

Deer Modeling/Quota Setting Timeline -2013

2/5/13

Jan 10 - Last stub mail in date - Feb 2 metro units

Jan 25 - Last stubs entered

Jan 29 - Deer Advisory Committee meeting

Feb 1 - Receive tribal harvest data from GLIFWC
Tribal threshold system discussed and completed

Feb 4 - First draft of SAK to field staff

Feb 5-8 - First draft accounting estimates to field staff

Feb 11-Feb 22 - Robert Road Show - Regional population modeling meetings, initial season framework discussion, and DTR implementation presentation

Feb. 15 - CWD prevalence update

Feb. 22 - Internet template complete and out for field review

Late Feb - Outreach informing customers of venues for sharing deer information

Early March - CWD modeling completed

March 5 - Deer Committee conference call/meeting - final population estimates
Preliminary DMU map developed - zero quota units unknown

March 8- internet forum goes live

March - Yellow sheet deadline for May NRB: Approval of 2013 deer season recommendations

March 1-11 - WCC District Meetings (part of deer information meeting circuit)

March 1 - Sec. Briefing on Deer Forum information/recommendations

March 1 - Quota reference values out to staff

March 18 -29 - Deer Hunter Forums

March 10-30 - Regional wildlife staff quota-setting meetings

March 16 (tentative) - WCC Big game study committee meeting

April 3 - Field quota recommendations due to central office

April 16 - Deer Committee live meeting/conf. call - Final Deer Quota Resolution

April 18 - Secretary briefing with season structure recommendations

Late April - Green Sheet: Approval of 2013 deer unit /season designation recommendations

May 12 - Deer season proposal to NRB/public

May 22 - NRB Meeting (Madison): Approval of 2012 deer season recommendations

June 26 - Deer Regulations to print

Late June - DNR adjusts tribal declarations to account for historical harvest
Final deer quota and permit levels (if harvest exceeded thresholds)

Law Enforcement Season Overview

We thank all of the hunters who aid our efforts to protect our resources from poachers and people who endanger public safety. Wardens recognize people who violate the law may only represent a very small percentage of those in the field, but these few can adversely impact public safety, our wildlife, and the image of all hunters. The assistance provided by the public in helping us apprehend violators who endanger public safety or steal opportunity from law abiding hunters is greatly appreciated. The public is the key to our success in protecting the people and natural resources in Wisconsin on behalf of future generations.

The focus of the conservation wardens' work is enforcement, education and public safety. During the gun deer season, wardens primarily respond to citizen complaints, check for license compliance, and investigate hunting accidents. But the wardens also spend a great deal of time simply answering questions about the laws, tagging deer for hunters, and assisting other agencies. Over the 9 day gun deer season, they sometimes find themselves mediating disputes over deer and deer hunting spots, and apprehending individuals with warrants and operating vehicles while intoxicated all while maintaining their regular response to environmental damage and non deer-hunting related complaints.

I'd like to share a brief synopsis and general comments about the gun deer season and information contained within the Bureau of Law Enforcement's Gun Deer Season Report. More details can be found in the remainder of the report.

- The Mentored Hunting Law has caught on with the number of licenses sold to 10 and 11 year olds increasing by 10 percent this year. Wardens reported that mentored hunters, youth, and families in the field were some of the most satisfied hunters with their overall experience.
- Wardens related many examples of hunter actions that reflect well on hunters. They shared positive hunting experiences and photos on social media, took advantage of electronic technology to report detailed information about violations observed, and welcomed youth and first time hunters to participate.
- The rate of hunting related shooting injuries/fatalities for the 2012 gun deer season was 1.1 incidents per 100,000 hunters. There were seven incidents total, of which one was a fatality.
- There were an increased number of Hotline calls during the season (732). In addition to complaints received via the Hotline, wardens received and responded to 3,637 calls for service directly from the public during the gun deer season.
- There were 994 citations/arrests reported, down slightly from 1,009 citations/arrests in 2011. Wardens documented 1,627 verbal warnings for violations encountered.
- Wardens were involved in 14 search and rescue situations during the gun deer season.
- As time permitted, and as a customer service, wardens registered 613 deer in the field. Daily deer registrations in the field generally reflect hunting pressure on a daily basis.

