6,926	88	2.3	6.3	531	569	1,101
Beaufort	19	152	100	2.0	4.0	19	19	38
Berkeley	76	645	50	1.0	8.5	19	57	76
Calhoun	57	987	100	2.0	8.7	76	38	114
Charleston	114	2,410	67	0.8	25.4	38	57	95
Cherokee	152	1,613	87	2.4	4.5	209	152	361
Chester	1,044	21,955	78	1.6	13.1	911	759	1,670
Chesterfield	664	10,760	69	1.7	9.8	569	531	1,101
Clarendon	152	1,993	100	1.6	8.1	190	57	247
Colleton	569	6,414	73	1.5	7.3	285	588	873
Darlington	19	281	69	1.7	8.8	16	16	32
Dillon	133	1,974	71	1.7	8.7	152	76	228
Dorchester	171	1,177	88	1.1	6.2	152	38	190
Edgefield	417	4,763	68	1.2	9.7	380	114	493
Fairfield	588	9,659	81	1.6	10.2	493	455	949
Florence	266	3,966	43	0.7	20.9	114	76	190
Georgetown	38	247	50	1.4	4.8	32	19	51
Greenville	76	380	75	1.3	4.0	38	57	95
Greenwood	190	2,865	60	1.4	10.8	95	171	266
Hampton	2,315	37,972	78	2.0	8.1	2,505	2,201	4,706
Horry	133	1,727	71	0.9	15.2	76	38	114
Jasper	493	7,685	77	2.3	6.6	493	664	1,158
Kershaw	474	7,553	80	1.7	9.3	380	436	816
Lancaster	512	7,363	85	1.6	9.0	474	342	816
Laurens	304	5,693	93	2.2	8.6	361	304	664
Lee	152	1,423	63	1.6	5.8	152	95	247
Lexington	19	38	100	1.7	1.2	16	16	32
McCormick	247	3,700	85	2.6	5.7	380	266	645
Marion	38	247	100	1.5	4.3	38	19	57
Marlboro	304	8,729	93	2.8	10.2	417	436	854
Newberry	399	5,389	76	1.0	12.9	152	266	418
Oconee	38	399	50	1.5	0.0	38	19	57
Orangeburg	493	3,548	73	1.3	5.3	323	342	664
Pickens	57	266	33	1.7	2.8	49	47	96
Richland	38	266	50	1.0	7.0	19	19	38
Saluda	38	930	100	3.5	7.0	57	76	133
Spartanburg	114	1,860	67	1.8	8.9	57	152	209
Sumter	57	569	63	1.9	5.4	49	57	106
Union	626	9,659	73	1.3	12.1	342	455	797
Williamsburg	323	3,454	82	1.6	6.5	285	247	531
York	342	3,947	67	1.1	10.4	228	152	380
Total	15,200	225,530	76	1.7	8.7	13,123	12,660	25,783
% Change from 2021	10.7	9.9	8.6	6.2	-2.3	7.7	17.0	12.1

Table 8. Hunting effort (man/days) by county for successful and unsuccessful resident and nonresident deer hunters in South Carolina in 2022.

