

2015 Kansas Deer Program Report

I. Current Harvest

Hunter harvest of deer during the 2014-15 seasons was estimated to be 97,394. That includes 3,454 deer that could not be classified to species, age and sex class and have not been estimated and reported in previous years. For comparison there 93,940 classified deer taken in 2014; up 4.8% from the 89,665 estimated for the 2013-14 season. The Kansas Outdoor Automated Licensing System data showed 123,207 people purchased 211,537 permits for the 2014-15 seasons, up 1.6% and 2.0% respectively from values in 2013-14.

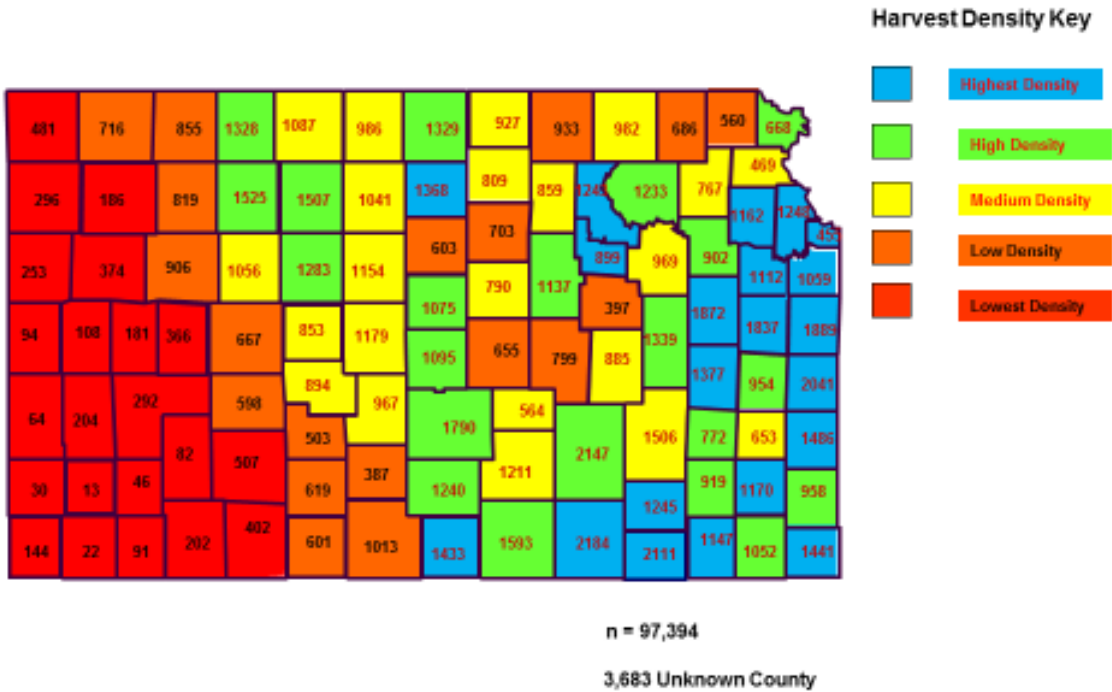
Harvest Age Structure*						
	Antlered Ad Bucks	Male Fawns	Adult Does	Female Fawns	Ad Buck Shed Antler	Total
White-tailed Deer	40,249	4,051	42,875	3,667	690	91,531
Mule Deer	1,929	13	438	24	3	2,409
By Residents	31,197	3,659	35,530	3,360	480	74,225
By Non-Residents	10,981	406	7,782	331	213	19,715
Total	42,178	4,064	43,313	3,691	693	93,940

Harvest By Equipment*				
	Compound Bow	Recurve / Long Bow	Crossbow	Total
Archery	25,980	770	5,541	32,291
	In-Line MZ	Traditional MZ	Total	
Muzzleloader	3,511	678	4,189	
	Centerfire Rifle	Shotgun and Slug	Pistol	Total
Firearms	56,857	376	226	57,459