General Observations on the gun deer season

- Most hunters reported seeing more deer. Hunters in the CWD Zones expressed satisfaction that they were able to harvest one buck without first harvesting an antlerless deer. Wardens did not report widespread use of crossbows. Hunters are increasingly making use of computers at home and smart phones in the field to access information on lands open to hunting, hunting hours and maps.
- Wardens, particularly those in northern Wisconsin where there were units with no antlerless quota (and therefore no \$12 bonus antlerless tags available) questioned the need to issue Herd Control tags. These tags are issued with each license sold, and hunters had questions about how and where the tags could be used.
- Law-abiding hunters and citizens continue to demonstrate a low tolerance for violations as evidenced by the number of Hotline calls received. Complaints are often accompanied by GPS coordinates and cell phone photos of vehicles, bait, and hunters suspected of committing violations. Wardens appreciate the extra details!
- In the year since the law allowing uncased firearms in a vehicle became effective, wardens reported that they observed a significant increase in the number of individuals choosing to transport their firearms uncased. Citations for having a loaded firearm in a vehicle increased compared to the previous year.
- Weather conditions were mild throughout the state, from highs of 50 degrees and lows below freezing. Fog was present in many areas on opening morning. Some parts of the state received a light snowfall, nothing significant enough to impact travel by vehicle or foot. Corn crop harvest was again almost 100% complete, which has an effect on huntable acreage, visibility of hunters (a safety concern with standing corn), and reduces the number of places deer can hide.
- While conflict between hunters was present, wardens report relatively few problems. These conflicts tend to fall into three main areas: conflict between neighboring landowners, conflict between hunters on public lands vying for the same prime areas, and conflict occurring between hunters at the property lines between public and private land. While the Voluntary Access Program has been extremely popular, it has caused the occasional parking dilemma due to lack of designated parking space, and occasional accidental trespass since property boundaries are not as well marked as public hunting lands.

In the following pages, we provide more detailed information on arrests and calls for service, data on license sales, a look at some of the initiatives that have been undertaken to recruit and retain hunters, and specific reports of incidents that give you a snapshot of the activities of Bureau of Law Enforcement staff members. During this 9 day season when more than a half million people participate in their favorite fall pastime, we strive to give everyone the safest and most enjoyable experience possible.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA, E-MAIL and THE HUNTING HOUR APP

As part of the coordinated DNR deer season communication efforts, the Bureau of Law Enforcement this year used two tools developed by the bureau to inform and educate the public about the wardens' work and the season.

1. **Warden Wire**: a free e-mail news service about conservation wardens, launched in fall 2011
<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wardenwire/> -

- *Warden Wire* had 143,878 total page views from October 27 – November 26, 2012 according to a Google Analytics report covering the pre-hunt information distributions through the gun-deer season close.
 - Links to *Warden Wire (WW)* stories were shared by *WW* subscribers, promoted on the DNR Twitter feed, DNR Facebook page and posted online by traditional media outlets where reader forums are used, thereby making *Warden Wire* also part of the social media world.
 - 10,000 to 12,000 *Warden Wire* page views each on November 15 and November 21.
 - About 200 subscribers joined *Warden Wire* during the month of November.
 - Top *Warden Wire* product of gun-deer season: 9 sets of FAQs: Special Edition–Gun-Deer Hunt. Total Page Views: 60,301

2. **DNR Hunting Hours App**: 1,669 sold as of November 26.

- Bureau of Law Enforcement designed and sold the DNR's first-ever WI Hunter Hour app for Android smart phones. The Hunting Hours App sells for 99 cents and displays the hunting hours for the hunter's current location, or can search for other locations. It also can show hunting hours for future dates and various game animals.

