

2020 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 2020 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 2020, (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 2020 Deer Hunter Survey represents a random mail survey that involved a single mail-out. The questionnaire for the 2020 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 2020. Since deer seasons statewide end on January 1 there was no need to sample individuals that were licensed thereafter.

Data entry was completed by Data Dash, Inc., Farmington, Missouri. Statistical analysis was conducted using Statistix 10 (Analytical Software, Tallahassee, FL).

Acknowledgments

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As with any mail survey, a portion of the attempted sample (30,000) was returned as undeliverable mail (478). Therefore, the actual attempted sample was 29,522 representing 17.2 percent of the entire population (171,666) of license holders. A total of 5,723 completed surveys were returned yielding a 19.4 percent response rate and 3.3 percent sampling rate on the entire licensee population.

Deer Harvest

During the 2020 deer season it is estimated that a total of 107,212 bucks and 90,681 does were harvested for a statewide total of 197,893 deer (Table 1). This represents a 2.4 percent increase in harvest from 2019 (193,073) and is 38 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. Since 2016 the states' deer harvest has increased possibly as a result of declining coyote densities that would naturally occur following colonization.

The fall of 2020 was the fourth season of the "all deer" tagging system and statewide limit on antlered deer. Although the harvest has increased (15%) since 2016, this increase is primarily a result of an increase in doe harvest (25%) rather than an increase in the harvest of bucks (7%). Prior to the tagging program, increases in harvest were normally the result of increases in the buck harvest or a more equal increase in buck and doe harvest. This disproportionate increase in harvest between the sexes may be indicative of the new buck limit having the desired effect of decreasing pressure on bucks and increasing the harvest on does. It will likely take a few more 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 mile²). When considering the estimated deer habitat that is available in South Carolina, the deer harvest rate in 2020 was 9.3 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 Anderson (18.1 deer/mile²), Spartanburg (17.1 deer/mile²), Bamberg (16.4 deer/mile²), Orangeburg (15.3 deer/mile²), and Saluda (13.8 deer/mile²).

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 2020 were Orangeburg, Colleton, Spartanburg, Williamsburg, and Hampton.

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 2020 season it is estimated that 4,113 bucks, 3,245 does, and 9 deer of unknown sex were harvested for a total deer harvest on Wildlife Management Areas of 7,367 (Table 4). This figure represents a 5 percent increase from 2019.

Hunter Opinion Regarding the Deer Population

The 2020 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 (59%) indicated that the number of deer in the area they hunted most often was about the same as in past years (Table 5). Slightly more hunters (23%) 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 2.0 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 88 percent actually hunted deer. For residents, 87 percent of sampled licensees hunted deer and for nonresidents 94 percent hunted deer. Extrapolating to the respective licensee populations yields 134,675 residents (Table 6) and 15,488 nonresidents (Table 7) for a total of 150,163 deer hunters statewide during 2020. This figure represents a 6 percent increase from the 141,116 hunters in 2019. Counties with the highest estimates for individual hunters include Orangeburg, Colleton, Fairfield, Laurens, and Newberry for resident hunters (Table 6) and Hampton, Allendale, Chester, Fairfield, and Bamberg for nonresidents (Table 7).

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 2020 was 69 percent, which should be considered very good. Success

rates for residents (69%, Table 6) were slightly lower than nonresidents (70%, 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 2,011,594 days deer hunting and nonresidents averaged 13 days for a total of 203,539 days (Table 8). Total effort expended deer hunting in South Carolina during 2020 was estimated at 2,215,133 days (Table 8), a 7 percent increase from 2020. 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 2020 were Orangeburg, Colleton, Kershaw, Spartanburg, and Aiken (Table 8). Resident hunters expended the most hunting effort in Orangeburg, Colleton, Spartanburg, Aiken, and Laurens counties. Nonresidents hunted the most in Hampton, Allendale, Lancaster, Chester, and Colleton counties and these 5 counties totaled 38 percent of all the nonresident deer hunting effort that took place in South Carolina in 2020. 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 nearly twice as many days (17 days) afield as unsuccessful residents (9 days) (Table 8). Similarly, successful nonresidents (15 days) averaged more days afield when compared with unsuccessful nonresidents (8 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 Beaufort, Orangeburg, Bamberg and Allendale, Barnwell, Hampton, and Jasper (tie) counties for resident hunters (Table 6). On the other hand, nonresidents spent less time to harvest a deer in Pickens, Lee, Darlington, Spartanburg, and Anderson and Williamsburg (tie) 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 (7.6%) and archery equipment (6%) also contribute significantly to the overall deer harvest in the state, whereas muzzleloaders, crossbows, and handguns combine to contribute 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 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 (19%) and shotguns (18%) than nonresidents (12% archery and 7% 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 (13%) 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 (81%) of deer hunters prefer rifles (Table 12). Bows (10%) 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 (2.7%) than by residents (1%) (Table 12). The explanation of this situation is 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 2020 Deer Hunter Survey asked hunters to provide information on the month of kill for deer taken during the 2020 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 2020 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 2020 an estimated 28,043 wild hogs were incidentally harvested by deer hunters in South Carolina (Table 13), an 11 percent decrease from 2019 (31,508 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. The dramatic decrease in harvest the last two years is likely related to these factors as bottomland flooding has been relatively widespread the last few years particularly in 2018 which resulted in a record hog harvest. Evidence of the presence of hogs in 44 of 46 counties was made by hunter harvest

activities (46 of 46 counties in 2019). Statewide, approximately 1.3 hogs/mile² 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 Abbeville (4.8 hogs/mile²), Allendale (4.2 hogs/mile²), Hampton (3.5 hogs/mile²), McCormick (3.4 hogs/mile²) and Richland (2.5 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 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 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 2020 it is estimated that approximately 18,919 coyotes were harvested incidental to deer hunting in South Carolina (Table 13), a decrease of 9 percent from 2019 (20,674 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 40 percent in recent years likely indicating a moderation in coyote populations across the state which is typical of a species following colonization. Statewide approximately 0.9 coyotes/mile² were harvested and the top 5 counties for coyote harvest per unit area included Anderson (2.5 coyotes/mile²), Abbeville (2.3 coyotes/mile²), Greenwood (2.2 coyotes/mile²), Spartanburg (2.0 coyotes/mile²), and Saluda (2.0 coyotes/mile²).