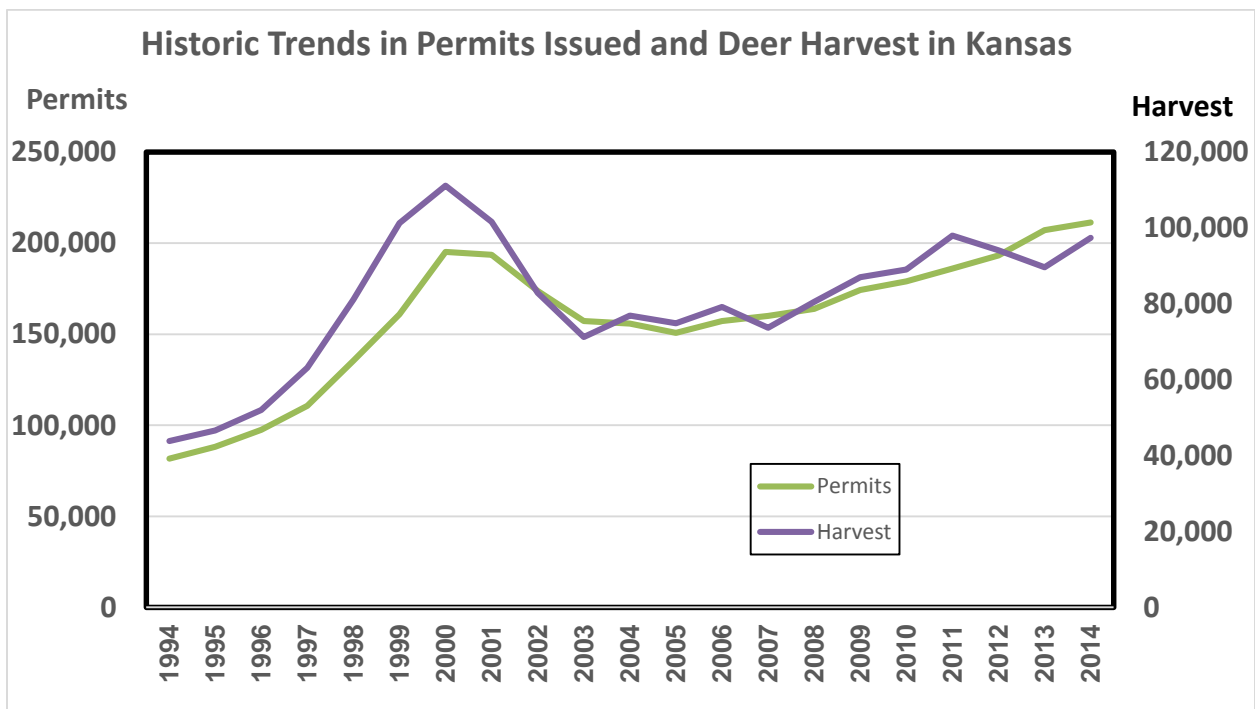
Harvest By Season*						
Youth/ Disability	Early MZ	Pre-Rut	Archery	Firearms	Whitetail Antlerless-Only	Total
1,660	3,758	1,731	33,578	44,901	11,765	97,394

- All estimates are rounded to nearest whole number. Sub-totals may not add exactly.

Number of Deer Killed during 2014-15 Seasons in Kansas.

