



Maine Deer Harvest Highlights 2007

2007 marks the 22nd season of the any-deer permit system. A total of 66,275 any-deer permits were allocated to 21 WMDs, including 2,442 bonus any-deer permits issued in WMDs 15-17 and 20-24 to achieve district specific doe harvest quotas. Of the permits available, 13,255 (20%) were issued to qualifying landowners in an early, separate lottery. Any-deer permits are WMD and hunter specific; they may be used during the regular firearms (October 27th-November 24th) and muzzleloader (November 26th-December 8th) seasons. Bonus permits allow hunters to take an additional antlerless deer and can be used during any open season. Continued in 2007 was the Superpack license that allocated up to 2.5 % of the any-deer permits in wildlife districts with 5,000 or more permits to Superpack license holders as "Bonus Deer" permits. This allowed Superpack license holders to take two deer, one of which must be antlerless. In all 753 permits were distributed in WMDs 15-17 and 20-23.

Although antlered bucks (3" minimum antler length) were legal quarry for all hunters during all deer seasons, only hunters who possessed a valid any-deer or bonus permit license could legally take a doe or a fawn during these firearms seasons. Sundays were closed to all hunting and the opening Saturday of the regular firearms season was reserved for Maine residents only.

Our expanded archery season targets locations in which deer populations are under-harvested primarily due to firearms discharge bans and residential sprawl. The expanded archery season had no limit on antlerless deer (either-sex) and ran for 79 hunting days (Sept. 8th to Dec. 8th). As before, deer of either sex could be hunted statewide during the Sept. 27th to October 26th regular archery season.

Overall 28,884 (preliminary as of March) deer were registered during 2007. During the expanded and special archery seasons 1,532 and 704 deer were taken respectively. This equates to an 11% decrease in the expanded zones and a 10% decrease during the regular archery season over 2006. The Youth Day harvest of 1,065 also showed a decrease over 2006 by 12%, and represents the 2nd highest harvest since the season's inception in 2002. The regular firearms season's overall harvest of 23,537 was a 5% decrease from the previous year. For the second year a special license allowed crossbow hunting during the regular firearms season. After the smoke settled from the blackpowder season muzzleloaders fared well with an overall harvest of 1,964 for an increase of 50% over 2006. This was the second consecutive year of increased interest and success, perhaps the presence of tracking snow in many areas helped.

A harvest quota of 8,488 adult does was set in 2007 to meet deer management objectives in Maine's 29 WMDs. These quotas included anticipated harvests resulting from the either-sex archery and youth-day seasons. Doe quotas ranged from 0 in 8 WMDs (districts 1-5, 19, 27, and 28), to 1,295 does in WMD 17. Any-Deer and Bonus permittees tagged 3,521 fawns, while archers and youth day hunters tagged 752 young of the year. Overall, 12,822 antlerless deer were registered by hunters and the statewide doe harvest totaled 8,480 or almost exactly the same as the pre-set quotas.

The statewide harvest of antlered bucks (16,103) in 2007 was within 1% of our projected buck harvest with a little more than half of our WMDs reporting a higher harvest than projected. The top 5 buck-producing WMDs (per sq. mi.) during 2007 were (in descending order) districts 24, 22, 21, 29 and 23, all in central and southern Maine. Among the 16,103 antlered bucks taken in 2007, roughly 7,890 (49%) were 1 ½ year-olds (yearlings), while more than 2,093 (13%) were mature bucks (4 ½ to 15 ½ years old). Male fawns are reported with antlerless deer.

Maine's statewide post-hunt population was estimated at 247,100 deer or 8.6 deer / mi² during 2007. Due to a very severe winter, deer population management in 2008 will focus on protecting the female segment of our statewide population through a reduction of permits to compensate for additional projected winter mortality and lower productivity and recruitment.