

We conducted a short survey of deer managers from Midwestern natural resource agencies. We received responses from Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, Nebraska, Minnesota, and South Dakota. We asked about management goals; do they have them, how are they expressed (e.g. population size or trend, level of deer-human interactions, etc...), and how often goals are reviewed or modified? We also asked which metrics are used and how this relates to management decisions.

All responding state agencies use management goals. SD, MN, MO, and IA all express goals in terms of desired population trend (for IA, the goal for all units is to decrease the population to mid-1990 levels). IN and OH use buck harvest goals. NE uses multiple objectives, including; trends in population levels, antlerless harvest, buck age structure, and hunter opportunity and success. Most states intend to review goals periodically (e.g. every 5 years), but there are not hard timelines for review. IA does not have a set schedule. SD reviews goals annually.

OH uses reported harvest as the sole metric for monitoring populations; all other states use multiple metrics. All states use hunter-harvest data. IN, NE, and IA examine data on deer-vehicle collisions or road-killed deer. MO, NE, SD survey hunters (SD surveys every 3 years). SD, MO, NE survey landowners. MN uses surveys as well, but it was unclear if the surveys targeted hunters and landowner, or if it was more of a general public survey. IA conducts human dimension surveys on a 5-year basis. IN gathers information on 'hunter and landowner satisfaction levels', but it was unclear if this was through a formal survey or through other public input processes. SD and IN gather depredation complaints and MO tracks deer damage permit issuance. IA takes into account 'deer damage to agricultural at the local level', but it is not clear exactly how. MN, IA, and MO model population size and trend. MO also conducts a bowhunter observation survey and monitors hunter effort (trips/kill) and satisfaction, and also surveys agency staff. NE monitors hunter success and the age-structure of harvested bucks.

Most states do not have a formal way to integrate the information they collect. IA uses accounting models and uses model inputs that provide the greatest correlation to their indices. SD reported that landowner desires carry the most weight, except in units with substantial public land.

Some interesting side notes:

- OH currently uses counties for their DMUs, but is moving to more ecologically-based DMUs (similar to Wisconsin).
- From SD, 'We are currently working on a plan to annually measure deer survival and/or conduct aerial surveys in larger geographic areas and model lambda per management unit.'
- A description of the goal setting process in MN 'Through a goal setting process, stakeholders (representing various interests) participate in a local roundtable (can be a few meetings per focal area), learn about the history of deer management and current issues and then indicate their perception regarding the population (too

high, too low, about right, don't know). They are to work with locals in their community and play a representative role. We ask for stakeholder recommendations regarding whether the population should: **Increase 50%, Increase 25%, Stay the Same, Decrease 25%, Decrease 50%, Don't Know**, over the next 5 years. Those stakeholder goals are reviewed by area and regional managers as well as research and program staff and could be modified if the recommendation is deemed unrealistic or sufficiently different from adjacent management units. We also include a public input process (either in person or online) before a final decision is made. **Final goals can include intermediate percentages (10%, 33%) once all input is considered.'**