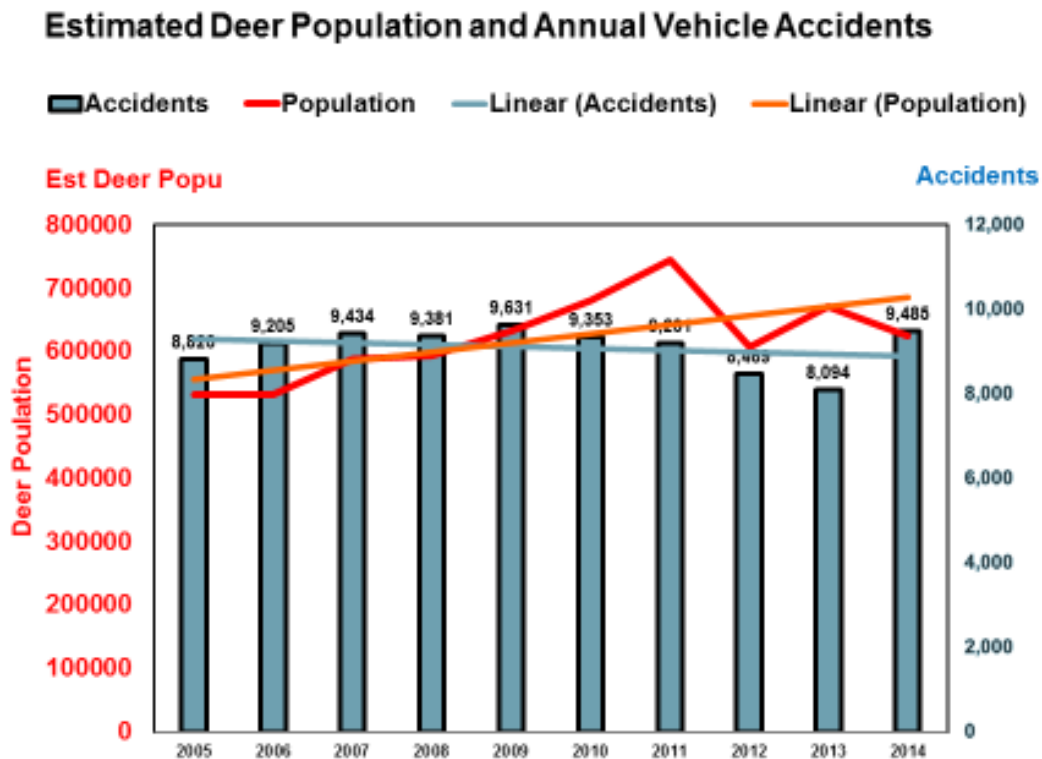


II. Historical Harvest

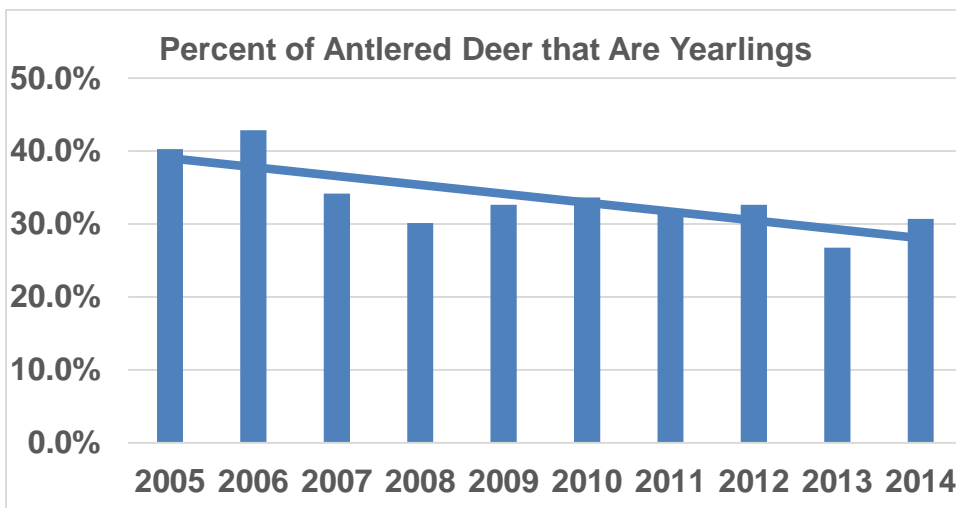
