2018 VERMONT WHITE-TAILED DEER HARVEST REPORT

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Most of the programs described in this report are funded through the *Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program*. This program was initiated in 1937 as the Federal Aid in Wildlife Act and created a system whereby taxes are paid on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment by the public who hunts. Today this excise tax generates more than one hundred million dollars each year that are dedicated to state wildlife restoration and management projects across the United States. The State of Vermont uses these monies for acquiring land, and for restoring and managing wildlife. These excise tax dollars, coupled with state hunting license fees, have been the predominant source of money funding the successful restoration and management of Vermont's wildlife resources.

Contents

The MISSION of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department is the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the people of Vermont.

Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

Agency of Natural Resources

1 National Life Drive, Dewey 1
Montpelier, Vermont 05620-3208
(802) 828-1000 / www.vtfishandwildlife.com

2018 White-tailed Deer Harvest Report

Overview

Hunters harvested a total of 19,011 deer during the four Vermont deer seasons in 2018, providing about 3.8 million servings of local, nutritious venison. The total harvest was 27 percent more than the previous 3-year average (14,984), and the buck harvest was 8 percent more than the previous 3-year

Figure 1. Annual antlered buck and total deer harvest in Vermont, 1900–2018.

average (9,267 bucks). The overall harvest was 19 percent more than 2017 (15,984), and the total buck harvest of 10,028 was 6 percent more than the 2017 buck harvest (9,477; Figure 1).

Hunting conditions were generally good during the 2018 hunting seasons. Statewide surveys conducted in 2018 indicated that apple, beechnut, and oak mast production were all fair to poor. With limited mast available, deer tend to concentrate near available food sources and utilize fields more often which makes them more accessible to hunters. Additionally, cool weather persisted for most of the October archery season, causing deer to move more during the day. Cold, blustery conditions limited the harvest on youth weekend and the opening weekend of rifle season. However, widespread, occasionally substantial, snow cover through November and December further concentrated deer and helped hunters locate them. This helped increase the harvest, particularly during the muzzleloader season.

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department estimated no substantial change (1 percent increase) in the deer population from 2017 to 2018. This was primarily due to increased antlerless harvests in 2016 and 2017 and a more moderate
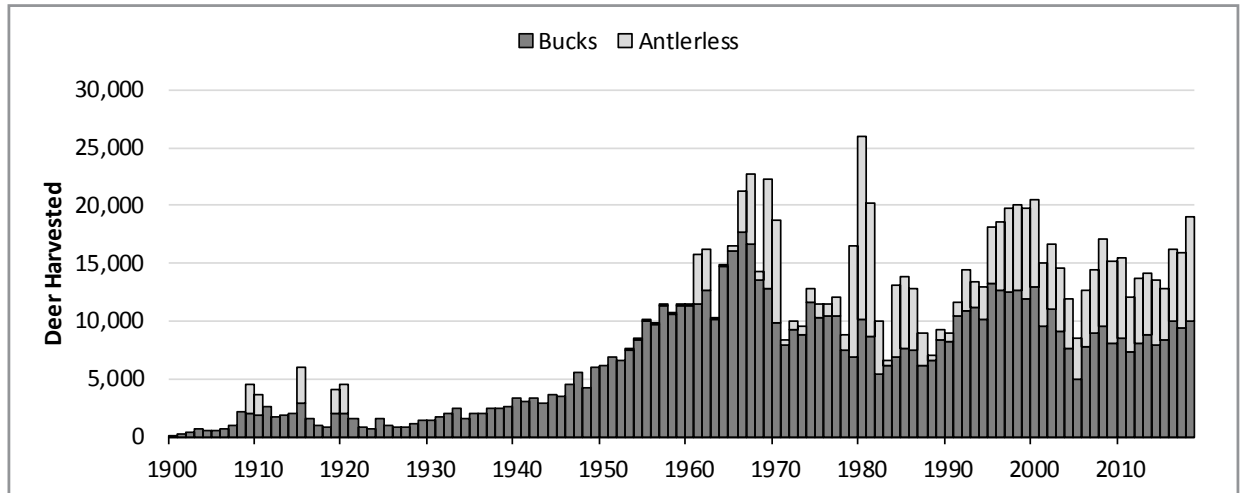
winter in 2018 (albeit still below average). Each winter, a Winter Severity Index (WSI) is calculated from 38 weather stations throughout Vermont. Points are accumulated for each day when temperatures are 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below or the snow depth is 18 inches or more. The statewide average WSI for 2018 was 38.4, slightly below the 30-year average of 43.9 (Figure 2). While population stability is usually desirable, in this case it meant that deer populations in many parts of Vermont remained above established objectives. Therefore, the number of muzzleloader season antlerless permits was increased to provide additional harvest opportunity and to reduce populations in some parts of the state and limit population growth in other areas.

The primary goal of Vermont's deer management strategy is to keep the deer herd stable, healthy, and in balance with available habitat. Deer that go into winter with heavier body weights are better able to survive harsh winter conditions, and high reproductive rates mean the population can rebound quickly. This helps to minimize the boom and bust cycles that have historically characterized Vermont's deer population and harvest (Figure 1). Fawn weights, yearling buck antler size, and reproductive data from road-killed deer indicate populations in much of Vermont have reached or exceeded the carrying capacity of their habitat. Allowing an appropriate number of antlerless deer to be harvested helps to keep populations from becoming overabundant, and thereby helps to keep the deer and their habitats healthy and productive.
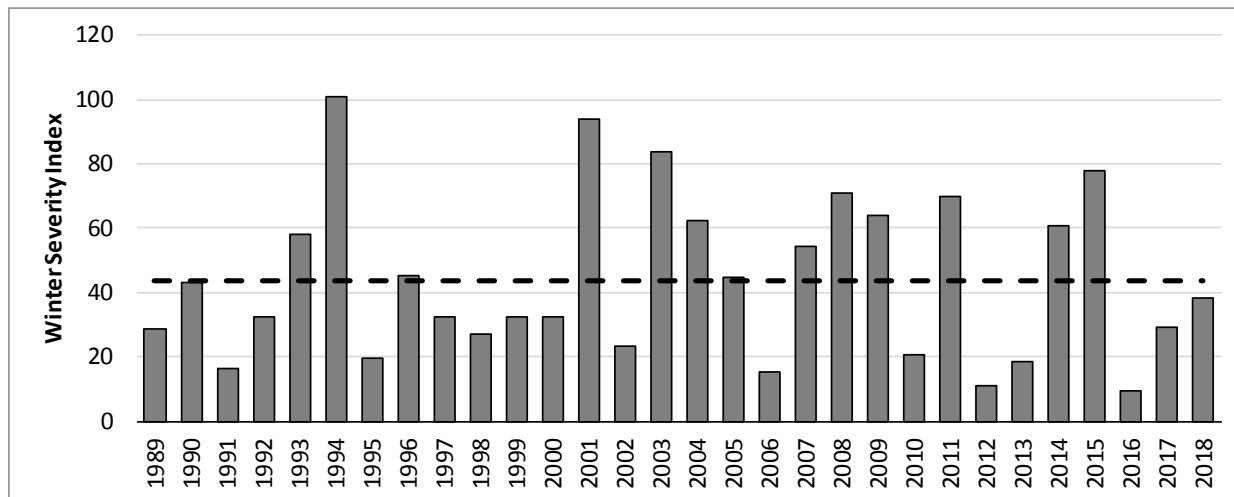

Figure 2. Statewide winter severity index (WSI) in Vermont, 1989–2018. The horizontal dashed line shows the 30-year average WSI of 44.

Season Results

Antlered bucks comprised 53 percent of the total harvest, while 38 percent were adult does, 3 percent were male fawns, and 6 percent were female fawns (Figure 3, Table 1). Rifle season accounted for 39 percent of the total deer harvest, while 21 percent were harvested during archery season, 33 percent during muzzleloader season, and 7 percent during youth season (Figure 4, Table 1).

Archery Season (October 6–November 2, December 1–9, 2018)

Archers harvested 3,984 deer during the split 37-day archery season (28 days in October–November and 9 days in December). This was up 11 percent from the 2017 harvest (3,578) and was 14 percent more than the previous 3-year average (3,481). The archery harvest was composed of 24 percent antlered bucks, 64 percent adult does, and 12 percent fawns (Figure 5, Table 1). The late archery season accounted for 6 percent (250 deer) of the overall archery harvest and 2 percent (22 deer) of the archery buck harvest. Hunters using crossbows accounted for 40 percent of the harvest, up from 34 percent in 2017 and 32 percent in 2016. Crossbows became legal for all hunters age 50 or older for the first time in 2016. In 2015, crossbows accounted for 14 percent of the archery harvest.

The prevalence of does in the archery harvest demonstrates that bow hunting is an important mechanism for deer population management. Harvesting does helps prevent overabundant and unhealthy deer. All wildlife management units were open to the taking of antlerless deer during the archery season in 2018.

Youth Season (November 3–4, 2018)

Youth hunters harvested a total of 1,342 deer during the 2-day youth season. This was 8 percent less than 2017 (1,462), and similar to the previous 3-year average (1,392). The youth harvest was composed of 32 percent antlered bucks, 47 percent adult does, and 21 percent fawns (Figure 6, Table 1).