Supplementary Information

The following section is not related to the 2020 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 2020 was 2,705 (Table 14). Since reporting of deer vehicle collisions is contingent upon notification of some law enforcement agency and then SCDPS, 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 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 2000. Currently the statewide population is estimated at about 715,000 deer.

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Table 1. Estimated statewide deer harvest in South Carolina in 2020.

County	Acres*	Square Miles	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest	Harvest Rates		% Change from 2019
						Ac/Deer	Deer/Mi. ²	
Abbeville	223,113	349	1,896	1,494	3,390	65.8	9.7	-7.1
Aiken	500,546	782	2,427	2,081	4,508	111.0	5.8	6.5
Allendale	216,455	338	2,014	1,828	3,842	56.3	11.4	10.6
Anderson	219,068	342	3,135	3,046	6,181	35.4	18.1	4.3
Bamberg	196,573	307	2,657	2,393	5,050	38.9	16.4	4.0
Barnwell	281,764	440	2,005	2,165	4,170	67.6	9.5	3.4
Beaufort	147,441	230	763	875	1,638	90.0	7.1	-42.3
Berkeley	567,530	887	3,475	2,745	6,220	91.2	7.0	1.4
Calhoun	190,584	298	1,695	1,454	3,149	60.5	10.6	22.5
Charleston	288,732	451	2,170	1,922	4,092	70.6	9.1	-2.1
Cherokee	156,664	245	1,875	1,151	3,026	51.8	12.4	3.8
Chester	300,589	470	2,145	1,895	4,040	74.4	8.6	-16.1
Chesterfield	372,478	582	2,459	1,640	4,099	90.9	7.0	18.3
Clarendon	298,087	466	1,657	1,170	2,827	105.4	6.1	-24.0
Colleton	502,666	785	4,272	4,233	8,505	59.1	10.8	10.1
Darlington	286,228	447	1,567	853	2,420	118.3	5.4	-10.9
Dillon	214,069	334	508	457	965	221.8	2.9	-28.4
Dorchester	302,717	473	2,148	2,177	4,325	70.0	9.1	-15.0
Edgefield	246,543	385	2,186	1,547	3,733	66.0	9.7	8.7
Fairfield	384,607	601	3,943	2,567	6,510	59.1	10.8	8.8
Florence	397,888	622	2,659	2,376	5,035	79.0	8.1	-3.5
Georgetown	399,638	624	1,667	1,524	3,191	125.2	5.1	20.1
Greenville	294,257	460	1,807	1,551	3,358	87.6	7.3	-14.8
Greenwood	204,400	319	1,945	1,849	3,794	53.9	11.9	30.7
Hampton	324,840	508	3,459	3,387	6,846	47.4	13.5	21.7
Horry	533,336	833	2,036	1,595	3,631	146.9	4.4	18.5
Jasper	309,889	484	1,729	1,105	2,834	109.3	5.9	-18.4
Kershaw	360,485	563	3,333	2,431	5,764	62.5	10.2	-0.6
Lancaster	266,382	416	2,522	1,674	4,196	63.5	10.1	-11.0
Laurens	317,916	497	3,392	2,525	5,917	53.7	11.9	-5.4
Lee	220,106	344	1,638	1,338	2,976	74.0	8.7	12.7
Lexington	280,742	439	2,026	1,140	3,166	88.7	7.2	-8.2
McCormick	212,021	331	1,832	1,332	3,164	67.0	9.6	155.4
Marion	216,907	339	830	467	1,297	167.2	3.8	-43.1
Marlboro	281,271	439	1,277	805	2,082	135.1	4.7	-20.9
Newberry	317,761	497	2,905	2,194	5,099	62.3	10.3	-7.9
Oconee	284,348	444	1,290	745	2,035	139.7	4.6	-6.7
Orangeburg	504,516	788	6,171	5,918	12,089	41.7	15.3	29.8
Pickens	219,926	344	1,733	1,004	2,737	80.4	8.0	2.2
Richland	340,121	531	2,355	1,861	4,216	80.7	7.9	33.8
Saluda	192,173	300	2,011	2,144	4,155	46.3	13.8	58.2
Spartanburg	265,939	416	3,487	3,637	7,124	37.3	17.1	-3.2
Sumter	338,968	530	1,804	1,665	3,469	97.7	6.5	-22.5
Union	258,111	403	2,167	2,283	4,450	58.0	11.0	0.3
Williamsburg	513,851	803	3,082	3,972	7,054	72.8	8.8	-8.0
York	276,650	432	3,059	2,466	5,525	50.1	12.8	18.3
Total	14,028,896	21,920	107,212	90,681	197,893	81.1	9.3	2.4

95% Confidence Interval for harvest (+ -) 3,573 (+ -) 3,844 (+ -) 5,901

* 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 2020.

