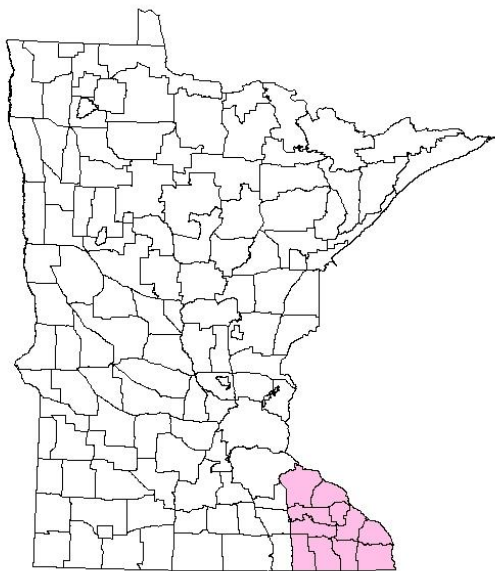




Fish and Wildlife Division

Deer Goal Setting Attitude Survey Report

Block 12: Blufflands Plateau



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Statement of Purpose and Scope of Data

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) periodically conducts surveys of deer hunters and landowners to assess preferences for deer populations, experiences with deer hunting, and impacts of deer populations on private property to inform the deer population goal setting process. This report details one such effort. Results of this study directly inform decision making for deer populations. We randomly selected landowners and hunters from county tax parcel records, and MNDNR deer license information respectively for participation. Therefore, the results of this study are representative of the stakeholder group, and may differ substantially from results of self-selected public input processes, as a function of the scientific study design. The values in this report are estimates of the average for all individuals within a given population of interest (e.g., hunters in a deer permit area), not just respondents to the survey.

Data Collection Process

We conducted our surveys of hunters and landowners using a mixed mode design that included three solicitations. We sent selected participants a letter directing them to complete a questionnaire online. Non-respondents received a second letter requesting their participation, followed by a paper copy of the survey with a postage-paid self-addressed return envelope. Copies of these questionnaires are found in Appendices A and B of this report.

Hunters

Within a deer permit area (DPA), we randomly selected hunters from the list of all firearm deer license holders in the given year to receive a goal setting survey. We only included adults over the age of 18 at the time the sample was drawn. The number of hunters selected in each DPA was determined by estimating the minimum sample size needed to make statistically valid inference about the population at the DPA level at 90% confidence. Participants may not be residents of the DPA, but have indicated that the given DPA is the primary location where they hunt deer.

Landowners

Within a deer permit area, we randomly selected individual parcels from all parcels greater than or equal to 2 acres in size for inclusion. Stratification occurred by quantiles of parcels by acres to ensure a representative coverage of land use types and interests. Land acres strata were: 2-19, 20-79, 80-319, and ≥ 320 acres respectively. Similar to hunters, the number of landowners selected for each DPA was proportional to the total number of landowners in the DPA and after determining, the minimum sample size needed for statistically valid inference at the DPA scale, with 90% confidence.

Block 12: Blufflands Plateau

The data presented herein are from a statistically representative survey of Minnesota deer hunters and landowners in goal setting Block 12 (Blufflands Plateau). This area includes deer permit areas: 341, 342, 343, 344, 643, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649 and 655 in the southeastern part of the state (Figure 1).

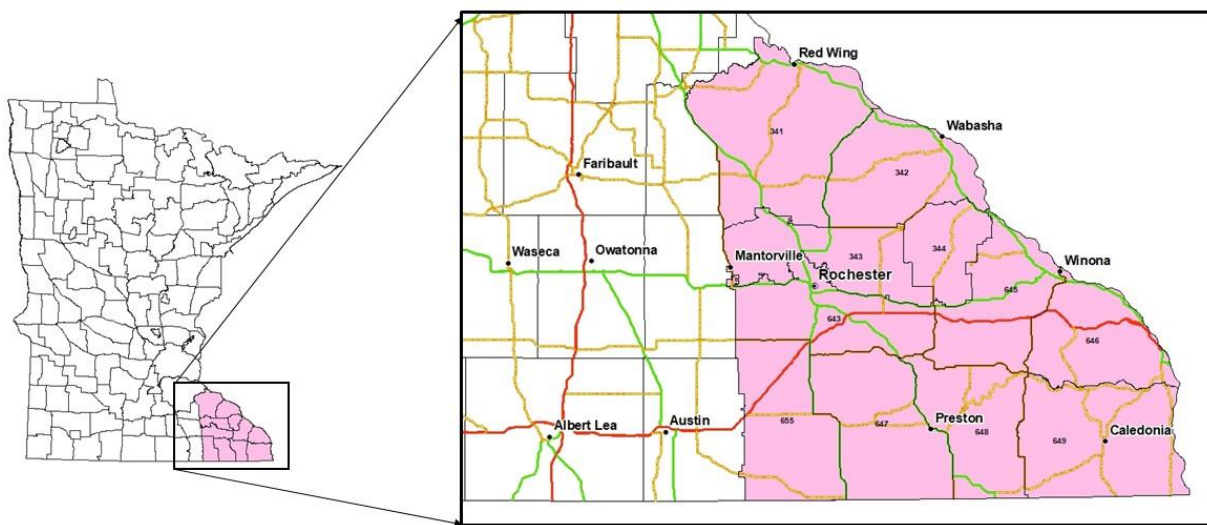


Figure 1. Goal setting Block 12 DPA boundaries

Response Rates and Weighting

Hunters

After accounting for undeliverable mail, the adjusted response rate for the Block 12 hunter sample was 38%. Response rates by DPA ranged from a low of 32% for DPA 344, to a high of 43% for DPA 649. A summary of response rates by DPA is located in Table 1.

We weighted responses in proportion to quantiles derived from the population of aged 18+ firearms deer hunters in Minnesota, during the 2020 hunting season. Respondents (M=52) were on average older than the population (M=46) from which the sample was drawn. To attend to this, we estimated population estimates according to the weight schedule presented in Table 2. Weights apply to the population rather than the block level, under an assumption that there is no correlation between age and preferred hunt location.

Landowners

After accounting for undeliverable mail, the adjusted response rate for the Block 12 landowner sample was 44%. Response rates by DPA ranged from a low of 33% for DPA 655, to a high of 52% for DPA 343. A summary of response rates by DPA is located in Table 3.

We drew samples of landowners equally within four strata (2-19, 20-70, 80-319, and 320+) corresponding to parcel acres to ensure representation of small, medium, and large landholders, and thus, the potential array of interests associated with different land uses. We calculated weights within Block to generate estimates representative of the population according to the schedule presented in Table 4.

Table 1. Response rates for hunter samples, by DPA

DPA	Initial Sample	Undeliverable	Respondents	Adjusted sample	Raw response rate	Adjusted response rate
341	536	12	189	524	0.35	0.36
342	522	21	186	501	0.36	0.37
343	506	18	176	488	0.35	0.36
344	516	25	156	491	0.30	0.32
643	505	21	195	484	0.39	0.40
645	513	15	209	498	0.41	0.42
646	521	20	207	501	0.40	0.41
647	487	35	181	452	0.37	0.40
648	509	22	172	487	0.34	0.35
649	525	19	218	506	0.42	0.43
655	430	32	158	398	0.37	0.40
Block Average	5570	240	2047	5330	0.37	0.38

Table 2. Population and sample proportions by age quantile, and weights

Age Quantile	Population Proportion	Sample Proportion	Weight*
18-32	0.2423	0.1365	1.7751
33-45	0.2553	0.2098	1.2169
45-58	0.2543	0.2887	0.8801
59+	0.2481	0.3650	0.6797

*Weight = $1/(\text{Sample Proportion}/\text{Population Proportion})$

Table 3. Response rates for landowner samples, by DPA

DPA	Initial Sample	Undeliverable	Respondents	Adjusted sample	Raw response rate	Adjusted response rate
341	535	8	275	527	0.51	0.52
342	508	13	183	495	0.36	0.37
343	517	4	257	513	0.50	0.50
344	390	11	189	379	0.48	0.50
643	507	7	246	500	0.49	0.49
645	489	7	215	482	0.44	0.45
646	513	0	240	513	0.47	0.47
647	504	0	179	504	0.36	0.36
648	490	0	197	490	0.40	0.40
649	507	0	220	507	0.43	0.43
655	492	0	162	492	0.33	0.33
Block Average	5452	50	2363	5402	0.43	0.44

Table 4. Population and sample proportions by acre strata, and weights

Acres strata	Population proportion	Sample proportion	Weight*
2-19	0.471	0.2747	1.714598
20-79	0.2236	0.2649	0.844092
80-319	0.2278	0.2594	0.87818
320+	0.0776	0.201	0.38607

*Weight = 1/(Sample Proportion/Population Proportion)

Summary of Deer Population Preferences

Figure 2 contains estimates of Goal Block 12 deer hunter and landowner preferences for change in the deer population where they hunt or their property is located respectively. Values are an estimate of the mean preferred percent change to the deer population by DPA, and its 95% confidence interval. Landowners reported deer population preferences ranging from a small reduction (-10%) for DPA 343 to small increase (+6%) for DPA 647. However, most 95% confidence intervals for estimates of landowners preferred change contained zero. Deer hunters, on average, and regardless of DPA preferred a small to moderate increase in the deer population. Estimates for deer hunters' preference for change to the deer population ranged from +12% for DPA 341 to +23% for DPAs 344 and 647.

Figures 3 through 8 contain DPA level estimates for the percent of hunters and landowners that preferred to see the deer population either decrease, stay the same, or increase. A near majority of deer hunters expressed a preference for an increase in the deer population in all Block 12 DPAs. Conversely, 50% or more of landowners expressed a preference for deer populations to remain the same, and a higher proportion of landowners indicated a preference for a reduction in the deer population, than deer hunters.

Figure 2. Landowners' and hunters' mean desired percent change in the deer population, by DPA

