

2016 DEER HUNTING FORECAST



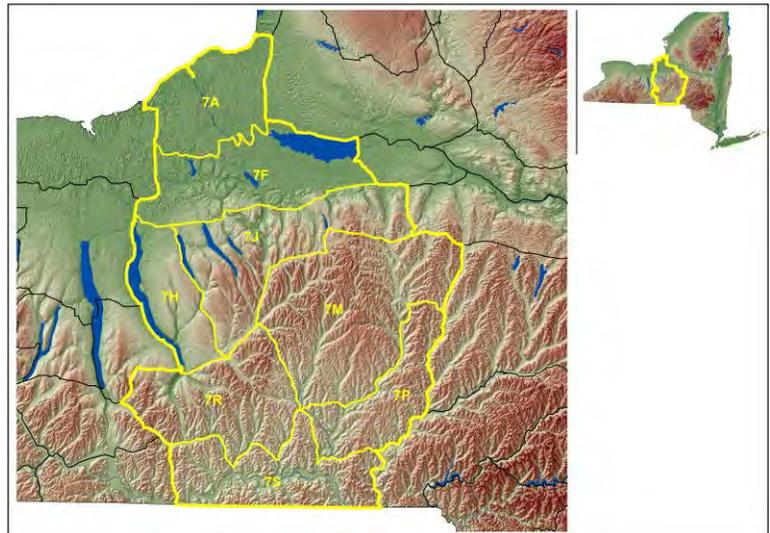
Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Region 7

Region 7 is located in Central New York, occupying a nine-county area reaching from Lake Ontario to the Pennsylvania border. This region is comprised of two broad ecological areas: the Great Lakes Plain ecozone in the north and the Appalachian Plateau ecozone developing in the middle of the region and stretching to the south. The Great Lakes Plain ecozone is characterized by productive, level to rolling terrain that is conducive to agriculture and human industrial and residential development. The Appalachian Plateau ecological area has higher elevations with deep valleys and a mixture of forested tracts and agriculture. Most of the region's state forests are in this ecozone.

The 2015 regional deer harvest was down 18% from 2014. Some decline in harvest was anticipated due to the smaller number of [Deer Management Permits](#) (DMPs, frequently called "doe tags") issued and some fawn mortality from the previous winter. Unfavorable weather conditions during the 2015 firearm season in the Southern Zone further contributed to declines in deer take and reduced DMP success.

Although there was a decline in harvest in 2015, half of the [Wildlife Management Units \(WMUs\)](#) in Region 7 have deer densities that remain above the population objectives set for them. Deer populations in three WMUs are at their desired levels and one is slightly below. Deer harvest numbers are expected to tick upwards in most of our WMUs. DMP issuance for 2016 is designed to keep harvest pressure on while still being fairly conservative. In most WMUs the goal is to achieve similar adult doe harvest as in 2015. Unless we have an unusually mild firearms season again, we anticipate DMP success rates will return to normal levels this fall. Hence, though regional issuance of DMPs for this fall will be reduced by 16% from last year, with higher success rates, we expect that hunters will achieve similar antlerless harvests in many WMUs.



Unit Summaries for the 2015 Season

The following is a brief description of the WMUs for which Region 7 oversees deer management, including a unit by unit review of deer populations, management efforts, harvest expectations, and a harvest graph. With each description is the unit's Buck Take Objective (BTO) which is established based on the recommendation of a [Citizen Task Force](#) (CTF). The BTO is the number of antlered bucks expected to be harvested per square mile when the WMU's deer population is at the level recommended by a CTF. The annual buck harvest and other indices are used to gauge a WMU's deer population size and its relationship to the desired population level. This relationship is key to determining management direction. Note: some portions of Region 7's counties fall into WMUs managed by an adjacent region (e.g., eastern Oswego County lies in 6K – the number in the unit designation denotes the Region responsible for the unit). See other regional forecasts for a report on these lands.

WMU 7A

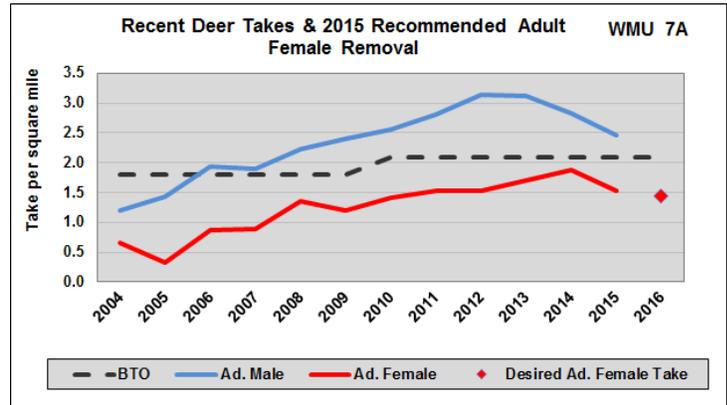
Area = 545 mile²

BTO = 2.1 bucks harvested per mile² (2009 CTF)

