

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Natural Resources Board Agenda Item

**CORRECTED**

**SUBJECT:** Request approval of antlerless deer harvest quotas and a deer hunting season framework for 2016.

**FOR:** May 2016 Board meeting

**TO BE PRESENTED BY:** Bob Nack, Big Game Section Chief

**SUMMARY:**

The following 2016 deer season recommendations are provided for Natural Resources Board consideration and approval:

- Approval of antlerless harvest quotas and bonus antlerless permit levels for deer management units.
- Approval of a Secretary's Order establishing the allowable use of antlerless tags by Junior license holders.
- Approval of a Secretary's Order establishing the numbers of Farmland Zone antlerless deer permits to issue.
- Approval of a Secretary's Order implementing a "Holiday Hunt" deer season in certain units.

Rules implementing the 2012 Deer Trustee Report establish that the department will seek input from groups or representatives for certain deer related interests in establishing antlerless deer quotas through county deer management advisory councils. The same rules authorize the department to modify deer seasons and antlerless permit use based upon the recommendations of county deer management advisory councils. This green sheet package is the vehicle for department approval of those recommendations.

**CORRECTED:** On page 2 of memo, last paragraph, a typo was corrected (The winter of 2015-16 will go down as one of the mildest winters on record since the department began measuring winter severity in 1960.)

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approval of antlerless deer harvest quotas and a deer hunting season framework for 2016.

**LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS (check all that are applicable):**

- Background memo
- 

Approved by	Signature	Date
Tom Hauge, Bureau Director	<i>Thomas M. Hauge</i>	5/13/16
Sanjay Olson Land Division Administrator	<i>[Signature]</i>	5/13/16
Cathy Stepp, Secretary	<i>[Signature]</i>	5/13/16

cc: Board Liaison – AD/8

**CORRESPONDENCE/MEMORANDUM**

DATE: May 13, 2016  
TO: Natural Resource Board Members  
FROM: Cathy Stepp, Secretary  
SUBJECT: 2016 Deer Season Recommendations

FILE REF: 2300

**Recommendations:** The following 2016 deer season recommendations are provided for Natural Resources Board (NRB) consideration and approval:

1. Approval of the antlerless harvest quotas and bonus antlerless permit levels for deer management units (DMUs) (Tables 1 & 2 and Figure 1).
2. Approval of a Secretary's Order establishing the 2016 use of antlerless tags by Junior license holders.
3. Approval of a Secretary's Order establishing the 2016 issuance of Farmland Zone antlerless deer permits (Figure 3 and 4, and Tables 3 and 4).
4. Approval of a Secretary's Order designating the 2016 antlerless only "Holiday Hunt" deer season (Figure 4).

Back to back mild winters combined with planned reductions in antlerless harvest are boosting herd growth in our Northern and Central Forest Zones, and Farmland Zone deer herds have also increased. As a result, we anticipate that Wisconsin's deer hunters are poised for a great deer season with a strong possibility of seeing and harvesting more deer in 2016! Hunters indicated that they had seen deer more frequently while hunting in many counties in 2015 including in the north. County Deer Advisory Councils (CDACs) are recommending larger antlerless harvest quotas and permit levels compared to the past few years, as well as some antlerless-only gun hunting opportunities during the Holiday Hunt in certain counties.

This is the second year that the newly established CDACs played a major advisory role on antlerless deer harvest quotas and permit levels to achieve their county's 3-year deer population objectives approved by the NRB in February of 2015. I now ask that you approve harvest quotas and permit levels, as well as additional season and permitting opportunities, as recommended by the CDACs for the 2016 deer hunting seasons.

**Continuing to adjust to new methods of management:**

Change brings challenges, and it also brings opportunity. While we will always see areas for improvement, I'm very proud of all the CDAC members and department staff for their ongoing efforts to embrace these changes and find innovative ways to manage Wisconsin's invaluable deer herd. New parameters require new data sets, new metrics, and new understandings of how one change affects another. Some of these things can only be accomplished through time, and we are still early in implementing this new system. With that said, we now have three years behind us as we adjust and learn more with each passing year. Our department scientists and biologists are successfully making the transition. In addition, staff from the Wildlife Management, Forestry and Law Enforcement programs committed many hours to serving as liaisons to each CDAC by attending and presenting information at meetings, providing input and answers to deer and forest management questions and working with council members on all aspects of this effort.

I'm also very proud of our Wisconsin deer hunters and our Conservation Congress partners who remain engaged and involved. Wisconsin continues to be a national leader in deer harvest, hunter numbers, and other categories that make it a deer hunting destination for people from around the world. I want to thank hunters for their patience as we continue to refine our process, and we offer our commitment to provide world class deer hunting opportunities!

**The Quota-Setting effort:**

Because this is the first deer quota-setting process for some of our NRB members, I would like to provide a brief background on the overall effort of the councils and department during determination of the 2016 antlerless quotas and permit levels. Quota and permit determinations begin with our Science Services staff that gather, review and provide harvest figures and other important data to local wildlife biologists and CDAC members.



When the Deer Trustee Report rules were first put into motion, we made a strong commitment that science would continue to play a major role in deer management. We provided this data to CDAC members and the public on our web site and in presentations.

Led by members of the Conservation Congress, each CDAC provides a seat for the major deer management stakeholder groups including hunters, agriculture, forestry, tourism, transportation, urban representatives, the Chippewa tribes, and cooperators enrolled in the Deer Management Assistance Program. Each county council held a meeting in March to formulate preliminary harvest quota and permit recommendations, and to consider various season and permitting options. Subsequently, the department provided an online public feedback questionnaire on the proposed quota and permit levels (Appendix A). The public's feedback was then shared with and considered by council members before they made final recommendations at April meetings in each county. Those final recommendations were reviewed by the DNR deer advisory committee and presented to the department leadership, and are now presented to you today.

### **Public involvement in quota setting:**

As we've done in recent years, the county councils and department took extra steps during development of the 2016 deer seasons to provide opportunity for public input. CDACs were created for the sake of including the local public voice in management recommendations. Over the past three years, we have placed a high priority on reaching out to the public and providing opportunities to participate in the state's deer management program. We saw an increase in the level of public participation and attendance at the meetings, as well as for the online forum compared to 2015. However, we'd like to have even higher levels of participation and will continue to explore opportunities to expand involvement.

CDAC members supplemented the online feedback with much additional input through coffee shop conversations, phone calls, letters, and more. This provided CDACs with valuable observations and opinions from every county of Wisconsin and impacted decisions. I hope the public recognizes that both DNR and CDACs value this feedback. We will continue to improve opportunities for the public to truly participate in deer management decisions in the years to come.

