

2010 Zone 3 Deer Season Recommendations

DNR Section of Wildlife



The recommendations in this presentation are a culmination of 5 years of research that examined both the biological and social aspects of changing deer regulations. Some of that data is presented as background to the recommendation process.

Data used to make these recommendations includes:

- Hunter Surveys conducted in 2005, 2007, 2009
- Deer examined at registration stations from 2005 - 2009



The primary objective of the deer management program has been, and will continue to be population management. The Minnesota DNR is committed to managing deer populations within goal ranges that were established through a collaborative public process. Any regulatory changes will be evaluated first on the basis of how they affect total deer numbers. Other metrics, such as satisfaction, opportunity, or changes in sex ratios, while also important, are secondary to our need to manage deer populations.

There are also significant agricultural depredation issues and landowner relation problems in some areas. There is a need to address them in collaboration with both recreational and non-hunting landowners. There is more to managing deer than changing harvest regulations.



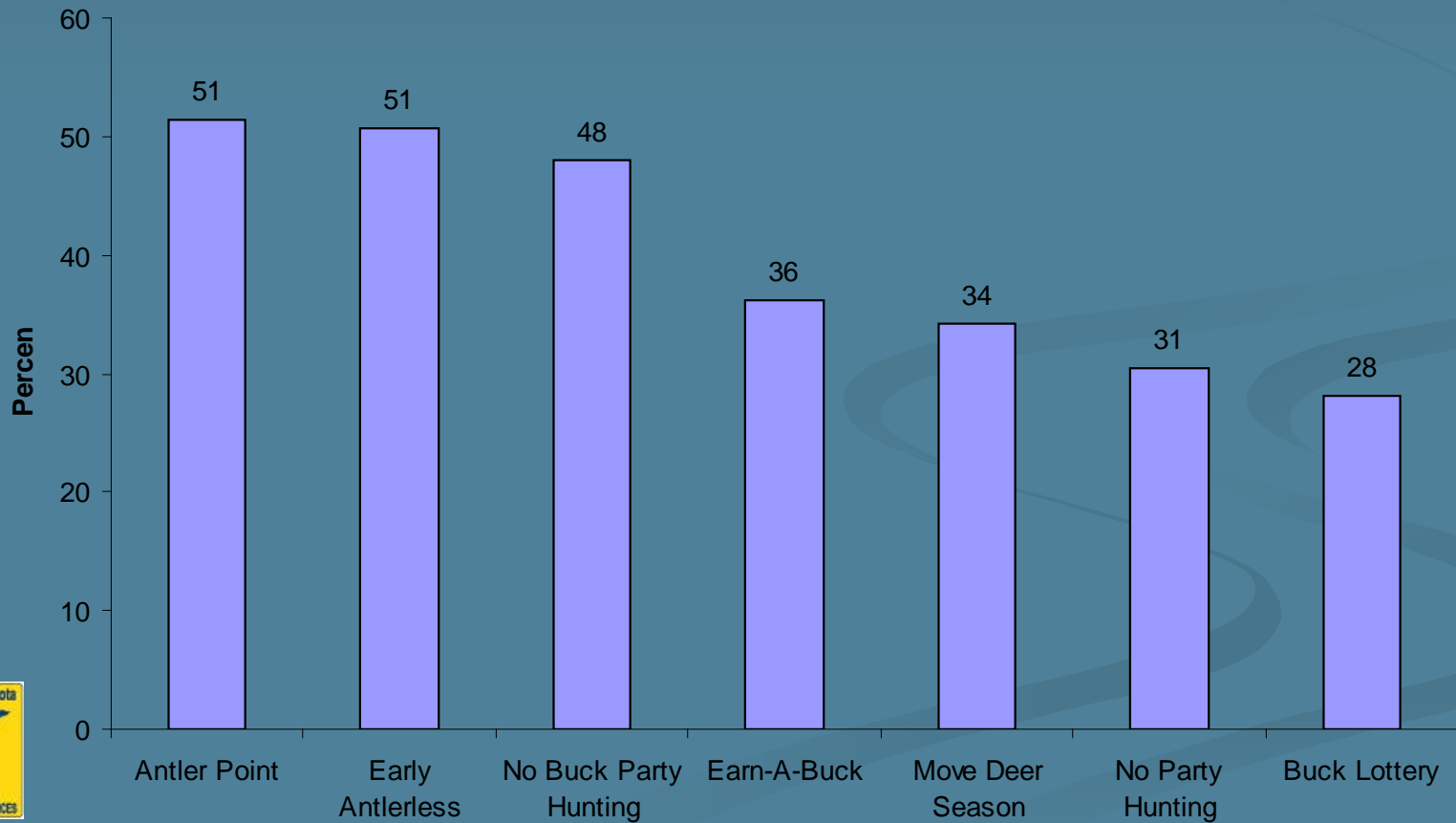
Zone 3 Deer Season Recommendations

1. Four day, either-sex youth-only statewide season over the MEA weekend.
2. Ban cross-tagging of bucks during all seasons (archery, 3A, 3B, muzzleloader).
3. Implement a 4-point (to one side) antler point restriction regulation throughout all 300-series deer areas for all seasons (archery, 3A, 3B, muzzleloader)
4. Lengthen the 3A season to 9 days as a component of the antler point restriction regulation.



2005 Hunter Choice Survey Southeast Hunters Only

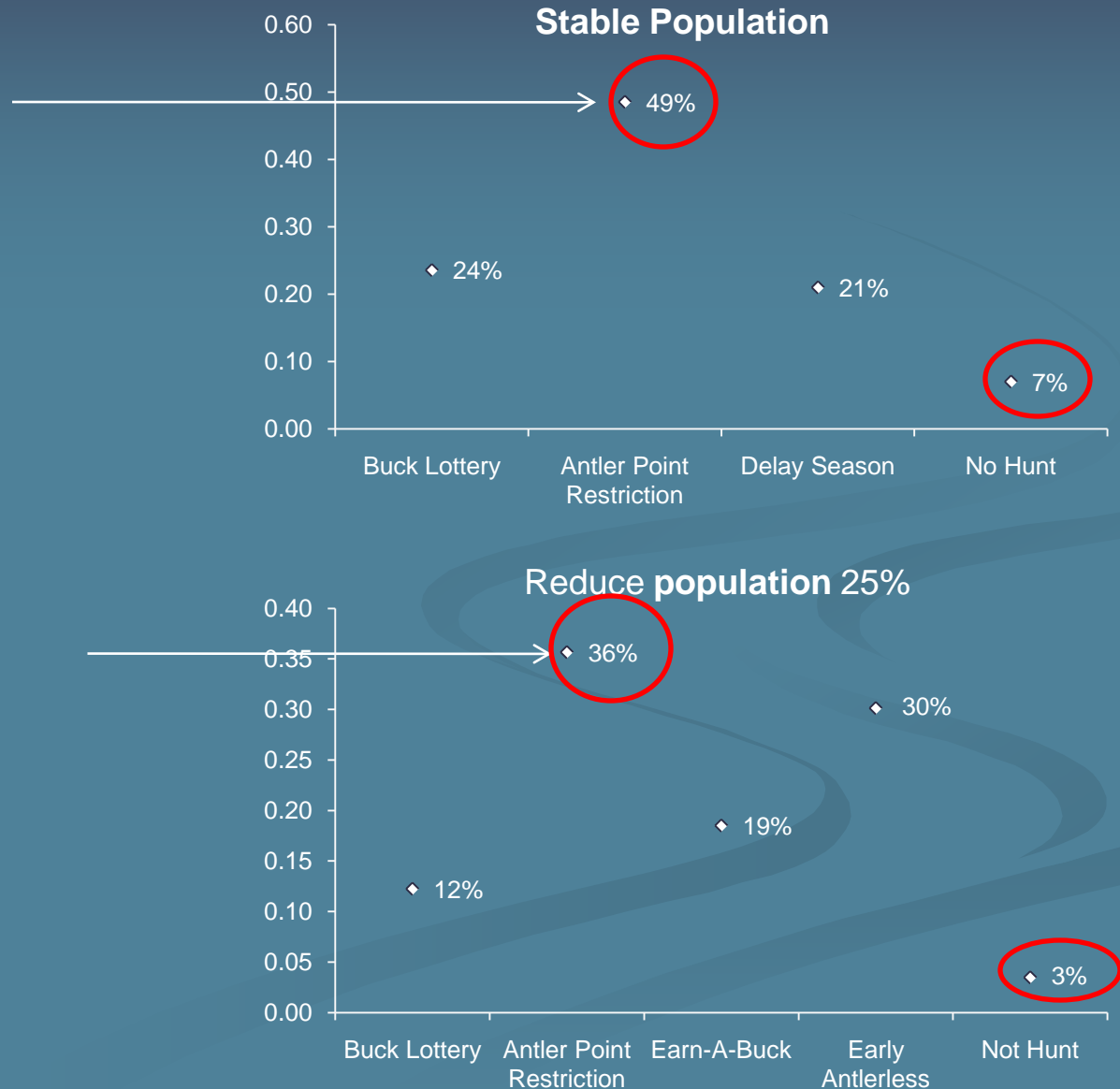
Percent wanting mature buck regulations – 69%