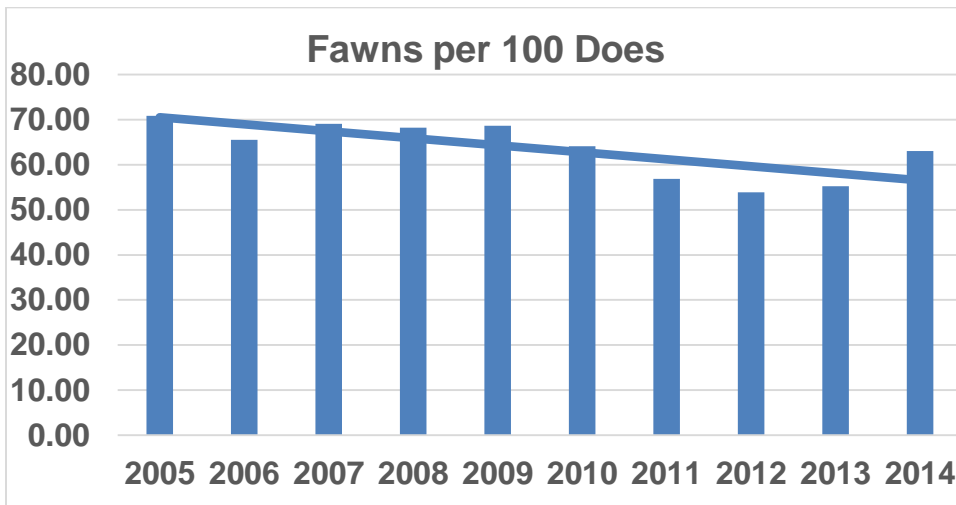
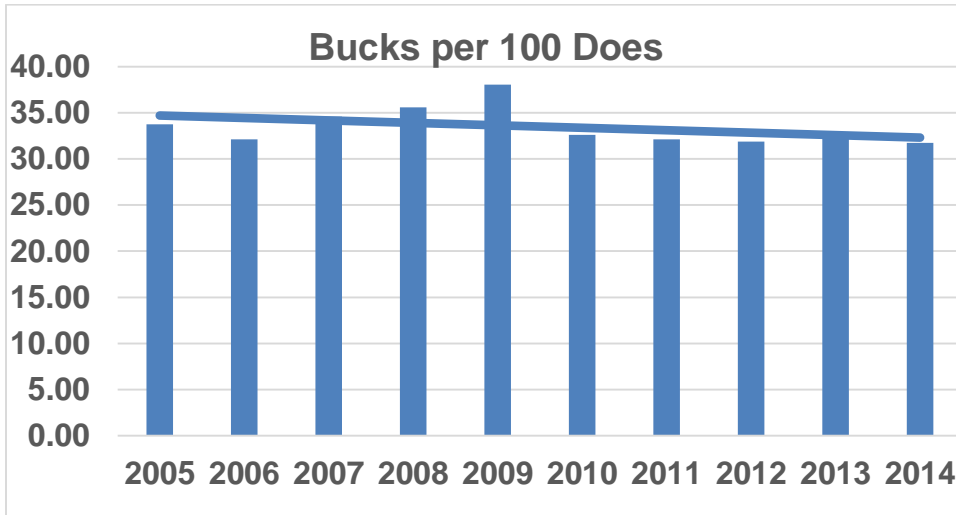