The youth season is particularly important for deer research and management in Vermont. Youth hunters during the youth season can harvest any deer, regardless of sex or antler characteristics. As a result, the youth harvest provides a representative cross-section of the entire deer population, including spike-antlered bucks. Data from harvested does and fawns are also useful for deer management purposes.

Figure 3. Age and sex distribution of the harvest.

Male Fawns - 648
3% of Harvest

Female Fawns - 1,057
6% of Harvest

Adult Does - 7,278
38% of Harvest

Antlered Bucks - 10,028
53% of Harvest

19,011 Deer Harvested
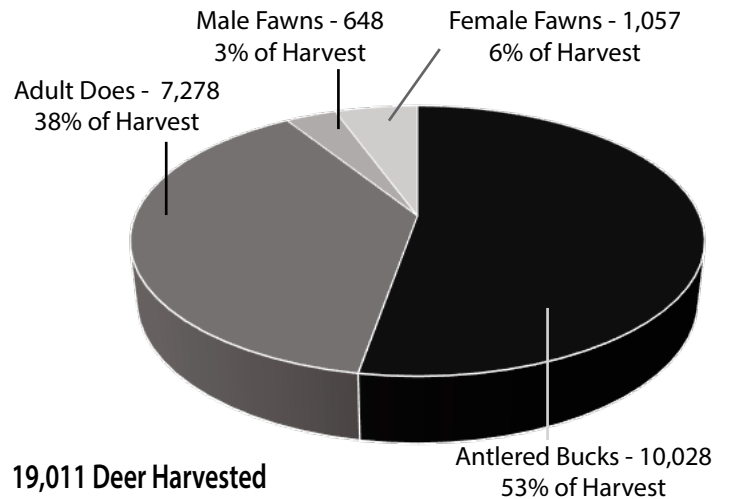
Figure 4. Distribution of the harvest by season.

Archery - 3,984
21% of Harvest

Youth -1,342
7% of Harvest

Rifle - 7,480
39% of Harvest

Muzzleloader - 6,205
33% of Harvest

19,011 Deer Harvested
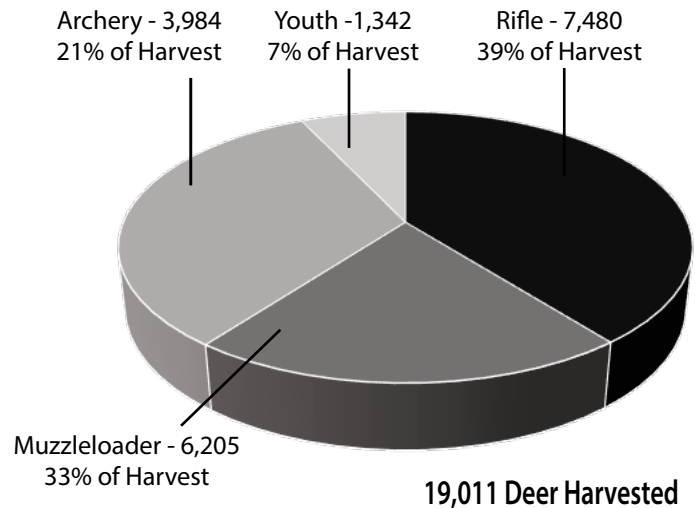
Figure 5. Age and sex distribution of the archery harvest.

Female Fawns - 292
7% of Harvest

Male Fawns - 181
5% of Harvest

Antlered Bucks - 969
24% of Harvest

Adult Does - 2,542
64% of Harvest

3,984 Deer Harvested
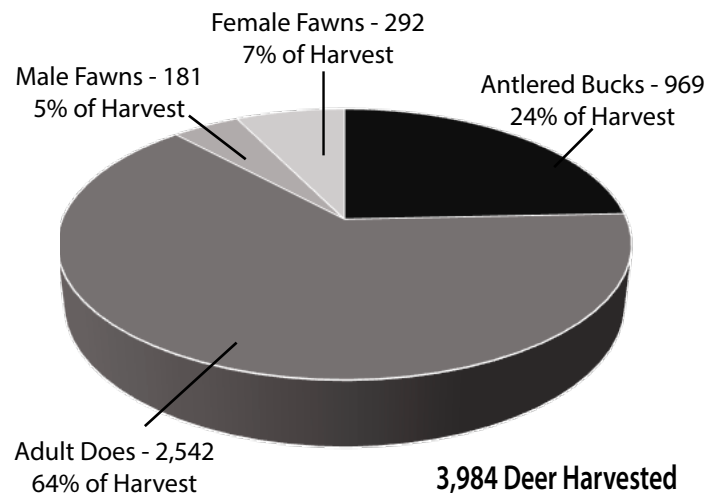
Figure 6. Age and sex distribution of the youth harvest.

Male Fawns - 147
11% of Harvest

Female Fawns - 135
10% of Harvest

Antlered Bucks - 433
32% of Harvest

Adult Does - 627
47% of Harvest

1,342 Deer Harvested

Table 1. 2018 Legal Deer Harvest Numbers and Percentages by Season and Age–Sex

Season		Antlered Buck	Adult Doe	Male Fawn	Female Fawn	Total
Archery	**Number Harvested**	**969**	**2,542**	**181**	**292**	**3,984**
	% of Archery Season	24%	64%	5%	7%	
	% of Age/Sex Class	10%	35%	28%	28%	
	% of Total Harvest	5%	13%	1%	2%	21%
Youth	**Number Harvested**	**433**	**627**	**147**	**135**	**1,342**
	% of Youth Season	32%	47%	11%	10%	
	% of Age/Sex Class	4%	9%	23%	13%	
	% of Total Harvest	2%	3%	1%	1%	7%
Rifle	**Number Harvested**	**7,480**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**7,480**
	% of Rifle Season	100%				
	% of Age/Sex Class	75%				
	% of Total Harvest	39%				39%
Muzzleloader	**Number Harvested**	**1,146**	**4,109**	**320**	**630**	**6,205**
	% of Muzzleloader Season	18%	66%	5%	10%	
	% of Age/Sex Class	11%	56%	49%	60%	
	% of Total Harvest	6%	22%	2%	3%	33%
Total	**Number Harvested**	**10,0028**	**7,278**	**648**	**1,057**	**19,011**
	% of Total Harvest	**53%**	**38%**	**3%**	**6%**	

Rifle Season (November 10–25, 2018)

Hunters reported a total of 7,480 antlered bucks during the traditional 16-day rifle season. This was a 3 percent increase from 2017 (7,272), and 4 percent more than the previous 3-year average (7,218).

Hunter effort surveys were again mailed to 10,000 randomly selected licensed Vermont hunters in 2018. This survey provides information on the number of hunters actively participating in deer hunting, the amount of time they spend afield, and the number of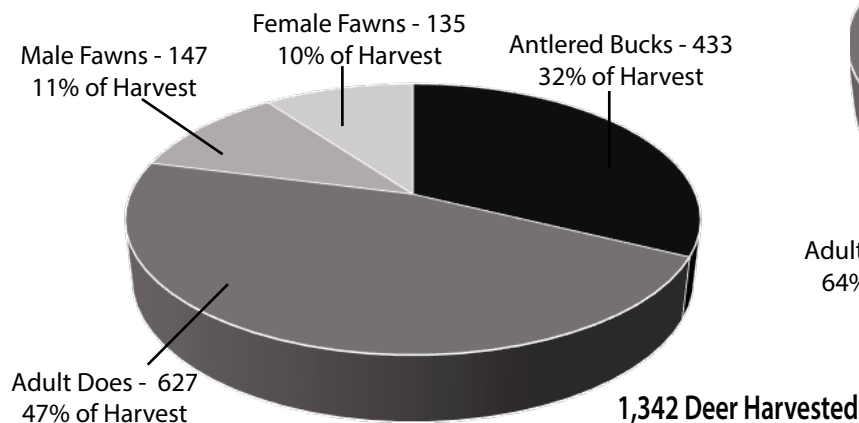 deer, moose, and other species they see while hunting. These data are used to monitor deer, moose, bear, and furbearer distribution and population trends.

Hunters returned 1,227 valid surveys (12 percent return rate), with 15 percent reporting that they did not hunt during the rifle season in 2018. Hunters reported an average of 37 hours afield during the rifle season which is slightly lower than the previous 3-year average (39 hours). Timing of hunter effort within the rifle season is also useful for modeling population size and harvest rates. As usual, Saturday and Sunday of opening weekend saw the greatest hunting effort and yielded the greatest harvests among all 16 days of the season (Figure 7). Respondents reported a total of 35,946 hunter-hours, equivalent to 18 people working 40 hours per week year-round. Clearly, this volunteer survey effort is more than the department could ever achieve with its own staff.

Hunters reported seeing an average of 3.6 deer per 10 hours of hunting. This was greater than 2017 (2.8 deer/10 hours hunting),

and the highest sighting rate in the history of this survey (since 1999; Table 2). The buck sighting rate of 0.37 per 10 hours of hunting (about 1 buck per 27 hours) was identical to the rate reported in 2017, and the highest buck sighting rate since the department began tracking this number in 2003.