2005 Regulatory Choice Survey

Percent Selecting the Regulation

➤ The survey gave hunters a choice between several regulations, including the option of not hunting. In all cases, hunters were most likely to choose the antler point restriction over other options. Very few indicated they would not hunt the area if regulations were changed.

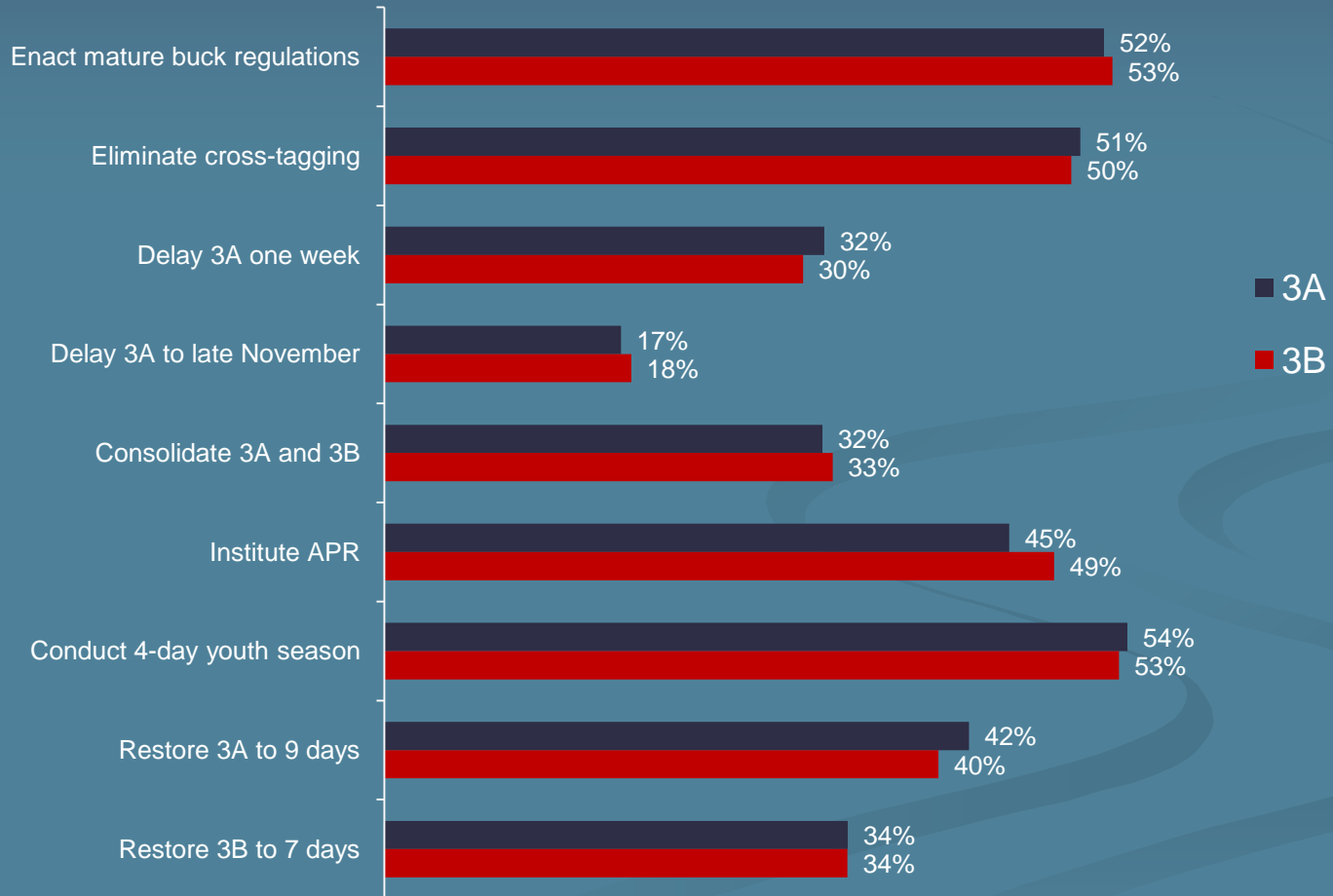


