

2019 Pronghorn Production Surveys

PERFORMANCE REPORT STATEWIDE WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND SURVEYS

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2019 Pronghorn Production Surveys

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The 2019 aerial pronghorn production surveys have been completed. These surveys are conducted in each of the three pronghorn hunting units preferably from July 15-31, but pushing into the first half of August as needed, to evaluate sex and age ratios of the population. The results of these surveys are not intended to be population estimates. With smaller average herd size and habitat conditions typically less favorable for observing pronghorn, pronghorn visibility is lower during production surveys than during the winter counts, which have traditionally been used to determine population size.

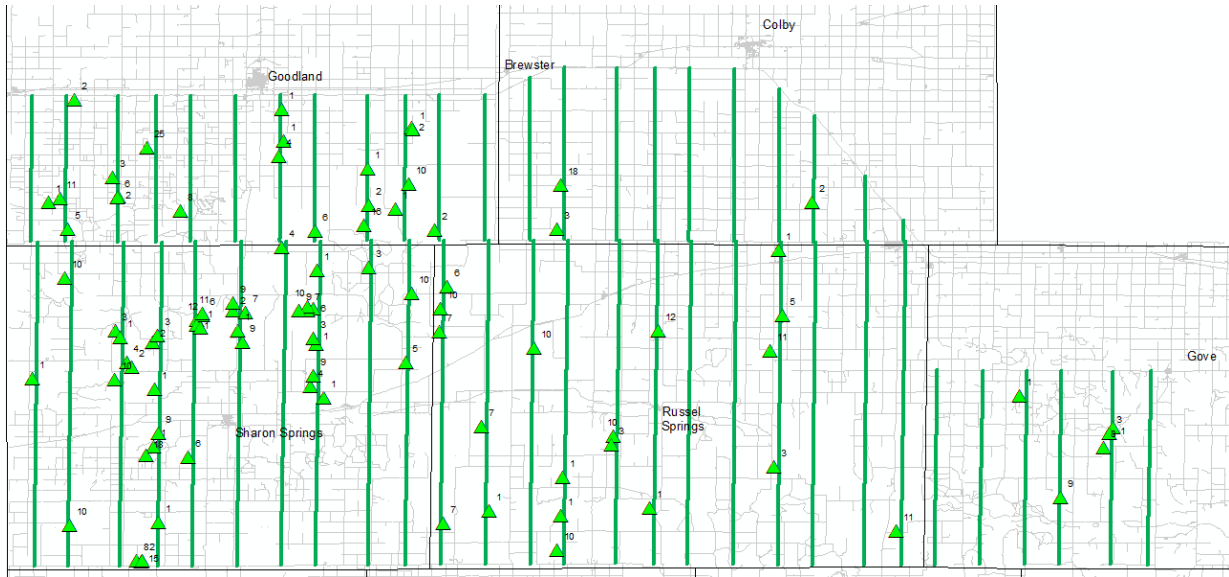
Total numbers of pronghorn observed in each pronghorn hunting unit and their respective buck:doe:fawn ratios are presented in **Table 1**. Survey routes and location of pronghorn observations for hunting units 2, 17 and 18 are provided in **Figures 1-3**, respectively. Trends in buck:doe and doe:fawn ratios since 2001 can be found in **Figures 4 and 5**.

We attempt to maintain a buck ratio of 35 bucks per 100 does. The combined total in all units is just over this objective due the positive influence of Unit 2. Unit 17 was a bit below objective, but the 5-year average for Unit 17 is still well above objective (41:100). Ratios in Unit 18 have remained the lowest and below objective for the past 6 years. The 5-year average is the same as this year's ratio (26:100). Limited draw permits have been reduced in this unit for the past couple years and further reductions will be given strong consideration again during the next regulatory cycle pending the outcome of the 2019 harvest season.

Fawn ratios were generally poor this year. This was the 5th lowest mean total since 2001. The one bright spot was that Unit 18 continued a gradual increase for the 3rd year in a row. Fawn ratios don't greatly influence hunter satisfaction with the current year's hunt since hunters rarely harvest fawns, but they do serve as a predictor of future opportunity. Despite this year's results, Units 2 and 17 have both seen good fawn production in recent years (5-year averages remain over 50:100), and the general status in these units is good. In fact, it appears some of this good production has been realized in the form of increased buck harvest shown in Figure 4. Conversely, despite the gradual increase in production over the past couple years in Unit 18, production has remained low (5-year average of 29:100) and is another indicator of the need to further reduce harvest opportunity in this unit.