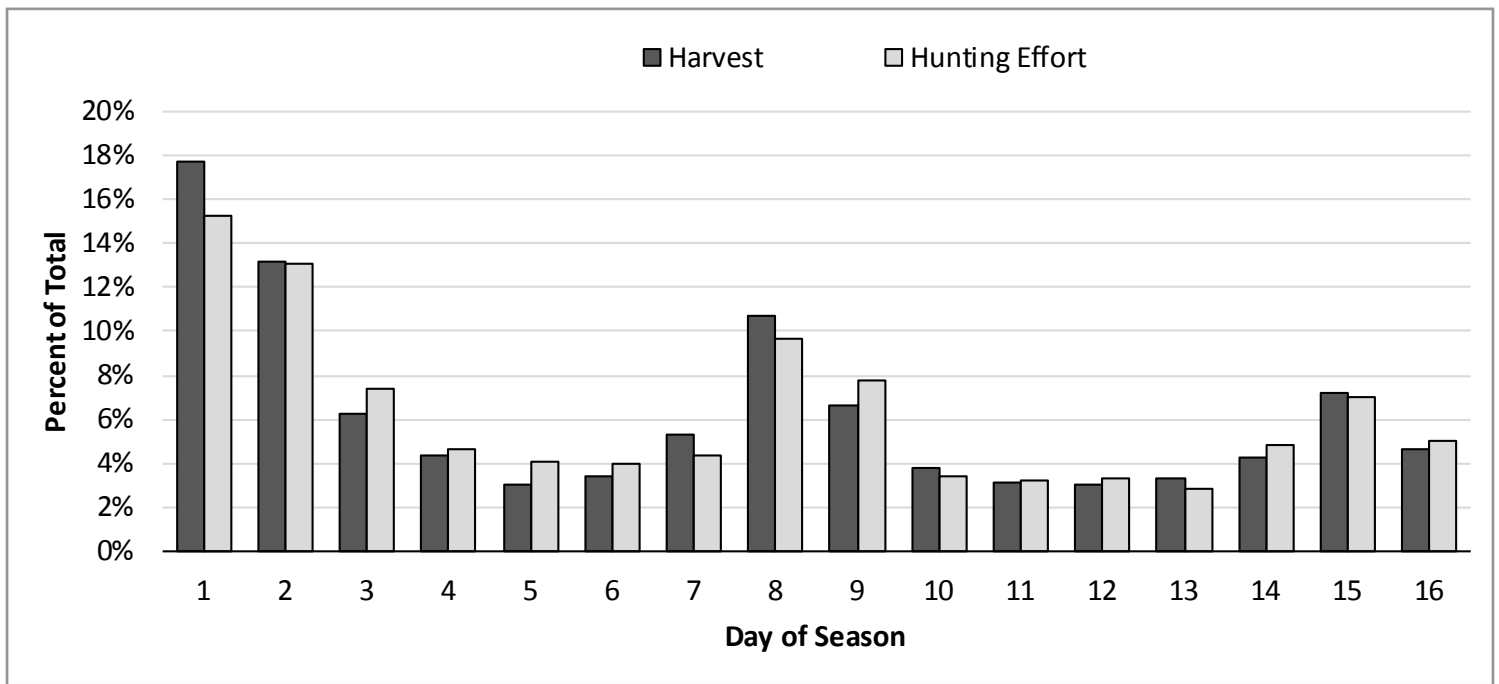photo courtesy of VT Big Game Trophy Club

Figure 7. Daily hunting effort and buck harvest during the rifle season.

Table 2. Number of Deer Seen per 10 Hours Hunting by WMU as Reported by Rifle Hunters

WMU	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
A	6.0	2.7	3.5	4.6	4.5	3.0	1.5	4.1	2.6	4.9	6.3	5.4	4.7	3.9	5.6	7.1
B	3.2	2.1	3.6	3.6	4.1	3.3	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.3	3.9	3.6	2.1	4.1	3.8	5.1
C	2.7	1.2	2.4	1.9	3.2	2.7	2.9	2.4	1.2	2.1	2.5	2.3	1.3	1.8	2.2	3.0
D1[1]	2.1	1.1	3.3	3.8	2.9	3.3	2.6	2.4	2.1	2.8	2.5	3.2	1.9	2.6	3.2	4.4
D2[1]	1.7	1.0	2.7	2.0	3.4	2.8	2.4	2.3	2.0	2.1	2.9	2.1	1.2	1.8	2.3	2.2
E1[1]	0.5	0.5	0.7	1.2	1.9	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.7	1.3	1.1	1.3	0.4	0.9	1.4	0.9
E2[1]	0.5	0.5	0.7	1.2	1.9	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.7	1.3	1.1	1.2	0.7	1.0	1.4	0.7
F1	3.8	2.4	3.6	3.2	5.2	2.6	3.0	2.4	2.3	4.1	3.3	4.3	2.6	3.7	3.9	5.5
F2	2.7	2.1	3.1	3.0	3.8	3.6	1.7	3.5	1.8	4.6	1.8	2.5	1.7	2.9	2.8	3.3
G	2.8	1.7	1.6	1.9	2.9	2.0	2.2	1.7	1.7	1.8	2.9	1.8	1.5	1.8	2.6	3.2
H[1]	3.8	1.5	2.2	2.6	4.7	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.6	2.3	2.7	3.0	1.8	2.2	2.3	2.2
I	1.6	1.0	1.6	1.3	3.1	1.0	1.6	1.4	1.0	1.3	1.9	2.0	1.0	1.6	2.2	2.1
J1	2.8	1.8	3.6	3.9	4.2	3.3	2.0	2.9	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.8	1.8	3.9	4.5	4.9
J2[1]	3.6	2.3	3.1	3.2	3.9	2.4	2.1	2.3	2.1	2.4	2.0	2.4	2.9	2.6	3.0	4.2
K	2.4	2.3	3.7	3.5	3.6	4.1	3.1	2.6	2.8	3.7	2.4	2.4	2.0	2.5	2.3	5.1
L	1.2	1.2	1.6	1.5	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.4	1.3	1.7	1.5	1.6	3.0	2.1	1.8
M[2]	1.5	1.3	2.0	2.0	2.3	1.9	1.7	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.5	2.7	2.4	2.5
N	2.8	3.5	3.1	3.3	2.8	3.2	3.7	2.3	1.9	2.5	2.0	2.8	2.5	3.1	2.7	2.9
O[1,2]	2.7	1.7	2.9	3.4	4.3	2.6	2.0	1.7	1.5	2.9	3.1	2.8	1.6	2.4	2.6	3.2
P	0.9	1.8	2.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.0	0.8	1.0	1.2	0.9	1.7	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.9
Q[1]	1.9	2.3	2.0	1.4	3.5	1.6	1.3	0.5	1.2	1.4	2.0	2.4	1.2	1.3	1.2	2.1
Total	**2.6**	**1.8**	**2.8**	**2.7**	**3.5**	**2.6**	**2.2**	**2.2**	**1.8**	**2.5**	**2.5**	**2.6**	**1.8**	**2.6**	**2.8**	**3.6**

[1] WMU boundaries were changed in 2014.
[2] Prior to 2014, data shown for WMU M are from old WMUs M1 and O1. Data for WMU O are from old WMUs M2 and O2.

Muzzleloader Season (December 1–9, 2018)

Muzzleloader hunters harvested a total of 6,205 deer during the 9-day season. This was 69 percent more than 2017 (3,672) and 114 percent more than the previous 3-year average (2,893). The total harvest and the buck harvest (1,146) were both all-time records for this season, surpassing the previous records (4,656 total deer, 1,006 bucks) set in 2000 by substantial margins. Of the muzzleloader harvest, 18 percent were antlered bucks, 66 percent adult does, and 15 percent fawns (Figure 8, Table 1).

Muzzleloader hunters play an important role in deer management, helping control total deer numbers in Vermont through shooting of antlerless deer. In 2018, a total of 27,000 antlerless deer permits were authorized by the Fish and Wildlife Board for 18 of the state's 21 wildlife management units (WMUs). This represented a 10 percent increase from the number of permits authorized in 2017 and was intended to reduce deer populations in some parts of Vermont while stabilizing the population in other areas. Antlerless permits were not recommended for WMUs E1, E2, and P, where deer populations were estimated to be below established long-term goals. Permit holder success was 21 percent statewide (5,026 antlerless deer harvested), varying from a high of 33 percent in WMU C to a low of 16 percent in WMU F1 (Table 3).

Figure 8. Age and sex distribution of the muzzleloader harvest.