County	Residents (man/days)			Total Effort Residents	Nonresidents (man/days)			Total Effort Non-residents	Total Days
	Successful	Unsuccessful	Average		Successful	Unsuccessful	Average		
Abbeville	13.3	9.2	12.4	37,064	12.8	10.5	11.8	2,012	39,076
Aiken	21.9	7.8	17.1	70,566	9.8	1.0	9.0	1,879	72,444
Allendale	12.8	10.1	12.0	16,042	15.9	8.7	14.4	15,523	31,564
Anderson	18.1	9.7	15.6	62,050	9.3	32.5	17.0	1,936	63,985
Bamberg	18.7	6.1	16.5	27,825	15.7	8.2	14.1	12,601	40,426
Barnwell	13.9	6.4	12.7	16,630	14.4	16.3	14.6	6,926	23,557
Beaufort	15.5	8.2	14.5	14,756	8.0	9.5	8.0	152	14,908
Berkeley	16.8	16.8	16.8	63,149	4.5	12.5	8.5	645	63,795
Calhoun	18.1	7.1	16.3	35,430	17.3	9.5	17.3	987	36,417
Charleston	17.1	12.1	15.5	50,909	29.8	4.0	21.2	2,410	53,319
Cherokee	16.0	17.4	16.4	28,039	11.6	4.0	10.6	1,613	29,652
Chester	15.0	11.2	13.9	41,590	23.0	14.1	21.0	21,955	63,545
Chesterfield	21.6	14.6	20.6	40,761	19.3	9.4	16.2	10,760	51,521
Clarendon	14.1	4.6	11.9	25,200	13.1	9.5	13.1	1,993	27,192
Colleton	16.9	9.9	14.6	56,024	12.0	9.3	11.3	6,414	62,438
Darlington	23.5	6.8	19.1	36,796	16.4	9.5	14.8	281	37,077
Dillon	20.2	10.4	17.3	13,899	14.6	15.5	14.9	1,974	15,873
Dorchester	20.9	11.1	18.7	35,564	7.5	2.0	6.9	1,177	36,741
Edgefield	15.4	11.3	14.1	40,733	11.8	10.6	11.4	4,763	45,496
Fairfield	16.7	10.1	14.8	58,490	18.6	7.3	16.4	9,659	68,149
Florence	20.8	10.4	17.8	47,082	19.2	11.8	14.9	3,966	51,048
Georgetown	15.4	6.5	13.2	25,816	3.0	10.0	6.5	247	26,062
Greenville	16.8	9.0	14.1	57,258	4.0	8.0	5.0	380	57,638
Greenwood	14.1	11.3	13.4	34,064	19.5	8.5	15.1	2,865	36,929
Hampton	10.9	4.8	9.9	22,709	18.3	9.8	16.4	37,972	60,681
Horry	10.8	10.2	10.6	16,980	16.4	4.5	13.0	1,727	18,706
Jasper	22.0	1.8	17.5	8,436	16.6	12.3	15.6	7,685	16,121
Kershaw	14.2	7.6	11.9	28,442	15.8	16.6	15.9	7,553	35,995
Lancaster	18.1	6.5	15.0	31,788	16.3	3.5	14.4	7,363	39,151
Laurens	15.3	8.2	13.5	67,057	19.7	4.0	18.8	5,693	72,750
Lee	19.9	13.3	18.5	34,707	10.4	7.7	9.4	1,423	36,131
Lexington	15.3	9.7	14.0	39,717	2.0	9.5	2.0	38	39,755
McCormick	15.7	8.7	13.1	26,272	16.7	5.5	15.0	3,700	29,972
Marion	20.8	14.3	18.7	17,997	6.5	9.5	6.5	247	18,244
Marlboro	28.7	5.5	23.6	22,710	28.7	30.0	28.8	8,729	31,440
Newberry	16.4	8.8	14.2	61,650	14.8	9.6	13.5	5,389	67,039
Oconee	15.3	8.0	13.4	30,129	20.0	1.0	10.5	399	30,527
Orangeburg	17.5	12.6	16.5	91,644	8.9	2.6	7.2	3,548	95,192
Pickens	12.3	10.4	11.8	36,289	1.0	6.5	4.7	266	36,555
Richland	16.4	6.6	13.7	33,502	10.0	4.0	7.0	266	33,768
Saluda	13.8	10.0	12.8	26,727	24.5	9.5	24.5	930	27,657
Spartanburg	16.1	7.7	14.0	60,338	19.8	9.5	16.3	1,860	62,198
Sumter	13.9	9.6	12.7	30,182	13.5	3.0	10.0	569	30,751
Union	13.7	8.1	12.2	50,588	17.7	9.3	15.4	9,659	60,247
Williamsburg	18.1	12.7	16.8	60,898	12.1	4.0	10.7	3,454	64,351
York	15.5	11.4	14.4	48,689	13.8	7.0	11.6	3,947	52,636
Total	16.5	9.8	14.7	1,783,188	16.4	9.5	14.8	225,530	2,008,718
% Change from 2021	0.0	4.3	2.0	6.8	-1.3	-7.8	-8.1	9.9	7.1

Table 9. Estimated deer harvest by weapon type in South Carolina in 2022.

	Rifle	Bow & Arrow	Shotgun	Muzzle-loader	Crossbow	Handgun	Total
Number of Deer Harvested	149,452	9,150	12,918	3,409	4,306	179	179,414
Percent Total Deer Harvest	83.3	5.1	7.2	1.9	2.4	0.1	100.0
Percent Hunter Success With Weapon	70.0	27.4	36.6	25.2	23.1	22.0	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 2022.