2015 Buck Take = 2.5 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Total Deer Take = 4.6 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 7A is comprised mainly of lands in western Oswego County and also includes small portions of northern Cayuga and north western Onondaga counties. The unit has very little public land. WMU 7A lies in the Great Lakes Plain physiographic zone and presents a relatively flat landscape. Soils in much of the unit are poorly suited for farming with only about 35% of the land being farmed and about 60% is forested. The buck take in this unit has trended above objective for nearly a decade and has been managed toward desired levels in recent years. The DMP quota has been lowered for this fall by 8%. There will be no second DMPs and no DMPs for non-residents.



WMU 7F

Area = 687 mile²

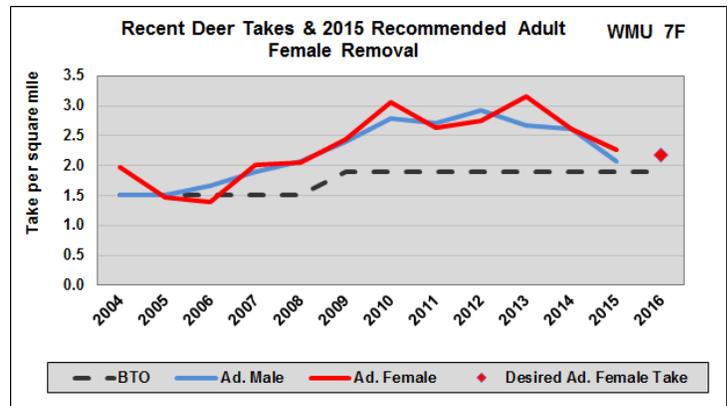
BTO = 1.9 bucks harvested per mile² (2008 CTF)

2015 Buck Take = 2.1 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Total Deer Take = 5.3 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 7F is centered in northern Onondaga County, includes portions of Cayuga, and northern Madison County, and has very little public land. WMU 7F lies in the Great Lakes Plain physiographic zone and presents a relatively flat landscape. About 35% of the land is farmed and about 40% is wooded. The unit also has a

considerable amount of developed area where management capability is compromised due to limited hunting access. For the previous 6 years the buck take has sustained a level that's well above objective. The 2015 buck take suggested a population near objective, however, population management effects were probably masked by poor hunting conditions in 2015. The relatively low DMP success rate that occurred in 2015 is expected to return toward average levels this year. Therefore to aim for achieving similar adult doe harvest as last year we will actually decrease the DMP issuance. All applicants will still have high odds of receiving a first and second permit.



WMU 7H

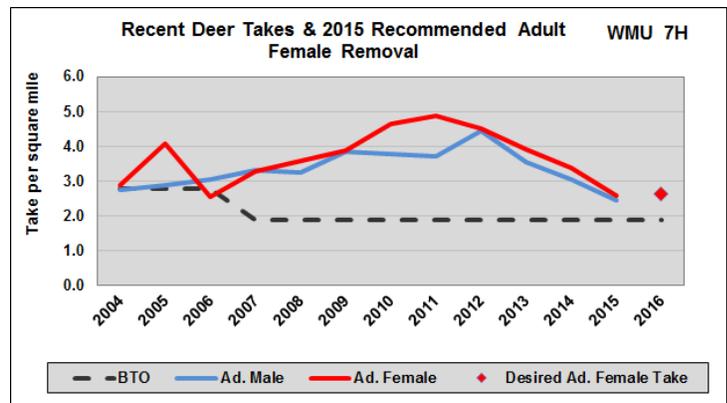
Area = 357 mile²

BTO = 1.9 bucks harvested per mile² (2007 CTF)

2015 Buck Take = 2.4 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Total Deer Take = 6.1 deer harvested per mile²

This unit consists of lands in southern Cayuga County and northern Tompkins County and has very little public land. The unit lies mainly in the Finger Lakes Highlands physiographic subzone, with some of the Great Lakes Plain zone on the north end. Soils in much of the unit are well suited to agriculture and almost 50% of the unit is cropland, while only about 30% is forested. Buck take and total deer harvest decreased for a third year in this unit, bringing the deer population closer to objective. The DMP target will decrease by 24% this year. All applicants will still have high odds of receiving a first and second permit.