Female Fawns - 630
10% of Harvest

Male Fawns - 320
5% of Harvest

Antlered Bucks - 1,146
18% of Harvest

Adult Does - 4,109
66% of Harvest

6,205 Deer Harvested
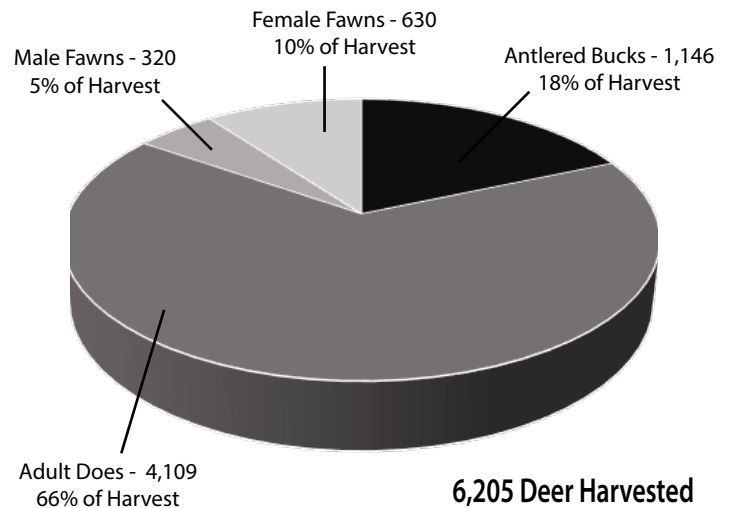
Table 3. 2018 Muzzleloader Antlerless Permit Allotments and Harvest by WMU

WMU	Permits Available	Permits Distributed	Landowner Permits		Antlerless Harvest	% Success
A	1,100	720	13	(2%)	135	19%
B	5,500	5,500	191	(3%)	1,026	19%
C	800	800	118	(15%)	263	33%
D1	1,200	1,200	224	(19%)	349	29%
D2	800	800	99	(12%)	167	21%
F1	1,000	900	11	(1%)	148	16%
F2	1,300	1,300	46	(4%)	253	19%
G	300	300	42	(14%)	85	28%
H	1,100	1,100	114	(10%)	220	20%
I	300	300	19	(6%)	72	24%
J1	1,200	1,200	121	(10%)	309	26%
J2	2,500	2,500	214	(9%)	583	23%
K	4,000	2,446	33	(1%)	450	18%
L	300	300	16	(5%)	92	31%
M	300	300	27	(9%)	71	24%
N	2,000	1,487	12	(1%)	270	18%
O	2,600	2,300	74	(3%)	459	20%
Q	700	604	17	(3%)	107	18%
Total	**27,000**	**24,057**	**1,391**	**(6%)**	**5,059**	**21%**

[1]Permits issued through the landowner lottery. These are included in the total number of permits distributed.

Geographic Distribution

Deer are not evenly distributed across Vermont, and neither was the 2018 deer harvest. Deer harvest densities ranged from 5.8 deer/square mile in WMU A to 0.4 deer/square mile in WMU E2 (Figure 9). Areas west of the Green Mountains (WMUs A, B, F1, F2, K, and N) once again accounted for nearly 40 percent of the total deer harvest in 2018 (Table 4) despite having only 24 percent of the state's deer habitat. These areas have productive soils, a lot of farmland, and generally experience easier winter conditions than the rest of the state, allowing them to sustain higher deer densities.
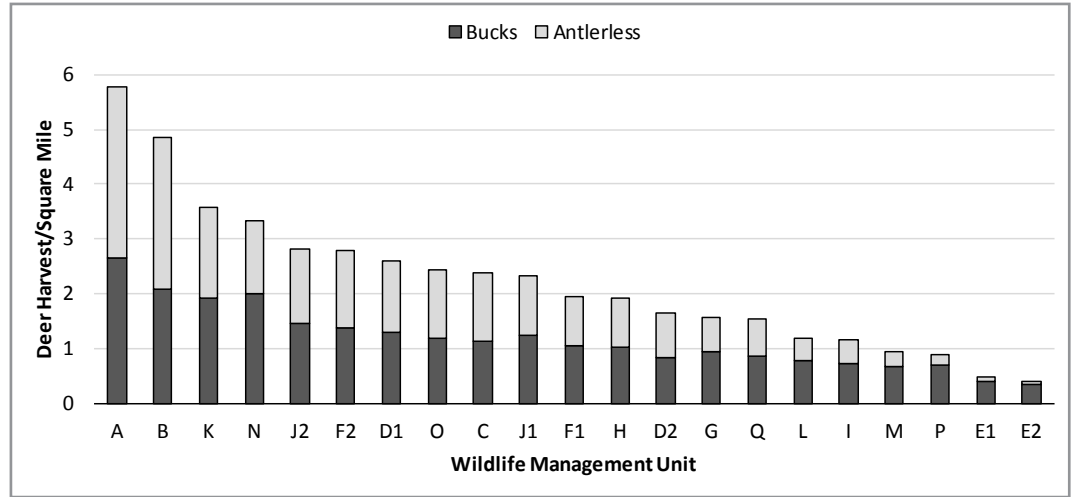
Figure 9. Antlered buck and total deer harvest density by wildlife management unit.

The distribution of the deer harvest changes over time as habitat conditions change. In 2018, 28 towns saw their highest total deer harvests ever, and another 61 towns had total deer harvests among their 10 best (Figure 10). Conversely, 10 towns had total deer harvests that were among their 10 worst since 1960.

Table 6 provides a breakdown of the harvest by county, town, and season. A map of the 2018 deer harvest distribution by town and WMU is available at the end of this report.

Bag Limits

A total of 14,989 individual hunters were successful in harvesting a deer in 2018. Of those, 2,730 (18 percent) harvested two deer, and 646 (4 percent) reached the 3-deer bag limit for all seasons (Figure 11). The percentages of hunters harvesting 2 or 3 deer were greater than those observed in 2017 (15 percent and 2 percent, respectively) or in prior years. Table 5 provides a detailed breakdown of the number of antlered bucks and antlerless deer harvested by individual successful hunters.

2 Deer - 18%
2,730 Hunters

3 Deer - 4%
646 Hunters

1 Deer - 78%
11,613 Hunters

Figure 11. Percentage of hunters harvesting 1, 2, or 3 deer in 2018.

Figure 10. Towns with record or near-record total deer harvests in 2018.

Table 4. 2018 Deer Harvest by Wildlife Management Unit and Season

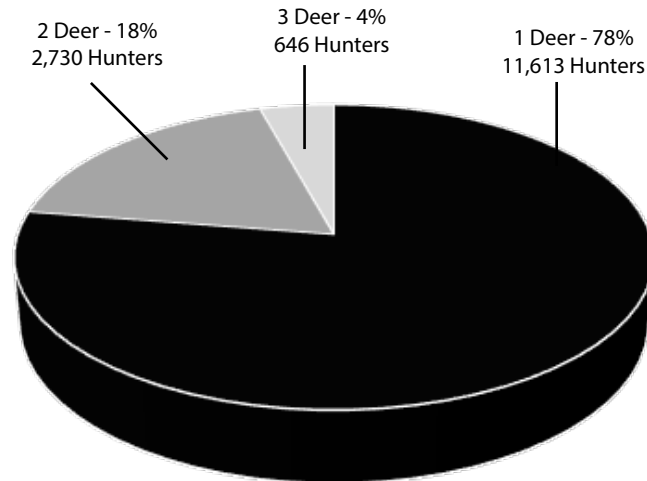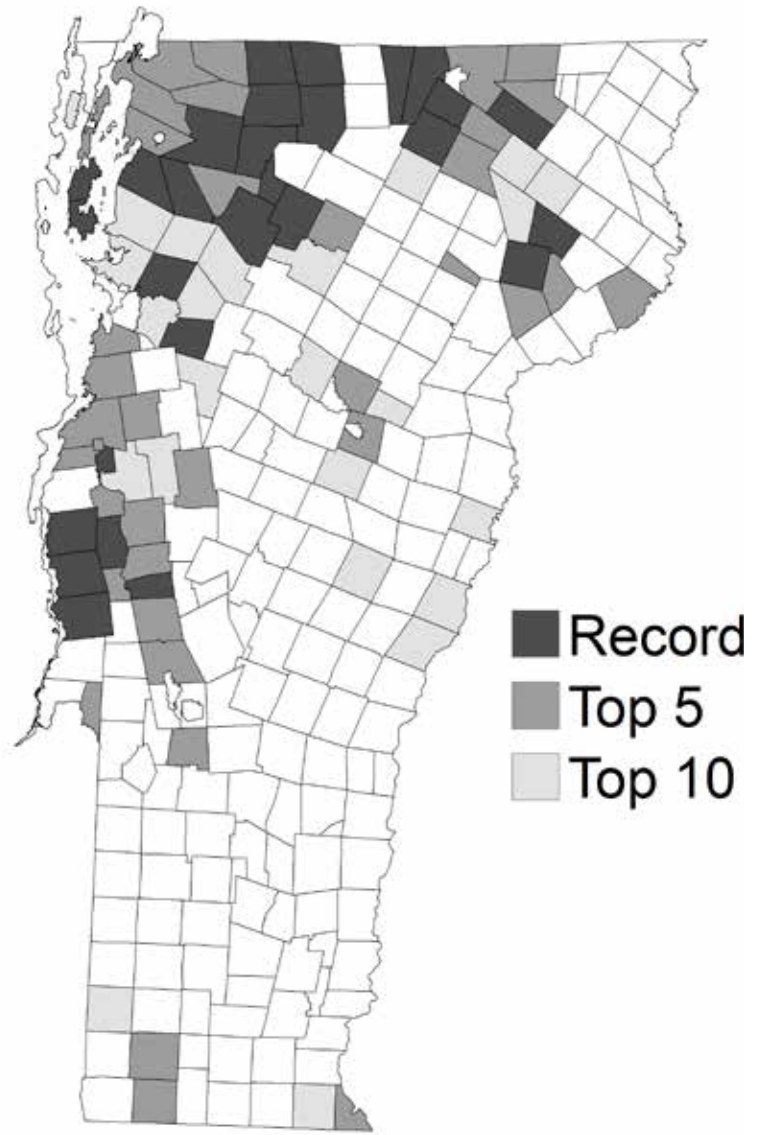| WMU	Archery Buck	Archery Antlerless	Youth Buck	Youth Antlerless	Rifle Buck	Muzzleloader Buck	Muzzleloader Antlerless	Total Buck	Total Antlerless	Total Harvest
A	38	69	7	16	129	14	135	188	220	408
B	187	539	78	141	913	106	1,026	1,284	1,706	2,990
C	39	152	20	73	316	58	263	433	488	921
D1	101	283	63	119	512	61	349	737	751	1,488
D2	25	110	26	42	226	47	167	324	319	643
E1	3	14	5	9	108	11	0	127	23	150
E2	3	15	1	9	95	13	0	112	24	136
F1	34	109	22	26	249	29	148	334	283	617
F2	54	104	14	26	263	36	253	367	383	750
G	32	133	7	23	270	55	85	364	241	605
H	60	199	17	48	391	64	220	532	467	999
I	24	91	4	19	245	31	72	304	182	486
J1	71	218	24	51	488	74	309	657	578	1,235
J2	82	305	42	81	770	128	583	1,022	969	1,991
K	61	199	41	76	647	97	450	846	725	1,571
L	21	36	5	14	220	43	92	289	142	431
M	13	36	11	19	230	46	71	300	126	426
N	45	119	24	41	496	78	270	643	430	1,073
O	43	180	14	45	500	93	459	650	684	1,334
P	17	60	6	25	255	37	0	315	85	400
Q	16	44	2	6	157	25	107	200	157	357
Total	**969**	**3,015**	**433**	**909**	**7,480**	**1,146**	**5,059**	**10,028**	**8,983**	**19,011**

