

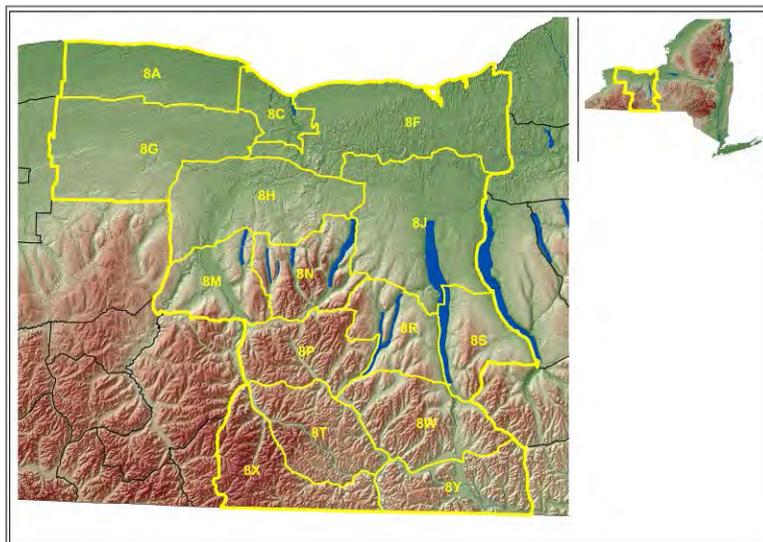
2016 DEER HUNTING FORECAST



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Region 8

Great habitat, large and plentiful deer, and lots of public land combine to make Region 8 home to some of the best deer hunting in New York. This region includes 11 counties in the eastern half of Western New York, extending from Lake Ontario to the Pennsylvania line, and comprises two broad ecological areas. The northern half of the region (the Lake Plains eco zone), is characterized by productive flat to rolling agricultural land interspersed with small woodlots, and higher residential and road development, while the Appalachian Plateau eco zone to the south has higher, more hilly terrain, larger woods, farmland restricted to the valleys and hilltops, and less development. With its better soils and corresponding higher percentage of agriculture, natural food supplies in the north are generally more plentiful, and winters there are usually relatively mild. The southern half of the region, with its higher elevations, generally has harsher winters and its poorer soils/lower percentage of agriculture make for less abundant deer food, and slightly poorer deer habitat.



The total 2015 deer harvest in Region 8 was 54,777, a 9.1% drop from last year. While adult buck take fell only 1.7%, the antlerless harvest was 13.9% lower than the 2014 season. In 2015 we continued to see the effects of the tough winters of 2013-14 and 2014-15 which were statistically two of the most severe in decades. In addition, November and December average temperatures were the highest in four years, which curtailed hunting participation. Add the good mast crop last fall, which reduced deer movements, and we ended up with another year in which the majority of our units saw declining buck takes. Buck harvest last fall was down in nine of our 15 units, up in four, and unchanged in two. Declining buck harvest in a unit indicates a declining total deer population.

Yearling deer harvests generally drop the season after a tough winter, harvests of 2½ year-olds two seasons later, and 3½s three seasons later, although the passage of time dilutes these effects somewhat. This may translate into a few less older deer out there this fall proportionally, but this past mild winter should mean good numbers of yearlings for the meat hunters out there. By 2017 and 2018, barring more severe winter weather, we should start to see the effects of this spring's bumper fawn crop, and hunter success on 2 ½s and 3 ½s should rise.

The almost 14% decline in antlerless take in the region last fall was the largest drop seen since 2005. This was partly intentional, as lower populations require lower doe removal. But the drop in antlerless harvest was also partly a result of lower fawn production in 2014 and 2015. Region 8 continues to be a tale of two eco zones; deer populations over objective in the north (Lake Plains eco zone), and below objective in the south (Appalachian Plateau eco zone). The irony is that actual deer densities are quite similar in both areas- it's just that, in general, population objectives are lower in the north, and higher in the south. Higher human density and associated activities in the north, and lower in the south, result in different social tolerances for deer, which in turn necessitates different population objectives.

Unit Summaries for the 2016 Season

Included in the discussion of most WMUs is a term called the Buck Take Objective (BTO). A 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. The annual buck harvest is used as a gauge of population size and its relationship to the desired population level.