2009 Survey Overview

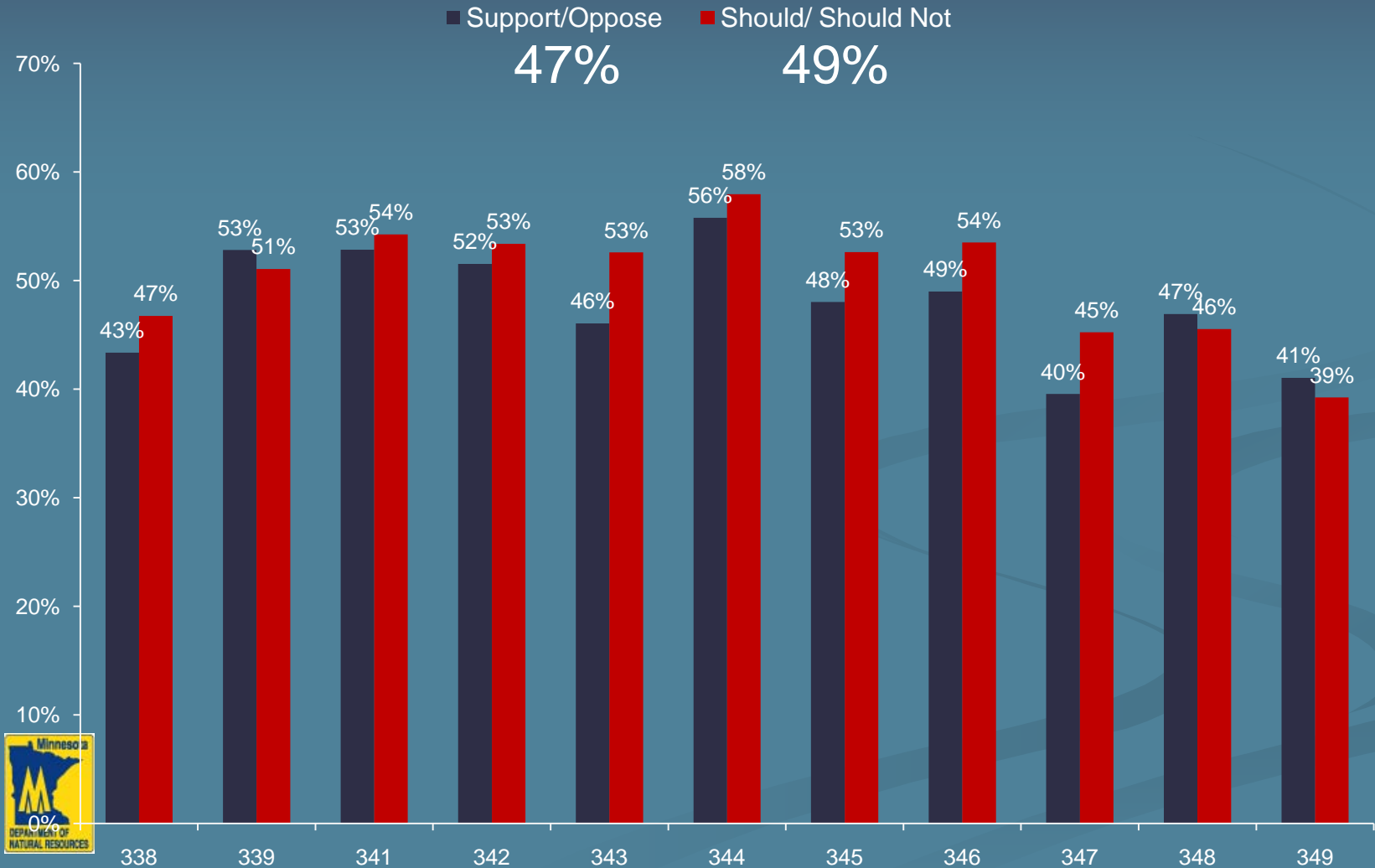
- 32,500 adult Zone 3 firearm deer hunters
- 3,000 surveys divided equally between 3A and 3B firearm hunters
- Mailed 3 waves, 1,740 completed responses (60%)
- 3A hunters = 24 years experience; 3B = 25 years
- 24% also hunted archery season
- 15% also hunted muzzleloader season
- 7% belong to an organized group (3% MDHA, 1% BWA)