Biological Data Collection

Each fall department biologists visit big game reporting stations throughout the state to collect biological information from harvested deer. These data are important for monitoring the health of Vermont's deer herd and evaluating the effects of deer management strategies. In 2018, the department operated 24 biological reporting stations during the youth season and 10 during opening weekend of the rifle season and examined a total of 915 deer.

Youth season is an important data collection period because youth hunters may harvest any deer regardless of sex, age or antler characteristics. Biologists examined 509 deer (38 percent of the youth harvest) during youth weekend, including 179 antlered bucks, 230 adult does, and 100 fawns. Yearlings accounted for 66 percent of antlered bucks examined during youth weekend, 2-year-olds were 30 percent, and 3-year-olds or older were 4 percent (Table 6).

Data collected during the rifle season provide additional information on age and antler development in legal-antlered bucks and, when compared to youth season data, allow the department to assess the effect of the antler restriction on the harvest. Since 2015, a concerted effort has been made to collect additional data on buck age structure and antler development. Biologists examined 396 antlered bucks (5 percent of the rifle harvest) during the 2018 rifle season.

Additionally, the department asked all successful rifle season hunters to provide a tooth from their deer. This effort resulted in an additional 2,999 teeth (40 percent of the rifle harvest). In

Table 5. Number of Antlered Bucks and Total Deer Harvested by Individual Successful Hunters in 2018

		Antlered Bucks 0	Antlered Bucks 1	Antlered Bucks 2	Total
Antlerless Deer	0		6,590	508	7,098 (47%)
	1	5,023	1,592	241	6,856 (46%)
	2	630	348		978 (7%)
	3	57			57 (0%)
	Total	5,710 (38%)	8,530 (57%)	749 (5%)	**14,989**

Table 6. Average Dressed Weights and Antler Beam Diameters (ABD) of Deer Examined at Biological Reporting Stations During Youth Season

	Age	Weight (lbs)	ABD (mm)	Sample Size	% of Adults
Males	0	66.5		51	
	1	116.4	16.3	115	66%
	2	151.2	22.0	52	30%
	3	170.2	31.6	5	3%
	4+	166.0	33.3	2	1%

	Age	Weight		Sample Size	% of Adults
Females	0	55.5		46	
	1	98.1		35	16%
	2	108.8		49	22%
	3	111.1		42	19%
	4+	118.8		99	44%

total, accurate age information will be available for 45 percent of the rifle buck harvest and 36 percent of the total buck harvest. These data will allow for comparison of age distribution and antler development among different regions of the state and improve the precision of statewide and regional population estimates.

Looking to the Future

The winter of 2018–2019 has been harder than average in central and northern Vermont, but relatively easy in western Vermont and along the Connecticut river valley. In many areas, snow has persisted since early November. Winter severity in March and April has the greatest effect on overwinter deer survival, so it's too early to make predictions. However, the winter severity index will certainly be above average in most areas and may reach severe levels in some areas. This means there will be fewer deer in 2019 than there were in 2018. Unfortunately, the areas where population reductions are most needed are not the areas experiencing a severe winter.

In 2018, the department was once again left with unallocated muzzleloader antlerless deer permits in WMUs A, F1, K, N, O, and Q (Table 3). It is very likely that there were more permits available in these units than there are muzzleloader hunters. In order to responsibly manage deer in these units, it will be necessary to find alternative ways to harvest antlerless deer and thereby control deer numbers. For example, the antlerless harvest in WMU N could be doubled with little or no impact on the population (compare WMUs N and B in Figure 9) and would need to be increased even further to achieve the population objectives established in the 2010–2020 Big Game Management Plan. If too few does continue to be taken, the deer herd in southwestern Vermont will become unhealthy and susceptible to drastic winter losses and disease. Deer from this region already have consistently lower body weights and smaller antlers than deer from other parts of the state. Habitats damaged by overabundant deer take longer to recover than reduced deer numbers. Some parts of Vermont are still dealing with habitat impacts caused by overabundant deer decades ago.

Hunters play a critical role in the management of deer in Vermont. They provide the mechanism for controlling deer numbers and they provide useful biological information from the animals they harvest. Some rifle season hunters also provide valuable information on hunting effort and sighting rates of deer, moose, and other species. Hunters have a responsibility to contribute to the sound management of these species, yet only 12 percent of rifle season hunter effort surveys were returned in 2018. Low return rates for this survey, as well as other surveys, make the information less useful and limit the department's ability to estimate population sizes of deer, moose, bear, and other species. To counteract these poor return rates, the department opened the online version of the deer hunter effort survey to all hunters in 2018. This did increase the number of respondents, but we are still evaluating whether these voluntary data are comparable to the data received from survey recipients. While these data should be useful in the future, they will not eliminate the challenges created by poor return rates.

Comprehensive Deer Management Evaluation

The Fish & Wildlife Department completed phase II of our comprehensive deer management evaluation in 2018 and published a final report in early 2019. This evaluation looked at the effects of regulation changes passed in 2016 (e.g., archery season extension, allowing crossbows for hunters aged 50 and older), evaluated the effects of the antler restriction on the buck population and the buck harvest, and assessed options for further changes to the timing and structure of the deer hunting seasons.

In early 2019 the department recommended a broad package of changes to deer hunting regulations. These changes are intended to improve hunter opportunity and hunter satisfaction while simultaneously improving the department's ability to manage the deer herd. Additional details, and the current status of this proposal, can be found at vtfishandwildlife.com

2020–2030 Big Game Management Plan

The department is in the process of developing a new 10-year Big Game Management Plan for Vermont's four big game species. The plan identifies the major issues facing each species, establishes management goals, and guides management actions for the next decade. There will be lots of opportunity for public involvement during 2019, so hunters with ideas about how these species should be managed, or important issues the department should address, will have ample opportunity to let the department know.

photo courtesy of VT Big Game Trophy Club

Heaviest Deer

A total of 141 deer were reported with scaled weights of 200 pounds or more. The heaviest deer weighed 260 pounds and was taken in the town of Guildhall. At least one 200-pound deer was reported from every WMU. For more information on large deer harvested in Vermont, visit the Vermont Big Game Trophy Club website at vermontbiggametrophyclub.com.

Table 7. Bucks Weighing at Least 200 Pounds in the 2018 Deer Harvest

(Weights have been corrected to account for remaining organs. Weights in parentheses are the reported weights of deer that were not completely field dressed.)