WMU 8A

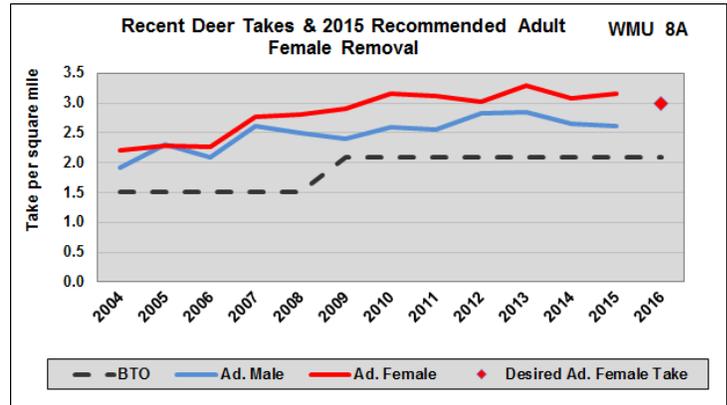
Area = 419 mile²

BTO = 2.1 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Buck Take = 2.6 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Total Deer Take = 7.1 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 8A is situated primarily in northern Orleans and Monroe Counties and contains very little public land. The terrain is mostly flat to gently rolling and has an abundance of agriculture interspersed with small woodlots, making for excellent habitat and large deer. Like many of our northern units, the effects of the tough winter of 2014-15 may be felt in WMU 8A this fall in the way of fewer 2 ½ year-old bucks on the landscape. The total adult buck take has come down a little the last two seasons, indicating a slightly declining total population, but it remains above objective. There are still plenty of deer in 8A, and we will make available about the same number of DMPs as last year in order to reduce the population further. All categories of applicants will have a high chance of selection for both first and second permits.



WMU 8C

Area = 138 mile²

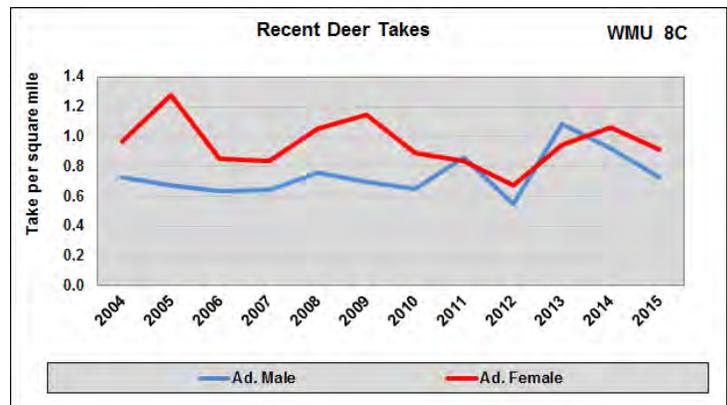
BTO = None

2015 Buck Take = 0.7 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Total Deer Take = 2.1 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 8C is a small "bow hunting only" unit surrounding the City of Rochester in Monroe County and has historically harbored a high deer population relative to the associated human development. Deer harvest here is governed largely by land access, not number of permits available, and there is no shortage of deer for those willing to hunt the fringes of "suburbia".

If desired, anyone applying for a DMP should receive two permits. Chances of success remain high in 8C, but because hunting access is limited, applicants are advised to secure a hunting location before applying for DMPs. It is also a good idea to check local Town ordinances regarding the discharge of bows. Note also that deer hunters in this unit must have passed a Bow hunter Education course, and the only legal hunting implement, for all big game seasons, is bow and arrow. No crossbows may be used to hunt deer in 8C. Chances of selection for DMPs will be high for all categories of applicants for both first and second permits.



