

# 2018 DEER HUNTING FORECAST



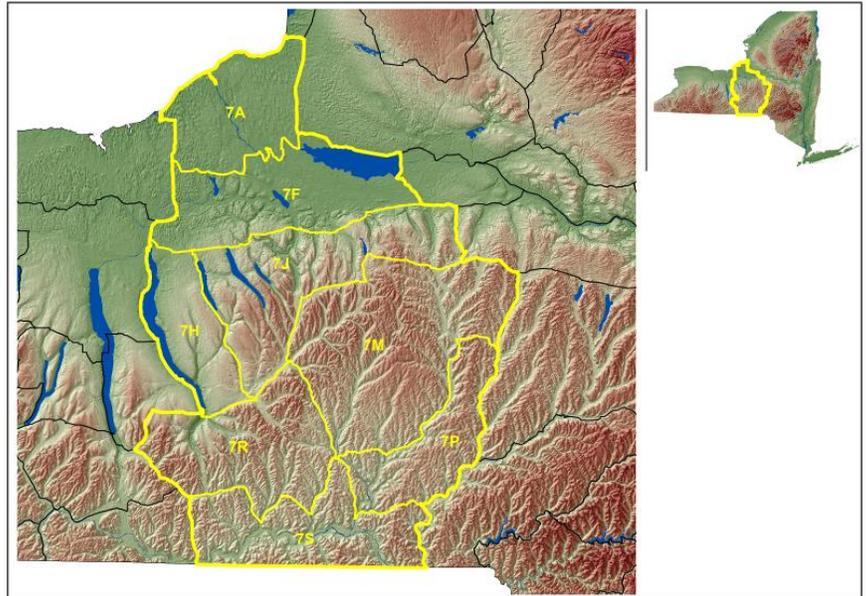
Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

## 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 comprises 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 total regional deer harvest declined about 8% in 2017. The regional harvest total of adult bucks was the same in 2017 as it was in 2016, but we observed a decline in the harvest frequency of yearling bucks in 5 of the 8 [Wildlife Management Units \(WMUs\)](#). Many hunters in the region are voluntarily choosing to pass up shots at young bucks. Age is the most important factor in the size of bucks taken in the region, and for bucks to grow bigger bodies and larger antlers, they just need to get older. We encourage hunters to *Let Young Bucks Go and Watch Them Grow*.

Five of the WMUs in Region 7 have deer densities that remain at least 10% above the objectives set for them, while populations in two WMUs are at their target levels, and one remains below objective. The allocation of [Deer Management Permits](#) (DMPs, frequently called "doe tags") for 2018 is designed to keep harvest pressure elevated in those units with deer populations above target levels while issuing sufficient numbers of DMPs to maintain current population levels or increase them marginally in the remaining units. Regional DMP issuance will increase by about 9% for the 2018 hunting season. In several WMUs hunters should keep an eye out for leftover DMPs that will become available on a first come, first served basis starting November 1.



## Unit Summaries for the 2018 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 and harvest expectations, as well as a harvest graph. There are also links provided for some public hunting lands in each unit. For a complete listing of public lands in each WMU, check out the [DEC website](#). With each description is the unit's Buck Take Objective (BTO), which has been 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 the 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. DEC is in the process of transitioning to a new, [survey-based public input process](#) for deer management that will replace the CTF model and provide updated preferences for deer management. 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

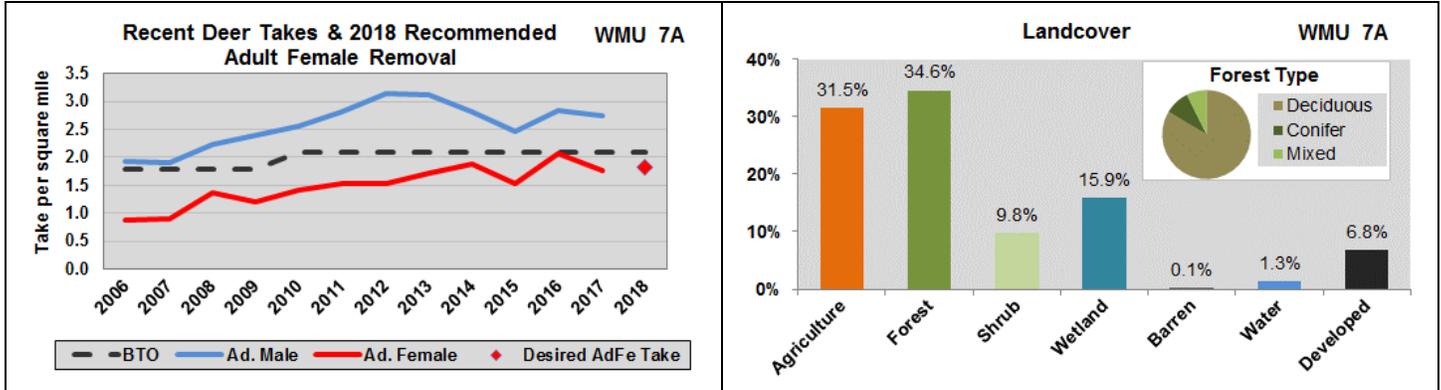
Area = 545 mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Buck Take = 2.7 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