Table 1. Results of summer 2019 aerial pronghorn production survey for each pronghorn hunting unit.

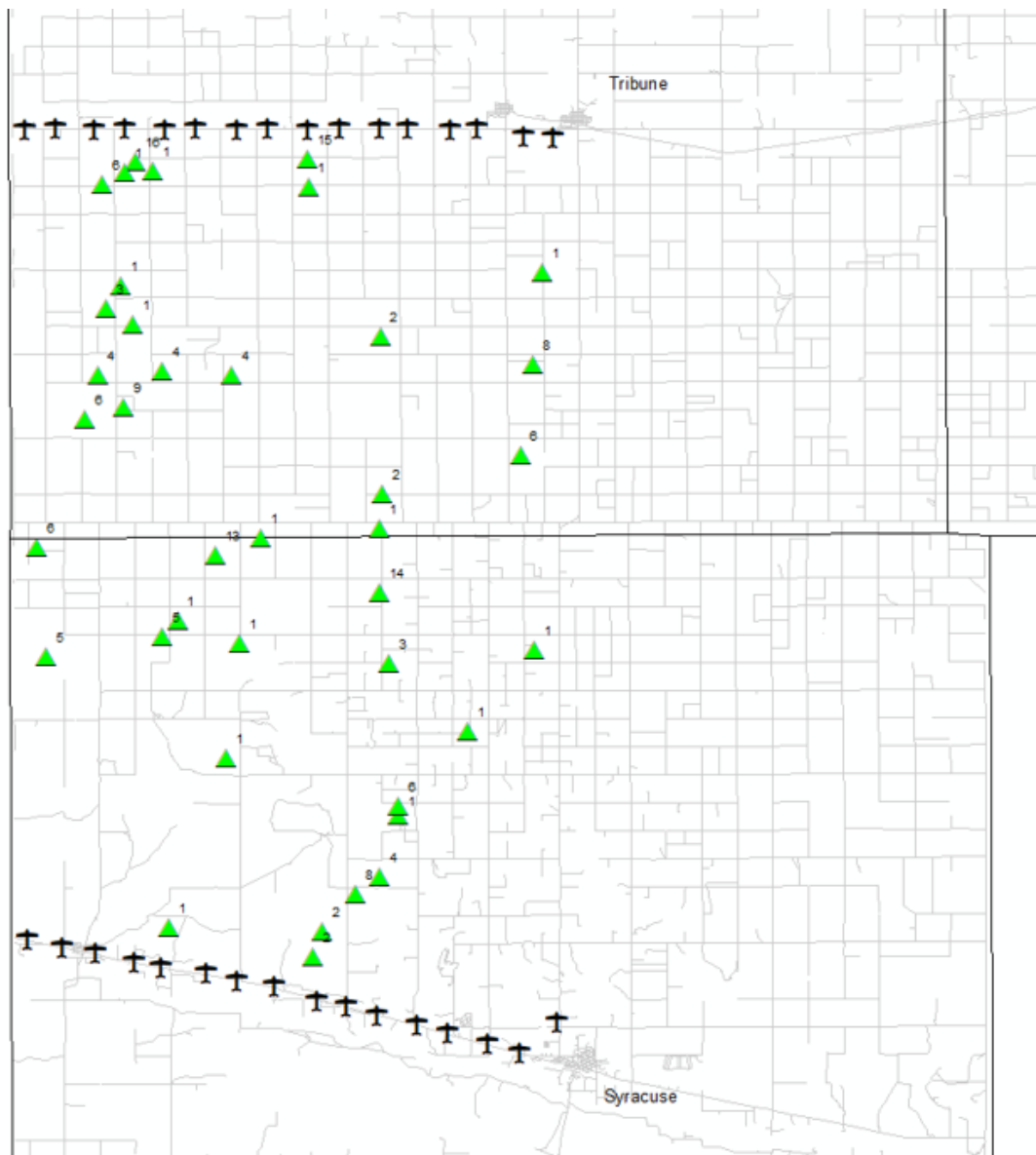
Unit	Ratio			Number Observed		
	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Bucks	Does	Fawns
2	42	100	42	117	277	117
17	31	100	35	30	96	34
18	26	100	33	16	61	20
Total	38	100	39	163	434	171