WMU 8F

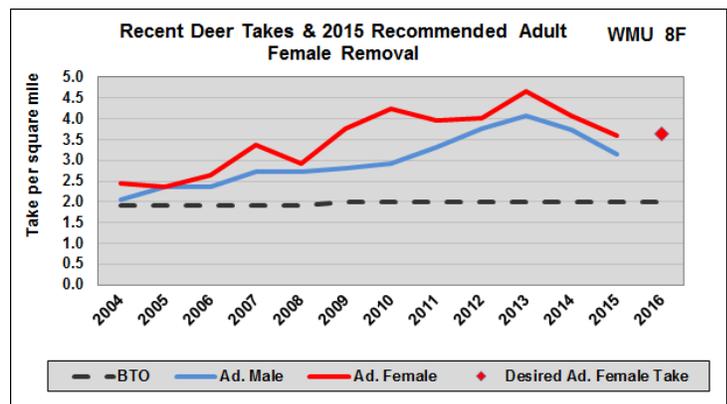
Area = 733 mile²

BTO = 2.0 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Buck Take = 3.1 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Total Deer Take = 8.2 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 8F occupies most of Wayne and a portion of Monroe County and contains a good deal of agriculture, including significant orchard acreage. The lay of the land is flat to rolling in the north with numerous drumlins (glacially carved hills) in the south. Large wetlands and significant forest cover exist, particularly in the northeast portion of the unit. There is ample public hunting land in eastern 8F. The last two seasons have seen the buck take in 8F decline, reversing a decade-long trend, however the unit's deer herd remains substantially over objective. Measures of reproduction and fawn harvests have both dropped the last two years. The effects should carry into this fall, with a perhaps a few less deer available for harvest. WMU 8F is great deer habitat, though, and there will be no lack of deer for hunters the unit. Chances of selection for DMPs will be High for all categories of applicants for both first and second permits.



WMU 8G

Area = 686 mile²

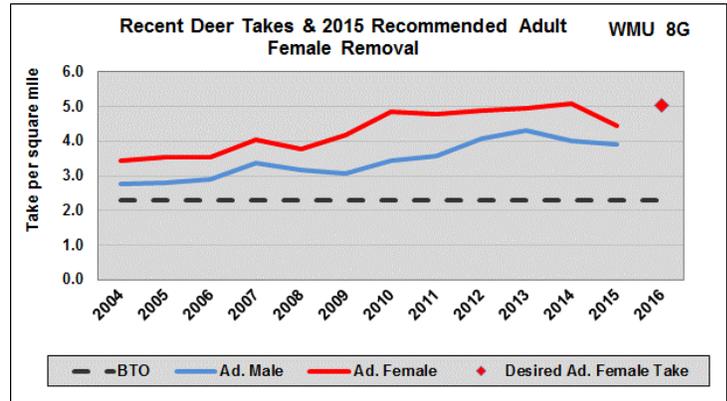
BTO = 2.3 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Buck Take = 3.9 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Total Deer Take = 10.2 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 8G comprises most of Genesee County and the southern portion of Orleans County. It contains a large expanse of state and federal land in the western part of the unit. This unit has some of the region's best agricultural land, and the deer habitat here is among the most productive in the state. Land is flat to gently rolling, with small wood lots interspersed with farms and wetlands.

Like 8F, 8G has seen a two year decline in buck harvest, but only a minor drop. The unit is still substantially over objective and in need of herd reduction. Although the tough winter of 2014-15 likely killed some fawns here, the effects in the woods this fall shouldn't be great. 8G and its neighbor WMUs have seen the yearling segment of the buck harvest drop from 70% to 40% in just the last six years, with a corresponding increase in the segment of 2 ½ year-old bucks taken. WMU 8G is among the units in Western NY that are in need of serious population reduction. DEC is seeking feedback on the best option for taking more antlerless deer here, as traditional DMP issuance has reached the limit of its effectiveness. Chances of selection for DMPs will be High for all categories of applicants for both first and second permits.