	Rifle	Bow & Arrow	Shotgun	Muzzle-loader	Crossbow	Handgun
Residents	110,010	23,989	20,839	11,389	14,054	2,787
Nonresidents	14,638	1,961	806	2,219	1,307	258
Total	124,647	25,950	21,644	13,608	15,361	3,045

Total across weapons not given because hunters use multiple weapons. Total hunters = 136,356.

Table 11. Weapons utilization (percent) among deer hunters in South Carolina in 2022.

	Rifle	Bow & Arrow	Shotgun	Muzzle-loader	Crossbow	Handgun
Residents	90.8*	19.8*	17.2*	9.4*	11.6*	2.3
Nonresidents	96.3	12.9	5.3	14.6	8.6	1.7
Total	91.8	18.6	15.1	10.3	11.1	2.6

* Significant difference in weapons use category based on residency.

Table 12. Weapons preference (percent) among deer hunters in South Carolina in 2022.

	Rifle	Bow & Arrow	Shotgun	Muzzle-loader	Crossbow	Handgun	Total
Residents	78.9	11.3*	5.9*	0.9*	2.5	0.5	100.0
Nonresidents	86.2	7.3	1.6	2.2	2.3	0.4	100.0
Total	80.2	10.6	5.1	1.1	2.5	0.5	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 2022.

Rank is by per unit area harvested.

County	Hog Harv.	Harv./Mile ²	% Change from 2021	2022 Rank	2021 Rank	Coyote Harv.	Harv./Mile ²	% Change from 2021	2022 Rank	2021 Rank
Abbeville	1,397	4.01	17.3	3	4	752	2.16	21.8	6	3
Aiken	873	1.12	-7.9	24	20	846	1.08	23.7	22	14
Allendale	524	1.55	-70.3	15	1	373	1.10	141.9	21	36
Anderson	2,008	5.87	57.0	1	3	565	1.65	-14.6	8	2
Bamberg	407	1.33	-26.1	19	10	259	0.84	17.3	25	21
Barnwell	611	1.39	31.9	17	21	648	1.47	13.1	13	9
Beaufort	87	0.38	31.9	37	40	87	0.38	31.9	41	43
Berkeley	902	1.02	-47.6	27	7	388	0.44	-12.0	39	34
Calhoun	1,309	4.40	324.1	2	22	655	2.20	97.9	5	10
Charleston	436	0.97	-38.2	28	14	724	1.61	17.3	9	6
Cherokee	320	1.31	459.1	20	41	366	1.49	50.8	12	11
Chester	873	1.86	108.3	10	25	711	1.51	79.1	11	15
Chesterfield	640	1.10	7.5	25	24	320	0.55	-34.0	35	17
Clarendon	757	1.62	18.3	13	15	306	0.66	130.9	32	44
Colleton	524	0.67	31.9	34	34	443	0.56	11.6	34	32
Darlington	553	1.24	-26.3	21	13	210	0.47	58.3	37	42
Dillon	145	0.43	-5.8	36	36	327	0.98	64.9	24	26
Dorchester	873	1.85	182.7	11	29	560	1.18	130.9	18	32
Edgefield	116	0.30	-34.0	40	36	473	1.23	64.9	16	20
Fairfield	407	0.68	-62.3	33	10	447	0.74	55.9	29	35
Florence	466	0.75	-4.0	30	26	483	0.78	-8.7	27	15
Georgetown	466	0.75	-39.7	30	17	120	0.19	-50.5	46	38
Greenville	116	0.25	163.9	41	46	543	1.18	105.2	18	27
Greenwood	611	1.91	2.6	9	9	367	1.15	84.7	20	25
Hampton	1,426	2.81	-43.8	4	2	644	1.27	-5.8	15	7
Horry	87	0.10	-89.9	45	23	204	0.24	31.9	45	46
Jasper	727	1.50	-50.0	16	5	226	0.47	-26.7	37	24
Kershaw	320	0.57	-57.3	35	16	204	0.36	-34.0	42	29
Lancaster	291	0.70	64.9	32	38	175	0.42	-47.2	40	18
Laurens	669	1.35	102.3	18	27	931	1.87	31.9	7	5
Lee	58	0.17	-74.6	43	27	960	2.79	107.3	2	7
Lexington	145	0.33	240.0	39	42	331	0.75	15.4	28	23
McCormick	582	1.76	-2.3	12	10	407	1.23	31.9	16	12
Marion	698	2.06	58.3	7	17	87	0.26	-34.0	43	38
Marlboro	524	1.19	196.9	23	39	109	0.25	-1.0	44	45
Newberry	378	0.76	471.7	29	44	393	0.79	48.4	26	31
Oconee	1,077	2.42	275.5	5	39	267	0.60	10.0	33	29
Orangeburg	145	0.18	-68.6	42	32	533	0.68	-3.2	31	22
Pickens	669	1.95	237.2	8	33	524	1.52	163.9	10	27
Richland	1,193	2.24	-11.3	6	6	549	1.03	126.2	23	36
Saluda	29	0.10	-81.2	45	34	669	2.23	31.9	4	4
Spartanburg	145	0.35	229.9	38	45	1,164	2.80	31.9	1	1
Sumter	553	1.04	-45.5	26	8	374	0.71	88.5	30	41
Union	495	1.23	103.9	22	31	570	1.41	84.7	14	19
Williamsburg	1,251	1.56	26.1	14	19	407	0.51	31.9	36	40
York	58	0.13	-12.0	44	42	1,048	2.42	163.9	3	13
Total	26,945	1.23	-3.7	NA	NA	21,750	0.99	33.5	NA	NA
	(+ -2,182)					(+ -1,461)				

