2019 DEER HUNTING FORECAST

Region 4

Region 4, occupying the central-eastern area of New York, includes 9 counties and covers almost 4 million acres. It borders Massachusetts and Vermont in the east and Pennsylvania in the southwest. The region is comprised of forests, agricultural lands, residential, and urban areas. The varying deer populations throughout the region reflect this mixture of habitat type, and overall hunting opportunities abound.

The 2018 deer season produced generally desirable results compared to the previous season. Buck harvests increased in twelve of the region’s eighteen Wildlife Management Units (WMUs), and seven of those increases were over 15%. Twelve of the WMUs are at or close to our population objective and will issue the same number of Deer Management Permits (DMPs) as last year. Three of the units with antler restrictions (4O, 4P and 4W) had a modest increase in buck harvest and will provide more opportunities to receive a DMP this year. None of our units will issue fewer DMPs than last year.

Unit Summaries for the 2019 Season

The annual buck harvest is used as a gauge of population size and its relationship to the desired population level. The Buck Take Objective (BTO) for a WMU is the number of antlered bucks expected to be harvested per square mile when the WMU’s deer population is at the desired level as determined by a Citizen Task Force. In future years, a public survey and habitat assessment will be used to form a population management plan. Management decisions will be made within WMU Aggregates as opposed to individual WMUs.
WMU 4A

Area = 430 mile\(^2\)  
2018 Buck Take = 2.6 bucks harvested per mile\(^2\)  
BTO = 1.9 bucks harvested per mile\(^2\)  
2018 Total Deer Take = 4.7 deer harvested per mile\(^2\)

WMU 4A spans northern Schoharie, eastern Montgomery and western Schenectady Counties. There is a fair amount of agriculture and two large areas offering public deer hunting: Charleston State Forest and Rural Grove State Forest. The buck harvest had reflected a deer population that was larger than desired for several years but has declined since 2016. We began to issue significantly more DMPs in 2017 and will maintain that number this year.

WMU 4B

Area = 162 mile\(^2\)  
2018 Buck Take = 2.6 bucks harvested per mile\(^2\)  
BTO = 1.8 bucks harvested per mile\(^2\)  
2018 Total Deer Take = 4.9 deer harvested per mile\(^2\)

WMU 4B is located in Albany County, both south and west of the City of Albany. Deer populations are difficult to manage due to suburban development and limited public access; Louise Keir Wildlife Management Area provides one option for public hunting. The buck harvest reflects a population that has been above desired levels for most of the past decade and has continued to increase since 2015. We increased the issuance of DMPs in 2017 and will maintain that amount this year.
WMU 4C

Area = 166 mile$^2$
BTO = 4.5 bucks harvested per mile$^2$

2018 Buck Take = 3.6 bucks harvested per mile$^2$
2018 Total Deer Take = 6.4 deer harvested per mile$^2$

WMU 4C is located in northern Rensselaer County. The area is predominantly farmland with some forested area. There is limited public access to hunting; one available option is Tibbits State Forest (land is divided between units 4C and 4L). The buck take suggests a population that has approached the objective level every few years but generally been slightly below the desired level. We will maintain DMP availability at the same level this year.

WMU 4F

Area = 1,161 mile$^2$
BTO = 3.2 bucks harvested per mile$^2$

2018 Buck Take = 3.6 bucks harvested per mile$^2$
2018 Total Deer Take = 6.9 deer harvested per mile$^2$

This unit, encompassing most of Otsego County, consists of rolling forested terrain and some agriculture in the valleys. Public lands accessible for hunting include Arnold Lake State Forest, Basswood Pond State Forest, Bear Swamp State Forest, and Hartwick State Forest; others are listed on the DEC website under Region 4 public lands. Buck harvests reflect a deer population that has been slightly larger than desired levels for several years. Our DMP allocation for 2019 is intended to achieve similar antlerless harvest as 2018 and thereby reduce the deer population slightly.
WMU 4G

Area = 371 mile²
2018 Buck Take = 2.2 bucks harvested per mile²

BTO = Antler Restriction Unit
2018 Total Deer Take = 4.0 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 4G encompasses much of Schoharie County. The Schoharie Valley runs directly through this unit; the terrain consists of forested hills and fairly intensive agriculture in the valley. There are several options for public deer hunting access, notably Burnt Rossman Hills State Forest. Other state lands can be found on DEC’s Region 4 of public lands. This is an antler restriction unit. The deer population has remained stable for years. We will issue the same number of DMPs as in previous years.