Season	WMU	Town	Weight	Points	Season	WMU	Town	Weight	Points
Rifle	E2	GUILDHALL	260	10	Rifle	D2	CONCORD	212	8
Rifle	O	HARTLAND	252	9	Bow	H	BARRE	212	9
Rifle	E2	FERDINAND	251	6	Rifle	B	FAIRFAX	211	9
Rifle	E2	EAST HAVEN	250	7	Rifle	D1	ALBANY	210	3
Rifle	F1	FERRISBURG	236	8	Rifle	D1	TROY	210	7
Bow	D1	CRAFTSBURY	235	7	Rifle	L	PLYMOUTH	210	8
Rifle	L	WESTON	233	9	Rifle	E2	MAIDSTONE	210	8
Rifle	J2	LUNENBURG	232	10	Rifle	J1	CHELSEA	210	8
Rifle	E1	NORTON	231	8	Rifle	F1	ORWELL	210	8
Rifle	O	VERNON	230	10	Rifle	G	JOHNSON	210	8
Rifle	J2	CORINTH	230	6	Bow	F1	ORWELL	209	7
Rifle	K	WEST RUTLAND	228	7	Rifle	F2	WILLISTON	209	8
Rifle	B	SHELDON	227	9	Rifle	I	CHITTENDEN	208	8
Rifle	C	ENOSBURG	227	8	Rifle	B	SWANTON	208	8
Rifle	E2	CONCORD	225 (228)	8	Rifle	B	BAKERSFIELD	208	10
Rifle	A	GRAND ISLE	225	8	Rifle	J1	BETHEL	208	9
Rifle	O	POMFRET	224	8	Youth	E1	NORTON	208	7
Rifle	E2	KIRBY	223 (237)	8	Bow	Q	DOVER	208	8
Rifle	E2	GRANBY	223 (237)	10	Rifle	C	BAKERSFIELD	206 (215)	9
Rifle	J2	CONCORD	223 (237)	7	Rifle	J2	LUNENBURG	206 (213)	7
Rifle	F1	ORWELL	223 (226)	10	Rifle	E1	LEMINGTON	206	7
Rifle	E2	LUNENBURG	223	11	Youth	D1	CRAFTSBURY	206	8
Rifle	B	FRANKLIN	223	8	Rifle	F1	FERRISBURG	206	8
Rifle	D1	HOLLAND	221	9	Rifle	H	WORCESTER	206	8
Rifle	E2	VICTORY	221	10	Rifle	Q	WILMINGTON	206	9
Rifle	I	BRANDON	220	8	Bow	L	MOUNT HOLLY	206	8
Rifle	Q	NEWFANE	220	7	Rifle	E1	BLOOMFIELD	206	8
Bow	B	ENOSBURG	220	8	Rifle	P	WOODFORD	206	8
Rifle	E2	GUILDHALL	218 (231)	9	Rifle	I	HANCOCK	205	8
Rifle	B	GEORGIA	218	8	Rifle	B	HIGHGATE	205	3
Rifle	D2	LYNDON	217	8	Rifle	B	ESSEX	205	9
Rifle	E1	CANAAN	217	8	Rifle	D1	EDEN	205	8
Rifle	E1	MORGAN	216	6	Youth	J2	CORINTH	204	7
Rifle	E2	VICTORY	215	10	Rifle	J2	WATERFORD	204	8
Rifle	E2	GRANBY	215	10	Rifle	P	WHITINGHAM	204	10
Rifle	B	HIGHGATE	215	4	Rifle	L	WESTON	204	8
Rifle	E2	GUILDHALL	214	10	Rifle	E2	GRANBY	204	8
Rifle	C	JOHNSON	212 (225)	9	Muzzleloader	J2	RYEGATE	203 (216)	5
Rifle	J1	STOCKBRIDGE	212	4	Rifle	D1	GLOVER	203 (216)	7
Rifle	F2	BRISTOL	212	7	Muzzleloader	E2	BRUNSWICK	203	12

Table 7. Bucks Weighing at Least 200 Pounds in the 2018 Deer Harvest

Season	WMU	Town	Weight	Points
Rifle	J2	NORWICH	203	7
Rifle	D1	IRASBURG	203	8
Rifle	I	ROCHESTER	203	8
Rifle	F2	WILLISTON	203	8
Rifle	F1	ADDISON	203	8
Rifle	D2	WHEELOCK	203	10
Rifle	J2	GROTON	202 (214)	8
Rifle	H	MARSHFIELD	202 (214)	8
Rifle	D2	BURKE	202 (214)	8
Rifle	D2	LYNDON	202 (214)	6
Rifle	F1	SHOREHAM	202 (205)	8
Rifle	F1	CHARLOTTE	202	9
Rifle	H	CABOT	202	8
Rifle	H	PEACHAM	202	8
Rifle	K	BENSON	202	7
Rifle	B	FRANKLIN	202	8
Rifle	B	HIGHGATE	202	8
Rifle	E1	BLOOMFIELD	202	6
Rifle	P	WHITINGHAM	202	8
Rifle	O	HARTFORD	201 (213)	10
Rifle	F1	CHARLOTTE	201 (213)	8
Youth	F1	ORWELL	201 (204)	7
Bow	D1	GLOVER	201	6
Rifle	L	SHREWSBURY	201	8
Rifle	E1	AVERILL	201	7
Rifle	C	BERKSHIRE	201	6
Rifle	M	GRAFTON	200 (212)	8
Rifle	J2	BARNET	200 (209)	6
Rifle	F2	ORWELL	200 (206)	7
Muzzleloader	D1	NEWPORT	200 (203)	10

Season	WMU	Town	Weight	Points
Rifle	D1	BROWNINGTON	200	8
Rifle	J2	SHARON	200	4
Rifle	L	MENDON	200	6
Bow	Q	BRATTLEBORO	200	7
Bow	N	BENNINGTON	200	8
Muzzleloader	D1	CHARLESTON	200	8
Rifle	D1	CRAFTSBURY	200	8
Rifle	Q	DOVER	200	8
Rifle	Q	BRATTLEBORO	200	8
Rifle	J2	NEWBURY	200	8
Bow	L	CLARENDON	200	8
Rifle	O	BARNARD	200	7
Rifle	B	ST ALBANS	200	8
Bow	J1	BRAINTREE	200	8
Rifle	J2	NEWBURY	200	8
Rifle	J1	BETHEL	200	8
Bow	O	POMFRET	200	9
Rifle	H	CABOT	200	7
Rifle	E2	VICTORY	199 (211)	6
Rifle	E2	CONCORD	199 (211)	8
Rifle	G	MORRISTOWN	198 (210)	8
Rifle	F2	MONKTON	195 (207)	9
Rifle	C	MONTGOMERY	194 (206)	8
Rifle	G	HUNTINGTON	194 (206)	8
Rifle	M	ANDOVER	194 (200)	10
Rifle	P	WOODFORD	193 (205)	10
Rifle	J2	BARNET	192 (204)	8
Rifle	G	RICHMOND	192 (200)	8
Rifle	D2	HARDWICK	192 (200)	7
Bow	D2	ST JOHNSBURY	191 (203)	6
Rifle	J1	MORETOWN	191 (203)	9

Table 8. 2018 Legal Deer Harvest by County, Town and Season

County	Town	Archery	Youth	Rifle	Muzzleloader	Total	Harvest/Mi.²
ADDISON	ADDISON	7	2	16	12	37	0.88
	BRIDPORT	12	1	28	11	52	1.18
	BRISTOL	10	6	29	32	77	1.93
	CORNWALL	10	3	27	34	74	2.55
	FERRISBURG	21	6	42	40	109	2.27
	GOSHEN	7	0	16	4	27	1.29
	GRANVILLE	2	0	9	3	14	0.27
	HANCOCK	0	0	11	5	16	0.41
	LEICESTER	10	5	18	18	51	2.43
	LINCOLN	33	4	46	15	98	2.13
	MIDDLEBURY	24	7	31	28	90	2.31
	MONKTON	15	5	25	25	70	1.94
	NEW HAVEN	25	11	38	51	125	3.05
	ORWELL	29	18	57	43	147	3.13
	PANTON	2	5	7	6	20	1.25
	RIPTON	13	2	32	12	59	1.20
	SALISBURY	26	7	22	25	80	2.76
	SHOREHAM	29	13	46	27	115	2.67
	STARKSBORO	14	3	29	34	80	1.78
	VERGENNES	2	1	0	0	3	1.50
	WALTHAM	2	0	11	9	22	2.44
	WEYBRIDGE	8	1	12	12	33	1.94
	WHITING	5	0	11	8	24	1.71
	TOTAL	**306**	**100**	**563**	**454**	**1,423**	**1.85**
BENNINGTON	ARLINGTON	18	4	58	33	113	2.69
	BENNINGTON	45	15	59	49	168	4.00
	DORSET	12	1	57	42	112	2.38
	GLASTENBURY	0	0	6	3	9	0.20
	LANDGROVE	0	0	4	0	4	0.44
	MANCHESTER	4	3	26	18	51	1.21
	PERU	1	0	8	1	10	0.27
	POWNAL	35	13	93	64	205	4.36
	READSBORO	7	3	20	1	31	0.86
	RUPERT	14	13	86	34	147	3.27
	SANDGATE	11	4	41	19	75	1.79
	SEARSBURG	2	0	4	0	6	0.29
	SHAFTSBURY	45	15	71	51	182	4.23
	STAMFORD	10	3	32	1	46	1.18
	SUNDERLAND	2	1	28	13	44	0.98
	WINHALL	0	3	5	1	9	0.20
	WOODFORD	8	0	26	8	42	0.89
	TOTAL	**214**	**78**	**624**	**338**	**1,254**	**1.87**
CALEDONIA	BARNET	18	15	45	47	125	2.98
	BURKE	19	13	24	37	93	2.74
	DANVILLE	24	9	43	25	101	1.66
	GROTON	3	0	35	14	52	0.96