### **CDACs doing good work and functioning well:**

County Deer Advisory Councils continue to embrace their responsibilities and are showing the passion and dedication that we knew they would! We have worked hard to support them in every way including the development of operating guidance that has been reviewed by the public, the creation of a CDAC Oversight Committee to help smooth out any rough edges, and annual CDAC training sessions. While we will always face challenges when working across 72 counties, I continue to hear excellent reports from both CDAC members and department staff who work so closely with them. I'm also hearing from our partners and the public that they are seeing positive changes in how they can take a greater stake in Wisconsin deer management. CDACs are demonstrating that the public can make a real difference, and they can expect to see results. That isn't to say that everyone gets their way, but we've never worked harder to see real compromise and a desire to engage the public in deer management issues.

### **Room to improve:**

We realize that there is strong desire for better metric information to be developed and provided to CDACs to help inform them during the population review and quota setting process. We are committed to build those metrics, but it will take time to do so. We also realize that due to the sheer volume of information that we have and share regarding deer management, this information can be difficult for the general public to access and use. While I think we have made great strides in improving from year one to year two of the CDAC process, we realize that we can do better. We will continue to work on creating data that is easily accessible and understood.

### **Another mild winter:**

The winter of 2015-16 will go down as one of the mildest winters on record since the department began measuring winter severity in 1960. Following the previous mild winter of 2014-15, herd growth was evident in most Northern Forest fringe counties, and the CDACs recommended antlerless quotas in 2015. The herd growth trend in the Northern Forest continues as the CDACs supported fewer buck-only units this year. We've said it would take time for northern herds to recover, and while the herd is making a comeback in some areas, there are still counties that aren't quite meeting the expectations of their CDACs.

### **Buck-Only hunting in 10 counties:**

All proposed buck-only counties fall within the Northern and Central Forest Zones (Figure 2). The decrease in buck-only counties compared to the last two years (19 in 2014 and 12 in 2015) is a sign that CDACs are seeing herds rebound in the “fringe” counties of the Northern Forest where there is a strong agricultural component, allowing faster herd growth compared to more forest-dominant habitat types in the counties further north.

### **Buck-Only, but antlerless harvest will occur:**

Keep in mind that rules are in place allowing disabled hunters, military personnel on leave, and youth hunters to harvest antlerless deer in buck-only units. As a result, there will be some antlerless harvest in each of the 10 buck-only units. CDACs took this antlerless harvest into consideration when making their quota recommendations.

Three CDACs (Ashland, Forest and Sawyer counties) have exercised their option to recommend that Junior license holders will not be allowed to harvest antlerless deer in an effort to see increased herd growth in these counties.

### **Antlerless permit issuance for 2016:**

The calculation of hunter success rates and their application to determine antlerless permit levels was made easier this year because of changes that now require hunters to declare the county unit where their antlerless permits are valid. This change provides us with actual numbers of permits issued for each county, thereby providing the ability to accurately determine hunter success rates in filling those tags. This was of great help during the permit-setting exercises for each CDAC. As a result, I believe they feel more confident in their recommendations and their abilities to prescribe more controlled harvest recommendations. The department supports harvest quotas and bonus permit levels as recommended by CDACs (Tables 1 and 2).

CDACs in the Farmland Zone counties were also provided with the opportunity to recommend the number of antlerless permits to issue with each deer hunting license in order to achieve their harvest objectives. Figure 3 and Table 3 show the variation in Farmland Zone antlerless permit levels by county, and we are confident that our GoWild licensing system will be able to accommodate this variability. We are committed to a considerable communication effort to explain the nuances of permit issuance by county.

One additional herd control option for counties that contain metropolitan sub-units is the ability to issue metro-specific antlerless permits. The purpose of this is to allow more focused harvest within human-populated areas where the general goal is to minimize urban deer conflicts. Some CDACs took full advantage of this opportunity which you can see from a variety of recommendations that range from offering zero or one metro permit with each license to additional metro-specific bonus permits that will be on sale for \$12 each (Figure 4 and Table 4).

### **Holiday Hunt in 13 counties:**

This year, Farmland Zone CDACs were given the option to recommend adding nine days of gun deer hunting by means of the December 24 – January 1 Holiday Hunt (antlerless-only). We support the recommendation of the 13 CDACs that would like to offer this hunting opportunity in their county (Figure 5). This hunt will add additional antlerless deer to the overall harvest in counties where the CDACs and department feel it is needed, and provide a special opportunity for family to hunt together during the holidays.

### **Bonus sales begin August 15:**

In 2016, the opening sales of bonus antlerless permits will again be staggered across several days to avoid any potential computer-overload glitches in the online or telephone ordering system. We plan to begin sales on Monday, August 15 at 10 a.m. for bonus permits in the Forest Zones. The Central Farmland Zone will follow on the 16<sup>th</sup>, and the Southern Farmland on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