WMU 8H

Area = 574 mile²

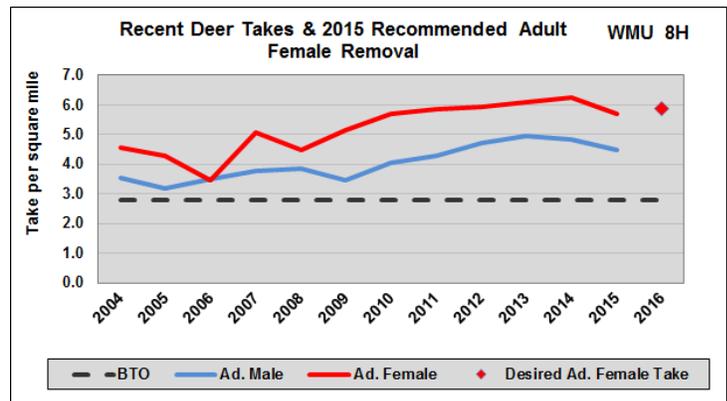
BTO = 2.8 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Buck Take = 4.5 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Total Deer Take = 12.6 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 8H includes parts of Livingston, Monroe, and Ontario Counties and has limited public land accessible for hunting. This is another typical Lake Plains unit; in other words, an ideal mix of habitat with big healthy deer and a productive population that has resisted our efforts at herd reduction. Limited public hunting land is available. The buck harvest (and thus total population) of 8H has tracked very similarly to that of 8G, and has seen a mild two year decline.

But like other of our northern units, the population is still significantly above objective, and the management strategy here is to reduce the population through healthy DMP issuance. Four years ago however, the supply of available DMPs in 8H started exceeding demand. This hampers our ability to reduce the population to objective. Additional means of taking antlerless deer here are clearly needed. Suffice to say, hunters in 8H this fall should find plenty of deer. Chances of selection for DMPs will be High for all categories of applicants for both first and second permits.



WMU 8J

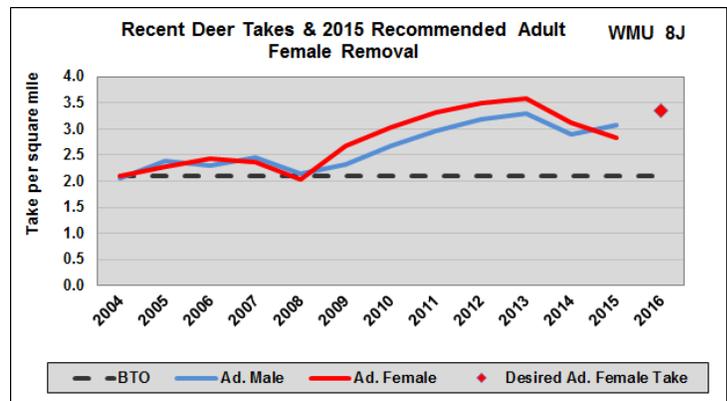
Area = 712 mile²

BTO = 2.1 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Buck Take = 3.1 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Total Deer Take = 7.1 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 8J includes portions of Seneca, Wayne, Ontario, and Yates Counties, and a moderate amount of public hunting land available. A lot of row crops are grown here, and WMU 8J has a history of producing big healthy farmland deer. The buck take in 8J saw a one-year decline in 2014, but went back up last year, and remains significantly above objective. This unit has been oversubscribed of late, meaning there have been more DMPs available than hunters who want them, which of course reduces management effectiveness. One measure of herd productivity, the average number of fawns per doe, dropped last year in the unit, which could very well result in a few less deer on the

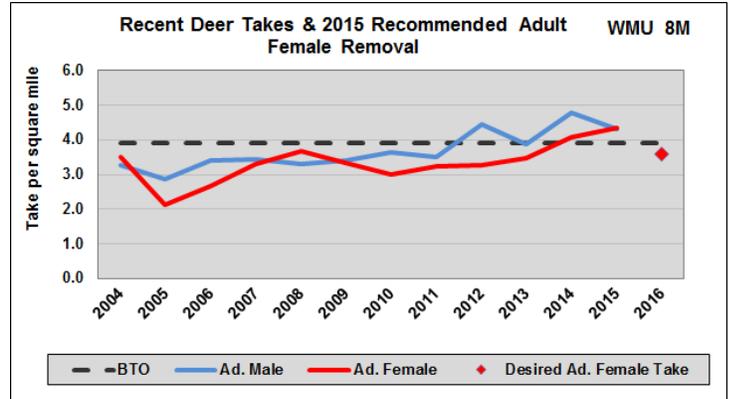


landscape, but there are still plenty of deer in 8J, and this coming season should be another good one. Chances of selection for DMPs will be High for all categories of applicants for both first and second permits.