▲ Location and number of pronghorn observed

— 2019 Summer Route

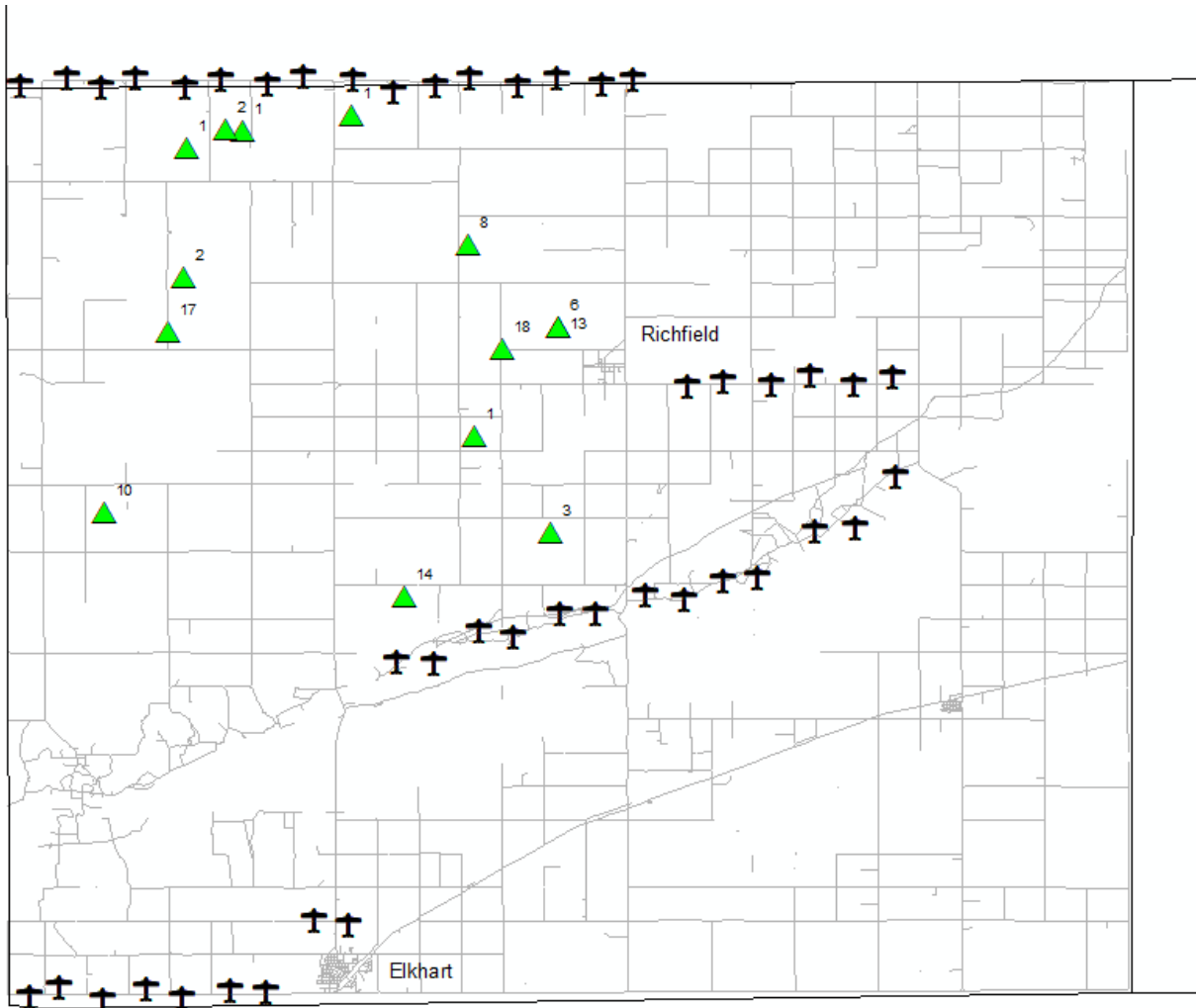
Figure 1. Unit 2 – Survey area and pronghorn observations (Sherman, Wallace, Thomas and Logan Counties).



