

Results of the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt

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

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GENERAL 2015 SUMMARY: The Arrowhead Bowhunters Alliance (ABA) placed 375 hunters into the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt. Those 375 hunters harvested a total of 371 white-tailed deer (309 antlerless & 62 antlered males) (Table 1). In addition, three adult males were found poached in DHAs 12B (two) and DHA 16B. The three poached males will not be included in the 2015 statistics and summaries presented in this document.

For the first time in the eleven-year history of the Duluth Bowhunt, the harvest rate as measured by the number of deer harvested per hunter was less than 1.0 (Tables 1 and 2). Harvest rates for the 2015 season were 0.99 ± 0.12 deer / hunter (Table 2). This represents the harvest for all registered hunters, including those hunters that failed to harvest any deer. Not knowing whether failing to harvest a deer in 2015 was the result of not spending much time in the woods, or not even getting into the woods is unknown. All of the hunters not reporting any harvested deer were removed, and the reported harvest / successful hunter statistics are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Harvest for successful hunters averaged 1.78 ± 0.14 deer (Tables 1 & 2).

The placement of 375 hunters in 2015 is in line with the average number of hunters placed since 2011 (Blue bars in Figure 1). The number of individuals harvesting deer in 2015 is similar to that observed in 2014 (Red line in Figure 1). Total harvest is at the lowest level since 2005, when far fewer hunters were placed (Blue bars in Figure 2). When standardized for number of participants, 2015 saw the lowest number of antlerless and total harvest per hunter (Blue & red lines in Figure 2).

Similar to past seasons, the 2015 harvest was dominated by antlerless individuals (Table 1, Figure 3). Of the 371 total deer harvested, 83% (N=309) were antlerless individuals. The breakdown of antlerless was 194 adult does, 55 fawn does, and 60 fawn bucks (Figure 3).

The Duluth City Council has established 42 Designated Hunting Areas (DHAs) throughout the City of Duluth. Harvest among these DHAs is highly variable (Figure 4). DHA 1, for the second year in a row, had the highest reported harvest of 45 deer. For the first time in the eleven years of this hunt, DHA 16B was not one of the top DHAs for harvest. 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 2015, only 15 deer were harvested from Hot Spots (Table 3). Figure 5 shows the City of Duluth with the 42 various DHAs identified, along with the number of deer harvested for each of the DHAs.

Cumulative harvest throughout the season, by week number, is shown in Figure 6 (orange lines). 2015 data is depicted by the orange squares. Lighter markers present data from other seasons, 2008 – 2014. The total harvest and the harvest of antlerless is the lowest observed in the Duluth Hunt. The harvest of antlered males was a little higher than that observed in 2013 (N=62₂₀₁₅ vs 53₂₀₁₃, Table 1).

For the eleven seasons of the Duluth Bowhunt, total harvest by registered bowhunters is 5572 white-tailed deer; of which 4683 were antlerless while 889 were antlered males (Table 1). Only 15.9% of the harvest was 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.

Total harvest had been somewhat stable from 2006 thru 2012, between 500 and 600 animals (Blue bars in Figure 2). Beginning with the 2013 season, and continuing thru the 2015 season, harvest dropped well below this level (Figure 2), to the frustration of many of the Duluth hunters. 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 2). In 2015, it dipped below 1.0 for the first time. The percentage of hunters harvesting deer is also at the lowest observed level (Figure 7). During the first season of the hunt, more than 90% of participating hunters harvested a deer. In 2015, that percentage is below 56% (Figure 7, Table 1).

The 2015 results continue the observed trend of fewer deer harvested per participant, and fewer deer total harvested. Deer populations, by all accounts, are 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 against the successes observed in this Hunt Program. Our hunters are to be commended.

For most readers, this will conclude the 2015 Annual Report by the ABA. For those brave souls that opt to continue, you may be tempted to interpret the following statistics and graphs as “*blah, blah, blah. . .*”. But there are some interesting observations that begin in section 2 on page 10.

On behalf of the Arrowhead Bowhunters Alliance, we thank all of those individuals that participated in the 2015 Duluth Bowhunt, and who made this another successful, albeit difficult, season. See you in the woods in 2016!

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 Buck Harvest / Hunter	Buck Buck Harvest / Successful Hunter	Antlerless Antlerless Harvest / Hunter	Antlerless Antlerless Harvest / Successful Hunter	% Donated	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%
2006	252	196	564	485	79	2.24	2.88	0.31	0.40	1.92	2.47		149	59.1%	77.8%
2007	315	252	568	477	91	1.80	2.25	0.29	0.36	1.51	1.89		155	49.2%	80.0%
2008	289	220	533	458	75	1.84	2.42	0.26	0.34	1.58	2.08		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%	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%	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%	168	44.6%	71.1%
2012	359	274	574	483	91	1.599	2.09	0.25	0.33	1.345	1.76	53.7%	162	45.1%	76.3%
2013	391	231	399	346	53	1.020	1.73	0.14	0.23	0.885	1.50	58.3%	98	25.1%	59.1%
2014	355	208	451	375	76	1.270	2.17	0.21	0.37	1.056	1.80	51.2%	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%	102	27.2%	55.7%
Mean	323.55	232.18	506.55	425.73	80.82	1.61	2.18	0.26	0.35	1.35	1.83	54.6%	139.40	42.5%	73.2%
Min	192	177	333	265	53	0.99	1.73	0.14	0.23	0.82	1.48	47.7%	98.00	25.1%	55.7%
Max	391	274	604	515	111	2.24	2.88	0.35	0.41	1.92	2.47	61.8%	168.00	59.1%	92.2%
Sum			5572	4683	889										

Table 2. Hunter harvest statistics for the 2015 Duluth Bowhunt, along with 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.

	2015	Long-term Duluth Average
Total Harvest/Hunter	0.99 ± 0.12	1.61
Buck Harvest / Hunter	0.16 ± 0.4	0.26
Anterless Harvest / Hunter	0.82 ± 0.10	1.35
Harvest / Successful Hunter	1.78 ± 0.14	2.18
Buck Harvest / Successful Hunter	0.30 ± 0.06	0.35
Anterless Harvest / Successful Hunter	1.49 ± 0.12	1.83

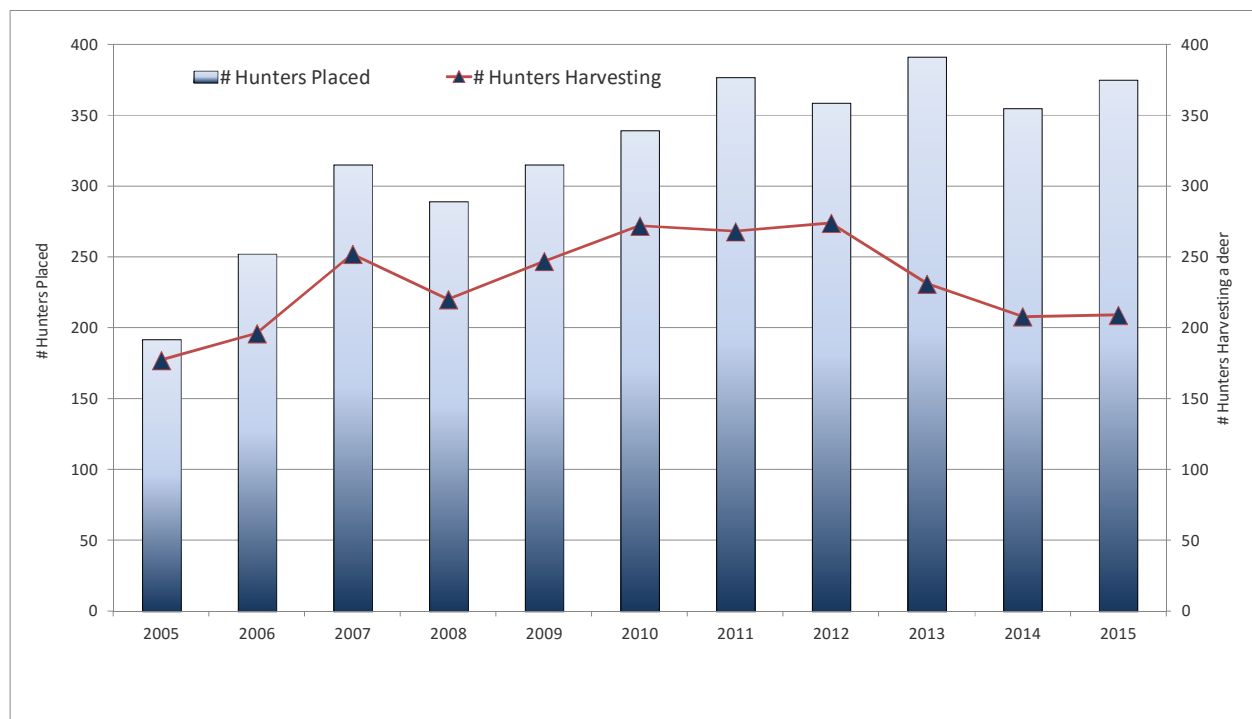


Figure 1. Number of hunters placed (left axis) and the number of those hunters harvesting deer (right axis) in each season of the Duluth City Bowhunt. The placement of 375 hunters in 2015 is in line with the average number of hunters since 2011. The number harvesting deer in 2015 is similar to that observed in 2014.

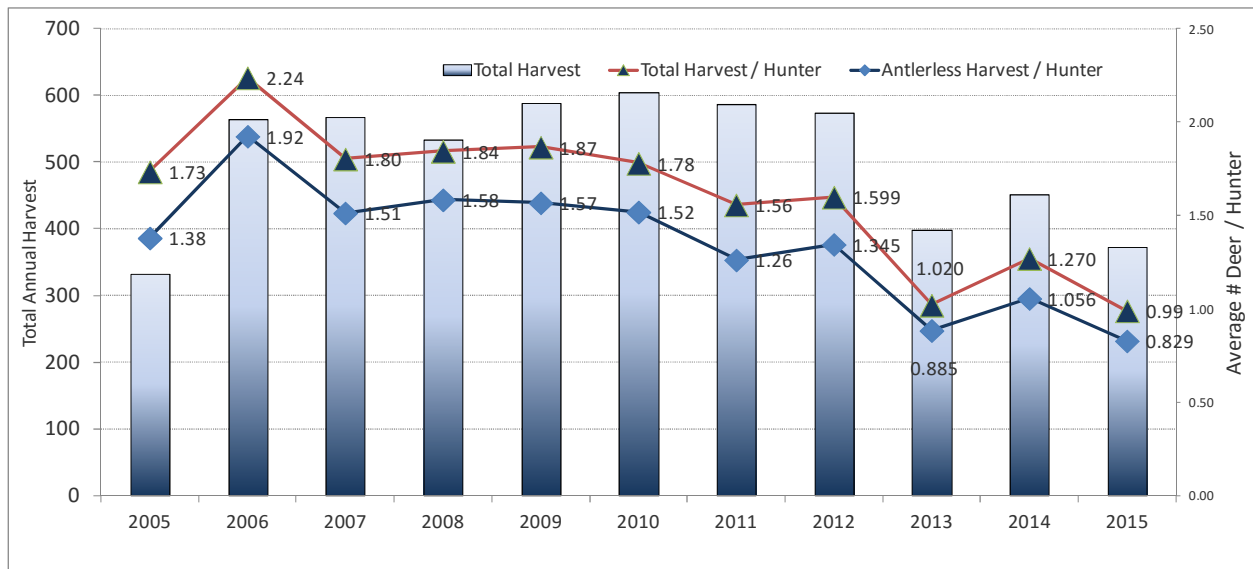


Figure 2. Total harvest, total per hunter, and total antlerless per hunter for the eleven seasons of the Duluth City Bowhunt. Total harvest is at the lowest level since 2005, when far fewer hunters were placed. When standardized for number of participants, 2015 saw the lowest number of antlerless and total harvest per hunter.

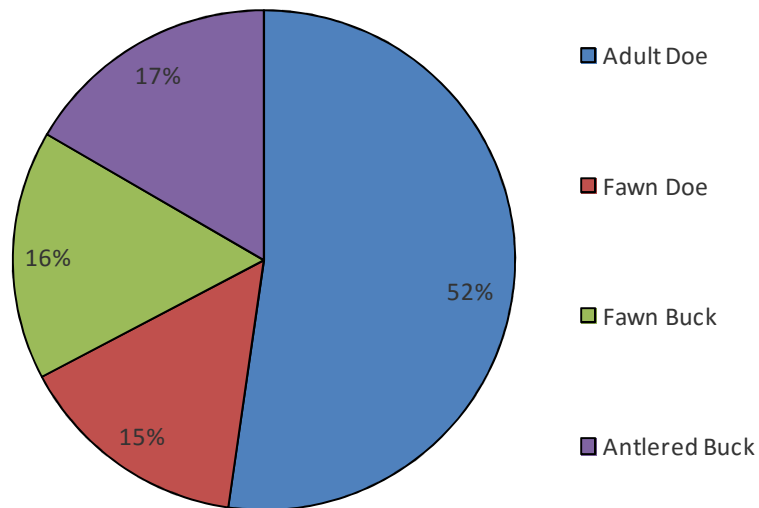


Figure 3. Breakdown of harvest by deer type for the 2015 Duluth Bowhunt.

