

Michigan 2022 deer hunting season recap: Highlights from first year of required harvest reporting February 17, 2023, Michigan DNR News

The 2022 deer hunting season has officially come to a close. Kicking off with the Liberty Hunt Sept. 9 and finishing with the urban deer hunt in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties, which ended Jan. 31, it was a memorable season for Michigan deer hunting.

It was a year of firsts in 2022, highlighted by the requirement that successful hunters report their deer harvest within 72 hours. Because of declining response rates with the traditional deer hunter survey, Michigan joined many other states in requiring deer harvests to be reported, which should improve harvest estimates and the timeliness of deer season reports in the future. Supporting the new harvest reporting process was the launch of the [Michigan DNR Hunt Fish app](#), which allows hunters to purchase licenses, manage hunt drawings, get important updates from the DNR, report harvests, and more.

For 2022, 586,595 hunters purchased a deer license, which is about 1% less than in 2021. The first year of electronic harvest reporting resulted in a reported harvest total of 303,087 deer. Sanilac County led the state with a reported 8,150 deer harvested, followed by Montcalm (8,103), Newaygo (7,422), Jackson (7,141) and Lapeer (6,976) counties. There were 182,586 deer reported harvested in the southern Lower Peninsula, 97,714 reported from the northern Lower Peninsula and 22,787 reported from the Upper Peninsula.

There is a [full harvest report summary dashboard](#) that contains all the antlered and antlerless harvest statistics by county and season for anyone wanting to look at how things rounded out in their neck of the woods.

Unsurprisingly, the most harvest reports came during the firearm season, with 154,598 deer reported taken Nov. 15-30. Interestingly, 45,834 deer were reported taken on opening day of firearm season, translating to nearly 30% of the firearm season harvest and over 15% of the overall deer season harvest. The total reported for archery season was 95,125 deer. The combined total of harvest reports in firearm and archery seasons, 250,083 deer, made up 82.5% of the total harvest.

A majority, 56.76%, of the harvest reports that came through were for antlered deer, with 172,044 legal bucks and 131,043 antlerless deer reported. There were 23,123 hunters who reported harvesting more than one buck.

One new feature the online harvest reporting system offers is the ability to discern types of antlerless deer reported. Of the harvested deer reported as antlerless, 83% were reported as does, 6.2% as doe fawns, 8.9% as buck fawns, 1.4% as bucks with antlers less than 3 inches and 0.5% as bucks with shed antlers. The accuracy of these reports will need to be verified in future years.

Reports came in through the Department of Natural Resources website, via in-person help at customer service centers, over the phone and through the DNR Hunt Fish app. The app was designed from the beginning with harvest reporting in mind, and for many is the easiest way to check that requirement off the list.

Nearly 83% of hunters reporting a deer harvest this year were able to complete their report in under five minutes. The DNR website proved to be the most common way for reports to be submitted, with over 86% of reports received through the website, while the app accounted for 13% of reports. In total, 208,408 individual hunters submitted a harvest report.

On the heels of this first year of mandatory online harvest reporting, efforts now shift to understanding the relationship between data collected through this new method and through the traditional, mailed survey the DNR has relied upon in the past. This traditional post-season survey gives us an opportunity to cross-reference the new data, as well as get feedback from unsuccessful hunters to help collect information on hunter effort and opinions on topical management questions. It is important to continue the traditional survey in the coming years to understand reporting rates and gather information that can't be collected through the new harvest reporting system, though the scope and scale of the survey is likely to be reduced over time.