BTO = 2.1 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Total Deer Take = 5.3 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

WMU 7A is composed mainly of lands in western Oswego County and also includes small portions of northern Cayuga and northwestern Onondaga Counties. The unit has very little public land, but it does contain a portion of [Three Rivers Wildlife Management Area](#) with productive deer habitat. 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. Only about 32% of the land is farmed, and about 44% is wooded. The buck take in this unit has trended above objective for nearly a decade. Management has brought it down toward desired levels in recent years, but it remains relatively high. For 2018, the DMP quota will be set at the same level as in 2017. There will be high odds for first DMPs for residents and non-residents and low odds for second DMPs for residents. Second permits will not be available for non-residents.



## WMU 7F

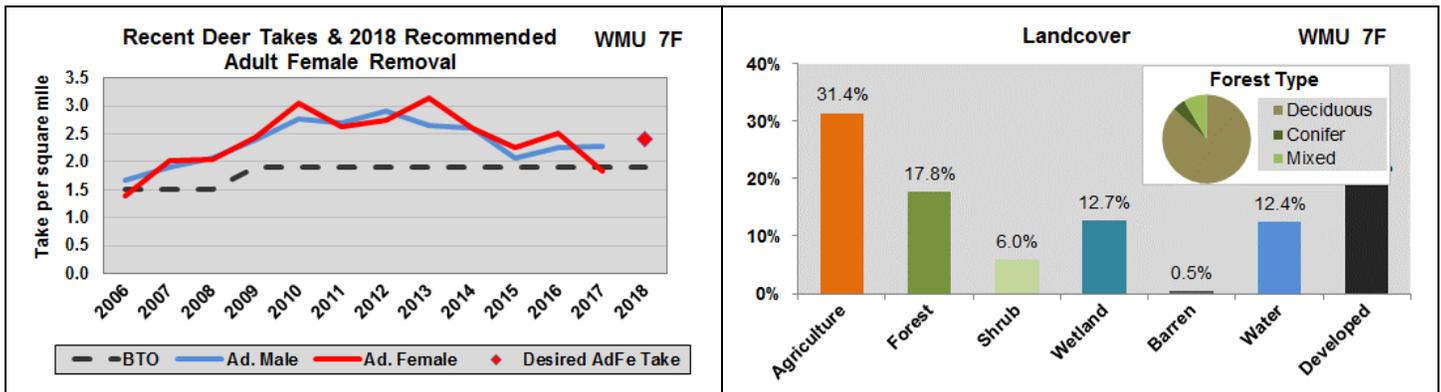
Area = 687 mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Buck Take = 2.3 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

BTO = 1.9 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Total Deer Take = 4.9 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

WMU 7F is centered in northern Onondaga County, includes portions of Cayuga County and northern Madison County, and has very little public land. However, both [Cicero Swamp Wildlife Management Area](#) and a portion of [Three Rivers Wildlife Management Area](#) lie within the unit, and both places offer good opportunities for deer hunting. WMU 7F lies in the Great Lakes Plain physiographic zone and presents a relatively flat landscape. About 31% of the land is farmed and about 24% is wooded. The unit also has a considerable amount of developed area where management capability is compromised due to limited hunting access. Archery hunters may consider taking advantage of the shortened discharge setback distances passed into law in 2014 and seek landowner permission to hunt closer to suburban areas. The buck take per square mile in 2017 remained even with 2016. This unit is still well above objective and DMP issuance will increase by nearly 9% this year. All applicants will have high odds of receiving a first and second permit. This unit usually has DMPs left over following the instant lottery, and is likely to again this year. These permits are available on a first come, first served basis on November 1.