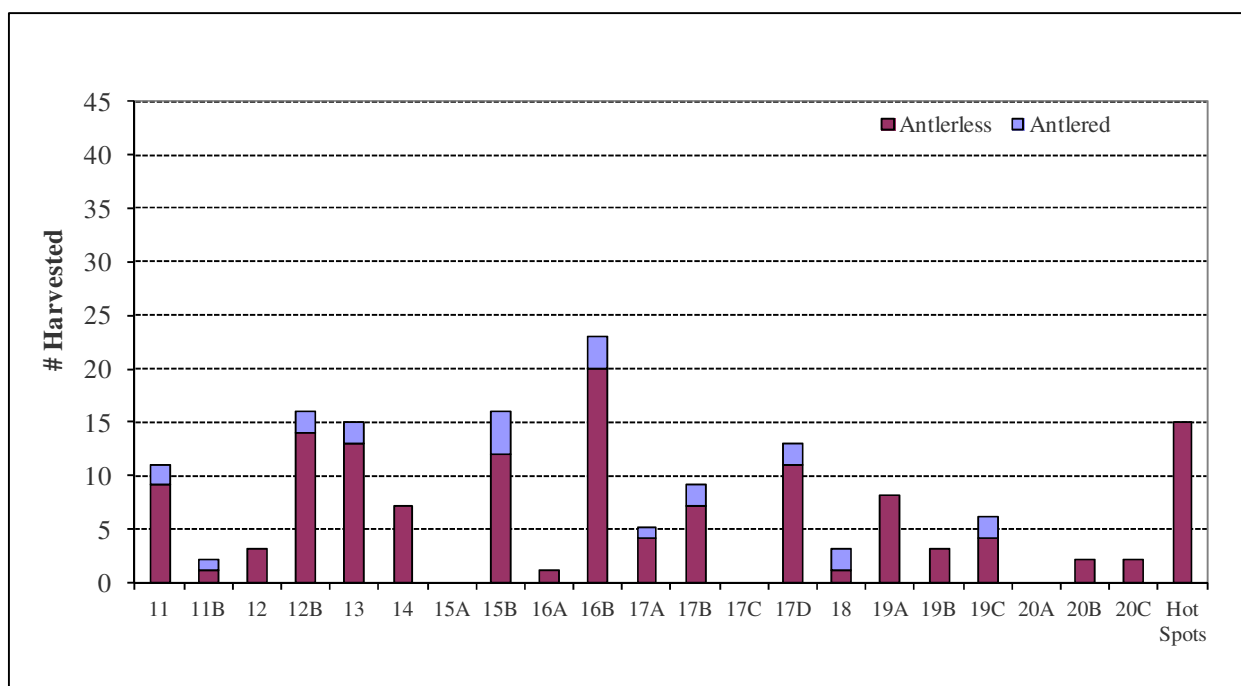
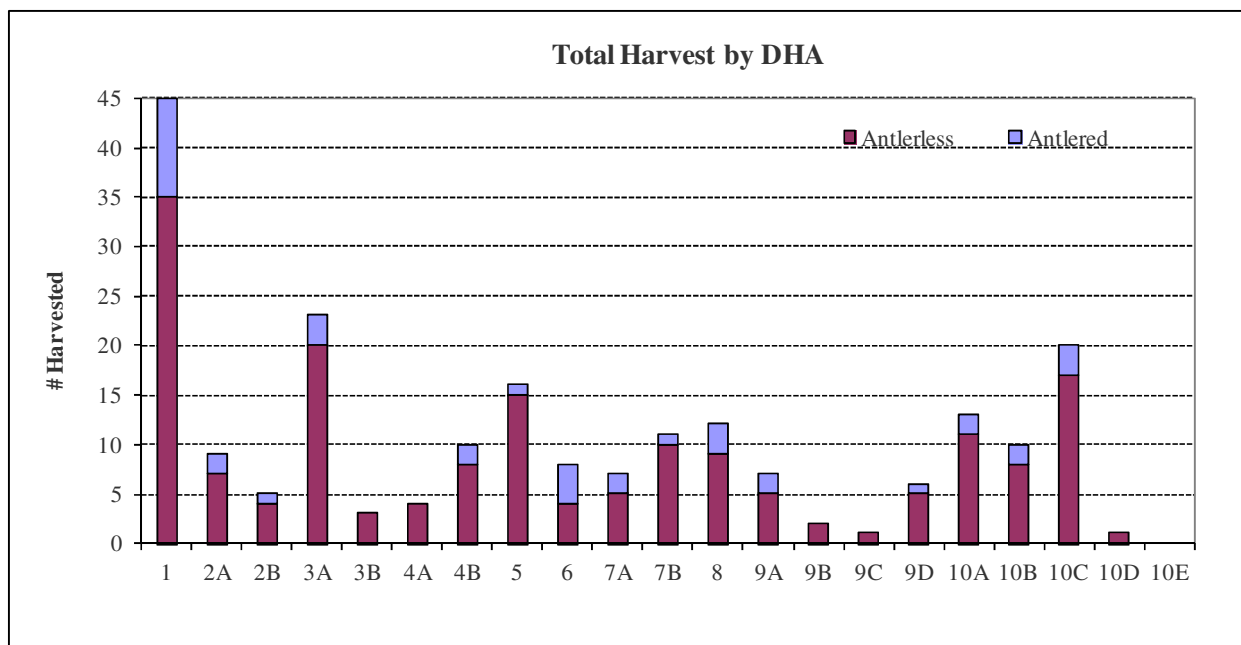


Figure 4. Number of deer harvested by deer type (Antlerless or Antlered) within each of the 42 designated hunting areas (DHAs) within the City of Duluth during the 2015 bowhunt.

Table 3. Harvest within Hot Spots during the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt. Harvest within Hot Spots is limited to antlerless only.

Description	No. Antlerless Harvested
Allendale	1
Glenwood and 51st	1
Hartley east	1
Lakeside	3
Locust Street	1
Sneve	3
Wabasha	3
Wabasha - Hartley	1
West End, between Munger and Railroad, Munger Inn to Riverside	1
TOTAL	15

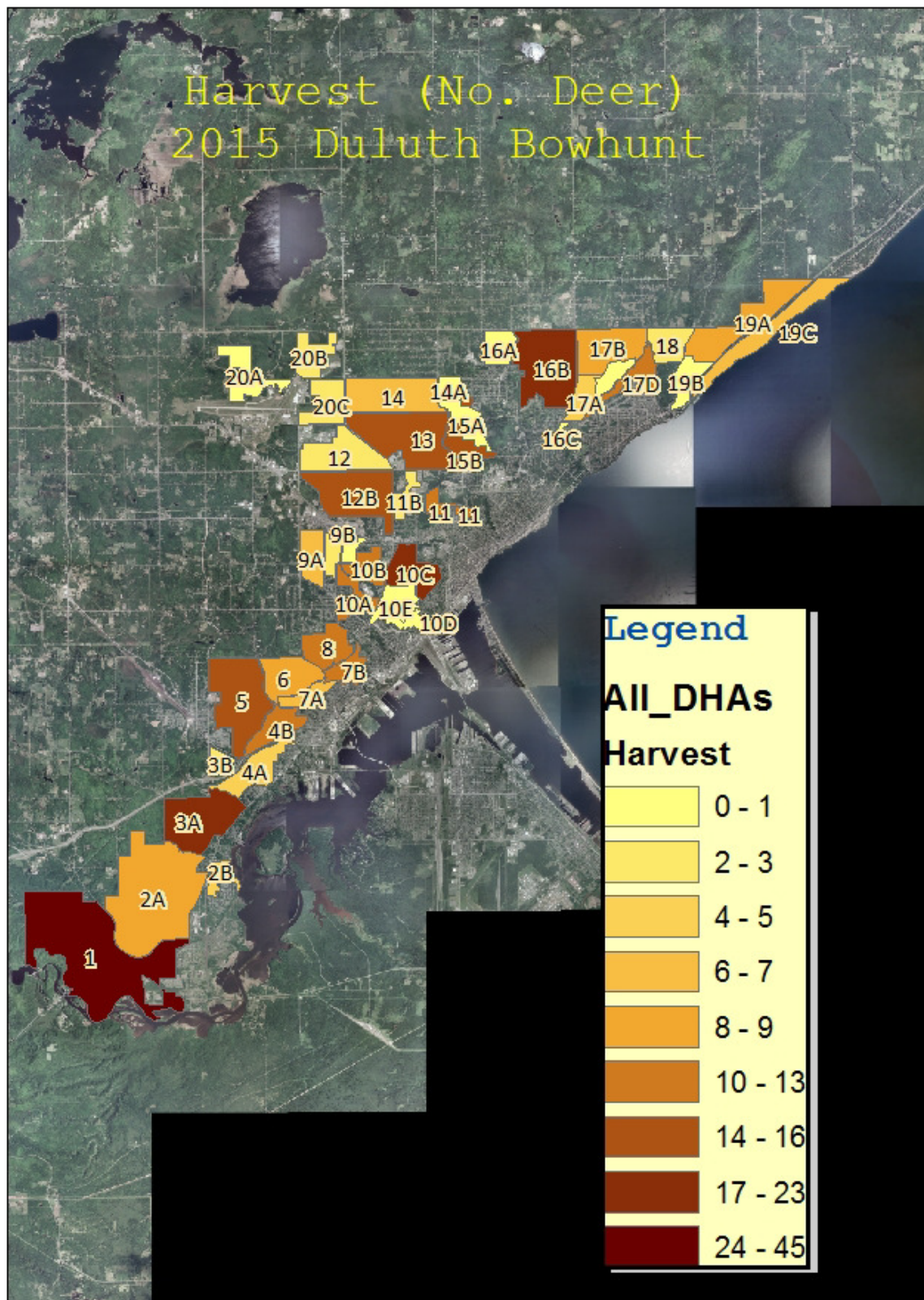


Figure 5. Map of the City of Duluth, along with harvest (number of deer) within each of the 44 Designated Hunting Areas during the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt. DHAs are labelled on the map. The color of the DHA indicates the number of deer harvested as identified in the legend at the right.

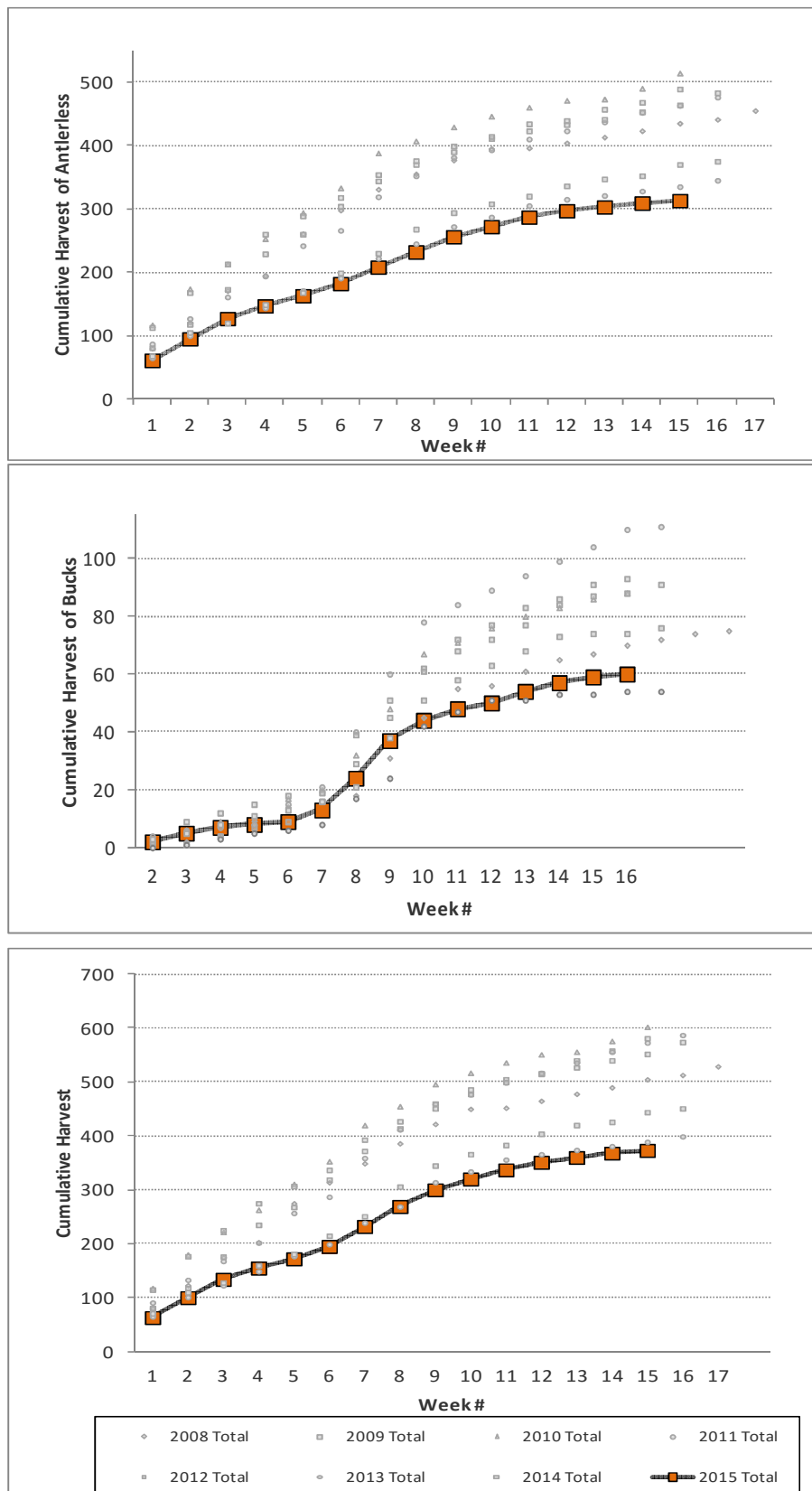


Figure 6. Harvest throughout the season, by week number, for the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt (orange lines). Top panel shows harvest of antlerless deer; middle panel shows harvest for antlered males; bottom panel is total harvest by week. Weeks are measured Saturday thru Friday, starting on 19 September 2015 thru the end of the season on 31 December 2015. Other seasons are shown for comparison using non-colored markers.