County	Acres*	Square Miles	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest	Harvest Rates		% Change from 2019
						Ac/Deer	Deer/Mi. ²	
Anderson	219,068	342	3,135	3,046	6,181	35.4	18.1	4.3
Spartanburg	265,939	416	3,487	3,637	7,124	37.3	17.1	-3.2
Bamberg	196,573	307	2,657	2,393	5,050	38.9	16.4	4.0
Orangeburg	504,516	788	6,171	5,918	12,089	41.7	15.3	29.8
Saluda	192,173	300	2,011	2,144	4,155	46.3	13.8	58.2
Hampton	324,840	508	3,459	3,387	6,846	47.4	13.5	21.7
York	276,650	432	3,059	2,466	5,525	50.1	12.8	18.3
Cherokee	156,664	245	1,875	1,151	3,026	51.8	12.4	3.8
Laurens	317,916	497	3,392	2,525	5,917	53.7	11.9	-5.4
Greenwood	204,400	319	1,945	1,849	3,794	53.9	11.9	30.7
Allendale	216,455	338	2,014	1,828	3,842	56.3	11.4	10.6
Union	258,111	403	2,167	2,283	4,450	58.0	11.0	0.3
Fairfield	384,607	601	3,943	2,567	6,510	59.1	10.8	8.8
Colleton	502,666	785	4,272	4,233	8,505	59.1	10.8	10.1
Calhoun	190,584	298	1,695	1,454	3,149	60.5	10.6	22.5
Newberry	317,761	497	2,905	2,194	5,099	62.3	10.3	-7.9
Kershaw	360,485	563	3,333	2,431	5,764	62.5	10.2	-0.6
Lancaster	266,382	416	2,522	1,674	4,196	63.5	10.1	-11.0
Abbeville	223,113	349	1,896	1,494	3,390	65.8	9.7	-7.1
Edgefield	246,543	385	2,186	1,547	3,733	66.0	9.7	8.7
McCormick	212,021	331	1,832	1,332	3,164	67.0	9.6	155.4
Barnwell	281,764	440	2,005	2,165	4,170	67.6	9.5	3.4
Dorchester	302,717	473	2,148	2,177	4,325	70.0	9.1	-15.0
Charleston	288,732	451	2,170	1,922	4,092	70.6	9.1	-2.1
Williamsburg	513,851	803	3,082	3,972	7,054	72.8	8.8	-8.0
Lee	220,106	344	1,638	1,338	2,976	74.0	8.7	12.7
Chester	300,589	470	2,145	1,895	4,040	74.4	8.6	-16.1
Florence	397,888	622	2,659	2,376	5,035	79.0	8.1	-3.5
Pickens	219,926	344	1,733	1,004	2,737	80.4	8.0	2.2
Richland	340,121	531	2,355	1,861	4,216	80.7	7.9	33.8
Greenville	294,257	460	1,807	1,551	3,358	87.6	7.3	-14.8
Lexington	280,742	439	2,026	1,140	3,166	88.7	7.2	-8.2
Beaufort	147,441	230	763	875	1,638	90.0	7.1	-42.3
Chesterfield	372,478	582	2,459	1,640	4,099	90.9	7.0	18.3
Berkeley	567,530	887	3,475	2,745	6,220	91.2	7.0	1.4
Sumter	338,968	530	1,804	1,665	3,469	97.7	6.5	-22.5
Clarendon	298,087	466	1,657	1,170	2,827	105.4	6.1	-24.0
Jasper	309,889	484	1,729	1,105	2,834	109.3	5.9	-18.4
Aiken	500,546	782	2,427	2,081	4,508	111.0	5.8	6.5
Darlington	286,228	447	1,567	853	2,420	118.3	5.4	-10.9
Georgetown	399,638	624	1,667	1,524	3,191	125.2	5.1	20.1
Marlboro	281,271	439	1,277	805	2,082	135.1	4.7	-20.9
Oconee	284,348	444	1,290	745	2,035	139.7	4.6	-6.7
Horry	533,336	833	2,036	1,595	3,631	146.9	4.4	18.5
Marion	216,907	339	830	467	1,297	167.2	3.8	-43.1
Dillon	214,069	334	508	457	965	221.8	2.9	-28.4
Total	14,028,896	21,920	107,212	90,681	197,893	81.1	9.3	

* 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 2020.

County	Acres*	Square Miles	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest	Harvest Rates		% Change from 2019
						Ac/Deer	Deer/Mi. ²	
Orangeburg	504,516	788	6,171	5,918	12,089	41.7	15.3	29.8
Colleton	502,666	785	4,272	4,233	8,505	59.1	10.8	10.1
Spartanburg	265,939	416	3,487	3,637	7,124	37.3	17.1	-3.2
Williamsburg	513,851	803	3,082	3,972	7,054	72.8	8.8	-8.0
Hampton	324,840	508	3,459	3,387	6,846	47.4	13.5	21.7
Fairfield	384,607	601	3,943	2,567	6,510	59.1	10.8	8.8
Berkeley	567,530	887	3,475	2,745	6,220	91.2	7.0	1.4
Anderson	219,068	342	3,135	3,046	6,181	35.4	18.1	4.3
Laurens	317,916	497	3,392	2,525	5,917	53.7	11.9	-5.4
Kershaw	360,485	563	3,333	2,431	5,764	62.5	10.2	-0.6
York	276,650	432	3,059	2,466	5,525	50.1	12.8	18.3
Newberry	317,761	497	2,905	2,194	5,099	62.3	10.3	-7.9
Bamberg	196,573	307	2,657	2,393	5,050	38.9	16.4	4.0
Florence	397,888	622	2,659	2,376	5,035	79.0	8.1	-3.5
Aiken	500,546	782	2,427	2,081	4,508	111.0	5.8	6.5
Union	258,111	403	2,167	2,283	4,450	58.0	11.0	0.3
Dorchester	302,717	473	2,148	2,177	4,325	70.0	9.1	-15.0
Richland	340,121	531	2,355	1,861	4,216	80.7	7.9	33.8
Lancaster	266,382	416	2,522	1,674	4,196	63.5	10.1	-11.0
Barnwell	281,764	440	2,005	2,165	4,170	67.6	9.5	3.4
Saluda	192,173	300	2,011	2,144	4,155	46.3	13.8	58.2
Chesterfield	372,478	582	2,459	1,640	4,099	90.9	7.0	18.3
Charleston	288,732	451	2,170	1,922	4,092	70.6	9.1	-2.1
Chester	300,589	470	2,145	1,895	4,040	74.4	8.6	-16.1
Allendale	216,455	338	2,014	1,828	3,842	56.3	11.4	10.6
Greenwood	204,400	319	1,945	1,849	3,794	53.9	11.9	30.7
Edgefield	246,543	385	2,186	1,547	3,733	66.0	9.7	8.7
Horry	533,336	833	2,036	1,595	3,631	146.9	4.4	18.5
Sumter	338,968	530	1,804	1,665	3,469	97.7	6.5	-22.5
Abbeville	223,113	349	1,896	1,494	3,390	65.8	9.7	-7.1
Greenville	294,257	460	1,807	1,551	3,358	87.6	7.3	-14.8
Georgetown	399,638	624	1,667	1,524	3,191	125.2	5.1	20.1
Lexington	280,742	439	2,026	1,140	3,166	88.7	7.2	-8.2
McCormick	212,021	331	1,832	1,332	3,164	67.0	9.6	155.4
Calhoun	190,584	298	1,695	1,454	3,149	60.5	10.6	22.5
Cherokee	156,664	245	1,875	1,151	3,026	51.8	12.4	3.8
Lee	220,106	344	1,638	1,338	2,976	74.0	8.7	12.7
Jasper	309,889	484	1,729	1,105	2,834	109.3	5.9	-18.4
Clarendon	298,087	466	1,657	1,170	2,827	105.4	6.1	-24.0
Pickens	219,926	344	1,733	1,004	2,737	80.4	8.0	2.2
Darlington	286,228	447	1,567	853	2,420	118.3	5.4	-10.9
Marlboro	281,271	439	1,277	805	2,082	135.1	4.7	-20.9
Oconee	284,348	444	1,290	745	2,035	139.7	4.6	-6.7
Beaufort	147,441	230	763	875	1,638	90.0	7.1	-42.3
Marion	216,907	339	830	467	1,297	167.2	3.8	-43.1
Dillon	214,069	334	508	457	965	221.8	2.9	-28.4
Total	14,028,896	21,920	107,212	90,681	197,893	81.1	9.3	

* 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 2020.