III. Population Estimate/Trends

Population – Deer related vehicle accidents have provided a long term deer population trend indicator in Kansas. In the early 2000s we initiated line transect and distance sampling procedures to assist in the monitoring of population trend.

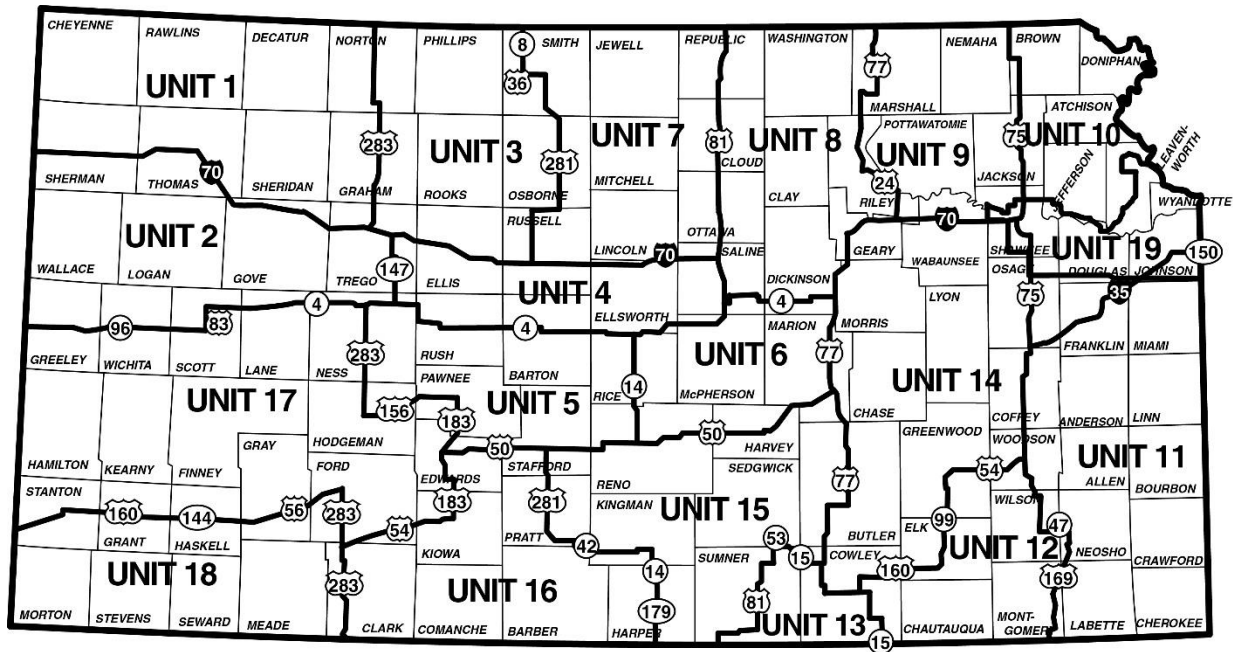


Demographics – Historically we monitor age structure from a sample of teeth mailed to the department by hunters. Changes in USPS procedures prohibits that technique. As a result we switched to observations made by KDWPT employees during spotlight surveys. Since 2005 we have been able to classify about 4,500 deer per year. Approximately 33 antlered bucks and 62 fawns have been observed per 100 adult does. Approximately a third of the antlered deer have been estimated to be yearlings, however the portion of yearlings in the populations appears to be declining through the years.



IV. Deer Management Units:

The Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) manages deer at the level of Deer Management Units (DMU). Population trends, harvest and human dimensions aspects to deer management are summarized by these units. Boundaries are established by major state and federal highways easily identified and located by hunters, while the shapes are intended to capture areas of similar physiographic and ecological values. No attempt has been made to align DMU with political or administrative areas. Long term maintenance of unit boundaries is desired for trend analysis.



V. Regulation/legislation

2015-2016 Season

Only minor season date changes were made from the regulations in 2014-15. They continue to be:

1. Non-resident deer hunters in the limited quota drawings were required to purchase an additional white-tailed deer antlerless-only permit. However, the price of the required WAO was set at \$15 (the same cost a resident would pay) instead of the \$50 former charged when the permit was optional. Non-residents purchased only 6,458 of the WAO permits and killed 3,137 deer on them in 2012, whereas they purchased 24,835 WAO permits and killed 7,448 deer on them in 2013 and they purchased 24,860 WAO permits and killed 8,510 deer on them in 2014. This change has substantially increased the take of antlerless white-tailed deer by non-resident hunters. The goal of the change included shifting the location of antlerless harvest to properties leased by non-residents.
2. A 2-day firearm season for antlerless white-tailed deer was created in mid-October.
3. Archers were allowed to continue either sex hunting during the pre-rut firearm season.
4. Firearms hunters were allowed to use any centerfire rifle during 2013 whereas the prior regulation had required them to use only rifles as large as or larger than the Winchester 243.

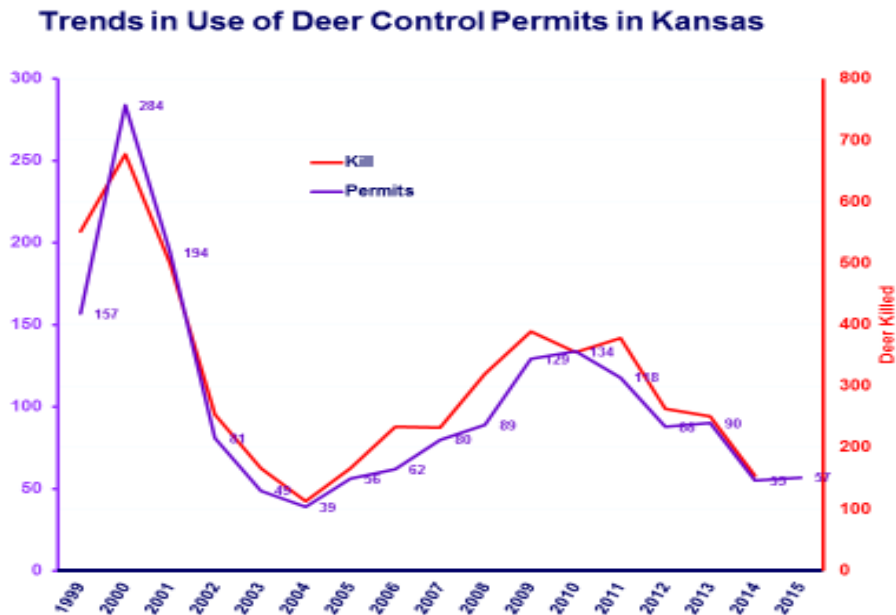
- Non-resident deer permit quotas were reduce in DMU 8 and 16 by 102 and 110 permits respectively in 2015. All either-species antlerless permits in the eastern mule deer zone were eliminated in 2015 and there was a reduction in other quota levels that allowed the hunter to take a mule deer.