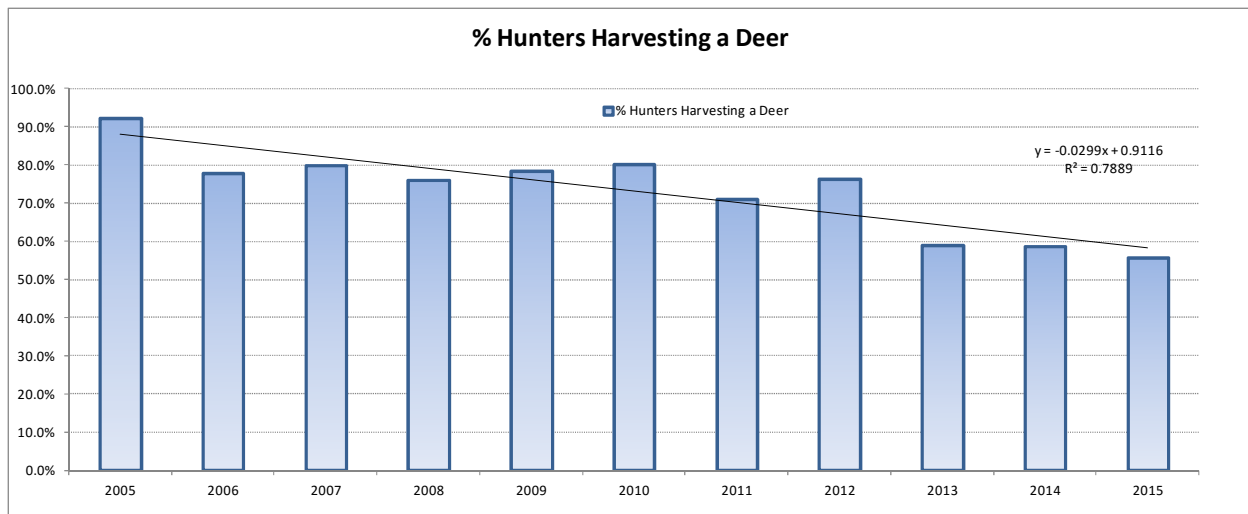


Figure 7. Percentage of hunters harvesting deer while participating in the Duluth City Bowhunt. 2015 was the lowest percentage of successful hunters observed. Regression line is shown.

Section 2: Further Evidence of a Declining Duluth Herd and Declining Duluth Hunter Success

Raw harvest numbers do not tell the complete story. Effort needs to be accounted for. When standardized by effort (number of hunters) or area (harvest / mile²), harvest takes on an entirely new meaning. Harvest per square mile (mile²) is presented in a map view of the City of Duluth (Figure 8) and by various geographic areas of the City (Figure 9). Figure 10 shows a consistent decline in harvest / mile² over the entire history of the hunt on a city-wide basis. When looking at general areas of the City, this same declining trend is observed over the ten-year period where DHA boundaries have not changed (Figure 11). Table 4 presents the raw data for the last ten years. Harvests in excess of 45 deer harvested / mile² were once common (Table 4, 2006 season), but in 2015, harvest was never observed to be higher than 17.2 deer / mile² within any area of the City (Table 4, DHAs 9's & 10's). These data further suggest that the deer herd is not as high as it was at the start of this Hunt Program in 2005.

Another way of analyzing harvest is on a per hunter basis. Figures 2 (red line) and 7 present data suggesting a decline in hunter success. As this hunt has progressed, a benchmark for success has been 2 deer / hunter. Figure 12 presents this data, and illustrates how much has changed between 2005 and the decline in 2013. Between 2005 and 2015, the percentage has dropped from just under 60% of hunters harvesting two or more deer, to less than 30% in 2015 (Figure 12). Figure 13 shows a consistent decline in both total harvest / hunter, antlerless harvest / hunter, and antlered buck harvest / hunter, where the slope of all three regressions is negative.

Another way of analyzing hunter success is placing all hunters into discrete categories. Two digits (XY) will be used to describe each hunter, where X = the number of antlerless harvested and Y = the number of adult males. Thus, 00 = no deer harvested; 10 = one antlerless and no antlered males; 50 = five antlerless and no males; 11 = one antlerless and 1 male. Figure 14 presents the hunter categories for the 2015 season. By itself, this graph doesn't reveal much about the 2015 Hunt, save that 166 individuals failed to register a deer and one individual failed to register an antlerless prior to shooting an antlered male. When compared to other seasons (Figure 15), we see an increase in the proportion of our hunters that failed to register any deer (category 00) (red line), and a slight increase in the number of hunters registering a single antlerless deer (10) (black line). The proportion of hunters registering one antlerless and one antlered (11) peaked in 2011, and has been declining since (green triangles).

However, when we look at the most successful hunters, i.e. those harvesting more than four deer, we see a consistent decline in these hunters (all three lines in Figure 16). As hunters drop out of these categories, they naturally fall into the 00 and 10 categories, which explains the increase observed in Figure 15. This observed decline in hunter success corroborates other data observed from this hunt.

The winter of 2013 - 2014 had the highest Winter Severity Index on record for the Cloquet / Duluth Area (C. Balzer, MNDNR, personal communication). There's some evidence to suggest that the Duluth herd may not be as affected by harsh winters as are other localized populations. The Duluth hillside is exposed to the sun, and might have lower snow depths and certainly warmer temperatures and thermal refuge. The popularity of bird feeders and illegal recreational deer feeders also likely help deer thru difficult winters. Generally, difficult winters affect rut-weakened bucks the most. However, long winters can affect the condition of the developing fetuses, especially during those winters that drag on into April, as in 2013. Even though the 2012 – 13 winter was not severe (WSI of 72, C. Balzer, personal communication), there were significant impacts on deer in some local areas. With late spring green-up and low quality food resources in April and May 2013, pregnant does may not have gotten the nutrition required to develop healthy fawns, leading to higher fawn mortality or a higher portion of very weak fawns born, and less fawns surviving and available to hunters in the fall. After two harsh winters and springs, it may be tempting to blame the weather on the shortage of deer in Duluth. We hypothesized that fawn production could have been affected, with less available to hunters, which may partially explain the decline in harvest.

Obviously it is difficult to assess hunter selectivity. It's safe to assume that hunters will harvest the first antlerless for which they have a safe and ethical opportunity. After the first antlerless has been harvested, it's difficult to know what hunter selectivity patterns truly are. Some hunters intentionally pass on fawns, as the time spent processing a deer is not worth the small amount of meat. Others go out of their way to harvest fawns, as they feel the higher quality meat is worth the lower quantity. Assuming that hunter selectivity has not changed from one year to the next, we can evaluate the harvest to see if winters or hunter success in the past are likely the causes for the declining hunter success and harvest totals observed in 2015. The antlered portion of the harvest for each season was removed from the antlerless portion. Fawns were combined into one category, with adult females in the second. There's little, if any, change over time in the percentages of each deer type (Figure 17). This suggests that the winters may not have as much of an influence on the declining deer harvest in Duluth as have the registered bowhunters.

At the end of the season, our hunters are asked to provide input in a Year End Survey. One of the questions in this survey was to ask returning hunters about their observations on deer densities in the woods. This is anecdotal information only, but trends become apparent with a few years' worth of observational data. Survey participants were asked to rate deer observations relative to previous years in the Duluth Hunt, on a scale from 1 to 7, with 1 being "a lot fewer deer observed" to 7 being "I saw a whole lot more deer relative to previous seasons". 4 meant "no change in Deer Numbers Observed". Figure 18 presents the data for antlerless, antlered, and total deer observations. Of the 99 returning hunters that responded, mean observational scores for the 2015 season were 2.03 ± 0.21 deer observed, indicating that hunters reported seeing a lot fewer deer this season relative to previous ones. Hunters reported seeing more antlered males (2.43 ± 0.27) relative to antlerless deer (2.27 ± 0.26), though this was not significantly different. Figure 19 presents 2015 data and previous seasons' observations. Note that over time, the distributions continue to shift to the left, indicating fewer and fewer deer are being observed by our participating hunters from one season to the next. No significant differences in observation data were observed from one year to the next, e.g. 2014 to 2015 ($P > 0.05$), or from 2013 to 2014 ($P > 0.05$). While the shift in observational data is definitely to the left, this suggests that deer densities may be declining gradually over time. Significant differences were observed when comparing means over a longer time frame, e.g. from 2011 to 2015 ($t = 5.7106$, $P < 0.0001$).

Overall, the deer harvested / mile² is the lowest observed (Figures 10 & 11). Total harvest / hunter and antlerless harvest / hunter are also at all-time lows (Figure 13). Deer observations continue a downward trend observed since the ABA began collecting this data in 2011 (Figure 19). Hunters, politicians, and landowners need to begin adjusting expectations and redefine the definition of “success” for this urban hunt. In 2005, “success” was defined by the 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 their definition of “success”. The ABA believes that those days are 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.

“Success” needs to be redefined as we move from the phase of depressing the deer herd to one of sustaining 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. Further, Duluth residents do not largely support a complete elimination of the deer herd. A new definition for success should be the continued opportunity for our bowhunters to participate in a sport that is a passion to many, in our own backyard. Continuing this opportunity provides services to our community by keeping the herd at current levels, one seemingly accepted by gardeners, homeowners, and those that drive vehicles and have to dodge darting deer during the autumn months. Eliminating this opportunity will no doubt increase the deer herd back to 2005 population levels in a few short years, a level completely unacceptable by the residents, insurance companies, and the Duluth Police Department.

Bowhunters need to adjust their expectations as well. Gone are the days of seeing a dozen deer every evening in the woods. While this Hunt Program continues, these population levels will likely never be seen again. Hunters that don’t have the time or patience to wait for just two or three harvest opportunities in a season are encouraged to hunt elsewhere. What the ABA and law enforcement can’t tolerate are hunters taking matters into their own hands, and 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 and hunting illegally in areas not approved of by the Duluth City Council or the Duluth Police Department. 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, please pull out a State map and find other areas that may have higher deer densities than what is currently observed within Duluth.

Section 3, beginning on page 21, will go into fine details of the 2015 Hunt, our hunters and their successes, and other such seemingly insignificant details that few, if any, will find interesting. If you have a misbehaving child, make them continue reading until their behavior and attitude improves, or until they fall asleep from sheer boredom.