WMU 8M

Area = 307 mile²
 BTO = 3.9 bucks harvested per mile²
 2015 Buck Take = 4.3 bucks harvested per mile²
 2015 Total Deer Take = 10.4 deer harvested per mile²

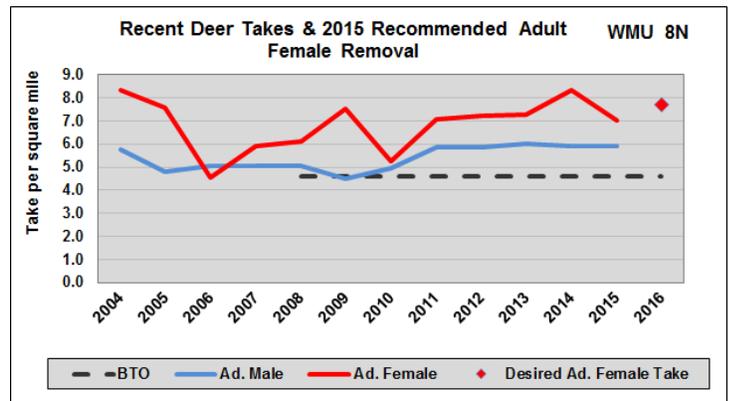
WMU 8M is situated primarily within southern Livingston County and holds plenty of public land. A transitional unit between our Lake Plains and Appalachian Plateau eco zones, there is both open agricultural land to the north and higher, wooded hills to the south. The deer population, as indexed by the buck harvest, has risen steadily in the last decade, and for the last two years has been slightly above objective. Antlerless harvest has risen over the same span to keep pace. Because it is very near our objective, the strategy here is to hold the population steady. Fortunately, there has been no history of oversubscription in 8M, and so we have the tools at hand to accomplish the antlerless harvest that is necessary. Measures of reproduction were down a little bit last year, so the buck take may drop a little this fall, but that would put deer numbers right where they should be. Hunters in 8M this season should see very similar numbers of deer in the woods as last year. Chances of selection for DMPs will be High on first selections for both residents and non-residents, and Low on second permits for residents. No second permits will be available for non-residents.



WMU 8N

Area = 314 mile²
 BTO = 4.6 bucks harvested per mile²
 2015 Buck Take = 5.9 bucks harvested per mile²
 2015 Total Deer Take = 15.9 deer harvested per mile²

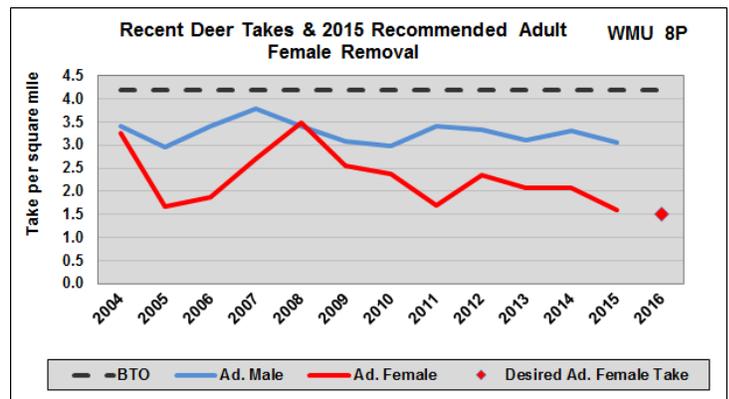
WMU 8N includes southern Ontario and smaller portions of Livingston and Yates Counties. Many diverse public hunting opportunities exist in this largely wooded and hilly Western Finger Lakes unit. This unit is northernmost of our Southern Tier units, but unlike most of our southern units, the recent history here is one of higher than desired deer numbers. The population in 8N has been very stable the last five years, but higher than it should be. A record doe harvest in 2014 coupled with the winter of 2014-15 should work together to bring the buck take down a bit this fall, but the unit will probably still be over objective. High doe removals in the past have failed to bring the population down here much, so this fall we will make a record number of DMPs available. Fortunately, oversubscription (more permits available than hunters who want them) hasn't been a problem in the unit. WMU 8N had among the highest buck harvest per square mile of any unit in the state last year, and we anticipate that trend will continue. That obviously equates to great chances for success for hunters this fall. Chances of selection for DMPs will be High for all categories of applicants for both first and second permits.



