



## Results of the 2022 Duluth City Bowhunt

Report prepared by Brian Borkholder on behalf of the Arrowhead Bowhunters Alliance

February 2023

The Arrowhead Bowhunters Alliance (ABA) placed 310 hunters into the 2022 Duluth City Bowhunt during the Lottery. Four failed to attend mandatory Orientation and were subsequently removed. A total of 306 hunters were allowed to participate in the 2022 Duluth Hunt. A total of 121 of the 306 hunters harvested a total of 166 white-tailed deer (94 antlerless & 72 antlered males) (Table 1).

For the 2022 season, the earn-a-buck requirement was suspended on a trial basis. In part, the decision was made to try this because hunters reported not seeing many antlerless deer the last few seasons, but still had the desire to harvest venison for their families. Many of these hunters reported that antlers made no difference to them, and they'd be fine with harvesting the first antlered deer to present an ethical shot. Based upon previous year-end surveys, the ABA Board believed that hunter success may decline some, but the increased harvest of antlered individuals may more than make up for the declined antlerless harvest. However, hunter success in 2022 dropped to the lowest observed level in the 18-year history of the Duluth Hunt (Tables 1 and 2). Harvest for the 2022 season was  $0.54 \pm 0.08$  harvested deer / registered hunter, down from the previously lowest observed success of  $0.88 \pm 0.11$  deer / hunter in 2021 (Table 2). This was the harvest for all registered hunters, including those hunters that failed to harvest any deer. The ABA doesn't know whether failing to harvest a deer in 2022 was the result of not spending much time in the woods, or not even getting into the woods. The statistics for all hunters not reporting any harvested deer were removed from the calculations, and the reported harvest for successful hunters are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Harvest for successful hunters was  $1.36 \pm 0.11$  deer, down from the 2021 observed value of  $1.60 \pm 0.11$  deer (Tables 1 & 2). Antlerless harvest for the successful hunters averaged  $0.78 \pm 0.14$ , lower than that last year's observed low of  $1.19 \pm 0.08$  antlerless per successful hunters (Tables 1 & 2). Buck harvest was  $0.59 \pm 0.09$  bucks / successful hunter, up from that observed in 2021 at 0.41 bucks / successful hunter. This higher buck harvest was expected given that the earn-a-buck requirement was lifted, allowing hunters to harvest the first deer that presented a shot opportunity.

The placement of 306 hunters in 2022 (Blue bars in Figure 1), is entirely in line with that observed since the big decline between 2016 and 2017. The percentage of individuals harvesting deer in 2022 was the lowest observed since the big decline in 2013, at 39.5% (Table 1). Of the 306 registered hunters, only 121 harvested a deer in 2022 (Red line in Figure 1; and Figure 2). Total harvest of 166 deer in 2022 was the lowest harvest ever observed (Blue bars in Figure 3). Hunters in 2022 harvested at the lowest rate observed (blue & red lines in Figure 3).

Total harvest had been somewhat stable from 2006 thru 2012, between 500 and 600 animals (blue bars in Figure 3). Beginning with the 2013 season, and continuing thru the 2022 season, harvest dropped well below this level (Figure 3). The number of deer harvested / hunter was essentially flat at about 1.8 deer / hunter from 2007 – 2010 and dropped to approximately 1.0 deer / hunter in 2013 (red line in Figure 3). In 2015, it dipped below 1.0 for the first time. During the first season of the hunt, more than 92% of participating hunters harvested a deer (Figure 1, Table 1). In 2016, that percentage was below 50%, but rose slightly in 2017 and has remained somewhat stable since, between 49% and 62% (Figure 1; Table 1). While the ABA Board and City Administration anticipated that harvest might decline some, the harvest of 0.54 deer / hunter was unexpectedly low (Tables 1 & 2; Figure 3).

In line with the stated goals of this management Hunt, and even with the lifting of the earn-a-buck requirement, the 2022 harvest was still dominated by antlerless individuals (Table 1, Figure 4). Of the 166 deer harvested, 94



(56.6%) were antlerless individuals. The breakdown of antlerless was 79 adult does, 8 fawn does, and 7 fawn bucks (Figure 4).

The Duluth City Council has established 42 Designated Hunting Areas (DHAs) throughout the City of Duluth. Harvest among these DHAs is highly variable (Figure 5). Four DHAs (1, 13, 10C, & 16B) had the highest harvest in 2022 at only 10 deer. Hunters harvested 9 deer from DHAs 15B and 17D. Hot spots are areas outside of DHAs, which the ABA Board and the Duluth Police Department set up on an ad hoc basis to target localized problem deer populations. In 2022, only 11 deer were harvested from Hot Spots (Table 3). Previously, harvest in the Hot Spots made up a significant portion of the antlerless harvest. But in the absence of the earn-a-buck requirement, hunters were not desperate to fulfill this requirement. Thus, interest in Hot Spots was not as high as in previous seasons. Hunters that needed venison were the only ones pursuing opportunities in Hot Spots. Figure 6 shows a map of the City of Duluth with the 42 various DHAs identified, along with the number of deer harvested for each of the DHAs.

For the 18 seasons of the Duluth Bowhunt, total harvest by registered bowhunters is 7358 white-tailed deer; of which 6037 were antlerless while 1321 were antlered males (Table 1). Only 17.9% of the harvest has been antlered males, completely in line with the stated goals of this hunt to reduce antlerless individuals, and thus the reproductive potential of the Duluth deer herd.

When standardized by area, harvest trends (harvest / mile<sup>2</sup>) continue to remain low compared to the early years. Harvest per square mile (mile<sup>2</sup>) is presented in a map view of the City of Duluth (Figure 7). Figure 8 shows a consistent decline in harvest / mile<sup>2</sup> throughout the history of the hunt on a city-wide basis. In 2022, harvest / mile<sup>2</sup> was only 21.7% of that observed in our first year's harvest (Figure 8). At 3.9 deer / mi<sup>2</sup>, the 2022 harvest is even lower than the average over the last six seasons of 7.0 deer / mi<sup>2</sup>. Harvest of more than 20 deer harvested / mile<sup>2</sup> were once common within some of the DHAs (Figure 8, 2006 – 2014 seasons), but these high harvest levels haven't been observed city-wide since and aren't likely to ever again be observed within Duluth.

Overall, the deer harvested / mile<sup>2</sup> was low (Figures 7 & 8). During the early years of the hunt, the white-tailed deer density was high, as was hunter success, which was relatively constant at just under 2.0 deer / hunter (blue line, Figure 3). After several seasons of high harvest, our hunters began to have a noticeable effect on the herd, and it, along with hunter success, began a five-year decline during what may be referred to as the “declining years” of the Duluth Hunt. 2022 represents the tenth consecutive year of the “Maintenance Phase” of the hunt, where the deer herd seems to have stabilized, as has hunter success, at a level at or just under 1.0 deer per hunter. Since entering the Maintenance Phase, by all accounts and observations, the deer herd isn't where hunters may like it, but likely where car drivers and gardeners do. Until 2022, harvest had been hovering between 6 – 8 deer / mile<sup>2</sup> (Figure 8). This year, it dropped to under 4 deer harvested / mi<sup>2</sup>, and continues the steady decline in harvest rate observed since inception of this Hunt (Figure 9).

The deer population is down from levels observed prior to the start of this Hunt Program. Our hunters have been very successful at lowering the Duluth deer herd, as promised to the Duluth residents and City Council. While not enjoyable for those hunters that have to sit eight, ten, or even twelve times between deer sightings, it is hard to argue that this Hunt Program hasn't been a success. Our hunters are to be commended.

This is not new information to us. We've stated before that “success” will be redefined as we move from the phase of depressing the deer herd to one of maintaining it at this low level. Bowhunters have never been successful at total deer herd removal in any urban hunt within the United States. Reduction is possible, and Duluth hunters have demonstrated this. But bowhunters will never completely eliminate white-tailed deer from the landscape. Duluth residents likely would not support a complete elimination of the deer herd. From the hunters'



perspective, the definition for success needs to be the continued opportunity to participate in a sport that is a passion of many, in our own backyard. Success from the Duluth community's perspective needs to be the maintenance of the herd at this lower level. Continuing this opportunity provides a service to our community by keeping the herd at current levels. Eliminating this opportunity will no doubt increase the deer herd back to 2005 population levels in a few short years, a level completely unacceptable to the residents, insurance companies, and the Duluth Police Department.

It is important to note that even though our hunters are largely not satisfied with the success rates in recent seasons (Figure 10), it is still significantly higher than the MN Statewide archery success rate, which in 2021 was 19.9% (C. Balzer, MN DNR, personal communication). Clearly, when compared to the past success rates in the city hunt, the success rate is down, but is still relatively high compared to the State (54%, Table 1, Figure 10). Our hunters can be expected to harvest a deer every 1.8 years (ABA Data), as opposed to the statewide average of hunters harvesting 1 deer every 5.0 years (C. Balzer, MNDNR, personal communication). The success of firearms hunters in the 100 series Deer Permit Areas (northern MN) was 24.1% in 2021 (C. Balzer, MNDNR, personal communication). So even compared with local rifle hunters, our Duluth hunters still have a much higher success. There are several hypotheses that may explain this difference in success rates, even given a real or perceived lack of deer in the woods. Duluth hunters jump thru a lot of hoops to get into this Hunt, and thus are likely to invest more time in the woods. Plus, it is very convenient to hunt in your back yard or after work to jump into a stand three blocks away. It is much less convenient to run up to deer shacks 30 miles out of town, or to leave the city after work and still have the daylight time to get in an evening sit. Without this opportunity, many of our hunters would likely spend much less time in the woods, and their hunting success would reflect that lack of effort.

The ABA has been advising local politicians and landowners to adjust their expectations and redefine the definition of "success" for this urban hunt. In 2005, "success" was defined by our hunters as "punching all five tags". Politicians and landowners defined "success" as a harvest of 500 or more deer during those early seasons. Politicians sought to increase hunter participation and recruitment from one year to the next in order to increase harvest and to meet their definition of "success". For several years now, the data has indicated those days are in the past, as we now have a new deer herd sustained at levels far lower than those observed prior to the start of this hunt in 2005, and far lower than what can sustain a harvest exceeding 500 deer per season. Hindsight demonstrates that the harvest of 500 deer per year was definitely not sustainable.

The ABA has been preaching to our bowhunters for years to adjust their expectations for the future, especially for those hunters that have participated for the last 18 years. Gone are the days of seeing a dozen deer every evening in the woods. While this Hunt Program continues, those population levels will never be seen again. Hunters that don't have the time or patience to wait for just one or two harvest opportunities in a season are encouraged to hunt elsewhere. What the ABA and law enforcement can't tolerate are hunters artificially increasing harvest opportunities at the expense of ethics and the law. Examples include baiting or creating illegal food plots on public lands. Another example is choosing to ignore the DHA boundaries, hunting illegally in areas not approved by the Duluth City Council or the Duluth Police Department, and hunting illegally from the ground, all of which occurred during the 2022 season. While lower deer numbers and harvest opportunities are a hard reality for hunters that have been with this Program since inception, it's vital that participants consider the future of the Hunt Program and our continued acceptance by the Duluth residents before choosing to break the law. If these lower deer numbers are not acceptable to individual hunters, the ABA would ask that they pull out a State map and find other areas that may have higher deer densities than what is currently observed within Duluth.

Hunters can always exercise self-discipline and self-regulation. Just because the State and City say you can harvest three deer doesn't mean you have to do so. No one will think less of you as a hunter if you only harvest one deer.



If you have a large family and need the three deer, that's also no one's business. But for every female deer that is allowed to walk in year-1 means there could be as many as three deer walking in the woods in year-2. Eliminating the earn-a-buck requirement will go a long way towards rebalancing this herd, and getting the male:female sex ratio back into proper balance, especially if our hunters opt out of harvesting a female deer. But only a single season of this requirement being lifted will not accomplish this goal. It may take several seasons with very low antlerless harvest rates in order to get the sex ratio back into proper balance. This issue will be discussed by the ABA Board and the Deer Review Committee as we press towards the 2023 Hunt and regulations for the Hunt.



Table 1. Summary Statistics for the Duluth City Bowhunt. Total harvest / hunter for each deer type reports the harvest for all hunters participating in the Hunt. Harvest / successful hunter removes all of the hunters that failed to register a deer during each season. Percentage Donated reports the percentage of harvested deer donated to friends, family, or food shelves. The number of hunters and percentage harvesting two or more deer is also reported, along with the percentage of hunters that were successful in harvesting any deer. Mean (average), maximum and minimum observed values are summarized at the bottom of the table. Total harvest numbers are also presented.

	# Hunters Placed	# Hunters Harvesting	Total Harvest	Total Antlerless	Total Antlered	Total Harvest / Hunter	Total Harvest / Successful Hunter	Buck Harvest / Hunter	Buck Harvest / Successful Hunter	Antlerless Harvest / Hunter	Antlerless Harvest / Successful Hunter	% Donated	% Hunters Harvesting a Deer	No. Hunters Harvesting 2+ Deer	% Hunters Harvesting 2+ deer	% Hunters Harvesting a Deer
2005	192	177	333	265	68	1.73	1.88	0.35	0.38	1.38	1.50		92.2%			92.2%
2006	252	196	564	485	79	2.24	2.88	0.31	0.40	1.92	2.47		77.8%	149	59.1%	77.8%
2007	315	252	568	477	91	1.80	2.25	0.29	0.36	1.51	1.89		80.0%	155	49.2%	80.0%
2008	289	220	533	458	75	1.84	2.42	0.26	0.34	1.58	2.08		76.1%	141	48.8%	76.1%
2009	315	247	588	494	94	1.87	2.38	0.30	0.38	1.57	2.00	51.7%	78.4%	153	48.6%	78.4%
2010	339	272	604	515	89	1.78	2.22	0.26	0.33	1.52	1.89	61.8%	80.2%	159	46.9%	80.2%
2011	377	268	587	476	111	1.56	2.19	0.29	0.41	1.26	1.78	57.9%	71.1%	168	44.6%	71.1%
2012	359	274	574	483	91	1.60	2.09	0.25	0.33	1.35	1.76	53.7%	76.3%	162	45.1%	76.3%
2013	391	231	399	346	53	1.02	1.73	0.14	0.23	0.88	1.50	58.3%	59.1%	98	25.1%	59.1%
2014	355	208	451	375	76	1.27	2.17	0.21	0.37	1.06	1.80	51.2%	58.6%	107	30.1%	58.6%
2015	375	209	371	309	62	0.99	1.79	0.16	0.30	0.82	1.48	47.7%	55.7%	102	27.2%	55.7%
2016	352	174	281	235	46	0.80	2.02	0.13	0.26	0.67	1.35	50.4%	49.4%	70	19.9%	49.4%
2017	296	160	290	239	51	0.98	1.81	0.17	0.32	0.81	1.85	52.8%	54.1%	74	25.0%	54.1%
2018	285	157	240	182	58	0.84	1.53	0.20	0.37	0.64	1.16	53.3%	55.1%	70	24.6%	55.1%
2019	283	151	233	179	54	0.82	1.54	0.23	0.36	0.63	1.19	48.9%	53.4%	70	24.7%	53.4%
2020	305	189	312	228	84	1.02	1.65	0.28	0.44	0.75	1.21	32.1%	62.0%	99	32.5%	62.0%
2021	299	165	264	197	67	0.88	1.60	0.22	0.41	0.66	1.19	37.9%	55.2%	78	26.1%	55.2%
2022	306	121	166	94	72	0.54	1.37	0.24	0.60	0.31	0.78	60.2%	39.5%	33	10.8%	39.5%
Mean	315.8	203.9	408.8	335.4	73.4	1.31	1.97	0.24	0.37	1.07	1.60	51.3%	65.2%	111.06	34.6%	65.2%
Min	192	121	166	94	46	0.54	1.37	0.13	0.23	0.31	0.78	32.1%	39.5%	33.00	10.8%	39.5%
Max	391	274	604	515	111	2.24	2.88	0.35	0.60	1.92	2.47	61.8%	92.2%	168.00	59.1%	92.2%
Sum			7358	6037	1321											



Table 2. Hunter harvest statistics for the 2022 Duluth Bowhunt, along with 2020 and 2021 statistics and the long-term averages. As in Table 1, total harvest / hunter for each deer type reports the harvest for all hunters participating in the Hunt. Harvest / successful hunter removes all of the hunters that failed to register a deer during each season.

	2022	2021	2020	Long-term Duluth Average
Total Harvest/Hunter	$0.54 \pm 0.08$	$0.88 \pm 0.11$	$1.02 \pm 0.11$	$1.31 \pm 0.24$
Buck Harvest / Hunter	$0.24 \pm .05$	$0.22 \pm .05$	$0.28 \pm 0.05$	$0.24 \pm 0.03$
Antlerless Harvest / Hunter	$0.30 \pm 0.07$	$0.66 \pm 0.08$	$0.75 \pm 0.08$	$1.07 \pm 0.22$
Harvest / Successful Hunter	$1.36 \pm 0.11$	$1.60 \pm 0.11$	$1.65 \pm 0.10$	$1.97 \pm 0.19$
Buck Harvest / Successful Hunter	$0.59 \pm 0.09$	$0.41 \pm 0.08$	$0.44 \pm 0.07$	$0.37 \pm 0.04$
Antlerless Harvest / Successful Hunter	$0.78 \pm 0.14$	$1.19 \pm 0.08$	$1.21 \pm 0.08$	$1.60 \pm 0.21$

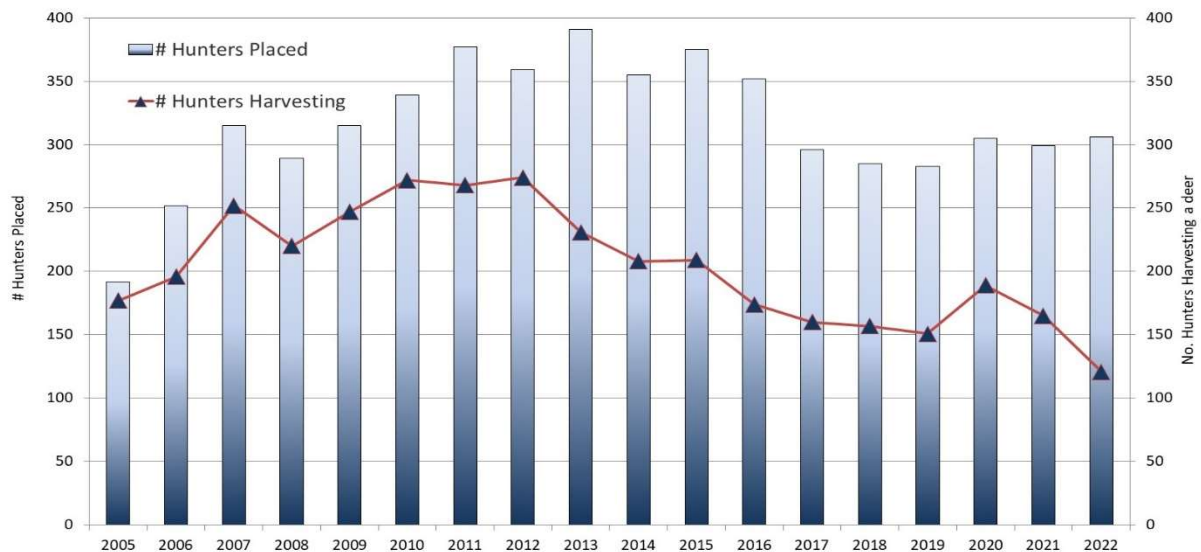


Figure 1. Number of hunters placed (left axis) and the number of those hunters harvesting deer (right axis) in each season of the Duluth City Bowhunt.