Area	Acres	Bucks	Does	Total	Deer/Mi. ²
Mountain Hunt Unit	193,566	1,156	707	1,863	6.2
Central Piedmont Hunt Unit	159,793	1,437	1,229	2,666	10.7
Western Piedmont Hunt Unit	119,077	1,018	779	1,797	9.7
Subtotal for Upstate WMA's	472,436	3,611	2,715	6,326	8.6
Coastal WMA's*					
Bear Island WMA	1,519	7	5	12	5.1
Bonneau Ferry WMA ¹	10,697	40	59	108	6.5
Botany Bay WMA	2,000	25	27	52	16.6
Crackerneck WMA	10,470	40	34	74	4.5
Donnelley WMA	8,048	50	54	104	8.3
Francis Marion WMA	252,578	94	145	239	0.6
Hamilton Ridge	13,281	38	48	86	4.1
Liberty Hill WMA	7,876	17	6	23	1.9
McBee WMA	1,213	13	7	20	10.6
Manchester State Forest WMA	25,505	93	64	157	3.9
Moultrie WMA	9,480	7	7	14	0.9
Palachucola WMA	5,947	30	27	57	6.1
Wateree River WMA	3,674	6	8	14	2.4
Webb Wildlife Center WMA	5,866	42	39	81	8.8
Subtotal for Coastal WMA's	358,154	502	530	1,041	1.9
Total	830,590	4,113	3,245	7,367	5.7

*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 2020 compared to previous years.

	Increasing	About the Same	Decreasing
Residents	16.1	60.5	23.4
Non-Residents	15.4	60.4	24.2
Overall	16.0	60.5	23.5

Table 6. Resident deer hunter and deer harvest statistics in South Carolina in 2020.

County	Number Hunters	Man/Days Hunted	Percent Success	Deer/Hunter	Days/Deer	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest
Abbeville	3,200	42,950	72	1.0	13.4	1,832	1,368	3,200
Aiken	3,919	66,191	73	1.1	15.2	2,342	2,018	4,360
Allendale	1,415	18,971	75	1.5	8.9	1,044	1,090	2,134
Anderson	4,151	63,964	78	1.4	10.9	2,945	2,899	5,844
Bamberg	2,226	35,367	81	1.8	8.7	2,087	1,971	4,059
Barnwell	1,763	26,299	75	1.7	8.9	1,415	1,554	2,969
Beaufort	1,090	12,013	64	1.4	7.7	742	812	1,554
Berkeley	4,012	52,853	67	1.4	9.1	3,201	2,597	5,798
Calhoun	2,110	36,760	73	1.5	11.9	1,693	1,391	3,084
Charleston	3,456	42,649	67	1.1	10.9	2,064	1,855	3,919
Cherokee	1,763	29,500	74	1.4	12.1	1,600	835	2,435
Chester	3,177	39,821	69	0.9	13.6	1,554	1,368	2,922
Chesterfield	2,203	36,272	67	1.5	10.9	1,995	1,345	3,340
Clarendon	1,902	27,065	77	1.4	10.5	1,531	1,044	2,574
Colleton	4,708	73,265	76	1.6	9.8	3,850	3,664	7,514
Darlington	1,948	31,472	74	1.2	13.8	1,461	812	2,273
Dillon	649	11,225	89	1.4	12.7	487	394	881
Dorchester	2,899	49,886	74	1.5	11.8	2,064	2,157	4,221
Edgefield	2,829	43,369	76	1.2	12.4	2,018	1,484	3,502
Fairfield	4,592	59,163	73	1.2	10.7	3,247	2,273	5,520
Florence	3,038	59,742	79	1.6	12.4	2,574	2,250	4,824
Georgetown	2,435	43,275	69	1.3	13.8	1,647	1,484	3,131
Greenville	3,224	45,873	67	1.0	13.8	1,786	1,531	3,317
Greenwood	3,131	47,148	67	1.2	12.7	1,925	1,786	3,711
Hampton	2,064	25,952	80	1.4	8.9	1,623	1,299	2,922
Horry	2,760	47,544	66	1.3	13.4	1,995	1,554	3,548
Jasper	1,484	17,394	73	1.3	8.9	1,160	789	1,948
Kershaw	3,456	65,100	75	1.5	12.5	3,038	2,157	5,195
Lancaster	2,597	45,874	68	1.3	14.1	1,995	1,252	3,247
Laurens	4,592	65,101	73	1.2	11.8	3,224	2,273	5,496
Lee	2,064	34,162	74	1.4	12.1	1,554	1,276	2,829
Lexington	3,316	44,089	68	0.9	14.2	1,995	1,113	3,108
McCormick	2,458	31,634	73	1.1	11.3	1,600	1,206	2,806
Marion	1,183	21,916	69	1.0	17.8	789	441	1,229
Marlboro	1,206	24,074	75	1.5	13.3	1,067	742	1,809
Newberry	4,546	54,384	66	1.1	11.2	2,736	2,111	4,847
Oconee	2,018	26,855	71	1.0	14.0	1,206	719	1,925
Orangeburg	6,772	100,632	78	1.7	8.6	5,960	5,728	11,689
Pickens	2,992	41,119	74	0.9	15.7	1,670	951	2,620
Richland	3,757	46,430	71	1.0	11.8	2,250	1,693	3,943
Saluda	3,177	52,946	69	1.2	13.4	1,948	2,018	3,966
Spartanburg	4,522	71,594	72	1.5	10.3	3,340	3,595	6,935
Sumter	2,853	36,853	72	1.2	10.9	1,763	1,623	3,386
Union	3,502	48,632	66	1.1	13.0	1,809	1,925	3,734
Williamsburg	3,850	61,085	78	1.7	9.2	2,829	3,804	6,633
York	3,664	53,132	73	1.4	10.4	2,806	2,319	5,125
Total	134,675	2,011,594	69	1.3	11.4	95,457	80,568	176,026
% Change from 2019	6.6	7.7	0.0	-7.0	3.6	2.8	3.8	3.3

Table 7. Nonresident deer hunter and deer harvest statistics in South Carolina in 2020.