WMU 7J

Area = 839 mile²

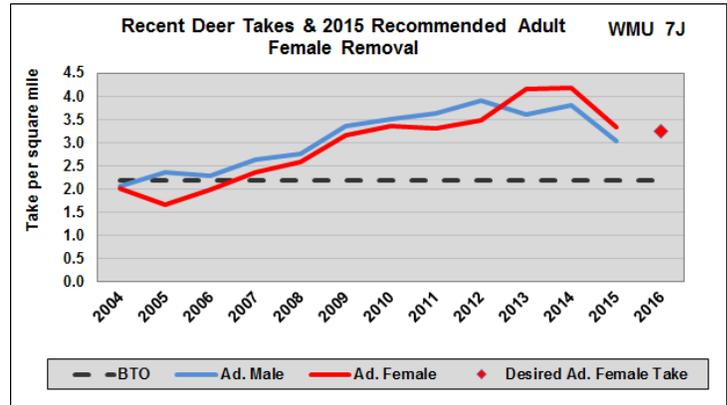
BTO = 2.2 bucks harvested per mile² (2003 CTF)

2015 Buck Take = 3.0 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Total Deer Take = 7.8 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 7J is centered in southern Onondaga County and also includes portions of Cayuga, Cortland, and Madison Counties and has limited public lands. The unit lies in the Appalachian Plateau physiographic zone and presents a rolling landscape on which many of the flatter areas, valleys, and hilltops, are farmed and the hillsides are wooded. About 45% of the unit is farmland and about 40%

is wooded. Deer harvest declined in this unit indicating moderate success in managing towards objective. The deer population in 7J still greatly exceeds the desired level. Similar to WMU 7F, the relatively low DMP success rate that occurred in 2015 is expected to climb this year. Therefore to aim for achieving similar adult doe harvest as last year we will actually decrease the DMP issuance. All applicants will again have high odds to receive first and second permits.



WMU 7M

Area = 1,242 mile²

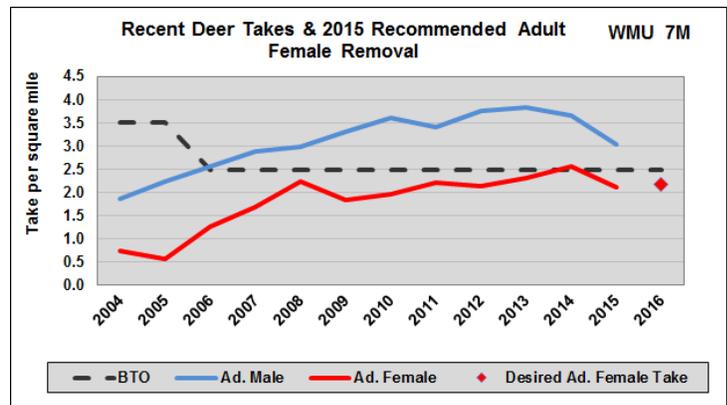
BTO = 2.5 bucks harvested per mile² (2006 CTF)

2015 Buck Take = 3.0 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Total Deer Take = 6.0 deer harvested per mile²

This unit encompasses large portions of Chenango, Cortland, and Madison Counties and small areas of Broome, Onondaga, and Oneida Counties. This WMU includes an abundance of public land. WMU 7M lies in the Appalachian Plateau physiographic zone and presents a rolling and predominately wooded landscape. Farming,

which once occurred in much of the unit, is now limited to the more fertile sites. About 30% of the area is farmed and about 65% is wooded. Deer harvest in 7M declined in 2015, but the population is still above the desired level. Fewer DMPs will be issued for 2016. This fall, residents will have high odds of receiving a first permit and no second DMPs will be issued. No DMPs will be available for nonresidents.



WMU 7P

Area = 485 mile²

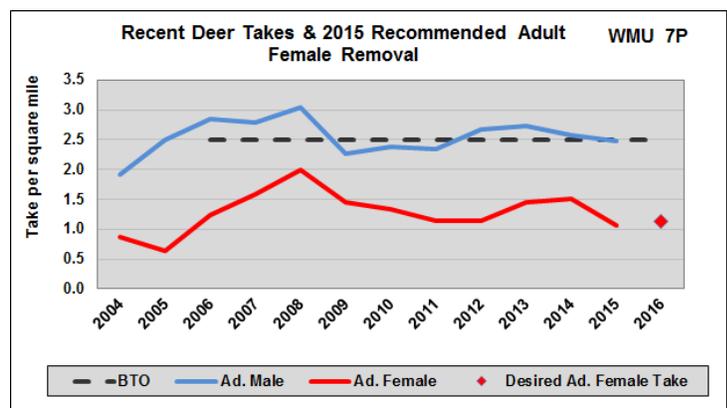
BTO = None set; managing for same BTO as 7M (2.5)