HUNTER RECRUITMENT and RETENTION

Several new initiatives focusing on hunter recruitment and retention were launched this year. The DNR stepped up recruitment and retention of new hunters, and partnerships with current hunters through the Hunter Challenge website, the Sporting Heritage Act signed into law in April 2012, and the development of a technical college course to train new hunters. Web-based technology to improve access to information unearthed a potential source of new hunters.

The Hunter Challenge website was launched in late summer and averaged about 80 customer views a day. The objective of the Wisconsin Hunter Challenge is to slow the decline in hunter numbers. The challenge is to get individuals involved. We'll measure the number of hunters in three key age groups this year compared to the last two. The goal is to get hunters involved on the local community level and display results by age group in each county. The pages can be found by searching keyword "challenge" on the DNR website.

Number of 10-11 year old Mentored Hunting gun deer licenses sold 2009-2012

Year	2012	2011	2010	2009
Number of mentored gun deer licenses sold to 10-11 year olds	13,468	12,226	11,331	9,907

See the addendum for some positive mentored and youth hunting stories.

HUNTER EDUCATION ADULT INTERNET PROGRAM

As a result of the Sporting Heritage Act, the DNR was able to offer an Adult Internet Hunter Education course where individuals completed an online course, scheduled a time to take the test at a DNR office, and completed the written and practical tests in about an hour of their time. Nearly 800 adults took advantage of this option since it was first offered in July. At most locations, all available spots for the testing were filled and had waiting lists. In response to the demand, the Hunter Education program plans to offer additional testing opportunities associated with the online course in 2013. The week prior to the gun deer season, many of the test takers at the Fitchburg DNR office walked across the hall to the service counter and purchased their first deer license as soon as they received their certificate. This table is a list of the counties that held the written and practical exam, number of test dates, and total number of students. There was a 98% pass rate among the test takers.

County	# of test dates	# of students
Brown	6	167
Dane	6	229
Eau Claire	5	84
Marathon	1	44
Milwaukee	4	144
Washburn	3	39
Winnebago	1	67

FIRST TIME and RETURNING LICENSE BUYER GUN DEER HUNTERS

The Sporting Heritage Act included provisions for a deer license cost to first time resident buyers of just \$5.00, and non-resident buyers of \$79.75 (half price.) Returning hunters, defined as those who have not participated in at least 10 years, were also able to purchase these specially priced licenses. These license opportunities were promoted through outreach on the WDNR website, Hunters Network of Wisconsin website, Facebook page and a statewide radio campaign in late October and early November.

We've followed hunter numbers by age for many years and watched what happens as the people age forward. In nearly all age groups, hunters are "lost" every year as they get older. This year as hunters aged, there was growth (more hunters) in every single age between 20 and 50. First Time Buyers accounted for the sale 28,925 licenses this year, more than 19,000 of those buyers were adults. They may not all be "hunters" yet, but they tried it out and some of them are bound to keep it up or return again. We will follow this group through their customer numbers to assess and evaluate the long term effectiveness of these various trials and new options.

The bottom line is, we believe that we have found a source of new hunters (adults) and we will continue to find ways to serve their needs and introduce new families to hunting. The overall number of licenses sold this year increased about 2% over last year.

Equally as important has been the steady growth in the number of females participating in deer hunting. The number has had steady growth of about 2-3% per year over the past five years. In 2012, the number of females participating in deer hunting jumped by more than 10%. This good news could be due to the discount for first time buyers and/or the convenient new adult hunter safety courses offered.

The number of 10 and 11 year-olds hunting with the mentored only privilege continued to rise. Over 13,000 kids under the age of 12 hunted this year with a mentor, 10% growth over 2011. We are partnering with the Hunters Network of Wisconsin to provide a reward drawing for mentors nominated by their apprentice hunters.

Where can I hunt? That is a frequently heard question as hunters report that urban sprawl is affecting hunting opportunities in many parts of Wisconsin. They comment that the loss of access to private lands, due to development, affects the overall quality of deer hunting opportunities. The loss of available private lands displaces hunters and adds additional pressure to the public areas. The new web mapping application for Managed Forest and Forest Crop Lands greatly enhance hunter access to these properties this year and Law Enforcement personnel contacted many hunters who were excited by the second year of the Voluntary Public Access Program (VPA). Many deer hunters took advantage of the VPA program and gun deer hunted on those properties. They stated they received information about the properties through the DNR website.