County	Number Hunters	Man/Days Hunted	Percent Success	Deer/Hunter	Days/Deer	Buck Harvest	Doe Harvest	Total Harvest
Abbeville	169	1,266	75	1.1	6.7	63	127	190
Aiken	232	3,102	54	0.6	21.0	84	63	148
Allendale	1,329	13,146	68	1.3	7.7	971	739	1,709
Anderson	127	1,456	83	2.7	4.3	190	148	338
Bamberg	696	8,546	82	1.4	8.6	570	422	992
Barnwell	591	8,208	86	2.0	6.8	591	612	1,203
Beaufort	127	992	50	0.7	11.7	21	63	84
Berkeley	169	4,051	100	2.5	9.6	274	148	422
Calhoun	106	992	40	1.4	15.2	2	63	65
Charleston	106	1,203	80	1.6	7.0	106	67	173
Cherokee	359	5,486	71	1.6	9.3	274	317	591
Chester	844	11,648	73	1.3	10.4	591	528	1,118
Chesterfield	570	11,163	44	1.3	14.7	464	295	760
Clarendon	127	1,372	83	2.0	5.4	127	127	253
Colleton	612	11,204	72	1.6	11.3	422	570	992
Darlington	106	380	80	1.4	2.6	106	42	148
Dillon	63	1,182	100	1.3	14.0	21	63	84
Dorchester	63	1,393	67	1.7	13.2	84	21	105
Edgefield	253	2,722	58	0.9	11.7	169	63	232
Fairfield	802	9,221	78	1.2	9.3	696	295	992
Florence	190	1,329	55	1.1	6.3	84	127	211
Georgetown	63	527	33	1.0	8.6	21	40	62
Greenville	63	696	67	0.7	16.5	21	21	42
Greenwood	63	1,329	100	1.3	15.8	21	63	84
Hampton	2,026	29,204	71	1.9	7.4	1,836	2,089	3,925
Horry	106	760	40	0.8	9.0	42	42	84
Jasper	633	10,318	77	1.4	11.6	570	317	886
Kershaw	422	6,098	70	1.4	10.7	295	274	570
Lancaster	654	12,766	84	1.5	13.4	528	422	950
Laurens	338	4,136	81	1.3	9.8	169	253	422
Lee	106	359	100	1.4	2.4	84	63	148
Lexington	42	232	50	1.4	0.0	32	27	59
McCormick	380	4,262	55	0.9	11.9	232	127	359
Marion	42	253	100	1.6	0.0	42	27	69
Marlboro	295	3,756	71	0.9	13.7	211	63	274
Newberry	232	2,110	55	1.1	8.3	169	84	253
Oconee	42	211	100	2.6	0.0	84	27	111
Orangeburg	274	3,503	85	1.5	8.7	211	190	401
Pickens	84	253	25	1.4	2.1	64	54	118
Richland	190	1,435	67	1.4	5.2	106	169	274
Saluda	148	1,519	33	1.3	8.0	63	127	190
Spartanburg	148	591	86	1.3	3.1	148	42	190
Sumter	148	760	67	0.6	9.0	42	42	84
Union	591	8,313	59	1.2	11.6	359	359	717
Williamsburg	317	1,794	73	1.3	4.3	253	169	422
York	443	8,292	67	0.9	20.7	253	148	401
Total	15,488	203,539	70	1.5	9.3	11,767	10,139	21,906
% Change from 2019	4.3	4.6	4.5	-6.3	8.1	-5.0	-1.1	-3.3

Table 8. Hunting effort (man/days) by county for successful and unsuccessful resident and nonresident deer hunters in South Carolina in 2020.

County	Residents (man/days)			Total Effort Residents	Nonresidents (man/days)			Total Effort Non-residents	Total Days
	Successful	Unsuccessful	Average		Successful	Unsuccessful	Average		
Abbeville	15.4	8.3	13.4	42,950	5.2	14.5	7.5	1,266	44,216
Aiken	18.8	11.8	16.9	66,191	16.7	9.4	13.4	3,102	69,293
Allendale	15.5	7.1	13.4	18,971	11.7	6.0	9.9	13,146	32,117
Anderson	16.9	10.0	15.4	63,964	13.2	3.0	11.5	1,456	65,420
Bamberg	17.2	10.1	15.9	35,367	12.7	10.5	12.3	8,546	43,913
Barnwell	17.5	7.2	14.9	26,299	13.8	14.5	13.9	8,208	34,508
Beaufort	13.1	7.4	11.0	12,013	6.7	9.0	7.8	992	13,005
Berkeley	15.9	7.6	13.2	52,853	24.0	0.0	24.0	4,051	56,904
Calhoun	19.8	11.2	17.4	36,760	19.0	3.0	9.4	992	37,752
Charleston	15.5	5.9	12.3	42,649	13.5	3.0	11.4	1,203	43,852
Cherokee	18.8	11.1	16.7	29,500	18.3	8.0	15.3	5,486	34,986
Chester	14.3	8.7	12.5	39,821	13.9	13.5	13.8	11,648	51,469
Chesterfield	19.8	9.5	16.5	36,272	26.4	14.1	19.6	11,163	47,434
Clarendon	16.8	5.7	14.2	27,065	12.4	3.0	10.8	1,372	28,437
Colleton	17.9	8.1	15.6	73,265	19.3	15.8	18.3	11,204	84,469
Darlington	18.7	9.0	16.2	31,472	3.8	3.0	3.6	380	31,852
Dillon	18.3	9.0	17.3	11,225	18.7	0.0	18.7	1,182	12,407
Dorchester	20.8	6.9	17.2	49,886	32.0	2.0	22.0	1,393	51,278
Edgefield	16.8	11.1	15.3	43,369	13.1	7.4	10.8	2,722	46,091
Fairfield	14.5	8.5	12.9	59,163	12.7	7.8	11.5	9,221	68,384
Florence	21.1	13.7	19.7	59,742	10.8	2.3	7.0	1,329	61,071
Georgetown	20.3	12.2	17.8	43,275	20.0	2.5	8.3	527	43,802
Greenville	17.3	8.0	14.2	45,873	13.5	6.0	11.0	696	46,569
Greenwood	16.5	12.1	15.1	47,148	21.0	0.0	21.0	1,329	48,478
Hampton	13.0	10.8	12.6	25,952	18.5	4.5	14.4	29,204	55,156
Horry	22.1	7.9	17.2	47,544	15.0	2.0	7.2	760	48,303
Jasper	13.0	8.1	11.7	17,394	18.2	10.0	16.3	10,318	27,713
Kershaw	21.5	10.9	18.8	65,100	18.2	5.7	14.5	6,098	71,198
Lancaster	20.2	12.5	17.7	45,874	20.5	14.2	19.5	12,766	58,640
Laurens	15.9	9.7	14.2	65,101	13.5	6.7	12.3	4,136	69,236
Lee	19.2	9.0	16.6	34,162	3.4	0.0	3.4	359	34,521
Lexington	15.6	8.3	13.3	44,089	10.0	1.0	5.5	232	44,321
McCormick	14.6	8.4	12.9	31,634	14.5	7.1	11.2	4,262	35,896
Marion	20.1	15.1	18.5	21,916	6.0	0.0	6.0	253	22,169
Marlboro	23.5	9.2	20.0	24,074	15.7	5.3	12.7	3,756	27,830
Newberry	13.7	8.6	12.0	54,384	10.0	8.0	9.1	2,110	56,494
Oconee	15.2	8.7	13.3	26,855	5.0	0.0	5.0	211	27,066
Orangeburg	17.7	6.0	14.9	100,632	12.3	15.5	12.8	3,503	104,135
Pickens	15.1	9.9	13.7	41,119	2.0	3.3	3.0	253	41,372
Richland	13.9	8.7	12.4	46,430	10.0	2.7	7.6	1,435	47,865
Saluda	18.6	12.3	16.7	52,946	10.0	12.0	10.3	1,519	54,466
Spartanburg	18.0	10.1	15.8	71,594	3.7	6.0	4.0	591	72,185
Sumter	14.6	8.6	12.9	36,853	7.0	2.7	5.1	760	37,612
Union	16.1	9.7	13.9	48,632	15.0	12.8	14.1	8,313	56,945
Williamsburg	18.2	7.4	15.9	61,085	6.7	2.8	5.7	1,794	62,879
York	15.4	12.0	14.5	53,132	21.0	14.1	18.7	8,292	61,425
Total	17.1	9.2	14.9	2,011,594	15.0	8.4	13.1	203,539	2,215,133
% Change from 2019	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.6	7.4