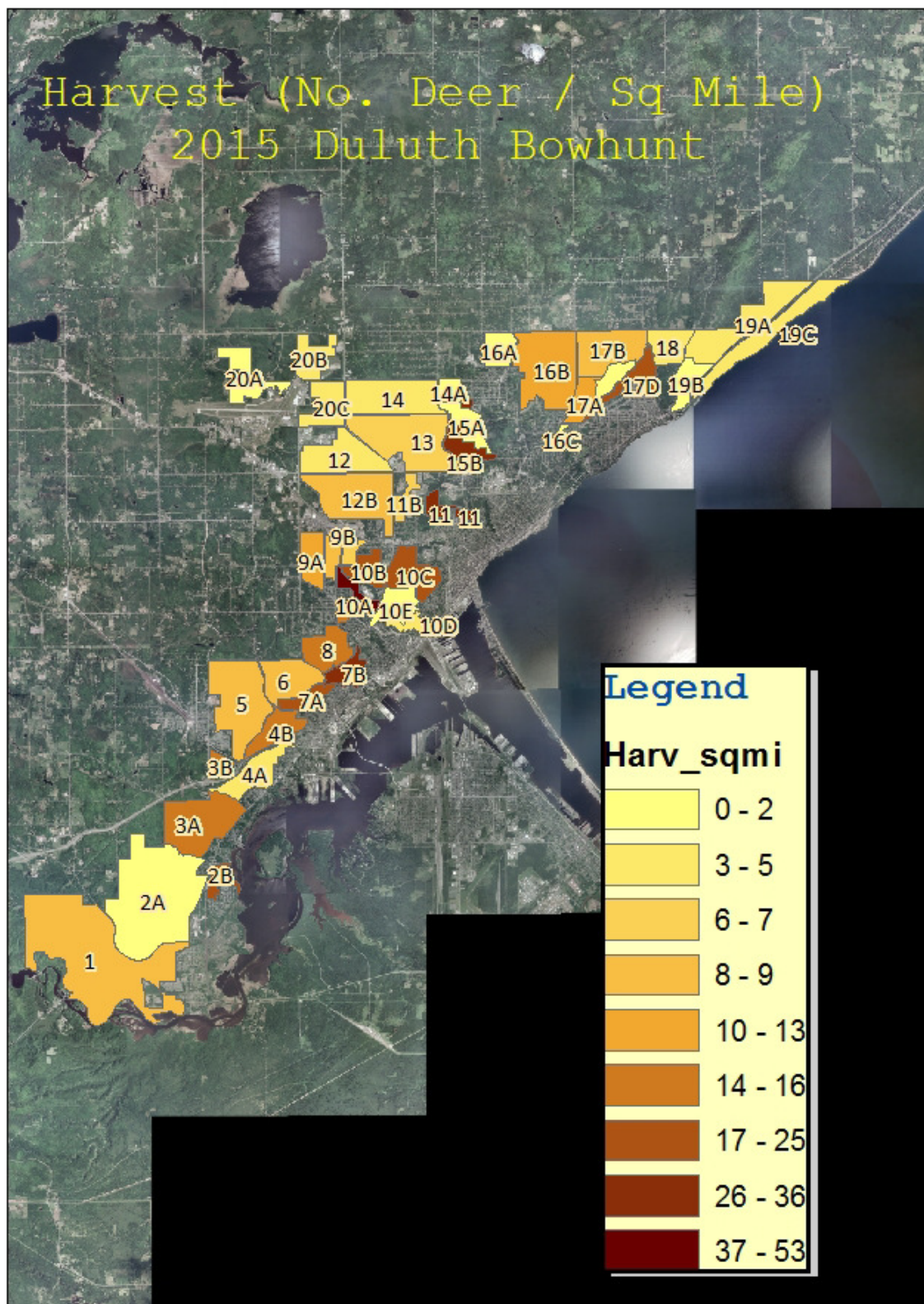


Figure 8. Map of the City of Duluth, along with harvest per mile² within each of the 44 Designated Hunting Areas during the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt. DHAs are labelled on the map. The color of the DHA indicates the number of deer harvested per mile² as identified in the legend at the right.

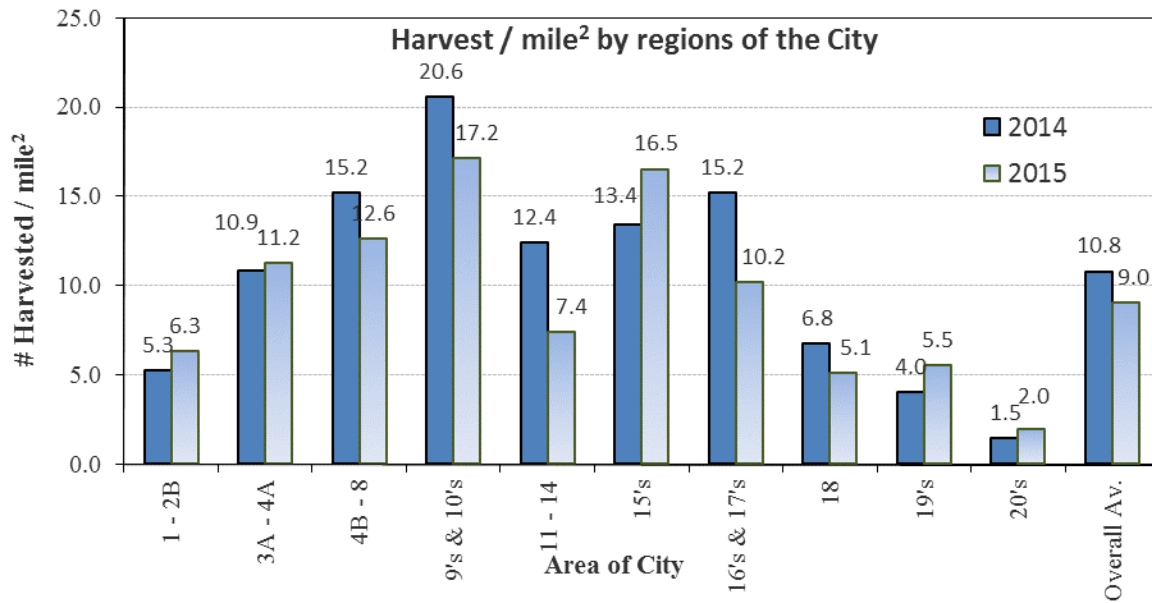


Figure 9. Harvest / mile² in various areas of the City of Duluth. Data presented is for both 2015 and for comparison, 2014.

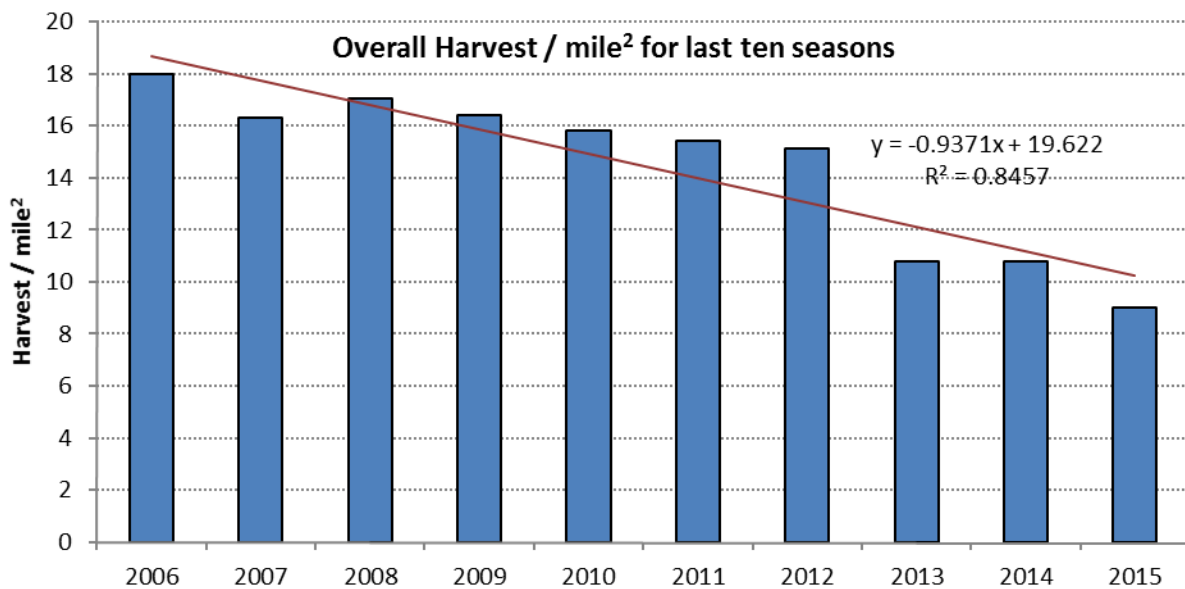


Figure 10. Harvest per mile² over a ten-year time period in the Duluth City Bowhunt. Harvest is not included for 2005, as the DHAs were redrawn and are not the same as during the first season. Regression line is shown.

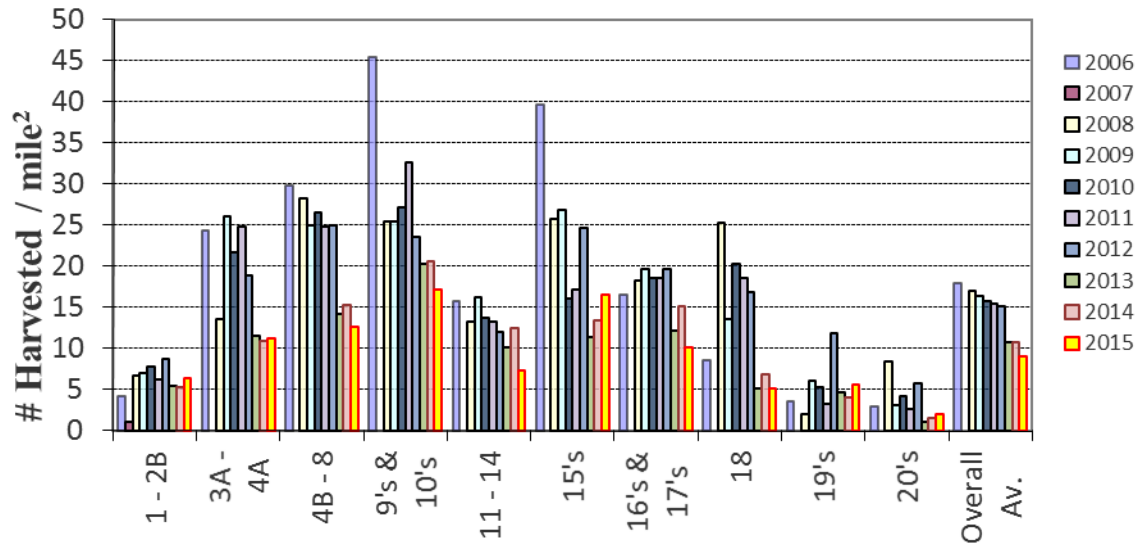


Figure 11. Harvest / mile² in sections of the city, identified as a range of Designated Hunting Areas (DHAs). The overall average presents the same data as in Figure 9.

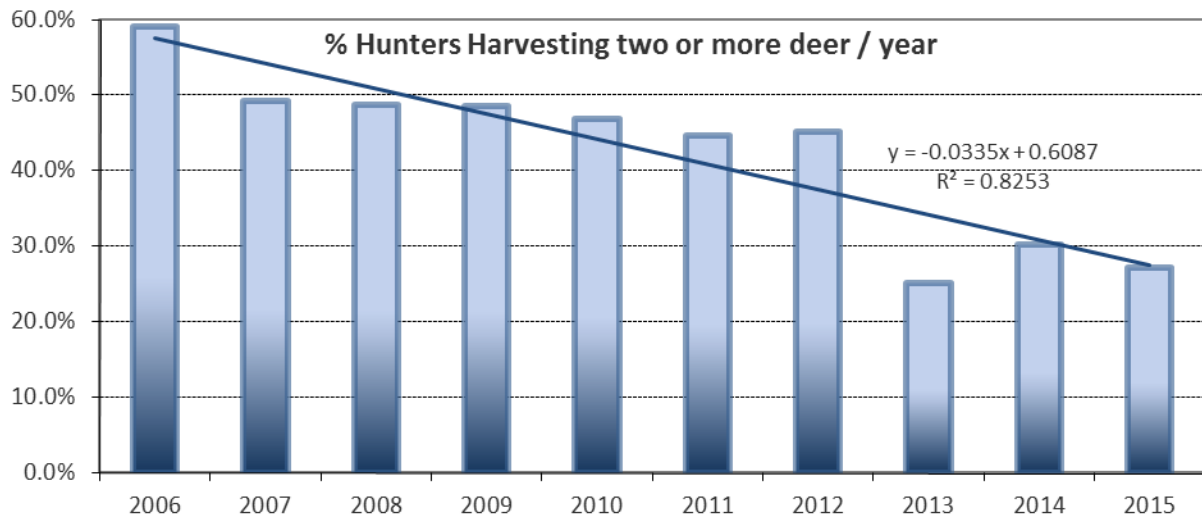


Figure 12. Percentage of hunters harvesting two or more deer per season while participating in the Duluth City Bowhunt. Regression line is shown.

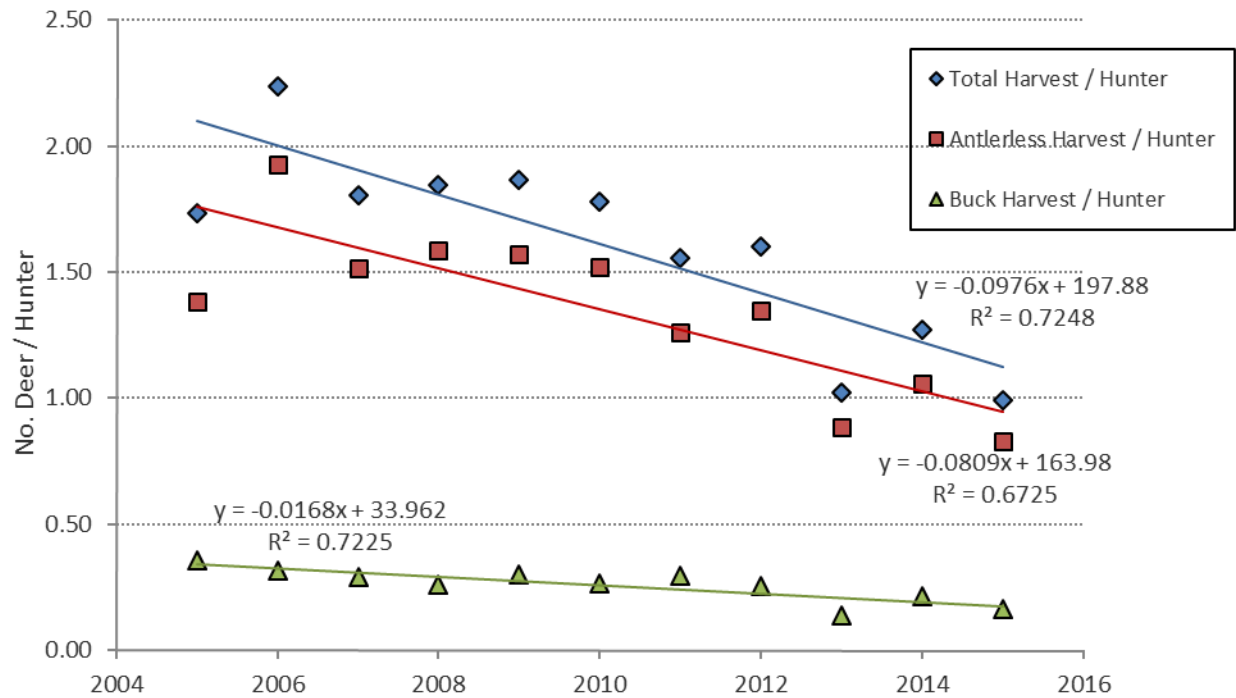


Figure 13. Harvest / hunter statistics for the eleven years of the Duluth City Bowhunt.

