

2015 Pronghorn Production Surveys

PERFORMANCE REPORT
STATEWIDE WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND SURVEYS

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Robin Jennison
Secretary

Prepared by

Matt Peek
Wildlife Research Biologist



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2015 Pronghorn Production Surveys

Matt Peek
Pronghorn program coordinator

The 2015 aerial pronghorn production surveys have been completed. 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 and 18 are provided in **Figures 1 and 2**. Unit 17 location data was not collected due to an error in the data collection program. Trends in buck:doe and doe:fawn ratios since 2001 can be found in **Figures 3 and 4**, respectively.

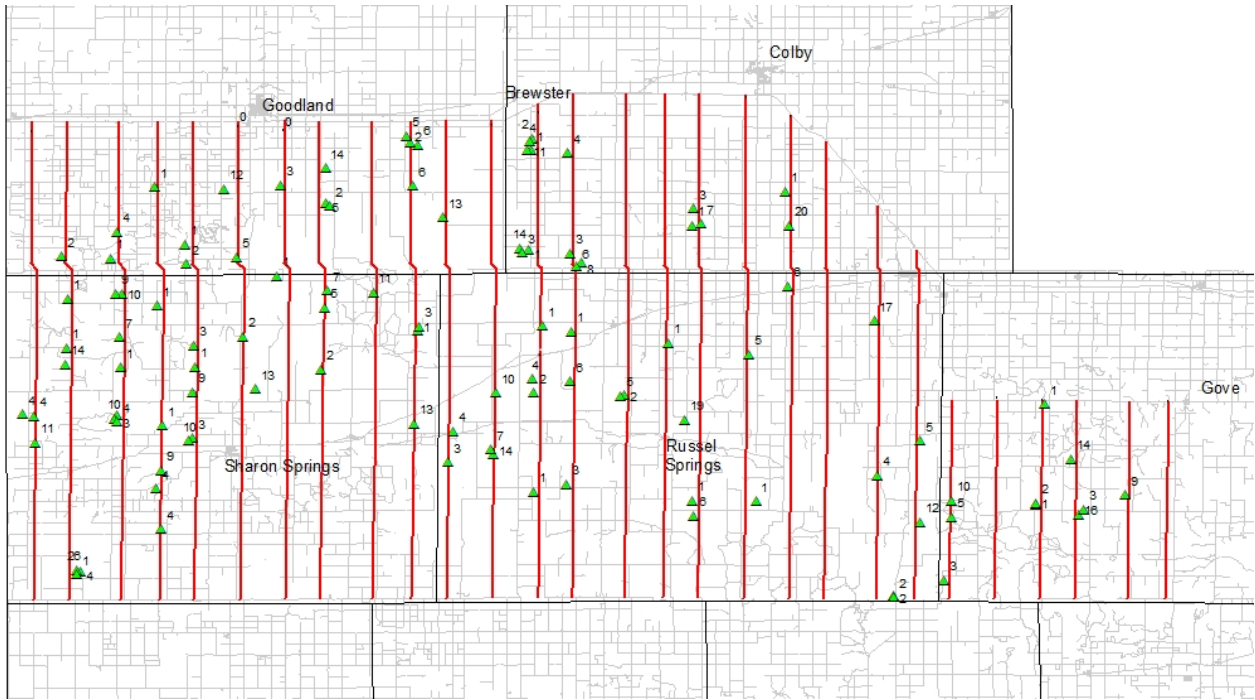
Conditions in western Kansas are substantially improved from the drought conditions of several years ago, but the impacts of reduced production may be reflected in buck harvest and survey ratios for another season or two, despite slight reductions in permit allocations. Sample size in Unit 17 was low and the reliability of these results is questionable, but results in the other two units are slightly below our objective of 35 bucks per 100 does.

Fawn ratios decreased slightly in Units 2 and 18, and the substantial increase in Unit 17 is again questionable due to sample size. Despite the slight decrease in Unit 2, a fawn ratio of 60 is considered good. In Unit 18 where production was much lower, it was still the fourth best ratio in the past 5 years. Fawn ratios don't greatly influence hunter satisfaction with the current year's hunt (though poor production means fewer pronghorn seen in a given year, and vice versa), but may better serve as a predictor of things to come. Fawn ratios over the past several years predict improving populations and an opportunity to increase limited permit quotas in the coming season.