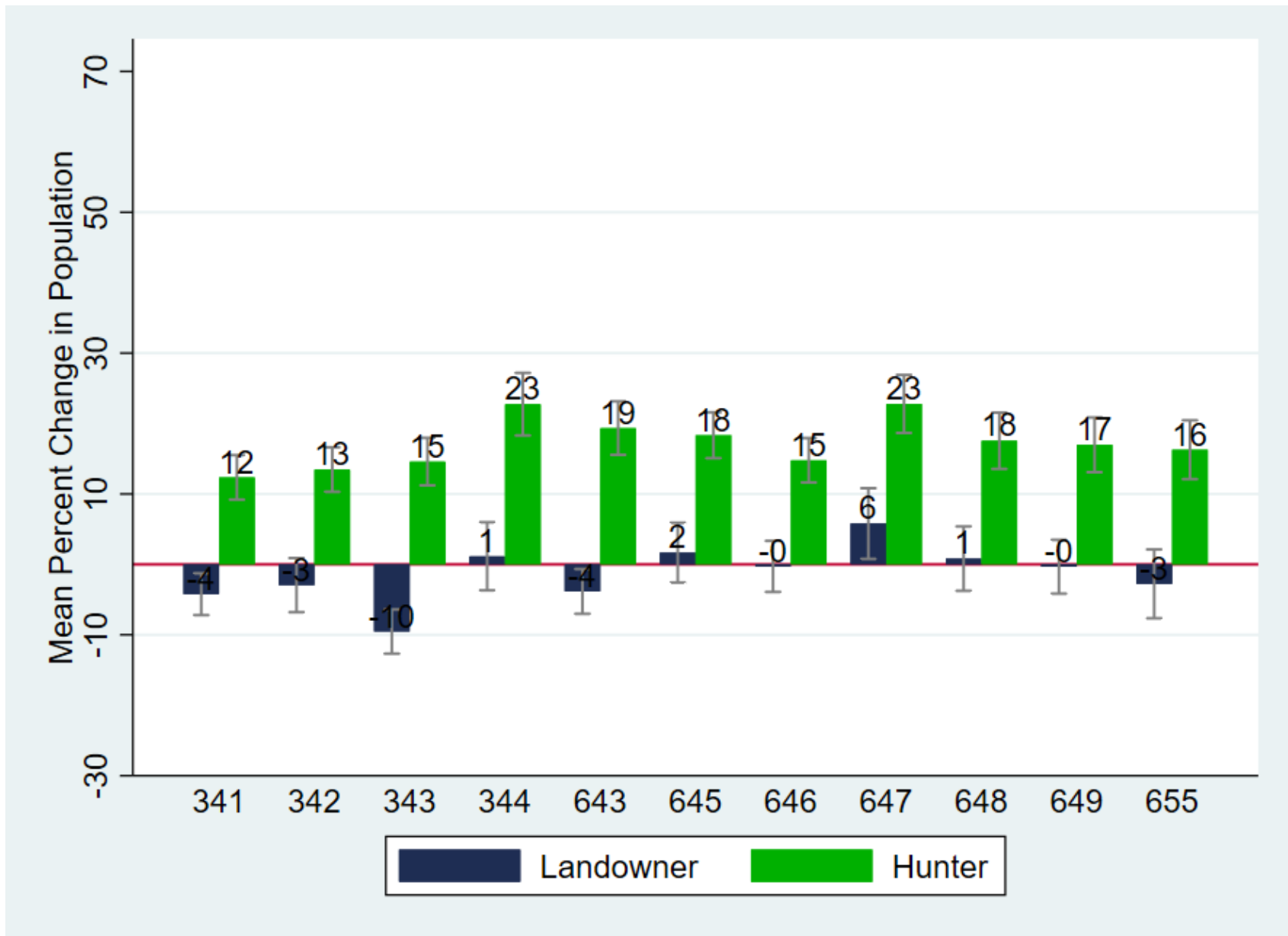


Figure 3. Deer permit area 341 deer hunters' and landowners' preference for future deer population

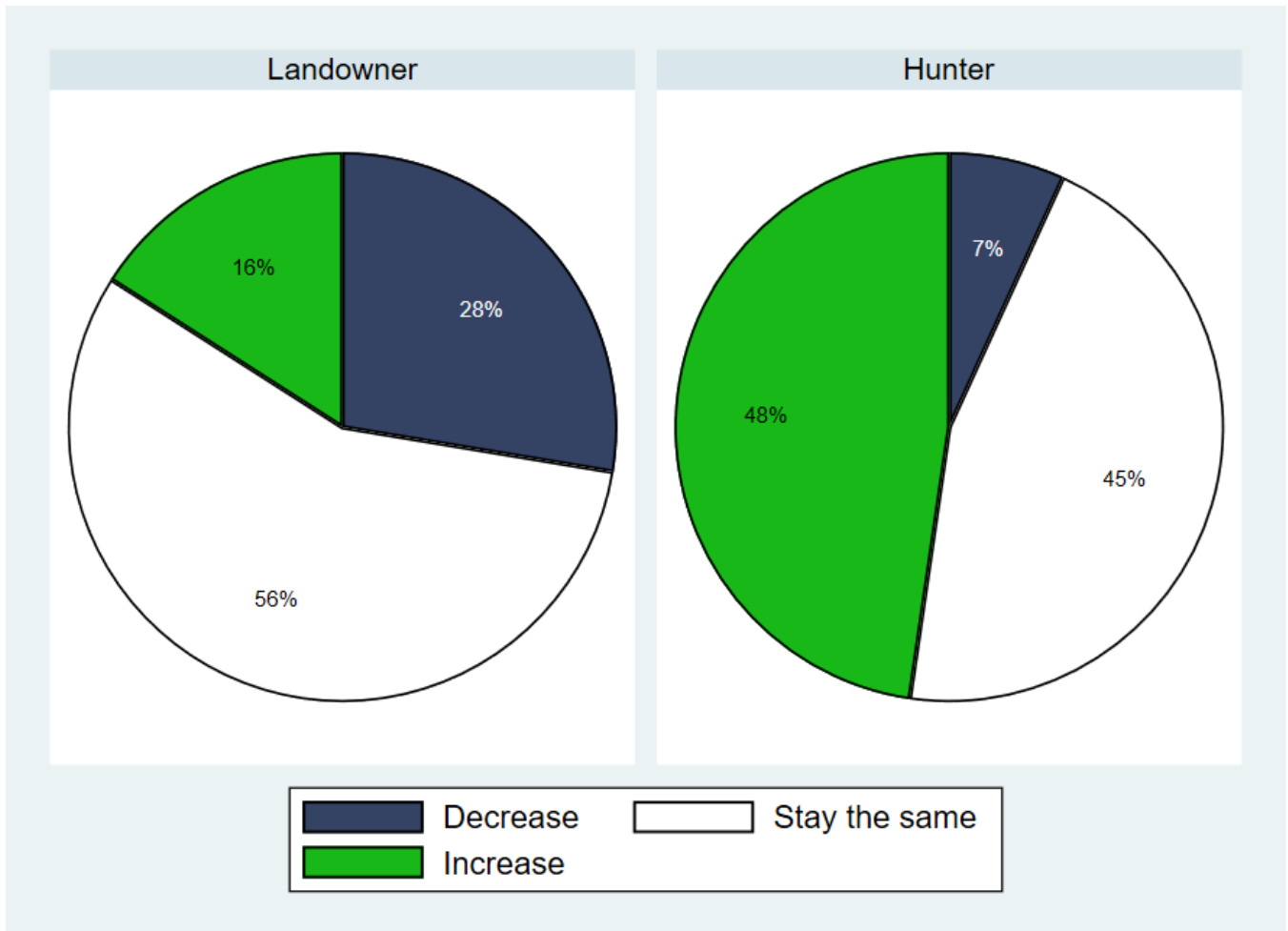


Figure 4. Deer permit area 342 landowners' and hunters' preference for future deer population