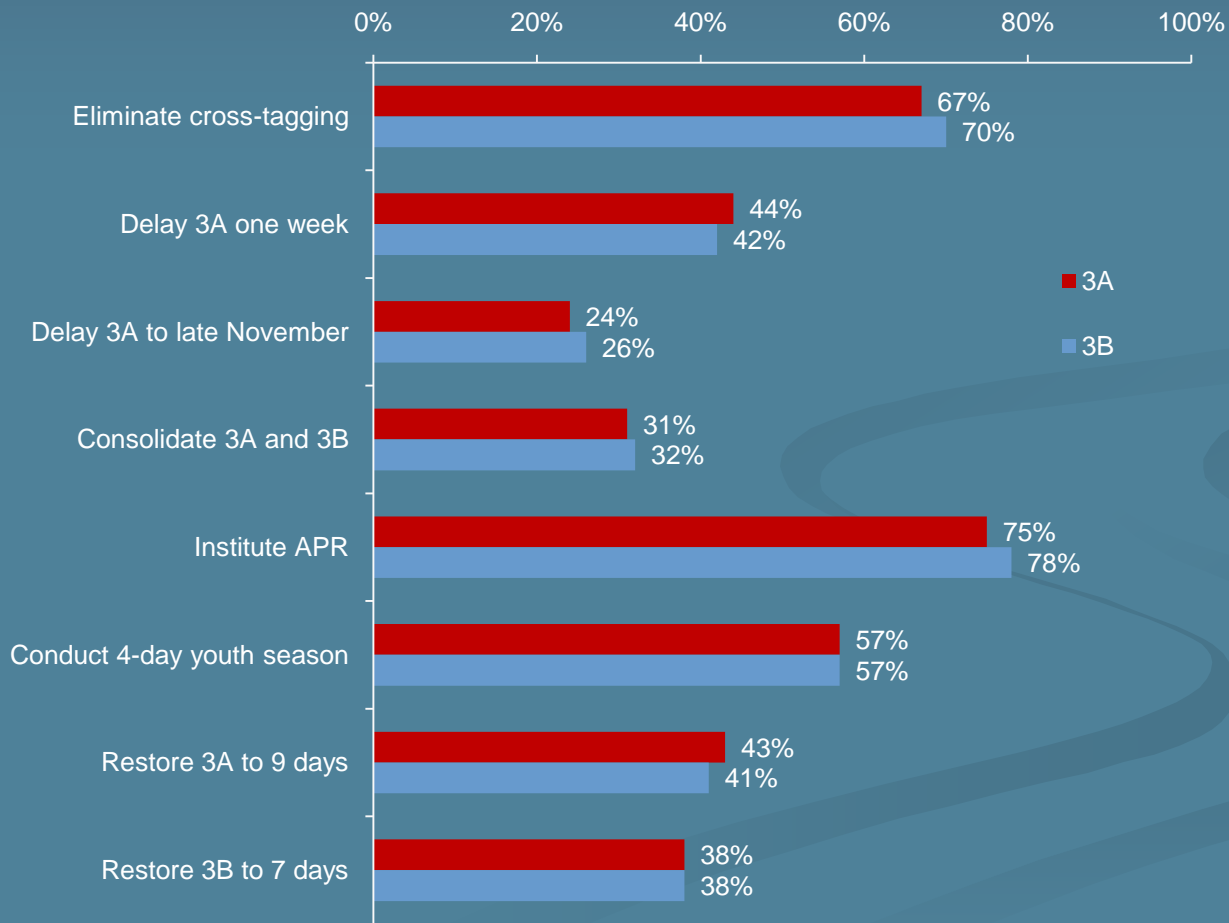
2009 Survey: Support for Regulations