## WMU 7H

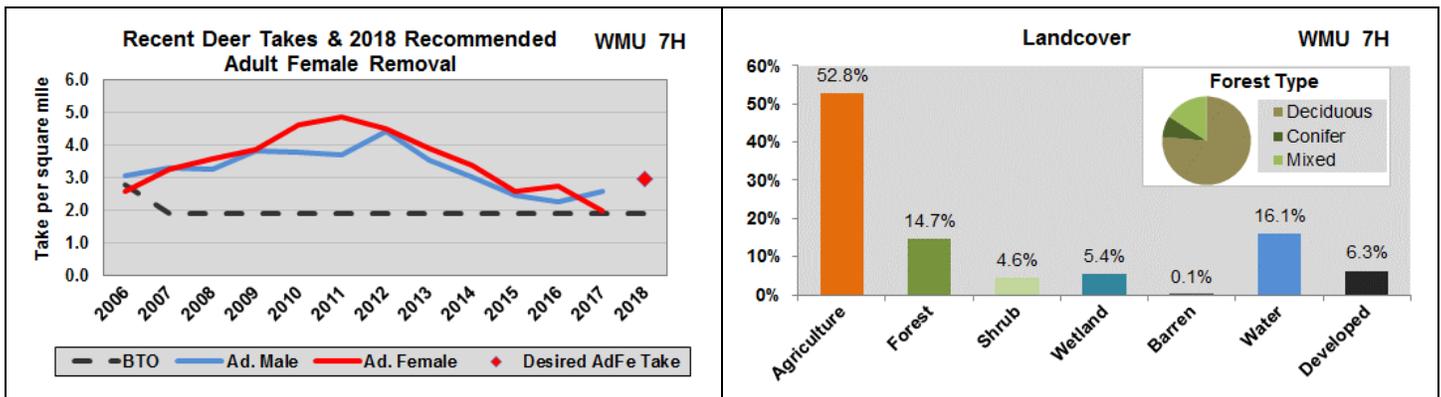
Area = 357 mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Buck Take = 2.6 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

BTO = 1.9 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Total Deer Take = 5.4 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

This unit consists of lands in southern Cayuga County and northern Tompkins County and has very little public land. However, DEC operates a hunting cooperative comprising approximately 4,000 acres of private land called the [Cayuga-Tompkins Cooperative Hunting Area](#) near the hamlet of King Ferry. Hunters must register with the cooperative in order to hunt there. A portion of 7H also falls within the [Central Tompkins County Deer Management Focus Area \(DMFA\)](#). All of the lands in 7H within the DMFA are private property; always seek landowner permission before hunting private property. 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 over 50% of the unit is cropland, while only about 20% is wooded. Buck take increased by over 14% in this unit in 2017 after two years of decreased DMP issuance. Prior to 2017, the deer population had been trending downward toward the objective for several years. In order to manage the population level toward the objective we will increase DMP issuance significantly for 2018. All applicants will have high odds of receiving a first and second permit. Hunters should keep an eye out for the availability of leftover permits in this unit starting on November 1.



## WMU 7J

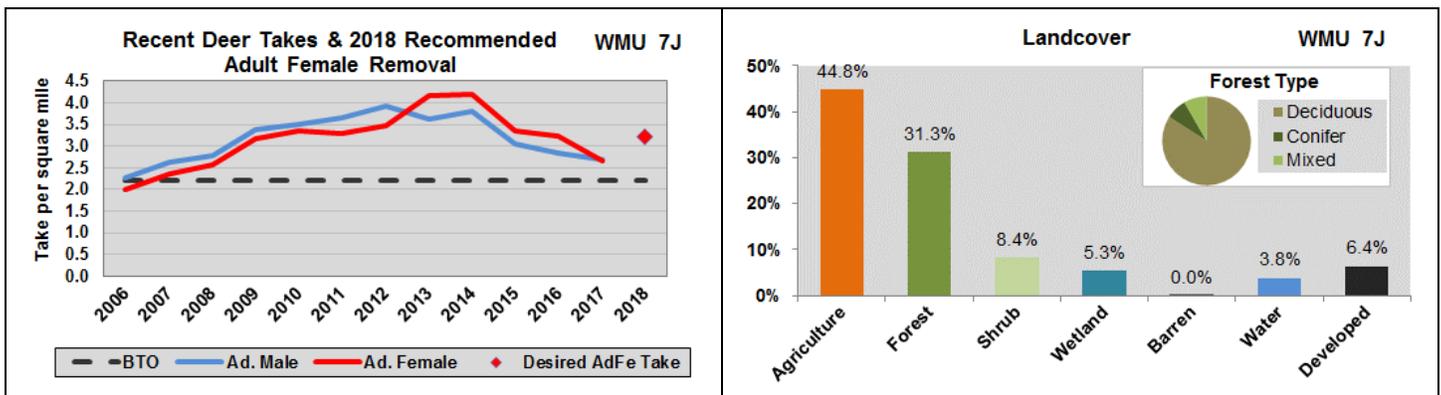
Area = 839 mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Buck Take = 2.7 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