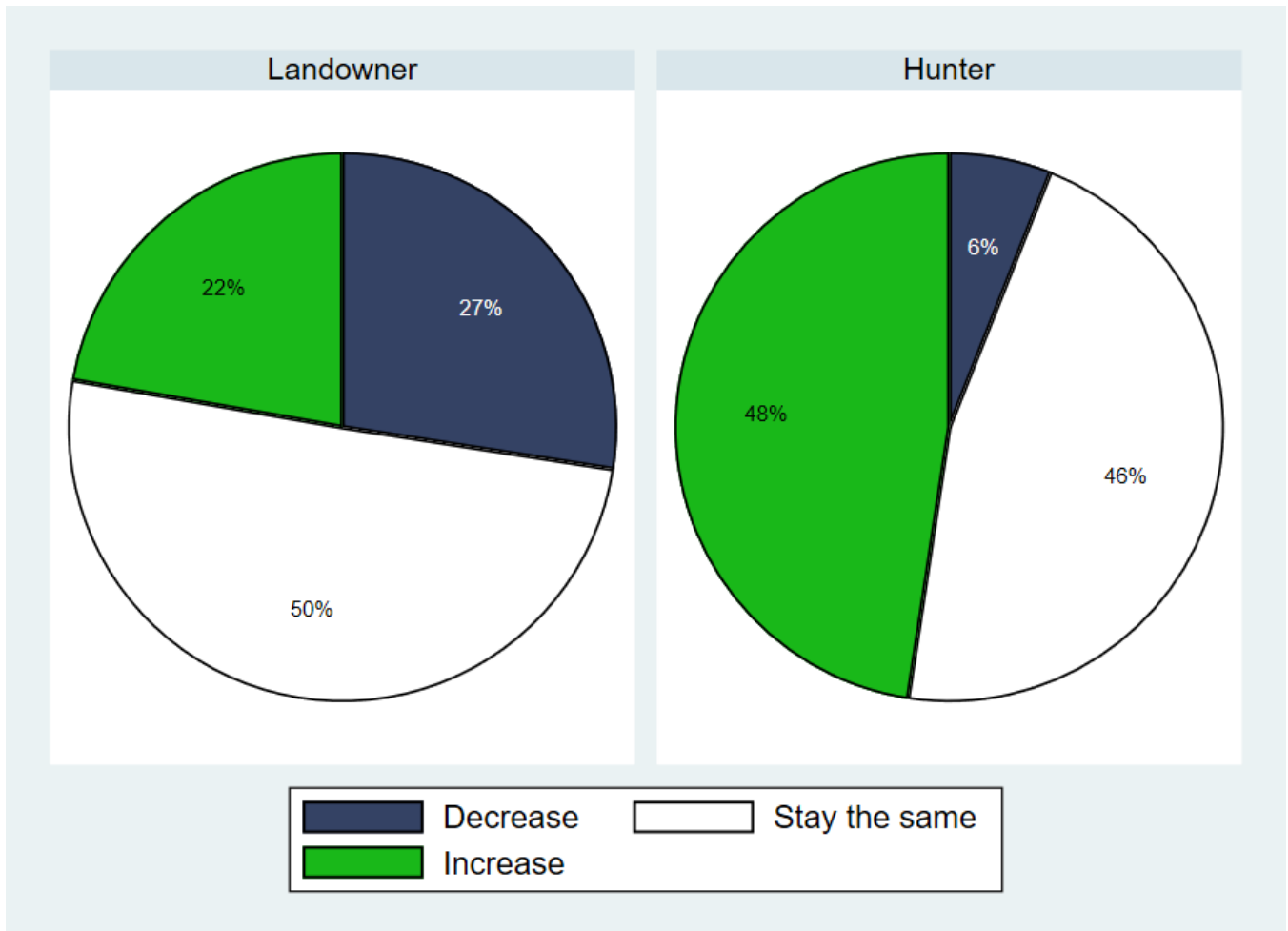


Figure 5. Deer permit area 343 hunters' preference for future deer population

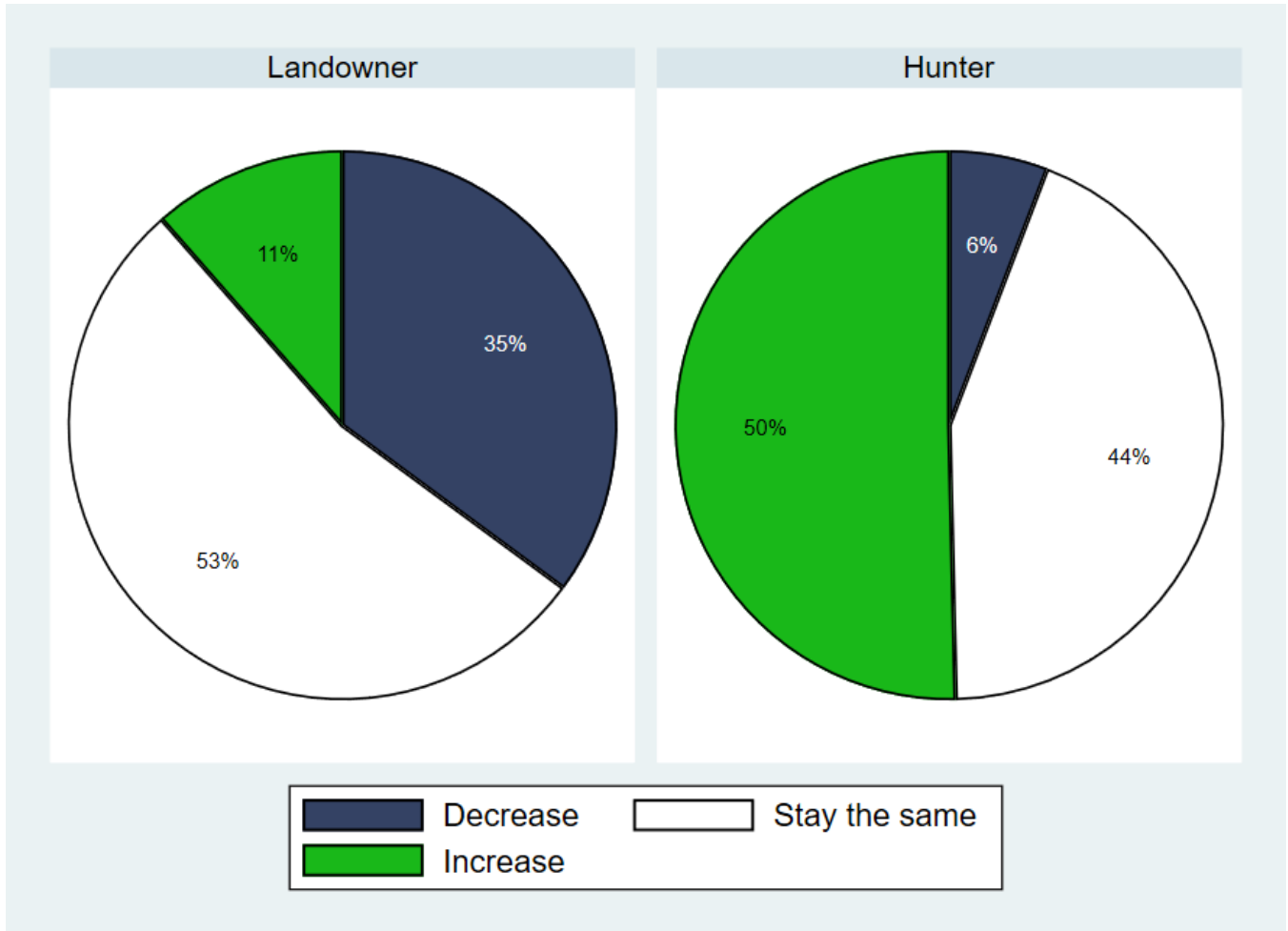


Figure 6. Deer permit area 344 landowners' and hunters' preference for future deer population

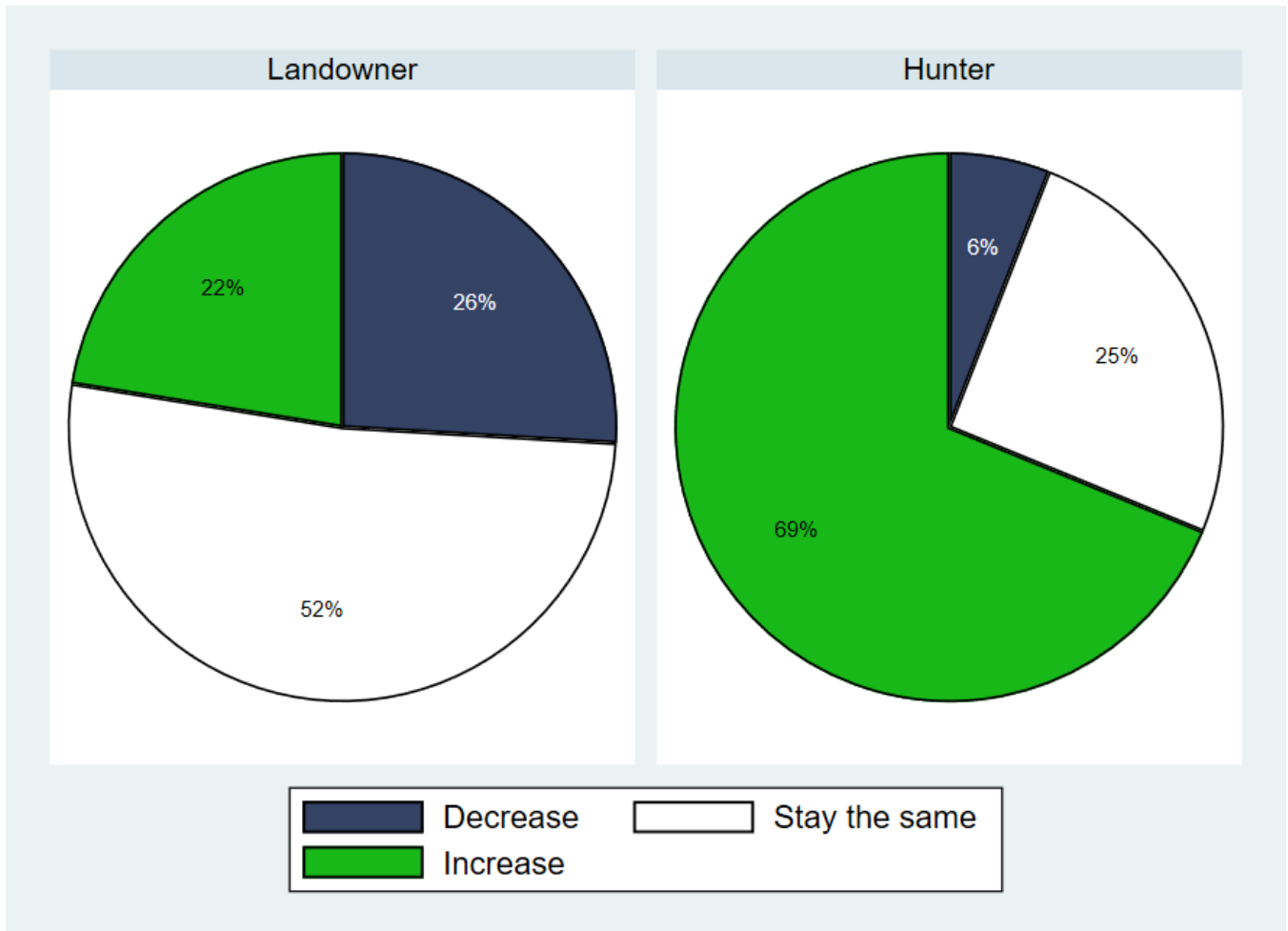


Figure 7. Deer permit area 643 landowners' and hunters' preference for future deer population