Table 8. 2018 Legal Deer Harvest by County, Town and Season

County	Town	Archery	Youth	Rifle	Muzzleloader	Total	Harvest/Mi.²
CALEDONIA *(cont.)*	HARDWICK	30	11	16	29	86	2.26
	KIRBY	5	1	21	2	29	1.16
	LYNDON	18	9	23	36	86	2.21
	NEWARK	6	1	9	13	29	0.78
	PEACHAM	2	1	21	1	25	0.53
	RYEGATE	24	11	45	40	120	3.33
	SHEFFIELD	7	2	9	1	19	0.58
	ST JOHNSBURY	37	8	39	36	120	3.33
	STANNARD	2	0	9	21	32	2.46
	SUTTON	2	7	11	16	36	0.95
	WALDEN	12	5	8	6	31	0.79
	WATERFORD	24	6	36	43	109	2.87
	WHEELOCK	2	3	15	7	27	0.68
	TOTAL	**235**	**102**	**409**	**374**	**1,120**	**1.72**
CHITTENDEN	BOLTON	8	2	27	13	50	1.19
	BUELS GORE	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
	BURLINGTON	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
	CHARLOTTE	15	4	26	21	66	1.61
	COLCHESTER	22	2	33	20	77	2.14
	ESSEX	45	3	35	31	114	2.92
	HINESBURG	16	1	29	23	69	1.77
	HUNTINGTON	16	3	43	26	88	2.32
	JERICHO	20	3	31	25	79	2.26
	MILTON	31	4	42	61	138	2.71
	RICHMOND	28	3	37	28	96	3.00
	SHELBURNE	22	0	7	9	38	1.58
	SOUTH BURLINGTON	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
	ST GEORGE	0	0	2	2	4	1.00
	UNDERHILL	36	3	36	48	123	2.41
	WESTFORD	17	5	35	43	100	2.56
	WILLISTON	14	3	19	20	56	1.87
	WINOOSKI	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
	TOTAL	**290**	**36**	**402**	**370**	**1,098**	**2.06**
ESSEX	AVERILL	1	0	6	0	7	0.19
	AVERYS GORE	0	0	3	0	3	0.17
	BLOOMFIELD	5	3	22	5	35	0.88
	BRIGHTON	5	1	7	1	14	0.26
	BRUNSWICK	3	0	8	5	16	0.64
	CANAAN	2	1	14	0	17	0.52
	CONCORD	10	2	26	11	49	0.96
	EAST HAVEN	0	2	15	1	18	0.49
	FERDINAND	0	0	15	0	15	0.28
	GRANBY	0	0	6	0	6	0.15
	GUILDHALL	1	0	9	0	10	0.30
	LEMINGTON	0	1	8	2	11	0.31

Table 8. 2018 Legal Deer Harvest by County, Town and Season

County	Town	Archery	Youth	Rifle	Muzzleloader	Total	Harvest/Mi.^{2}
ESSEX *(cont.)*	LEWIS	0	0	7	0	7	0.18
	LUNENBURG	7	3	31	11	52	1.16
	MAIDSTONE	0	2	8	1	11	0.35
	NORTON	1	5	20	3	29	0.76
	VICTORY	0	0	5	1	6	0.14
	WARNERS GRANT	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
	WARREN GORE	0	0	3	0	0	0.00
	TOTAL	**35**	**20**	**213**	**41**	**306**	**0.46**
FRANKLIN	BAKERSFIELD	35	18	69	62	184	4.38
	BERKSHIRE	50	19	61	92	222	5.29
	ENOSBURG	63	35	87	83	268	5.58
	FAIRFAX	50	20	58	75	203	5.08
	FAIRFIELD	100	40	120	198	458	6.84
	FLETCHER	22	8	47	73	150	3.95
	FRANKLIN	72	17	67	78	234	6.16
	GEORGIA	36	13	44	69	162	4.15
	HIGHGATE	112	26	101	91	330	6.47
	MONTGOMERY	9	8	54	58	129	2.30
	RICHFORD	39	17	45	72	173	4.02
	SHELDON	43	18	58	66	185	4.74
	ST ALBANS	15	2	25	19	61	1.65
	SWANTON	30	13	50	48	141	2.94
	TOTAL	**676**	**254**	**886**	**1,084**	**2,900**	**4.62**
GRAND ISLE	ALBURGH	28	7	47	43	125	4.31
	GRAND ISLE	24	5	25	38	92	5.75
	ISLE LA MOTTE	3	1	20	14	38	4.75
	NORTH HERO	14	1	17	33	65	5.42
	SOUTH HERO	38	9	20	21	88	5.87
	TOTAL	**107**	**23**	**129**	**149**	**408**	**5.10**
LAMOILLE	BELVIDERE	7	1	16	8	32	0.89
	CAMBRIDGE	47	12	65	68	192	3.05
	EDEN	4	2	18	5	29	0.46
	ELMORE	11	1	12	8	32	0.82
	HYDE PARK	24	6	18	17	65	1.71
	JOHNSON	28	11	44	49	132	2.93
	MORRISTOWN	16	5	31	32	84	1.65
	STOWE	32	3	47	25	107	1.49
	WATERVILLE	15	7	23	30	75	4.69
	WOLCOTT	21	8	30	16	75	1.92
	TOTAL	**205**	**56**	**304**	**258**	**823**	**1.78**
ORANGE	BRADFORD	31	3	35	55	124	4.13
	BRAINTREE	7	7	29	29	72	1.89
	BROOKFIELD	14	3	32	28	77	1.88
	CHELSEA	18	14	55	46	133	3.33

Table 8. 2018 Legal Deer Harvest by County, Town and Season

| County	Town	Archery	Youth	Rifle	Muzzleloader	Total	Harvest/Mi.²
ORANGE *(cont.)*	CORINTH	19	7	37	36	99	2.06
	FAIRLEE	5	4	27	21	57	2.85
	NEWBURY	27	8	56	43	134	2.09
	ORANGE	6	3	21	10	40	1.03
	RANDOLPH	22	10	49	70	151	3.15
	STRAFFORD	20	11	44	39	114	2.59
	THETFORD	39	10	77	81	207	4.81
	TOPSHAM	10	5	27	19	61	1.24
	TUNBRIDGE	29	12	56	42	139	3.09
	VERSHIRE	11	3	22	15	51	1.42
	WASHINGTON	13	6	39	11	69	1.77
	WEST FAIRLEE	6	1	16	16	39	1.70
	WILLIAMSTOWN	64	10	52	47	173	4.33
	TOTAL	**341**	**117**	**674**	**608**	**1,740**	**2.53**
ORLEANS	ALBANY	15	3	33	25	76	2.00
	BARTON	15	17	37	38	107	2.49
	BROWNINGTON	13	6	37	10	66	2.36
	CHARLESTON	20	14	30	26	90	2.43
	COVENTRY	24	7	19	17	67	2.48
	CRAFTSBURY	17	10	26	24	77	1.97
	DERBY	75	24	48	53	200	4.08
	GLOVER	8	11	29	9	57	1.50
	GREENSBORO	14	1	17	10	42	1.11
	HOLLAND	31	15	39	22	107	2.82
	IRASBURG	25	17	52	33	127	3.18
	JAY	5	1	12	7	25	0.74
	LOWELL	7	6	23	10	46	0.82
	MORGAN	16	7	29	15	67	2.16
	NEWPORT	44	25	46	58	173	4.22
	TROY	29	23	41	36	129	3.58
	WESTFIELD	2	1	9	4	16	0.40
	WESTMORE	3	4	12	9	28	0.82
	TOTAL	**363**	**192**	**539**	**406**	**1,500**	**2.18**
RUTLAND	BENSON	23	8	70	47	148	3.44
	BRANDON	20	6	53	24	103	2.58
	CASTLETON	32	5	57	33	127	3.26
	CHITTENDEN	15	5	39	11	70	0.96
	CLARENDON	30	14	62	70	176	5.68
	DANBY	7	7	57	26	97	2.31
	FAIR HAVEN	12	3	23	24	62	3.65
	HUBBARDTON	14	4	44	25	87	3.22
	IRA	6	3	21	19	49	2.23
	KILLINGTON	3	0	6	1	10	0.21
	MENDON	7	2	19	15	43	1.13
	MIDDLETOWN SPRINGS	12	1	27	39	79	3.43