Table 9. Estimated deer harvest by weapon type in South Carolina in 2020.

	Rifle	Bow & Arrow	Shotgun	Muzzle-loader	Crossbow	Handgun	Total
Number of Deer Harvested	161,085	11,676	15,040	4,749	5,145	198	197,893
Percent Total Deer Harvest	81.4	5.9	7.6	2.4	2.6	0.1	100.0
Percent Hunter Success With Weapon	66.2	31.4	34.0	28.6	25.2	13.0	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 2020.

	Rifle	Bow & Arrow	Shotgun	Muzzle-loader	Crossbow	Handgun
Residents	123,632	25,588	24,107	13,198	16,296	3,232
Nonresidents	14,512	1,781	1,100	2,060	1,704	263
Total	138,144	27,369	25,206	15,258	17,999	3,495

Total across weapons not given because hunters use multiple weapons. Total hunters = 150,163.

Table 11. Weapons utilization (percent) among deer hunters in South Carolina in 2020.

	Rifle	Bow & Arrow	Shotgun	Muzzle-loader	Crossbow	Handgun
Residents	91.8	19.0*	17.9*	9.8*	12.1	2.4
Nonresidents	93.7	11.5	7.1	13.3	11.0	1.7
Total	92.0	18.0	16.5	10.3	11.9	2.3

* Significant difference in weapons use category based on residency.

Table 12. Weapons preference (percent) among deer hunters in South Carolina in 2020.

	Rifle	Bow & Arrow	Shotgun	Muzzle-loader	Crossbow	Handgun	Total
Residents	80.5	10.5*	5.6*	0.8*	2.4	0.3	100.0
Nonresidents	85.7	7.5	1.9	2.7	1.9	0.3	100.0
Total	81.2	10.1	5.1	1.0	2.3	0.3	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 2020. Rank is by per unit area harvested.

County	Hog Harv.	Harv./ Mile ²	% Change from 2019	2020 Rank	2019 Rank	Coyote Harv.	Harv./ Mile ²	% Change from 2019	2020 Rank	2019 Rank
Abbeville	1,686	4.84	30.4	1	2	808	2.32	150.0	2	23
Aiken	1,132	1.45	53.1	14	27	785	1.00	13.3	17	24
Allendale	1,409	4.17	15.1	2	3	162	0.48	-41.7	35	27
Anderson	601	1.75	-62.3	12	1	855	2.50	27.6	1	3
Bamberg	716	2.33	19.2	7	13	208	0.68	-50.0	26	9
Barnwell	785	1.78	41.7	11	20	300	0.68	0.0	26	34
Beaufort	46	0.20	0.0	41	43	46	0.20	-60.0	44	37
Berkeley	1,016	1.15	-62.7	20	6	924	1.04	42.9	15	30
Calhoun	277	0.93	-7.7	29	24	139	0.47	-71.4	37	5
Charleston	370	0.82	-68.0	30	9	231	0.51	66.7	32	45
Cherokee	69	0.28	50.0	38	44	370	1.51	60.0	9	21
Chester	670	1.43	81.3	15	30	416	0.89	-50.0	19	4
Chesterfield	393	0.67	30.8	34	37	670	1.15	-19.4	12	7
Clarendon	439	0.94	90.0	27	38	346	0.74	7.1	23	33
Colleton	1,063	1.35	12.2	16	21	393	0.50	54.5	33	44
Darlington	323	0.72	-26.3	33	25	208	0.46	-65.4	38	10
Dillon	69	0.21	-89.3	40	14	46	0.14	-60.0	46	43
Dorchester	531	1.12	-17.9	22	19	347	0.73	15.4	24	35
Edgefield	370	0.96	77.8	26	36	346	0.90	15.4	18	28
Fairfield	1,409	2.34	154.2	6	28	624	1.04	42.1	15	30
Florence	508	0.82	-52.2	30	15	485	0.78	0.0	21	28
Georgetown	993	1.59	38.7	13	22	92	0.15	-60.0	45	42
Greenville	0	0.00	-100.0	45	41	346	0.75	-11.8	22	25
Greenwood	300	0.94	44.4	27	33	716	2.24	138.5	3	21
Hampton	1,756	3.46	10.1	3	5	277	0.55	0.0	30	36
Horry	993	1.19	22.9	18	26	347	0.42	7.1	39	41
Jasper	993	2.05	0.0	10	11	116	0.24	-44.4	43	39
Kershaw	601	1.07	-31.6	23	17	185	0.33	-71.4	41	13
Lancaster	116	0.28	25.0	38	42	462	1.11	-16.7	13	12
Laurens	393	0.79	13.3	32	32	762	1.53	-31.3	8	2
Lee	0	0.00	-100.0	45	34	508	1.48	46.7	10	18
Lexington	185	0.42	240.0	36	45	277	0.63	-25.0	28	26
McCormick	1,132	3.42	14.0	4	8	346	1.05	7.1	14	20
Marion	785	2.32	13.3	8	12	116	0.34	400.0	40	46
Marlboro	554	1.26	20.0	17	23	139	0.32	-25.0	42	40
Newberry	185	0.37	-38.5	37	34	439	0.88	-38.7	20	6
Oconee	439	0.99	-36.7	25	17	231	0.52	-52.4	31	16
Orangeburg	23	0.03	-88.9	44	40	393	0.50	-29.2	33	32
Pickens	393	1.14	-29.2	21	16	577	1.68	56.3	7	17
Richland	1,317	2.48	-25.0	5	4	254	0.48	0.0	35	38
Saluda	300	1.00	225.0	24	39	601	2.00	44.4	5	8
Spartanburg	23	0.06	-92.9	42	30	855	2.06	-36.2	4	1
Sumter	624	1.18	-61.4	19	7	370	0.70	-30.4	25	19
Union	185	0.46	-42.9	35	29	739	1.83	60.0	6	13
Williamsburg	1,848	2.30	3.9	9	10	485	0.60	-46.2	29	15
York	23	0.05	0.0	43	46	577	1.34	0.0	11	10
Total	28,043	1.28	-20.0	NA	NA	18,919	0.86	-9.1	NA	NA
	(+ -) 1,915					(+ -) 1,157				

