

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources



Little Falls Area Wildlife Office
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CAMP RIPLEY DEER MANAGEMENT AND SPECIAL HUNTS

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Management philosophy – Deer populations at Camp Ripley are not managed with a priority of producing trophy-status bucks, nor are they managed with goals of maximizing hunting opportunity or harvest. Instead, a less intensive approach is used with relatively light hunting pressure compared to most deer management areas in Minnesota. This is primarily due to the 53,000-acre installation's status as a military training site and statutory game refuge.

Several factors have helped to create a deer population that is slightly older (approximately 0.5 years older) and more naturally regulated that requires little harvest compared to areas outside the refuge. These include the presence of 1) an established wolf population, 2) large amounts of high quality, intact, and diverse habitats, and 3) relatively low levels of human activity or encroachment.

Deer density – There has been no consistent formal monitoring and deer population estimation within Camp Ripley. However, available information for the surrounding permit area and recent aerial surveys in Camp suggest that as of 2010 the population is at 22 and 30 deer/mi² for pre-fawning and post-fawning densities, respectively. Pre-harvest densities in Camp during the last 12-year period of mild winters have ranged from 30-40 deer/mi². Liberal regulations designed to maintain the deer herd below carrying capacity has resulted in high harvest during the last ten years. Consequently, deer densities have declined slightly by design, although remain high with a predicted 2010 pre-harvest density of 30 deer/mi². Extrapolating these figures informally across the reservation, and with prevailing mild winters when deer over-winter survival and fecundity is high, a pre-harvest population between 2,400 and 3,200 occurs within Camp.

Special deer hunts – Although the deer herd can be sustained at Camp Ripley without harvesting animals, special archery hunts have been conducted for 57 years under the premise that a harvestable surplus exists, and that several benefits are realized. Through natural mortality and controlled annual harvest (recent harvest rates exceed 20%, with 60-70% comprised of antlerless deer) the deer population can be held below the reservation's over-winter carrying capacity. This, in turn, maintains the deer population in good physical condition and reduces the potential of adverse effects of high deer densities on habitat quality, military training, adjacent private property, and public transportation (i.e. over-browsing vegetation, crop & stored forage deprecations, and deer-vehicle collisions on nearby roads).

Since 2004, between 4,500 and 5,000 permits have been issued annually, resulting in average harvest of 490 deer, well above the historic average of 310 deer. This harvest strategy and level of permits will likely occur well into the future. The dates for the 2010 Camp Ripley Bow Hunts are set for October 21-22 and October 30-31. Those interested may apply at a POS-ELS agent, via the Internet at https://jc.activeoutdoorsolutions.com/mn_customer/, or by phone (888-665-4236) beginning July 1st, with an application deadline on the 3rd Friday in August. Interest will be solicited via statewide DNR news release in late-June. Winners will be notified by early-September. In addition, disabled veteran, youth archery, and deployed soldier archery hunts are held annually. Questions regarding the hunts should be directed to the Little Falls Area Wildlife Office at the address above.

DNR Information: 651-296-6157 • 1-888-646-6367 • TTY: 651-296-5484 • 1-800-657-3929

CAMP RIPLEY ARCHERY HUNT DATA, 1980 TO PRESENT

*Bag limit = 2 and bonus permits allowed

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DEER HARVESTED</u>	<u>ADULT MALES</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>ADULT FEMALES</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>FAWNS</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>PERMITS ISSUED</u>	<u>NO. OF HUNTERS</u>	<u>% SUCCESS</u>	<u>1 ST SEASON</u>	<u>2 ND SEASON</u>	<u>DAYS HUNTED</u>	<u>LARGEST DEER (LBS)</u>
1980	CLOSED													
1981	153	48	31	45	29	60	39	2587	1972	7.8	Oct.10-25	3 Weekends	6	272
1982	200	67	34	86	43	47	23	3000	2274	8.8	Oct. 23-24	Oct. 30-31	4	236
1983	237	89	38	94	40	54	22	3500	2831	8.4	Oct. 8-9	Oct. 15-16	4	253
1984	387	162	42	151	39	74	19	4500	3815	10.1	Oct. 6-7	Oct. 27-28	4	238
1985	278	118	42	113	41	47	17	5000	3996	7.0	Oct. 12-13	Oct. 27-28	4	257
1986	257	106	41	83	32	68	26	5000	3940	6.5	Oct. 11-12	Oct. 25-26	4	243
1987	284	122	43	91	32	71	25	5000	4112	6.9	Oct. 10-11	Oct. 24-25	4	250
1988	241	91	38	101	42	49	20	5000	4090	5.9	Oct. 8-9	Oct. 22-23	4	262
1989	215	95	44	75	35	45	21	4000	3136	6.9	Oct. 17-18	Oct. 28-29	4	226
1990	301	137	46	115	38	49	16	3500	2585	11.6	Oct. 27-28	Nov. 17-18	4	225
1991	219	87	40	90	41	42	19	4000	2217	9.9	Oct. 19-20	Nov. 30-Dec. 1	4	232
1992	406	228	56	140	35	38	9	4500	3156	12.9	Oct. 31-Nov. 1	Nov. 21-22	4	224
1993	287	147	51	82	29	58	20	5000	4127	7.0	Oct. 21-21	Oct. 30-31	4	237
1994	267	136	51	95	36	36	13	4000	3158	8.5	Oct. 20-21	Oct. 29-30	4	237
1995	247	102	41	100	41	45	18	4500	3564	6.9	Oct. 19-20	Oct. 28-29	4	256
1996	160	78	49	55	34	27	17	4000	3154	5.1	Oct. 17-18	Oct. 26-27	4	248
1997	142	67	47	57	40	18	13	3000	2316	6.1	Oct. 16-17	Oct. 25-26	4	243
1998	189	116	61	50	26	23	12	3000	2291	8.2	Oct. 15-16	Oct.31- Nov. 1	4	249
1999	203	100	49	83	41	20	10	3000	2335	8.7	Oct. 21-22	Oct. 30-31	4	251
2000	375	228	61	109	29	38	10	4000	3128	12.0	Oct. 19-20	Oct. 28-29	4	247
2001	350	192	55	126	36	32	9	4500	3729	9.4	Oct. 18-19	Oct. 27-28	4	272
2002	324	186	57	102	31	36	11	4500	3772	8.6	Oct. 17-18	Oct. 26-27	4	235
2003	318	161	50	120	38	37	12	4500	3810	8.4	Oct. 16-17	Oct. 25-26	4	252
*2004	484	218	45	206	43	60	12	4521	3836	12.4	Oct. 21-22	Oct. 30-31	4	235
*2005	477	186	39	218	46	73	15	4522	3813	11.9	Oct. 20-21	Oct. 29-30	4	245
*2006	514	165	32	241	47	108	21	5009	4351	11.8	Oct. 19-20	Oct. 28-29	4	244
*2007	476	150	32	228	49	98	21	5014	4296	10.8	Oct. 18-19	Oct. 27-28	4	255
*2008	516	183	35	220	43	113	22	5005	4167	11.9	Oct. 19-20	Oct. 26-27	4	234
*2009	477	190	40	202	42	85	18	5005	4126	11.4	Oct. 15-16	Oct. 31-Nov. 1	4	265
Average	310	136	45	120	38	53	18	4230	3383	9				