It is important to remember that traditional production surveys are not intended to determine population size, but rather to evaluate sex and age ratios of the population. Due to smaller individual herd size and habitat conditions, pronghorn visibility is lower than during winter counts. This survey may also be conducted when conditions are less suitable for observing pronghorn than permitted in winter (i.e. during midday or when there's cloud cover).

Table 1. Results of summer 2015 aerial pronghorn production survey for each pronghorn hunting unit.

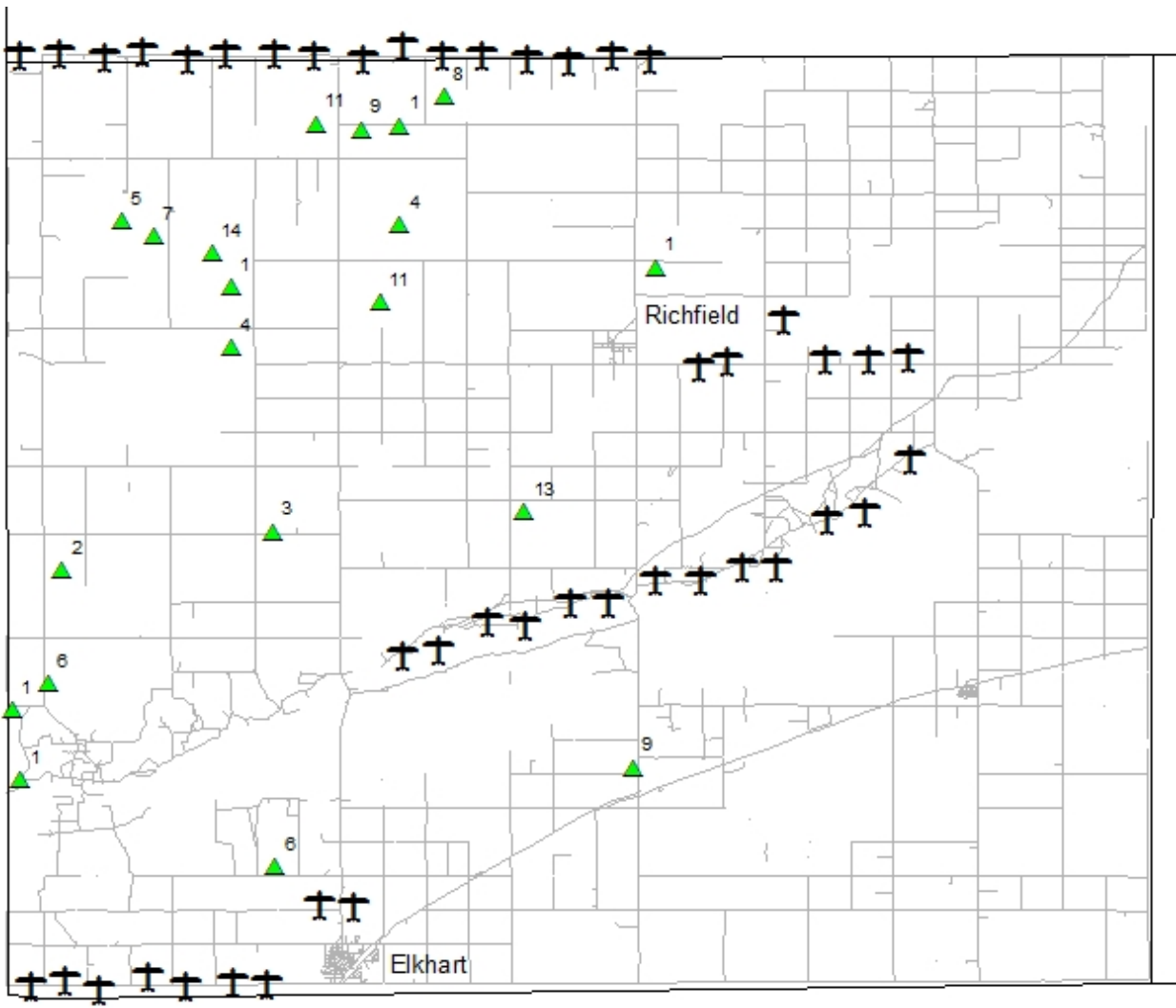
Unit	Ratio			Actual Number		
	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Bucks	Does	Fawns
2	32	100	60	98	310	186
17	68	100	82	19	28	23
18	31	100	36	22	70	25
Total	34	100	57	139	408	234



▲ Location and number of pronghorn observed

— 2015 Summer Survey Area

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



- ▲ Location and number of pronghorn observed
- ✚ 2015 Summer Route

Figure 2. Unit 18 – Survey route and pronghorn observations (Morton County).