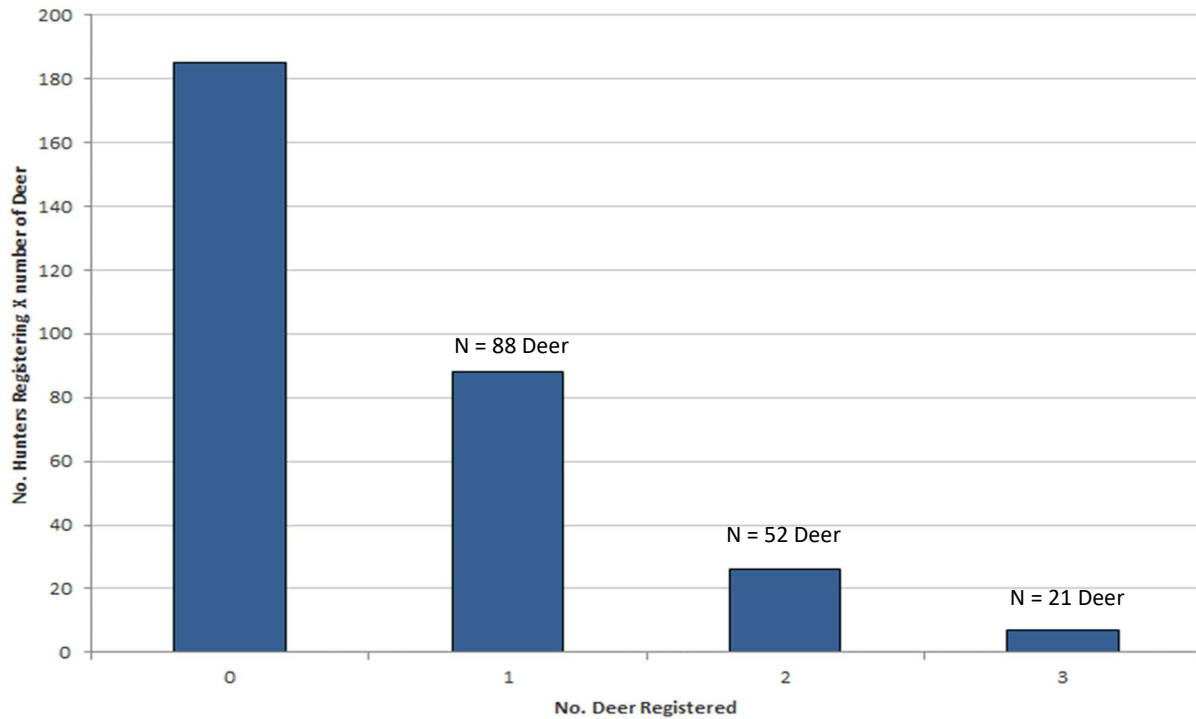


Figure 2. The number of Duluth City bowhunters and the number of deer harvested for the 2022 Duluth City Bowhunt ( $N = 306$  hunters). Numbers above indicate the number of deer harvested by each group, e.g. 7 hunters harvested 3 deer for a total of 21 deer. 185 hunters failed to harvest a deer in 2022 (0 on x-axis).

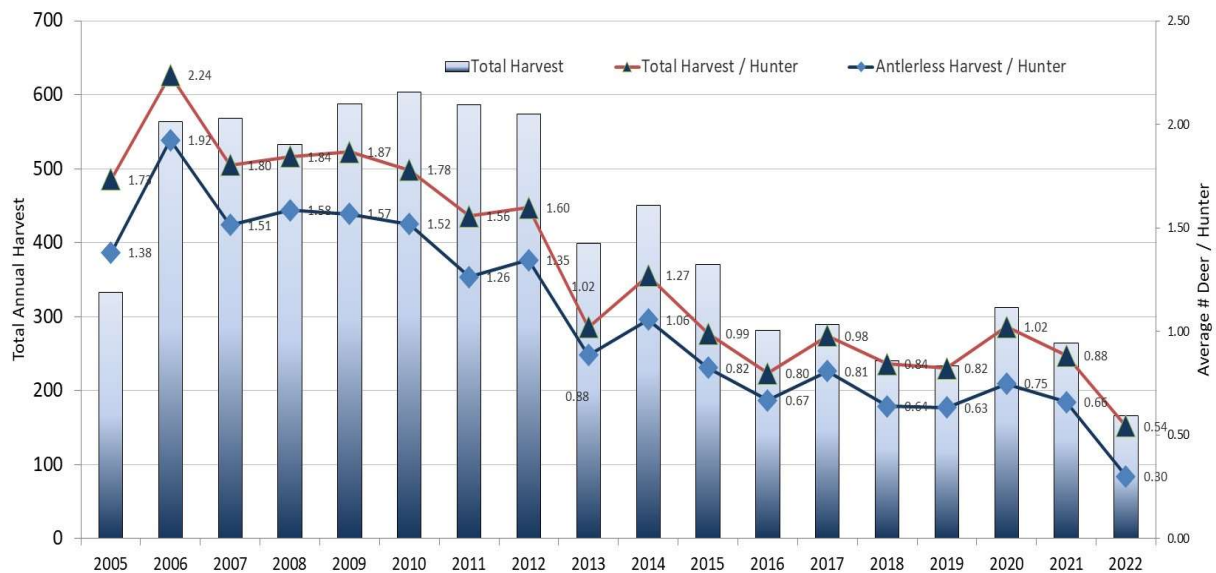


Figure 3. Total harvest (blue bars), average harvest per hunter (triangles and red line), and average antlerless per hunter (blue diamonds) for the 18 seasons of the Duluth City Bowhunt.



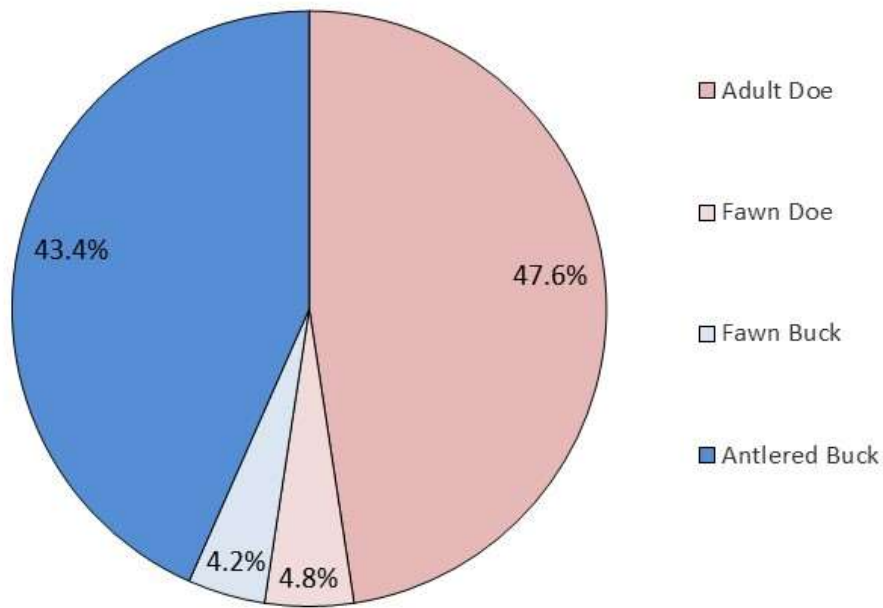


Figure 4. Breakdown of harvest by deer type for the 2022 Duluth Bowhunt.

Table 3. Harvest within Hot Spots during the 2022 Duluth City Bowhunt. Harvest within Hot Spots is limited to antlerless only.

Description	No. Antlerless Harvested
Lakeside	2
Little Ely	6
Sneve	1
Wabasha	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>



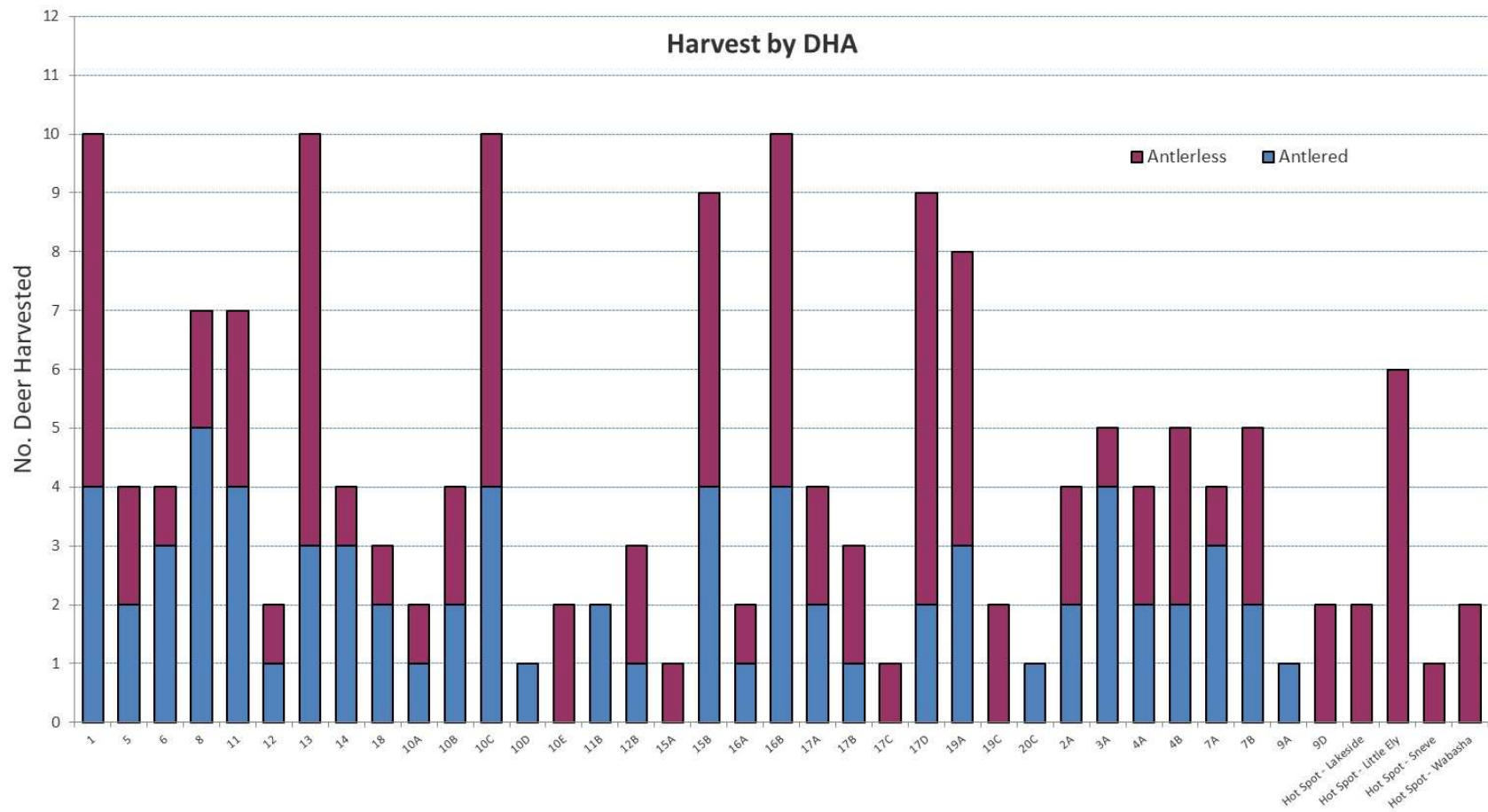


Figure 5. Number of deer harvested by deer type (Antlerless or Antlered) within each of the 42 designated hunting areas (DHAs) within the City of Duluth during the 2022 bow hunt.

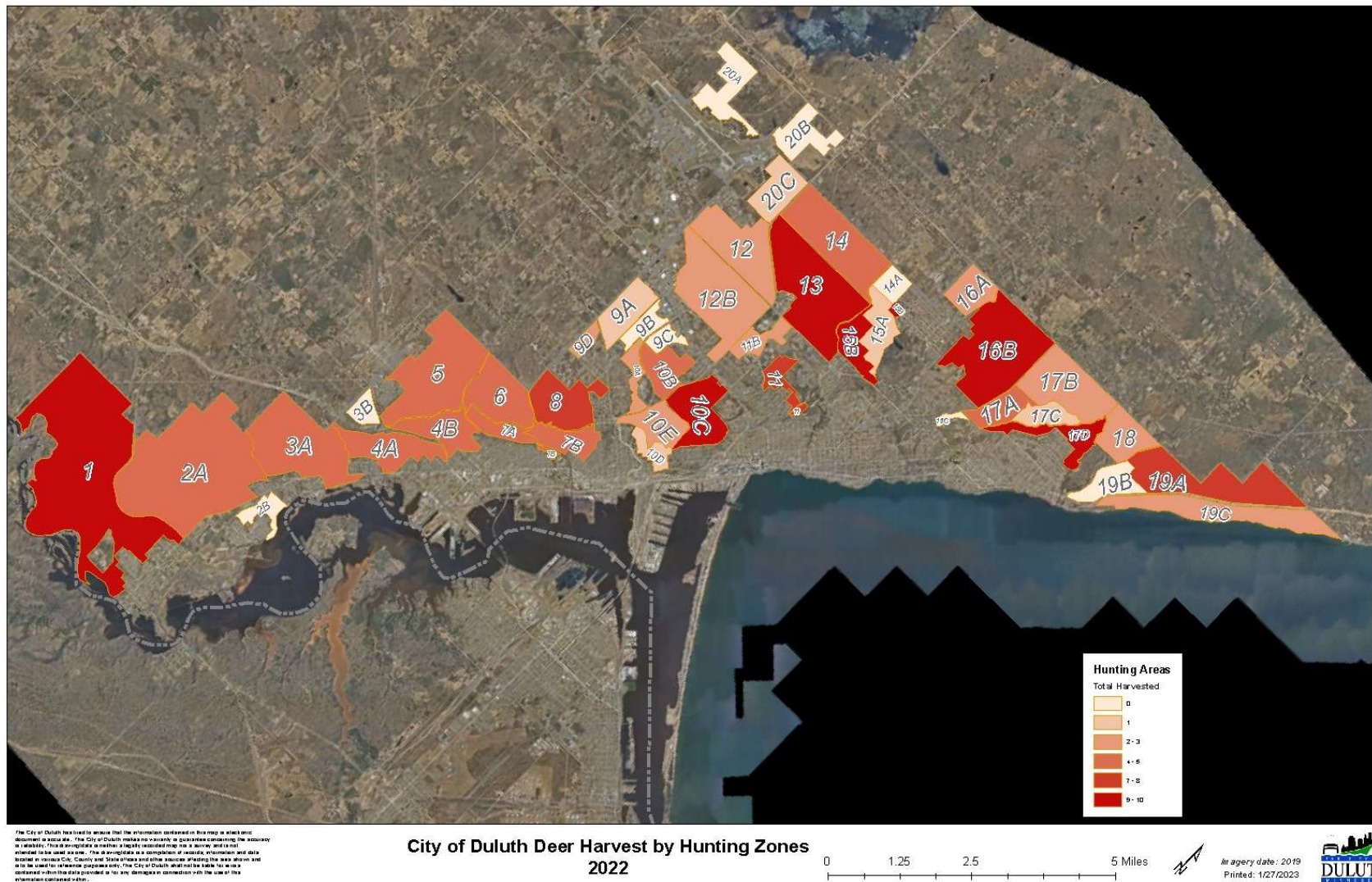


Figure 6. Map of the City of Duluth, along with harvest (number of deer) within each of the 42 Designated Hunting Areas during the 2022 Duluth City Bowhunt. DHAs are labelled on the map. The color of the DHA indicates the number of deer harvested as identified in the legend at the right. Map courtesy of City of Duluth GIS Department.



