

# 2016 DEER HUNTING FORECAST



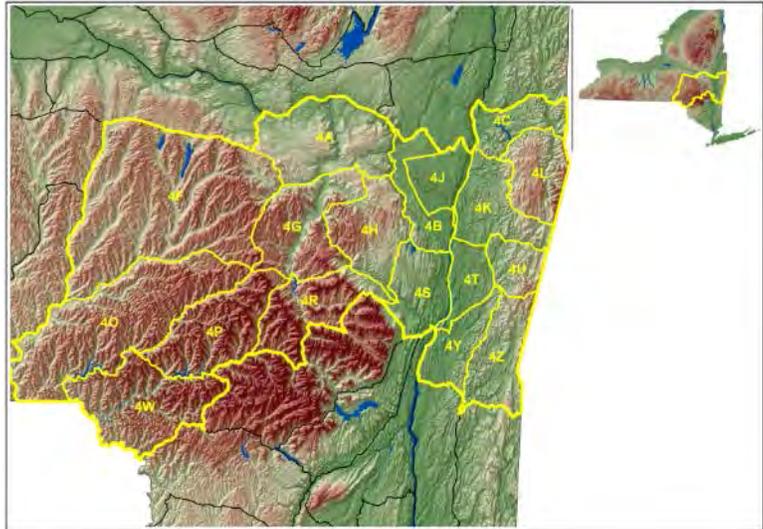
Department of Environmental Conservation

## Region 4

Local deer hunters observed reduced harvests of bucks in most WMUs in 2015. Only WMUs 4U, 4K and 4L saw increases. The reductions were attributed to some mortality from the previous winter as well as mild hunting conditions and a lack of snow cover for much of the hunting season.

The mild winter of 2015-16 should have left deer in good condition. Increased buck harvests should be expected in many WMUs this season. However, loss of fawns in the winter of 2014-15 may translate to a reduction of available two year old bucks in antler restriction units this season. Those Units were particularly prone to winter losses.

Of the 18 WMUs in Region 4, twelve will see no change in permit allocations, five will be reduced and only WMU 4Z will see a slight increase.



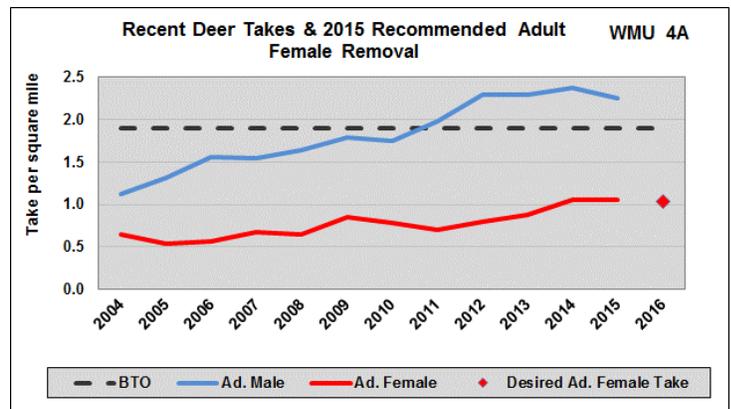
### Unit Summaries for the 2016 Season

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 desired 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 the [Citizen Task Force](#). The BTO is not the estimated take for the coming season but rather is the objective of our management efforts. In Antler Restriction units, the BTO becomes complicated since there is not a one to one tradeoff between yearlings and older bucks in the harvest. Buck harvests in these units are expected to remain below former BTOs when deer populations are at the desired level.

### WMU 4A

- Area = 430 mile<sup>2</sup>
- BTO = 1.9 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>
- 2015 Buck Take = 2.2 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>
- 2015 Total Deer Take = 3.6 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

WMU 4A is located in northern Schoharie, eastern Montgomery and western Schenectady Counties. There is a fair amount of agriculture in the area with two sizable state forests in the center (Charleston and Rural Grove State Forests) providing public deer hunting. The buck harvest in this unit has been fairly consistent for 5 years and is above objective. DMPs will remain the same as last year. Residents without preference points will have a low chance at getting a permit. Second permits are not available in this unit.