There appears to be interest in future development of web-based tools to easily access property maps and information similar to the WDNR Hunting Hours app that was rolled out in early November 2012. The \$1 app will calculate the hunting hours based on the species and the hunter's location. About 1,700 copies of the app have been sold since to date. (One hunter who used the app suggested an improvement - a built-in feature that would cause the phone to buzz to signal the beginning and end of hunting hours so you wouldn't even have to take the phone out of your pocket!)

THE MAKING OF A NEW HUNTER - A HUNTER RECRUITMENT SUCCESS STORY

We recognize that not everyone grows up with adult mentors to introduce them to hunting from an early age. The DNR is offering a number of opportunities for those interested in learning to hunt, and one Madison man took full advantage of DNR sponsored Learn to Hunt events, classes and reduced price licenses to test the waters, and find out if hunting was really for him. David LeZaks, his wife, and friend are part of an emerging market of new hunters. They are self-described "locavores" and "foodies" meaning they choose their food based on where it comes from and how it was raised. They and other locavores participated in the first ever "Hunting for Sustainability" course offered by DNR through Madison Area Technical College in September 2012. The 8-hour course focused on teaching participants

how to hunt, field dress and butcher whitetail deer as a source of sustainable local protein. David took part in a Learn to Hunt turkey event last spring, and after the Hunting for Sustainability course, he bought or acquired firearms, participated in a Learn to Deer Hunt event and purchased a \$5.00 hunting license. He tells the story of his first deer hunting outing:

“On Sunday, around 7:45 am, I harvested my first deer. I was out on MFL land near Richland Center ... sitting atop a ridge looking down toward a network of deer trails, patiently waiting. A group of 6-8 does started to walk through. I took aim and shot (with a bit of a shaky hand) and missed, but took aim at another deer who had stopped to figure out what that loud noise was, and was able to get a shot off. She collapsed immediately. As I walked from where I took my shot to where she fell, two bald eagles circled above and landed in the tree above where I was sitting.

The field dressing and moving the deer from where she fell to the car were not without their challenges, but many lessons were learned for the next time. We did the registration and CWD testing in Spring Green, then started the butchering process that evening. We were able to get ~45 lbs. of meat, most which we processed last night into summer sausage, snack sticks and Italian sausage (all with 20% added fat from whey-fed, acorn-finished pork from Uplands Dairy.) Some ground venison, backstrap and tenderloin are in the freezer. I have *never had a regular supply of red meat* in my house, so I look forward to experimenting with new dishes and preparations. Thank you all for your time, advice, stories, warnings, safety tips and other tidbits...”

Each time we have offered hunting for sustainability events, the demand outstrips the number of spots available. Through the locavore/foodie connections we have developed, and the adult hunter safety one-hour test out, we believe there are substantial gains to be made in recruiting and forming another community of hunters.

David added, “I’ll be going out again this weekend for the antlerless hunt. I believe one could say that I am hooked.”

HUNTING RELATED SHOOTING INCIDENTS

Wardens conduct thorough investigations to learn what happened in hunting related shooting incidents in order to prevent such incidents in the future. Our lengthy historical data and inquiries into the circumstances of each incident enables us to make effective modifications to hunter education curriculum, target media outreach efforts and train volunteers and Department staff. You can see from the statistics represented in these graphs, that the trend toward involvement in injuries resulting from the discharge of a firearm during the gun deer season is downward.