WMU 8P

Area = 356 mile²
 BTO = 4.2 bucks harvested per mile²
 2015 Buck Take = 3.1 bucks harvested per mile²
 2015 Total Deer Take = 5.3 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 8P is located in northern Steuben County and contains a fair amount of public land. The terrain is rolling to hilly, and the unit sports a balanced mix of both farm land and forest. The deer population of WMU 8P has been substantially below objective for well over a decade and



has stubbornly resisted our efforts to raise it, despite low doe removal. This may be evidence that the population objective here, at 4.2 bucks per square mile in the harvest, is unrealistically high. Still, to keep things in perspective, the buck take per square mile here is as high or higher than six of our other 14 units. We will lower the number of available DMPs further this fall to a decade low level to try and spur population growth. Recent measures of reproduction are a little up in 8P, but fawn harvest last year was down. Hunters this fall should expect similar numbers of deer sightings as last year. Chances of DMP selection will be Low on first permits for residents. No other permits will be available.

WMU 8R

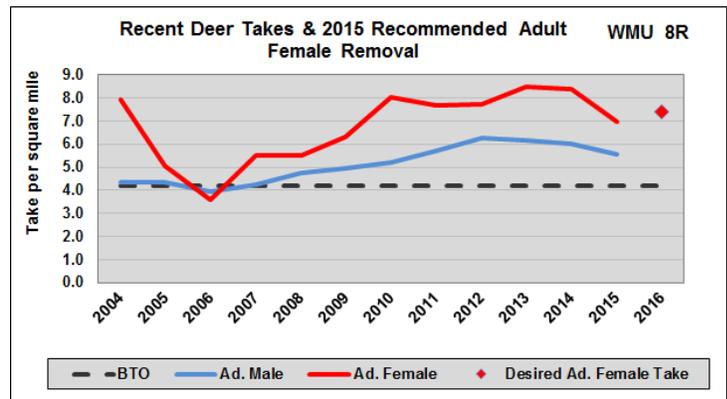
Area = 270 mile²

BTO = 4.2 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Buck Take = 5.6 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Total Deer Take = 15.5 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 8R includes most of Yates County, as well as parts of Steuben and Schuyler Counties, and has a fair amount of public hunting land. Large rolling hills predominate, with an ample amount of farmland in the valleys and hill tops, including significant vineyard acreage. Both fawns per doe and fawn take were considerably down last year. Coupled with a near record doe harvest in 2014, indications are the buck harvest will be lower this fall. Still, this unit is among the tops in the state in terms of recent buck harvest density, and it will remain so. Since this unit is still over objective, DMPs will still be readily available this fall, but hunters may notice a few less deer in the woods and fields of 8R, especially when compared to the recent high point of 2012. Chances of selection for DMPs will be High for all categories of applicants for both first and second permits.