## WMU 4B

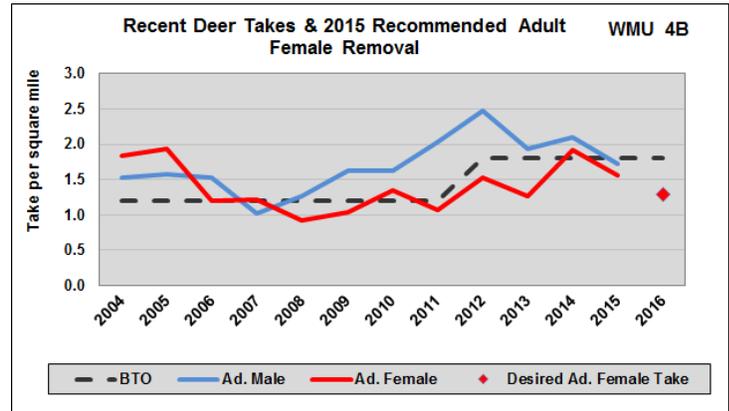
Area = 162 mile<sup>2</sup>

BTO = 1.8 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2015 Buck Take = 1.7 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2015 Total Deer Take = 3.8 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

WMU 4B is located in Albany County, south and west of the City of Albany. Deer populations are difficult to manage in this area due to the unit's suburban character and very limited access for hunting. After staying above objective for several years, the buck harvest fell slightly below objective in 2015. DMP numbers are reduced slightly from last year. Resident and non-resident applicants will have a high chance of receiving a first permit.



## WMU 4C

Area = 165 mile<sup>2</sup>

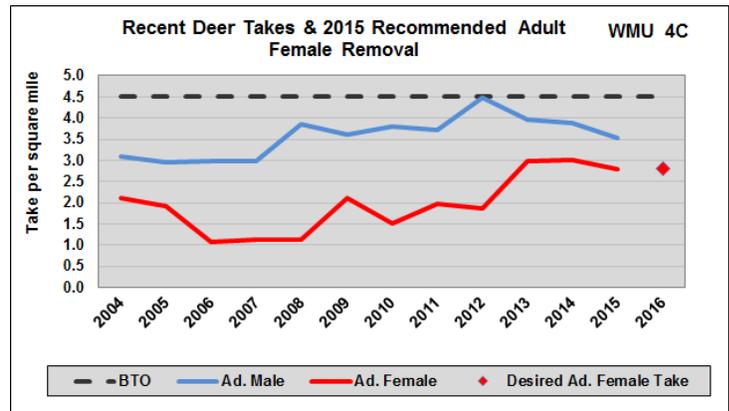
BTO = 4.5 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2015 Buck Take = 3.5 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2015 Total Deer Take = 7.2 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

WMU 4C is located in northern Rensselaer County. This area is predominantly farm land with some forested area. The unit includes very little public land for hunting. The buck take objective is considered high regionally and was met in this unit in 2012 but has declined since. DMPs were reduced last year and will remain the same this year.

Residents will need preference points for a chance at getting a first permit. Second permits will not be available.



## WMU 4F

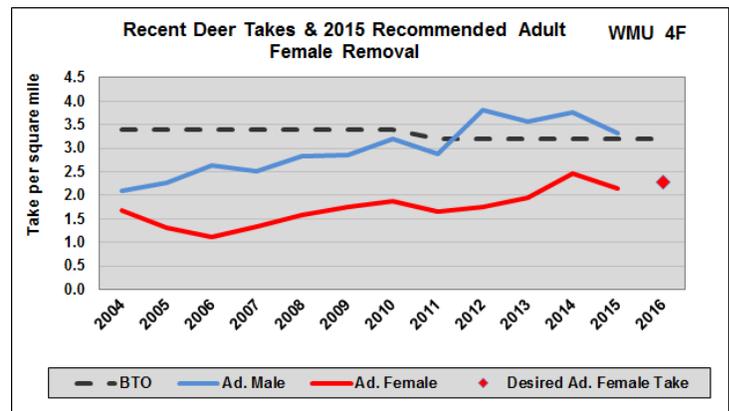
Area = 1,161 mile<sup>2</sup>

BTO = 3.2 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2015 Buck Take = 3.3 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2015 Total Deer Take = 6.1 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

WMU 4F encompasses most of Otsego County and has fairly good deer habitat throughout the area. Most of the area consists of rolling forested terrain with some agriculture in the valleys. Several state forest areas are interspersed throughout the unit and provide some public access for hunting. Buck harvest had remained above objective for three years but came down nearly to objective in 2015. We are now aiming for stability in this unit. DMPs remain the same as last year. All residents without preference points will have a high chance of getting a first permit. Non-residents have a low chance of obtaining a first permit. Second permits will not be available in this unit.