Summary of incidents during gun deer season:

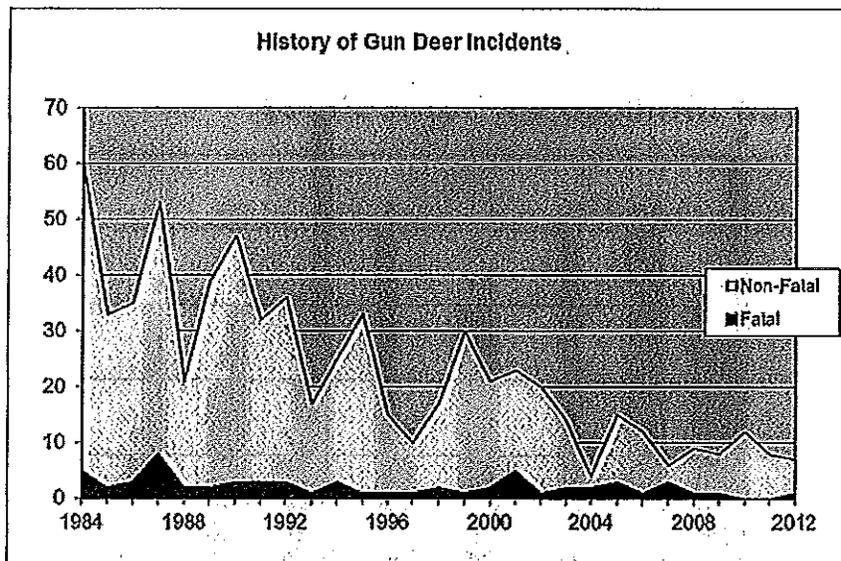
- 2 of the 7 incidents involved a self-inflicted injury (29%), the other 5 incidents involved two individuals, shooter and victim (71%)
- Of the two party incidents, 4 of the 5 involved members of same hunting group (80%)
- 3 of the incidents occurred during deer drives (43%)

- Type of firearms involved: 6 – Rifle, 1 - Shotgun
- The average age of the shooters involved is 33 years old, 2 of the 7 incidents involved shooters under age 18.

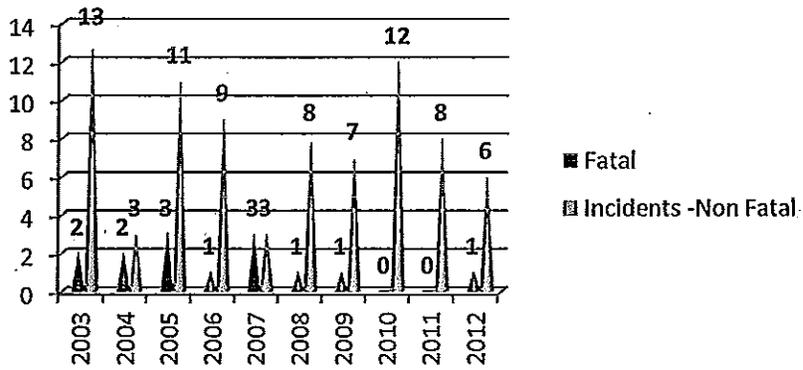
Every year, media outlets have reported on hunter deaths or injuries throughout the season. These reports are often related to death by natural causes or injuries from treestand falls. The WDNR does not track or include these events in statistical reports.

Treestand safety continues to be part of the Wisconsin Hunter Education program with emphasis on the use of safety harnesses, 3 points of contact, use of a haul line to bring unloaded firearms up and down and safety inspections of stands. In addition to the Hunter Education program we have a website page specific to treestand safety and include treestand safety in our media releases.

