Deer Management
SE Nebraska

January 2018
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NGPC
Big Game (Deer) Management

Goal

“To manage big game populations at levels consistent with social and biological carrying capacities, and provide opportunities for aesthetic enjoyment and hunting.”
Input to Deer Management Comes from 4 primary sources

- Landowners
- Hunters
- Public
- Biology
  - Age structure of bucks, Buck/Doe ratio, Fawn production
  - Disease & Parasites (CWD, EHD, TB, Brain worm, Lice)
2010 Landowner Survey

- 3,999 Farm and Ranch operations surveyed
- 222 samples per Deer Management Unit
- 3,201 responses (80%)
  - 47% by mail
  - 33% by phone
Landowner Survey Results

- **Firearm Season Date Preference**
  - 51% No change
  - 40% Late November
  - 9% December

- **Firearm Season Length Preference** – to reduce deer numbers
  - 40% as long as necessary
  - 35% add 7 days
  - 23% no change
  - 1% shorter
# Landowner Survey Results

*Damage Unacceptable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Animal Type</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Damage Area(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whitetail</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue, KP</td>
<td>53-55%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LW, RP, WH</td>
<td>43-46%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>30-39%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL, PT</td>
<td>25-28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mule Deer</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LW, SH</td>
<td>34-36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW, FR, KP, PR, PN</td>
<td>24-27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>BF, PL, UP</td>
<td>11-19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR, KP, PL</td>
<td>9-10%</td>
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</table>
# 2009 & 2016 Deer Hunter Survey

- **Email survey**
- **Email addresses**
  - **2009**: 63,000
  - **2016**: 57,364
- **Emails sent**
  - **2009**: 47,000
  - **2016**: 54,217
- **Responses**
  - **2009**: 14,000
  - **2016**: 9,254
2016 Deer Hunter Survey

% of hunters agree or strongly agree:

Why do you hunt:

93% Spend time outdoors
85% Spend time with family/friends
79% For meat
65% Harvest a big deer
44% Control the herd
2016 Deer Hunter Survey

- Generally satisfied with check in process by phone, internet & in person
- Deer hunters get info from Big Game Guide and outdoornebraska.org & family/friends & some guy named Greg!
- Generally hunters believe regulations are easy to understand
- Nearly 70% keep deer meat for themselves
- 11% transfer some or part of deer
2009-2016 Deer Hunter Satisfaction

% of Hunters Satisfied or Very Satisfied:

- 68% # of WT deer seen 49%
- 49% # of WT bucks seen 38%
- 37% Quality of WT bucks seen 34%
- 63% Quality of their WT hunt 60%
- 40% Number of hunters seen 42% (23% 25% Saw too many)
- 39% # of Mule deer seen 56%
- 28% # of MD bucks seen 43%
- 26% Quality of MD bucks seen 42%
- 35% Quality of their MD hunt 58%
Population Trend Indicators

Harvest Data

- Adult Male Harvest
- Antlerless Harvest
- % 1 ½ and 2+ year old Bucks in Harvest
- % Success by permit type
Wildcards

- Weather/Habitat – drought/available food
- CWD – Low impact so far (50% infection in some Colorado herds)
- EHD – WT primarily (0-50% mortality?) (2012 high mortality)
- Predation (10-50% fawn mortality??)
  - Coyotes are the primary predator of fawns.
  - Mange can decrease coyote population
- New diseases and Parasites
  - Brainworm “Meningeal worm”
  - Lice “bovicola tibialis”
Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

- Prion disease
- Attacks the brain of infected animals
- 100% fatal to infect animal
- 1st found in NE in Kimball County 2000
- Since 1997 NGPC tested over 50,000 deer
- Currently found in 35 counties
- Low prevalence
CWD Testing

- 2015 in NE District
- 2016 in the SE District
- 2017 in the SW & NW District

1. Results from testing not 100% complete
2. Prevalence rates have increased since last testing
3. Found in additional counties
Road Killed Deer

Nebraska and Other States

(Nebraska figures are from Dept. of Roads)
Whitetail Deer

- Statewide distribution
- Up to 20 deer per sq. mile
- High productivity
  - Many breed as fawns
  - Twins or triplets
- Less vulnerable to hunters
- Vulnerable to EHD
- 50% female mortality to stop herd growth
Mule Deer