## WMU 4G

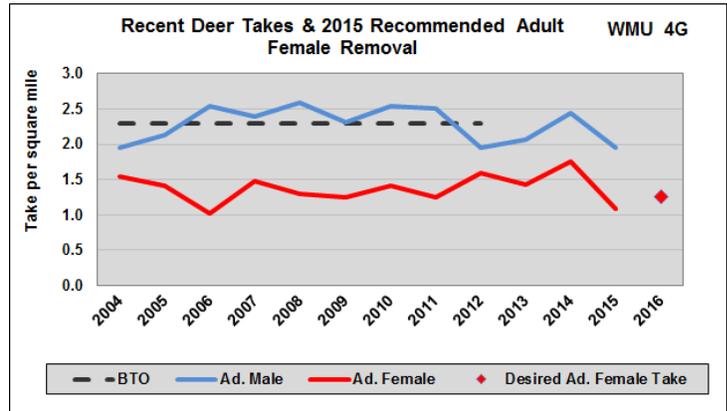
Area = 371 mile<sup>2</sup>

BTO = Antler Restriction Unit

2015 Buck Take = 2.0 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2015 Total Deer Take = 3.4 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

WMU 4G encompasses much of Schoharie County. The Schoharie Valley runs directly through this unit and includes some hilly and occasionally steep wooded areas with fairly intensive agriculture in the valley. Several state forest areas provide some public access. The 2015 DMP allocations were reduced by approximately 30% from the previous year because of concerns about mortality from the previous winter. Loss of fawns from the winter of 2014-15 may translate into fewer 2 year old bucks this season in this antler restricted unit. Allocations remain unchanged this year. Residents with one preference point will have a chance to receive a permit. Second permits will not be available in this unit.



## WMU 4H

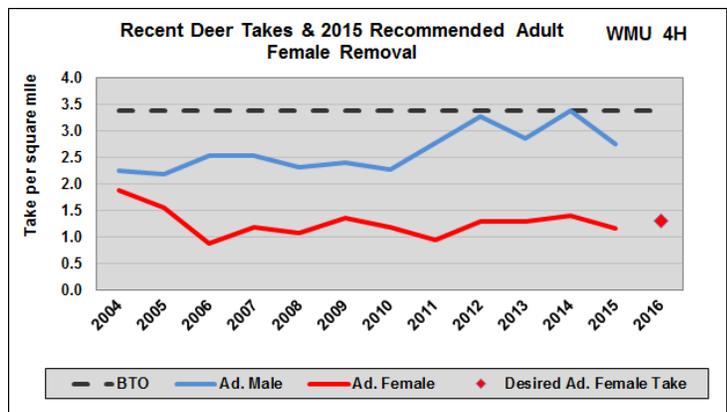
Area = 290 mile<sup>2</sup>

BTO = 3.4 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2015 Buck Take = 2.8 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2015 Total Deer Take = 4.3 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

WMU 4H lies primarily in Albany County and includes a large portion of the Helderberg Mountains. Public access is available on several pieces of state land in the central-western portion of the unit. The buck take reached objective level in 2014 but declined in 2015. Buck harvest should increase in 2016. Permit numbers will remain the same as last year. Resident applicants with a preference point will have a chance of getting first permits. Second permits will not be available in this unit.



## WMU 4J

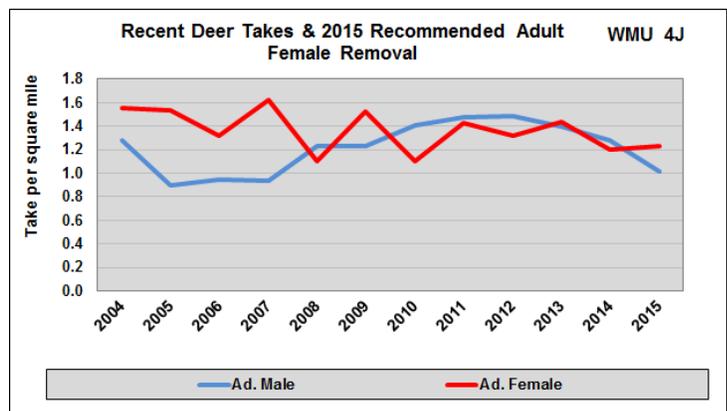
Area = 149 mile<sup>2</sup>

BTO = none

2015 Buck Take = 1.0 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2015 Total Deer Take = 2.9 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