▲ Location and number of pronghorn observed

† 2019 Summer Route

Figure 2. Unit 17 – Survey route and pronghorn observations (Hamilton & Greeley Counties).



▲ Location and number of pronghorn observed

⊥ 2019 Summer Route

Figure 3. Unit 18 – Survey route and pronghorn observations (Morton County).

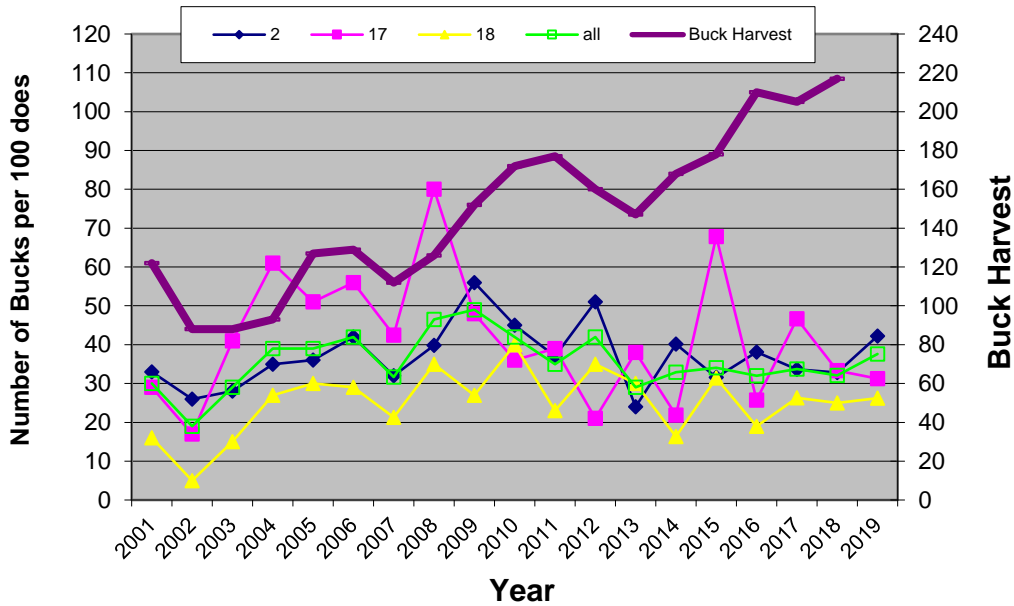


Figure 4. Number of pronghorn bucks per 100 does for each unit since 2001, and total annual buck harvest.

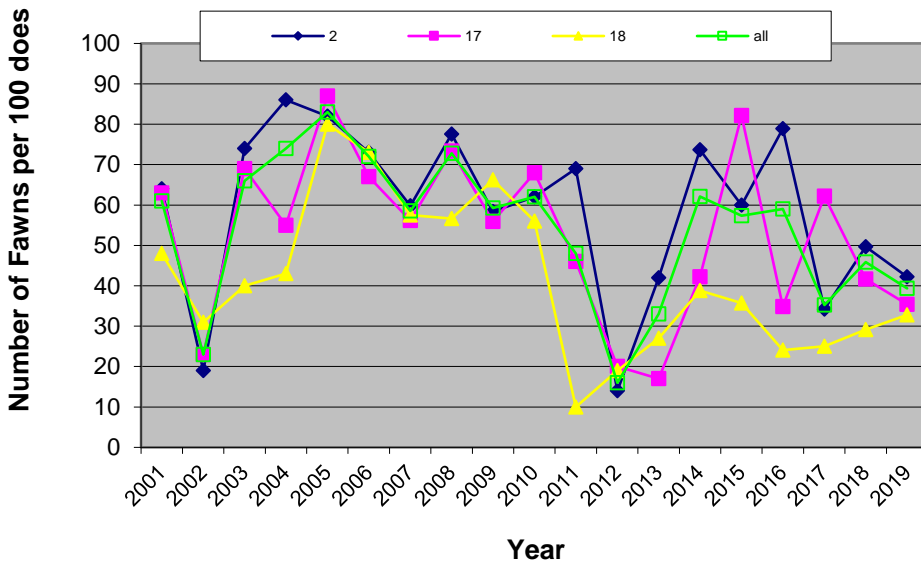


Figure 5. Number of pronghorn fawns per 100 does for each unit since 2001.

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