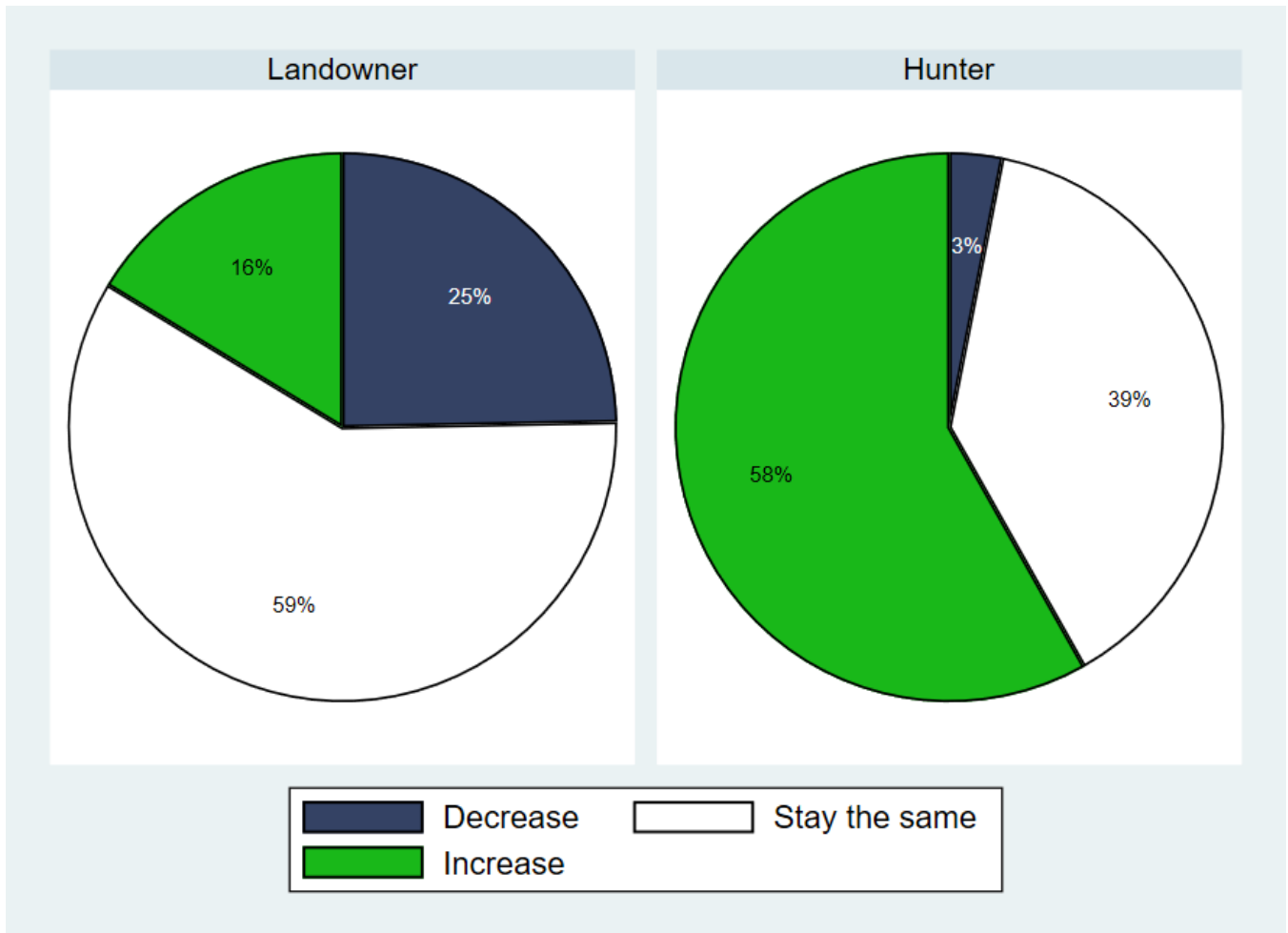


Figure 8. Deer permit area 645 hunters' preference for future deer population

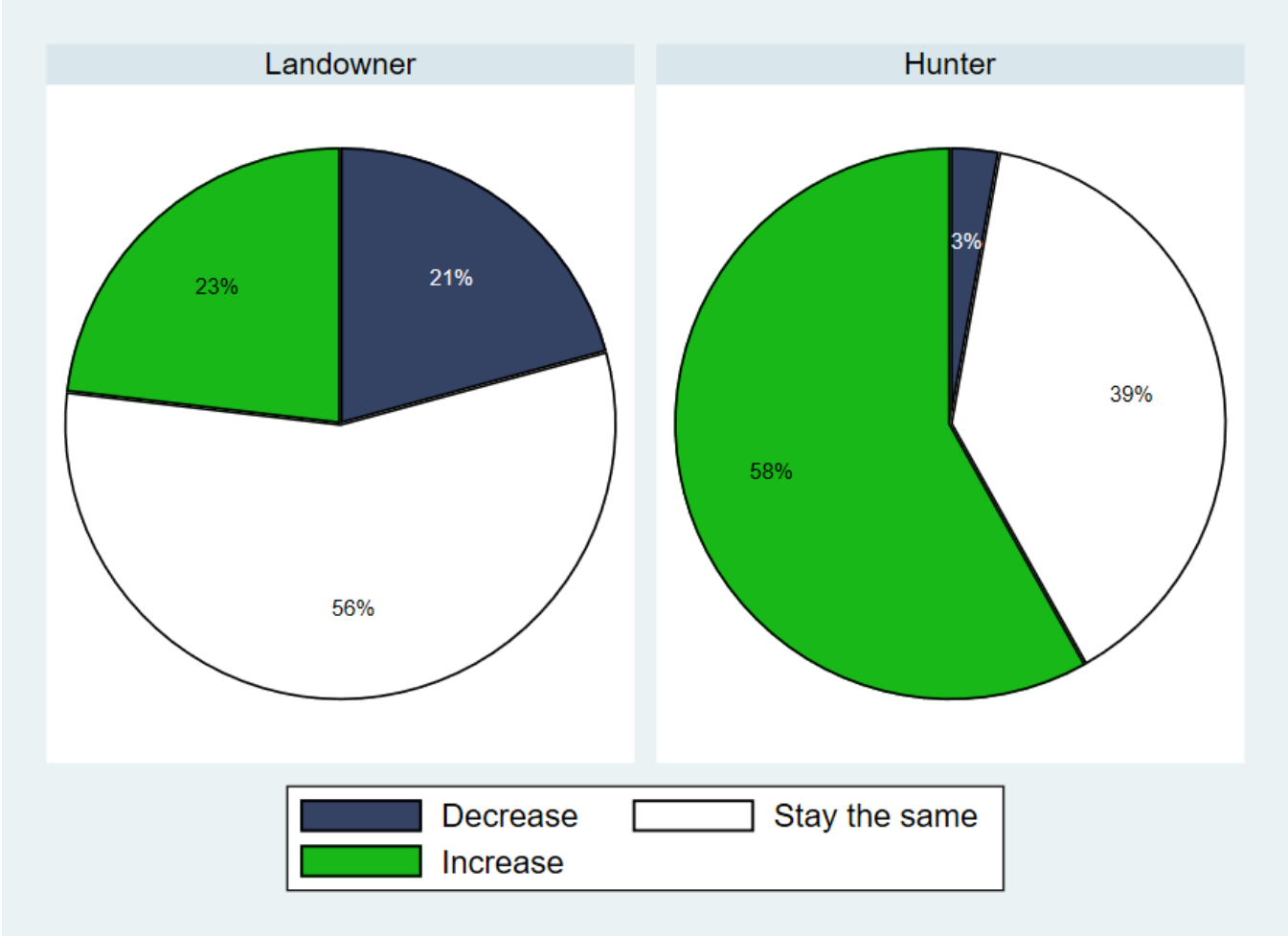


Figure 9. Deer permit area 646 hunters' preference for future deer population

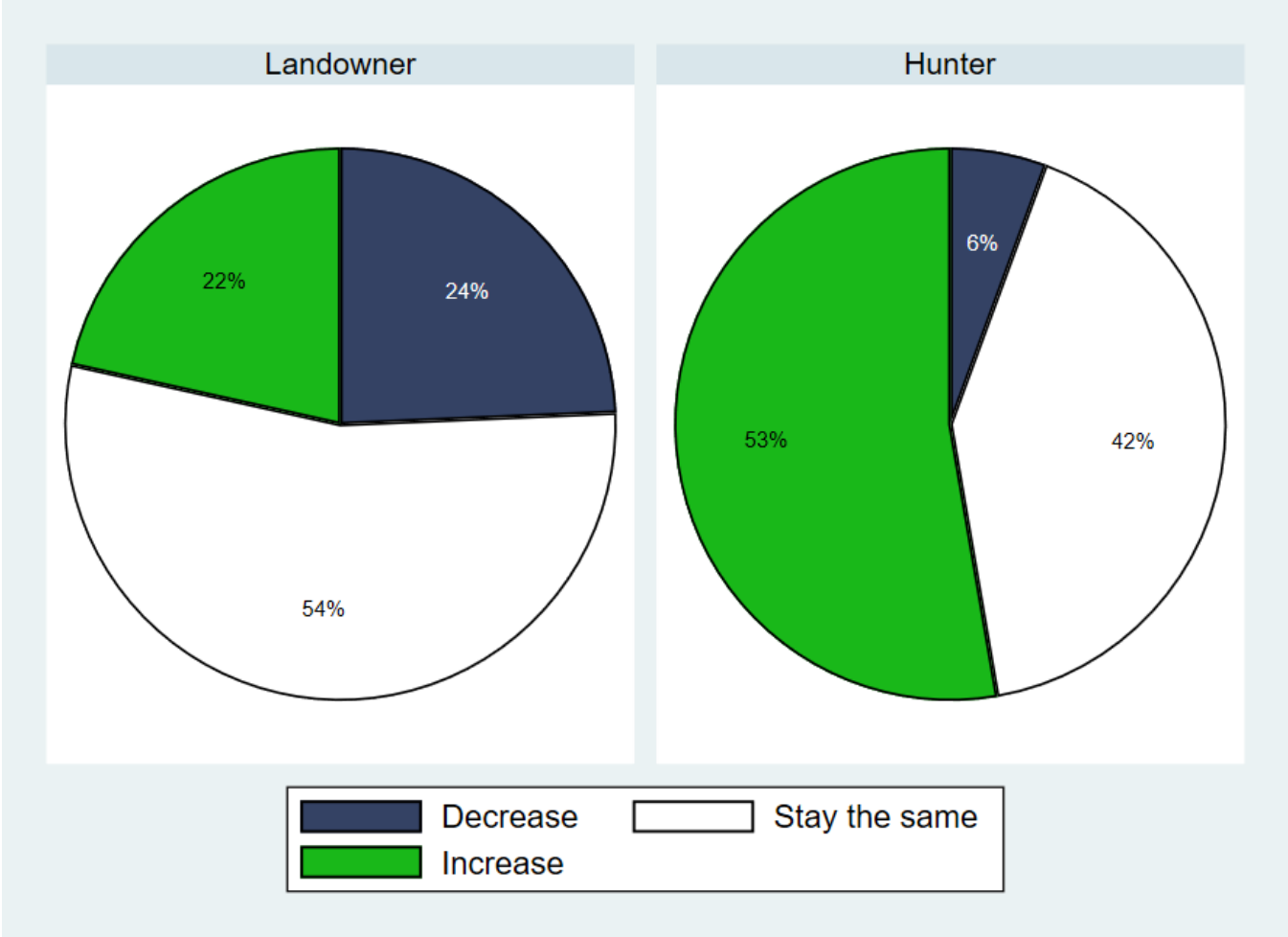


Figure 10. Deer permit area 647 hunters' preference for future deer population

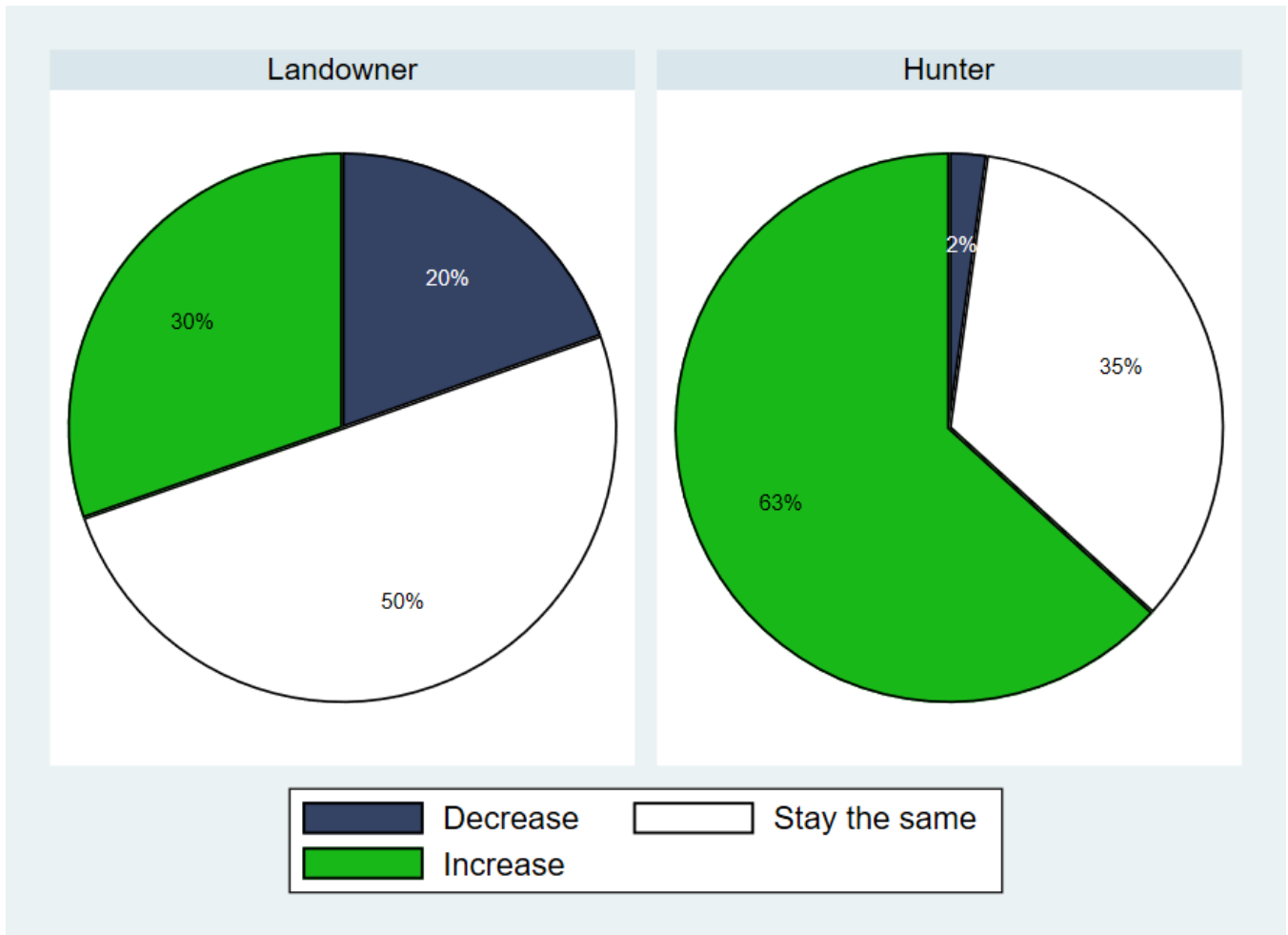


Figure 11. Deer permit area 648 hunters' preference for future deer population

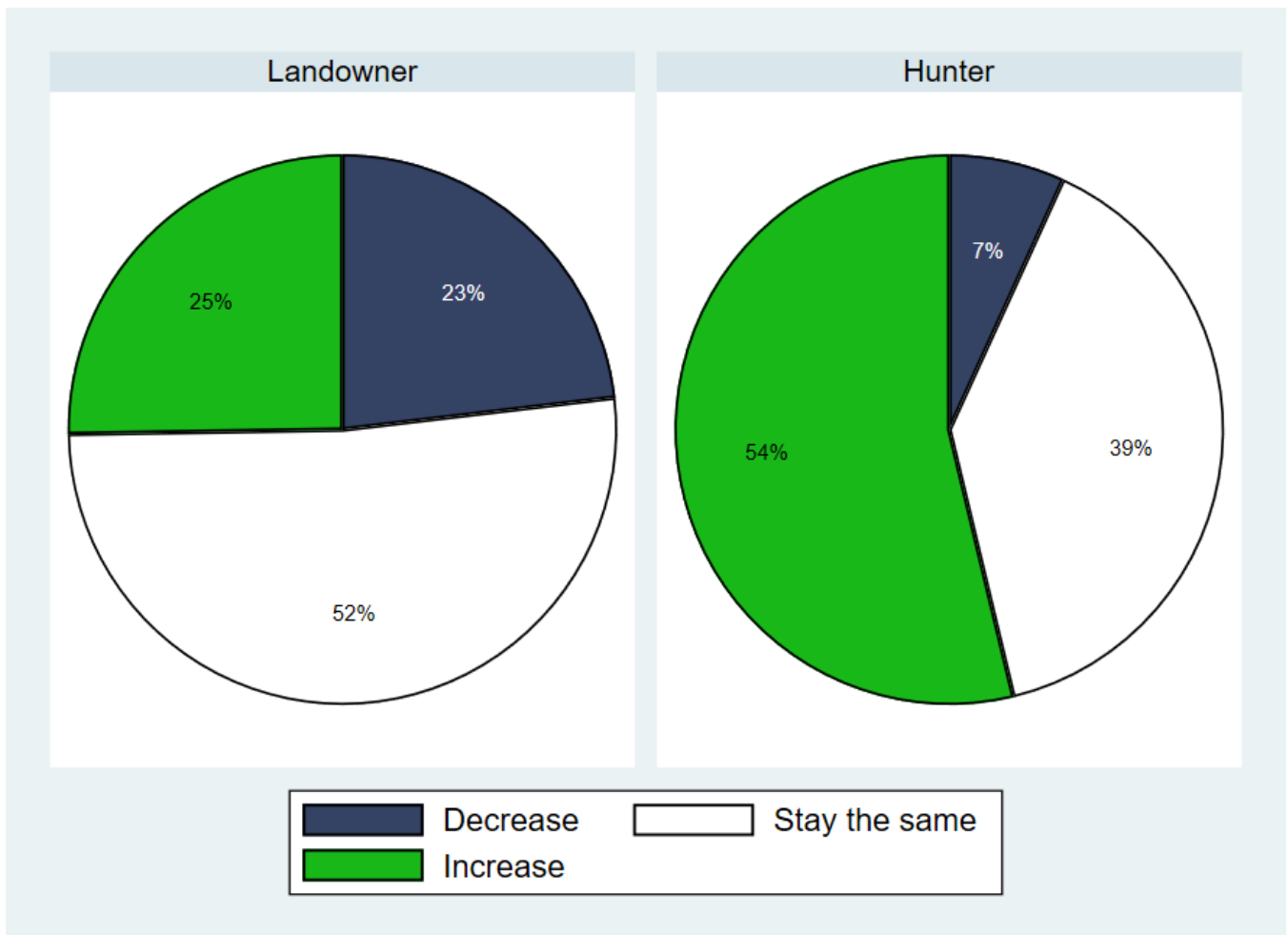


Figure 12. Deer permit area 649 hunters' preference for future deer population

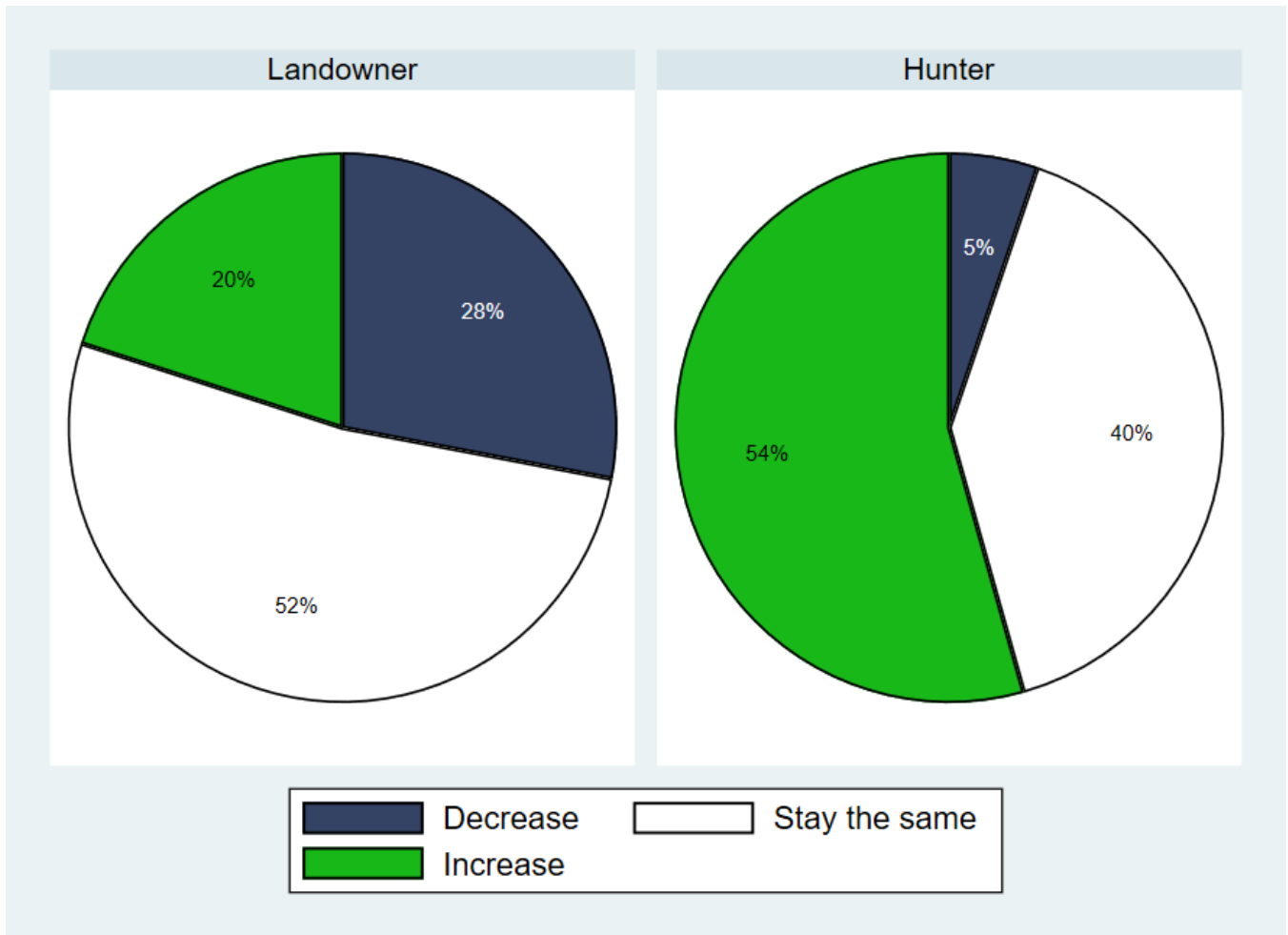
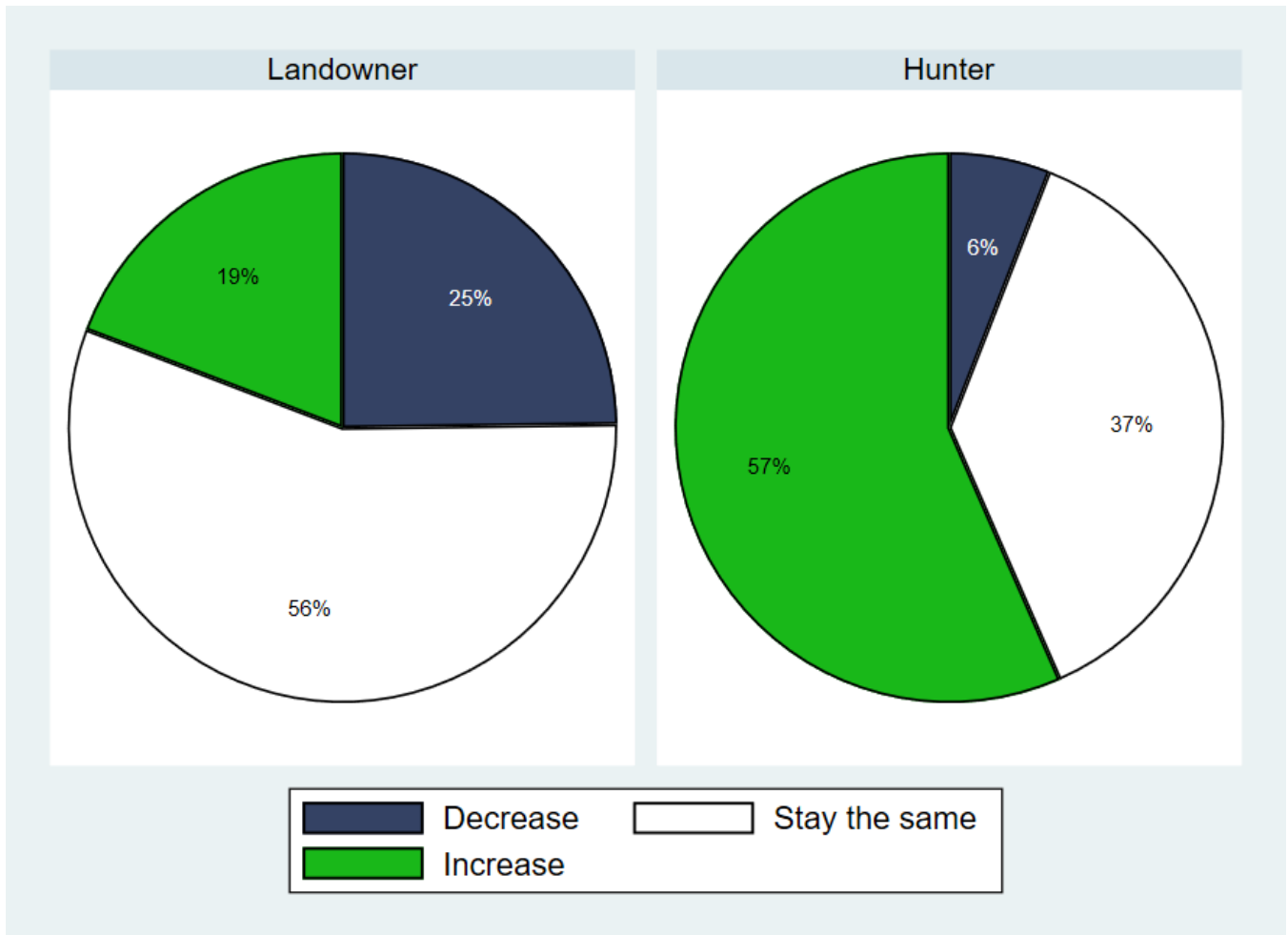


Figure 13. Deer permit area 655 hunters' preference for future deer population



Hunters

We asked hunters to report their recent deer hunting activity. The vast majority (>85%) of hunters reported having hunted deer during the last three years, and 97% in 2020 (Table 5). Among these hunters, around 41% reported that they hunted during the archery season in 2020, while 31% participated in muzzleloader season, and 66% reported hunting during the firearms season A (Table 6). Fewer Block 12 hunters reported hunting during firearm season B (20%), and very few participated in the early antlerless season (9%). A quarter of Block 12 hunters reported spending all of their time hunting on private land that they own, while 14% reported spending most of their time hunting on private land that they own, 10% some of their time, and 52% reporting none. Hardly any (5%) Block 12 hunters reported spending any time hunting on land that they lease. Around half (48%) of hunters reported hunting all of the time on private land that they do not own. Sixteen percent of hunters reported spending all of their deer hunting time on public land (Table 7).