WMU 4J is a bowhunting-only unit in Albany County, including the City of Albany and several of the adjacent suburban towns. Gaining access to hunt in WMU 4J is difficult and limits the number of hunters. The only public land within WMU 4J open to hunting is the Albany Pine Bush Preserve. While the Preserve encompasses 3,000 acres, hunting can be challenging due to its urban/suburban character, dense vegetation, and other public uses of the property. The result is a relatively large deer population with a very low deer harvest.



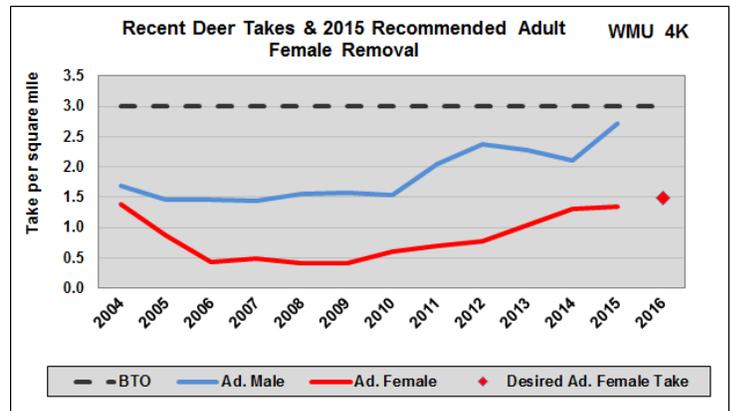
Buck take had been nearly stable for several years but declined in 2015. Resident and non-resident applicants will have a high chance of getting first and second permits. Due to concerns of DMP misuse (DMPs used in the wrong WMU), DMPs for 4J will not be offered in the "First-Come/First-Serve" drawing that is offered in November for some other units. All hunters must apply before October 1<sup>st</sup> to receive a DMP in this area. However, in an effort to increase the antlerless harvest in this unit, [Bonus Permits](#) are issued at two check stations, the Five Rivers Education Center in Delmar and the

DEC regional office in Schenectady. Bonus Permits are only issued to bowhunters who have harvested an antlerless deer on a 4J DMP. Hunters can continue to shoot antlerless deer and can receive as many Bonus Permits as they are willing to fill.

### WMU 4K

Area = 256 mile<sup>2</sup>  
 BTO = 3.0 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>  
 2015 Buck Take = 2.7 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>  
 2015 Total Deer Take = 4.4 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

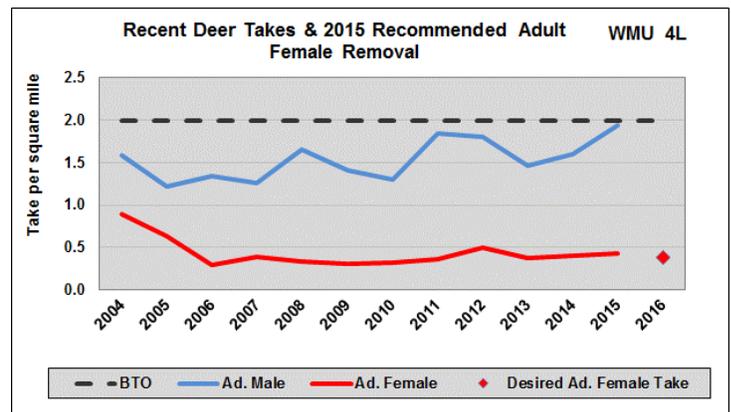
WMU 4K lies in western and southern Rensselaer County. It is bordered on the west by the Hudson River and extends east to the Massachusetts border. This unit is fairly flat and consists of a mosaic of residential, agricultural and forest land with limited hunting access. Buck harvest declined slightly in 2014 but rose dramatically in 2015. Harvest is now approaching objective. DMP numbers will remain the same as last year. Residents without preference points will have a low chance to receive a first permit. Second permits will not be available.