Figure 1. 2016 Deer Season Structure

# Draft 2016 Deer Season Structure

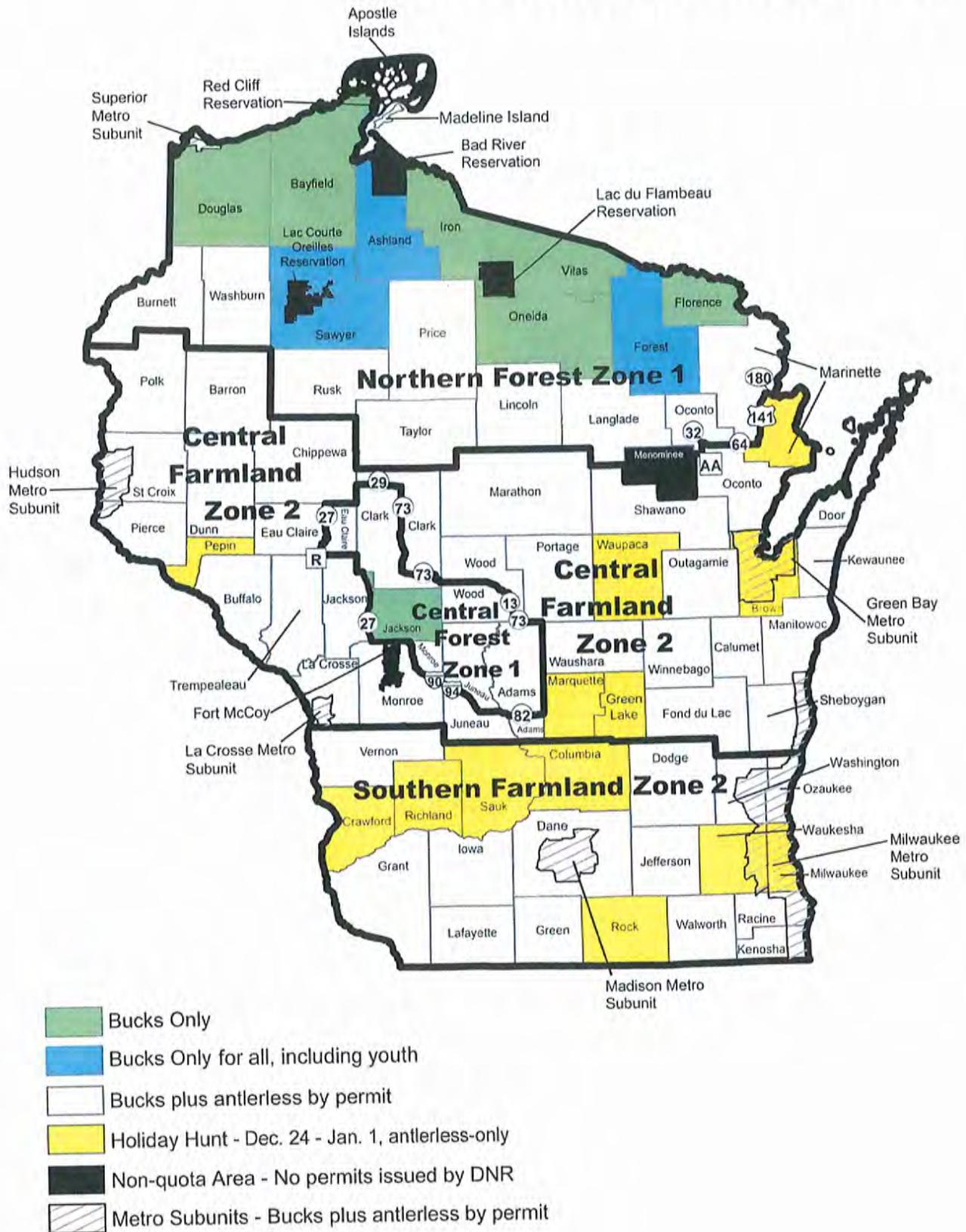


Figure 2. Buck-Only During All Seasons

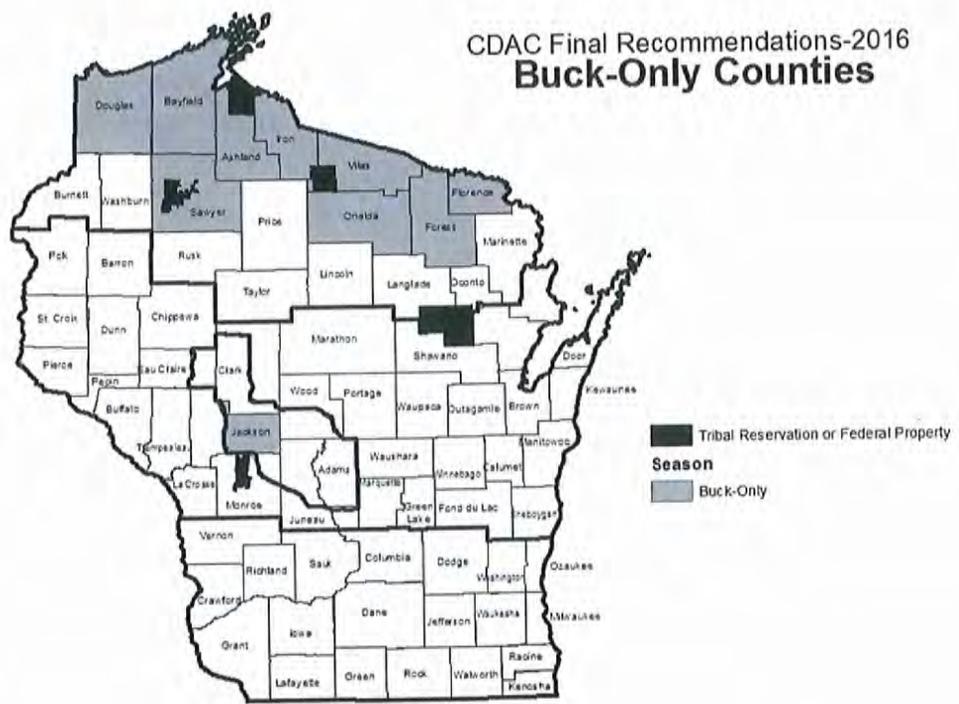
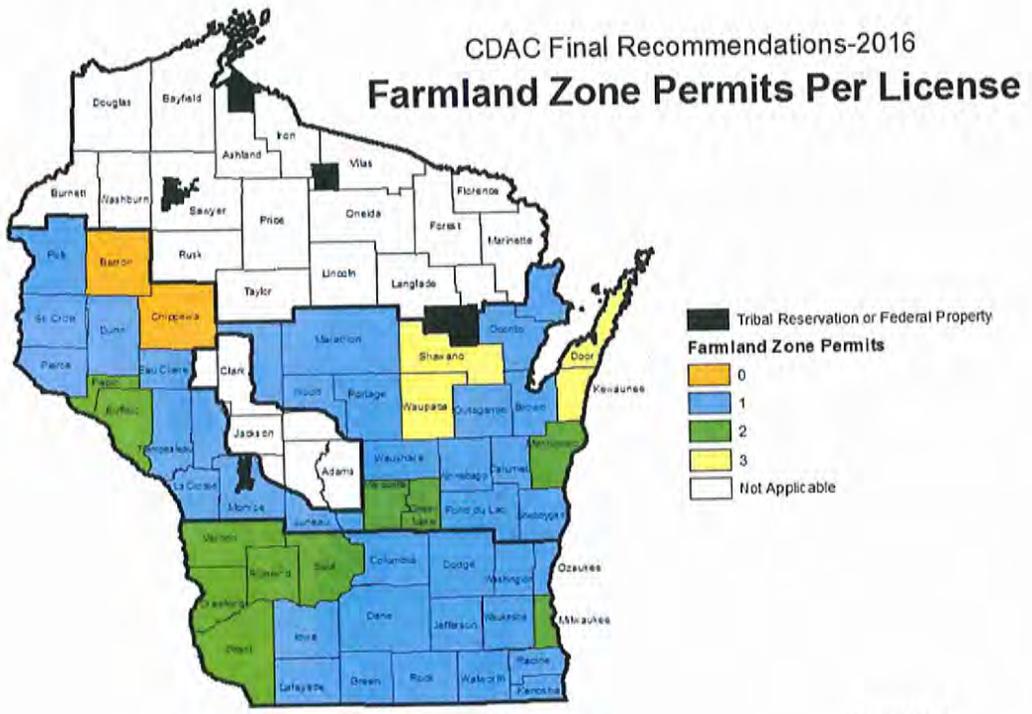