VI. Urban/Special Hunts

Special permits have been issued to municipalities (including parks in suburban areas and airports) to allow culling in areas where local deer abundance created safety or public intolerance of the deer and traditional hunting by citizens had been prohibited by local ordinances. KDWPT continues to create and expand special hunts to encourage the harvest of deer or to provide special access for youth, veterans and individuals with disabilities. Special hunts are being used to create some areas where limited entry will create low hunter densities to emphasize the experience, while in other situations they are being used to emphasize the need to remove additional antlerless deer. In 2015 there will be 232 special hunts for deer. That included 50 hunts for youth, 40 hunts with mentors, 2 hunts for people with disabilities and 140 hunts that will be open to anybody. The hunts allowed 418 people to participate for a total of 14,270 hunter days on 65,632 acres that would not traditionally be opened to deer hunters.

VII. Deer Management Assistance/Crop Damage

KDWPT District Wildlife Biologists, Public Land Manager and Natural Resource Officers have been authorized since 1999 to issue Deer Control Permits (DCP) to landowners suffering from damage caused by deer. DCP allow landowners and up to two resident agents to kill deer outside the dates of traditional hunting seasons. They allow the use of techniques typically not allowed where fair chase is a goal. The issuing employee reviews each site and confirms damage caused by deer. They specify conditions and times when the permit may be used. So far in 2015 there have been 57 permits issued.



VIII. Diseases

Following two years with unusually high number of reported cases of EHD (2011 and 2012) we initiated a program to encourage the public to assist KDWPT field employees in detecting sick or recently dead deer. The system allows people to report sightings of sick or dead deer at our website. This was done to promote the collection of samples usable for viral isolation testing. However, only 4 specimens were collected in 2013 and only 3 specimens have been collected in 2014. Viral isolation conducted at SCWDS was successful in finding EHDV-2 from only one deer submitted in 2013 from Atchison County. As of the time of this report, two deer have been confirmed with viral isolation as having EHDV-2 during 2015.

Monitoring deer populations for chronic wasting disease is currently funded through Pittman/Robertson Act (W39 R019 Subproject 8115). The level of funding is less than we had used from 2003-2011 under USDA grants. Sampling rotates to a different region each year. In 2014 we focused on the south central and southwest portion of the state. In addition to the hunter harvested deer we collected samples from selected vehicle killed deer, and all elk killed in the state. The sampling protocol included testing of all suspect deer. We also collected information on deer from hunters who paid for private testing.

KDWPT collected samples from 640 cervids during 2014. CWD was detected in 10 deer (8 white-tailed deer and 2 mule deer). Since 1996 KDWPT has tested 24,891 deer and elk with 74 testing positive for the CWD prions.