### WMU 4L

Area = 221 mile<sup>2</sup>  
 BTO = 2.0 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>  
 2015 Buck Take = 1.9 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>  
 2015 Total Deer Take = 2.5 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

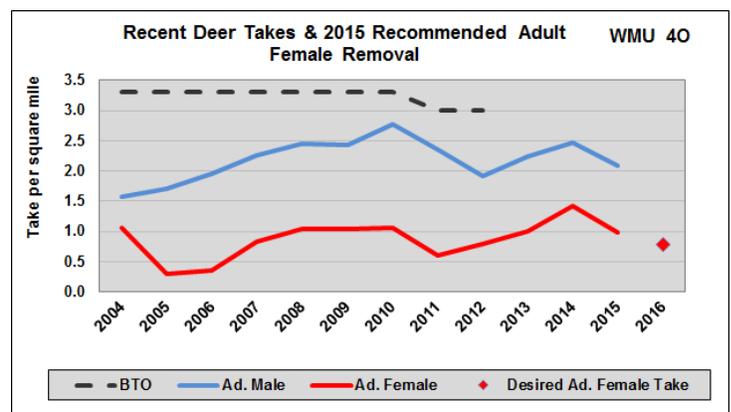
WMU 4L is located in central and eastern Rensselaer County in the Rensselaer Hills, includes a portion of the Taconic Mountains and extends to the Massachusetts and Vermont border. There is substantial public access in this unit including the Capital District Wildlife Management Area, Pittstown State Forest, Tibbits State Forest, Taconic Ridge State Forest, Berlin State Forest and properties under conservation easement along the Taconic ridge. The buck take rose in 2015 and is now near objective. DMPs have not been available since 2005 as adult female harvest is being met through bow and muzzleloader use. This unit will remain closed to issuance of DMPs in 2016.



### WMU 4O

Area = 760 mile<sup>2</sup>  
 BTO = Antler Restriction Unit  
 2015 Buck Take = 2.1 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>  
 2015 Total Deer Take = 3.3 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

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 moderate to steep. There are several large state forests (Steam Mill, Arctic China, and Melody Hill State Forests) in the western part of the unit for public hunting. [New York City Department of Environmental Protection \(DEP\)](#) lands around the Canonsville Reservoir also offer public hunting. A free permit is required from DEP though many of their lands now require no permit for access. The 2015 DMP allocations were reduced by approximately 30% from the previous year because of concerns about mortality from the previous winter. Loss of fawns from the winter of 2014-15 may translate into fewer 2 year old bucks this

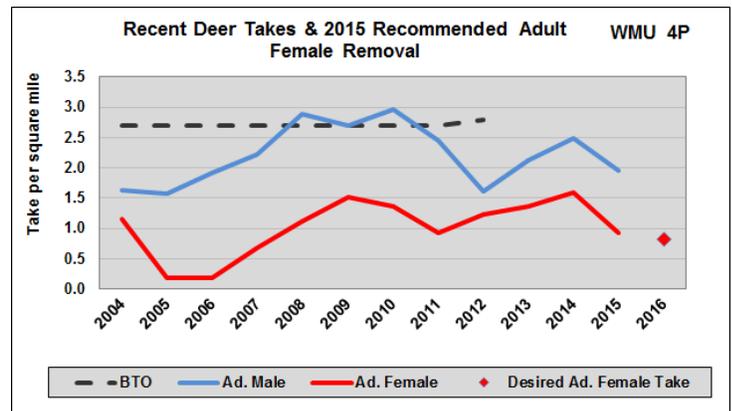


season in this antler restricted unit. Permit numbers are further reduced this year. Resident applicants will need preference points for a chance to receive a DMP. Second permits will not be available in this unit.

### WMU 4P

Area = 361 mile<sup>2</sup>  
 BTO = Antler Restriction Unit  
 2015 Buck Take = 2.0 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>  
 2015 Total Deer Take = 3.2 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

WMU 4P is located in eastern Delaware County on the edge of the Catskill Mountains. It consists of active and abandoned agricultural lands and large blocks of forest. The terrain is moderate to steep. There are a few moderate sized parcels of state forest lands in the unit (Relay and Plattekill State Forests). [New York City Department of Environmental Protection \(DEP\)](#) lands around the Pepacton Reservoir also offer public hunting. A free permit is required from DEP though many of their lands now require no permit for access. The 2015 DMP allocations were reduced by approximately 30% from the previous year because of mortality concerns from the previous winter. Loss of fawns from the winter of 2014-15 may translate into fewer 2 year old bucks this season in this antler restricted unit. Permit numbers are further reduced this year. Residents without preference points will have low odds of receiving a first permit. Second permits will not be available.