Figure 3. Number of Farmland Zone Permits Included per Deer Hunting License



Revised 4/26/16

Figure 4. Number of Metro Sub-Unit Permits Included per Deer Hunting License

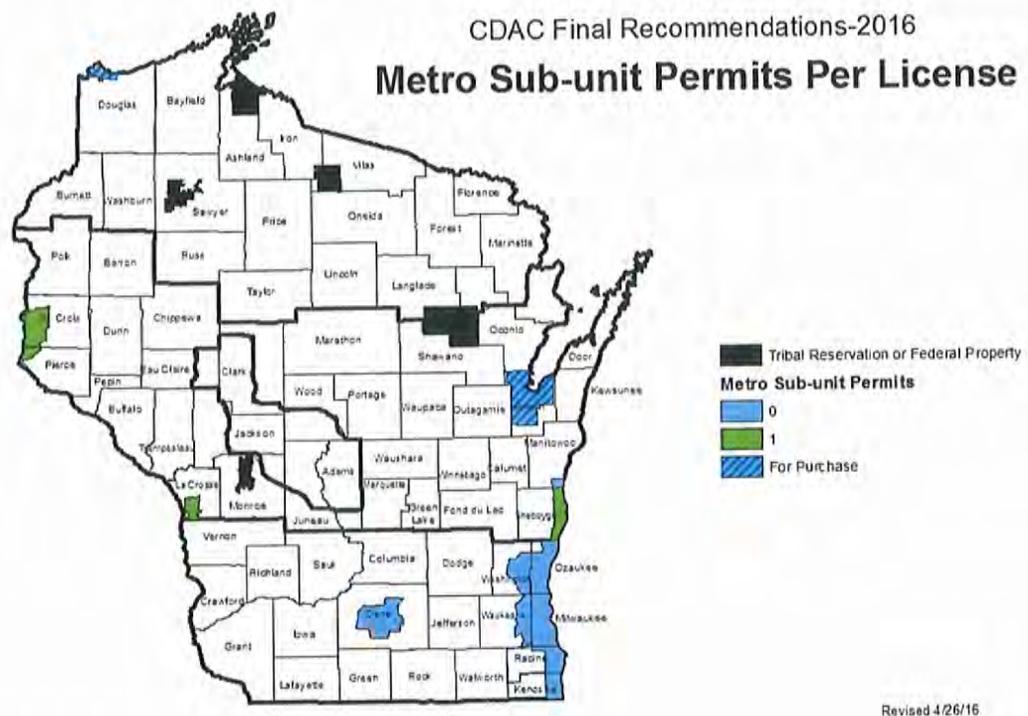
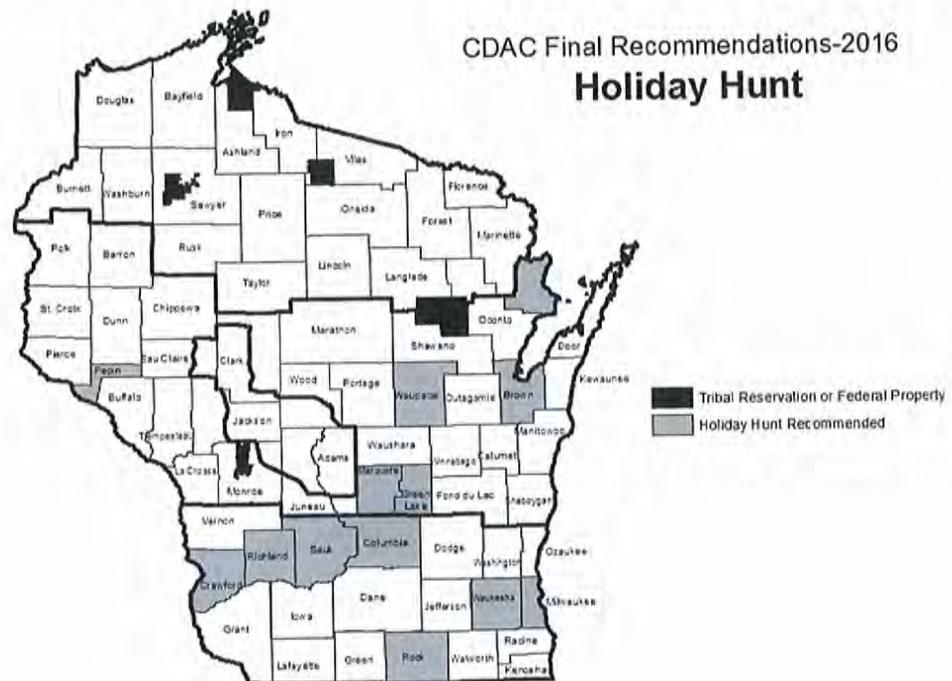


Figure 5. Holiday Hunt Antlerless-Only Season



**Table 1. CDAC Recommendations for Bonus Antlerless Deer Permit Levels by DMU**

County	Public Land	Private Land
Adams – Farmland	50	1800
Adams – Forest	850	5150
Ashland	0	0
Ashland – Madeline Island	50	175
Bad River Res.	0	0
Barron	550	4950
Bayfield	0	0
Brown	225	875
Buffalo	500	3000
Burnett	475	3800
Calumet	100	400
Chippewa	0	2500
Clark – Farmland	25	825
Clark – Forest	775	1800
Columbia	1000	2000
Crawford	0	3500
Dane	700	2500
Dodge	125	1325
Door	500	1500
Douglas	0	0
Dunn	400	2100
Eau Claire - Farmland	50	800
Eau Claire – Forest	250	1275
Florence	0	0
Fond du lac	450	2800
Forest	0	0
Grant	250	3000
Green	250	1750
Green Lake	750	2000
Iowa	450	3000
Iron	0	0
Jackson – Farmland	0	1100
Jackson – Forest	0	0
Jefferson	75	950
Juneau – Farmland	25	1050
Juneau – Forest	0	1000
Kenosha	0	0
Kewaunee	300	1100
Lac du Flambeau Res.	0	0
Lac Courte Oreilles Res.	0	0
La Crosse	150	850
Lafayette	75	1125
Langlade	300	800

County	Public Land	Private Land
Lincoln	200	800
Manitowoc	300	2000
Marathon	0	3500
Marinette - Farmland	175	2050
Marinette - Forest	175	700
Marquette	2000	8000
Milwaukee	75	600
Monroe - Farmland	400	1350
Monroe - Forest	0	100
Oconto - Farmland	200	2075
Oconto - Forest	175	375
Oneida	0	0
Outagamie	500	1000
Ozaukee	250	750
Pepin	75	925
Pierce	400	2200
Polk	400	3100
Portage	275	2000
Price	350	900
Racine	0	0
Red Cliff Res.	0	0
Richland	500	5000
Rock	400	1500
Rusk	0	1225
Sauk	750	3200
Sawyer	0	0
Shawano	750	3450
Sheboygan	125	1175
St. Croix	200	1400
Taylor	0	3875
Trempealeau	0	500
Vernon	100	1000
Vilas	0	0
Walworth	150	375
Washburn	2175	8675
Washington	400	1350
Waukesha	500	1500
Waupaca	300	7200
Waushara	600	1200
Winnebago	125	375
Wood - Farmland	0	500
Wood - Forest	50	150
<b>2016 Totals</b>	<b>22,775</b>	<b>136,875</b>