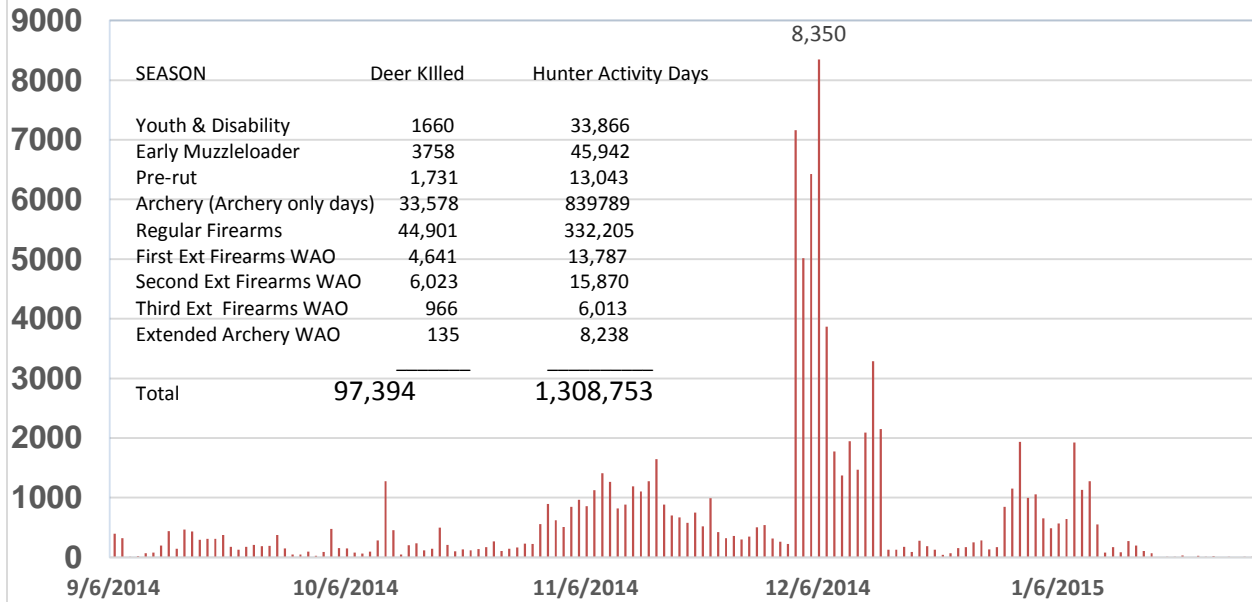
IX. Research

No research projects emphasizing deer management were conducted in 2014.

Deer Hunter Surveys

Deer hunter harvest surveys are conducted annually to determine harvest, success rates, activity days and participation during various seasons. It is used to determine deer hunter use and hunter harvest on public hunting areas and the Walk-In-Hunting-Area program. This survey is used to gather opinion information from deer hunters and as measure of hunters' season satisfaction, and to survey hunter opinions on various hot-button topics that may come before the Commission for regulatory review. Public lands make up 1.9% of the state. They are used by 12.1% of the deer hunters, who harvest nearly 5,000 deer or 5% of the statewide harvest. The harvest density of deer on public managed lands is 3.17 deer per square mile while the corresponding density on private land is 1.13, and the density on private property open in the WIHA program is 2.09.

Deer Killed per Day During 2014-15 Season in Kansas.



X. Hot Topics

Antlers to Landowners

All things considered, 2014 in Kansas was a relatively calm period for deer management. Antlers continue to draw attention, with one set from a notorious poaching event being the focus of controversy. The event started in 2011 when a 14 point typical white-tailed buck was poached and the headless body was found. The antlers were submitted as a hunter kill at a “Monster Buck Expo” but identified by a landowner from photos taken while the deer was live. The antlers scored in the 198 range and were considered highly valuable. A person who claimed the deer used his property demanded that the antlers should be given to him. Eventually the issue surfaced at the state legislature in House Bill 2538 with a provision that:

“Landowners shall have the right of first refusal to all wildlife illegally hunted on such landowner’s land unless such wildlife was illegally hunted by said landowner.”

The bill was defeated but sent back to a conference committee where it may emerge at a later date. The department sees this topic as a potential threat to the North American Model of Conservation and public ownership of wildlife.



Trophy quality deer at heart of controversy over Landowner versus public ownership.