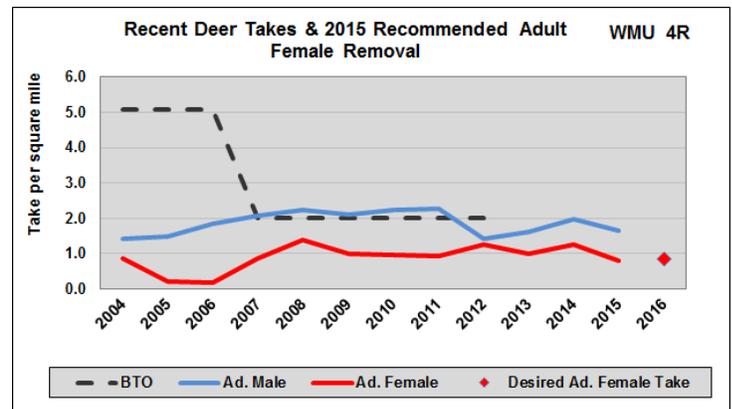


The 2015 DMP allocations were reduced by approximately 30% from the previous year because of mortality concerns from the previous winter. Loss of fawns from the winter of 2014-15 may translate into fewer 2 year old bucks this season in this antler restricted unit. Permit numbers are further reduced this year. Residents without preference points will have low odds of receiving a first permit. Second permits will not be available.

### WMU 4R

Area = 290 mile<sup>2</sup>  
 BTO = Antler Restriction Unit  
 2015 Buck Take = 1.6 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>  
 2015 Total Deer Take = 2.7 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

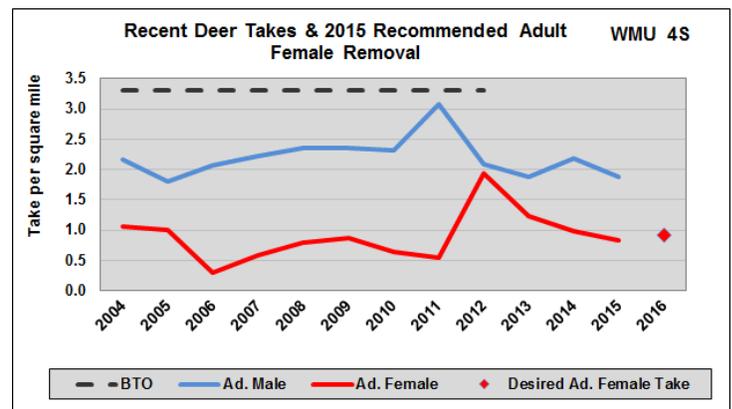
WMU 4R is located in portions of Greene and Delaware counties in the northern Catskills. It contains a combination of forested mountains and agriculture. The terrain is moderate to steep. There are some state forest preserve lands in the southern portion of the unit for public hunting. The 2015 DMP allocations were reduced by approximately 30% from the previous year because of mortality concerns from the previous winter. Loss of fawns from the winter of 2014-15 may translate into fewer 2 year old bucks this season in this antler restricted unit. Adult female harvest in 2015 was the lowest in 9 years. Permit numbers remain unchanged. Resident applicants will need a preference point to have a chance of receiving a first permit. No second permits will be available.



### WMU 4S

Area = 220 mile<sup>2</sup>  
 BTO = Antler Restriction unit  
 2015 Buck Take = 1.9 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>  
 2015 Total Deer Take = 3.0 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

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 fairly flat but rises westward into moderately steeper terrain. There is little public access in this unit.