Table 4. Harvest / mile² in various areas (DHAs) of the City of Duluth, for the last ten years where DHA boundaries have not changed.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1 - 2B	4.1	5.6	6.7	7.0	7.8	6.3	8.7	5.4	5.3	6.3
3A - 4A	24.4	18.4	13.6	26.0	21.6	24.8	18.8	11.5	10.9	11.2
4B - 8	29.8	28.2	28.2	25.0	26.6	24.7	25.0	14.3	15.2	12.6
9's & 10's	45.4	33.6	25.4	25.4	27.2	32.7	23.5	20.3	20.6	17.2
11 - 14	15.7	15.8	13.3	16.3	13.8	13.3	11.9	10.0	12.4	7.4
15's	39.7	20.4	25.8	26.9	16.1	17.2	24.7	11.4	13.4	16.5
16's & 17's	16.5	18.2	18.2	19.6	18.6	18.6	19.6	12.2	15.2	10.2
18	8.5	15.2	25.4	13.5	20.3	18.6	16.9	5.1	6.8	5.1
19's	3.6	5.7	2.0	6.1	5.3	3.3	11.8	4.7	4.0	5.5
20's	3.0	5.8	8.4	3.1	4.2	2.6	5.8	1.0	1.5	2.0
Overall Av.	18.0	16.3	17.0	16.4	15.8	15.4	15.1	10.8	10.8	9.0

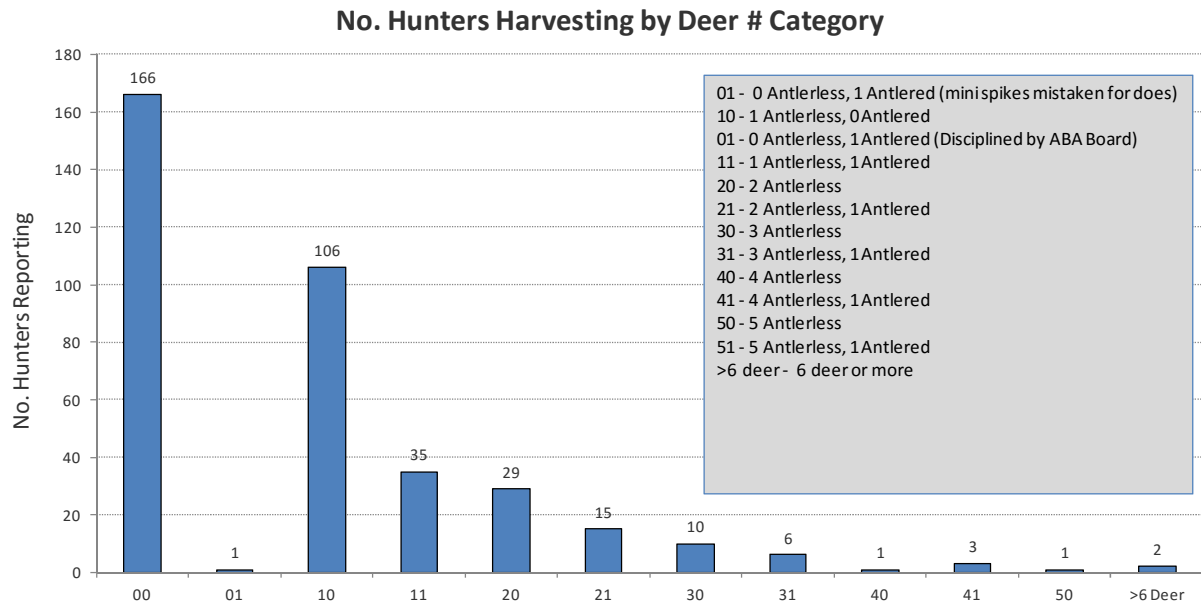


Figure 14. The number of Duluth City bowhunters by harvest category for the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt.

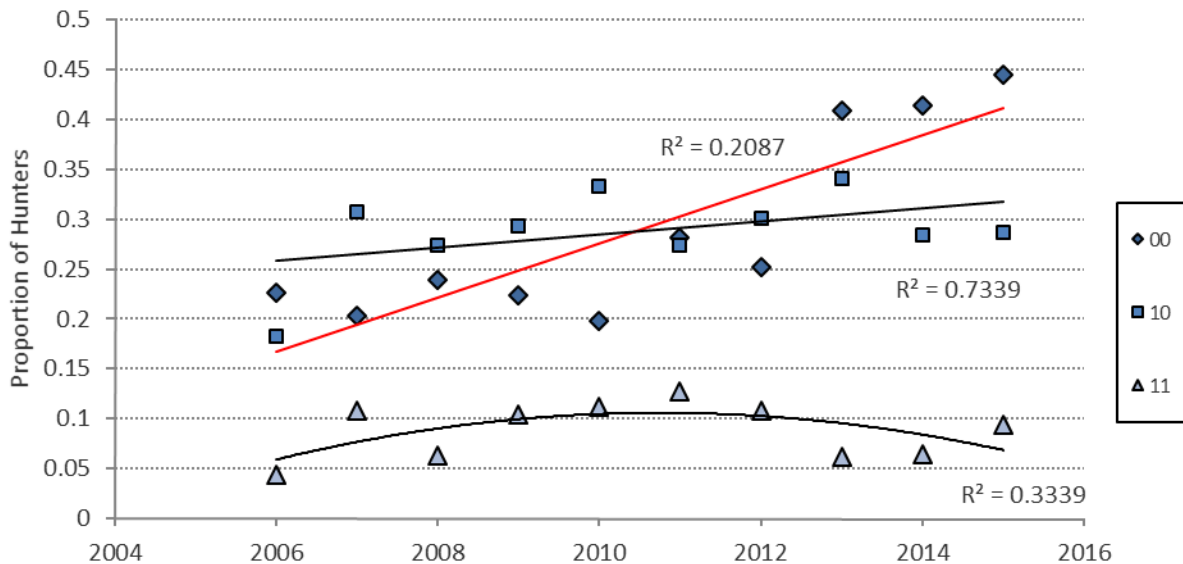


Figure 15. Hunter category for hunters in the Duluth City Bowhunt, for seasons 2006 – 2015. Data presented here are for hunters harvesting zero deer (00), one antlerless (10), and one antlerless and one antlered male (11).

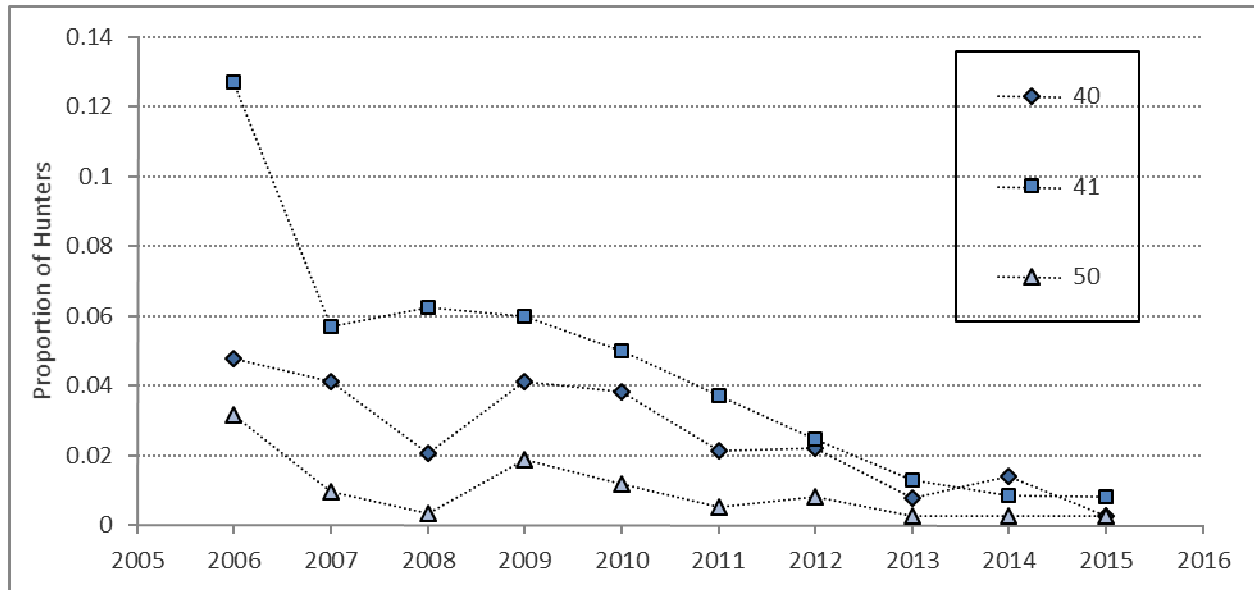


Figure 16. Hunter category for hunters in the Duluth City Bowhunt, for seasons 2006 – 2015. Data presented here are for hunters harvesting four antlerless (40), four antlerless and one antlered individual (41), and five antlerless (50).

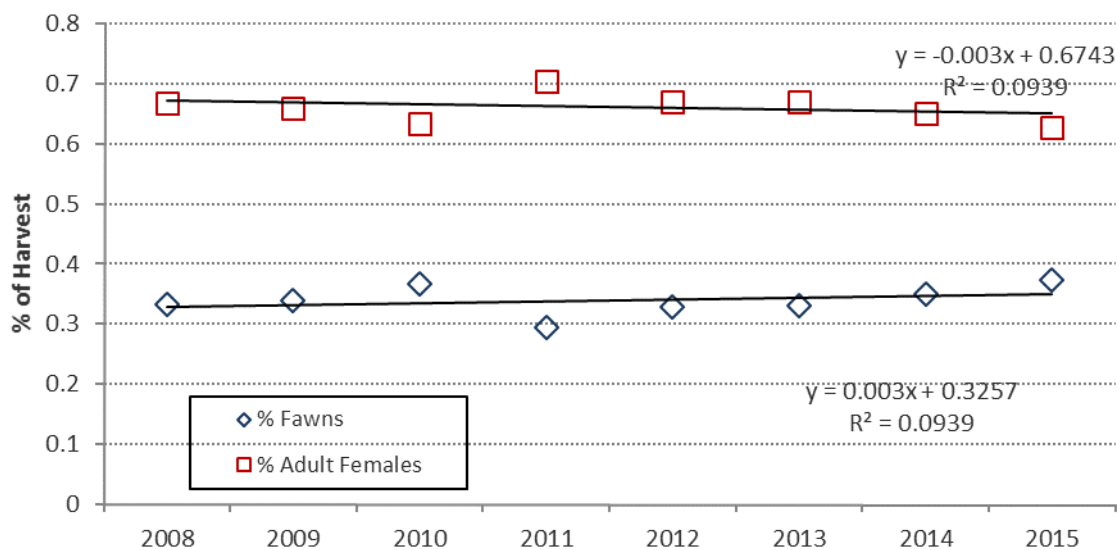


Figure 17. The percentage of antlerless harvest in the Duluth Bowhunt, from 2008 thru 2015.