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 Public Safety 2016-2020.

County	2016	2017	2018	2019*	2020*
Abbeville	8	7	7	8	4
Aiken	88	79	78	93	91
Allendale	10	12	7	19	10
Anderson	81	63	100	97	67
Bamberg	13	16	24	27	21
Barnwell	15	16	22	15	21
Beaufort	114	106	110	130	135
Berkeley	63	77	90	115	108
Calhoun	46	41	27	31	24
Charleston	215	216	252	248	249
Cherokee	15	19	22	41	31
Chester	33	24	36	48	46
Chesterfield	33	27	36	37	48
Clarendon	19	20	13	19	16
Colleton	53	73	60	51	38
Darlington	86	100	86	133	106
Dillon	53	71	63	71	74
Dorchester	60	55	63	60	54
Edgefield	10	4	8	11	2
Fairfield	29	24	28	33	26
Florence	107	137	186	176	136
Georgetown	31	61	29	31	32
Greenville	108	138	149	162	130
Greenwood	21	13	15	19	17
Hampton	12	18	14	18	17
Horry	196	251	313	340	286
Jasper	52	64	60	64	62
Kershaw	32	24	40	37	33
Lancaster	33	37	45	40	45
Laurens	16	20	18	14	19
Lee	19	18	32	15	14
Lexington	36	30	34	33	30
McCormick	2	3	2	0	0
Marion	43	62	68	63	44
Marlboro	50	80	73	85	76
Newberry	8	14	16	13	6
Oconee	4	13	17	26	11
Orangeburg	140	145	130	148	132
Pickens	28	37	28	50	34
Richland	79	69	55	54	58
Saluda	6	7	8	5	2
Spartanburg	156	145	151	169	141
Sumter	23	26	18	25	20
Union	19	13	14	20	17
Williamsburg	85	102	75	85	68
York	110	119	117	107	104
Total	2,460	2,696	2,839	3,086	2,705

* 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 2020 Deer Hunter Survey

2020 South Carolina Deer Hunter Survey

1. Did you hunt deer in SC this past season (2020)? **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 (2020). 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	
		# Bucks	#Does
1		# Bucks	#Does
2		# Bucks	#Does
3		# Bucks	#Does
4		# Bucks	#Does

If you did not harvest any deer in SC in 2020 please go to question # 6.

4. Please record the number of deer taken by month of season in SC last season (2020).

August	September	October	November	December	January

5. Please record the number of deer taken with each weapon in SC last season (2020).

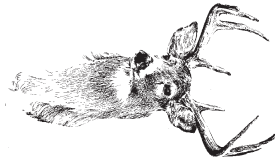
Rifle	Bow	Shotgun	Muzzleloader	Crossbow	Handgun

6. Please circle **all** the weapons that you hunted deer with in 2020.
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 2020, 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.



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Figure 1 Cont.

January, 2020

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 2020 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 2019 survey can be found at www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/deer/2019/DeerHarvestReport.html

Thank you for your assistance.

Charles Ruth
Wildlife Biologist
Big Game Program Coordinator

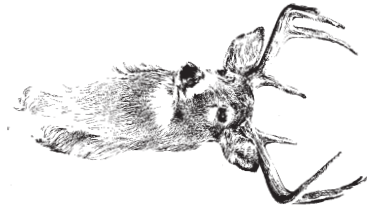
PLEASE MAIL YOUR SURVEY AFTER SEPARATING THIS HALF FROM THE SIDE ON WHICH YOUR ANSWERS HAVE BEEN ENTERED. NO POSTAGE IS NECESSARY.

If you have questions regarding this survey, please call 803-734-3886 or write 2020 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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SC DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
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Figure 2. Percent of deer harvested by month of season in South Carolina in 2020. Note that December includes January 1 which is the last day of deer season.