2015 Totals

18,450 125,375

**Table 2. CDAC Recommendations for Antlerless Harvest Quotas by DMU**

County	Antlerless Quota
Adams – Farmland	1525
Adams – Forest	3000
Ashland	0
Ashland – Madeline Island	70
Bad River Res.	0
Barron	2190
Bayfield	0
Brown	3000
Buffalo	9000
Burnett	2000
Calumet	1480
Chippewa	1000
Clark - Farmland	1800
Clark - Forest	1000
Columbia	8800
Crawford	5000
Dane	5090
Dodge	2725
Door	6250
Douglas	0
Dunn	7200
Eau Claire - Farmland	1300
Eau Claire - Forest	625
Florence	0
Fond du lac	2500
Forest	0
Grant	7000
Green	2000
Green Lake	4800
Iowa	4025
Iron	0
Jackson - Farmland	2550
Jackson - Forest	0
Jefferson	1350
Juneau - Farmland	1800
Juneau - Forest	510
Kenosha	170
Kewaunee	4750
Lac du Flambeau Res.	0
Lac Courte Oreilles Res.	0
La Crosse	3120
Lafayette	2000
Langlade	440

County	Antlerless Quota
Lincoln	400
Manitowoc	5000
Marathon	6500
Marinette - Farmland	2000
Marinette - Forest	350
Marquette	11000
Milwaukee	400
Monroe - Farmland	5000
Monroe - Forest	150
Oconto - Farmland	5500
Oconto - Forest	225
Oneida	0
Outagamie	5810
Ozaukee	1530
Pepin	2500
Pierce	4400
Polk	7000
Portage	4890
Price	500
Racine	225
Red Cliff Res.	0
Richland	14000
Rock	1110
Rusk	550
Sauk	11500
Sawyer	0
Shawano	17000
Sheboygan	2205
St. Croix	3000
Taylor	1550
Trempealeau	4000
Vernon	7700
Vilas	0
Walworth	580
Washburn	4340
Washington	2850
Waukesha	1740
Waupaca	14200
Waushara	4400
Winnebago	1300
Wood - Farmland	1200
Wood - Forest	100
<b>2016 Total</b>	<b>256,775</b>

2015 Total

224,735

**Table 3. CDAC Recommendations for Farmland Zone Antlerless Permits Issued per Deer Hunting License**

County	Permits per Licenses
Adams - Farmland	1
Barron	0
Brown	1
Buffalo	2
Calumet	1
Chippewa	0
Clark - Farmland	1
Columbia	1
Crawford	2
Dane	1
Dodge	1
Door	3
Dunn	1
Eau Claire – Farmland	1
Fond du lac	1
Grant	2
Green	1
Green Lake	2
Iowa	1
Jackson - Farmland	1
Jefferson	1
Juneau – Farmland	1
Kenosha	1
Kewaunee	3
La Crosse	1
Lafayette	1
Manitowoc	2
Marathon	1
Marinette - Farmland	1
Marquette	2
Milwaukee	2
Monroe - Farmland	1
Oconto - Farmland	1
Outagamie	1
Ozaukee	1
Pepin	2
Pierce	1
Polk	1
Portage	1
Racine	1
Richland	2

County	Permits per License
Rock	1
Sauk	2
Shawano	3
Sheboygan	1
St. Croix	1
Trempealeau	1
Vernon	2
Walworth	1
Washington	1
Waukesha	1
Waupaca	3
Waushara	1
Winnebago	1
Wood - Farmland	1

**Table 4. CDAC Recommendations for Metro Subzone Antlerless Permits per License, and Metro Bonus Permits by Public and Private Land**

County	Metro Permits per License	Bonus	
		Public	Private
Brown	0	100	100
Dane	0	0	0
Douglas	0	150	50
Kenosha	0	0	0
La Crosse	1	25	75
Manitowoc	0	0	0
Milwaukee	0	0	0
Ozaukee	0	0	0
Pierce	1	50	100
Racine	0	0	0
St. Croix	1	150	300
Sheboygan	1	0	0
Washington	0	0	0
Waukesha	0	0	0

### 2015 herd monitoring data:

Annually, department staff conduct a post-hunt review of the biological data, aerial surveys and harvest data from the previous year and calculate updated population estimates for each DMU. Annual herd monitoring data (some of which is being collected by volunteers) includes information on fawn production, age structure, body condition, hunter observations and harvest data. This information, and more, is shared with CDAC members and is available on the department and CDAC web pages.

The 2015-16 Winter Severity Index score of 23 points indicated that this winter was the mildest on record since WSI was first measured in the 1960. It is also the second mild winter in a row, helping to rebuild deer populations that were hit by the record severity of 149-points across the north in 2013-14. While the past two mild winters have been taken into consideration by CDACs in setting quotas, deer herds take time to recover. Northern herds are recovering, which is evident by the CDAC recommendations that include fewer buck-only units and higher quotas.

We aged more than 15,000 deer in 2016. Our field staff worked hard to address challenges in gathering aging data as electronic registration has made it more difficult for our biologists to directly inspect deer. To obtain our aging data, we set up agreements with meat processors around the state who saved deer heads for us, and biologists then visited those processors and collected the aging information we need. We were pleased with our first year results, collecting samples from every county. That isn't to say it worked perfectly, and we will continue to find ways to increase our sample size where needed while keeping the work involved with collecting this information on the department rather than hunters. This method shows promise, but continued evaluation is needed to ensure that this method provides the quality data needed to inform management. Aging information is used to measure changes in the deer population over time, including estimating deer population size.

Tables 5 and 6 provide a summary of antlered and antlerless harvests in recent years, as well as a comparison of the 2014 and 2015 harvests by Wisconsin's four deer management zones (Figure 6).