- Western 2/3 of state
- Up to 4 deer per sq. mile
- Less Productive
  - Rarely breed as fawns
  - Single or twin fawns
- Vulnerable to disease - brain worm, others
- Vulnerable to hunters
- 30% female mortality to stop herd growth
BNW - % Buck 2 ½ & Older
Blue NW – All Kill

Blue NW - All Kill

WT Buck

WT Aless

Years: 2005 to 2016

Numbers: 0 to 4500
BSE % Buck 2 ½ & Older
Wahoo % Buck 2½ & Older

Graph showing the percentage of buck 2½ and older from 1995 to 2016.
NGPC Damage Abatement Policy

- Hunting is the preferred method to control deer
- Fencing
- Habitat modification
- Scare devices
- Damage Control Permits
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Complaints</th>
<th>Permits Issued</th>
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<tr>
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# Blue SE Damage Control

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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>3</td>
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# Wahoo Damage Control

<table>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Blue Southeast 2009

“284”
Wahoo 2010

“203”
**Youth Hunters**

- 2004 - Youth deer permit (123 day season)
- 2008 - Minimum age reduced to age 10
- 2014 - $5 youth deer permits (11,750 issued)
NGPC Responsibilities

- Develop permits & seasons to successfully manage the herd.
- Provide regulation and policy to assist landowners in controlling deer damage
- Recruit/Inform/Communicate with hunters
Things to know

- November Firearm Season starts the Saturday Closest to November 13th or Ends the Sunday before Thanksgiving
- Know the Mgmt. unit you shot your deer in
- Inside beam spread – 11”
- What species (WT/MD) is your permit valid for
- Check your deer in! – Telecheck/internet/checkstation
Landowner Responsibility

- Estimate deer population
- If population is too high increase antlerless harvest
  - Give access to hunters who harvest does
  - If you lease your property to hunters, require an antlerless harvest quota
- Work with neighbors in achieving common deer management goals
Hunter Responsibility

- Work with the landowner to manage deer numbers and quality
- Harvest deer ethically and responsibly
- Mentor & Recruit New Hunters
- Learn to age deer on the hoof
- Know the age/sex of your deer @ check in
- Harvest does if population reduction is desired
- Donate surplus deer (Deer Exchange, Hunters Helping the Hungry)
How do you get older bucks

- Hunter behavior! “Go Big or Go Home, or shoot a doe” OK = Voluntary

- Habitat/Land Mgmt..
  - Security cover – “Keep Out”
  - Screening cover along road
2016 Harvest

- Down slightly from last year
- 58,126 deer have been taken in all seasons, compared to 58,690 last year
- Mule deer buck harvest up 4%
- WT buck harvest down 4.5% this year
- Hunter success rate is slightly up a % from last year
2017/2018…

- Recovery from EHD continues
- Starting to get crop damage complaints
- Don’t want to get as high as we did before in many places = Allow for growth but have tools (river antlerless) to manage population.
- Habitat loss
2018 SEASON & beyond
CONSIDERATIONS:

- Provide opportunity while striving for older bucks
- Permits - allow for herd recovery in places but not to levels that cause excessive damage
- Increase antlerless permits to stay ahead of herd growth
Questions/Comments
Pawnee County

Agriculture - 17.9%
- Corn - 7.9%
- Soybeans - 7.5%
- Wheat - 2.2%
- Alfalfa - 0.3%
- Sorghum - 0.01%
- Other Ag - 0.003%

Woodland/Grassland - 75.07%
- Tall Grass - 43.9%
- Eastern Red Cedar - 0.001%
- CRP - 13.3%
- CRP-Trees - 0.03%
- Riparian Shrubland - 0.04%
- Riparian Trees - 3.5%
- Upland Woodland - 10.8%
- Wet-meadow - 3.5%

Development/Bare - 5.8%
- Developed - 5.6%
- Sand Bar - 0.01%
- Fallow - 0.001%

Water - 1.3%
- Floodplain - 0.002%
- River Channel - 0.13%
- Pit - 0.04%
- Stock Pond - 0.9%
- Reservoir - 0.2%
- Emergent Marsh - 0.01%

0 1.5 3 4.5 6 Miles