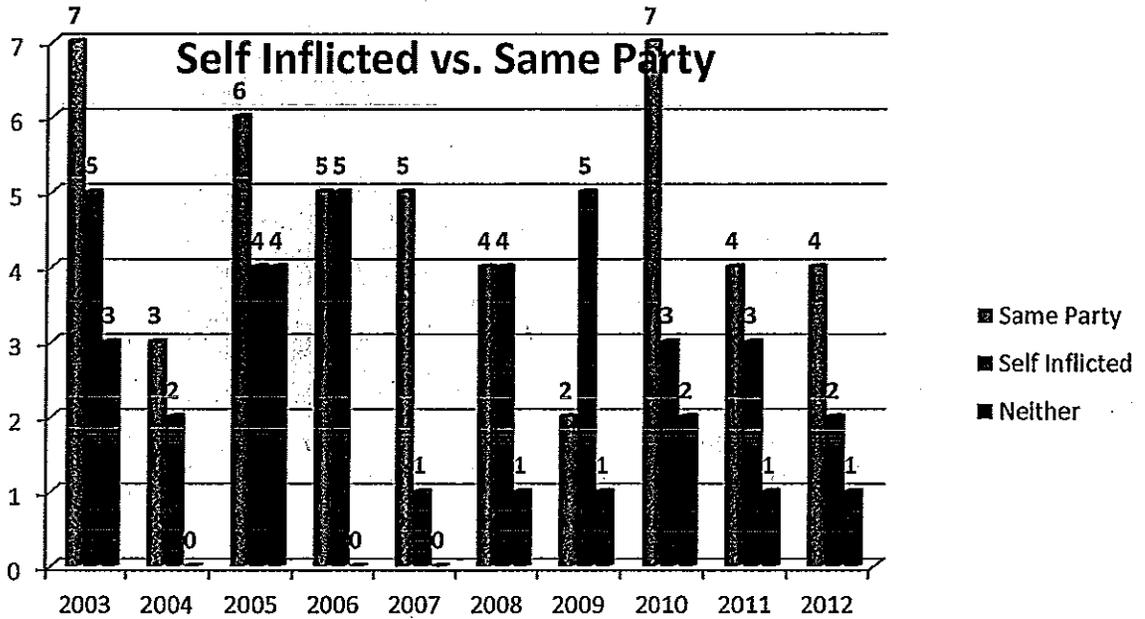
A complete synopsis can be found in the addendum.

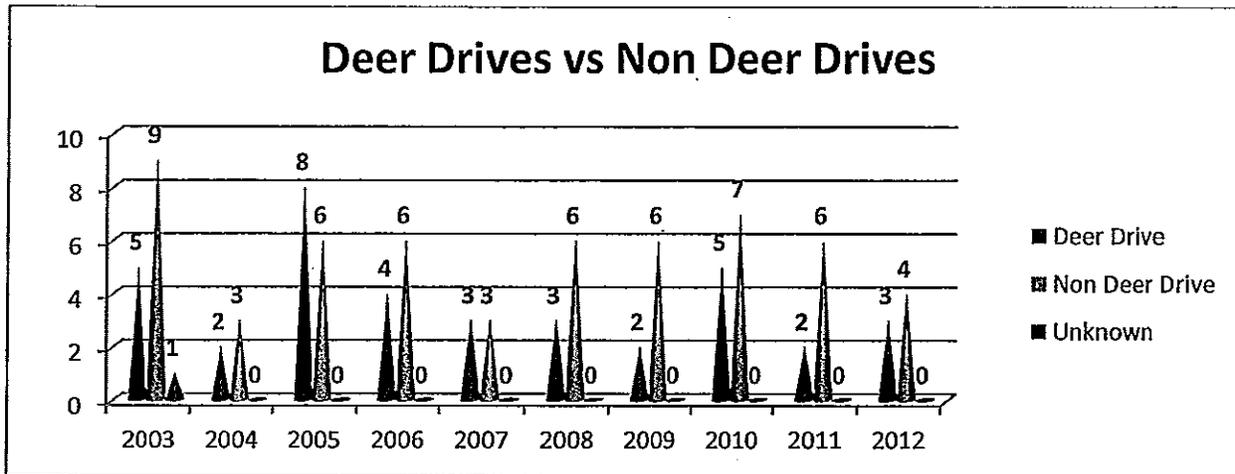


9 Day Gun Deer Seasons Only - 10 year Stats



Self Inflicted vs. Same Party





PUBLIC SAFETY

One of the goals of the warden service is to create a safe and enjoyable outdoor recreational environment for everyone. To this end, wardens have placed emphasis on removing known criminal offenders, intoxicated individuals and subjects using illegal drugs from the outdoor recreational environment in the interest of public safety.