**Table 5. Statewide Deer Harvest by Season 2008-2015**

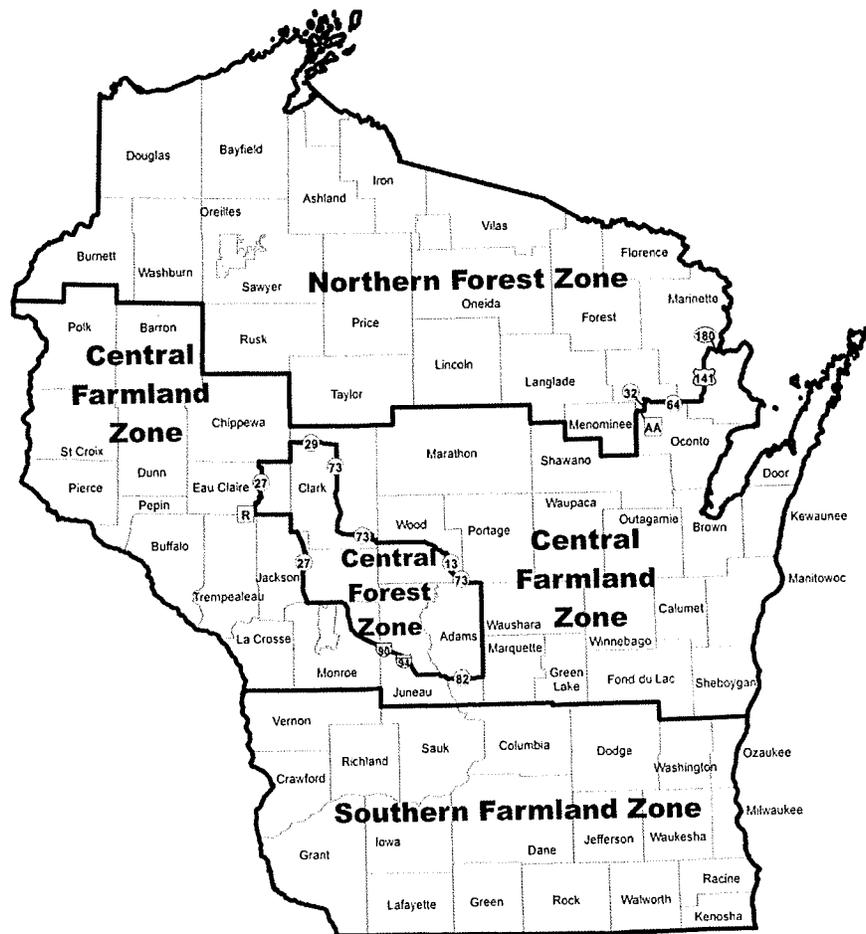
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Archery Season*	99,284	87,241	83,833	90,200	94,267	87,628	54,810	53,004
Crossbow Season	----	----	----	----	----	----	26,891	34,094
Total Gun	352,601	241,862	253,038	257,511	274,047	255,003	222,588	222,731
Total Antlerless	313,378	194,947	188,493	196,872	202,857	198,893	158,689	158,247
Total Buck	138,507	134,156	148,378	150,839	165,457	143,738	143,397	151,580
<b>Total Deer Harvest</b>	<b>451,885</b>	<b>329,103</b>	<b>336,871</b>	<b>347,711</b>	<b>368,314</b>	<b>342,631</b>	<b>304,289</b>	<b>309,829</b>

\*Prior to 2015, archer and crossbow harvest totals are combined.

**Table 6. 2015 Deer Harvest by Deer Management Zone and Difference from 2014**

Deer management zone	2015 total harvest	Change from 2014	Change in total bucks	Change in gun buck	Change in archery buck	Change in crossbow buck	Change in total antlerless
Northern Forest	40,321	11%	-13%	-2%	2%	19%	49%
Central Forest	12,245	10%	19%	18%	9%	40%	-3%
Central Farmland	183,057	-2%	3%	-2%	5%	32%	-5%
Southern Farmland	72,791	4%	12%	15%	-4%	37%	1%

**Figure 6. Wisconsin Deer Management Zones**



### CWD monitoring effort:

During the 2015 deer season, DNR sampled 3,142 deer statewide. Of these, 298 tested positive. The sampling strategies were aimed at detecting changes in the location and trends in prevalence of the disease. Similar to previous years, monitoring plans focused surveillance on adult deer which are the age group most likely to have CWD. Since 2002, over 193,000 deer have been sampled in Wisconsin with over 3,100 testing positive.

Once again, hunter cooperation was outstanding. This past deer season was the first sampling year under the new electronic deer registration system. Although the total number of deer tested decreased from 2014, it was not unexpected in the first year.

Following the 2012 discovery of a CWD-positive adult doe near Shell Lake, 2015 marked the fourth year of surveillance efforts in Washburn County. Following recommendations from a local community action team, local landowners and hunters have helped the department sample over 2,000 deer in the area over the last four years. No new positives have been detected. Based on four years of sampling, all information has indicated CWD is not widespread in the Washburn area, and occurs at a very low prevalence rate.

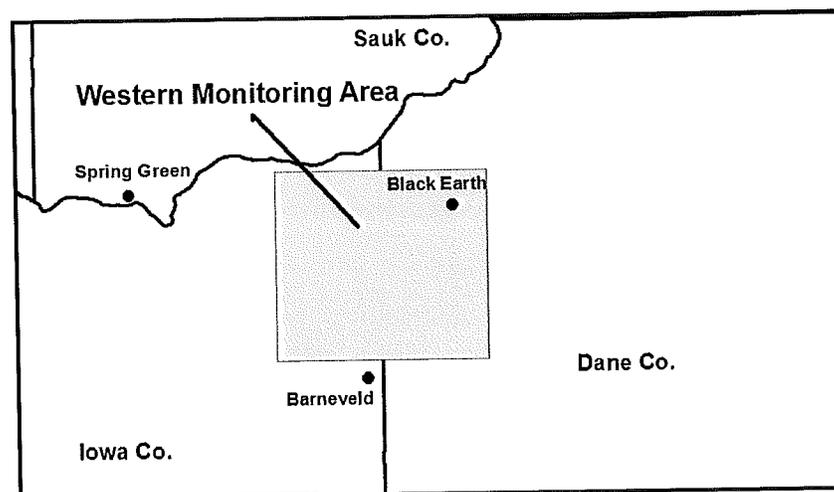
The 2012 discovery of CWD in wild deer in Juneau, Adams, and Portage counties prompted the 2013 surveillance effort in a ten mile radius surrounding the positives utilizing hunter harvested deer. Four additional positives were found in 2013 in Adams and Portage counties, while two additional positives were discovered in Adams County in 2014 and two more in 2015. We also recently detected another positive in northern Portage County as a result of a sick deer report. Surveillance was also conducted surrounding a CWD-positive captive deer farm in Marathon County, with no wild CWD deer detected.

New for 2015, Wildlife Management staff sampled wild deer in the Fairchild/Augusta area in Eau Claire County, where DATCP discovered a CWD-positive deer on a private deer farm. Eighty wild deer were sampled with no wild CWD deer detected.