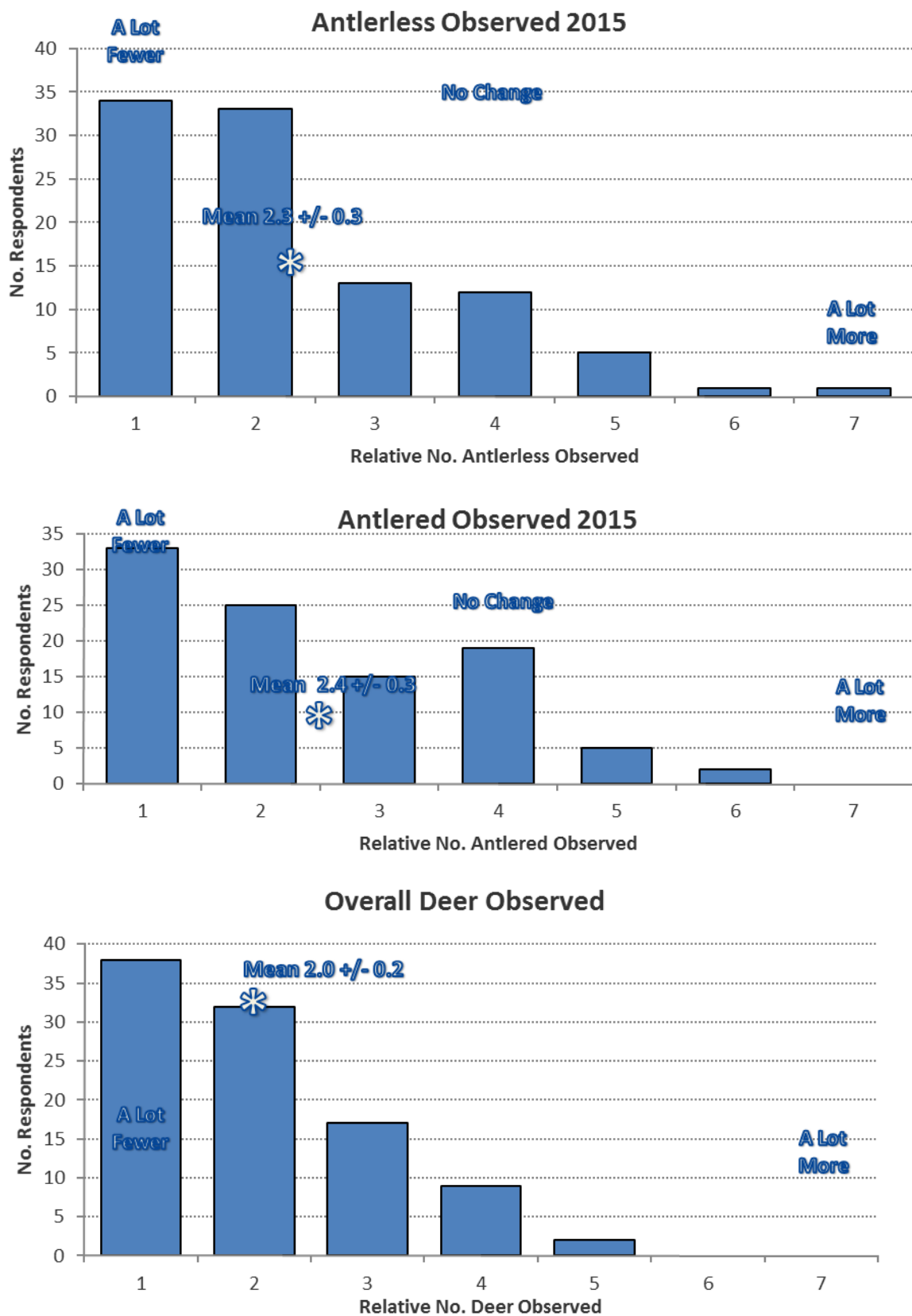


Figure 18. Relative number of deer observed by returning hunters in the 2015 Duluth Bowhunt.

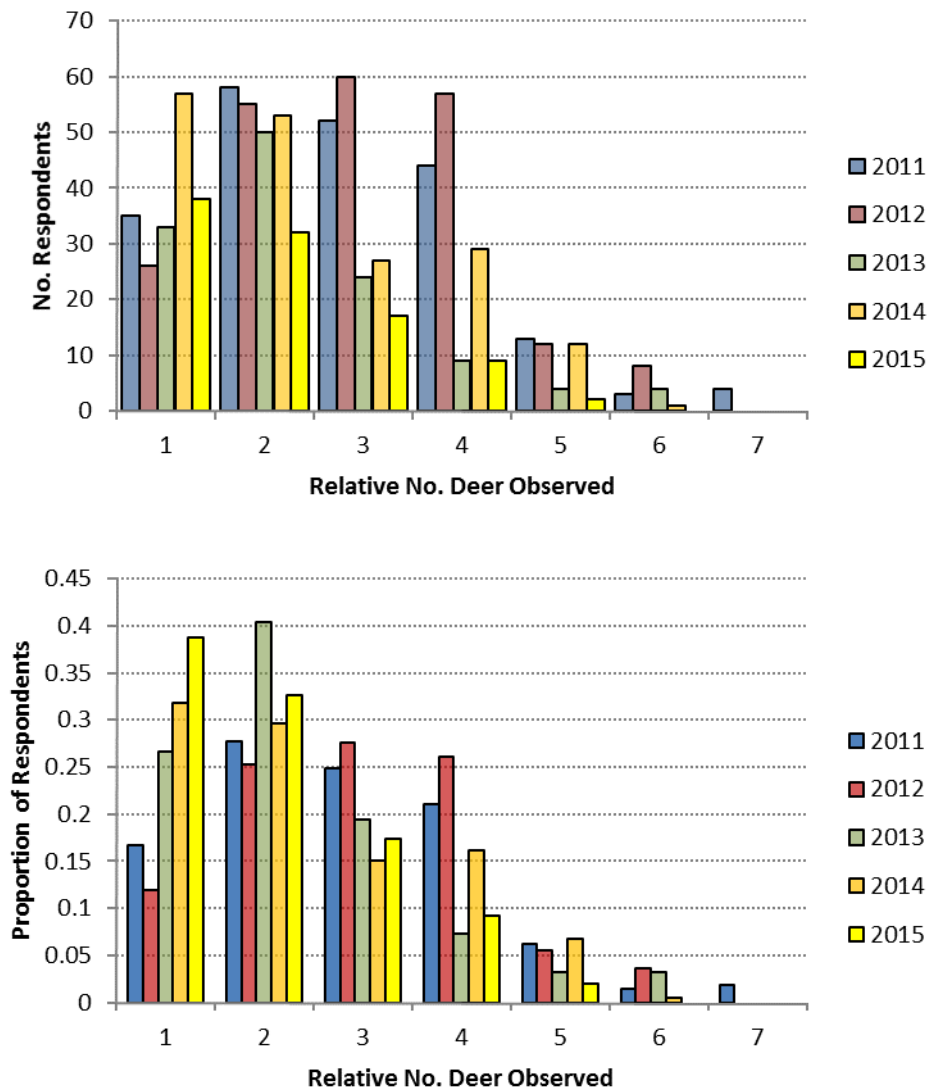


Figure 19. Relative number of deer observed by returning hunters during the past five seasons of the Duluth City Bowhunt. The top panel is raw data, the number of hunters that filled out the Year End Survey and answered the questions. The bottom panel presents the percentage of hunters in each observational category, standardized by the number of respondents.

Section 3: General Hunt details for the 2015 season

Many hunters will recognize Figure 20. It's been used in many of the Hunt summaries. If you appreciate the humor, you will probably find the following Section interesting. If you view figure 20 as moronic, now's a great time to put this report away, grab the ice-rod and your children, and head out for a much better use of your time.

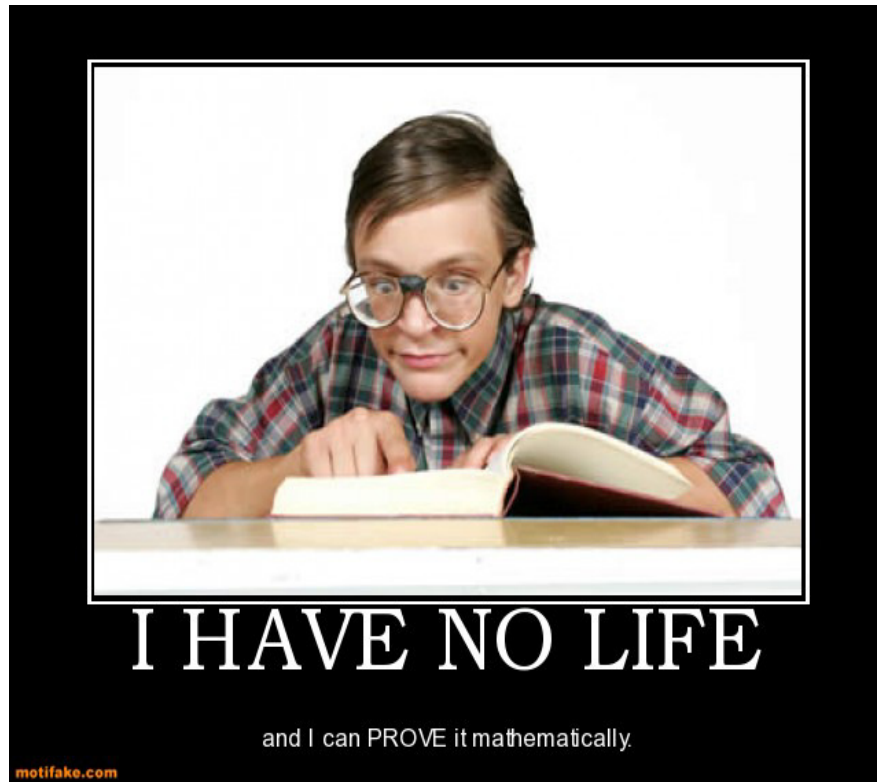


Figure 20. Needs no caption. Self-explanatory for those who know Bork.

Private Lands

The Duluth City Council has opened up private lands within the DHAs to our bowhunters. The Council could have limited hunting solely to public lands owned by the City. But to increase harvest, hunters can access any private property, with permission, within any of the DHAs. Our hunters once again took advantage of this opportunity in 2015. Harvest from private lands accounted for 45.0% of the 2015 harvest (Figure 21). 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 22 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. However, it also 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.

Public vs. Private Land Harvest Total No. Deer

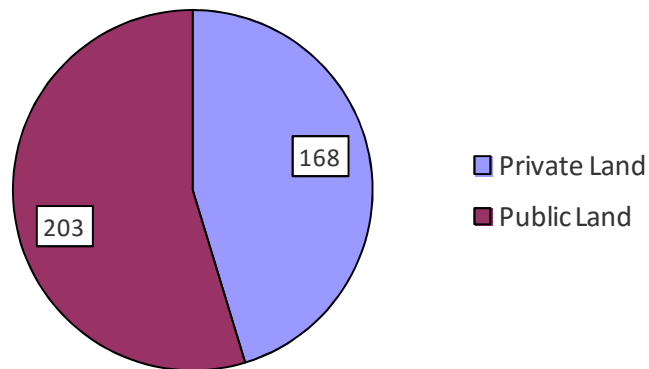


Figure 21. Harvest on public and private lands within the designated hunting areas during the 20105 Duluth City Bowhunt.

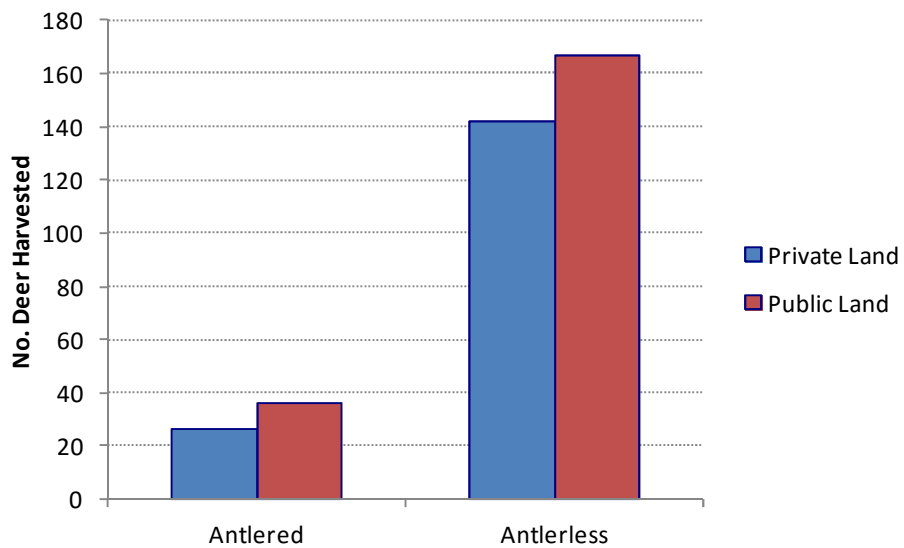


Figure 22. Harvest by deer type on public and private lands within the designated hunting areas during the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt.

Not all of the DHAs are created equally, in terms of the portion of public and private lands within the boundaries of each DHA. Figure 22 breaks down harvest within the various DHAs by public and private. Clearly DHAs such as DHA 1 and 3A are dominated by City-owned public lands, whereas 11B, 15B 16B, 13, for example, have many more opportunities available on private lands.