95% Confidence Interval for harvest

Ranking is based on harvest per square mile

Table 14. Number of deer-vehicle collisions reported by the South Department of Public Safety 2018-2022.

County	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022*
Abbeville	7	8	4	50	59
Aiken	78	93	95	276	217
Allendale	7	19	11	31	27
Anderson	100	97	69	316	344
Bamberg	24	27	21	43	30
Barnwell	22	15	21	43	43
Beaufort	110	130	136	169	183
Berkeley	90	115	109	193	154
Calhoun	27	31	24	64	54
Charleston	252	248	249	280	244
Cherokee	22	41	31	70	101
Chester	36	48	46	114	119
Chesterfield	36	37	49	90	94
Clarendon	13	19	16	73	58
Colleton	60	51	39	132	88
Darlington	86	133	106	129	177
Dillon	63	71	74	63	78
Dorchester	63	60	54	134	120
Edgefield	8	11	2	35	28
Fairfield	28	33	27	81	67
Florence	186	176	136	188	183
Georgetown	29	31	32	59	56
Greenville	149	162	132	334	308
Greenwood	15	19	17	123	116
Hampton	14	18	17	51	27
Horry	313	340	286	366	349
Jasper	60	64	62	115	108
Kershaw	40	37	37	136	117
Lancaster	45	40	45	132	131
Laurens	18	14	19	174	153
Lee	32	15	14	94	71
Lexington	34	33	30	212	185
McCormick	2	0	0	10	9
Marion	68	63	44	71	65
Marlboro	73	85	75	155	136
Newberry	16	13	6	75	74
Oconee	17	26	11	75	78
Orangeburg	130	148	132	257	243
Pickens	28	50	35	131	121
Richland	55	54	58	255	228
Saluda	8	5	2	32	37
Spartanburg	151	169	142	389	458
Sumter	18	25	20	128	125
Union	14	20	27	33	46
Williamsburg	75	85	68	81	101
York	117	107	106	301	304
Total	2,839	3,086	2,736	6,363	6,114

* Preliminary figures

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

COUNTY	Males				Females			
	1.5 Years Old		2.5+ Years Old		1.5 Years Old		2.5+ Years Old	
	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 2021 Deer Hunter Survey

2021 South Carolina Deer Hunter Survey

1. Did you hunt deer in SC this past season (2021)? Yes No

If you answered No to this question please go to question # 9.

2. Did you harvest any deer in SC this past season? Yes 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 (2021). **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.

1.	SC Counties You Deer Hunted	# of Days Hunted	# of Deer Harvested	
			#Bucks	#Does
2.			#Bucks	#Does
3.			#Bucks	#Does
4.			#Bucks	#Does

If you did not harvest any deer in SC in 2021 please go to question # 6.

4. Please record the number of deer taken by month of season in SC last season (2021).

August	September	October	November	December	January

5. Please record the number of deer taken with each weapon in SC last season (2021).

Rifle	Bow	Shotgun	Muzzleloader	Crossbow	Handgun

6. Please circle **all** the weapons that you hunted deer with in 2021.

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 2021, please complete the box below.