BTO = 2.2 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Total Deer Take = 6.5 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

WMU 7J is centered in southern Onondaga County and also includes portions of Cayuga, Cortland and Madison Counties and has limited public lands. The larger tracts of public land are located in the portion of the WMU that lies in Cayuga County; these include [Bear Swamp State Forest](#) and [Summer Hill State Forest](#). 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 with forest or shrubland. The deer population in 7J had greatly exceeded the desired level for nearly a decade, but management actions have started to bring the population down toward the objective in recent years. We will keep the harvest pressure on in order to continue the gradual decline, and DMP issuance will increase slightly this year. All applicants will again have high odds of receiving first and second permits. It's likely that leftover DMPS will be available for this unit starting on November 1.



## WMU 7M

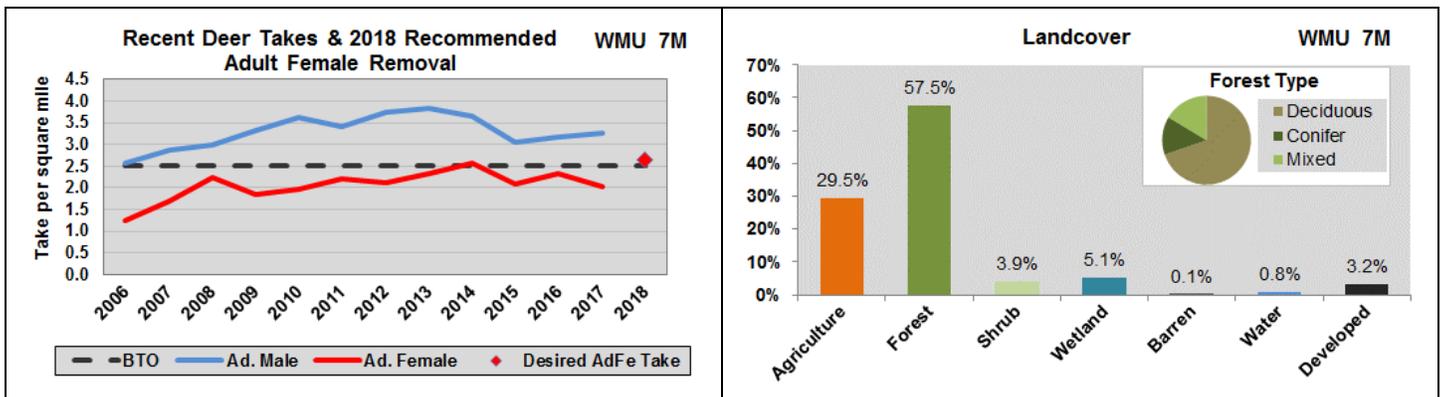
Area = 1,242 mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Buck Take = 3.3 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

BTO = 2.5 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Total Deer Take = 6.2 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

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. There are over 40 parcels managed by DEC that are open to hunting in 7M, including [Beaver Meadow State Forest](#), which participates in the [Deer Management Assistance Program \(DMAP\)](#). Check out <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/75658.html> for more information on each of the DEC-managed lands in this unit. WMU 7M lies in the Appalachian Plateau physiographic zone and presents a rolling and predominantly 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 60% is wooded. The buck take in 7M was nearly level with that of 2016 this past season, and the population is well above the desired level. In order to manage the deer herd toward the population objective, we will significantly increase DMP issuance by nearly 30% this year. This fall, residents will have high odds of receiving a first permit and medium odds for a second permit. Non-residents will have high odds of receiving a first permit and will not receive a second permit.