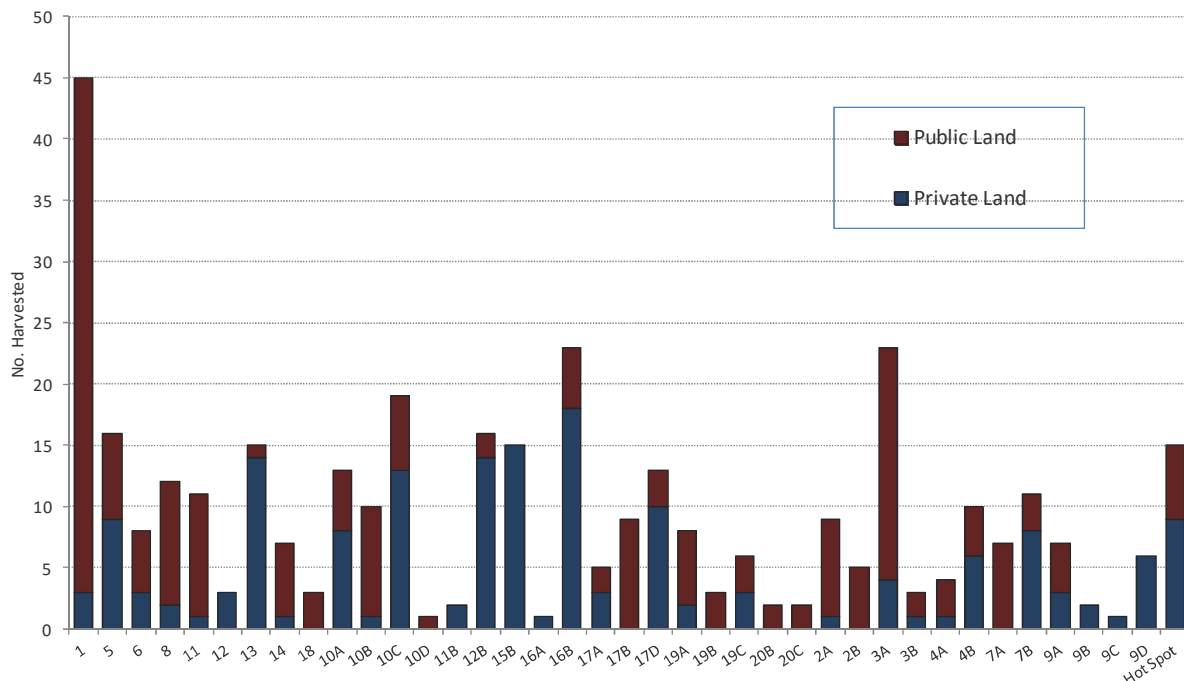


Figure 22. Harvest by Designated Hunting Area on public and private lands during the 2010/5 Duluth City Bowhunt.

Ground Blinds:

During the first years of the Duluth Hunt, the rules specified that hunters could ONLY hunt from elevated stands. Hunters requested the use of ground blinds to further open up areas within DHAs. The City Council approved, and ground blinds have been allowed by permission only from both the ABA and the respective DHA Hunt Coordinator. Figure 23 shows the results of ground blind use in 2015. Harvest was minimal from ground blinds, with only 20 harvested, barely a significant amount (5.0%). However, once again, there were no incidents involving Duluth participants or any accidents resulting from the use of ground blinds. The ABA will continue to advocate for the use of ground blinds as a reasonable opportunity within areas of the City where tree stand setups are simply not feasible.

Tree Stands vs. Ground Blinds Total No. Deer

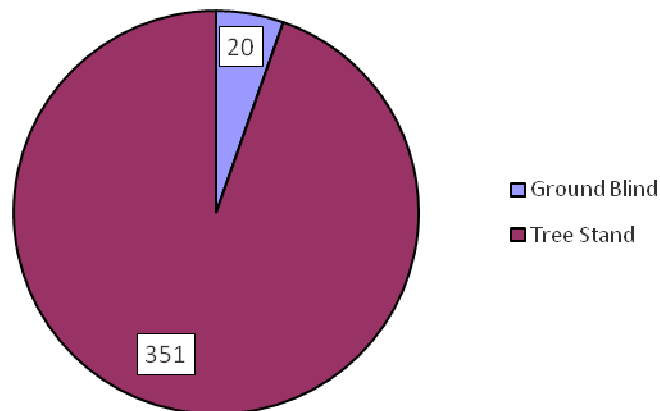


Figure 23. Number of deer harvested from ground blinds and tree stands during the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt.

Hearts and Livers:

Again in 2015, Duluth hunters were asked to save hearts and livers 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 terms of arteries and capillaries, than do formalin-preserved ones. Hearts were collected on 8 November, when the harvest had reached 248 deer. Only 43% of our hunters opted to participate in this opportunity to give back to the community (Figure 24).

A researcher associated with UMD requested livers from harvested deer for the second year in a row. This individual is examining the occurrence of liver flukes in various white-tailed deer populations. Duluth was included in the study for the opportunity to receive many more samples at little to no cost. Figure 25 shows that Duluth hunters were largely cooperative, and provided many samples for this researcher.

Hunter participation in these two programs was in the 30% - 43% range (Figures 24 & 25). This is a wonderful opportunity for hunters to participate in cutting-edge research as well as give back to the community that has opened up their backyard for our bowhunting recreation. The ABA Board struggles with how to make this program relevant to our hunters, and to encourage continued / further participation. After the 2014 season, hunters asked that UMD make an effort to encourage participation. UMD came thru with tickets to sporting events and gift cards to Gander Mountain and the UMD bookstore. These items were raffled off to participating hunters. The ABA would have hoped that participation rates would have been greater than 50% as a result. Results from the 2015 Year End Hunter Survey (*Details in Section 4, page 34*) suggest that this Program is still important to our hunters (Figure 26). The ABA will likely commit once again to UMD to collect these. Please understand that the ABA is immensely grateful to those hunters that went out of their way to collect, store, and ultimately deliver these hearts and livers. The ABA would encourage others to participate in 2016, especially given that harvest is likely to continue to decline, meaning there will be fewer hearts available to collect. Every heart will be important in 2016!

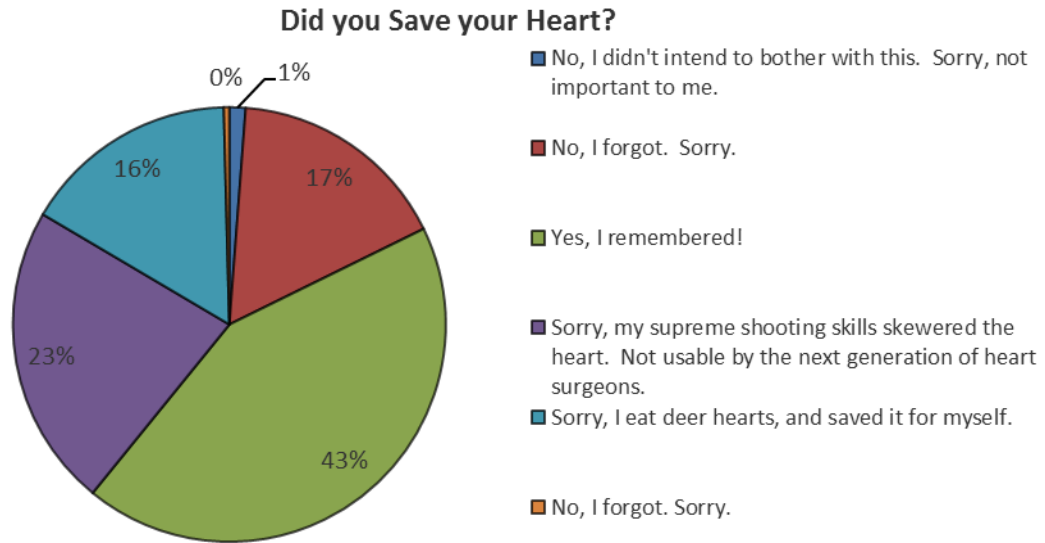


Figure 24. Responses from hunters asked to save deer hearts for the UMD-Medical School during the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt.

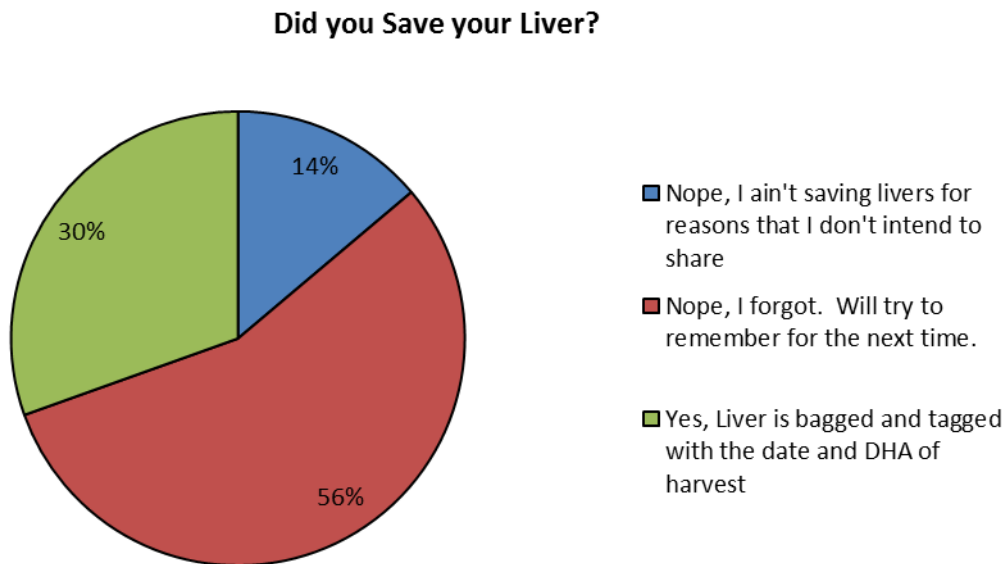


Figure 25. Responses from hunters asked to save deer livers for the UMD liver fluke study during the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt.

Save a Heart for UMD in 2016?

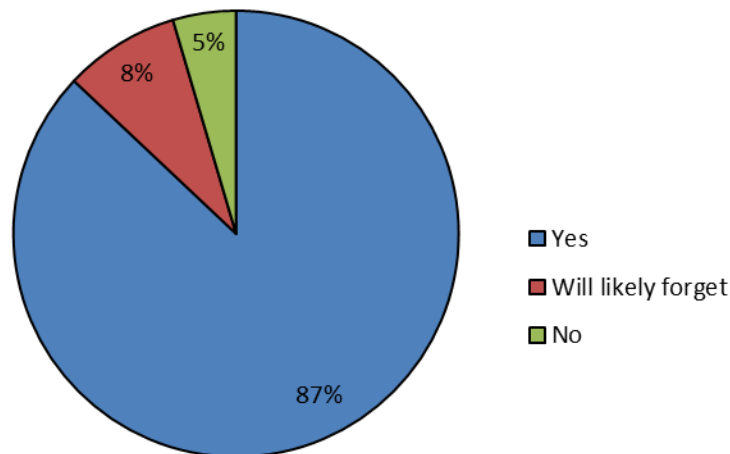


Figure 26. Results from the Year End Hunter Survey when asked whether a hunter would be willing to save a heart for the UMD Medical School in 2016.

Hunter Demographics, Locals vs Non-Local Hunters:

So, who participated in the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt? Local hunters, defined as those living within 30 miles of Duluth (e.g. Cloquet, Hermantown, Saginaw, and Carlton) were obviously the majority (86.7%, Table 5). Local hunters accounted for 90.6% of the antlerless harvest, and 91.9% of the antlered harvest, suggesting that local hunters had more opportunity and harvested deer in a higher percentage than their representation in the hunter pool. Duluth residents made up 71.2% of the hunting population, and were responsible for 72.8% of antlerless and 71.0% of antlered harvest, in line with their participation rates. Out-of-State hunters were not a significant portion of the 2015 hunter population (3.5%) (Table 5). When standardized by participation rates, we see that local hunters, which include Duluth residents, harvested deer at a higher rate than their rate of participation, as evidenced by proportion of harvest levels greater than 1.0 (Figure 27). All other hunter groups failed to harvest deer in proportion to their participation rates (Figure 27).

Local hunters harvested 1.04 ± 0.13 total deer per hunter (0.86 ± 0.11 antlerless deer / hunter). Non-locals and out-of-State hunters harvested 0.68 ± 0.22 total deer per hunter (0.58 ± 0.19 antlerless deer / hunter). These differences were significant for both total deer harvested ($t = 2.008$, $P = 0.022$) and for antlerless deer harvested ($t = 1.91$, $P = 0.028$).

The ABA and the City of Duluth routinely receive complaints that out-of-state and non-local hunters are in this hunt solely for the chance to harvest a trophy buck, and then move on. Out-of-state hunters have to pay much higher fees for MN hunting licenses and tags, and may not be willing to purchase multiple antlerless bonus tags. Our data suggests that this is not necessarily the case. Time constraints and travel make it improbable that the average non-local or out-of-state hunter would be able to invest the time and effort required to harvest at the same rate as local hunters, especially when the deer herd is at the low end of what has been observed over the last decade. Local hunters appear to have the advantage when it comes to harvest opportunity.

Table 5. Breakdown of hunter demographics for hunters participating in the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt. Locals are hunters living within 30 miles of Duluth. Duluth residents are a subset of “locals”, and are Duluth residents. Non-locals are hunters residing within the State of Minnesota outside of the 30-mile radius. Out-of-state hunters in 2015 were all individuals living in Wisconsin. The number and percentage of antlerless and antlered harvest is reported by hunter residency.