One important tool we continue using is the weighted surveillance program using taxidermists as sampling cooperators. By focusing the collection and sampling effort on select age and sex classes of deer, the program attempts to increase the efficacy and efficiency of our outstate detection surveillance efforts. Because CWD is found at higher prevalence rates in adult males than in other demographic groups, we work with taxidermists who routinely receive older age bucks. In 2015, taxidermists in Marquette and Green Lake counties provided samples, with no positives detected.

CWD prevalence has changed over time. Since 2002, CWD prevalence within our western monitoring area (Figure 7) has shown an overall increasing trend in all sex and age classes. During the past 14 years, the trend in prevalence in adult males has risen from 8-10 percent to about 30 percent and in adult females from about 3-4 percent to nearly 15 percent. During that same time, the prevalence trend in yearling males has increased from about 2 percent to about 10 percent and in yearling females from roughly 2 percent to about 8 percent.

**Figure 7. CWD Western Wisconsin Monitoring Area**



## Appendix A:

### 2016 Deer Management Unit Public Input Summary

The public was offered an opportunity to view deer management unit-specific information and contribute feedback through a DNR website questionnaire that was active from April 4 through April 17. More than 5,500 individuals filled out the questionnaire. Results were provided, by county, to each County Deer Advisory Council to be considered when developing quota, permit, and season recommendations for 2016.

Note: Not all respondents answered all questions and some respondents provided input for more than one county. Thus, the total number of responses differs slightly for each question.

#### Responses by Deer Management Zone

The Central Farmland Zone received the most responses (45%), followed by the Northern Forest (33%), Southern Farmland (15%), and Central Forest (7%).

Region	Frequency	Percent of all responses
Central Farmland	2,522	45%
Central Forest	386	7%
Northern Forest	1,855	33%
Southern Farmland	811	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,574</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Responses by Type of Deer Hunters

Respondents were asked to check all that apply to their style of deer hunting. The majority identified themselves as gun deer hunters (40%) and archers (29%), while relatively few respondents replied that they identify themselves as muzzleloader deer hunters (18%) or crossbow hunters (13%).

Type	Frequency	Percent of all responses
Gun	4,860	40%
Archer	3,478	29%
Crossbow	1,571	13%
Muzzleloader	2,106	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,015</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Number of Deer Compared to Two Years Ago

Statewide, 51% of respondents indicated the number of deer in their DMU was “Many Fewer” or “Fewer” than two years ago. Twenty-seven percent said it was about the same, and 6% said there were “More” or “Many More”.

Number	Frequency	Percent of all responses
Many Fewer Deer	1,169	21%
Fewer Deer	1,669	30%
About the Same	1,504	27%
More Deer	872	16%
Many More Deer	226	4%
Unsure	134	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,574</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Antlerless Quota Recommendation for 2016**

The majority of Northern Forest Zone respondents indicated the quotas recommended for 2016 were about right (36%). Central Forest Zone and Central Farmland Zone respondents indicated the recommended quota was much too high (40% and 35%, respectively). In addition, Southern Farmland hunters indicated the 2016 quota recommendations were about right (34%).

Area	Percent (%)						Total #
	Much Too Low	Too Low	About Right	Too High	Much Too High	Unsure	
Central Forest	5	12	25	16	40	2	386
Cen. Farmland	3	7	27	25	35	3	2,522
N. Forest	10	9	36	11	32	2	1,855
S. Farmland	5	8	34	27	24	3	811
<b>Overall</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total #</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>1,705</b>	<b>1,112</b>	<b>1,845</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>5,574</b>

**Free Farmland Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016**

Most hunters in both zones thought the Farmland Antlerless Permit recommendations were about right (48% Central Farmland, 53% Southern Farmland).

Area	Percent (%)					Total #
	Too Low	About Right	Too High	Unsure		
Central Forest	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Cen. Farmland	13	48	36	4	2,511	
N. Forest	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
S. Farmland	13	53	30	4	811	
<b>Overall</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>Total #</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>1,626</b>	<b>1,142</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>3,322</b>	

**Free Metro Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016**

The majority of surveyors in the Northern Forest Zone thought the free Metro Antlerless Permit recommendation was too high or they were unsure (both 39%). The majority were unsure of the recommendation in the Central Farmland Zone. In the Southern Farmland Zone, 40% thought the recommendation was about right.

Area	Percent (%)					Total #
	Too Low	About Right	Too High	Unsure		
Central Forest	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Cen. Farmland	16	30	15	39	186	
N. Forest	10	39	12	39	114	
S. Farmland	20	40	19	21	187	
<b>Overall</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>Total #</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>487</b>	

**Public Land Bonus Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016**

Surveyors in the Central Farmland, Northern Forest, and Southern Farmland zones thought the Public Land Bonus Antlerless Permit recommendation was about right (32%, 42%, and 34%, respectively). In the Central Forest, 39% thought the recommendations were much too high.

Area	Percent (%)						Total #
	Much Too Low	Too Low	About Right	Too High	Much Too High	Unsure	
Central Forest	7	9	26	12	39	7	386
Cen. Farmland	5	10	32	18	26	11	2,521
N. Forest	9	7	42	7	29	5	1,588
S. Farmland	5	9	34	16	25	11	811
<b>Overall</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total #</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>1,966</b>	<b>748</b>	<b>1,543</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>5,573</b>

**Private Land Bonus Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016**

In the Central Farmland, Northern Forest, and Southern Farmland Zones, the majority thought the recommendations for Private Land Bonus Antlerless Permits were about right (31%, 36%, and 36%, respectively). In the Central Forest Zone, 41% thought the recommendations were much too high.

Area	Percent (%)						Total #
	Much Too Low	Too Low	About Right	Too High	Much Too High	Unsure	
Central Forest	4	6	25	17	41	6	386
Cen. Farmland	3	8	31	24	30	4	2,519
N. Forest	9	8	36	11	31	5	1,854
S. Farmland	4	8	36	24	23	5	811
<b>Overall</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total #</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>1,837</b>	<b>1,074</b>	<b>1,690</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>5,570</b>

**Public Land Metro Bonus Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016**

In both the Central Farmland and Northern Forest Zones, the majority were unsure about the recommendations for Public Land Metro Bonus Antlerless Permits (40% and 41%, respectively). In the Southern Farmland, the majority (37%) thought the recommendation was about right.

Area	Percent (%)						Total #
	Much Too Low	Too Low	About Right	Too High	Much Too High	Unsure	
Central Forest	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cen. Farmland	7	9	26	9	10	40	187
N. Forest	5	3	38	6	7	41	114
S. Farmland	13	10	37	7	9	25	187
<b>Overall</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total #</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>488</b>

**Private Land Metro Bonus Antlerless Permit Recommendations for 2016**

Similar to Public Land permits, surveyors were unsure of Private Land Metro Bonus Permit recommendations in the Central Farmland and Northern Forest Zones (40% and 41%, respectively). Thirty-seven percent thought recommendations were about right in the Southern Farmland Zone.

