



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Wildlife Report No. 3639
June 2017

Michigan Deer Harvest Survey Report 2016 Seasons

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ABSTRACT

A survey of deer hunters was conducted following the 2016 hunting seasons to estimate hunter participation, harvest, and hunting effort. In 2016, an estimated 585,994 hunters spent 8.2 million days afield. Statewide, the number of people hunting decreased significantly by nearly 4% between 2015 and 2016. Hunters harvested about 348,000 deer. Harvest was not significantly different from 2015. Statewide, 44% of hunters harvested a deer in 2016. About 20% of hunters took an antlerless deer and 31% took an antlered buck in 2016.

Approximately 13% of deer hunters harvested two or more deer of any type. About 4% of hunters statewide harvested two antlered bucks. Levels of satisfaction with numbers of deer seen, bucks seen, and overall experience increased significantly in 2016 from 2015, while satisfaction with the number of deer harvested was not significantly changed. Statewide, 48% of hunters were satisfied with their overall hunting experience in 2015, and satisfaction was highest in the Lower Peninsula. About 193,137 hunters used a crossbow during the 2016 archery season, and they harvested approximately 74,130 deer with the crossbow. About 14% fewer individuals purchased a deer hunting license in 2016 than ten years ago in 2006. Although the overall number of license buyers declined from 2006, an increased number of people younger than 12 years of age and people older than 53 purchased a license in 2016. About 11% of the license buyers in 2016 were younger than 17 years old. Most hunters (71%) approved or strongly approved of people hunting deer with bait. Statewide, most deer hunters (59%) supported regional antler-point restrictions. In addition, most hunters (56%) supported allowing hunters to take two bucks in any combination of seasons if one of those bucks has at least four antler points on one antler. Most deer hunters (85%) supported maintaining the November 15 opening date for the regular firearm season.

Table 3 (continued). Number of deer hunters and hunting effort in Michigan by hunting season, 2015-2016.

Season and Area	Number of hunters ^a				Hunting effort (days)		
	2015	2016	95% CL ^b	Change from 2015 to 2016 (%)	2015	2016	95% CL ^c

Statewide ^c	607,113	585,994	1,714	-3.5*	8,741,086	8,244,739	137,251
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^aExcluded people that did not hunt during the season.

^b95% confidence limit for the 2016 estimate. $P < 0.005$.

^cNumber of hunters does not add up to statewide total because hunters can hunt in more than one area.

Table 5. Number of deer harvested in Michigan, 2014-2016.

Season or permit	Type of deer	2014	2015	2016	Change from 2015 to 2016 (%)
Season					
Archery	Antlerless	48,136	42,644	50,103	17.5*
	Antlered bucks	61,886	68,924	75,438	9.5*
	Sexes combined	110,022	111,568	125,541	12.5*
Regular firearm	Antlerless	67,503	64,553	57,513	-10.9*
	Antlered bucks	105,258	110,721	107,329	-3.1
	Sexes combined	172,761	175,274	164,843	-6.0*
Muzzleloader	Antlerless	13,404	11,959	14,195	18.7
	Antlered bucks	6,816	6,594	9,083	37.7*
	Sexes combined	20,220	18,553	23,278	25.5*
Early antlerless	Antlerless	3,086	3,428	2,840	-17.2
Late antlerless	Antlerless	10,264	12,266	18,035	47.0*
Liberty ^a	Antlerless	1,646	2,118	2,227	5.1
	Antlered bucks	4,079	5,163	4,113	-20.3*
	Sexes combined	5,725	7,281	6,339	-12.9
Independence ^b	Antlerless	100	105	142	35.2
	Antlered bucks	189	207	270	30.6
	Sexes combined	288	311	412	32.1
Special permits ^c	Antlerless	6,673	5,931	6,934	16.9
Grand Total	Antlerless	150,812	143,004	151,988	6.3
	Antlered bucks	178,228	191,608	196,233	2.4
	Sexes combined	329,040	334,612	348,222	4.1

^aEstimates for Liberty hunt included results of both youth and disabled hunters.

^bEstimates included only one disabled hunter season.

^cIncludes deer harvested with DMA permits. These permits could be used during any deer hunting season.

* $P < 0.005$.

Source: [Michigan 2017 Harvest Report](#), page 40

Table 6. Number of deer harvested in Michigan, 2014-2017.

Season or permit	Type of deer	2014	2016	2017	Change from 2016 to 2017 (%)
Season					
Archery	Antlerless	42,644	50,103	53,404	6.6
	Antlered bucks	68,924	75,438	83,655	10.9*
	Sexes combined	111,568	125,541	137,059	9.2*
Regular firearm	Antlerless	64,553	57,513	63,898	11.1*
	Antlered bucks	110,721	107,329	126,167	17.6*
	Sexes combined	175,274	164,843	190,065	15.3*
Muzzleloader	Antlerless	11,959	14,195	13,427	-5.4
	Antlered bucks	6,594	9,083	10,632	17.0
	Sexes combined	18,553	23,278	24,058	3.3
Early antlerless	Antlerless	3,428	2,840	2,231	-21.4
Late antlerless	Antlerless	12,266	18,035	14,340	-20.5*
Liberty ^{a,b}	Antlerless	2,118	2,227	2,282	2.5
	Antlered bucks	5,163	4,113	4,911	19.4
	Sexes combined	7,281	6,339	7,193	13.5
Independence ^b	Antlerless	105	142	248	75.3
	Antlered bucks	207	270	236	-12.4
	Sexes combined	311	412	485	17.8
Urban Archery	Antlerless	NA	NA	477	NA
	Antlered bucks	NA	NA	52	NA
	Sexes combined	NA	NA	530	NA
Disease Hunt	Antlerless	NA	NA	401	NA
	Antlered bucks	NA	NA	2	NA
	Sexes combined	NA	NA	403	NA
Special permits ^c	Antlerless	5,931	6,934	9,189	32.5
Grand Total	Antlerless	143,004	151,988	159,898	5.2
	Antlered bucks	191,608	196,233	225,656	15.0*
	Sexes combined	334,612	348,222	385,554	10.7*

^aEstimates for Liberty hunt included results of both youth and disabled hunters.

^bDisabled hunters could hunt in both the Liberty and Independence seasons.

^cIncludes deer harvested with DMA permits. These permits could be used during any deer hunting season.

*P<0.005.