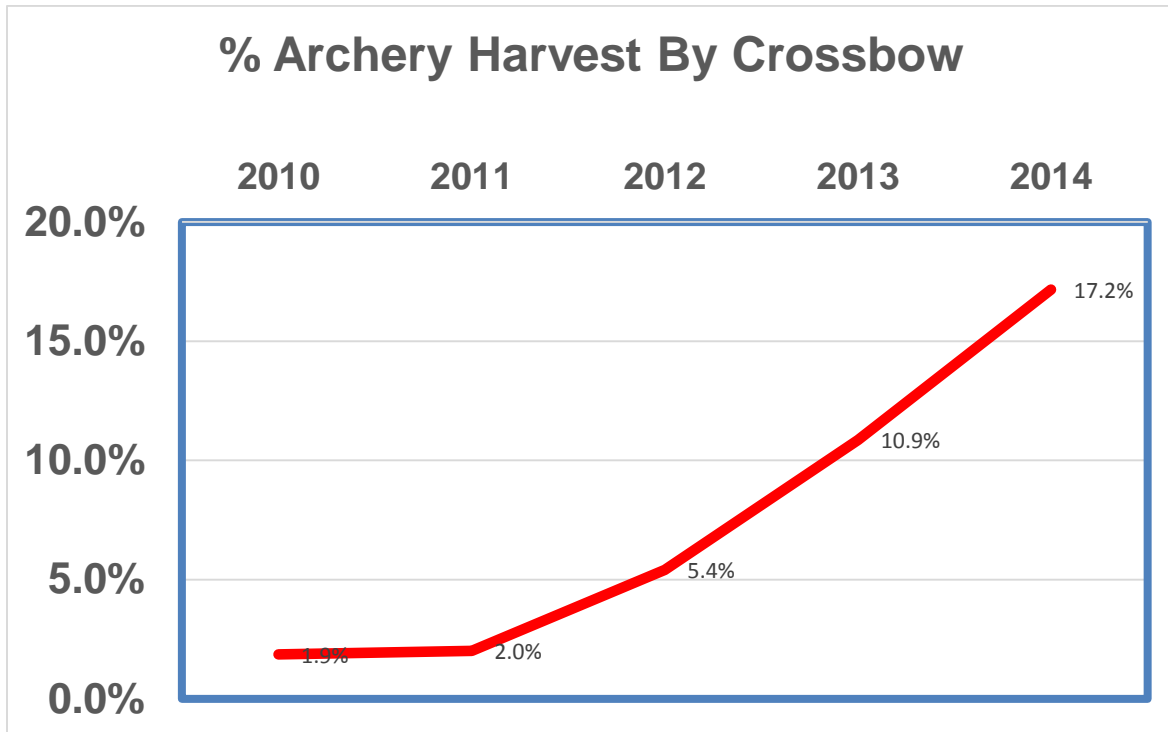
Permit and License Fee Increase

KDWPT is going through a review process on license and permit fees. Permit prices for deer and turkey have not changed since 1984. The current proposal would increase the resident hunting license from \$18 to \$25 and the non-resident from \$70 to \$95. The general resident either-sex deer permit would increase from \$30 to \$40, while the non-resident permit that include both an either-sex deer and white-tailed antlerless permit would increase from \$315 to \$415.

Equipment

Regulation of equipment continues to be a hot topic in Kansas. Crossbows were allowed as archery equipment during 2012. The removal of size restrictions on rifles also caused much discussion. We had asked about the types of equipment used by hunters in past harvest surveys. We estimated that 2.6% of the firearms hunters used calibers of rifles smaller than the 243 during the 2013 seasons. The change in the regulation did not appear to encourage additional youth or female hunters to take up deer hunting. The use of small caliber firearms was not disproportionately selected by young hunters or females.

Crossbows continue to increase in popularity in Kansas. We estimated that crossbows were used to harvest 3,511 deer in 2014-15. The portion of the harvest during the archery season that is taken with crossbows has increased from approximately 2% when that equipment was allowed for just people with disabilities to 17% when it is allowed for any person. The total harvest during the archery season has increased from 20,291 in 2010 to 32,291 in 2014.



XI. Relevant Links

KDWPT Regulations are available on-line at:

<http://kdwpt.state.ks.us/news/Hunting/Hunting-Regulations>

General information on deer management may be located at:

<http://kdwpt.state.ks.us/news/Hunting/Big-Game-Information>

Chronic wasting disease information and maps may be found at:

<http://kdwpt.state.ks.us/news/Hunting/Big-Game-Information/Chronic-Wasting-Disease>