

2005 DEER HUNTER SATISFACTION AND PREFERENCES FOR REGULATION CHANGES IN MINNESOTA



**A cooperative study conducted by the University of Minnesota for
the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

Your help on this study is greatly appreciated!

*Please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope.
The envelope is self-addressed and no postage is required. Thanks!*

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Section A. Minnesota Deer Hunting Experiences

First, we would like to know about your background and experience as a deer hunter.

1. Would you say you know A GREAT DEAL, A MODERATE AMOUNT, A LITTLE, OR NOTHING about DNR's deer management program? (Check one).
 - A GREAT DEAL – I read most of the hunting handbook, DNR news releases, and follow the outdoor media
 - A MODERATE AMOUNT - I read parts of the handbook and occasionally follow the outdoor media
 - A LITTLE – I only read the parts of the handbook that pertain to me and otherwise don't follow the outdoor media
 - NOTHING – I buy my license just before the season and follow the advice of my friends
 - DON'T KNOW

2. In your opinion, should the deer population in the same area you hunt most often be increased, remain the same, or be decreased? (Check one).
 - INCREASED
 - REMAIN THE SAME
 - DECREASED
 - DON'T KNOW

3. Did you hunt deer during the 2004 firearm season? (Check one).
 - YES
 - NO → **SKIP TO QUESTION 8**

4. How much of your deer hunting did you do on each of the following types of land during the 2004 deer hunting season? (Circle one number for each item)

	None	Some	Most	All	Don't Know
Land that I own	1	2	3	4	9
Private land that I do not own	1	2	3	4	9
Public land	1	2	3	4	9

5. Overall, were you satisfied or dissatisfied with your Minnesota deer hunting experiences during the 2004 season? (Check one).

- VERY SATISFIED
- SOMEWHAT SATISFIED
- NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED
- SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED
- VERY DISSATISFIED
- DON'T KNOW

6. Please indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with the following issues related to your Minnesota deer hunting experiences in 2004. (Circle one number for each item)

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neither	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
Ability to understand the deer hunting regulations	1	2	3	4	5	9
Amount of PUBLIC land for deer hunting	1	2	3	4	5	9
Amount of PRIVATE land for deer hunting	1	2	3	4	5	9
Number of other hunters	1	2	3	4	5	9
Scenic beauty of hunting areas	1	2	3	4	5	9
Experiences with family and friends	1	2	3	4	5	9
Success in killing a deer	1	2	3	4	5	9
Weather conditions	1	2	3	4	5	9

7. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about the area you hunted most often in 2004. Please circle one number for each question. (Circle one number for each item)

	Strongly Agree	Slightly Agree	Neither	Slightly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
I am satisfied with the number of mature bucks	1	2	3	4	5	9
I am satisfied with the quality of bucks	1	2	3	4	5	9
I heard about or saw mature bucks while hunting	1	2	3	4	5	9
I am satisfied with the number of antlerless deer	1	2	3	4	5	9
I am satisfied with the number of deer I see while hunting	1	2	3	4	5	9

8. Which **ONE** of the following best describes how you deer hunt in Minnesota? Would you say you: (Check only one).

- HUNT FOR LARGE ANTLERED BUCKS DURING ENTIRE SEASON
- HUNT FOR LARGE ANTLERED BUCKS EARLY SEASON AND SHOOT ANY LEGAL DEER LATER
- SHOOT ANY ANTLERED BUCK
- SHOOT THE FIRST LEGAL DEER (ANTLERED OR ANTLERLESS) THAT I CAN
- HUNT FOR AN ANTLERLESS DEER FOR THE FREEZER, THEN WAIT FOR A MATURE BUCK
- SHOOT ONLY ANTLERLESS DEER

Section B. Deer Management in Minnesota

We are interested in understanding how you feel about deer management strategies and goals in Minnesota. The following questions will ask you how much you support a variety of deer management options.

9. In general, would you support or oppose a regulation that would increase the proportion of antlered bucks in the deer population you hunt most often? (Check one).