WMU 8S

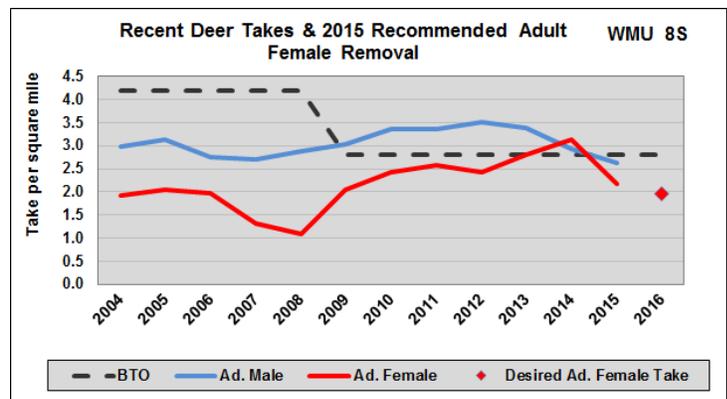
Area = 256 mile²

BTO = 2.8 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Buck Take = 2.6 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Total Deer Take = 5.7 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 8S includes portions of Schuyler and Seneca Counties and is home to the Finger Lakes National Forest, a large tract of federal land open to hunting. Agriculture is the main land use in this unit except in the southwest where the public land is located. Topography is flat in most of the unit except for the southwest corner. The buck harvest in 8S has dropped the past three years, falling just below objective last season. Currently at 2.6 bucks harvested per square mile, it's now close to the objective of 2.8. Management efforts will be centered on keeping the population stable, but that will be difficult considering lower fawn recruitment and harvest last year, and a record doe harvest in 2014. The buck harvest will likely drop again this fall, and hunters may very well notice fewer deer in the woods. DMP availability this year will be reduced somewhat from last fall to account for a slightly lower population. Chances of DMP selection will be High on first permits for residents. No other permits will be available.



WMU 8T

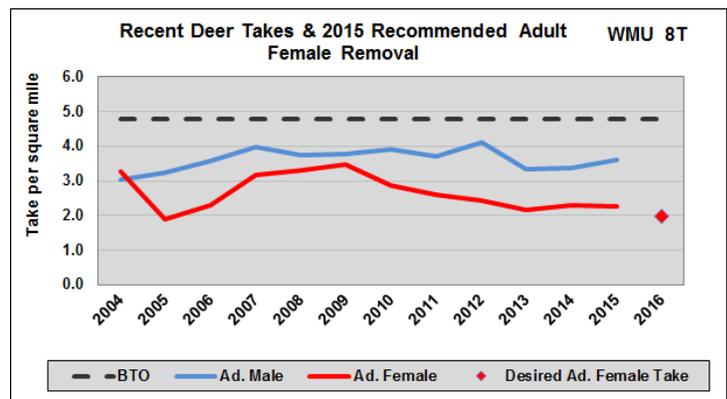
Area = 385 mile²

BTO = 4.8 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Buck Take = 3.6 bucks harvested per mile²

2015 Total Deer Take = 6.6 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 8T is in central Steuben County and has ample public hunting land available. It is a typical southern tier unit in that it is hilly, with a mix of agriculture in the valleys and forested slopes. Like 8P, this unit has stubbornly remained below that objective for a good decade, despite



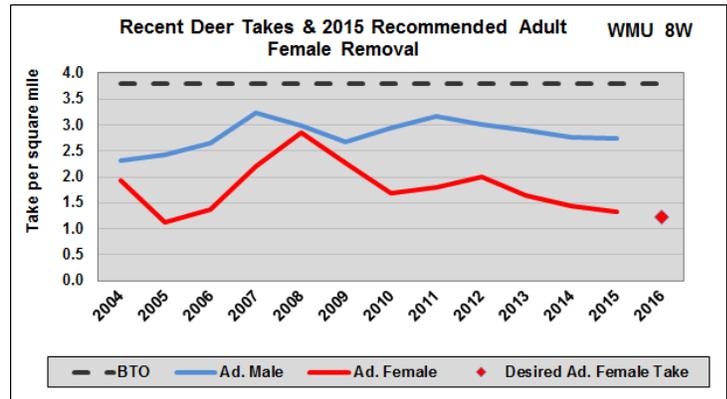
low doe removals. And like 8P, the buck take objective for this unit, at 4.8 bucks per square mile harvested, may be unrealistically high given today's habitat conditions. Recent winters haven't been much of a factor in deer survival here, and fawn productivity and adult doe harvests have been relatively flat, so hunters should not expect much change from last fall's deer sightings. DMP availability will be reduced again this fall to an all-time low to try to spur population growth. Preference points will be required for first permits for residents with no other permits available.

WMU 8W

Area = 439 mile²
 BTO = 3.8 bucks harvested per mile²
 2015 Buck Take = 2.7 bucks harvested per mile²
 2015 Total Deer Take = 4.6 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 8W includes portions of Chemung and Schuyler Counties and holds abundant public hunting opportunities. 8W is one of our most forested units, but open farmland does exist, particularly in the north and east portions of the unit. 8W can be lumped in with 8P and 8T in terms of its population and management history the last ten years.