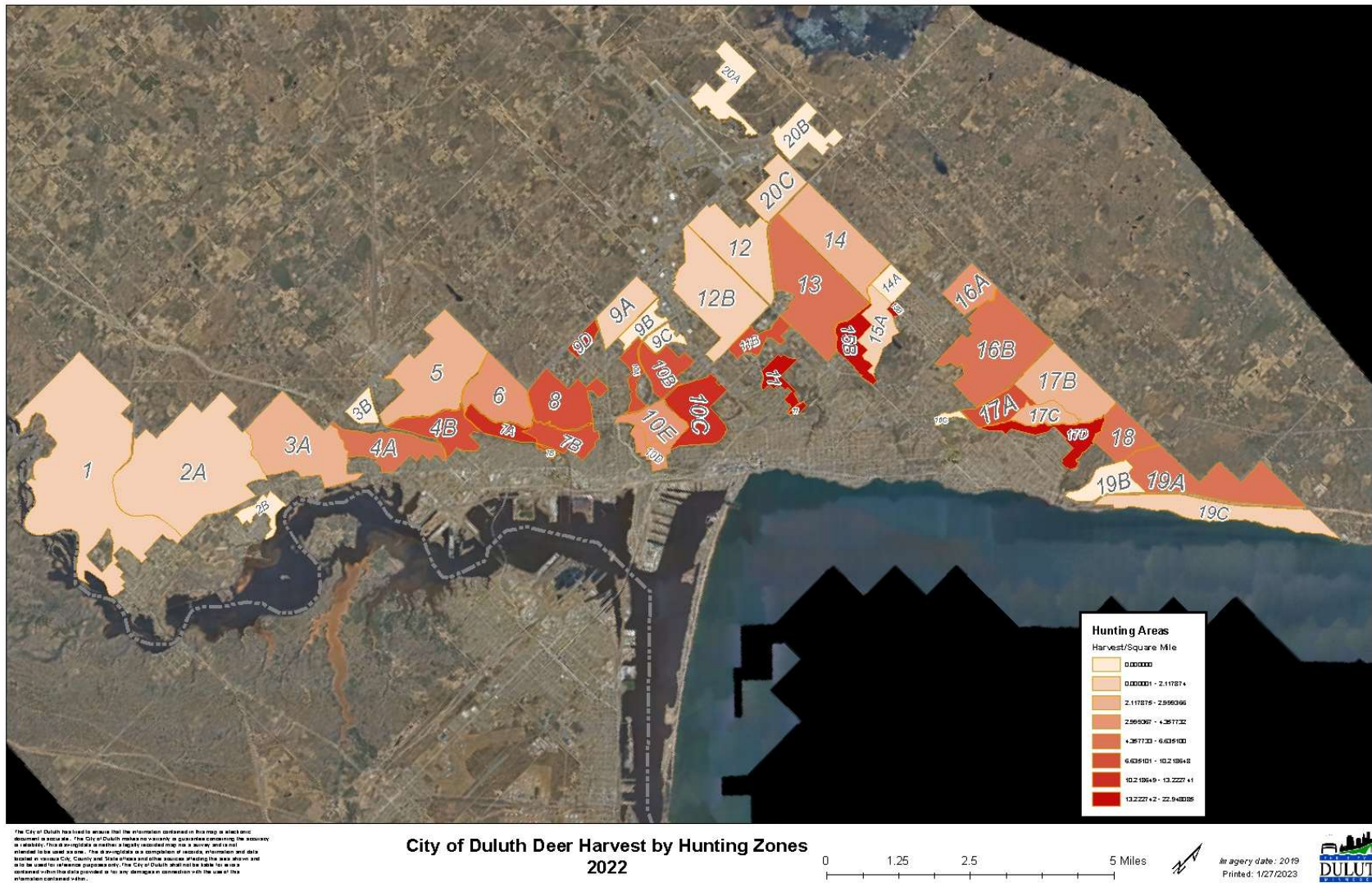


Figure 7. Map of the City of Duluth, along with harvest per mile<sup>2</sup> within each of the 42 Designated Hunting Areas during the 2022 Duluth City Bowhunt. DHAs are labelled on the map. The color of the DHA indicates the number of deer harvested per mile<sup>2</sup> as identified in the legend at the right. Map courtesy of City of Duluth GIS Department.



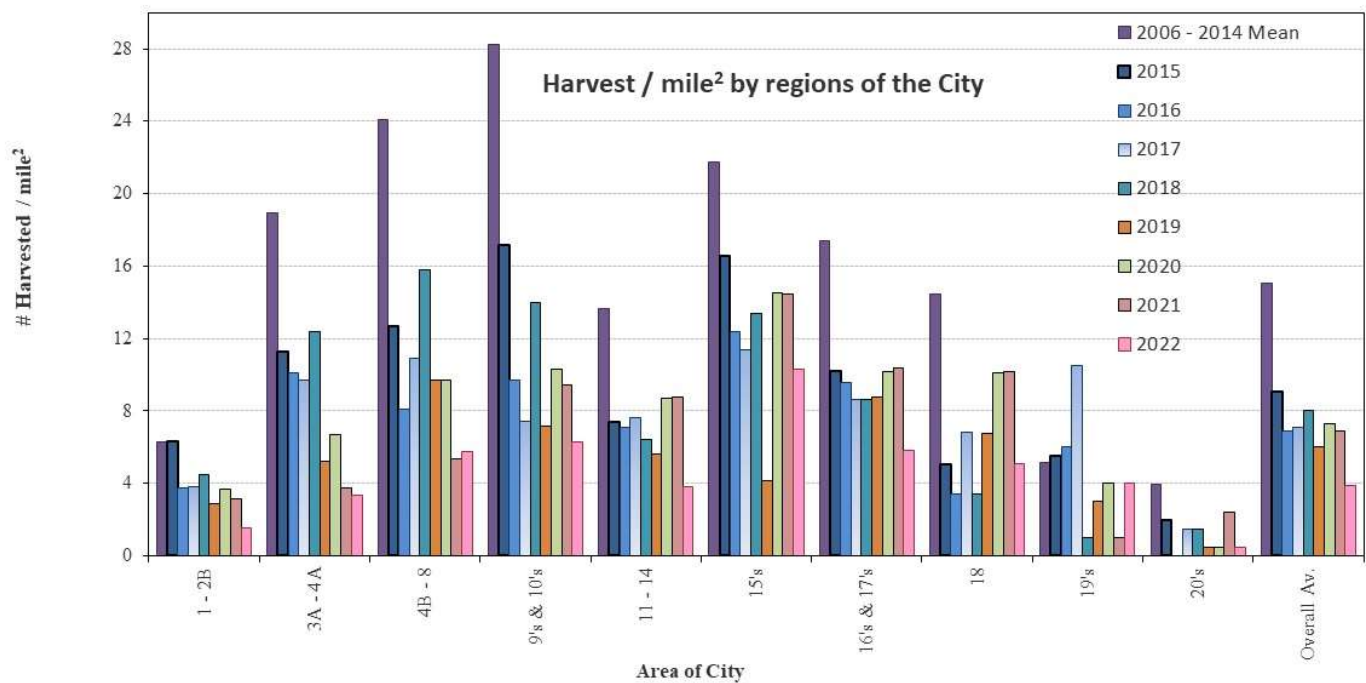


Figure 8. Harvest / mile<sup>2</sup> in various areas of the City of Duluth. Data presented is for the 2015 – 2022 seasons, and the long-term average (mean).

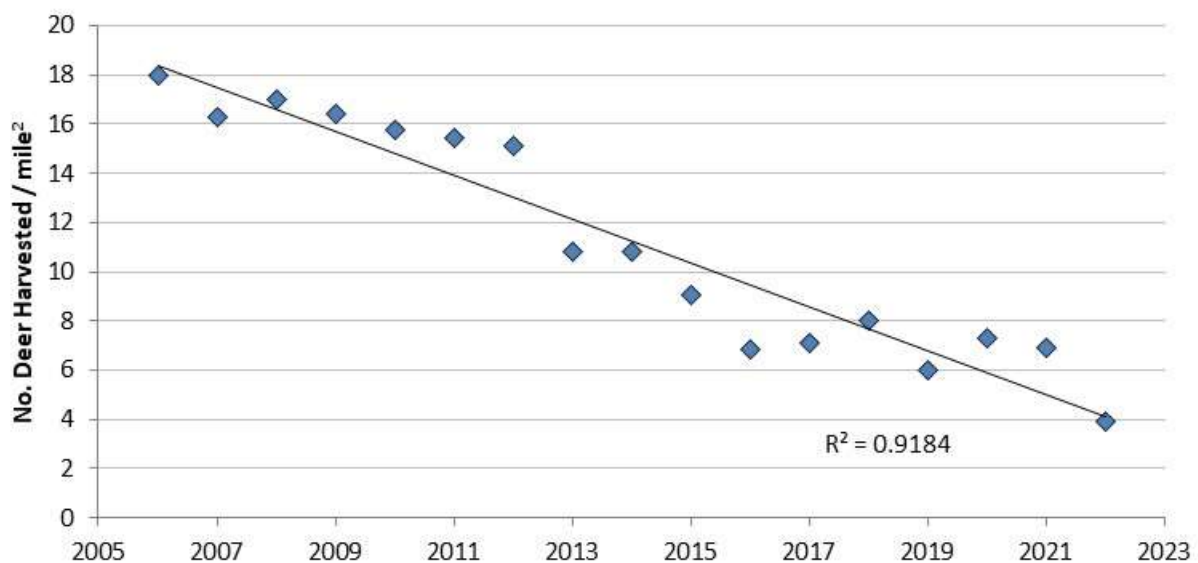


Figure 9. Overall harvest / mile<sup>2</sup> in the City of Duluth. Data presented is for the 2006 – 2022 seasons. DHAs were changed after the 2005 inaugural season and have stayed consistent since.

## General Hunt details for the 2022 season

### Private Lands

Hunters may access and hunt on any private property, with permission, within any of the DHAs. Harvest from private lands accounted for 48.8% of the 2022 harvest (Figure 10). A general misconception among some of the hunters, especially new ones, is that one needs access to private land in order to harvest deer, and specifically antlered males. Figure 11 breaks down harvest on public and private lands by deer type, and demonstrates that deer are still found on the public tracts of land within the City. In fact, more antlered deer were taken from public lands (Figure 11). This demonstrates the importance of continued public support for this hunt and forging positive relationships with Duluth landowners who continue to allow bowhunters to participate in this sport on their property.

Not all of the DHAs are created equally in terms of the portion of public and private lands within their boundaries. Figure 12 breaks down harvest within the various DHAs by public and private. Clearly DHAs such as DHAs 1, 2A, 3A, 4A, 10C, and 19A are dominated by City-owned public lands, whereas DHAs 13 and 15B for example, seem to have more opportunities available on private lands.

### Hot Spots

Hot spots represent a unique portion of the private land harvest. Hot spots are private parcels OUTSIDE of the DHAs established by the Duluth City Council. What makes these areas unique is that private citizens petition the ABA to hunt on their property. Essentially, these are areas where the main complaint is “*Why not in my backyard? We still have deer problems.*” For the third consecutive season, hot spots represented a significant portion of the harvest (Table 3, Figure 12), though not as high as in previous seasons for reasons previously discussed.

The ABA does NOT initiate set-up of hot spots. We have more than enough work to find time to query the city’s residents and locate additional hunting spots for our hunters. When landowners approach the ABA requesting their property be set up as a hot spot, the ABA will only proceed if, and only if, the property owner has discussed with, and received support from their neighbors. The ABA will NEVER push our way into neighborhoods without the support of the residents.

If you know of landowners that still are experiencing deer problems, please have them contact the ABA at the official email address ([infoduluthhunt@gmail.com](mailto:infoduluthhunt@gmail.com)). The ABA will work with the landowners and determine if this is a possibility for their land to be included in this Program. Landowners and our hunters need to understand that these spots are NOT set up to be private hunting reserves for one or two individuals. The ABA will need to be able to move multiple hunters into and out of the Hot Spots to maximize opportunity and harvest.

Another criterion unique to Hot Spots is that currently they are open for antlerless harvest only. Many hunters have asked for buck harvest to be allowed, likely due to constant observations of “trophy” individuals at some of these hot spots. The ABA allowed buck harvest for one season, which turned out to be a management nightmare. Hunters panicked that bucks were taken and they weren’t given the opportunity to hunt them first. Basket 6-pointers grew to 200-inch trophies overnight thru social media and the rumor mill. For those reasons, the ABA has recommended to the City that these spots be open to antlerless harvest only. The ABA does not anticipate recommending changes to the policy for the foreseeable future. We trust our hunters understand the reasons for this policy.



### Public vs. Private Land Harvest Total No. Deer

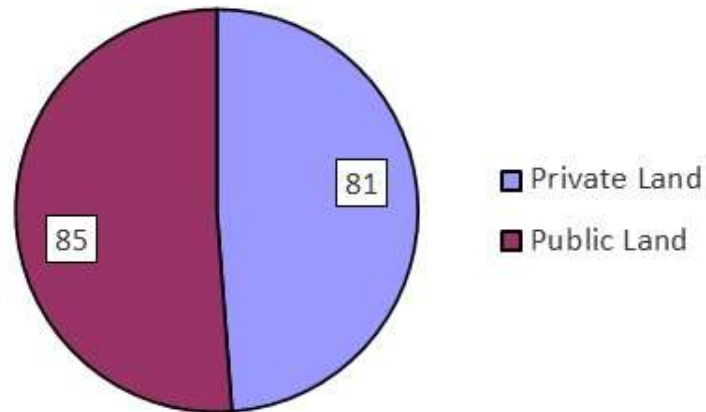


Figure 10. Harvest on public and private lands within the designated hunting areas during the 2022 Duluth City Bowhunt.

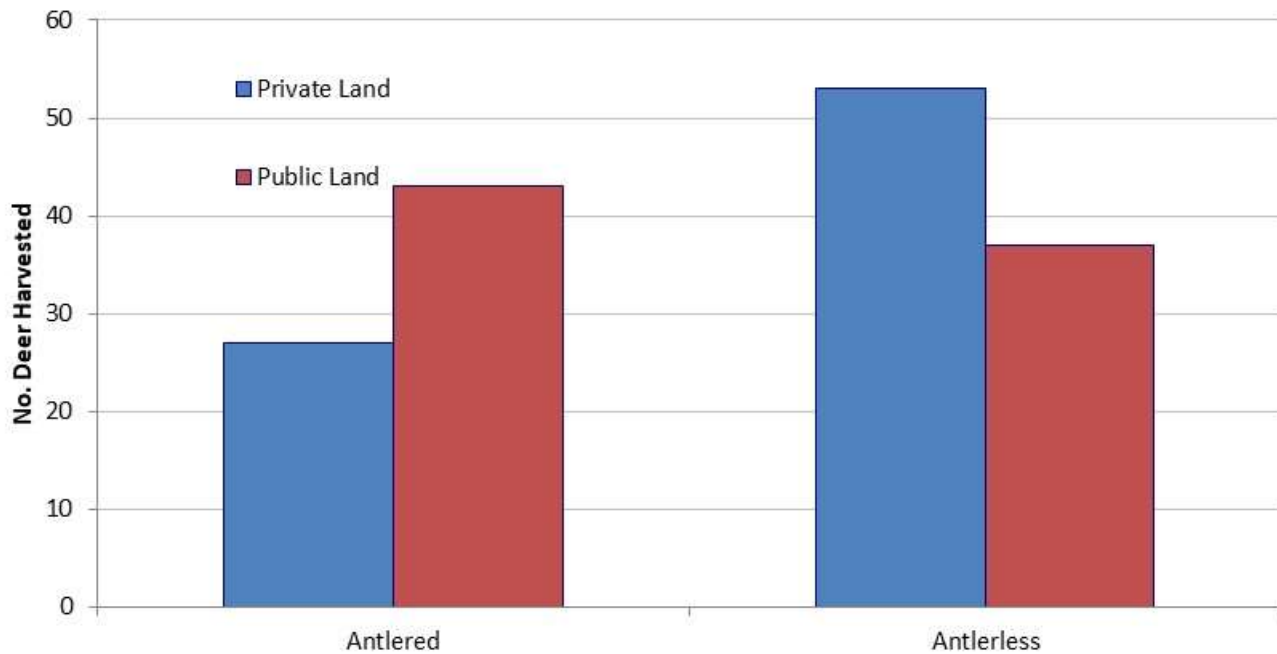


Figure 11. Harvest by deer type on public and private lands within the designated hunting areas during the 2022 Duluth City Bowhunt.

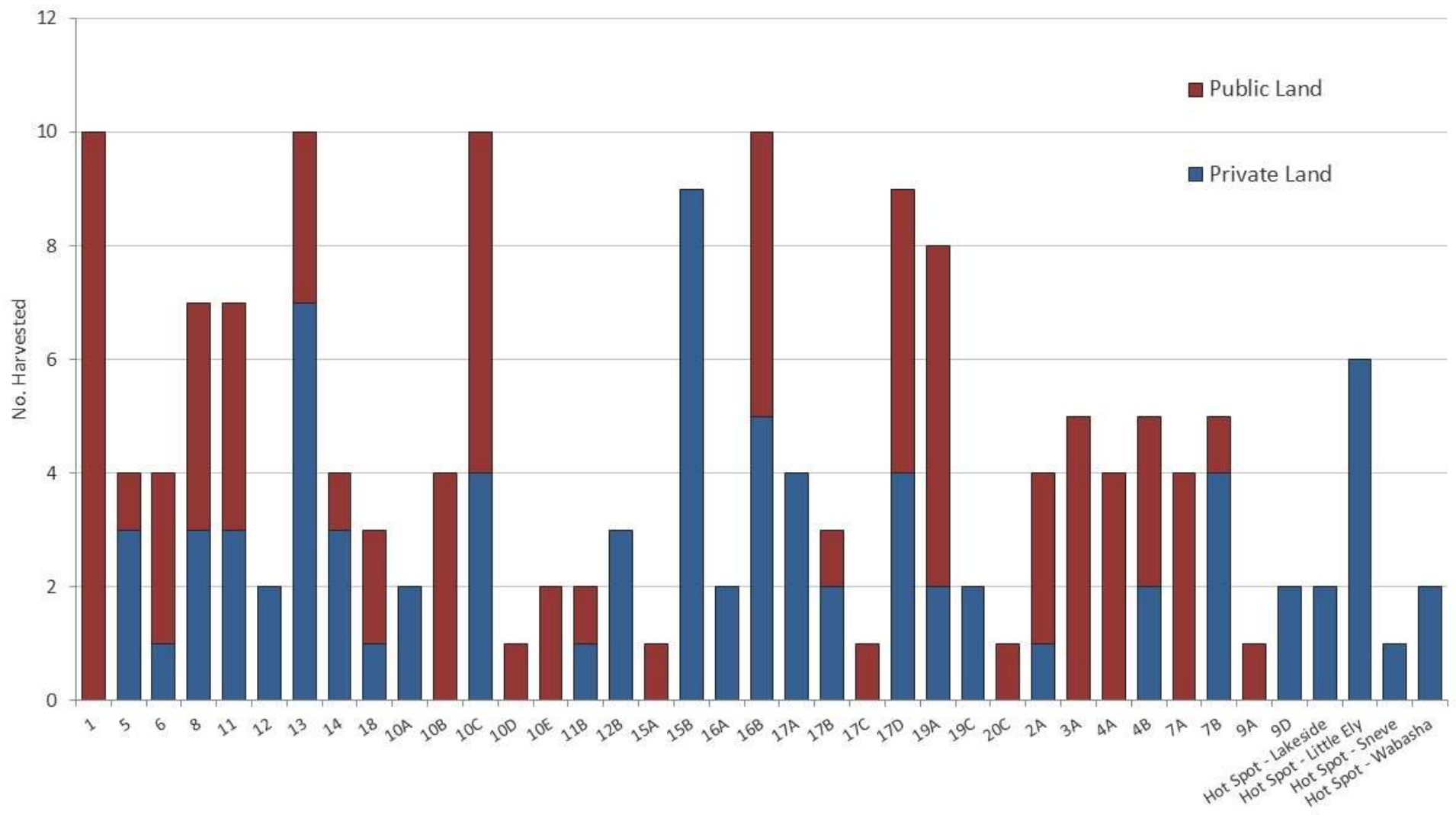


Figure 12. Harvest by Designated Hunting Area on public and private lands during the 2022 Duluth City Bowhunt.