Around a third (35%) of hunters reported feeling either “very dissatisfied” or “slightly dissatisfied” with their most recent deer hunting season. Conversely, around a third (64%) reported feeling either “slightly satisfied” or “very satisfied” (Table 8). Hunters also reported their agreements with statements about their satisfaction elements of their most recent deer hunting season (Table 9a-9e). Respondents reported the greatest agreement (68%) with the statement “I heard about or saw legal bucks while hunting”, and “the number of antlerless deer I saw while hunting” (60% slightly or strongly agree).

Hunters evaluated the trend in the deer population over the last 5 years in the DPA where they hunt, their satisfaction with the deer population in the DPA where they hunt, and their likelihood to harvest an antlerless deer given the opportunity. Slightly more than half of hunters (51%) reported seeing either slightly fewer or many fewer deer compared to 5 years ago (Table 10). Forty-six percent of Block 12 hunters reported feeling either “slightly dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with the deer population in the DPA where they hunt, while 41% reported dissatisfaction (Table 11). A clear majority (88%) of hunters reported that they would shoot an antlerless deer given the opportunity (Table 12).

Hunters rated the importance of several competing priorities MNDNR could consider when setting deer population goals on scale where 1= not at all important and 5 = very important. Among these priorities, Block 12 hunters rated “deer hunting heritage and tradition” (M = 3.9), “potential health risks to the deer herd” (M = 3.7), and “hunter satisfaction with deer numbers” (M = 3.7), the highest (Table 13).

Hunters evaluated the current deer population in the DPA where they hunt, on a scale of much too low to much too high. Half of hunters felt that the current population where they hunt is about right, while 42% believed it was either too low or much too low, and 8% believed it was either too high or much too high (Table 14).

When asked if hunters prefer to see the deer population decrease, stay the same, or increase, 55% reported a preference for an increase (Table 15). This compares to 39% that reported a preference for the population to stay the same, and 5% that preferred a decrease. On average, hunters in Block 12 wish to see a 17% increase in the deer population (Table 16). A majority of hunters in Block 12 (66%) supported establishing regulations to increase the proportion of adult bucks in the DPA where they hunt (Table 17).

We asked hunters how long they have been hunting deer in Minnesota, whether they place feed or minerals out for deer to consume, and if they belong to a deer hunting organization. On average, Block 12 deer hunters have been hunting in Minnesota for 28 years (Table 18). Given the regulatory prohibition on deer feeding given concerns about chronic wasting disease, only 1% of hunters reported that they set out feed for deer (Table 19), while 4% reported placing minerals for deer to consume (Table 20). Around 7% of Block 12 hunters reported that they belong to a deer hunting organization (Table 21).

Hunters reported their agreement with statements about their trust in the MNDNR on a scale where 1 = strongly disagree, 3 = neither, and 5 = strongly agree. On average, hunters reported moderate amounts of trust with mean values falling between 3.0 and 3.5 (Table 22).

Table 5. Percent of respondents reporting hunting deer during the last three years, by DPA

DPA	2018	2019	2020	Did not hunt
341	86	88	98	1
342	84	86	96	2
343	84	85	97	0
344	82	80	96	0
643	82	90	98	0
645	90	93	99	0
646	87	89	99	0
647	89	89	98	1
648	86	89	99	0
649	85	91	97	1
655	85	85	95	1
Block average	86	88	97	1

Table 6. Percent of 2019 deer hunters participating in deer hunting seasons, by DPA

DPA	Archery	Firearm A	Firearm B	Muzzleloader	Early Antlerless
341	47	57	21	25	6
342	33	59	22	26	6
343	51	59	19	25	5
344	37	65	20	25	11
643	49	63	16	32	5
645	39	67	23	37	8
646	45	72	19	36	16
647	38	69	18	35	6
648	40	68	21	31	10
649	38	70	23	37	15
655	29	80	20	26	6
Block average	41	66	20	31	9

Table 7. Percent of respondents effort spent hunting deer on hunting different types of land during their most recent deer hunting season, by DPA

	Response	341	342	343	344	643	645	646	647	648	649	655	Avg.
Private land that I own	None	48	58	50	77	56	53	38	48	45	55	42	52
	Some	7	10	16	6	10	8	9	15	9	8	12	10
	Most	11	9	14	11	10	16	18	10	16	13	27	14
	All	34	23	20	6	24	23	35	28	30	24	19	25
Private land that I lease for hunting	None	88	83	90	94	89	91	81	92	89	90	91	89
	Some	6	3	2	4	3	1	2	3	3	3	5	3
	Most	1	4	5	0	5	4	4	4	1	1	2	3
	All	5	11	3	2	3	4	13	2	7	6	3	5
Private land that I do not own or lease	None	24	15	18	40	16	14	11	12	28	15	12	18
	Some	9	8	14	20	18	12	15	12	11	10	21	13
	Most	22	24	19	20	20	21	15	18	18	23	27	21
	All	45	53	49	21	46	54	60	58	42	53	40	48
Public land	None	50	42	52	9	44	56	52	58	38	48	52	44
	Some	33	37	30	24	28	27	31	31	36	39	38	32
	Most	6	6	7	16	14	5	8	4	8	4	5	8
	All	12	15	11	51	14	11	9	8	18	9	5	16

Table 8. Deer hunters' satisfaction with their most recent deer hunting season, by DPA

DPA	Very dissatisfied	Slightly dissatisfied	Neither	Slightly satisfied	Very satisfied
341	5	14	8	35	39
342	8	16	8	32	36
343	7	7	15	30	41
344	13	15	11	40	21
643	9	15	13	32	31
645	12	9	13	33	33
646	12	18	7	25	28
647	15	22	13	23	28
648	17	15	9	33	27
649	11	18	7	30	34
655	5	14	15	30	35
Block average	10	15	11	31	33

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 9a. Deer hunters' agreement with the statement "I was satisfied with the number of legal bucks" during their most recent deer hunting season, by DPA

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
341	10	27	16	31	16
342	19	26	11	23	20
343	22	24	16	25	13
344	30	22	17	23	7
643	24	27	15	22	11
645	23	24	15	24	14
646	21	21	12	29	18
647	26	21	12	29	18
648	22	30	12	22	14
649	19	20	13	28	20
655	19	27	8	29	16
Block average	21	25	13	26	15

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 9b. Deer hunters' agreement with the statement "I was satisfied with the quality of bucks" during their most recent deer hunting season, by DPA

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
341	11	28	15	30	16
342	18	22	14	30	16
343	26	20	15	27	12
344	26	26	20	20	9
643	29	25	17	18	11
645	20	28	15	25	12
646	19	22	13	29	12
647	28	24	11	27	14
648	21	27	11	27	14
649	23	20	14	25	19
655	19	29	11	28	13
Block average	22	25	14	25	14

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 9c. Deer hunters' agreement with the statement "I heard about or saw bucks while hunting" during their most recent deer hunting season, by DPA

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
341	5	11	8	38	38
342	7	11	11	40	30
343	9	15	14	31	32
344	19	12	12	32	25
643	11	13	12	37	26
645	7	17	13	32	31
646	9	10	14	32	35
647	16	9	10	37	28
648	8	14	9	35	34
649	9	11	8	35	38
655	7	9	9	44	31
Block average	10	12	11	36	32

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 9d. Deer hunters' agreement with the statement "I was satisfied with the number of antlerless deer I saw" during their most recent deer hunting season, by DPA

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
341	7	17	9	35	32
342	10	15	9	38	29
343	7	13	7	38	35
344	20	24	11	27	17
643	10	17	8	40	25
645	12	18	15	30	24
646	12	22	10	28	28
647	22	20	12	27	19
648	19	11	13	31	25
649	13	12	7	37	30
655	7	18	7	30	38
Block average	13	17	10	33	27

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 9e. Deer hunters' agreement with the statement "I was satisfied with the number of deer I saw while hunting" during their most recent deer hunting season, by DPA

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
341	8	17	10	37	27
342	13	17	13	34	23
343	12	16	13	36	23
344	23	24	13	27	14
643	14	22	17	33	17
645	17	23	12	27	21
646	15	24	8	22	29
647	22	29	11	22	16
648	23	18	11	29	20
649	19	14	10	33	25
655	14	21	12	28	26
Block average	16	20	11	30	22

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 10. Deer hunters' perceived change in the deer population over last 5 years, by DPA

DPA	Many fewer deer	Slightly fewer deer	About the same	Slightly more deer	Many more deer
341	6	27	42	20	6
342	11	23	38	21	8
343	16	24	39	16	5
344	31	35	18	12	4
643	27	24	34	13	2
645	28	24	31	15	3
646	30	29	29	8	4
647	40	25	27	8	1
648	39	23	27	10	2
649	31	28	31	7	3
655	22	21	33	18	6
Block average	25	26	32	13	4

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 11. Deer hunters' satisfaction with the deer population where they hunt, by DPA

DPA	Very dissatisfied	Slightly dissatisfied	Neither	Slightly satisfied	Very satisfied
341	5	22	13	35	24
342	8	23	13	32	24
343	13	22	17	30	17
344	23	26	17	27	7
643	15	23	14	33	15
645	19	27	12	29	13
646	15	26	15	26	18
647	26	26	10	25	12
648	23	26	14	19	18
649	16	25	14	25	19
655	14	27	9	33	17
Block average	16	25	14	29	17

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 12. Percent of deer hunters that would shoot an antlerless deer, by DPA

DPA	Yes	No
341	89	11
342	87	13
343	88	12
344	76	24
643	91	9
645	91	9
646	91	9
647	85	15
648	86	14
649	89	11
655	91	9
Block average	88	12

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 13. Deer hunters' mean stated importance for factors to consider in making deer population goals, by DPA

Item	341	342	343	344	643	645	646	647	648	649	655	Avg.
Amount of deer mortality during an average winter	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.4
Amount of deer mortality during a severe winter	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.6
Potential health risks to the deer herd	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.7
Public health (human-deer diseases)	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.3
Amount of crop damage from deer	2.7	3.0	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.6	2.7	2.9	2.8	2.8
Number of deer vehicle collisions	3.0	3.3	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.1
Deer over-browsing of forests	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.8
Impacts of deer on other wildlife species	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.7
Deer hunting heritage and tradition	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.9
Hunter satisfaction with deer numbers	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.7
Public satisfaction with deer numbers	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.7	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.9
Impact of deer hunting on the local economy	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.4	3.6	3.2	3.5
Quality of bucks (antler size)	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.6
Damage to gardens and landscaping	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.0	2.2	2.3	2.2
The ratio of bucks to does	3.5	3.4	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.5

responses measured on a unipolar scale, where 1 = not at all important, and 5 = very important

Table 14. Deer hunters' perception of the deer population in the DPA where they hunt, by DPA

DPA	Much too low	Too low	About right	Too high	Much too high
341	2	28	62	7	1
342	4	31	54	8	3
343	7	25	61	7	1
344	19	36	37	8	0
643	7	36	52	5	0
645	9	35	52	3	1
646	5	36	49	7	2
647	16	35	47	2	0
648	12	38	42	8	0
649	7	34	46	10	2
655	8	36	48	6	1
Block average	8	34	50	7	1

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 15. Deer hunters' preference for future deer populations, by DPA

DPA	Decrease	Stay the Same	Increase
341	7	45	48
342	6	46	48
343	6	44	50
344	6	25	69
643	3	39	58
645	3	39	58
646	6	42	53
647	2	35	63
648	7	39	54
649	5	40	54
655	6	37	57
Block average	5	39	55

