

Vermont Population Estimate Average for 2014 to 2018

[Source:](#) Big Game Management Plan 2020 - 2030, page 22

Estimate: 139,164 (see table at bottom of page)

Current Status

As a result of historical land use practices, many of Vermont's forests are of similar age. Importantly, the amount of young forest habitat (less than 20 years old), which provides substantial forage for deer, has declined substantially in recent decades. The lack of young forest habitat combined with the proliferation of invasive plants and impacts of historically overabundant deer in some areas means Vermont's forest habitat can support fewer deer today than it could in the past.

This conclusion is supported by observations of deer impacts on forests and trends in the physical condition of deer over time. Antler beam diameters of yearlingbucks have been steadily declining for the past 20-30 years (Figure 2), and it appears that fawn weights may also be declining (Figure 3). While annual antlerless harvest recommendations will be based on deer density objectives for each WMU,

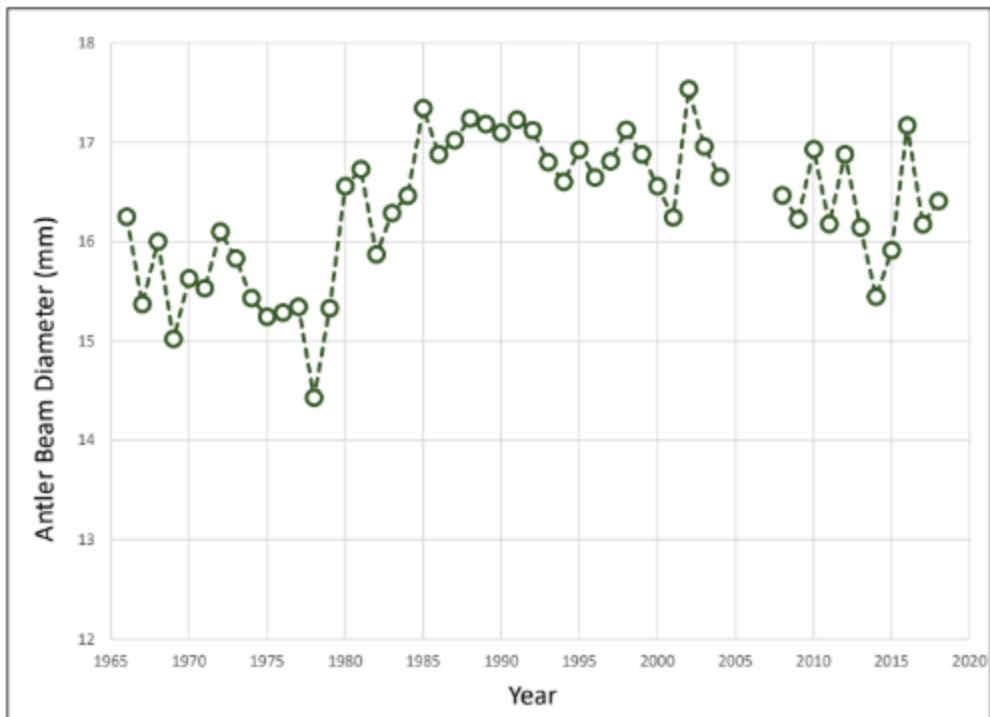


Figure 2. Antler Beam Diameters

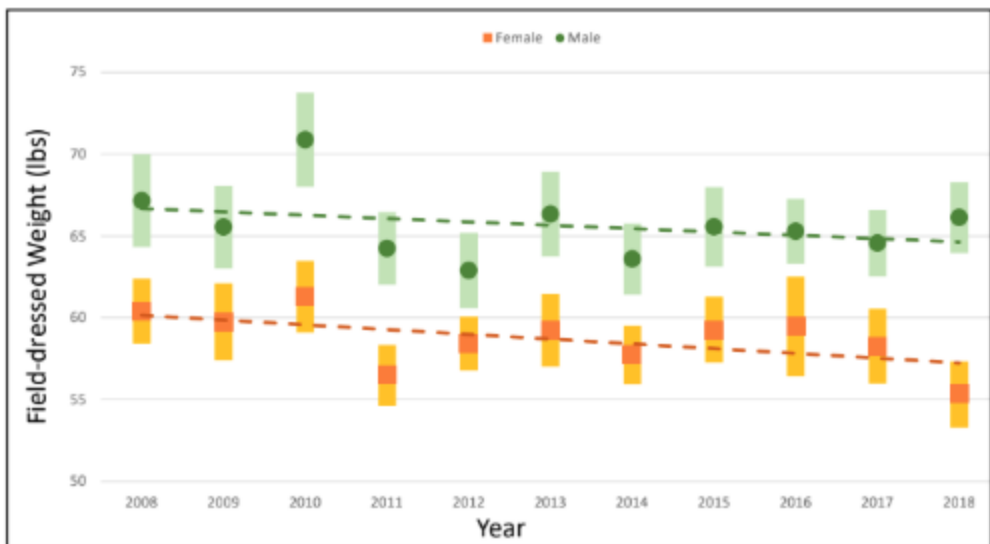


Figure 3. Fawn Weights

Harvesting adequate numbers of antlerless deer is critical to effectively managing the deer population. Managers must also be able to tailor antlerless harvest to specific areas and adjust harvest in response to extrinsic factors (i.e. winter mortality, disease). Lessons from deer managers throughout the northeast and decades of managing deer in Vermont show that around 20% of does may need to be removed when winters are mild just to stabilize population growth. Conversely, severe winters have resulted in population declines of 20% or more

in some areas... [p. 23-24]