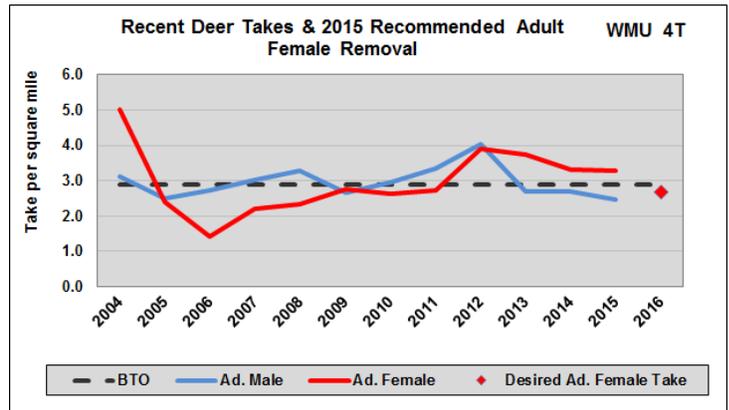


Buck harvest has remained flat for the past 4 seasons. Adult female harvest remains low. Permit allocations remain unchanged. Resident applicants with one preference point will have a chance at receiving a first permit. No second permits will be available.

### WMU 4T

- Area = 132 mile<sup>2</sup>
- BTO = 2.9 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>
- 2015 Buck Take = 2.5 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>
- 2015 Total Deer Take = 6.7 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

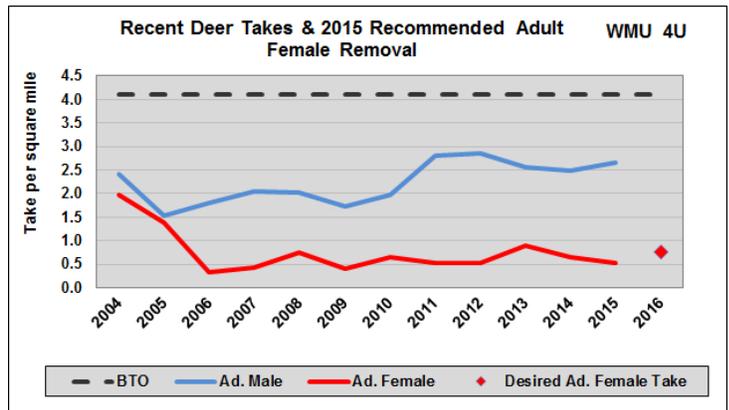
WMU 4T is located in northwestern Columbia County with the Hudson River as the western boundary. Much of the area is agricultural and deer damage is a significant problem. Public access for hunting is very limited in this unit. This unit remained just shy of its objective in 2013 and 2014 and declined slightly in 2015. Permit numbers have been reduced slightly this year. All residents and non-residents have a high chance of drawing their first permit, and residents will have a low chance of drawing a second permit.



### WMU 4U

- Area = 127 mile<sup>2</sup>
- BTO = 4.1 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>
- 2015 Buck Take = 2.7 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>
- 2015 Total Deer Take = 3.4 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

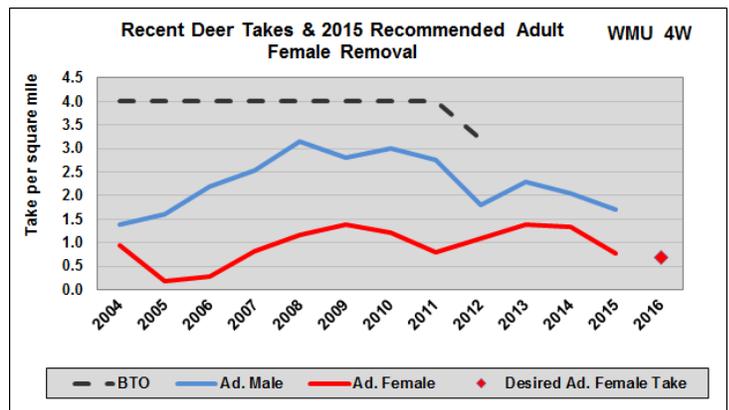
WMU 4U is located in northeastern Columbia County and borders Massachusetts. Public access is limited to Beebe Hill State Forest in the southern portion of the unit. The buck harvest in this unit has been very stable for the past 4 years but consistently below objective. To provide some modest harvest opportunity we issued about 100 DMPs to landowners and disabled veterans again this year. DMPs will be available only to landowners and disabled veterans.