- STRONGLY SUPPORT
- MODERATELY SUPPORT
- NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE
- MODERATELY OPPOSE
- STRONGLY OPPOSE
- DON'T KNOW

10. Currently, Minnesota is one of only a few states that allow hunters to shoot deer for each other. Because hunters can kill multiple bucks per year, the cross-tagging provision might contribute to higher buck harvest rates in Minnesota than in other states. The following two questions assess your level of support for allowing hunters to kill deer for each other.

In the area you hunt most often, would you support or oppose a regulation that would allow hunters to continue to hunt together as a party, but would prohibit hunters from shooting deer for each other (both antlered bucks and antlerless deer)? (Check one).

- STRONGLY SUPPORT
- MODERATELY SUPPORT
- NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE
- MODERATELY OPPOSE
- STRONGLY OPPOSE
- DON'T KNOW

11. In the area you hunt most often, would you support or oppose a regulation that would allow hunters to continue to hunt together as a party but would prohibit shooting antlered bucks for each other? You would still be able to shoot antlerless deer for each other (Check one).

- STRONGLY SUPPORT
- MODERATELY SUPPORT
- NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE
- MODERATELY OPPOSE
- STRONGLY OPPOSE
- DON'T KNOW

Currently, in areas that are above population goals, hunters are encouraged to kill antlerless deer. If hunters selectively kill antlerless deer, the proportion of antlered bucks surviving the hunting season might increase.

The next series of questions addresses specific methods of increasing the harvest of antlerless deer and possibly increasing the proportion of antlered bucks in the deer population.

Please indicate the degree to which you support or oppose each method in the area you hunt most often.

12. The first method would limit the number of buck licenses available to hunters during the firearm season. Under this scenario, the standard firearm license would be valid for **antlerless** deer only.
- Hunters interested in killing antlered bucks would need to apply for a permit through a lottery system.
 - Only lottery winners would be eligible to hunt antlered deer.
 - Unsuccessful applicants would be restricted to hunting antlerless deer during the current year, but would gain preference points in the lottery which would improve their chance of getting drawn for a buck license in future years.
 - A hunter would likely win a buck permit every 2-3 years depending on hunting pressure.

Would you support or oppose a regulation that would limit the number of buck licenses available to hunters during the firearm season in the area you hunt most often. (Check one).

- STRONGLY SUPPORT
- MODERATELY SUPPORT
- NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE
- MODERATELY OPPOSE
- STRONGLY OPPOSE
- DON'T KNOW

13. In the area you hunt most often, would you continue to hunt antlerless deer if you were not able to obtain a buck license through the lottery? (Check one).

- YES
- NO
- DON'T KNOW

14. The second method would protect bucks with less than 3 or 4 antler points on at least one side. The protection level would be designed to protect at least half of all 1½ year old bucks in the population.

- Under this scenario, buck hunters could only kill adult males that met the established legal definition.
- Hunters would first have to identify the animal as a legal buck before shooting the deer.
- As a result of this regulation, harvest rates on antlerless deer should increase. Also, a greater proportion of 1 1/2 year old males should survive to the 2 1/2 year age-class and would be available to hunters the next hunting season.

Would you support or oppose an antler point restriction regulation in the area you hunt most often? (Check one).

- STRONGLY SUPPORT
- MODERATELY SUPPORT
- NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE
- MODERATELY OPPOSE
- STRONGLY OPPOSE
- DON'T KNOW

15. A third method would move the firearm deer season outside of the rut. Under this scenario, the regular firearm season would begin no earlier than mid-November. As a result of this regulation, bucks may be less vulnerable and buck harvest rates may be reduced.

Would you support or oppose this type of regulation that would move the firearm season date outside of the rut in the area you hunt most often? (Check one).