Population calculation from table below

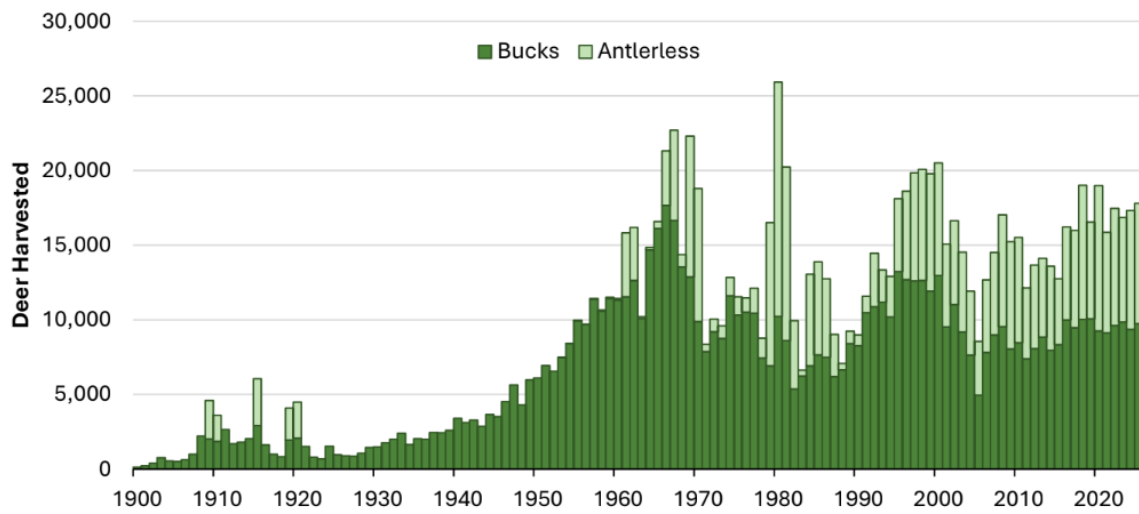


Table 1 Population Objectives by WMU

WMU	Deer Habitat (mi2)	Density Objective (deer/mi2)	Population Objective	2014-2018 Average Density	Forested Habitat (mi2)	Deer/mi2 Forest at Objective
A	71	18	1,300	30	15	84
B	616	18	11,100	25	352	32
C	386	15	5,800	15	339	17
D1	570	15	8,500	21	410	21
D2	387	12	4,600	14	332	14
E1	315	<10	2,500	6	284	9
E2	334	<10	2,700	7	302	9
F1	316	15	4,700	14	84	56
F2	268	18	4,800	16	124	39
G	388	12	4,700	14	354	13
H	518	15	7,800	15	447	17
I	424	12	5,100	11	396	13
J1	528	15	7,900	19	454	17
J2	705	15	10,600	20	613	17
K	438	18	7,900	23	324	24
L	365	12	4,400	13	323	14
M	451	12	5,400	10	418	13
N	323	18	5,800	25	261	22
O	548	15	8,200	16	464	18
P	455	12	5,500	10	418	13
Q	233	12	2,800	12	214	13
STATE	8,638		122,100		6,930	

Population calculated by multiplying Deer Habitat by 2014-2018 Average Density

WMU	Deer Habitat (mi2)	Density Objective (deer/mi2)	Population Objective	2014-2018 Average Density	Forested Habitat (mi2)	Deer/mi2 Forest at Objective	Multiply column B by Column E
A	71	18	1,300	30	15	84	2130
B	616	18	11,100	25	352	32	15400
C	386	15	5,800	15	339	17	5790
D1	570	15	8,500	21	410	21	11970
D2	387	12	4,600	14	332	14	5418
E1	315	<10	2,500	6	284	9	1890
E2	334	<10	2,700	7	302	9	2338
F1	316	15	4,700	14	84	56	4424
F2	268	18	4,800	16	124	39	4288
G	388	12	4,700	14	354	13	5432
H	518	15	7,800	15	447	17	7770
I	424	12	5,100	11	396	13	4664

J1	528	15	7,900	19	454	17		10032
J2	705	15	10,600	20	613	17		14100
K	438	18	7,900	23	324	24		10074
L	365	12	4,400	13	323	14		4745
M	451	12	5,400	10	418	13		4510
N	323	18	5,800	25	261	22		8075
O	548	15	8,200	16	464	18		8768
P	455	12	5,500	10	418	13		4550
Q	233	12	2,800	12	214	13		2796
STATE	8,638		122,100		6,930		Total	139164