### Hearts:

Again in 2022, Duluth hunters were harassed into saving hearts from their harvested white-tailed deer. Hearts are used by the University of Minnesota – Duluth Medical School for dissection and anatomy. Medical School personnel approached the ABA many years ago, requesting hearts for their future surgeons to learn fine and intricate heart anatomy. Fresh hearts have much finer detail in the arteries and capillaries than do formalin-preserved ones. Hearts were turned over in early November. In 2022, 55% of our hunters indicated that they participated in this opportunity (Figure 13), well above participation rates of recent years. This increase in participation may, in part, be due to the generosity of one of our hunters. We have a hunter who personally bought and donated prizes to raffle off to participating hunters. One of the 2022 prizes was a 3D deer target. The ABA Board wishes to personally thank this generous individual. Without his generosity, we may not have collected as many hearts as we did in 2022.

This is a wonderful opportunity for hunters to give back to the community that has opened up their backyards for our bowhunting recreation. After near constant badgering to save hearts, the ABA finds it hard to believe that 19 hunters “forgot” to save hearts (Figure 13). The ABA believes that these “forgot’s” should really be “*no, I don’t intend to bother with this, it’s just not important to me*”. The ABA Board struggles with how to make this Program relevant to our hunters, and to encourage continued / further participation. While raffle prizes no doubt help, hunters have to want to participate in the Program. The ABA is immensely grateful to those hunters that went out of their way to collect, store, and ultimately deliver these hearts. The Board would encourage ALL hunters to participate in the future. This is especially important given that harvest is likely to continue to decline, meaning there will be fewer hearts available to collect, and UMD needs approximately 75 hearts each fall. Every heart will

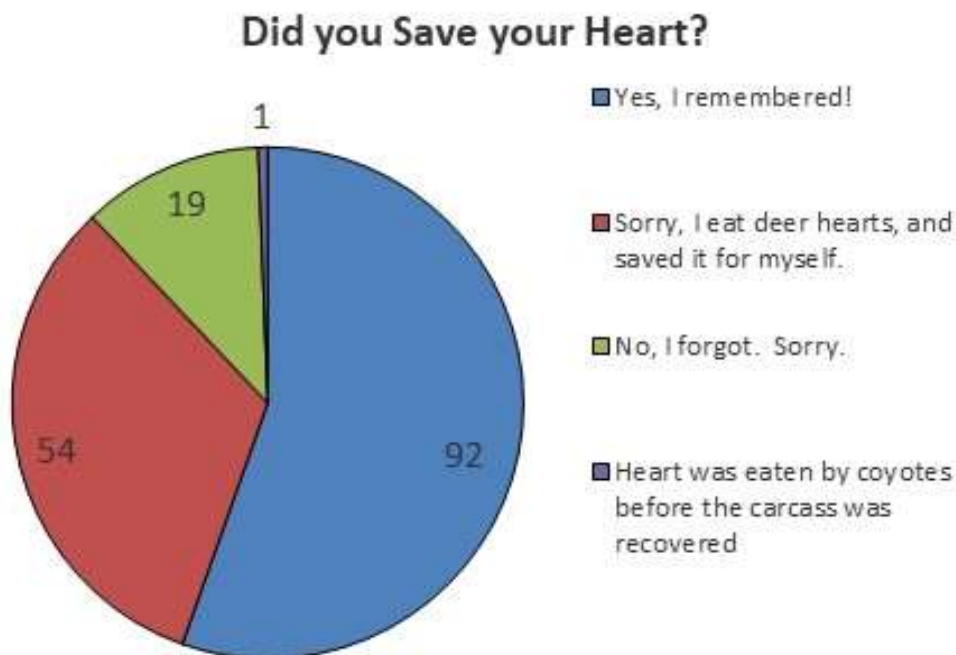


Figure 13. Responses from hunters who were asked to save deer hearts for the UMD-Medical School during the 2022 Duluth City Bowhunt.

be important in 2023. And to be clear, hearts do not need to be solely collected from Duluth nor do they need to be white-tailed deer hearts. UMD will take hearts from bear, moose, elk, antelope, mule and white-tailed deer, and any other large mammal legally harvested outside of the City.

### **Year End Survey:**

At the conclusion of every season in the Duluth City Bowhunt, our hunters are asked to complete a Year End Survey. This survey is 100% anonymous. Participants are asked several questions, ranging from wounding deer to observational reports. This year, survey participation was not as high as in 2020. 189 of the 306 participating hunters (61.8%) took part in the survey. By comparison, survey response rate were 74.4% in 2020. Our 2022 survey respondents were responsible for a reported 78.2% of the harvest, suggesting that if hunters were successful this season, they were perhaps slightly more likely to participate in the Year End Survey. The ABA Board is very grateful for those hunters that took the time to provide feedback to the Board and to the City of Duluth. All comments will be shared with the City (Appendix 1).

Response rate was different between returning hunters (63.7%) and new hunters (49.2%). 160 returning hunters and 29 new hunters filled in this survey. Of these hunters, 92.6% reported that they actually hunted in 2022 after being placed. The ABA understands that life does happen, and not everyone placed into the hunt at Lottery Night will have the opportunity to actually participate. The respondents largely reported that most (89.9%) will likely apply for the 2023 Hunt. Seventeen (17) individuals indicated that they were still undecided as to whether they will apply in 2023. Two hunters indicated that they would not be applying due to too many hoops, regulations, and too few deer.

Survey respondents reported harvesting 129 of the 166 deer. An additional 28 deer were reported as being wounded, with 15 of these deer reported as being “known to have survived” with nothing more than haircuts or scratches. This gives a reported wounding rate of 17.8% total, and 8.3% if the presumed surviving deer are removed from the analysis. This 17.8% is the highest reported wounding rate for the Duluth hunters.

### **Earn-A-Buck Requirement:**

During the last several seasons, many of our hunters complained that they could have harvested an antlered deer, but did not since they had not yet fulfilled the earn-a-buck requirement by first harvesting an antlerless individual. In 2017, this requirement was removed on 1 December. Only five (5) of our hunters took advantage of this opportunity by harvesting a buck without first harvesting an antlerless individual in 2017. In 2018, the earn-a-buck requirement was suspended on Thanksgiving Day. Only three (3) of our hunters took advantage of this opportunity. In 2019, the requirement also expired on Thanksgiving Day. But unfortunately for our hunters, a near-record snowfall event followed on that weekend, and harvest all but ended for the 2019 season. Seven (7) hunters took advantage of harvesting a buck without having first harvesting an antlerless deer in 2020. In 2021, the earn-a-buck requirement again expired on Thanksgiving Day. Six (6) hunters took advantage of this and harvested an antlered male. In 2021, while the ABA did not ask survey respondents to comment about earn-a-buck regulations, many did offer up suggestions in the comments portion of the survey. These comments largely demonstrated our hunters’ support for being allowed to put food into the freezer before a date too late to be useful, e.g., after Thanksgiving.



In 2022, the ABA and the City of Duluth suspended the earn-a-buck requirement for the entire season to see how this impacted harvest. 23.8% of the hunters took advantage of this suspension and harvested a buck prior to harvesting an antlerless deer (Figure 14). Of the 74 bucks harvested in 2022, 59 (79.7%) were harvested before harvesting an antlerless. Of the 59 hunters that first harvested a buck, six went on to harvest an antlerless afterwards (Figure 15). 53 of our 306 hunters only harvested a buck during the 2022 Duluth Hunt (01 hunters in Figure 16).

One of the main complaints the ABA has received from our participants is that this Hunt has turned into a “Trophy Buck” hunt thru the elimination of the earn-a-buck requirement. Several hunters voiced their concern that ALL of the trophy bucks would be removed from the Duluth population with the elimination of this requirement. This concern appears to be unfounded based on our data. Even with 79.7% of the bucks being harvested before an antlerless, the overall buck harvest is still exactly what it has been since inception of the Hunt (Figure 17). The regression slope of this data is -0.0066, which for our purposes is essentially no slope and no change in buck harvest rate since the first year of this Hunt. The number of bucks / hunter harvested in 2022 (0.24 bucks / hunter) is actually lower than it was in 2020 (0.28) (Table 1; Figure 17). The highest buck harvest was observed in the first season at 0.35 bucks harvested / hunter (Table 1). The ABA and City Administration expected the antlered buck harvest to be a lot higher without the earn-a-buck requirement than what was observed. The hope was that more bucks would be harvested to take some of the pressure off the adult doe portion of the population, to get the buck to doe ratio back to a healthy balance. At this low rate of harvest, the ABA will likely recommend to the Deer Review Committee that the earn-a-buck requirement be suspended for the 2023 season.

Our hunters were asked for their opinion on the earn-a-buck requirement for the future. The majority (68.3%) of the survey respondents believed a second year with no earn-a-buck would be preferred (Figure 18). A minority of respondents (6.3%) would like to see this requirement go back to the original regulation, which was for earn-a-buck for the entire season. 14.2% would like to see the season start off with earn-a-buck, but have this requirement expire either at Thanksgiving (6.3%) or even earlier than Thanksgiving (7.9%) (Figure 18). Survey respondents were asked to provide reasons for their responses, which are all included in Appendix 2. For those that want to see the requirement all season, reasons ranged from the perceptions of this not being a “trophy” hunt, to managing for trophy bucks by not removing too many bucks. The ABA would counter that the data suggests we didn’t overharvest bucks in 2022 (Figure 17). Further, by not allowing the harvest of bucks to avoid this becoming a “trophy” hunt, doesn’t that by default lead to a trophy buck population? This is what we saw in the early years of the Hunt after decades of the buck population not being hunted. For those hunters that wanted to see the requirement expire mid-hunt, their reasons ranged from providing incentive to keep hunting even if an antlerless hasn’t been harvested, to the “trophy buck” argument (Appendix 2).

Those respondents that wanted to see a second year of no earn-a-buck requirement were in the majority, and largely wanted the opportunity to harvest whatever presented an ethical shot. Some believed that this year’s tough winter may be hard on the population, and another year of lower harvest would help the herd. Most reported just not seeing enough antlerless to justify the requirement (Appendix 2).

Survey respondents were asked if they intentionally passed on an antlerless during the 2022 Hunt (Figure 19). The majority of survey respondents (37.3%) reported that they never had a shot at an antlerless, and thus never passed on one. 15.8% of hunters reported that they didn’t want to orphan fawns by shooting the adult doe. 13.6% of hunters passed on an antlerless doe because they feel there should be more breeder does in the population. Other reasons for not harvesting an antlerless include wanting to use breeder does as natural “bait” for bucks (5.7%), and there’s not enough meat on a fawn to justify burning a tag on one (5.3%).



Survey respondents were asked about the number of deer they observed in 2022 relative to what they observed in 2021. Respondents that identified as “new” hunters were removed from this analysis. Responses could range from 1 (much less deer observed relative to last year) to 7 (much more deer observed). A value of 4 was defined as seeing the same number of deer this year as last. Respondents reported seeing much less antlerless ( $2.6 \pm 0.2$ ) this year (Figure 20, top panel). They also reported seeing less antlered deer this year ( $3.0 \pm 0.3$ ) (Figure 20, middle panel). They reported seeing slightly less total number of deer this year ( $3.1 \pm 0.2$ ), though the graph seems to suggest they observed about the same number of deer (Figure 20, bottom panel).

### Hunting Demographics

Survey respondents were asked several questions regarding their hunting during the 2022 season. Some of these questions were intended to find reasons for the low deer harvest in 2022. Hunters were asked where they hunted within Duluth. Most of our hunters (63.5%) reported spending the majority of their hunting time within the DHA they were assigned during the Lottery process (Figure 21). Our hunters were then asked how much they actually hunted within Duluth. Figure 22 shows the number of times our new and returning hunters participated in 2022. New hunters participated an average of  $14.2 \pm 5.6$  days while returning hunters participated  $16.8 \pm 2.2$  days. There was no significant difference observed between new and returning hunters ( $P = 0.20018$ ).

Comparing participation rates with previous years, there were no differences observed between 2022 and the last few seasons (2018 – 2020), suggesting that hunters have not changed their efforts despite real or perceived declines in deer density within Duluth. However, in 2022, hunters did spend significantly less time in the Duluth woods than they did in 2016 ( $P = 0.024$ ) and in 2017 ( $P = 0.018$ ). The ABA refers to the 2016 season as the start of the “maintenance” phase of the hunt, where the hunters experienced the big decline in success rates from the early years of the hunt (Figure 3) and success rates stabilized to the low levels we’ve seen. Hunters were perhaps still optimistic that they’d still be seeing multiple deer per hunt in 2016 and 2017. After realizing that the herd was at low levels, interest in spending a lot of time in Duluth may have declined and hunters spent more time pursuing deer elsewhere, e.g. Hermantown, Two Harbors, or Wisconsin.

When asked about participation in the other deer seasons within MN, only 52.9% of survey respondents reported only bowhunting in 2022 (Table 4). Almost 40% of our hunters reported participating in the firearms season, while a smaller percentage participated in the muzzleloader season (Table 4). Of those participating in the firearms season, 9% of respondents reported harvesting a buck during the firearms season (Table 5). When asked why they hunted outside of Duluth, the most common answer was the family hunting camp (Table 6). Another common reason for hunting elsewhere was a perceived lack of deer in Duluth (Figure 20).



Did you take advantage of the suspension of the earn-a-buck requirement?

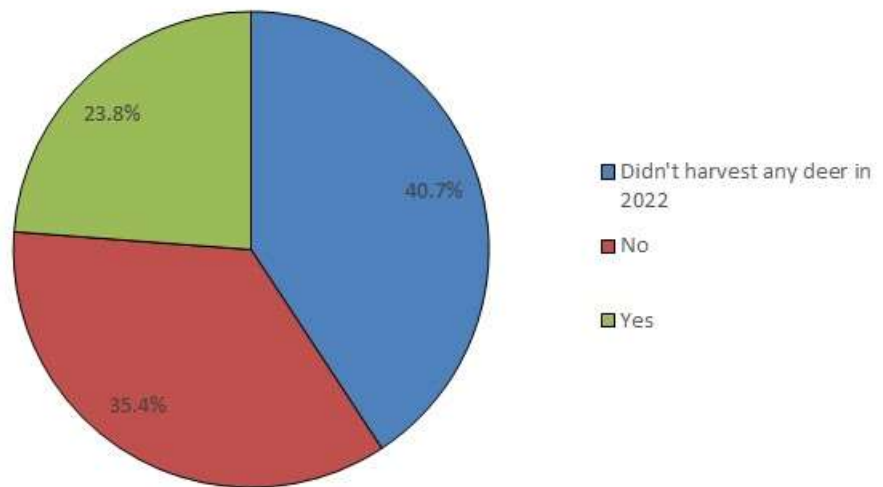


Figure 14. Hunters' responses in the Year End survey on whether they took advantage of the earn-a-buck suspension by harvesting an adult male deer prior to harvesting an antlerless deer.

Did you harvest an antlerless after harvesting a buck?

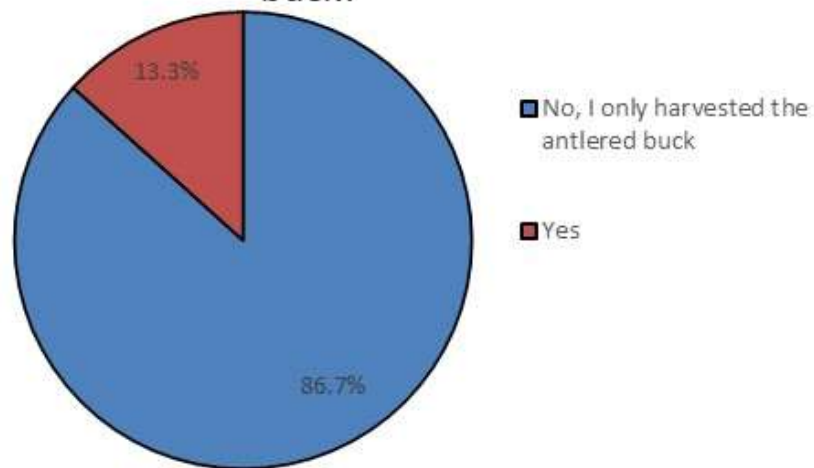


Figure 15. Hunters' responses in the Year End survey on whether they harvested an antlerless deer after first harvesting an antlered adult male.