- STRONGLY SUPPORT
- MODERATELY SUPPORT
- NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE
- MODERATELY OPPOSE
- STRONGLY OPPOSE
- DON'T KNOW

16. A fourth method would require all deer hunters to kill an antlerless deer before killing an antlered buck. This is typically called earn-a-buck. Under this scenario, hunters cannot shoot a buck until they first killed an antlerless deer. As a result of this regulation, harvest rates on antlerless deer should increase. Also, harvest rates on antlered deer should decrease, resulting in a greater proportion of antlered bucks that survive to the next hunting season.

Would you support or oppose this type of regulation that would require hunters to kill an antlerless deer before killing an antlered deer in the area you hunt most often? (Check one).

- STRONGLY SUPPORT
- MODERATELY SUPPORT
- NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE
- MODERATELY OPPOSE
- STRONGLY OPPOSE
- DON'T KNOW

17. Suppose an antlerless-only season was offered in addition to the regular firearm deer season that you normally hunt. The season would not last more than a week (most likely a single weekend in mid-October) and killing an antlerless deer during this new season would not affect your regular firearms licenses. The season would be timed to minimize conflicts with peak archery harvest and would not occur during that period known as the 'pre-rut'.

Would you support or oppose this type of regulation? (Check one).

- STRONGLY SUPPORT
- MODERATELY SUPPORT
- NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE
- MODERATELY OPPOSE
- STRONGLY OPPOSE
- DON'T KNOW

Would you participate in an antlerless-only season before the regular firearm season ? (Check one).

- YES
- NO

18. If the MnDNR were to adopt new deer management regulations, would you prefer to see them applied.....? (Check one).

- STATEWIDE
- THE ZONE AND PERMIT AREA YOU HUNT
- THE ZONE YOU HUNT BUT ONLY IN A PERMIT AREA YOU DON'T HUNT
- ONLY IN A ZONE YOU DON'T HUNT
- NOT AT ALL

19. Overall, people have different reasons for supporting or opposing new hunting regulations. Please tell us how important to you each of the following reasons is for supporting or opposing new hunting regulations.

When I consider proposed hunting regulation changes, it is important to me that these factors are considered: (Please circle one number for each item)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Do not result in an increased total buck harvest.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Do not result in an increased doe harvest.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Increase DNR's ability to control the deer population.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Increase hunting opportunity for bowhunters.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Increase hunting opportunity for muzzleloader hunters.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Increase hunting opportunity for firearm hunters.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Increase my own chances of taking an antlered buck.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Increase my own chances of taking a large antlered buck.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Increase my own chances of taking antlerless deer.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Encourage new people to take up deer hunting.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Lead to a better public image of hunters and hunting.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Protect the interests of farmers and other landowners.	1	2	3	4	5	9
Protect areas so that deer do not cause forest and other habitat damages	1	2	3	4	5	9
Reduce crowding of hunters on public lands.	1	2	3	4	5	9

Section C. Past Hunting Experience

20. Including last year, how many years have you hunted deer in Minnesota? _____ Years

21. What hunting method do you primarily use? (check one)

- DEER DRIVE WITH LESS THAN 5 PEOPLE
 - DEER DRIVE WITH 5 OR MORE PEOPLE
 - TREE STAND
 - GROUND BLIND
 - STILL HUNTING OR STALKING
 - OTHER (PLEASE LIST):
-

22. Which statement best characterizes where you hunt? (check one)

- I ALMOST NEVER HUNT THE SAME AREA EVERY YEAR
 - I CHANGE MY HUNTING LOCATION EVERY 1 TO 2 YEARS
 - I CHANGE MY HUNTING LOCATION EVERY 3 TO 5 YEARS
 - I TYPICALLY HUNT THE SAME AREA EVERY YEAR
-

Section D. Preferences for Deer Season Options

We will now present you with 5 deer management scenarios that are occurring in various permit areas throughout Minnesota. These are current issues that will need to be addressed in the coming years. Within each scenario, you will be presented 3 management options. These 3 options represent only a subset of all possible management options. Some hunters will receive surveys with the same options, while others will receive surveys with different options. The options presented to you have been randomly selected from the total set of choices. In the end, when all the surveys are combined, we will be able to create a ranked list of management options.