WMU 4H

Area = 290 mile²
2018 Buck Take = 3.2 bucks harvested per mile²

BTO = 3.4 bucks harvested per mile²
2018 Total Deer Take = 4.8 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 4H lies primarily in Albany County and includes a large portion of the Helderberg Mountains. Public access is available on state lands in the central-western portion of the unit, including Partridge Run Wildlife Management Area and Rensselaerville State Forest. The buck take reflects a deer population that has been near the desired level for several seasons. We have maintained consistent DMP availability since 2013 and will continue to do so this year.
WMU 4J
Area = 149 mile²
BTO = none
2018 Buck Take = 1.5 bucks harvested per mile²
2018 Total Deer Take = 2.8 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 4J is a bowhunting-only unit in Albany County that includes the City of Albany and several of the adjacent suburban towns. Public hunting access is limited to Albany Pine Bush Preserve. Although the Preserve encompasses 3,000 acres, hunting can be challenging due to its popularity with other users, proximity to development, and dense vegetation. This results in a large deer population and low harvest.

While harvest increased in 2016 and 2017, it declined last year, with adult doe harvest reaching its lowest point in 15 years. Both resident and non-resident applicants will have a high chance of receiving first- and second-choice DMPs this year. DMPs will not be offered on an order-of-arrival basis in November like some units due to concerns of permit misuse (primarily use in the incorrect unit). All hunters must apply before October 1st to receive a DMP. Hunters that fill a DMP can continue to harvest antlerless deer using one Bonus Permit per deer.

WMU 4K
Area = 256 mile²
BTO = 3.0 bucks harvested per mile²
2018 Buck Take = 2.6 bucks harvested per mile²
2018 Total Deer Take = 4.9 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 4K lies in western and southern Rensselaer County. It borders the Hudson River in the west and the southeastern portion stretches to Massachusetts. The landscape is a mostly flat mosaic of residential, agricultural, and forest with limited public hunting access. Complaints of deer crop damage are high. Deer populations appear to be approaching the desired level. We will issue DMPs this year at the same level as 2018.
WMU 4L

Area = 221 mile²  2018 Buck Take = 2.2 bucks harvested per mile²
BTO = 2.0 bucks harvested per mile²  2018 Total Deer Take = 2.9 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 4L is located in central and eastern Rensselaer County in the Rensselaer Hills; it includes a portion of the Taconic Mountains and extends to the Massachusetts and Vermont borders. There is substantial public access in this unit, including the Capital District Wildlife Management Area, Pittstown State Forest, a portion of Tibbits State Forest, Taconic Ridge State Forest, Berlin State Forest, and conservation easement properties along the Taconic ridge. After over a decade of no DMP issuance and limited antlerless harvest, the deer population has increased to the desired level. We offered a small number of DMPs in 2017 and 2018 and will continue to do so this year.

WMU 4O

Area = 760 mile²  2018 Buck Take = 2.5 bucks harvested per mile²
BTO = Antler Restriction Unit  2018 Total Deer Take = 3.6 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 4O covers the northwestern half of Delaware County and a portion of Broome County. It consists of active and abandoned agricultural lands mixed with large blocks of forest. The terrain is topographically diverse. There are several large state forests including Steam Mill, Arctic China, and Melondy Hill that provide public hunting access. Other state lands in this unit can be found at the DEC’s website for Region 4 public lands. The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) also offers public land for hunting around the Canonsville Reservoir. A free Access Permit from the DEP is required on all City-owned recreational lands that are posted with “Entry by Permit” signs. This is an antler restriction unit. After several years of low to moderate adult female harvest, the buck harvest last season reached its highest level in 5 years. As this suggests the deer population is at or near its desired level, we will issue more DMPs this season.
WMU 4P

Area = 361 mile²

2018 Buck Take = 2.3 bucks harvested per mile²

BTO = Antler Restriction Unit

2018 Total Deer Take = 3.7 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 4P is located in eastern Delaware County on the edge of the Catskill Mountains. It consists of active and abandoned agricultural lands and forested areas. The terrain is moderate to steep. Relay State Forest and Plattekill State Forest are some of the lands offering public hunting access; others are listed on the DEC’s website for Region 4 Public Lands. Additionally, New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has public land accessible for hunting around the Pepacton Reservoir. A free Access Permit from the DEP is required on all City-owned recreational lands that are posted with “Entry by Permit” signs. This is an antler restriction unit. The 2018 buck harvest suggests that the deer population is near the desired level, and thus we are able to increase DMP availability slightly this season.