Buck takes significantly lower than objective that refuse to budge despite low doe harvest are the hallmarks of these units. And like the other units, our only recourse is to lower DMP availability further. Conflicting trends between fawn productivity and recent doe take probably point to the buck harvest not changing much this fall. Hunters here should expect similar deer sightings to last fall. Chances of DMP selection will be Low on first permits for residents. No other permits will be available.

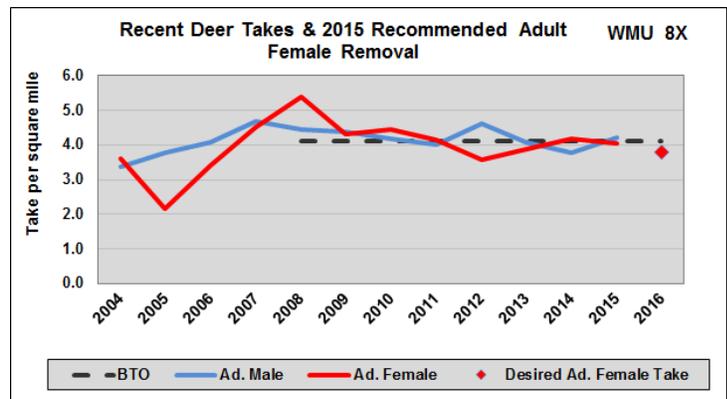


WMU 8X

Area = 401 mile²
 BTO = 4.1 bucks harvested per mile²
 2015 Buck Take = 4.2 bucks harvested per mile²
 2015 Total Deer Take = 9.8 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 8X is located in southern Steuben County and has a fair amount of public land available. The unit is hilly, with its highest elevations and most forest cover in the northern portion. A good deal of farm land occurs in the southern valleys, particularly along portions of the New York-Pennsylvania border.

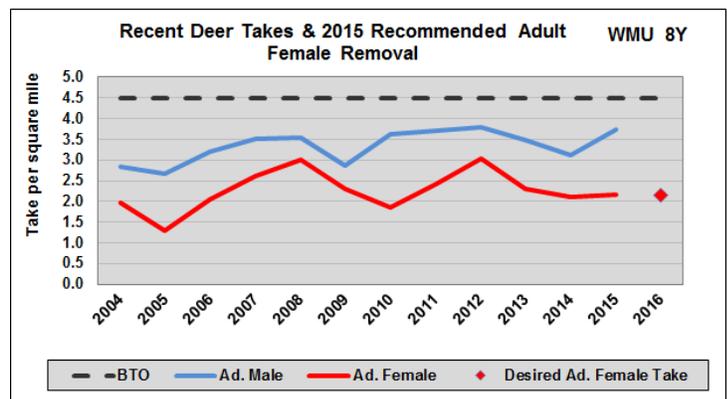
In terms of its position relative to objective, the deer population in WMU 8X is currently right on target. Both the buck take and doe take the last six years have been pretty steady, which makes predicting the population's reaction to DMP issuance much easier. Obviously, management direction here is to keep everything steady, so permit availability will be almost the same as last year. Hunters in 8X should expect very similar levels of deer encounters as last year. Chances of selection for DMPs will be High on first selections for both residents and non-residents, and Low on second permits for residents. No second permits will be available for non-residents.



WMU 8Y

Area = 354 mile²
 BTO = 4.5 bucks harvested per mile²
 2015 Buck Take = 3.7 bucks harvested per mile²
 2015 Total Deer Take = 6.8 deer harvested per mile²

WMU 8Y occupies the southern half of Chemung and a small portion of Steuben County and has very limited public hunting opportunities. It is another of our most heavily forested units, but also contains the relatively large cities of Corning and Elmira. Both buck and doe harvests the last ten years have been trending together on a roller coaster in 8Y, but the deer population has failed to rise to objective. At 4.5 bucks harvested per square mile, the objective may be higher than is realistically achievable given



today's conditions. To get off the roller coaster and achieve some stability to doe harvests, we'll shoot for a similar adult female harvest as last year. Maintaining steady doe harvests will also allow us to more easily predict future buck takes. Signs point to a similar deer population level as last year, and sightings in the woods and fields of 8Y should be unchanged from last fall. Chances of DMP selection will be High on first permits for residents, but preference points will be required on first permits for non-residents. No second permits will be available for either residents or non-residents.

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