No current law prohibits a person with a felony conviction from purchasing a gun deer hunting license in Wisconsin. However, it is illegal for felons to possess firearms, therefore hunting with a firearm or participation in group deer hunting is illegal. During the 2012 gun deer season, wardens arrested 16 felons in possession of firearms in the field.

A number of other individuals were contacted for violations that can greatly affect public safety. They included 4 subjects who were armed while intoxicated, 9 subjects in possession of drugs or drug paraphernalia, 6 subjects possessing open intoxicants in a vehicle, 2 subjects operating vehicles while intoxicated, and wardens arrested 10 individuals with outstanding warrants. In another instance, wardens intervened in a domestic disturbance with threats of bodily harm; when the armed subject fled into the woods, the wardens, who knew the subject from previous DNR contacts, called his cell phone and convinced him to peacefully turn himself in to the sheriff's deputies.

Felons in Possession of a Firearm 2007-2012

Year	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Number of arrests	16	21	37	29	9	16

HUNTER/USER CONFLICTS

Some conflict is inevitable when more than 600,000 hunters and many other outdoor users hit the woods at the same time. Analyzing the sources of conflict can be instructive in terms of developing strategies to reduce conflicts and create a safe and enjoyable outdoor recreational environment for everyone.

While conflict between hunters was present, wardens reported fewer conflicts between hunters and fewer hunter harassment complaints this year, as compared to prior years. These conflicts tend to fall into three main areas: conflict between neighboring landowners, conflict between hunters on public lands, and conflict occurring between hunters at the property lines between public and private properties.

There were 5 citations issued for interference with lawful hunting, and 10 warnings issued.

Warm weather brings out hikers, bicyclists and dog walkers. Wardens voiced concern for the conflicts arising on state lands between hunters and non-hunters who may not be aware of season dates, and are inadvertently disturbing hunters. Safety is an issue as well since non-hunters are not always wearing the most visible color clothing, a feature that has been proven to lessen the likelihood of an accidental shooting since blaze orange became a requirement in 1980.

SEARCH AND RESCUE EFFORTS

Being ready to respond to emergencies to enhance public safety is a major goal of the warden service. The conservation warden's knowledge of their administrative area, coupled with equipment furnished by the Department enhances efficiency and effectiveness during search and rescue efforts. The use of Global Positioning Units (GPS), computer mapping software, radios, cellular phones, Mobile Data Computers, boats and ATV's were all deployed this deer season in 14 search, rescue, recovery and emergency response efforts. The Department aircraft equipped with forward looking infra-red (FLIR) capabilities was put on standby in a couple of searches. The variety of calls are documented in the addendum, and include requests from other law enforcement agencies to locate missing persons (hunters and non-hunters) in wooded areas, on islands and in urban settings. In several cases, wardens assisted emergency medical personnel with transportation to victims of heart attacks, injuries and tree stand falls, and they responded to vehicular and airplane crashes.

Details of search and rescue efforts are in the addendum.

BUILDINGS and OTHER INCIDENTAL SHOOTINGS

Wardens reported that dwellings, garages, commercial buildings, vehicles on the roadway, and an occupied combine were among those items with damage from projectiles during the 9 day season. A cow was found dead and a dog was injured by a hunter as well. These property damage complaints are usually reported to local law enforcement agencies and wardens are often called to assist in the investigations based on their training and expertise. The numbers may not reflect all incidents, and it should not be assumed that all incidents are caused by participants in the gun deer season. If the responsible shooter was located, and in a number of cases they were, they would be liable for repairs, the value of the animal or for the cost of veterinary care. Additionally, arrests were made for shooting across a roadway and reckless use of a firearm when appropriate.

Reported Buildings or Other Incidental Shootings 2007-2012

Year	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
# of incidents	27	13	13	10	25	19

See details of incidents in addendum on Public Safety Issues.

ARRESTS

For the purposes of this report, "arrests" is used to indicate all violations for which persons are cited. It includes forfeiture violations in which a citation is issued, cases where a person was taken into custody when warranted, and those cases in which the subject will later be issued a criminal summons by the District Attorney.