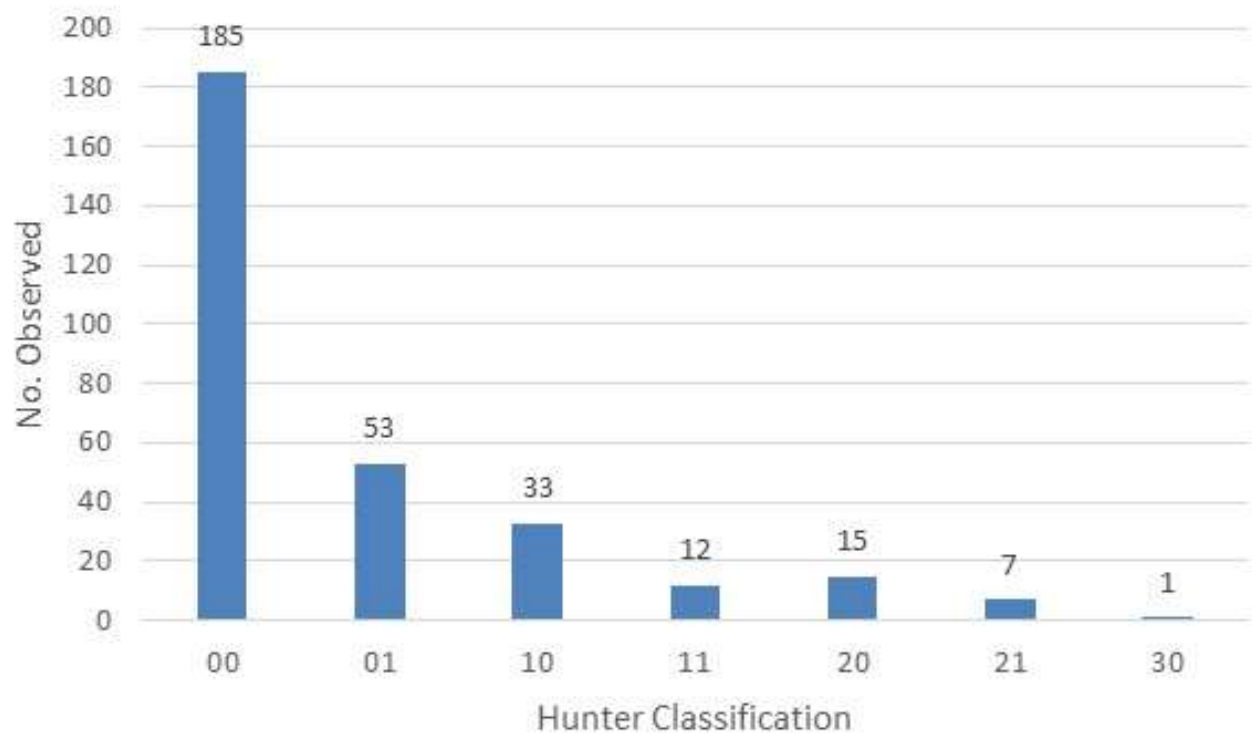


Figure 16. Hunter classification for the 2022 Duluth Urban Bow Hunt. Classification represents the number of antlerless deer harvested followed by the number of antlered males harvested. Thus, 00 represents the number of hunters that failed to harvest any deer within Duluth in 2022. 01 represents the number of hunters harvesting zero antlerless deer and one antlered male. 10 represents the number of hunters harvesting one antlerless deer and no antlered one.

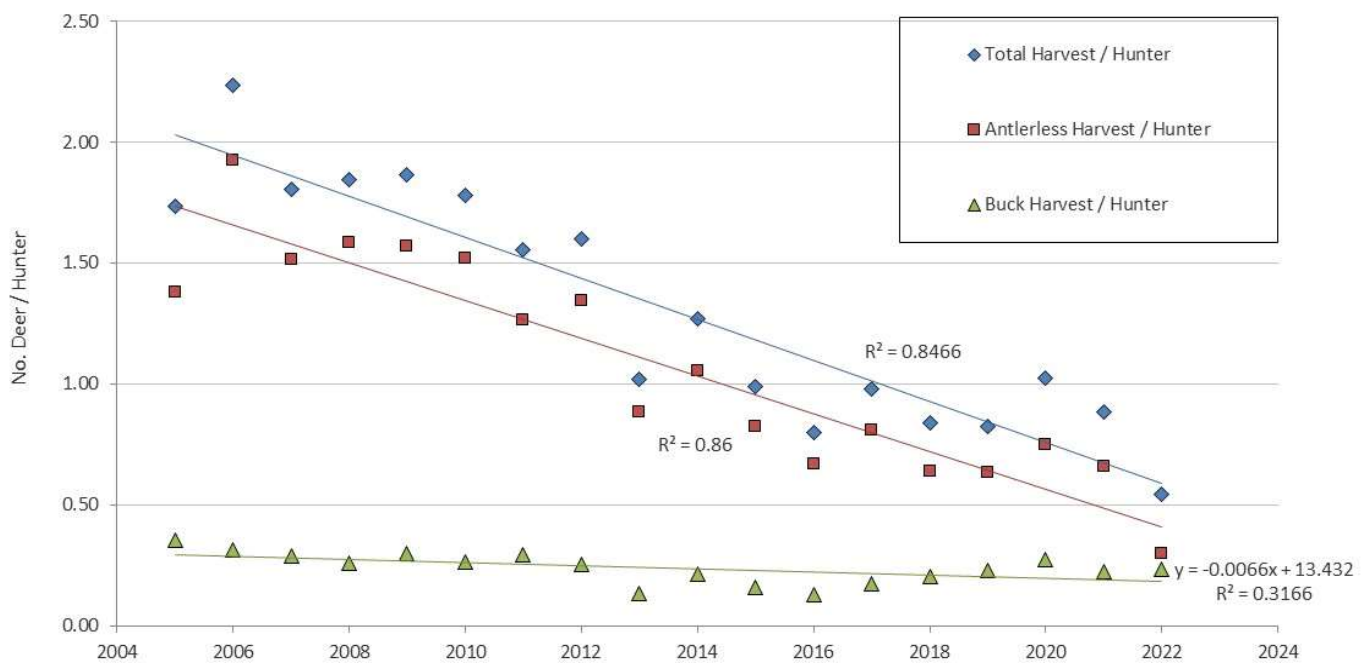


Figure 17. Harvest / hunter statistics for the 18 years of the Duluth City Bowhunt, separated by all deer, antlerless deer, and antlered males.



### Suggestions for 2023

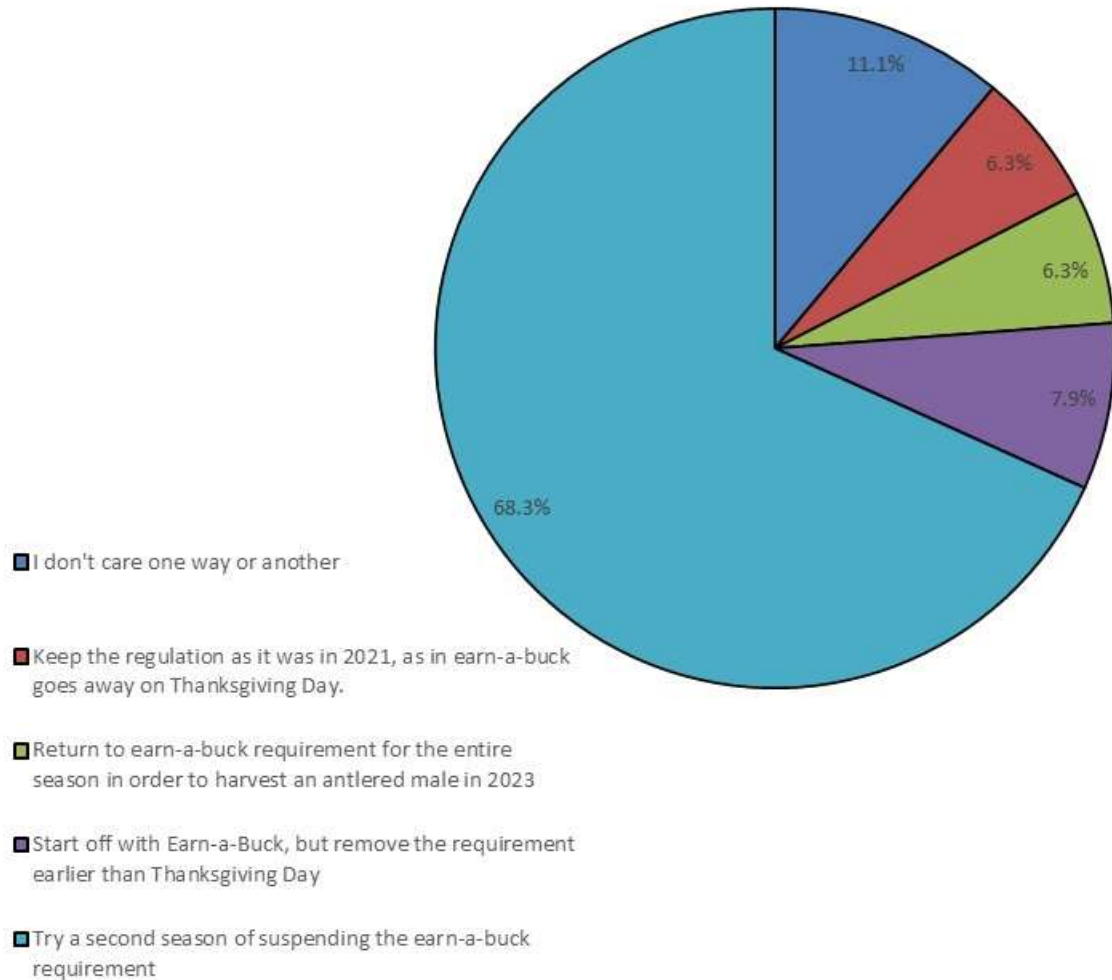


Figure 18. Hunters' responses in the Year End survey on their opinion for the earn-a-buck requirement recommendations for the 2023 Duluth Urban Bow Hunt season.



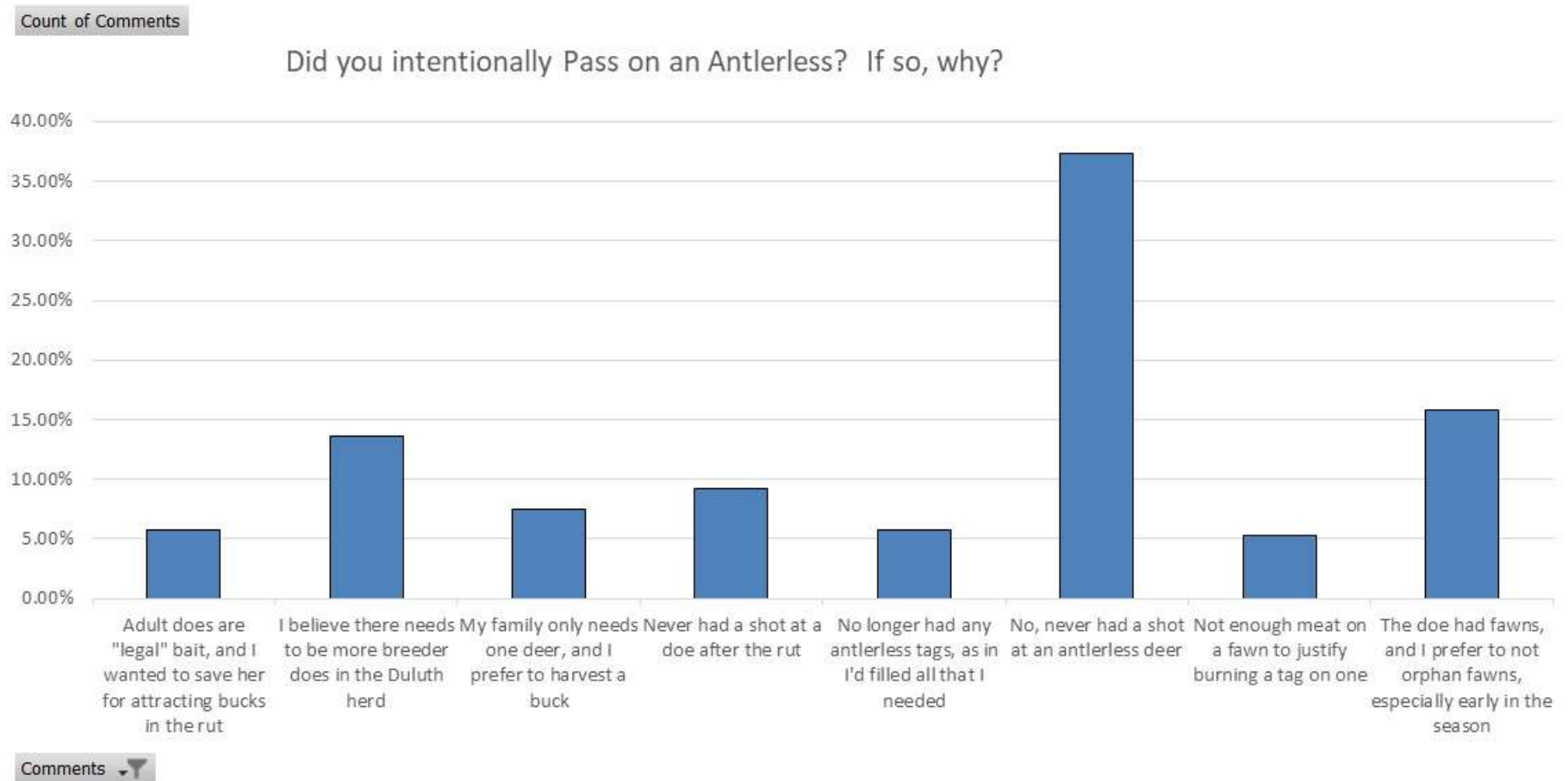


Figure 19. Hunters' responses in the Year End survey when asked if they passed on an antlerless deer during the 2022 Duluth Urban Bow Hunt, and if so, why.



No. Hunters Responding for each category

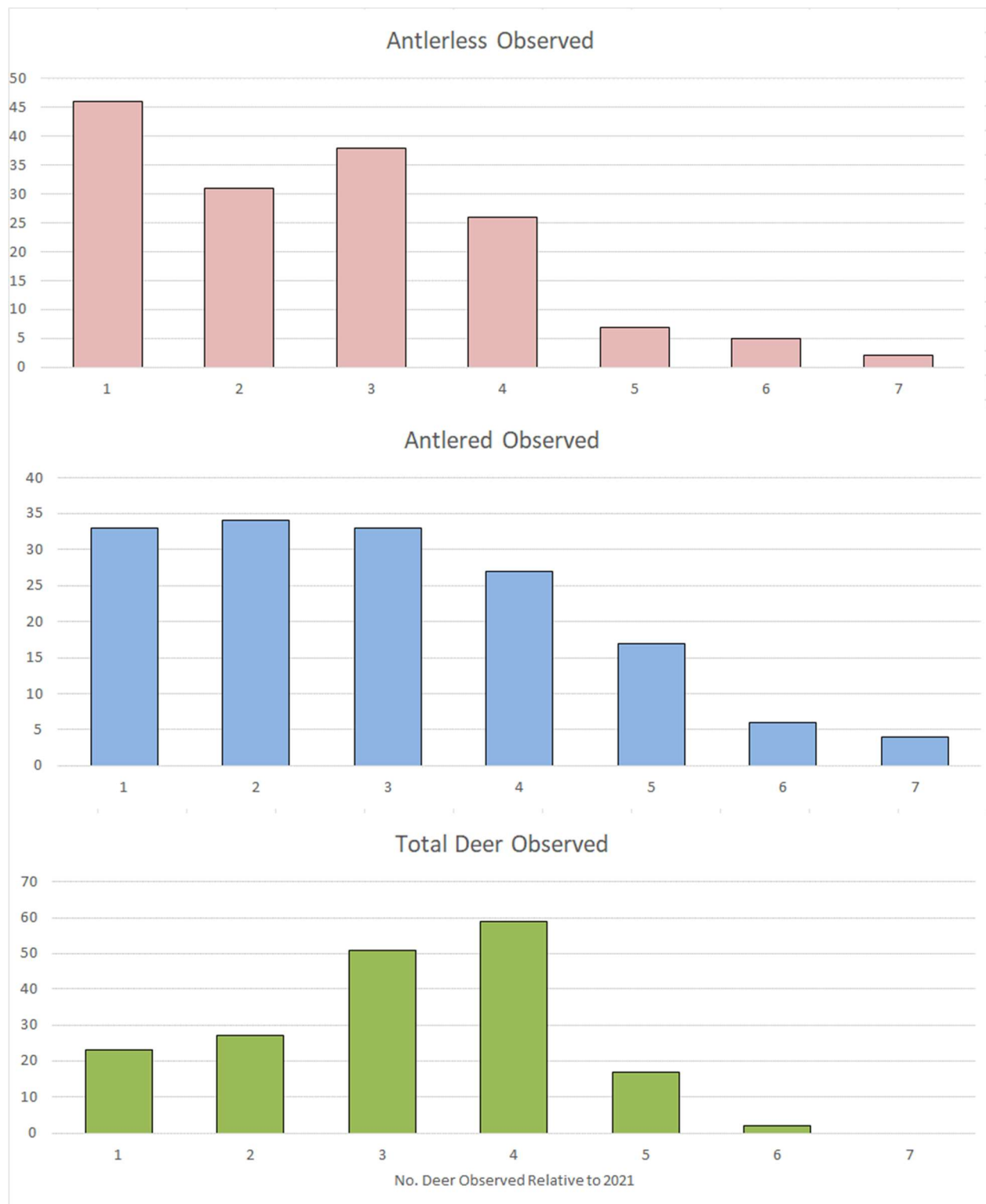


Figure 20. Returning hunters' reports on the number of deer observed in 2022 relative to that observed in 2021, separated by antlerless deer (pink bars, top panel), antlered deer (blue bars, middle panel), and all deer (green bars, bottom panel).



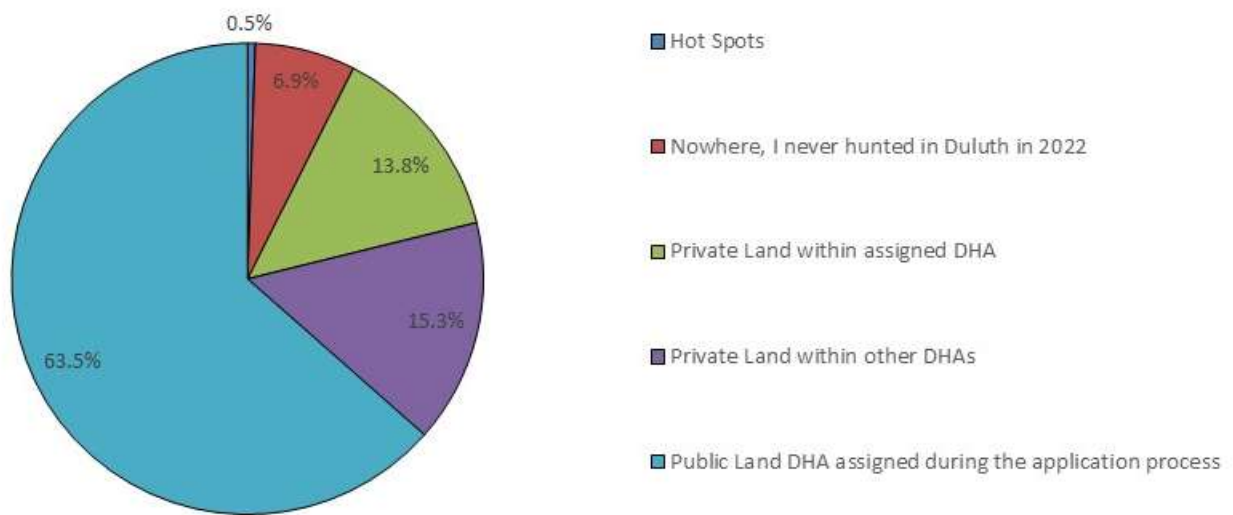


Figure 21. Hunters' responses in the Year End survey when asked where they spent the majority of their time hunting in 2022 within the City of Duluth.