In all cases, the scenarios are real and the management response is possible. To the best of your ability, please read the scenarios and choices very carefully and answer the following questions as if the scenario exists in the area you hunt most often.

Scenario 1: The deer population is stable and within population goals. It is currently being managed so that either-sex licenses are available over the counter and hunters can also buy additional antlerless permits. Based on requests from some hunters, this area will be managed in the future for more mature bucks.

Please read the following deer season options and rank them from your most preferred to least preferred. **Write a “1” by your most preferred choice, a “2” by your next most preferred choice and a “3” by your least preferred choice among the three options.**

Choice (S1C4) _____

- **Either-sex and antlerless licenses** would be available **over the counter**
- Only bucks that had at least **one four point antler** would be legal to harvest
- The antler point regulation would protect 75% of the 1½ year old buck population
- Shooting a bucks and antlerless deer for another hunter would be **legal** because a higher percentage of 1½ year-old bucks would be protected

Choice (S1C5) _____

- **Either-sex and antlerless licenses** would be available **over the counter**
- Only bucks that had at least **one four point antler** would be legal to harvest
- The antler point regulation would protect 75% of the 1½ year old buck population
- Shooting a buck for another hunter would be **illegal** so that the **maximum number of bucks could be protected**
- Hunters could still shoot antlerless deer for each other

Choice (S1C7) _____

- I would not hunt deer in the area if the regulations were changed

Scenario 2: The deer population is currently **25%** above the management goal. The current strategy of allowing five deer per hunter has not been effective in lowering the deer population. A new strategy needs to be developed that lowers the deer population to goal levels within 3 to 5 years.

Please read the following deer season options and rank them from your most preferred to least preferred. **Write a “1” by your most preferred choice, a “2” by your next most preferred choice and a “3” by your least preferred choice among the three options.**

Choice (S2C7) _____

- I would not hunt deer in the area if the regulations were changed

Choice (S2C1) _____

- **Antlerless** licenses would be available over the counter
- **Buck** licenses would be available through a lottery
- Shooting **bucks** and **antlerless deer** for another hunter would be **legal**
- There would be **fewer buck licenses** available because hunters could shoot bucks and antlerless deer for each other
- Hunters who failed to draw a buck license could hunt antlerless deer and would gain “buck” preference for future years
- Hunters could expect to draw **a buck license every 2 to 3 years**

Choice (S2C3) _____

- **Either-sex and antlerless licenses** would be available over the counter
- Only bucks that had at least **one three point antler** would be legal to harvest
- The antler point regulation would protect 50% of the 1½ year old buck population
- Shooting a buck for another hunter would be **illegal** because a lower percentage of 1½ year old bucks would be protected
- Hunters could still shoot antlerless deer for each other

Scenario 3: The deer population is currently **50%** above the management goal. The current strategy of allocating five deer per hunter has not been effective in lowering the deer population. A new strategy needs to be developed that lowers the deer population to goal levels within 3 to 5 years. Please look at the following panel and choose one of the available options.

Please read the following deer season options and rank them from your most preferred to least preferred. **Write a “1” by your most preferred choice, a “2” by your next most preferred choice and a “3” by your least preferred choice among the three options.**

Choice 2 (S3C2) _____

- **Buck** licenses would be available through a lottery
- **Antlerless** licenses would be available over the counter
- Shooting **bucks** for another hunter would be **illegal**
- There would be more buck permits available because hunters could not shoot deer for each other
- Hunters who failed to draw a buck license could hunt antlerless deer and would gain “buck” preference for future years
- Hunters could expect to **draw a buck license every 1 to 2 years**

Choice (S3C3) _____

- **Either-sex and antlerless licenses** would be available over the counter
- Only bucks that had at least **one three point antler** would be legal to harvest
- The antler point regulation would protect 50% of the 1½ year old buck population
- Shooting a buck for another hunter would be **illegal** because a lower percentage of 1½ year old bucks would be protected
- Hunters could still shoot antlerless deer for each other