## WMU 7P

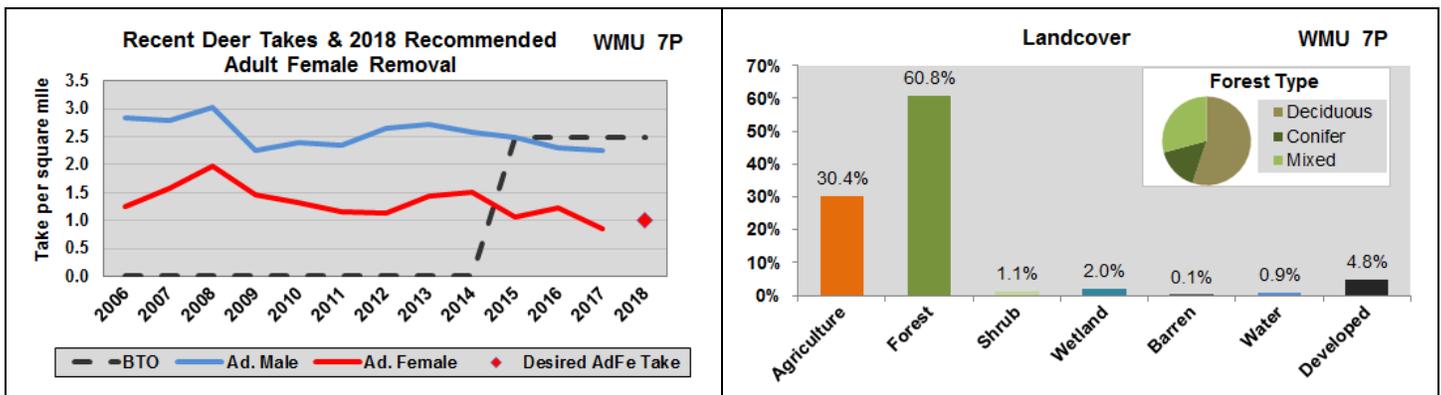
Area = 485 mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Buck Take = 2.2 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

BTO = 2.5 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Total Deer Take = 3.5 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

WMU 7P contains mainly lands that were formerly in 7M, and the BTO for 7M will be used until a new management direction is determined for the unit. The unit is composed predominantly of lands in eastern and southern Chenango County with a small area of Broome County also included. This WMU is mostly private land, though it contains over a dozen state forest parcels. From [Pine Ridge](#) and [Skinner Hill](#) State Forests in the north to [Bobell Hill](#) and [Beaver Flow](#) State Forests in the southern part of the unit, there are several opportunities to hunt public land. WMU 7P lies in the Appalachian Plateau physiographic zone and presents a rolling and predominantly 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 stable in this unit, but drifted slightly below the objective in 2016 and again in 2017. DMP issuance will be aimed at allowing the population to increase closer to the temporary objective. Recruitment indices look good in this unit, so the DMP allocation will stay at the same level as in 2017 for this year. Resident applicants will have low odds of receiving a first permit; no second permits will be available. No permits will be available for non-residents.



## WMU 7R

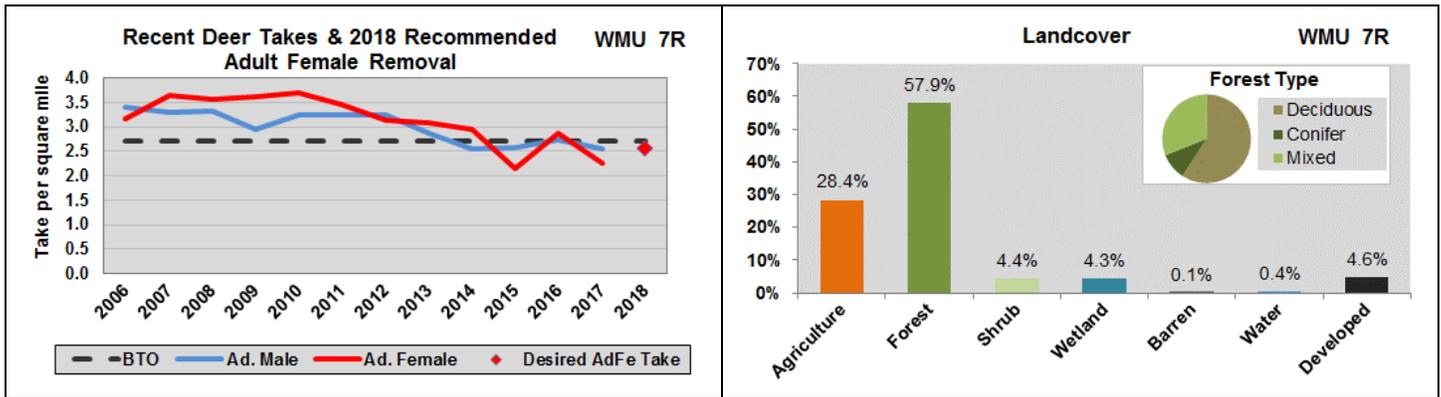
Area = 739 mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Buck Take = 2.6 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