Area	Percent (%)						Total #
	Much Too Low	Too Low	About Right	Too High	Much Too High	Unsure	
Central Forest	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cen. Farmland	8	7	29	7	9	40	187
N. Forest	5	3	39	7	5	41	114
S. Farmland	13	10	37	10	7	24	187
<b>Overall</b>	9	7	34	8	7	34	-
<b>Total #</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>488</b>

**Antlerless Holiday Hunt Implementation Recommendations for 2016**

In both the Central Farmland and Southern Farmland Zones, 60% opposed the implementation of a Holiday Hunt.

Area	Support	Oppose	Unsure	Total #
Central Forest	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cen. Farmland	32	60	8	2,511
N. Forest	NA	NA	NA	NA
S. Farmland	36	60	4	811
<b>Overall</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,107</b>	<b>1,982</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>3,322</b>

**Invalid Junior Permits Recommendations for 2016**

In the Central Forest and Northern Forest Zones, the majority (55% and 58%, respectively) supported a recommendation for making the Junior Permit invalid.

Area	Support	Oppose	Unsure	Total #
Central Forest	55	36	9	384
Cen. Farmland	NA	NA	NA	NA
N. Forest	58	36	5	1,854
S. Farmland	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Overall</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total #</b>	<b>1,290</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>2,238</b>

### Antlerless-Only Season Framework Recommendations for 2016

The majority opposed an Antlerless-Only Season Framework recommendation in both the Central Farmland Zone (83%) and the Southern Farmland Zone (84%).

Area	Support	Oppose	Unsure	Total #
Central Forest	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cen. Farmland	13	83	4	2,231
N. Forest	NA	NA	NA	NA
S. Farmland	11	84	5	699
<b>Overall</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total #</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>2,451</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>2,930</b>

**BEFORE THE STATE OF WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

In the matter of a Secretary's Order modifying the 2016 deer hunting season framework in select deer management units.

**FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND ORDER**

FINDINGS OF FACT

County deer management councils, established under NR 10.104 (5) (b), are directed under par. (c) to gather public input on deer hunting season framework options and make annual recommendations to the department. During March and April each deer management council met twice to gather public input and develop recommendations.

1. HOLIDAY HUNT. The deer management councils representing the following counties recommend that the department modify the deer hunting season dates by establishing that the firearm season will reopen on December 24 and continue through January 1 for the harvest of antlerless deer only: Brown, Columbia, Crawford, Green Lake, Marinette (farmland zone portion), Marquette, Milwaukee, Pepin, Richland, Rock, Sauk, Waukesha and Columbia.

2. USE OF ANTLERLESS TAGS BY JUNIOR LICENSE HOLDERS. The deer management councils representing Ashland, Forest and Sawyer counties have recommended not establishing a quota for the harvest of antlerless deer. The councils further recommend that the department modify the deer hunting season bag limit by establishing that permits allowing the harvest of antlerless deer statewide by people who obtained their license while under 18 years of age are not valid in Ashland, Forest and Sawyer counties.

3. ISSUANCE OF ANTLERLESS TAGS.

(a) Barron and Chippewa counties are in the farmland zone and they have established an objective to increase or maintain the deer population. The deer management councils representing those counties recommend that antlerless tags issued with the purchase of firearm and archery licenses under NR 10.104 (7) are not valid in Barron and Chippewa counties except that antlerless permits issued to persons holding a Class A or C disabled permit or a person who obtains the tag while under 18 years of age would still be issued a valid antlerless permit.

(b) Buffalo, Crawford, Grant, Green Lake, Manitowoc, Marquette, Milwaukee, Pepin, Richland, Sauk and Vernon counties are in the farmland zone. The deer management councils representing those counties recommend that two antlerless tags be issued with the purchase of firearm and archery licenses under NR 10.104 (7).

(c) Door, Kewaunee, Shawano and Waupaca counties are in the farmland zone. The deer management councils representing those counties recommend that three antlerless tags be issued with the purchase of firearm and archery licenses under NR 10.104 (7).

(d) Brown, Dane, Douglas, Kenosha, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington and Waukesha counties have metropolitan subunits. The deer management councils representing those subunits recommend not issuing free antlerless tags which are valid only in the subunit under NR 10.104 (7).

**-MORE-**

CONCLUSION OF LAW

1. According to ss. NR 10.01 (3) (ex) Wis. Adm. Code related to deer season framework modifications and 10.104 (7) related to deer carcass tags the department may, upon making the above findings, modify the deer hunting season framework as recommended by county deer management advisory councils.

ORDER

1. HOLIDAY HUNT. Notwithstanding all other provisions of Ch. NR 10, Wis. Adm. Code, which remain in effect, the firearm deer season will reopen on December 24 and continue through January 1 and only antlerless deer may be harvested in the following counties: Brown, Columbia, Crawford, Green Lake, Marinette (farmland zone portion), Marquette, Milwaukee, Pepin, Richland, Rock, Sauk, Waukesha and Columbia.

2. USE OF ANTLERLESS TAGS BY JUNIOR LICENSE HOLDERS. Notwithstanding all other provisions of Ch. NR 10, Wis. Adm. Code, which remain in effect, permits allowing the harvest of antlerless deer statewide by people who obtained their license while under 18 years of age are not valid in Ashland, Forest and Sawyer counties.

3. ISSUANCE OF ANTLERLESS TAGS. Notwithstanding all other provisions of Ch. NR 10, Wis. Adm. Code, which remain in effect:

(a) Antlerless tags issued with the purchase of firearm and archery licenses under NR 10.104 (7) are not valid in Barron and Chippewa counties except that antlerless permits issued to a person holding a Class A or C disabled permit or a person who obtains the tag while under 18 years of age would still be issued a valid antlerless permit.

(b) Two antlerless tags shall be issued with the purchase of firearm and archery licenses under NR 10.104 (7) for Buffalo, Crawford, Grant, Green Lake, Manitowoc, Marquette, Milwaukee, Pepin, Richland, Sauk and Vernon counties.

(c) Three antlerless tags shall be issued with the purchase of firearm and archery licenses under NR 10.01 (7) for Door, Kewaunee, Shawano and Waupaca counties.

(d) The department will not issue unique antlerless tags under NR 10.104 (7) for metropolitan subunits in the following counties: Brown, Dane, Douglas, Kenosha, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington and Waukesha. Antlerless tags issued under NR 10.104 (7) which are valid for the surrounding county unit continue to be valid in the metropolitan subunit and bonus permits under 10.104 (8) may be issued.

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin, \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL  
RESOURCES

\_\_\_\_\_  
By Cathy Stepp, Secretary