Choice (S3C5) _____

- **Either-sex and antlerless licenses** are available over the counter
- The area will be managed as “Earn-A-Buck”
- You must tag an antlerless deer prior to tagging a buck
- The antlerless deer can be taken in any deer season so long as it is killed first

Scenario 4: The deer population is stable or below population goal and the harvest rate on 1½ year-old bucks is high. Consequently, a low percentage of the buck population lives beyond 1½ years. Currently, buck licenses are available over the counter, either-sex permits are available through the lottery, and hunters can only kill one deer. Based on requests from hunters, this area may be managed in the future to protect young bucks and allow them to get to the next age class.

Please read the following deer season options and rank them from your most preferred to least preferred. **Write a “1” by your most preferred choice, a “2” by your next most preferred choice and a “3” by your least preferred choice among the three options.**

Choice (S4C1) _____

- **Buck and antlerless** licenses would be available through a **lottery**
- Shooting bucks and antlerless deer for another hunter would be **legal**
- There would be **fewer** buck permits available because hunters could shoot bucks for each other
- Hunters who failed to draw a buck or antlerless license would not be able to hunt but would gain preference for future years
- Hunters could expect to draw a buck license every 2 to 3 years

Choice (S4C2) _____

- **Buck and antlerless** licenses would be available through a **lottery**
- Shooting bucks for another hunter would be **illegal**
- There would be **more** buck permits available because hunters could not shoot bucks for each other
- Hunters who failed to draw a buck or antlerless license would not be able to hunt but would gain preference for future years
- Hunters could expect to draw a buck license every 1 to 2 years

Choice (S4C4) _____

- **Buck** licenses would be available **over the counter**
- **Antlerless licenses** would be available through a **lottery**
- Only bucks that had at least **one four point antler** would be legal to harvest
- The antler point regulation would protect 75% of the 1½ year old buck population
- Youth hunters must abide by the antler point regulation but could take an antlerless deer without making application
- Shooting a buck for another hunter would be **legal** because a higher percentage of 1½ year-old bucks would be protected

Scenario 5: Antler point restriction regulations are currently being used by several states to encourage antlerless harvest and protect 1½ year old bucks. The number of hunters and sporting organizations interested in antler-point restriction regulations is increasing in Minnesota. While the harvest rate of bucks varies in Minnesota, the majority of the bucks killed during the firearm season are 1½ years old. Typically, 50 to 75% of the 1½ year old buck population is harvested during the firearm season.

Please read the following deer season options and rank them from your most preferred to least preferred. **Write a “1” by your most preferred choice, a “2” by your next most preferred choice and a “3” by your least preferred choice among the three options.**

Choice (S5C7) _____

- I would not hunt deer in the area if the regulations were changed

Choice (S5C1) _____

- **Either-sex and antlerless licenses** would be available **over the counter**
- Only bucks that had at least **one three point antler** would be legal to harvest
- The antler point regulation would protect 50% of the 1½ year old buck population
- Youth hunters would have to abide by the same antler restriction regulation
- Shooting a buck for another hunter would be **illegal** because a lower percentage of 1½ year old bucks would be protected
- Hunters could still shoot antlerless deer for each other

Choice (S5C3) _____

- **Either-sex and antlerless licenses** would be available **over the counter**
- Only bucks that had at least **one three point antler** would be legal to harvest
- The antler point regulation would protect 50% of the 1½ year old buck population
- Youth hunters could shoot any antlered buck
- Shooting a buck for another hunter would be **illegal** because fewer bucks are protected and hunters **could not shoot sub-legal bucks for youth hunters**
- Hunters could still shoot antlerless deer for each other

Comments: We are interested in your views about deer hunting in Minnesota. Please write additional comments below. The results of this survey will be available next year on the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Web site, www.dnr.state.mn.us.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope

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