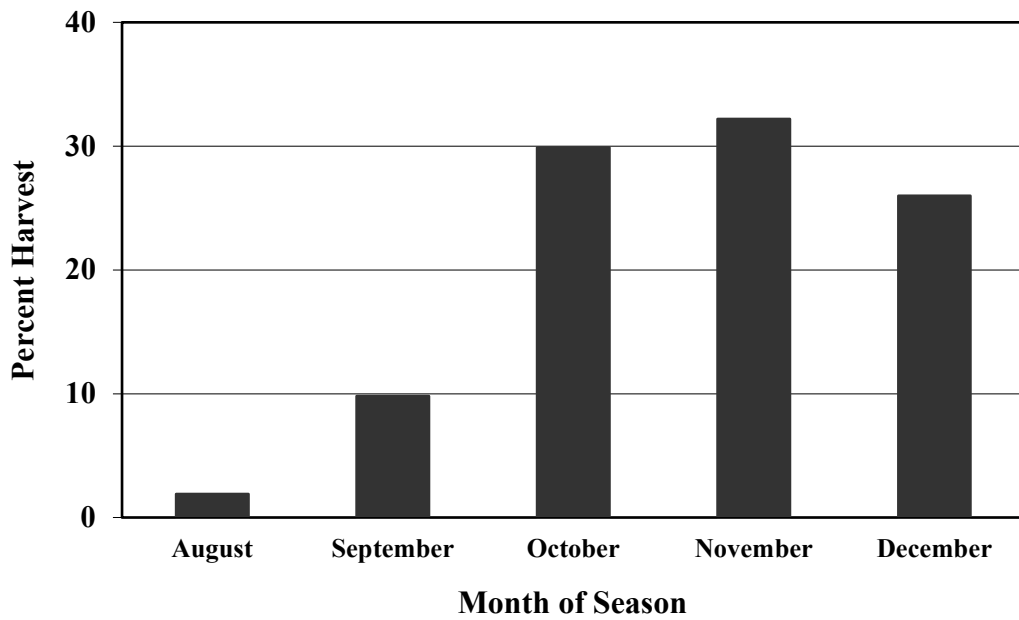


Figure 3. Percent of female deer conceiving by week in South Carolina, based on historic data.

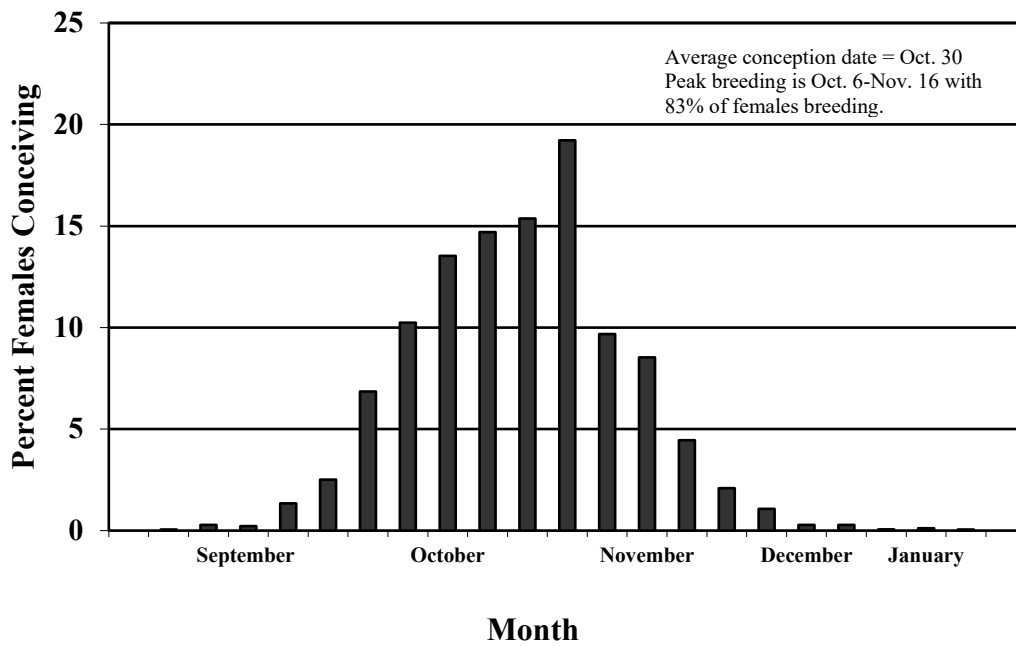


Figure 4. Estimated deer harvest in South Carolina 1972-2020.

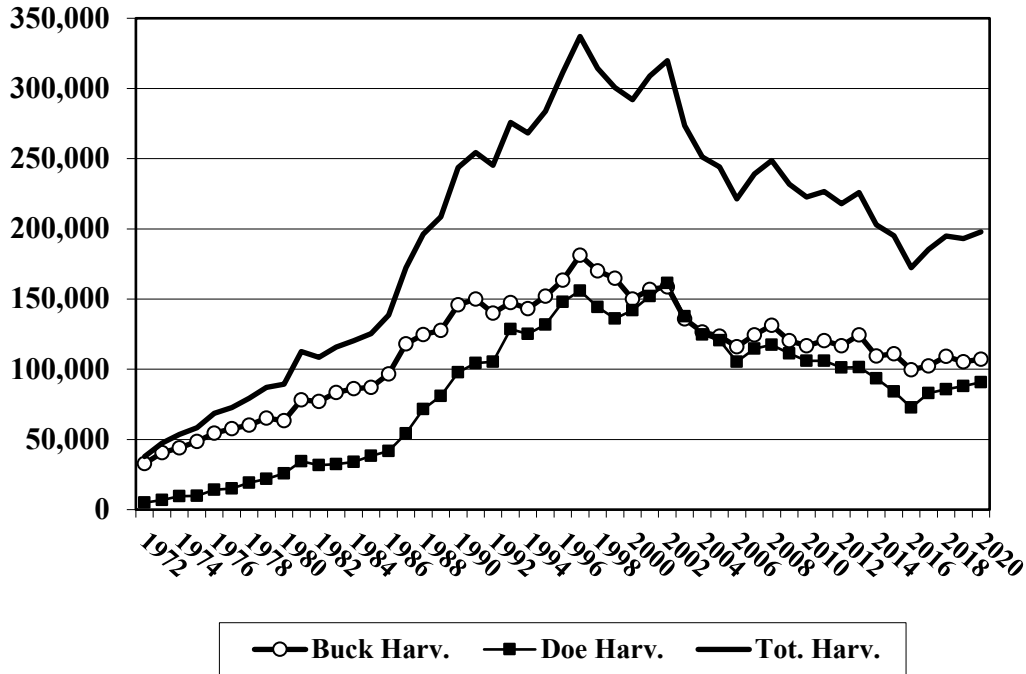


Figure 5. Estimated South Carolina deer population 1972-2020 based on population reconstruction modeling. Note that antlerless deer includes male fawns (button bucks).