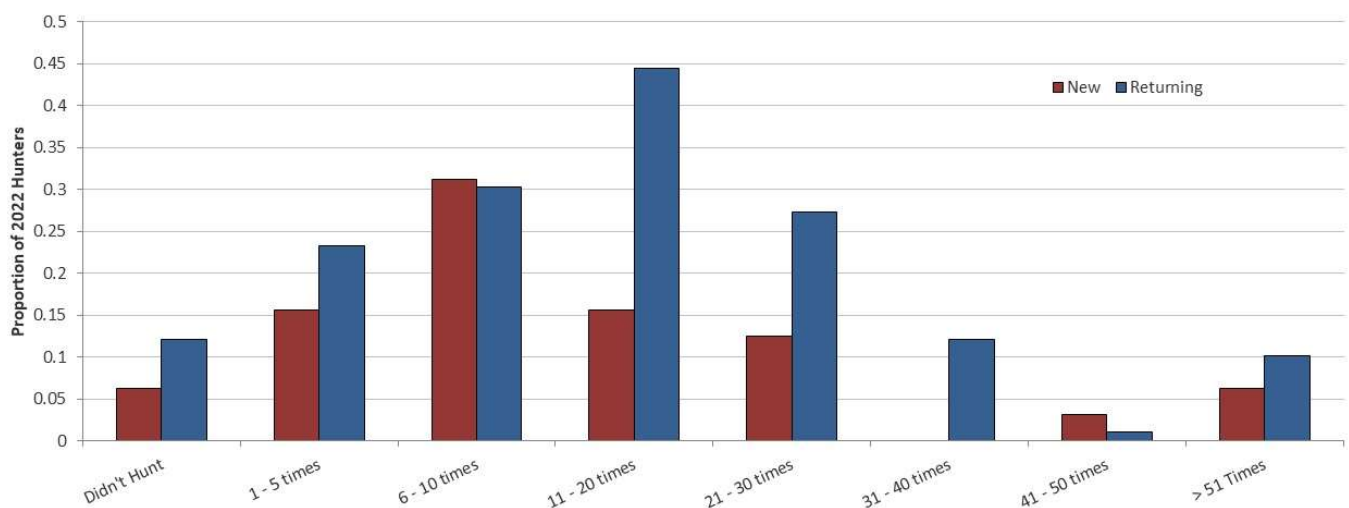


Figure 22. Hunters' responses in the Year End survey when asked how many times they actually hunted within the City of Duluth during the 2022 Urban Bow Hunt.

Table 4. Hunters' responses in the Year End survey when asked if they participated in the MN State Firearms or the State Muzzleloader Seasons.

Row Labels	Did you participate in the Minnesota Deer Firearms or Muzzleloader Seasons in 2022?
BOTH the Firearms and Muzzleloader Seasons	2.6%
Didn't Hunt at All	3.7%
Only Bowhunted in MN	52.9%
Participated in the Firearms Season	39.7%
Participated in the Muzzleloader Season	1.1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 5. Hunters' responses in the Year End survey when asked if they participated in the MN State Firearms or the State Muzzleloader Seasons.

Row Labels	Did you harvest a buck in the Minnesota Deer Firearms or Muzzleloader Seasons in 2022?
No	91.0%
Yes	9.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



Table 6. Hunters' responses in the Year End survey when asked for reasons why they may have hunted for white-tailed deer somewhere other than within the Duluth City Limits. These comments are directly from the Year End Survey and have not been altered or corrected for grammar or spelling.

Row Labels	Count of If you hunted white-tailed deer elsewhere, please briefly tell us why, e.g. drew a special hunt tag, family hunting camp, hunt with friends, couldn't find enough deer in Duluth, etc.
1. Drew a Montana tag so spent a month out there 2. It's a 2 hour drive to Duluth, limits number of trips 3. Lots of hunting opportunities around home and elsewhere	1
Able to hunt at home, more convenient.	1
Another hunter was hunting where I was going to hunt so I didn't hunt.	1
Because of weather and convenience	1
Bow hunted Wisconsin	1
Family hunting area and able to party hunt for bucks with them even though I filled my buck day in the city hunt.	1
Family Hunting Camp	54
Family Minnesota firearm hunting camp and meeting up with buddies for an out-of-state bowhunt.	1
Family property out in Wyoming	1
Firearms hunting	1
For fun	1
Group trip	1
Gun hunted with friends... Wanted more venison than I harvested in the city bow hunt. Also bow hunted elsewhere after not seeing deer during 3 weeks of sitting most mornings and evenings and limited sightenings on trailcams.	1
Hermantown hunt	3
Hopes to find higher deer numbers	1
Hunt with friends	1
Hunted elsewhere to fill my tags	1
Hunted in Wisconsin for myself with bow. Also sat with my wife a bunch in my spots in central MN helping her as it was her first year to bow hunt.	1
Hunted other areas of Mn due to lack of deer in our secondary dha, we did not draw our primary dha in lottery	1
Hunting camp	1
Hunting close to home shot 2 does meat for the winter	1
I also hunt archery outside city limits	1
I always hunt multiple states. Spent time in North Dakota and Nebraska as well	1
I hunt firearm season in zone 178 by Hibbing because of tradition with freinds.	1

I hunted in the Superior, WI city hunt in addition to Duluth City hunt. More deer in Superior and two hunts provide more opportunities to hunt close to home.	1
I hunted the Superior City Hunt as well as the WI rifle season as a I am a Wisconsin resident.	1
I live in Hermantown and hunted this area in addition. The Duluth Hunt has been overhunted and the amount of deer has dwindled. It used to be a Kansas/Idaho/etc type hunt but the people who hunt it haven't practiced QDM, which means searching for deer elsewhere.	1
I love deers and beers. They both taste great and make me fart.	1
I took a trip to North Dakota with a friend for whitetails for one weekend. Otherwise I only bowhunted in the city hunt.	1
I went to college out in ND so have hunted there for almost 10 years now.	1
I would only hunt somewhere else if I drew a special tag.	1
In my dha	1
Kansas drew a tag	1
MBRB hunts	1
More deer and more accesible public land outside of duluth with easier scouting	1
More options	1
N/A	1
New hunter. Learning every area I can access, and had additional access to private lands where I was seeing significantly more deer.	1
No deer in my area	1
None	1
Normal rifle hunting camp with friends	1
North Dakota	1
Not enough deer in Duluth. I ran cameras, just never hunted.	1
Not enough deer in my zone and too many rifle hunters	1
On my land behind my house, Was seeing a lot of people walking around my Duluth hunting spot.	1
Only Duluth city hunt	1
Out of state	1
Participated in rifle season with non-bowhunting friends.	1
Trophy Whitetail hunt with friends in Buffalo County Wisconsin	1
Two Harbors Hunt	1
Variety	1
Wisconsin	4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>110</b>



### Official, Unofficial, and Bike Trails

The bike trail system within Duluth is clearly one of the best in the nation. There's no arguing that it certainly attracts tourists into our City to enjoy the trails, the scenery, and our hotel and restaurant industry. But the trail system seems to be unregulated and out of hand. Many of the DHAs that have been hunted for almost two decades are now so carved up with the bike trail network as to render them almost un-huntable. Conversations between hunters and ABA Board members and the public suggest that the extensive bicycle network has even had an impact on the hikers, dog walkers, and the public that values quiet time in the woods. The ABA encourages the City of Duluth to survey their residents on their feelings towards this bike trail network. The results may be enlightening to politicians.

The City asked that we once again survey our hunters on the official and "unofficial" trails within the City. The first question that the City included asked the hunters to rank how their experience has been over the last five years with respect to the entire network of trails throughout the City. A ranking of "1" indicated that the trail system had impacted their hunting experience and had led to conflicts with other user groups. A rank of "5" indicated that the hunter had an excellent experience with the trail system and had not experienced any issues or conflicts. The average response was  $2.8 \pm 0.2$ , significantly lower than that reported in 2021 of  $3.1 \pm 0.2$  ( $t = -2.404$ ,  $P = 0.0167$ ). This suggests a middle-of-the-road reaction for our hunters (Figure 23) with perhaps a few more problems than observed in 2021.

Appendix 3 contains comments from our hunters and locations of some "unofficial" trails that City officials may need to investigate.



Figure 23. Participants in the 2022 Year End Survey indicating their experience with the city-wide network of trails within the Duluth City woods. Responses ranged from 1 (bad experience, including conflicts with other user groups) to 5 (positive experience with no conflicts).



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### Homelessness in Duluth

In 2020, the ABA Board was asked to query our hunters about the homeless population in Duluth, and about any interactions our hunters had. While the City didn't ask us to re-survey our hunters, a few of the ABA Board members saw reason to get a third year's worth of data on this topic. Frequently, homeless individuals will set up shop in the woods, either in make-shift shelters or in tents.

Only 42 hunters reported in the year end survey as having had issues with presumed homeless individuals while participating in the Hunt. These hunters reported having multiple issues (Table 7.) The two overwhelming complaints were garbage being left in the woods and make-shift shelters being set up within the hunting areas. The DHAs reported by our hunters is presented in Table 8, with DHAs 1 & 4A having the most reported encounters.

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Table 7. Number of reported encounters hunters had with presumed homeless individuals while participating in the 2022 Duluth Hunt.

Complaint	Count of Complaint
Shelters erected near your hunting setup location	11
Disruptive behavior	1
Garbage left in the woods	21
Shelters erected near your hunting setup location	2
Theft	4
Chose to avoid areas where homeless more likely to be which i think reduced possible stand locations	1
Just trash left. Tents, beer cans, etc...	1
Moved into ground blind then stole ground blind	1
Grand Total	42

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Table 8. List of DHAs where hunters had encounters with presumed homeless individuals while participating in the 2022 Duluth Hunt.

Row Labels	Count of Which DHAs did you experience any issues with suspected homeless individuals?
1	1
5	2
8	1
10B 10C 5 4A 4B	1
10D	1
10D 10E 7B 7A 6	1
15B	1
3A	2
4B	3
7A	3
7B	1
Don't Matter Anyway	1
Lester golf course	1
Grand Total	19

#### Comments from the Masses:

Hunters were all given the opportunity to comment on whatever they felt important. The question was worded:

*"Do you have any ideas or suggestions for improving the Hunt in 2023?"*

As expected, the responses were all over the place. Many comments were useful. Several were obviously held by a small minority of individuals. But all comments are included in Appendix 1

A brief summary of the key comments follows:

- 1) Too few deer left in the City. Yes, our hunters have done a fabulous job at decreasing the deer herd. But the ABA does not set limits. This is a MN DNR decision. And perhaps the City residents don't share this opinion.
- 2) Earn-a-buck. Many folks want to see this requirement return, while many others liked not having it.
- 3) Orientation Night. Some folks want to see it back in Duluth.



Finally, the ABA would like to thank these volunteers, without whom we couldn't pull this Hunt off:

Andrew Frieland	Bruce Fehringer
Camron Vollbrect	Matt Stark
Peter Vanderbosch	Gary Rabold
Jesse DeWitte	Joe Austin
Kerry Lapcinski	Tony Marino
Matt Anderson	Brandon Mandt
Greg Cross	Eric Cooper ,
Mike Dodge	Scott Schafer
Seth Hartman	Tim Key

Board Members for 2022:

Phillip Lockett, President	Tom Florestano
Leann Oehlerking-Boes	Jordan Buetow
Brian Borkholder, Secretary / Treasurer	
Alan Vorderbruggen ( <i>Retired, Thanks for your service!</i> )	
Phillip Mannon, Chairman ( <i>Retired, Thanks for your service!</i> )	

Thank you to all who made it this far in the Report. Your perseverance is applaudable, though your choice to do so is questionable. On behalf of the Arrowhead Bowhunters Alliance, we thank all those individuals that participated in the 2022 Duluth Bow Hunt, and who made this another successful, albeit difficult, season. See you in the woods in 2023!



**Appendix 1.** Suggestions received from hunter filling in the Year End Survey when asked, “Do you have any ideas or suggestions for improving the Hunt in 2023?” Hunter comments are in the left-hand column. Responses from the Arrowhead Bowhunters Alliance are in the right-hand column. Comments are as submitted. No attempt was made to correct grammar or spelling.

Do you have any ideas or suggestions for improving the Hunt in 2023?	ABA Response
All camera's need to be removed just like stand. no trail cameras place until DHA area is assigned. the cameras need to have the hunter number and phone number. if a stand is up the other hunters should not place a camera. To hunt in the city of Duluth is a privilege.	Problem is there are no MN State laws against hanging trail cameras on public land, year round. Thus, anyone in the public, including landowners, are allowed to place trail cameras, and leave them out all year long. We could ask our hunters to place their Hunter ID on a camera, but this would be difficult to enforce.
All good except for I'd like to see the return of earn a buck before Thanksgiving.	Noted
Allow hunters to shoot coyotes. They are chasing live deer ( I witnessed this) and getting to shot deer at times before hunters and destroying the deer’s meat at times.	Currently, the City Ordinance only allows for bow-hunting of whitetailed deer. To allow for coyote hunting would require a visit to the Council. If you're a City resident, please discuss this with your Council representative.
Allow taking bucks and limit the number of deer per hunter to 1.	MN DNR will see your comment and note it.
<p>At this point the only thing to improve the hunt in my opinion is stand set day. I was in the woods on the first eligible day and went out at first light in the pouring rain to hang stands. To find multiple stands set ALREADY HUNG! no vehicles parked along the roadway. I drive all the way around the zone in the dark. Did these individuals go out at midnight to hang stands? Possibly. But I call bull crap. They were hung early. Make it so the first day to hang stands is shooting light on whatever said day.</p> <p>If the illegal stands hung early (my suspicion) were indeed hung legally in the dark, it’s unsafe. Nobody needs to be hanging a stand in the dark via headlamp.</p>	<p>You make valid points. I personally know of several hunters that do go out at midnight to hang stands. I think it's silly, and very likely not the safest activity. Your suggestion of sunrise is a very good one. We'll discuss this at the next Board meeting.</p>



Be more stringent at the end of the season when hunters would like to switch DHA's. I wanted to switch to a DHA, but was told 3 hunters already switched into the zone. This was 3 weeks before the end of the season. I live in the zone, walk the dog in the woods, run and bike through the woods at least 2-3 times/day and there were no hunters in the woods. If hunters are not going to actually hunt, don't let them switch. Not sure how you monitor this without adding burden onto the hunt coordinators. It was just frustrating as I know I could have easily harvested a doe or fawn the last week if I would have been let in.	Contact the HC for the DHA you live in IMMEDIATELY after Orientation. Request to get on the list and you're a landowner that wants to hunt just off of your property. You are correct, we can't monitor to verify that hunters are actually hunting after a transfer. Life happens. Kids get sick. Kids get into Holiday Programs. Schedules change. Perhaps our HC Team can do a better job of managing the transferring hunters. The ABA already gets lambasted for micromanaging our hunters, and baby-sitting them too much. I suspect that additional management would please you and tick off 20 other hunters.
Board did a great job. Didn't hear a peep (not even an introduction) from HC though	HC's, please take note of this concern.
Bork, your mother is wonderful, I'm sure. Possibly opening ground hunting without approval for zones that do not contain houses (e.g. Jay Cooke, Airport zones, etc)	We don't manage the hunt in Jay Cooke. City Ordinance clearly states that our hunters are required to be in stands 12 feet off of the ground. This is for the safety of the public. Thus, to violate this rule requires ABA approval on a case-by-case basis.
Bring back drive-thru orientation for returning hunters.	The ABA preferred this as well, but in 2021, we had far too many of our hunters violating rules. So we felt it time to bring everyone back together again.
Bring back earn-a-buck. It is better for the deer herd, for the environment and will help ensure opportunities to see and harvest quality whitetail remain accessible to local people of ordinary means. It will also help prevent a frenzy of people after big bucks and big bucks only; everyone who entered the hunt this year entered expecting to have to harvest an antlerless deer before a buck. Let's keep it that way	Some of your points are indeed valid, for instance controlling the "trophy buck" hunters. But the ABA is not managing the herd for "quality" whitetail bucks. We are managing for controlling the deer herd, and keeping the herd healthy. We felt that in 2022, it was worth trying to see if we could increase the harvest on bucks, and bring back a better male:female balance to a herd that is grossly dominated by males. I think few biologists would agree that the earn-a-buck requirement is better for the herd.
Continue the ban on earn a buck. Start regulating the deer that are killed and truly take account for what is being harvested. Have individuals start checking in with actual hunt coordinators upon a kill and send photo proof. People can jump through some hoops to be involved with this hunt. Start setting expectation of what can and cant be killed. Set a limit on the number of does/bucks that are killed. Start managing this as a true hunt destination. Increase the cost to hunt. Bring back the population and bring back some of the trophies that used to roam the woods. The Duluth Hunt Destroyed this areas deer population and trophy deer population. Be Better	Again, we aren't in the business of creating trophy opportunities at a competitive price point. We are charged with controlling a deer population, that at one point was so large that the number of deer - vehicle collisions was taxing our Duluth PD, and local gardeners were lodging too many complaints with the Duluth Council. The ABA is already lambasted at micromanaging our hunters. I think your best option is to purchase a section of hunting land, and manage the land and herd in a way that meets your expectations.
Duluth city hunt should be reserved for residents of Duluth	Duly noted.