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 16. Deer hunters' mean preferred percent change in the deer population, by DPA

DPA	Mean percent change	Median percent change	Minimum	Maximum
341	12.4	0	-50	100
342	13.5	0	-50	100
343	14.6	0	-25	100
344	22.8	20	-75	100
643	19.3	10	-25	150
645	18.3	0	-33	100
646	14.8	10	-50	100
647	22.8	20	-40	100
648	17.6	20	-50	100
649	17.0	10	-54	150
655	16.3	10	-50	100
Block average	17.2	10	-75	150

Table 17. Deer hunters' support for regulations to increase proportion of antlered bucks in the area they hunt, by DPA

DPA	Strongly oppose	Slightly oppose	Neither	Slightly support	Strongly support
341	7	5	26	28	34
342	8	13	24	30	26
343	6	7	20	26	41
344	9	9	15	26	41
643	4	9	24	32	31
645	9	11	18	31	31
646	13	10	24	25	28
647	10	8	23	23	35
648	7	10	22	24	38
649	9	7	24	30	30
655	5	12	27	27	29
Block average	8	9	22	28	33

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 18. Mean number of years that deer hunters have been hunting deer in Minnesota, by DPA

DPA	Mean
341	29.5
342	23.3
343	31.2
344	25.0
643	28.3
645	25.6
646	31.7
647	28.4
648	30.0
649	28.6
655	25.6
Block average	27.8

Table 19. Percent of deer hunters that set out food for deer to consume, by DPA

DPA	Yes	No	Live in CWD management or control zone
341	4	80	17
342	1	85	13
343	1	58	41
344	2	65	33
643	1	47	52
645	2	49	50
646	1	40	59
647	1	40	59
648	1	36	63
649	1	53	47
655	1	53	46
Block average	1	55	44

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 20. Percent of deer hunters that set out minerals for deer to consume, by DPA

DPA	Yes	No	Live in CWD management or control zone
341	9	71	20
342	9	77	14
343	3	57	39
344	3	65	32
643	3	45	48
645	2	48	50
646	2	39	59
647	3	38	59
648	1	34	64
649	4	51	46
655	2	52	46
Block average	4	52	44

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 21. Percent of deer hunters that belong to a deer hunting organization, by DPA

DPA	Yes	No
341	5	95
342	4	96
343	5	95
344	5	95
643	5	95
645	10	90
646	11	89
647	10	90
648	5	95
649	12	88
655	5	95
Block average	7	93

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 22. Deer hunters' mean level of agreement with statements about the MNDNR, by DPA

	341	342	343	344	643	645	646	647	648	649	655	Avg.
The MNDNR does a good job managing deer in MN	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.1
When deciding about deer management in MN, the MNDNR will be open and honest in the things they say and do	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.2
The MNDNR can be trusted to make decisions about deer management that are good for the resource	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2
The MNDNR will make decisions about deer management in a way that is fair	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.2
The MNDNR has deer managers and biologists who are well-trained for their jobs	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.5
The MNDNR listens to the concerns of deer hunters	3.3	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.2	2.9	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0

responses measured on a bipolar scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 3=neither, and 5 = strongly agree

Landowners

Landowners reported the number of acres that they own or lease within a DPA. On average, Block 12 landowners reported owning 162 acres. Among individuals in Block 12 DPAs, that reported leasing property the average lease was 243 acres (Table 23). Sixty-eight percent of landowners reported having agricultural land use on their property. Of these landowners, only 36% reported experiencing damage from deer. Landowners reporting damage to agricultural land, reported damages that were minor or negligible (44%), moderate (37%), and severe or very severe (19%) (Table 24). A majority of landowners (66%) reported owning land in forest. Of these individuals, 13% reported having experienced damage from deer. The severity of damage experienced by landowners with forest were split relatively evenly between minor/negligible (28%), moderate (41%), and severe/very severe (30%). (Table 25). Around 77% of landowners reported having residential land use on their property, and 25% experienced damage from deer. Landowners experiencing damage from deer to residential land use reported damage that was minor/negligible (46%), moderate (34%), and severe/very severe (20%) (Table 26).

Landowners assessed the damage they have experienced from deer compared to five years ago, and the change they have observed in the deer population on their property. Of landowners that have owned their property for five years or longer, the majority (61%) indicated that the amount of damage they have experienced from deer has remained about the same (Table 27). Landowners' perception of the trend in the deer population over the last 5 years split between those perceiving fewer (29%), about the same amount (37%), and more deer (34%) (Table 28).

Only 27% of landowners reported feeling satisfied or very satisfied with the deer population on their land, while 41% were neutral, and 32% either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (Table 29). Hunting landowners reported slightly higher levels dissatisfaction (35%) than non-hunting landowners (29%), while non-hunters were more likely to report neutrality regarding their satisfaction with the deer population on their land (Table 30). Over half of landowners (55%) indicated that the population of deer on their land was "about right," compared to too low (18%) or too high (26%) (Table 31). Non-hunting landowners (58%) were more likely to hold a belief that the current population on their property was "about right" than hunting landowners. Similarly, a higher percentage of hunting landowners (28%) than non-hunting landowners (8%) expressed a belief that the current deer population on their property was too low (Table 32).

When asked what they would like to see happen with future deer populations on their land, a majority (54%) of Block 12 landowners preferred to see the deer population stay the same, compared to 20% that would like to see the deer population increase, and 26% decrease (Table 33). A higher proportion of hunting landowners preferred an increase in the deer population (31%) than non-hunting landowners (8%) (Table 34). Landowners mean preferred change in the deer population was a 2% decrease (Table 35).

We asked landowners if they were aware that MNDNR offers technical assistance for deer damage issues, if they allow hunting on their property, if they lease any of their property for deer hunting, and if they impose any deer harvest restrictions on their property. Regardless of the number of acres a landowner owned, around a third were aware that MNDNR offers technical assistance for deer depredation issues (Table 36). The

proportion of landowners allowing hunting on their property increased with the amount of land they owned, where roughly 43% of landowners with 2-19 acres allowed hunting on their property. This compares to 92% who own 320 acres or more (Table 37). Very few (3%) of landowners lease their land for deer hunting (Table 38). The majority of landowners (80%) did not impose any restrictions on the deer that hunters could take on their property (Table 39).

We asked landowners several questions about their deer hunting activity. Over a third of Block 12 landowners reported hunting deer in each of 2018, 2019, and 2020 respectively. Roughly, 9% indicated that they hunt deer but did not hunt during one of those three years, and 47% indicated that they do not hunt deer at all (Table 40). Among deer hunting landowners, 47% reported doing all of their hunting on private land that they own, while 1%, 11% and 2% of landowners reported doing all of their hunting on land that they lease, private land that they do not own, and public land, respectively (Table 41). Around 81% of landowners indicated that they would shoot an antlerless deer given the opportunity (Table 42), and landowners have been hunting deer in Minnesota for an average of 33 years (Table 43).

Landowners rated their agreement with five statements about their trust in the MNDNR on scale from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree, and a mid-point of neither. Landowners, on average, were neutral regarding their trust in the MNDNR. Mean values ranged from 3.3 to 3.6 for trust items (Table 44).

Respondents rated the importance of several priorities MNDNR could consider when setting deer population goals. Responses were recorded on a scale where 1 = not at all important, and 5 = very important. Among the items evaluated, landowners placed the highest importance on “potential health risks to the deer herd” (M = 3.7), and “the number of deer vehicle collisions” (M = 3.7), as issues to consider when setting deer population goals (Table 45).

We asked landowners if they place food or minerals out for deer to consume. Given the rules surrounding chronic wasting disease management, a very small number of landowners (1%) reported feeding deer (Table 46), or placing minerals out for deer to consume (5%) (Table 47).

Table 23. Mean acres owned and leased by landowners, by DPA

DPA	Acres Owned			Acres Leased*		
	Mean	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max
341	148	3	1525	185	4	640
342	182	3	890	259	7	1000
343	100	2	1145	213	13	900
344	139	3	865	221	40	700
643	167	2	5000	298	2	2000
645	166	2	1069	114	2	900
646	130	2	820	165	4	1100
647	161	3	1300	149	12	700
648	213	3	1600	346	4	2000
649	186	2	1400	119	5	600
655	213	3	2000	540	13	2000
Block average	162	2	5000	243	2	2000

*among those reporting having leased 1 acre or more

Table 24. Percent of landowners with agriculture on their land, percent experiencing damage from deer, and severity of damage, by DPA

Agriculture	Own or lease		Experience damage		Severity of Damage*		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Minor/ Negligible	Moderate	Severe/ Very Severe
341	70	30	36	64	53	26	21
342	73	27	40	60	48	37	15
343	60	40	33	67	60	23	18
344	69	31	40	60	36	32	32
643	61	39	30	70	55	35	10
645	79	21	44	56	44	37	19
646	59	41	33	67	25	58	17
647	75	25	31	69	46	35	19
648	78	22	40	60	40	42	17
649	68	32	38	62	37	43	20
655	72	28	26	74	43	39	18
Block average	68	32	36	64	44	37	19

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

*too few respondents reported experiencing damage, and prevented analysis of this question

Table 25. Percent of landowners with forest on their land, percent experiencing damage from deer, and severity of damage, by DPA

Forest DPA	Own or lease		Experience damage		Severity of Damage*		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Minor/ Negligible	Moderate	Severe/Very Severe
341	64	36	13	87	24	39	37
342	73	27	16	84	38	42	20
343	57	43	14	86	34	36	30
344	72	28	17	83	9	38	52
643	58	42	8	92	25	54	22
645	72	28	13	87	26	41	33
646	73	27	12	88	33	44	23
647	61	39	13	87	26	45	29
648	71	29	10	90	10	54	36
649	77	23	17	83	43	42	15
655	43	57	6	94	35	15	50
Block average	66	34	13	87	28	41	30

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

*too few respondents reported experiencing damage, and prevented analysis of this question

Table 26. Percent of landowners with residential land use on their land, percent experiencing damage from deer, and severity of damage, by DPA

Residential DPA	Own or lease		Experience damage		Severity of Damage		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Minor/ Negligible	Moderate	Severe/Very Severe
341	71	29	24	76	41	34	24
342	83	17	22	78	52	29	19
343	82	18	42	58	59	28	13
344	78	22	21	79	32	30	38
643	81	19	29	71	40	44	16
645	81	19	19	81	26	41	33
646	78	22	23	77	47	40	13
647	76	24	23	77	45	40	15
648	73	27	20	80	46	37	17
649	72	28	23	77	46	30	23
655	68	32	21	79	52	25	23
Block average	77	23	25	75	46	34	20

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 27. Landowners' perceived trend in damage from deer over 5 years, by DPA

DPA	Much less damage	Slightly less damage	About the same damage	Slightly more damage	Much more damage
341	11	3	68	10	7
342	13	10	62	9	6
343	10	6	61	16	7
344	17	7	53	12	10
643	10	13	58	14	4
645	14	10	58	11	8
646	14	17	56	9	6
647	14	7	66	9	4
648	17	12	63	4	4
649	15	9	62	11	4
655	15	5	69	6	4
Block average	13	9	61	11	6

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 28. Landowners' perceived trend in the deer population over the last 5 years, by DPA

DPA	Many fewer deer	Slightly fewer deer	About the same number of deer	Slightly more deer	Many more deer
341	7	12	35	28	18
342	12	13	37	25	13
343	8	12	34	27	19
344	15	16	35	21	14
643	9	14	41	26	9
645	17	15	38	18	13
646	15	22	36	16	11
647	22	14	39	17	8
648	17	26	32	19	6
649	13	18	43	14	11
655	17	18	36	22	7
Block average	13	16	37	22	12