2015 Buck Take = 2.5 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Total Deer Take = 4.0 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 7P is comprised mainly of lands formerly in old 7M and the BTO for 7M will be used until a Citizen Task Force is convened for the unit. The unit is comprised predominately of lands in eastern and southern Chenango County with a small area of Broome County also included. This WMU is predominately private land, though it includes several state forest parcels. WMU 7P lies in the Appalachian Plateau physiographic zone and presents a rolling and

predominately wooded landscape. Farming is now limited to the more fertile sites with about 30% of the area in farms and about 60% wooded. Buck take has been very stable in this unit and the 2015 harvest data indicates the population is in line with the temporary objective. DMP issuance will be aimed at maintaining the current population level. DMP

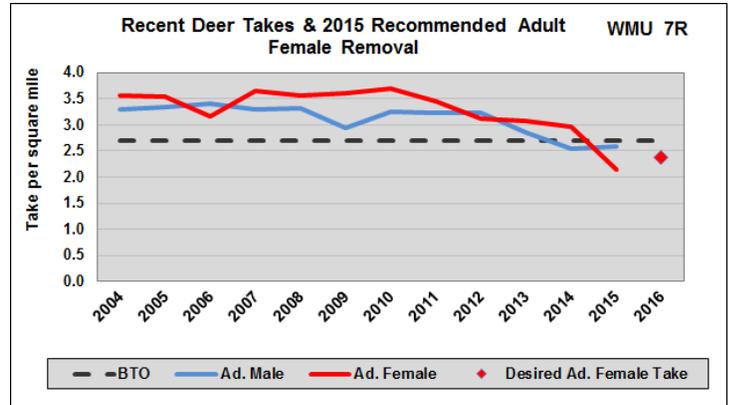


allocation for this unit will remain nearly the same as 2015 with resident applicants having medium odds of receiving a first permit. No second permits will be available.

WMU 7R

- Area = 739 mile²
- BTO = 2.7 bucks harvested per mile² (2009 CTF)
- 2015 Buck Take = 2.6 bucks harvested per mile²
- 2015 Total Deer Take = 5.6 deer harvested per mile²

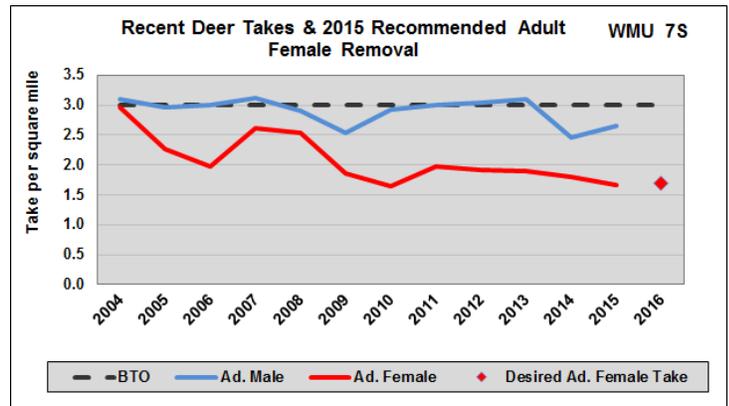
WMU 7R encompasses much of southern Tompkins County and northern Tioga County. It also includes portions of Broome, Chemung, Cortland, and Schuyler Counties and contains several parcels of public land. WMU 7R lies in the Appalachian Plateau physiographic zone and presents a rolling landscape. Farming, which once occurred in much of the unit, now occurs on only about 25% of the area and about 65% is wooded. The buck take in this unit over the past few seasons suggests the population is stabilizing near the desired level. Again in 2016, as in 2015, management actions will be geared towards maintaining the population near its current level. DMP allocations will increase marginally this year. All applicants will have high odds of receiving a first permit, and residents will also have high odds of receiving a second permit. No second permits will be available to nonresidents.



WMU 7S

- Area = 663 mile²
- BTO = 3.0 bucks harvested per mile² (2004 CTF)
- 2015 Buck Take = 2.6 bucks harvested per mile²
- 2015 Total Deer Take = 5.0 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 7S encompasses much of southern Broome and Tioga Counties and a very small section of Chemung County. The unit contains very little public land. WMU 7S lies in the Appalachian Plateau physiographic zone and presents a rolling landscape. Formerly a major industry in the area, farming now occurs on only about 25% of the area and forests cover a little over 60%. The buck take per square mile climbed slightly in 2015 after dropping in 2014. Harvest data indicates the population is close to objective. DMP issuance will increase marginally while still allowing for growth towards the desired level. Resident and nonresident applicants will again have high odds of receiving a first permit and resident qualifying landowners and veterans with disabilities may receive a second DMP. As in 2015, no second permits will be available for nonresidents this year.



Courtney LaMere
Region 7 Big Game Biologist