Table 8. 2018 Legal Deer Harvest by County, Town and Season

County	Town	Archery	Youth	Rifle	Muzzleloader	Total	Harvest/Mi.²
RUTLAND *(cont.)*	MOUNT HOLLY	8	2	38	8	56	1.17
	MOUNT TABOR	0	1	16	15	32	0.73
	PAWLET	13	12	70	62	157	3.65
	PITTSFIELD	1	0	8	1	10	0.50
	PITTSFORD	26	19	53	45	143	3.33
	POULTNEY	25	7	50	51	133	3.17
	PROCTOR	2	0	8	15	25	3.57
	RUTLAND	22	2	22	17	63	3.32
	SHREWSBURY	12	4	38	17	71	1.45
	SUDBURY	6	5	16	12	39	1.86
	TINMOUTH	10	5	38	30	83	2.86
	WALLINGFORD	14	6	38	61	119	2.77
	WELLS	16	5	35	39	95	4.32
	WEST HAVEN	7	10	50	22	89	3.30
	WEST RUTLAND	12	6	24	16	58	3.22
	TOTAL	**355**	**142**	**982**	**745**	**2,224**	**2.43**
WASHINGTON	BARRE	70	14	40	44	168	5.42
	BERLIN	43	9	44	27	123	3.42
	CABOT	10	2	31	18	61	1.65
	CALAIS	11	7	27	15	60	1.58
	DUXBURY	12	5	12	8	37	0.86
	EAST MONTPELIER	48	14	36	37	135	4.22
	FAYSTON	14	0	23	16	53	1.47
	MARSHFIELD	10	3	31	20	64	1.49
	MIDDLESEX	30	10	49	31	120	3.08
	MONTPELIER	18	0	10	10	38	3.80
	MORETOWN	11	3	37	18	69	1.73
	NORTHFIELD	15	1	35	24	75	1.67
	PLAINFIELD	18	7	33	31	89	4.24
	ROXBURY	2	0	12	6	20	0.48
	WAITSFIELD	15	1	18	6	40	1.54
	WARREN	10	2	27	14	53	1.33
	WATERBURY	29	3	42	23	97	2.02
	WOODBURY	4	1	10	6	21	0.55
	WORCESTER	5	1	16	5	27	0.69
	TOTAL	**375**	**83**	**533**	**359**	**1,350**	**1.97**
WINDHAM	ATHENS	0	0	8	2	10	0.71
	BRATTLEBORO	13	2	20	24	59	1.84
	BROOKLINE	1	0	11	14	26	2.00
	DOVER	10	3	16	0	29	0.81
	DUMMERSTON	25	6	39	47	117	3.77
	GRAFTON	0	0	11	9	20	0.53
	GUILFORD	22	10	39	62	133	3.41
	HALIFAX	4	1	24	27	56	1.40
	JAMAICA	4	2	23	16	45	0.92
	LONDONDERRY	4	1	16	2	23	0.66

Table 8. 2018 Legal Deer Harvest by County, Town and Season

County	Town	Archery	Youth	Rifle	Muzzleloader	Total	Harvest/Mi.²
WINDHAM *(cont.)*	MARLBORO	6	0	20	6	32	0.80
	NEWFANE	8	1	32	36	77	1.93
	PUTNEY	7	1	28	26	62	2.30
	ROCKINGHAM	7	1	36	33	77	1.88
	SOMERSET	1	0	9	0	10	0.40
	STRATTON	0	0	10	1	11	0.24
	TOWNSHEND	4	4	33	18	59	1.40
	VERNON	14	2	19	11	46	2.42
	WARDSBORO	1	0	17	2	20	0.69
	WESTMINSTER	12	2	25	14	53	1.18
	WHITINGHAM	14	6	29	2	51	1.38
	WILMINGTON	6	5	35	7	53	1.33
	WINDHAM	0	0	9	0	9	0.35
	TOTAL	**163**	**47**	**509**	**359**	**1,078**	**1.38**
WINDSOR	ANDOVER	0	2	10	1	13	0.45
	BALTIMORE	3	0	5	2	10	2.00
	BARNARD	3	0	18	9	30	0.63
	BETHEL	13	6	32	25	76	1.69
	BRIDGEWATER	5	0	16	14	35	0.70
	CAVENDISH	6	7	33	14	60	1.54
	CHESTER	7	4	47	30	88	1.57
	HARTFORD	36	7	59	64	166	3.69
	HARTLAND	29	10	43	56	138	3.07
	LUDLOW	11	4	17	5	37	1.03
	NORWICH	53	9	76	86	224	5.09
	PLYMOUTH	0	0	18	4	22	0.45
	POMFRET	5	2	27	34	68	1.74
	READING	3	2	16	6	27	0.66
	ROCHESTER	4	1	24	11	40	0.70
	ROYALTON	17	5	34	34	90	2.25
	SHARON	17	1	42	34	94	2.35
	SPRINGFIELD	35	10	52	69	166	3.39
	STOCKBRIDGE	1	1	20	11	33	0.72
	WEATHERSFIELD	23	8	43	59	133	3.09
	WEST WINDSOR	11	1	12	3	27	1.08
	WESTON	3	1	11	1	16	0.46
	WINDSOR	12	1	18	37	68	3.58
	WOODSTOCK	22	10	40	51	123	2.80
	TOTAL	**319**	**92**	**713**	**660**	**1,784**	**1.84**
STATE	**TOTAL**	**3,984**	**1,342**	**7,480**	**6,205**	**19,011**	**2.07**

Figure 12. Distribution of Vermont's 2018 deer harvest by town and wildlife management unit.
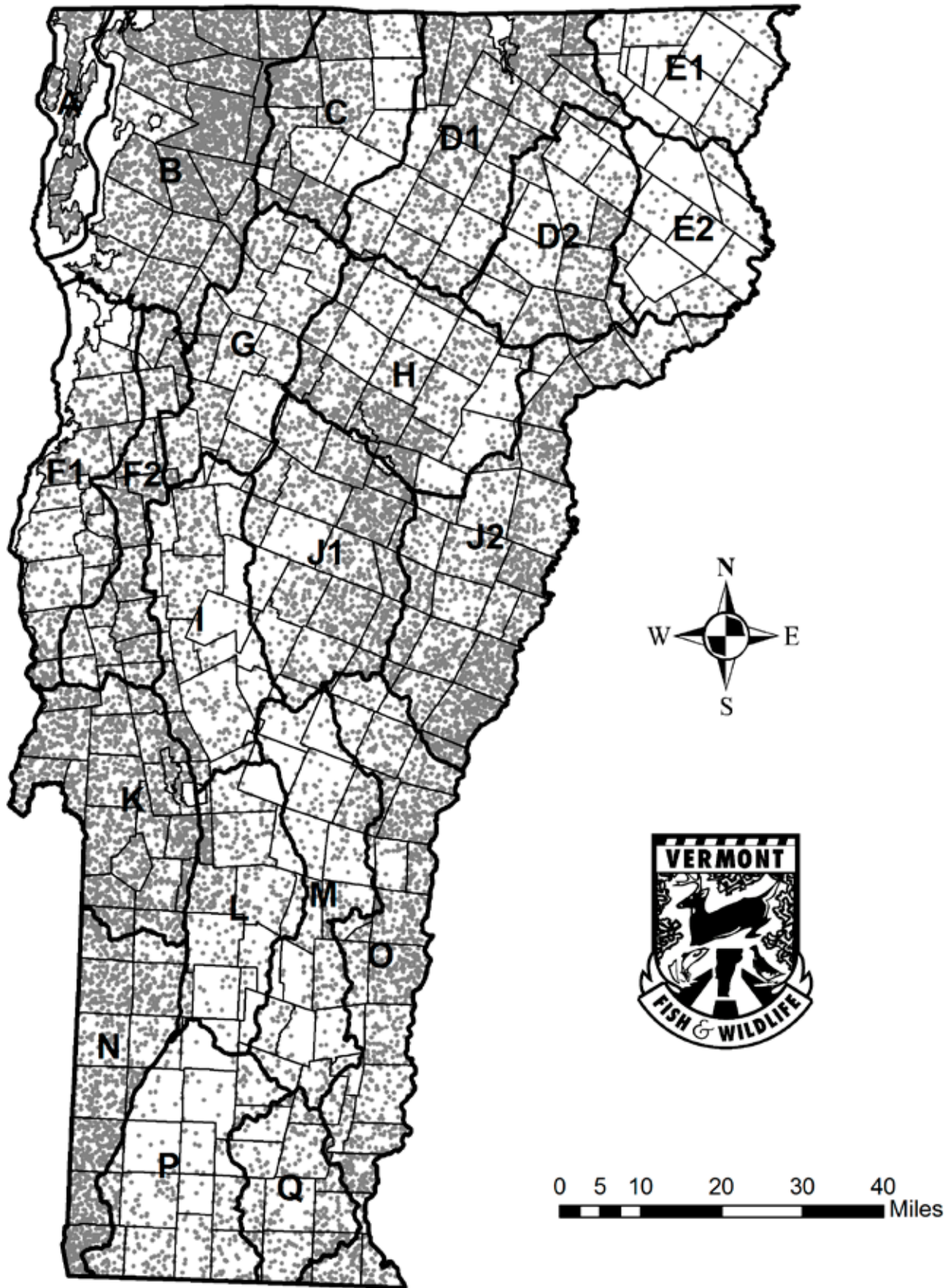
Each dot represents a single deer harvested in the underlying town and wildlife management unit.
Dots do not show the exact location of harvest, and some dots may not be visible on the map.