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 29. Landowners' satisfaction with the current deer population in the area of their property, by DPA

DPA	Very dissatisfied	Slightly dissatisfied	Neutral	Slightly satisfied	Very satisfied
341	9	23	44	8	16
342	9	23	37	13	17
343	11	20	39	12	19
344	20	19	41	8	12
643	11	17	43	12	18
645	15	20	45	8	12
646	13	19	36	15	18
647	12	21	44	11	13
648	11	19	44	15	12
649	11	19	38	18	14
655	13	19	45	6	18
Block average	12	20	41	11	16

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 30. Landowners' satisfaction with the deer population on their land, by DPA and hunting status

DPA	Non-hunting Landowners			Hunting Landowners		
	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied
341	32	55	13	31	35	34
342	28	50	22	35	28	37
343	30	45	26	32	34	38
344	32	54	13	44	31	26
643	26	50	23	31	29	40
645	30	51	19	38	41	20
646	26	39	34	35	34	31
647	28	53	19	38	33	28
648	28	47	27	33	42	25
649	28	48	24	31	32	36
655	30	51	19	33	35	32
Block average	29	49	22	35	34	32

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 31. Landowners' perception of the deer population on their land, by DPA

DPA	Much too low	Too low	About right	Too high	Much too high
341	2	10	60	23	6
342	3	16	53	18	10
343	2	7	55	28	9
344	8	16	50	19	8
643	3	12	60	21	5
645	10	13	55	18	5
646	5	16	53	21	5
647	10	19	52	16	3
648	6	17	53	16	7
649	5	12	55	22	6
655	8	10	61	17	5
Block average	5	13	55	20	6

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 32. Landowners' perception of the deer population on their land, by DPA and hunting status

DPA	Non-hunting Landowners			Hunting Landowners		
	Too low/much too low	About right	Too high/much too high	Too low/much too low	About right	Too high/much too high
341	7	63	31	15	58	27
342	4	58	39	30	50	20
343	3	58	39	16	50	34
344	8	55	37	36	46	18
643	7	59	33	29	60	12
645	9	54	36	31	55	14
646	7	59	34	32	48	20
647	20	59	21	38	45	17
648	7	59	35	38	49	14
649	9	56	36	22	55	24
655	7	61	32	35	60	4
Block average	8	58	34	28	52	20

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 33. Landowners' preference for future deer populations, by DPA

DPA	Decrease	Stay the Same	Increase
341	28	56	16
342	27	50	22
343	35	53	11
344	26	52	22
643	25	29	16
645	21	56	23
646	24	54	22
647	20	50	30
648	23	52	25
649	28	52	20
655	25	56	19
Block average	26	54	20

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 34. Landowners' preference for future deer populations, by DPA and hunting status

DPA	Non-hunting Landowners			Hunting Landowners		
	Decrease	Stay the same	Increase	Decrease	Stay the same	Increase
341	31	61	8	25	53	23
342	39	55	5	19	47	34
343	37	58	4	32	47	22
344	34	59	7	19	46	35
643	32	60	8	10	57	33
645	36	57	7	11	55	33
646	35	55	10	16	54	30
647	24	58	18	15	42	43
648	32	61	7	16	43	41
649	38	49	13	22	54	24
655	37	54	9	5	59	36
Block average	34	57	8	18	51	31

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 35. Landowners' mean preferred percent change in the deer population, by DPA

DPA	Mean percent change	Median percent change	Minimum	Maximum
341	-4.2	0	-75	100
342	-2.9	0	-75	100
343	-9.5	0	-80	100
344	1.1	0	-100	100
643	-3.8	0	-100	100
645	1.7	0	-100	150
646	-0.3	0	-80	101
647	5.8	0	-100	100
648	0.8	0	-100	100
649	-0.3	0	-75	100
655	-2.8	0	-100	100
Block average	-1.8	0	-100	150

Table 36. Percent of landowners aware that MNDNR offers technical and financial assistance for deer depredation problems, by DPA, and acres owned

DPA	2-19 acres	20-79 acres	80-319 acres	320+ acres*	Average
341	28	29	29	21	28
342	22	33	41	25	29
343	27	28	25	12	26
344	49	44	42	46	47
643	15	20	24	31	18
645	40	44	36	40	40
646	33	27	42	29	34
647	16	33	33	24	24
648	27	28	40	17	30
649	29	43	38	47	36
655	26	16	27	28	24
Block average	28	31	34	30	30

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

*too few respondents in the 320+ strata to calculate

Table 37. Percent of landowners that allow hunting on their property, by DPA, and acres owned

DPA	2-19 acres	20-79 acres	80-319 acres	320+ acres	Average
341	45	78	81	90	65
342	42	70	96	90	67
343	40	71	81	97	67
344	48	80	92	96	66
643	20	76	87	81	49
645	40	88	91	19	70
646	50	79	95	92	72
647	32	83	79	94	60
648	60	86	96	98	80
649	75	83	100	96	85
655	30	70	81	82	54
Block average	43	79	89	92	65

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

*too few respondents in the 320+ strata to calculate

Table 38. Percent of landowners that leased their property for deer hunting, by DPA.

DPA	Yes	No
341	2	98
342	4	96
343	1	100
344	2	98
643	2	98
645	2	98
646	2	98
647	3	97
648	8	92
649	4	96
655	1	99
Block average	3	97

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 39. Percent of landowners imposing different harvest restrictions on their property, by DPA

DPA	Antlerless harvest is restricted, but hunters can take any legal buck	Buck harvest is restricted to large antlered bucks, but hunters can take any antlerless deer	Buck harvest is restricted to large antlered bucks, and antlerless harvest is also restricted	No restrictions on the type of deer that can be harvested	Other
341	0	13	3	79	5
342	1	16	4	77	3
343	2	7	3	82	6
344	1	7	3	82	8
643	2	14	4	73	8
645	2	7	3	84	4
646	0	18	2	76	4
647	1	10	2	77	10
648	1	10	3	80	6
649	1	12	3	79	6
655	0	6	1	91	2
Block average	1	11	3	80	6

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 40. Percent of landowners reporting hunting deer during the last three years, and those that do not hunt, by DPA

DPA	2018	2019	2020	Did not hunt these years	Do not hunt
341	39	37	40	8	46
342	41	40	41	15	40
343	27	26	25	12	58
344	45	45	41	7	40
643	26	25	25	6	64
645	45	45	44	9	37
646	49	49	46	6	42
647	436	39	34	6	47
648	41	39	36	10	44
649	56	56	51	6	34
655	26	22	25	10	61
Block average	39	38	37	9	47

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 41. Landowners' time spent hunting on different land ownership types, by DPA

	Response	341	342	343	344	643	645	646	647	648	649	655	Avg.
Private land that I own	None	17	10	18	15	15	15	6	21	14	8	36	15
	Some	20	17	20	21	17	17	16	16	4	16	11	17
	Most	22	23	16	23	17	17	30	16	22	25	19	21
	All	41	50	45	41	51	51	47	48	59	51	34	47
Private land that I lease for hunting	None	91	94	95	88	87	96	94	94	89	89	87	91
	Some	14	4	5	3	5	1	5	0	5	3	13	4
	Most	5	2	0	7	6	1	1	5	4	8	0	4
	All	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	2	1	0	1
Private land that I do not own or lease	None	39	48	52	38	41	44	33	43	53	44	52	44
	Some	27	26	25	28	32	19	37	23	26	24	24	26
	Most	22	14	15	18	15	18	18	15	7	19	9	16
	All	12	12	9	16	11	19	12	19	14	13	15	14
Public land	None	75	66	84	41	72	76	81	87	78	67	71	71
	Some	19	24	4	32	16	21	16	12	22	29	24	24
	Most	6	7	7	22	9	1	4	0	0	2	4	6
	All	0	3	5	5	3	2	0	2	0	3	1	2

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 42. Percent of hunting landowners that would shoot an antlerless deer, by DPA

DPA	Yes	No
341	81	19
342	87	13
343	76	24
344	87	13
643	73	28
645	87	13
646	90	10
647	70	30
648	79	21
649	86	14
655	72	28
Block average	81	19

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 43. Mean number of years that hunting landowners have been hunting deer in Minnesota, by DPA

DPA	Mean
341	31.3
342	34.6
343	19.9
344	43.9
643	29.8
645	38.2
646	36.2
647	28.6
648	32.2
649	33.7
655	23.9
Block average	32.5

Table 44. Landowners' mean level of agreement with statements about the MNDNR, by DPA

	341	342	343	344	643	645	646	647	648	649	655	Avg.
The MNDNR does a good job managing deer in MN	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.4	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.2
When deciding about deer management in MN, the MNDNR will be open and honest in the things they say and do	3.5	3.3	3.5	3.3	3.7	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.5	3.4
The MNDNR can be trusted to make decisions about deer management that are good for the resource	3.6	3.3	3.5	3.1	3.6	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.4	3.3
The MNDNR will make decisions about deer management in a way that is fair	3.6	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.6	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.4
The MNDNR has deer managers and biologists who are well-trained for their jobs	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.8	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.7	3.6
The MNDNR listens to the concerns of landowners	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.1	3.5	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.1	3.3	3.3

responses measured on a bipolar scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 3=neither, and 5 = strongly agree

Table 45. Landowners' mean stated importance for factors to consider in making deer population goals, by DPA

	341	342	343	344	643	645	646	647	648	649	655	Avg.
Amount of deer mortality during an average winter	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.3	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.1	3.0	3.3	3.2
Amount of deer mortality during a severe winter	3.4	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.4
Potential health risks to the deer herd	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.7
Public health (human-deer diseases)	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6
Amount of crop damage from deer	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.2	3.4
Number of deer vehicle collisions	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.6	3.8	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.7
Deer over-browsing of forests	3.1	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.2	2.9	3.2	3.3	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.2
Impacts of deer on other wildlife species	3.0	3.2	3.1	3.0	3.1	2.7	3.0	3.1	2.9	2.8	2.9	3.0
Deer hunting heritage and tradition	3.4	3.5	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.3	3.4
Hunter satisfaction with deer numbers	3.1	3.3	3.0	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.2
Public satisfaction with deer numbers	2.9	3.2	3.1	2.9	3.1	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.8	2.8	3.0
Impact of deer hunting on the local economy	3.0	3.2	2.9	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.1
Quality of bucks (antler size)	3.0	3.1	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.7	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9
Damage to gardens and landscaping	3.0	3.1	3.1	2.9	3.2	2.8	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.8	3.1	3.0
The ratio of bucks to does	3.2	3.2	3.2	2.9	3.2	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.1

responses measured on a unipolar scale, where 1 = not at all important, and 5 = very important

Table 46. Percent of landowners that set out food for deer to consume, by DPA

DPA	Yes	No	Live in CWD management or control zone
341	2	92	6
342	4	87	9
343	1	84	15
344	3	82	15
643	1	82	17
645	0	81	19
646	2	73	25
647	2	79	18
648	0	66	34
649	1	71	28
655	1	86	13
Block average	2	80	18

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category

Table 47. Percent of landowners that set out minerals for deer to consume, by DPA

DPA	Yes	No	Live in CWD management or control zone
341	9	84	6
342	5	87	9
343	7	79	14
344	4	84	12
643	6	78	17
645	3	77	19
646	3	73	24
647	8	74	19
648	0	67	33
649	1	73	26
655	3	84	13
Block average	5	78	17

values are the percent of respondents reporting each category