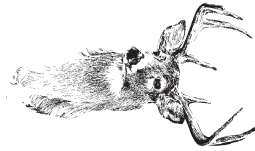
If you did not harvest any hogs or coyotes please go to question # 10.

	County	# of Hogs		County	# of Coyotes
1.			1.		
2.			2.		

10. Are you a resident of SC? Yes No

11. If yes, which county? _____

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



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Figure 1 Cont.

January, 2022

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 2021 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 2020 survey can be found at www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/deer/2020/DeerHarvestReport.html

Thank you for your assistance.

Charles Ruth
Wildlife Biologist
Big Game Program Coordinator

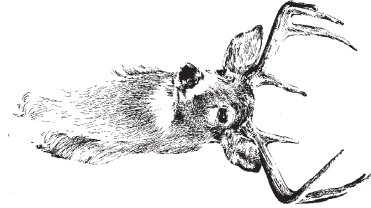
PLEASE MAIL YOUR SURVEY AFTER SEPARATING THIS HALF FROM THE SIDE ON WHICH YOUR ANSWERS HAVE BEEN ENTERED. NO POSTAGE IS NECESSARY.

If you have questions regarding this survey, please call 803-734-3886 or write 2021 Deer Hunter Survey, SCDNR, P.O. Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202.

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, disability, religion or age. Direct all inquiries to the Office of Human Resources, P.O. Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202

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Figure 2. Percent of deer harvested by month of season in South Carolina in 2022. Note that December includes January 1 which is the last day of deer season.

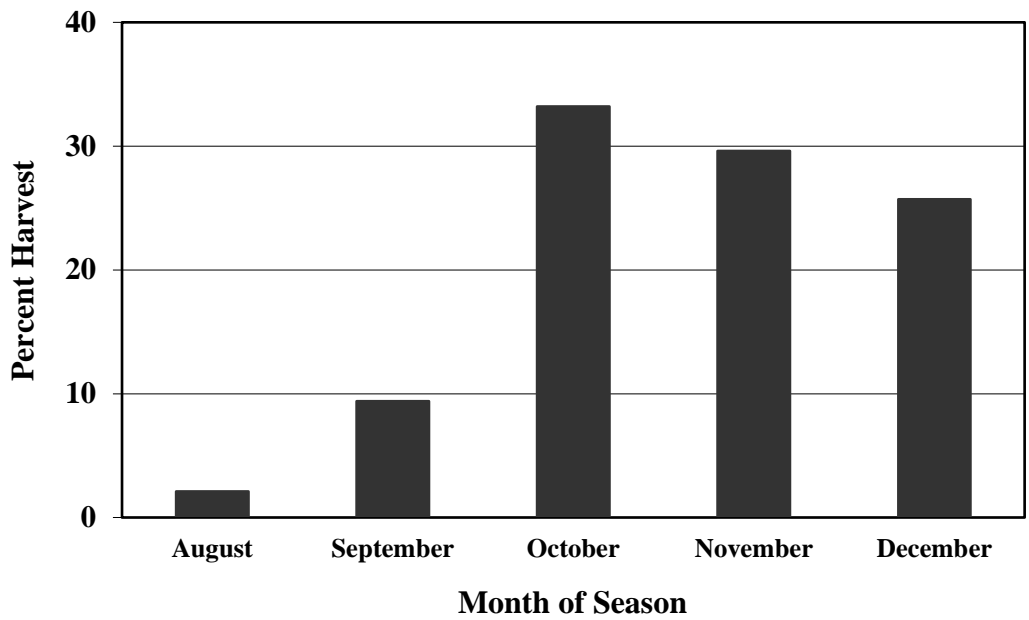


Figure 3. Percent of female deer conceiving by week in South Carolina, based on historic data.