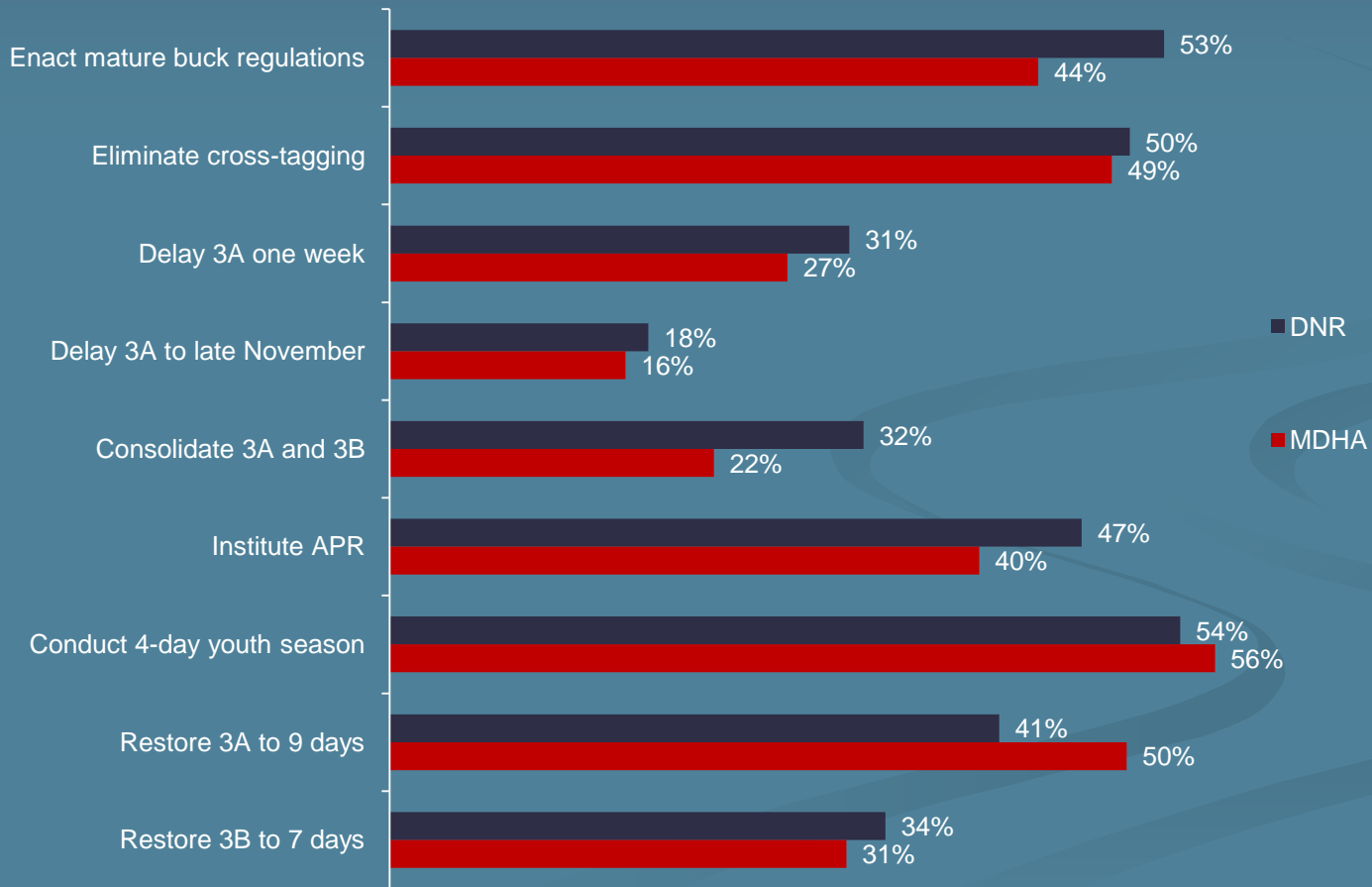
2009 Survey: Antler Point Restrictions (asked two ways)