Expand the range of the DHA more towards the inner city. I'm aware of the complications that it would present but that is where the vast majority of the deer herd resides	You are correct. The deer have learned where to avoid the hunters. Problem is with access. Best bet is to submit suggestions for Hot Spots, but get the neighbors in the area to buy in to the idea of a Hot Spot prior to submitting it to the ABA Board.
Expansion of, or some new DHA's given the craziness of continual expansion of the bike trail network?	Most of the large tracts of "hunnable" land are already DHAs. The smaller tracts could become Hot Spots. But your point on the crazy bike trail network is well founded!
Find ways to get more youth and females involved in the hunt. Especially youth, if we don't get more youth involved, hunting will lose public support and our public lands will suffer.	This is an issue for MNDNR, and one that most State's DNRs are struggling with. Have you encouraged your wife or girlfriend to get involved with hunting? Hunter recruitment is best done between family and good friends. An ABA dork isn't likely to encourage a lady or youth to get involved with hunting. A dad or husband is much more likely to pass on the tradition.
<p>First off, a sincere thanks to the ABA Board and the HCs. I thoroughly enjoy being able to hunt so close to my home. Without all of your work, I would not have the privilege of participating in this hunt. The overall deer numbers were certainly disappointing this year, but that's hunting. The low number of deer I saw this year will not prevent me from hunting next year - as they say, a bad bad hunting is still better than a good day in the office!</p> <p>One suggestion I have is to treat us more as the adults we SHOULD BE. I would imagine the multiple reminders &amp; repeat communications are the result of hunters missing clearly communicated information and then whining about it over the years. I feel your frustration with trying to "herd us cats" as that frustration can come across as being cynical and snarky at times. Do not let us get to you! Tell us what we need to do and if we don't do it, its on us!</p>	<p>Duly noted. I would hope that all participating hunters will take heed to your suggestions.</p>
For orientation and lottery put it back to west end.	We will likely be returning to Clyde Iron for Orientation, but stick to Zoom for the Lottery.
Go back to earn a buck, if not entirely, make it that a hunter has to participate in the hunt for a minimum of five years before earn a buck status is dropped. increase the number of antlerless tags, the very few hunters that actually harvest more than 2 antlerless won't affect the herd.	MNDNR issue to set harvest limits. Hard to regulate a five year minimum, only because of the number of hunters that hunt for a few years, drop out, only to return. Becomes a logistical nightmare for a volunteer organization. Easiest to just go earn-a-buck for all or for none.
Go back to the Clyde or another more central location and tables you can assign to zones for the rules night. Much better to actually meet folks in your zone, your HC too.	This is our intention for 2023
great hunt, no suggestions.	Thank you.
Great hunting thanks	Thank you.



Great job handling the hunt.	Thank you.
Had my interest more when u can shoot a buck right away,	
Have dog walkers put leashes on their dogs on the golf course so they can't run wild.	There is a City Leash Law. Unfortunately, the ABA can't enforce this.
Have the option to select multiple DHA's. So if there's someone in (what has always been) your spot, or if there's no sign you have options earlier in the season.	Not going to happen. Everyone gets one DHA. It's already a headache dealing with hunter:hunter conflicts in one DHA. Can't imagine how horrible it would be if folks could bounce all over, and all chasing that one particular "trophy" buck that everyone has images of.
Hunting is for balance, not wiping out the herd. It is a renewable resource that should be managed to continue to provide this balance for the wildlife and opportunities for the hunters. In my opinion, the herd numbers have declined too far, and we need to change our harvest to help bring the herd numbers back up. Reduce the amount of does a hunter can harvest within a year. Bring the earn a buck back or soon our buck populations will be the same as our doe population.	This is exactly why we eliminated the earn-a-buck requirement for this past season.
I always enjoy the hunt. It's set up wonderfully. Couldn't ask for more.	Thank you.
I appreciate the ABA and how they organize and run the program. Thank you all.	Thank you.
I had a great yr, having earn a buck made hunting much more enjoyable.	
I think it is run very professionally. I would have liked to shoot a doe but did not have an opportunity to do so.	Thank you.
I think that all hunters should turn in the coordinates of their stand location(s). This will stop the "I was here first" arguments and let others who haven't hung a stand yet know which areas to stay away from. The coordinates could be used by the Police/EMS in the event of an injury as well.	Problem is that we have a population of hunters that seem to feel that their "secret" spots are so good that they have to keep them quiet. Ask one of these hunters where their stand is, and you're likely to hear "In Duluth". We would NEVER get hunters to turn in these coordinates. We already have a heck of a time getting everyone to register their LOPs with us.





I think the Duluth hunt is fantastic. One thing I do wish we had was a list of places or specific spot to dispose of deer carcasses/gut piles for new hunters or newer people to Duluth that join the hunt. I do think getting rid of the earn a buck requirement was very necessary, and quite frankly a couple more years would be great to adjust the buck to doe ratio a bit more. I saw an incredible number of bucks in limited sits with only ONE doe total, which is great for the hunter looking for a buck but is worrisome for the overall health of the deer herd. I truly appreciate and cherish the opportunity to be involved in this hunt.	Guts can be hauled away by your trash hauler. In addition, Bork provided countless invitations for hunters to bring over guts and carcasses for disposal. Lots of hunters took advantage of this opportunity. You are correct about the reasons for suspending the earn-a-buck requirement.
I think we need to address the predator problem to city officials. There has been an influx of Coyotes in my area and i have heard the same problem elsewhere as well. I lost 5 chickens due to Coyotes in my yard this year. We need to make the harvesting of Coyotes within city limits non-offensive.	Currently, the City Ordinance only allows for bow-hunting of whitetailed deer. To allow for coyote hunting would require a visit to the Council. If you're a City resident, please discuss this with your Council representative.
I would be more likely to harvest an antlered deer if we were allowed to purchase another buck tag specifically for the city hunt. then we could hunt our other propertys outside the city like normal.	Current MN State Statutes allow hunters to harvest one antlered male annually, using any weapon. The change you ask for would require a change in MN State law. The ABA will not be pursuing this. Contact your State Representative or Senator.
I would suggest a posted list of hunters and names for each zone. Understanding this takes lots of work however it may help hunters who are willing to help one another offer up their information to help recover deer or help set up hunting locations. Maybe could be a simple survey that drops the info into a spread sheet.	If we return to in-person Orientation at Clyde would allow you all to meet face-to-face, and share contact information and stand locations. The ABA isn't allowed to release hunter contact information without permission. Some HCs work with their hunters to get this level of cooperation and communication. Encourage your HC to do the same.
I, like I'm sure many others, very much appreciated this year's suspension of the earn-a-buck requirement. Thanks for all of the hard work from the board and all others involved for giving us hunting opportunities close to home!	Thank you.
I'd like to see a few of the latest season zones opened up earlier. Golf courses for example the edges that are huntable don't have trails and set backs from fairways could be same/similar as bike trails. Hartley as well. Let private land outside dhas be hunted if setbacks fit	Can't. Not going to happen. We can't hunt the late season DHAs until the bird-banding is done at Hawks Ridge, and the golf courses are fully closed. If we push this too much, we're likely to lose these spots altogether. Just be patient. City Council set up the DHAs based upon public lands. We can't hunt outside of these DHAs, with the only exception of Hot Spots. You are encouraged to get neighbors to buy in to the Hunt, and then submit a suggestion for a Hot Spot. The ABA and Duluth PD will evaluate it for inclusion into this Hunt.
ID tag or similar to put on vehicle dash to help ID legal bowhunters vs rifle hunters. More proactive support from DPD on rifle hunters. They park and hunt the same spots every year and calling them in does not seem to be changing anything	While a good suggestion, you now are identifying legal hunters to the anti-hunting public. We can discuss this, but there may be more cons with this suggestion than pros.



If earn-a-buck is reinstated, a lottery system for a limited number of hunters would be a good way to make sure at least a small amount of bucks are able to be killed if people are not seeing many does.	We already get accused of running a good old boy's club for returning hunters. To allow some of those to get first crack at a buck would open ourselves up to an all out mutiny from the "trophy buck hunters" that don't get drawn for a free buck.
In my experience, the ABA hunt is conducted wonderfully. Communication is clear and timely, rules are reasonable, even if a bit over-protective. The suspension of the earn-a-buck is well grounded and deserves continuation until such a time that an insufficient number of antlerless relative to their density are being harvested. The hunt is one of my favorite things Duluth offers.	Thank you.
It would be helpful to underscore the importance of the bowhunter ethics pledge by giving examples in the orientation. For example, I encountered an individual who contacted one of my landowners for permission. Even when he knew I was already there (the landowner told him), he had the landowner sign the form and he fully intended to go ahead and hunt there. In the end, I worked it out with the hunter, after much deliberation (unnecessary if he had just abided by the pledge). This is clearly a violation of the bowhunter's ethics pledge. At this point, the hunter should have asked my permission, not just barged in and assumed I was ok with him intruding onto property that I've hunted for many years.  I myself have encountered this situation after knocking on landowner's doors. Once I know there is another hunter already on a property, I thank the landowner for their time and walk away. To do otherwise is to intrude on someone else's hunting area. When you do not "Respect the hunting areas and strategies of other participants of the hunt", you have violated the Bowhunter's Ethics Pledge.  It seems crazy that this has to be addressed, but it happens all too often. We live in a world that is increasingly becoming more and more self-centered. The golden rule needs to be considered - treat others with the same consideration you want for yourself.	
Keep it the same next year as this year	We assume you mean the earn-a-buck requirement?
Keep the earn a buck out of the city hunt, it kept none meat hunters out and let we the meat the hunters have more doe opportunity's. Thanks for another year, hope this goes on forever.	Noted.
Keep thing the way they were this year it was nice not to stress on shooting a doe to get a chance at a buck.	Noted.
Keep up the good work	Thank you.
Keep up the good work!	Thank you.
Keep up the great work!	Thank you. I like "great" over "good"



Keep up the great work. Thankful for providing the City Hunt opportunity.	Thank you.
Kill the earn a buck regulation once again for another year. If ABA requires another everyone must attend orientation night., maybe set it up in seating by dha again so during the greatest event of the year we all can see what the other hunters in our zones have planned.	We intend to meet at Clyde again in 2023.
Less emails	There's never "less emails". If the ABA doesn't communicate to all in mass emails, we communicate with individual hunters in 300 emails.
Less snow for December! No other suggestions, thanks for running this program	The snow and cold in December certainly shut down harvest this year.
Liked the no earn a buck...keep it that way and let people hunt.	Noted.
Love it and appreciate your work on our behalf.	Thank you.
Love that the city and alliance agreed to give the does a year break!! That said I hope in future years the city and the alliance can continue to have a blend of "earn a buck" during high population years and dropping the earn a buck after a couple years of low deer numbers based on what us hunters are seeing out there and other factors involved. Hopefully we can be open to adapting the hunt back and forth on that earn a buck front when needed and not needed to keep a balanced herd vs going scorched earth on them. Great work and heartfelt thanks to all involved with putting on this city hunt!!	That is kind of our intentions, using the earn-a-buck tool when appropriate and suspending it when no longer needed. It's a learning game, and no one does it perfectly every year.
Loved the no earn a buck this year, does we're hard to come by this year. It was great going out with a brown it's down mentality to fill the freezer.	Noted
Lowering the height requirement. In other areas I usually am less than 10ft off the ground. I am nervous about heights and am usually around 6ft high. this has still allowed me to stay out of the eyeline of several animals and observe them in the woods. Besides, the steeper angle of additional height can be exacerbated by being near a hill top and shooting down into a valley.	The purpose of the stand height requirement is NOT to keep you out of sight from your prey, but to make sure your arrows go down INTO the ground and not thru the woods into a neighbor's back yard. This is one issue that has a real chance of shutting down this hunt permanently. All it would take is one arrow hitting the wrong house or the wrong swing-set, and this Hunt is over. Please understand the importance of this rule.
Make the City hunt shooting test harder. Far to many deer are wounded and many never practice before taking the test and deciding there good enough to take long booms in city limits.	Noted.
Maybe less people assigned to public land DHA's. If we could take a look at how many people are at each spot and then cut the number down in all places.	That potentially could leave you out for 2023. You willing to give up your spot for another? We don't really have too many hunters in these DHAs, especially given the large number of hunters each year that never actually hunt.



No complaints from my end! Dropping earn a buck was beneficial to me this year.	Noted
No thanks for all you do to make this hunt happen.	Thank you.
No, I had a fun season. Thanks for all the hard work you guys do in setting this up.	Thank you.
Nope! Thank you for organizing!	
Not have the survey require an answer that cannot be answered either way given the previous question. (One question on the last page regarding doe/buck harvest order did not allow users who harvested a doe first to appropriately answer the ensuing questions)	Noted, and fixed after you brought it to my attention.
Not many deer left in the city, the bag limit should be two per hunter.	MNDNR will note this.
Note - The survey question that starts with "Unrecovered ..." should not require a numerical answer if the number of unrecovered deer in previous question is zero. So it should not be a mandatory question the way it is phrased. I tried to put NA but it has to be a number. Putting 0 doesn't make sense so I put 100 to point that out. Thank you.	Noted
On line orientation somehow	Not going to happen. Bork's time is too valuable to waste on handing out stand tags and ID cards to 300+ hunters whenever it's convenient for them to show up at his home.
One idea would be that if the "earn-a-buck" is reinstated, your antlerless deer could carryover to the next year if you do not shoot a buck in the City. For example, in 2023 I shoot an antlerless deer, but do not shoot a buck in the City (maybe I don't see any that I would like to shoot or I shot one outside of the city). In 2024, my "earn-a-buck" would be waived. It could help control the herd, but not decimate the does.	Logistical nightmare, and open to fraud with lots of folks registering "phantom" antlerless deer on 31 December in order to not have to do the earn-a-buck in the next season.
Option to share buck/first deer pictures anonymously on website. Cool to see the harvests through the years.	I agree, but folks are goofy and secretive with their deer, especially the bucks they shoot. I don't understand the need for secrecy, but have seen it over the last 18 years. Best bet is for you to start a Duluth Hunt WasteBook page, and we can encourage hunters to join and post.
Provide better DHA maps or maybe educate me better on how to use them. I find the pdf maps less than ideal to figure out details of DHAs although I also use OnXmaps. There is mention of some interactive maps but I have no idea how to access them.  Thank you for the hunt opportunity.	Maybe we could address this at Orientation Night.
Request to reduce the setback requirements as most of the hunters that hunt in these pockets are experienced and are able to make an ethical shot while being mindful of the public's safety.	Issue is that many landowners don't share your opinion. Many landowners would like the setbacks to increase to 500 feet, if they were in charge. We feel we're at a reasonable balance. But in your defense, the MN DNR doesn't have ANY setback requirements for bowhunters.
Return to earn a buck	Noted.



Returning hunters should be allowed to drop the earn a buck while new hunters should have to earn a buck. It's not fair to the many returning hunters that have had to deal with it over the years (some of us from the very beginning), while the new hunters get to reap the rewards of our dedication to following the cities rules, regardless of how dumb they are. If a hunter loses their returning hunter status then they are considered a new hunter and have to earn a buck until their returning status is reinstated	This would be an easier thing to enforce, but we'd still be dealing with the good old boys club complaints again.
See reply about earn a buck question	
Set up a hot spot behind the Baseball fields on E. 8th street and 20th Ave. . The heard of critters needs to be removed (thinned drastically). I have recent video (October 2nd, and November 29th of eight walking through the hood). Too Many.  Otherwise I really apricate all that you folks do to put this hunt together and keep it running smoothly.	Thank you.
Signs placed on trails in DHA's indicating hunters in area and be respectful by not screaming and yelling. Way too disrespectful of noise they make.	Problem is the woods are public for everyone. If we start advertising our whereabouts, it's likely the anti-hunters would become even more vocal and disrespectful.
Simplify the registration process and reduce the email lengths (people aren't reading them because they're 3 pages long).	Noted.
Smaller number of hunters allowed in- herd seems to be getting smaller but need to continue the harvest- try 200- 250 in 2023	
Some of your questions are no option answers for me - I also hunt in Wisconsin- trouble with crop damage- so I harvested 3 does there	
Start earlier	Can't. MNDNR sets the seasons and limits.
Thank you for your time and effort you put into this hunt for us.	Thank you.
Thanks for all your hard work. Hopefully this year is a start to an open mind on this hunt and how it moves forward to help manage the herd rather than reduce.	Thank you.
Thanks for coordinating all this!	Thank you.
Thanks for the work all of you put into this hunt.	Thank you.



The city needs to enforce the leash law or take it off the books. The amount of loose dogs running the trails is ridiculous. Also, it seems to me that sportsmanship is a thing of the past for some hunters. Messing with cameras and setting up close to someone else's stand are just two examples of things I've encountered. The city hunt is a great thing, and a great opportunity, but negative experiences with other hunters can really sour a person.	Noted. Contact your HC if you're having issues with fellow hunters.
The deer population is low. That is the goal of the hunt. Thus, dropping the earn-a-buck for 2023 would be helpful in giving us a chance to fill the freezer. Otherwise, THANK YOU ABA for giving your time for all of us to have an opportunity to hunt close to home!	Thank you.
The hunt is run very well. The constant tone of being kicked out of the hunt if you make a mistake is intimidating and unnecessary. Wish ABA would use a different. Continue to allow bucks to be harvested instead of having to "earn a buck". Excellent call to extend removing equipment from public land due to record snowfall. Finally, disabled veterans should be granted permission to waive the requirement of having to remove hunting equipment from public land.	thank you. Regarding veterans, what if that veteran doesn't draw the same DHA next year? It's just easiest to require everyone to remove their stands by a certain date. Then folks aren't reserving spots year after year. Veterans can always ask another hunter to assist with stand removal.
The hunt is what it is at this point. It was an extermination.	Noted
the orientation site was a joke terrible parking very bad acoustics when people were speaking many people had to park on the road and walk in ,what if the weather was BAD	This will change next year.
There seems to be some unfairness with the "lottery" for zones. The same guys get the same zones year after year- especially the most sought after zones in the heart of the city. I noticed on the spread sheet that some zones had individuals assigned to them prior to the lottery- and more than just hunt coordinators. I've talked to many that say they have been hunting the same zones for the last 10 years or since the hunt began and I don't think this would be possible if the lottery was legit. I have heard similar concerns from other hunters as well. I did appreciate the ability to shoot a 3D course. I don't think there should be a cap on how many times you can take the accuracy test, why not encourage people to try and be more proficient. Seems a little shaming to not let someone participate after they fail the test twice- probably leads to more people not wanting to participate.	You didn't pay attention to Bork's description of the Lottery process. He has been very transparent on the Lottery set-up, and even wordier in 3-page long emails. It's fair, transparent, and most importantly, approved of by City Administration. Call Bork before the Lottery and ask for a full description of the set-up process. It's not perfect, but it seems the fairest way to manage the placement of 300+ hunters. The proficiency test isn't hard or onerous. We don't need unskilled archers flinging arrows willy-nilly throughout the City. Our test is similar to how most urban hunts test their prospective hunters. It encourages our participants to maintain their equipment and skill set. There are no participation trophies in hunting.
This is a very tough job. You guys are doing an excellent job.	Sometimes this job out-right sucks
This is likely the best run municipal hunt in the country. Keep it up!	Thank you. Too bad more folks don't see things your way.
too many new hunters too inconsiderate hunters trespassers	Noted



Try to encourage somehow to take a young buck if only looking for meat.	We don't manage the herd for trophies. We manage for opportunities. Even meat hunters like to see a nice whitetail. Shouldn't they have the opportunity to harvest it?
Unlimited doe tags	Not going to happen.
Virtual orientation if orientation is mandatory for returning hunters Had "issue" with dnr where i was assumed to be in violation rather than someone emailing or calling me to verify my correct information was correct, which it was. Late night emails with police cc'd telling me to remove my stands, without contacting me first, was an unprofessional move considering my application had no issues and some desk jockey from the cities didnt know how to double check electronic paperwork.	Virtual orientation is not an option. Because then Bork would have to deal with 300 hunters showing up at all hours of the day to pick up their stand tags, armband, and Hunter ID. You suggesting that his time is less valuable than your own?
we ought to be able to engage with members of the public instead of just walking away from confrontation. if I'm legally hunting and abiding by all laws I should be able to tell some A-hole to go "fly a kite" if you know what I mean instead of having to fear removal from the hunt due to confrontation.	We aren't here to cause trouble. We're here to participate in an activity that we are passionate about. Yes, it sucks to have to take the high road. But fighting with the public gains us nothing, and only provides additional reasons for the anti-hunters to hate our presence.
Well organized and run program. Thanks for all the volunteers who make it happen.	Thank you.
Why can't Hartley be opened earlier? Even if it's just a couple weeks? Zone 8 has just as many people going threw it, if not more then Hartley	It's a deal with the City and with Hartley.
You can't improve on perfection! Thanks for all you do!	Wow! Perfection? Likely not, but we appreciate your opinion.
You previously asked if we shared our venison and the question seemed to be worded as though we gave the whole deer away. If that question is asked in future questionnaires, we should be able to answer that we gave part of a deer away (not just a yes or no question)- maybe have multiple possible answers (I gave away 1/4, 1/2, 3/4, whole deer).	Sure, sounds reasonable. The ABA will try to remember to do that next year. Best if you remind Bork just before the season starts.