WMU 4R

Area = 290 mile²

2018 Buck Take = 2.0 bucks harvested per mile²

BTO = Antler Restriction Unit

2018 Total Deer Take = 3.3 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 4R is located in portions of Greene and Delaware Counties in the northern Catskills. It contains a combination of forested mountains and agriculture. The terrain is moderate to steep. Bearpen Mountain State Forest and Huntersfield State Forest, as well as several Forest Preserve Lands, offer publicly accessible hunting opportunities. This is an antler restriction unit. The buck harvest has remained stable for three seasons and suggests the deer population is near the desired levels. Following several years of very low DMP availability, we increased DMP issuance slightly in 2018 and will maintain it at the same level this season.
WMU 4S

Area = 220 mile²
BTO = Antler Restriction Unit
2018 Buck Take = 2.5 bucks harvested per mile²
2018 Total Deer Take = 4.4 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 4S is located in northeastern Greene County with a small portion in Albany County. The Hudson River is the eastern boundary for much of the unit. The eastern section is generally level but rises westward into moderately steeper terrain. There is little public hunting access in this WMU; Vosburgh Swamp Wildlife Management Area offers one option. This is an antler restriction unit. Recent harvests suggest the deer population has increased to desired levels. We issued more DMPs in 2017 and 2018 to address higher deer numbers in the Hudson Valley, and this year we will maintain that amount.

WMU 4T

Area = 132 mile²
BTO = 2.9 bucks harvested per mile²
2018 Buck Take = 2.6 bucks harvested per mile²
2018 Total Deer Take = 5.8 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 4T is located in northwestern Columbia County with the Hudson River as the western boundary. Much of the area is agricultural, and deer-caused damage is a significant problem. Crop damage complaints are moderate to high. While public access for hunting is limited in this unit, Stockport Wildlife Management Area and Charles Flood Wildlife Management Area are available options. The deer population appears to be slightly lower than desired, and antlerless harvest have progressively declined since 2012. Current antlerless harvest levels should be adequate to maintain a stable population, and we will issue the same number of DMPs as last year.
WMU 4U

Area = 127 mile²  
BTO = 4.1 bucks harvested per mile²

2018 Buck Take = 3.4 bucks harvested per mile²  
2018 Total Deer Take = 4.5 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 4U is located in northeastern Columbia County and borders Massachusetts. Public access for big game hunting includes Beebe Hill and Harvey Mountain State Forests as well as Hand Hollow State Forest. The buck harvest suggests that the deer population in this unit has been steadily increasing and reached its highest level in 16 years this past season. We will slightly increase DMP issuance this year.

WMU 4W

Area = 443 mile²
BTO = Antler Restriction unit

2018 Buck Take = 1.9 bucks harvested per mile²  
2018 Total Deer Take = 2.8 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 4W is located in southern Delaware County. It consists mostly of steep forested lands in the Catskill Mountains. There are thousands of acres of public land accessible to hunters, including Columbia Lake State Forest, Delaware Wild Forest, Kerryville State Forest, Tomannex State Forest and Bear Spring Mountain Wildlife Management Area. Additionally, New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) lands around the Pepacton and Canonsville Reservoirs are open for public hunting. A free Access Permit from the DEP is required on all City-owned recreational lands that are posted with “Entry by Permit” signs. Buck harvests have remained low following implementation of antler point restrictions in 2012, but recent harvests and deer sighting rates recorded by bowhunters suggest the population is growing slightly. We will offer a few more DMPs this season.
WMU 4Y

Area = 177 mile$^2$  
2018 Buck Take = 2.9 bucks harvested per mile$^2$

BTO = 3.9 bucks harvested per mile$^2$  
2018 Total Deer Take = 5.7 deer harvested per mile$^2$

WMU 4Y is located in southwestern Columbia County with the Hudson River as the western boundary of the unit. This unit contains a large amount of agricultural land, especially orchards. Deer are highly attracted to these areas and damage complaints are numerous. Public hunting access is limited; Livingston State Forest offers one option. Deer populations have fluctuated below desired levels for more than a decade. We have kept DMP allocations at a low levels since 2015 and will continue to do so this season.

WMU 4Z

Area = 251 mile$^2$  
2018 Buck Take = 2.6 bucks harvested per mile$^2$

BTO = 4.7 bucks harvested per mile$^2$  
2018 Total Deer Take = 4.2 deer harvested per mile$^2$

WMU 4Z is located in southeastern Columbia County bordering Massachusetts. Similar to WMU 4Y, there is a high proportion of agricultural land in the unit and many damage complaints. Areas with public hunting access include New Forge State Forest, Lake Taghkanic State Park, Taconic State Park and Doodletown Wildlife Management Area. Due to a relatively low amount of public land and a large number of non-resident posted properties, the deer population may be larger than reflected in annual harvest trends. Buck harvests have recently been on an increasing trend, suggesting population growth and allowing for a slight increase in DMPs this year.

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