Summary of arrests and seizures 2007 - 2012

Summary/By Year	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Total number of Arrests	994	1,009	1,284	1,404	1,400	1,518
Juvenile	18	22	43	13	33	4
Adult	976	987	1,241	1,391	1,367	1,514
Total Seizures	239	214	282	233	301	341
Illegal Deer	100	116	165	114	176	183
Illegal Bear	2	3	1	4	7	5
Other	113	82	105	105	106	144
Car Killed Deer	24	13	11	10	12	9

Most commonly encountered violations for which arrests were made 2009- 2012

Rank	Violation	2012	2011	2010	2009
1	Illegal use of bait – 2012 - 204 firearm hunters/4 archery hunters	208	184	216	334
2	Place, possess or transport loaded gun in vehicle	58	33	109	88
3	Fail to validate tag	49	45	50	37
4	Hunt within 50 feet of paved road center	42	67	53	35
5	Hunt deer before or after hours – 2012 - 31 firearm hunters/6 archery hunters	37	25	18	24
6	Shoot within 50 feet of or across road	31	35	28	32
7	Hunt without or improper blaze orange	26	14	26	23
8	Shoot from vehicle	25	25	16	16
8	Hunt deer without a license	25	36	30	35
9	Use illegal elevated device, tree stand	22	45	43	51
9	Hunt with improper license	22	21	20	28
10	Feeding wild animals violations	19	28	32	42

Summary of arrests:

- There was a 1.5% decline in the total number of citations from 2011 to 2012 (down from 1,009 arrests to 994 arrests.)
- The top violation in 2012 was illegal baiting – the number of arrests for illegal baiting (208) represents a 11.5% increase from 2011.

- The number of citations issued for possession of a load firearm in a vehicle increased 43%, going from 33 in 2011 to 58 in 2012.

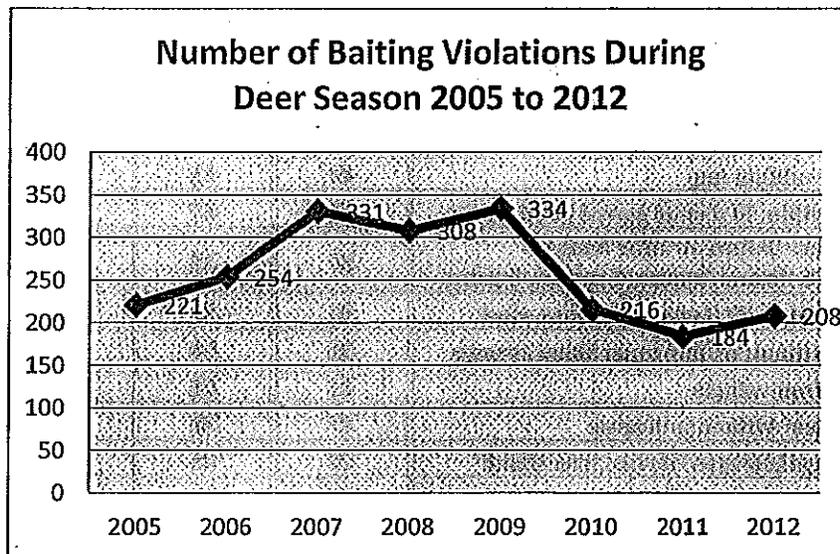
Cases representative of deer season enforcement efforts around the state can be found starting in the addendum.

Illegal Baiting and Feeding of Deer

There was no significant increase in arrests for baiting except in the Northeast Region. Baiting does continue to be a source of conflict for adjacent property owners as the placement of bait to attract deer definitely creates an advantage for the illegal hunter.

By region, arrests for illegal baiting and feeding during the gun deer season 2011 and 2012

Region	2012 Baiting citations	2011 Baiting citations	2012 Feeding citations	2011 Feeding citations
Northern	59	68	0	8
West Central	61	50	7	6
Northeast	65	41	7	9
South Central	19	16	5	4
Southeast	4	9	0	1
Total	208	184	19	28



Northern Forest