### WMU 4W

- Area = 443 mile<sup>2</sup>
- BTO = Antler Restriction unit
- 2015 Buck Take = 1.7 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>
- 2015 Total Deer Take = 2.7 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

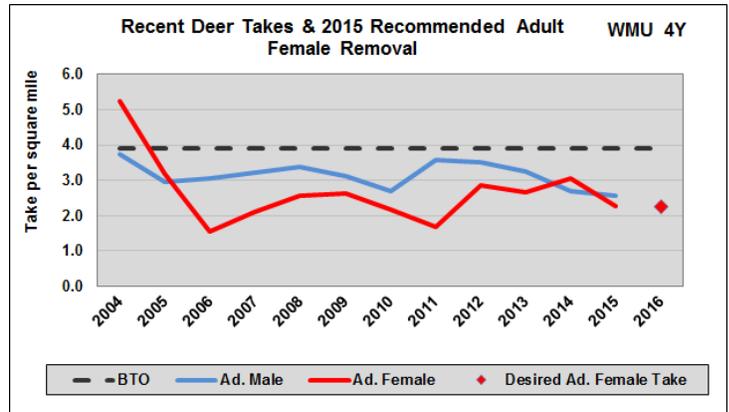
WMU 4W is located in southern Delaware County. It consists mostly of steep forested lands in the Catskill Mountains. There are a few large parcels of state forest land and Bear Spring Mountain Wildlife Management Area which add up to thousands of acres of public access for hunting. [New York City Department of Environmental Protection \(DEP\)](#) lands around the Pepacton and Canonsville Reservoirs also offer public hunting. A free permit is required from DEP though many of their lands now require no permit for access. The 2015 DMP allocations were reduced by approximately 30% from the previous year because of mortality concerns from the previous winter. The deer population in this unit was hit particularly hard, seeing the lowest buck harvest in 10 years. Loss of fawns from the winter of 2014-15 may translate into fewer 2 year old bucks this season in this antler restricted unit. Resident applicants will need preference points for a chance at receiving a permit. Second permits will not be available.



## WMU 4Y

Area = 177 mile<sup>2</sup>  
 BTO = 3.9 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>  
 2015 Buck Take = 2.6 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>  
 2015 Total Deer Take = 5.5 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

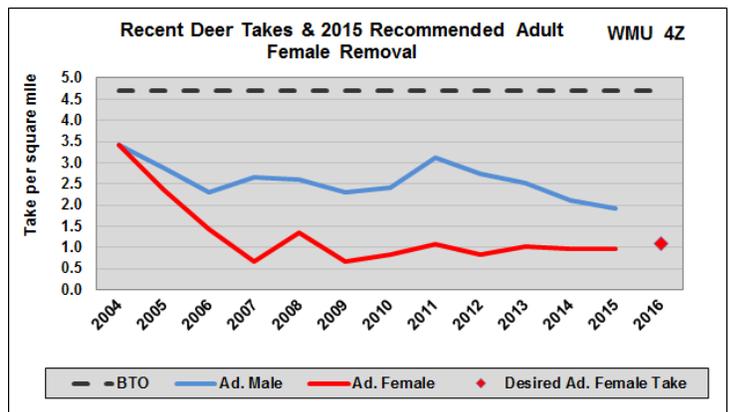
WMU 4Y is located in southwestern Columbia County with the Hudson River as the western boundary of the unit. This unit contains a large amount of agricultural land, including a number of orchards, making it highly productive for deer but also a source of numerous damage complaints. Public hunting access is very limited in this unit. Buck take remained nearly the same for the past 2 seasons but is below objective. Permits were reduced 25% last year reducing adult female harvest significantly. Permit allocations will remain the same this year. Residents and non-residents will have a high chance of getting a first permit. Second permits will only be available to landowners and disabled veterans.



## WMU 4Z

Area = 251 mile<sup>2</sup>  
 BTO = 4.7 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>  
 2015 Buck Take = 2.1 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>  
 2015 Total Deer Take = 3.5 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

WMU 4Z is located in southeastern Columbia County bordering Massachusetts. Similar in character to WMU 4Y, there is a high proportion of agricultural land in the unit. Hunter access is very limited in this area. Buck take has declined for the past four years despite several years of low female harvests. High numbers of agricultural damage complaints and habitat damage documented by DEC staff in some areas of the unit suggests that the deer population is higher than is indicated by the buck take. We will begin to offer a low number of DMPs to increase hunting opportunity and attempt to address habitat and agricultural concerns. We will continue to monitor closely. Residents will have a low chance of receiving a first permit. Second permits will not be available.



Larry Bifaro  
 Region 4 Big Game Biologist