Regulations among people who support mature bucks



Comparison between DNR and MDHA Surveys



4-Day Statewide Youth Season

- Held over MEA weekend, which is Oct. 21-24, 2010.
- Youth would need to be accompanied by an adult who could not possess a firearm.
- Youth would be allowed to take 1 deer of either-sex.
- The deer would count towards the seasonal bag limit for that deer permit area.



Buck Cross-Tagging

- Regulation would require hunters to shoot and tag their own buck.
- Hunters would no longer be allowed to tag bucks for each other.
- Would have no effect on the hunting 'party' nor would successful hunters be required to leave the field.
- Hunters would still be allowed to shoot and tag antlerless deer for each other.



Antler Point Restriction

- Only bucks possessing at least one 4-point antler would be legal for harvest.
- Regulation would protect about 75% of yearling (18 month) old bucks and less than 10% of 2-year old bucks.
- Regulation would be in place for 3 years and then evaluated.
- Should increase the proportion of mature bucks in one year and slightly increase antlerless deer harvest.
- Youth hunters would not have to comply; however, adults would not be allowed to shoot and tag bucks for youth hunters.



Lengthen 3A to 9-days

- This would be done in conjunction with the antler point restriction (APR).
- This recommendation is a trade-off for protecting yearling bucks. In essence, if there is an APR, more hunting opportunity could be offered because the majority of harvest on the second weekend would be antlerless.
- If DNR does not institute the antler point restriction, the recommendation is to leave the 3A season at 7-days (current structure).



For More Information

- The 2005 hunter choice survey can be found at:
 - http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/outdoor_activities/hunting/deer/2005huntersurvey_fulldoc.pdf
- The 2009 hunter survey can be found at:
 - http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/outdoor_activities/hunting/deer/2009_zone3survey.pdf
- The full Zone 3 recommendation report can be found at:
 - http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/outdoor_activities/hunting/deer/regchanges/2010_zone3_recs.pdf
- E-mail comments accepted at:
 - wildlife.dnr@state.mn.us