BTO = 2.7 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Total Deer Take = 5.8 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

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 over 20 diverse parcels of public land. This unit includes a large portion of [Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area](#), as well as some sizable state forest properties such as [Hammond Hill State Forest](#), [Shindagin Hollow State Forest](#) and [Danby State Forest](#). A portion of 7R falls within the [Central Tompkins County Deer Management Focus Area \(DMFA\)](#). Most of the lands within the DMFA are private property; always seek landowner permission before hunting private property. 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 30% of the area, while about 60% is wooded. The 2017 buck take in this unit indicated that the deer population is essentially at the desired level. Again in 2018, as in 2017, management actions will be geared toward maintaining the population near its current level. In order to keep the population hovering around the objective, DMP allocations will decrease slightly this year. All applicants will again 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 non-residents.



## WMU 7S

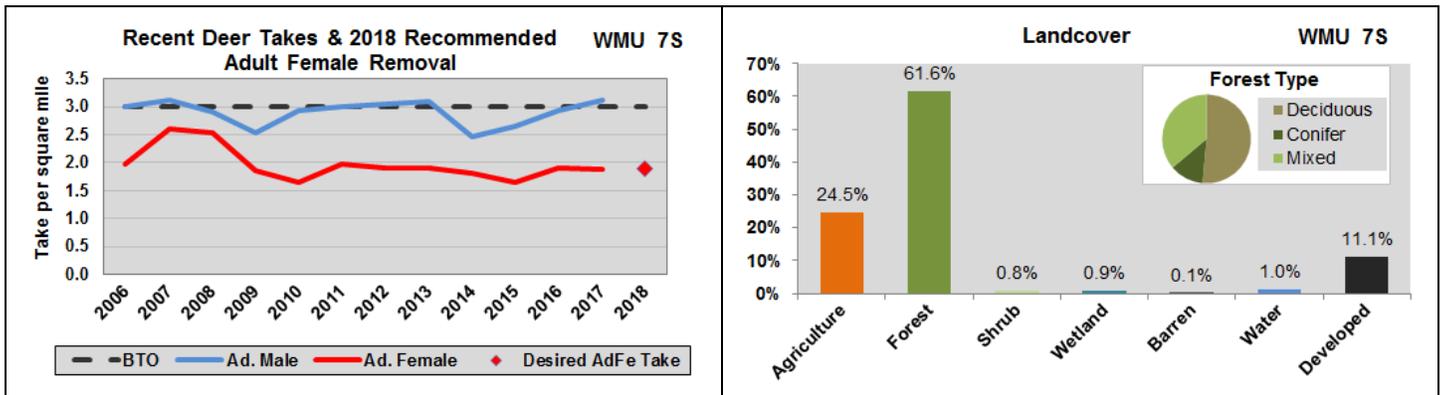
Area = 663 mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Buck Take = 3.1 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

BTO = 3.0 bucks harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

2017 Total Deer Take = 5.9 deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup>

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, but there are hunting opportunities to be found on four state forest properties, the largest of which is [Oakley Corners State Forest](#). 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 increased slightly in 2017, but it has remained close to objective for a few years. For 2018, we will aim to maintain the population around the current level, and DMP issuance will decrease slightly, by about 9%. Resident and non-resident applicants will again have high odds of receiving a first permit, and residents will have low odds of receiving a second DMP. As in 2017, no second permits will be available for non-residents this year.



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