**Appendix 2.** Hunters’ responses in the Year End survey when asked to justify their recommendations for the 2023 Season with respect to the earn-a-buck requirement. Responses are separated and grouped by the respondents’ answers, e.g. justifications from hunters that didn’t care about the earn-a-buck requirement are grouped first, followed by hunters that wanted to see the requirement expire on Thanksgiving Day in 2023, etc.

What would you like to see for earn-a-buck for the 2023 season?

What was your justification for your recommendation for the earn-a-buck requirement for 2023?

**I don't care one way or another**

I don't know if the elimination of earn a buck generates too much bucks only hunting or which policy makes my hunt better

Suspend - really not that many deer out there.

In previous question I wish there was "other" as I'm not sure my opinion on the doe numbers in the city after this fall. Generally speaking. I hunted 5 sits this year and saw two does and three fawns or so. What the status is on those at this point is unknown. That said I couldn't pretend to know the entire population trend in the city based off of just that. I can just say I was happy for a one year break this year to give the does a break. What the city and the arrowhead bowhunter alliance feels is best for the hunt and the purpose of it I'm totally good with and support as I don't have an opinion based on this years experience. Based on my 2020 and 2021 season though I was very unimpressed with doe numbers at least in the zone I was hunting. So my hopes are after this years harvest maybe a few does made it through and have good fawning season so next fall isn't like 2020 and 2021 doe numbers. Not sure how realistic it is but hopefully if collectively the hunt see's boom and bust years in pattern we can adapt by keeping earn a buck in place "for the interest of hunt purpose" and drop the earn a buck on lower number years for the same reasons!

Doesn't matter to me

It really doesn't matter to me personally. I'm not hunting for a trophy or specific deer. If the first opportunity is a doe great, if it's a little buck it will probably get a pass unless I'm feeling the need to fill my tag as the season ends and the freezer is empty. And if I don't fill my tag I'm not going to starve.

I would leave it to those who have the data and can determine what the impact was on the herd, future, needs.

Lack of empathy?

it doesn't matter to me. Either way works.

I understand the rational for the EAB and have harvested in the neighborhood of 40 antlerless deer in the city hunt over the years. It doesn't matter to me personally if there is an EAB or not, I just want to see the regulation driven by the science and harvest goals of the hunt. This year for the first time in the 15 years I have hunted in the city I did not shoot an antlerless deer. I had very limited time and a buck was the first deer to offer me an ethical shot.

I don't care





**Keep the regulation as it was in 2021, as in earn-a-buck goes away on Thanksgiving Day.**

This is a management hunt first

The hunt is for reducing deer numbers on the City, not for just hunting big bucks.

To keep this a management hunt.

Doe harvest was minimal this year.

The whole concept of the city hunt is to eliminate deer. Know of several hunters that passed on does because they were only after bucks

When you remove the requirement to shoot a doe this allows for excessive outside interest and trophy-only hunters who may not be local to move in. You can expect increased competitive, territorial, illegal (eg baiting) and other bad behaviors once the cat is out of the bag and the hunt is non-Earn-a-Buck prior to announcing the season. Having earn-a buck also protects the opportunities for locals to harvest mature antlered deer, something that virtually all hunters appreciate. This is one of the few hunts where hunters of modest means can have a chance at a nice buck. When you remove the requirements to shoot a doe, people may be less selective shooting bucks and fewer may make it to maturity. I don't want to see the behaviors that were seen so widespread prior to the implementation of Earn-a-Buck.

I've heard many people (hunters and non-hunters) say that It's fun to see bigger bucks. Too many small and medium sized bucks got whacked in 2022.

People passing does on a heard reduction hunt

I think it helps provide incentive to those who actively participate in the city hunt.

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**Return to earn-a-buck requirement for the entire season in order to harvest an antlered male in 2023**

I believe we changed this hunt from a management hunt to trophy hunt

So the hunt doesn't become a trophy hunt

improve the quality of bucks

Over harvesting of bucks

Helps keep it from being trophy hunting.

If a youngster, beginning hunter, or someone with limited time wants to take a small buck, the buck/doe ratio is extremely high. So I'm fine with that.



In the area I hunted, there was a surplus of does early season. Thus I believe it effect the rut in my area more than I anticipated. I should have taken a doe when I had the chance. Live and learn.

Look what the city bowhunt has done to the doe population. Soon it will be the same for the buck population. Hunting is not meant to wipe out the deer herd, urban zone or not. It is meant to balance the herd. We should reduce the doe limit to 1 per hunter.

Far more Does than Bucks - Let's get the ratio as close to 2:1 as possible

This isn't a trophy hunt.

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**Start off with Earn-a-Buck, but remove the requirement earlier than Thanksgiving Day**

Taking away earn a buck creates too many trophy hunters, and that's not what this hunt is supposed to be.

Eliminate earn a buck the beginning of firearms season.

Good to keep population down IF that's still needed but allow for buck during rut if you haven't shot a doe yet - maybe earn a buck opening day to 31 Oct.

Most of the deer I saw were antlered bucks or does with fawns.

If Duluth hunt is for population control, then this is the best plan to put into action. or maybe just do an every-other year thing.. or if herd is low, then remove earn a buck for a few years.

Not a trophy hunt

Don't do

Weeds out those that are simply and only trophy hunting

I dont believe in earn a buck now that the deer numbers are reduced in the city hunt. Seems the buck to doe ratio is one to one. If it's an elimination hunt then shoot all the does, that would be reasonable eh?.

I like the idea of not being able to shoot bucks when they are in their early season routine. Allow hunters to lose the earn a buck last weekend of October.

I believe does should be targeted for the first month or so then get rid of earn a buck after a month or so

Promotes the mangment of deer herd as well as disuades trophy hunting

No reason

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**Try a second season of  
suspending the earn-a-buck  
requirement**

I think it's going to be another tough winter and deer need to recover some. Also, I don't think 1 year will correct the buck/doe ratio issue.

I think the buck to doe ratio is very off in Duluth. I placed many cameras throughout the summer and fall and had very limited does and fawns vs bucks on camera. In my 10 sits this fall, I saw 17 bucks and 1 doe. That is absolutely insane to me. A lot of young 1.5-2.5 year old bucks, but only one doe all season.

If I have a deer with in bow range thats a buck early in the season id like to be able to take it

Deer are still hard to get. The buck to doe ratio is still out of whack.

I just want to hunt deer and get meat. I don't care if it has antlers or not, I just don't want to have to pass on a deer that would fill my freezer. I'll still hunt regardless , just nice not to have to pass on a deer walking by because it has antlers.

Not enough deer anyways

If we truly are at a maintenance level deer population, taking more does than desired isn't necessary. Removing the earn-a-buck is only needed when the Duluth area is trying to decrease overall deer population.

Didn't have a lot of opportunities to get a doe. I also see that the number of deer taken is drastically dropping which makes me want to take a buck and leave the does so we can continue to have successful future city hunts.

I think the buck-doe ratio is still high on the buck side and not harvesting does helps with this issue

this year I only saw bucks. I was able to see 3,4,6,7,8,10 point bucks

I think this year was a good step in balancing the herd out. If we could do it another year that would be great. Then maybe we go to an every other year type system or whatever seems fit to manage the herd. We are past the herd reduction phase of this hunt. It now needs to become a herd management hunt to keep the herd balanced and at a respectable number.

I believe that earn a buck shouldn't go away because of the limited chances at a nice mature buck.

Letting hunters have preference on what they want to shoot. Also, removing the earn a buck would limit people killing deer just to shoot a buck. If people didn't feel obligated to shoot does then there would likely be an increase in the deer population.

The hunt fulfilled it most needed requirement. Get these deer out of the city. It's so hard to shoot a doe. Please. Let it go another year without earn a buck. There's very few girls even in the woods to shoot. Last year it was mid November before I was able to harvest a doe.

Suspend the earn a buck for another year. My buck to doe sightings and camera proof was way in favor of more bucks. Even as much as 5 to 1.

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**Try a second season of  
suspending the earn-a-buck  
requirement**

I am more of a meat hunter so like to shoot either sex if I have a good shot!

Didn't really see that many deer for sitting 51 plus sits

Just not many deer in my area. They all disappear in mid October.

It feels like the population is low, but it would be nice to know the target deer population and have that drive the earn-a-buck requirement.

None

For me, its hard enough to find deer, I want to be able to harvest anything I have a legitimate shot at. I am a meat hunter, I could care less if it has antlers or not.

I saw a lot of bucks!

Not many does...let us hunt!

shoot all sexes

I feel there's not enough deer to force that issue, and it's then a decision if we want to push trophies or not.

Few overall deer seen

Don't have strong opinion. Don't like shooting fawns.

Fewer deer

Fewer deer in the city limits

Based on conversations with other hunters, there is more desire to harvest deer than opportunity(# of deer). The earn a buck is not needed to achieve the desired herd reduction, and in fact, in lean years, discourages going I to the woods, ultimately reducing the harvest of antlerless.

Deer herd is low and will be worse next year. I'm not a trophy hunter, I like meat in the freezer and being able to harvest a buck first allows for that.

Not enough deer

there seems to be more bucks then does

I have seen very few does in the time I've hunted duluth.

In previous years, there was always pressure to get an antlerless deer prior to late October/early November. Now, I can enjoy all of my hunts and not have to pass a buck because I haven't harvested an antlerless deer

I saw 21 deer in the stand this year and 7 were antlerless. Previous years have been the same. It was nice this year picking up my bow instead of a camera when I saw antlers.

From my experience there is 2 or 3 bucks per doe. It may even be approaching 4 to 1. This is why I believe the earn-a-buck requirement should be suspended once again.

Harvesting a buck early does go towards the goal of culling the herd, both as a deer and his seed won't be laid...

Low population

Still saw 2x as many bucks as does, albeit very few (2 bucks, 1 doe)

Less opportunities overall and still buck to doe ratio is high.

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**Try a second season of  
suspending the earn-a-buck  
requirement**

I nice not to have to take risky shots at a doe in order to shoot a buck

I have two trail cameras out year round in DHA 2A. I could identify only three or four does with fawn(s). Only a handful of does without fawns and more bucks than total antlerless. Even with more than 1 to 1 buck to doe ratio, I didn't see a single deer from the stand in 8 sits. I saw one buck while walking out of the woods one morning. At least 60% of my photos during season are at night. In past years with earn-a-buck, I've had to let bucks pass because I hadn't had a shot at an antlerless yet and the freezer has gone empty.

The deer herd has been in rapid decline and this winter is not going to help their numbers

If it would have been earn a buck this year I wouldn't have any meat in the freezer. I never had an opportunity to shoot an antlerless deer and that shouldn't exclude someone from being able to harvest a deer

I only had a chance at a buck and never had a chance at a doe (a twig deflected my arrow and it did NOT hit the deer at all). If not for the twig, I would have had my deer. If there was earn a buck, I could not have even drawn my bow this year (limited hunting time this fall).

I seen 9 deer in Duluth. All were bucks. Not one doe. I shot a big buck on Nov 8th. If I had to shoot a doe, I would of have really hunted harder and moved around more. Would of been difficult to get a doe.

Based on camera pictures, still far too few does in the herd.

I like meat and dont care much about its antler having or antler not having abilities

I only saw bucks while hunting

Deer population seems to be at point where this is justified.

Hunt in an area where there are a lot of bucks and minimal does. See 3x bucks to does.

I only want to take one deer per year and had to pass on multiple deer in the past because I wasn't able earn a buck.

dont change it,we dont get alot of chances at bucks.

I believe hunters should have the best opportunity to take a buck even if they have yet to take a doe

The deer herd has had several consecutive severe years resulting in a major drop in population making it much harder to tag an animal, especially if we have to concentrate on antlerless. By eliminating the earn a buck requirement, hunter success is increased, thereby further reducing the herd size.

based on the data provided. it appears that there were less deer harvested this year. is this due to a decrease in deer population? if so, I think keeping more does around would help bolster the populations for future years.

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**Try a second season of  
suspending the earn-a-buck  
requirement**

Leave it up the the hunter to decide what they want to shoot, also could be a tough winter on deer.

I think one more year should be tried for not earning a buck.

I saw more mature bucks than any other deer

Low doe sightings

Still saw more bucks than does so I don't think the earn a buck is necessary

I believe the herd is reduced/balanced enough to justify not having earn a buck

If the goal is to reduce white tail numbers within the city it should open to any legal deer, regardless of sex.

Would prefer more options

There are limited Shooter Bucks in Duluth at this time. The population needs to rebound and repopulate the gene pool in the outer zones. 150+ Bucks need a chance to grow and continue to breed in order to generate the !75+ bucks for future generations. There should be a new standard set for bucks shot, anything less than 140 should be fined per inch. I've never seen a hunt conducted where the people who run it, disregard the longevity of the hunt like they do here.

I passed one doe with a fawn on my first sit. Never had another shot at a doe. I went out many times after harvesting buck to try and get another deer. No luck with the does.

i think that there should be no earn a buck. i shot a buck early season. i would not have harvested him if i had to shoot a doe first. i still hunted plenty of times trying to shoot a doe but it just never happened. if there was an earn a buck then i would have harvested 0 deer instead of 1

Shooting a doe puts allot of pressure on a hunter, when you don't see many or have one come into range, it felt like it was way more enjoyable this yr in the woods not to have to worry about getting a doe, and to be able just go hunt.

I am not targeting a trophy buck but would be upset if a nice buck stepped out in front of me before a doe and am not allowed to shoot it

no does left

I think the deer population has begun to stabilize within the city, and further increasing doe kills could bring the population to lower levels than originally intended for years to come.

I think it gives all hunters their own choice for whether they would like to "fill the freezer" or hold out for a nice buck. My non-biologist opinion is that the Duluth deer population is at a healthy level when weighing the number of deer seen per sit as opposed to car crashes, eating flowers, etc.

I prefer to only shoot one deer (buck) per season. I don't believe in shooting a doe and spending time/ money if the meat is going to be wasted.

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**Try a second season of  
suspending the earn-a-buck  
requirement**

If the purpose is to reduce deer population in the city, should be able to take a buck without harvesting a doe first.

Deer numbers are low not just in the surrounding area but within the city hunt zone. I know this is a herd control hunt, but the hunt is also a recreational opportunity in our community and should be managed as such. Right now the satisfaction with the amount the deer is low due to multiple factors like past hunter success, predators (we can't touch those and I accept this), and multiple harsh winters. Without the earn-a-buck requirement we may boost deer numbers a bit for the armed recreationalists.

Don't care either way

Maintains deer herd balance.

We are hunters AND conservationists. When the deer population is so low, it does not seem right to keep shooting antlerless deer. At some point, this hunt became less of a culling hunt to more of a management hunt. In other words, we must manage for the overall health of the deer herd. Many of us veteran hunters simply do not feel right about shooting does when we know it is a detriment to overall herd health and vitality.

Suspended it one more year and see how it goes

Buck numbers seem steady

I have limited time to hunt (young family) and my main goal is hunting a shooter buck. If I have to use extra days to get a doe first, then I may be tempted to hunt outside of the city with my limited time. I want my goal open throughout the season.

Hard winter already, bucks don't directly effect populations

Less pressure to take less than perfect shots on a doe just to be eligible for a buck

Didn't seem to be a very high doe population.

Deer numbers are way down and will probably suffer greatly from this years winter so far. In the past 5-10 years, deer numbers in the arrowhead have dropped drastically and in many areas almost eradicated. Therefore, I see 0 reason why anyone should be shooting does in this city hunt or surrounding areas until the population stabilizes.

I don't see many deer. Like to be able to shoot deer of choice for meat purposes

After this winter, there will be enough deer mortality to justify another season of saving does



**Appendix 3.** Survey respondents were asked to identify “unofficial” trails. These are included here for the City’s Parks & Trails Coordinator. These comments are directly from the Year End Survey and have not been altered or corrected for grammar or spelling.

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10c had a massive amount of birch bark stripped from trees. Areas are between Arlington and Observation and not far within the wood line.

16B N of the cemetery has a lot of relatively new bike trails, I question if they are legit

19a has a disc golf course set up below my stand this year on city property and an unofficial dog walking trail

19a. Frisbee golf course. Also homemade hiking trails.

Don’t matter anyway

far to many trails in zone 8

I am aware

I have watched the trail that runs through the two public forties in 19A get trimmed by a man and his family. My trail camera has him driving a four wheeler and trimming. When I first started using 19A it looked like a game trail on an overgrown trail from the past, but now it is wide open. They trimmed a tree with a natural lick that deer would use every year and provide some great photos.

I hunt mostly private property.

Its not that hard, just for a walk.

too many

Trails are all over zone 14.

Trails from houses to trail systems in zone 3A on the eastern side assuming for residents to access the trail system

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