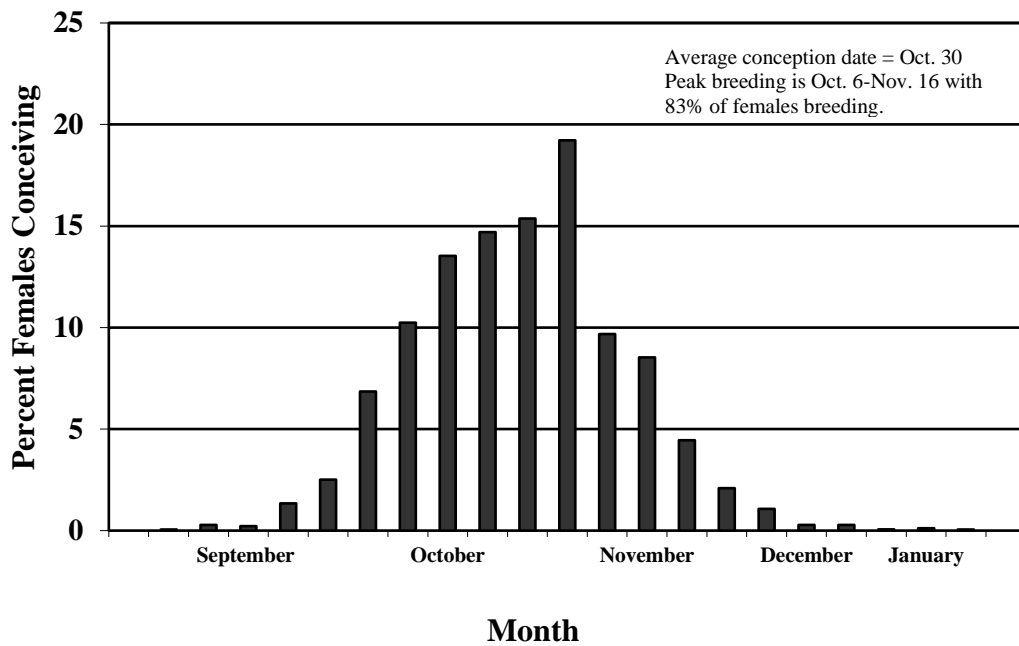


Figure 4. Estimated deer harvest in South Carolina 1972-2022.

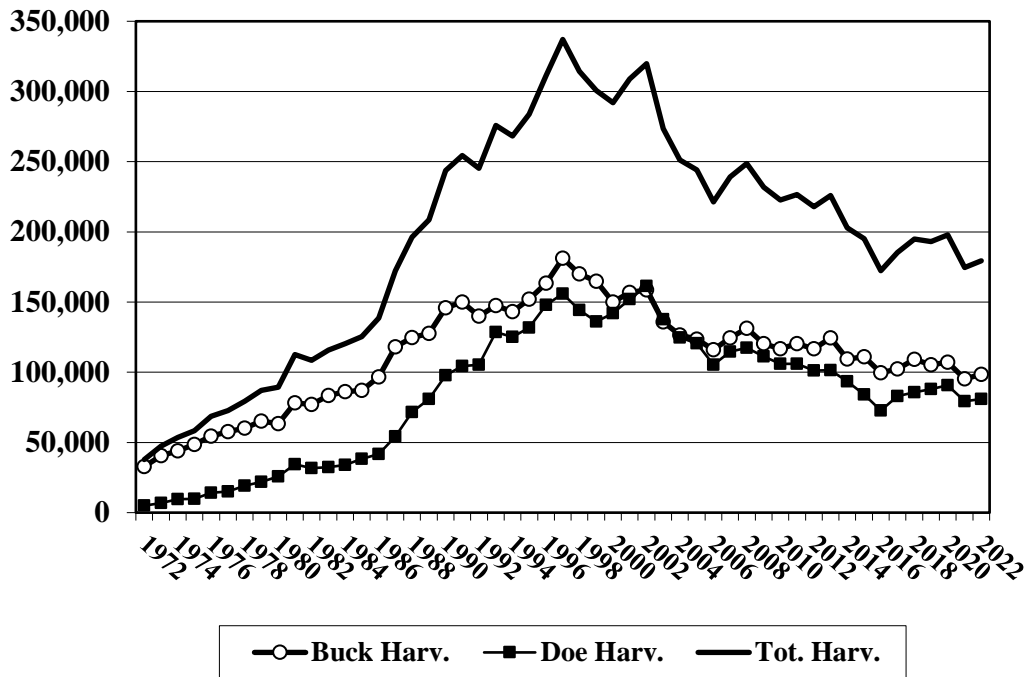


Figure 5. Estimated South Carolina deer population 1972-2022 based on population reconstruction modeling. Note that antlerless deer includes male fawns (button bucks).