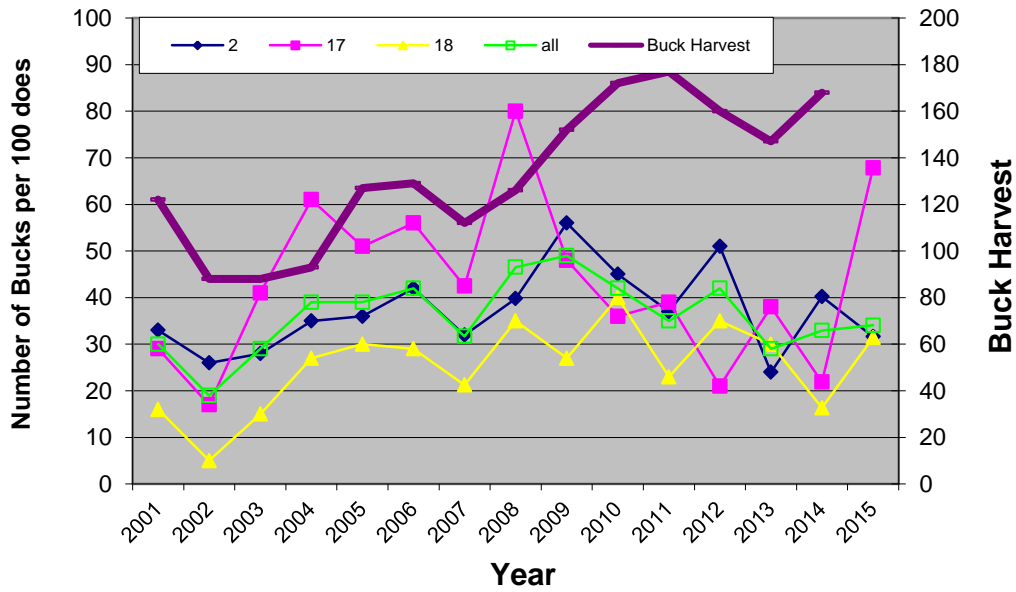


Figure 3. Number of pronghorn bucks per 100 does for each unit since 2001, and total annual buck harvest.

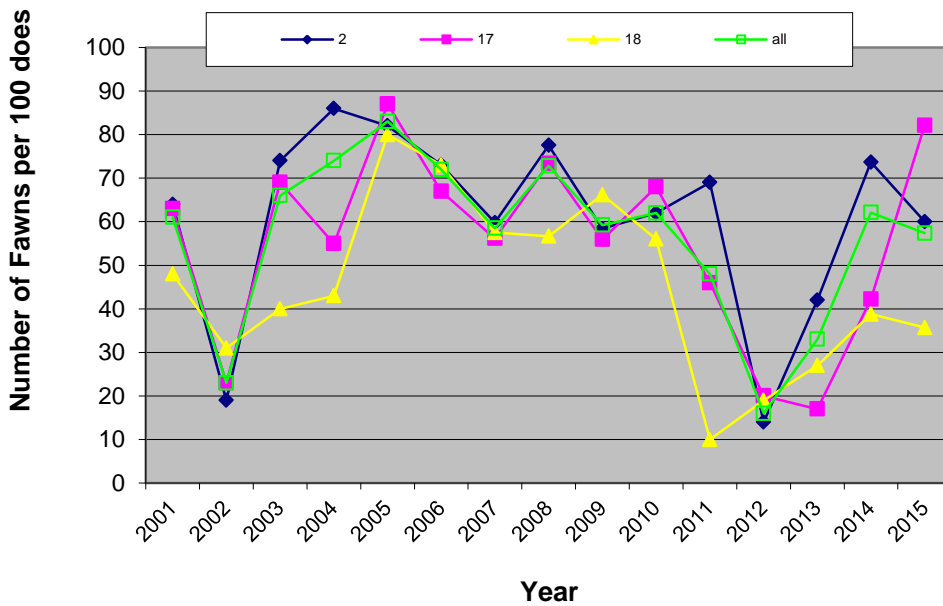


Figure 4. Number of pronghorn fawns per 100 does for each unit since 2001.