	# Hunters Participating (%)	# Antlerless Harvested (%)	# Antlered Harvested (%)
Locals	325 (86.7%)	280 (90.6%)	57 (91.9%)
Duluth Residents	267 (71.2%)	225 (72.8%)	44 (71.0%)
Non-Locals	37 (9.8%)	23 (7.4%)	4 (6.4%)
Out-of-State	13 (3.5%)	6 (1.9%)	1 (1.6%)
TOTAL		309	62

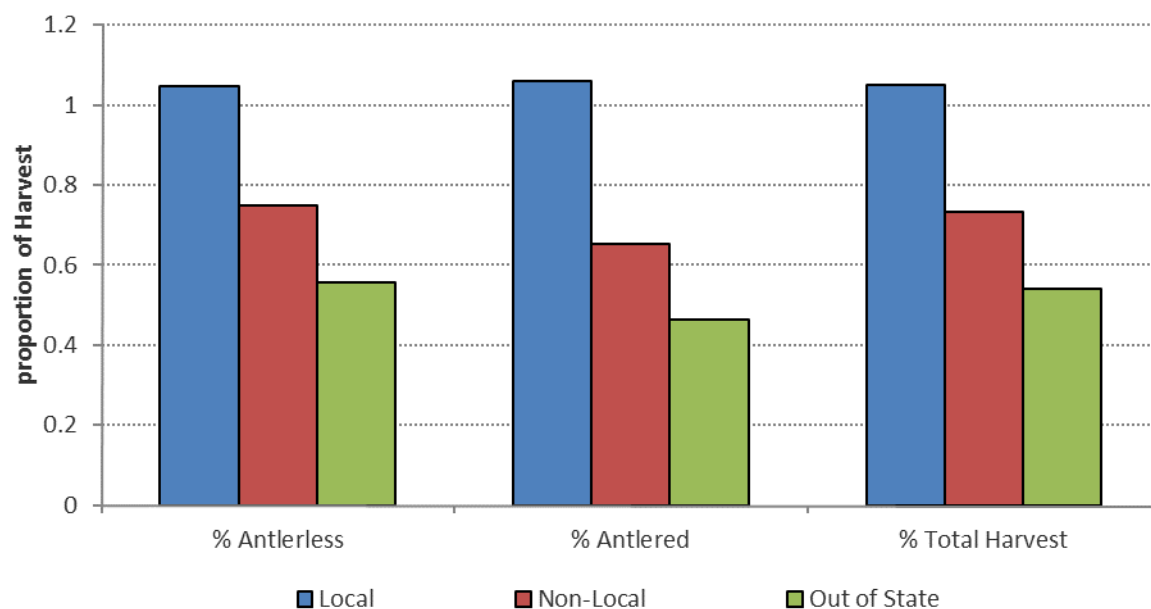


Figure 27. Harvest rates standardized by participation for hunters residing within 30 miles of Duluth (Locals), Minnesota residents outside of the Duluth area (non-locals), and out-of-state hunters for the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt.

Hunter Demographics, New vs Returning Hunters:

In 2015, the ABA placed 89 new hunters and 286 returning hunters from the 2014 hunt (Table 6). Returning hunters accounted for a much higher percentage of the harvest than did new hunters, when standardized by the number participating (Figure 28). Returning hunters harvested 1.15 ± 0.15 total deer per hunter, significantly different than the new hunters total harvest of 0.49 ± 0.16 ($t = 4.64$, $P < 0.0001$). Returning hunters harvested 0.96 ± 0.12 antlerless deer per hunter, significantly higher than the new hunters' antlerless harvest of 0.39 ± 0.13 ($t = 4.88$, $P < 0.0001$).

Several hypotheses have been offered to explain these observed differences between new and returning hunters. Certainly there's the "home field advantage" where many returning hunters may already know where they will be hunting even before placement at Lottery Night. And certainly there's a learning curve, where returning hunters have experience and knowledge of deer movements within the various DHAs that new hunters do not. Returning hunters likely already have private land lined up from past seasons. Even though new hunters appear to be at a disadvantage, the ABA Board continues to be impressed each season at the new recruits, and the energy and enthusiasm that they demonstrate to the goals of this management hunt.

Table 6. Breakdown of hunter demographics by returning status that participated in the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt. New hunters are defined as those that did not participate in the 2014 Duluth City Bowhunt. Returning hunters were registered in 2014. The number and percentage of antlerless and antlered harvest is reported by hunter status.

	# Participating	Antlerless (%)	Antlered (%)	Total Harvest (%)
New	89 (23.7%)	34 (11.0%)	9 (14.5%)	43 (11.6%)
Returning	286 (76.3%)	275 (88.9%)	53 (85.4%)	328 (88.4%)
TOTAL	375	309	62	371

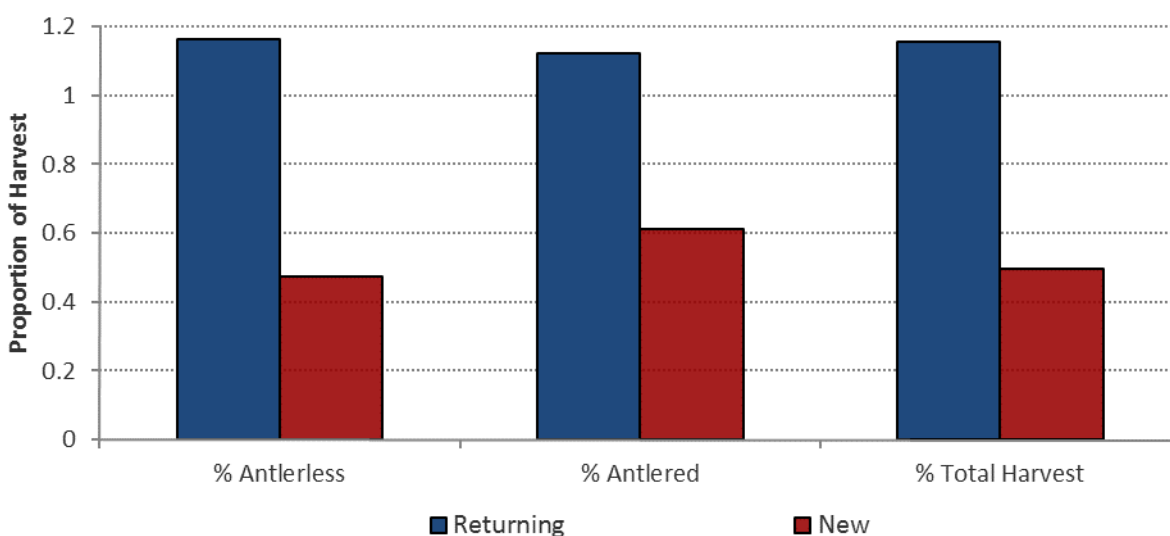


Figure 28. Harvest rates standardized by participation for new and returning hunters for the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt.

Venison Donation:

In 2015, Duluth bowhunters reported donating all or part of 178 harvested deer (47.7%) to friends and family. This continues the downward trend for donated venison (Figure 29). As deer densities continue to decline, and hunters have a more difficult time filling their own freezers, it's to be expected that the deer available for donation will continue to decline.

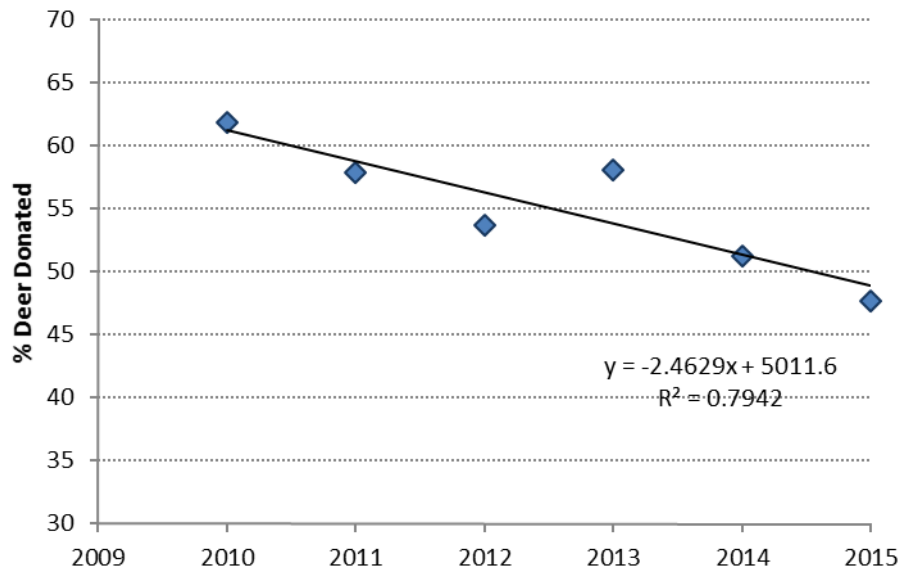


Figure 29. Percentage of venison reported as being donated to friends and family for the last six seasons of the Duluth City Bowhunt.

Mandatory 48 Hour Registration:

The ABA Rules manual states that hunters have 48 hours to register their harvests with the ABA. This year, our hunters largely did a good job at this, with 80.2% following the 48-hour rule (Figure 30). An additional 15.3% registered their harvest within a week. Eight deer were not identified until after the season was over, and hunters were required to check in with their Hunt Coordinators. This amounts to an additional 2.1% harvest, down from past seasons, and greatly appreciated by the ABA.

Figure 31 suggests that the best the ABA and the City may be able to expect is 80% compliance with the 48-hour rule for harvest registration. Further, data suggests that a consistent 15% of harvest can be anticipated to be a week late (Figure 31). The ABA can live with this 95% reporting rate. But what really makes the ABA's job difficult is the harvest that shows up a month or more late. The ABA Board will be discussing this and addressing this for the 2016 season.

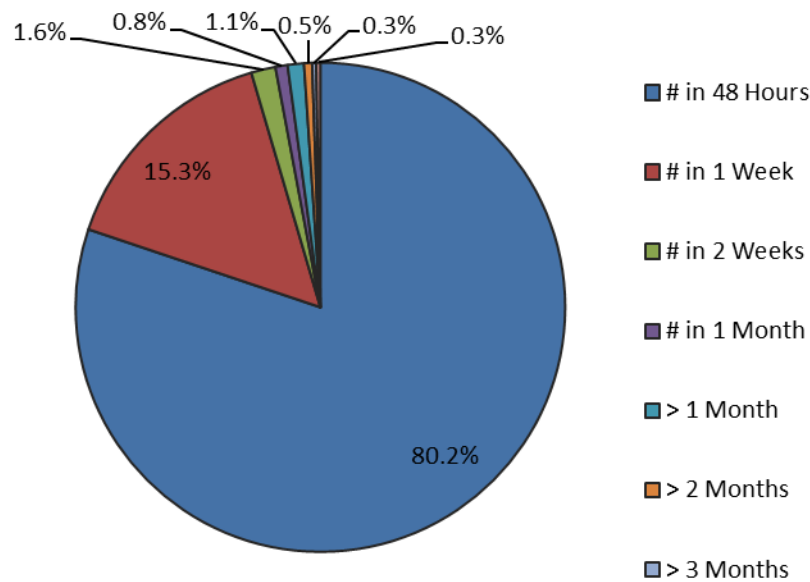


Figure 30. Harvest registration by 2015 Duluth City Bowhunters. The ABA Rules require registration within 48 hours.

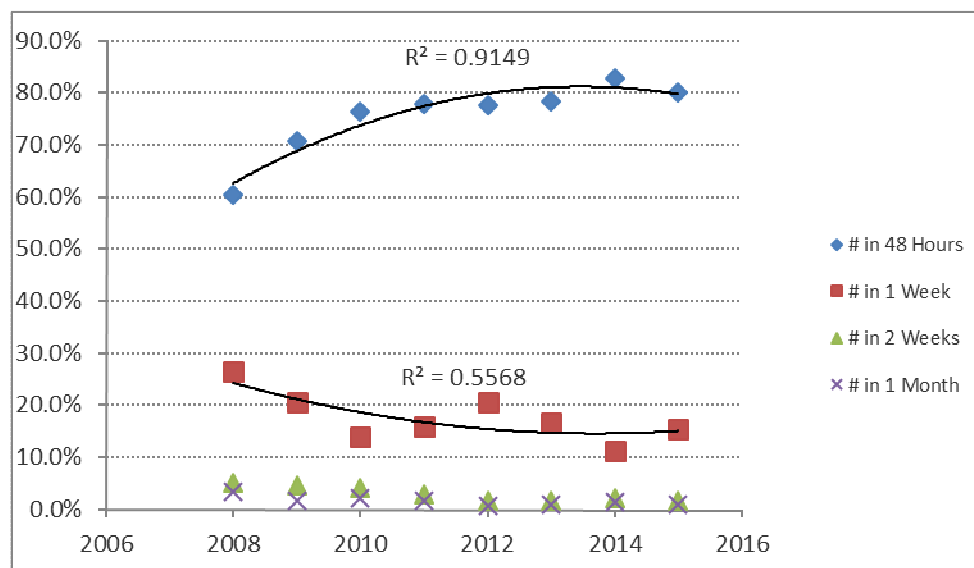


Figure 31. Time between harvest and subsequent registration with the ABA for deer harvested in the Duluth City Bowhunt for the years 2008 thru 2015.

Lottery Results, the Application Process, and Subsequent Harvest

By the 30 June deadline, a total of 383 hunters had applied for the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt. Eight individuals were subsequently removed for not turning in all of the required paperwork or a check by the 30 June deadline. This left 375 hunters eligible for the Lottery Night to be placed into DHAs.

285 Returning hunters were automatically placed. 186 (65.3%) of these were placed into their First Choice DHA prior to the Lottery Night, due to requesting DHAs where more spots were available than interested individuals. An additional 47 individuals received their First Choice at the Lottery Event, thus placing 233 hunters (81.8%) into their First Choice DHA. Another 18 hunters received their second choice DHA, identified during the application process. A total of 251 returning hunters (88.1%) were placed into one of their first two DHA choices, making it hard to argue that the ABA's lottery model is flawed.

Either at Lottery night, or the week following, 90 new hunters were ultimately placed. An additional 2000 acres were added to the Hunt following the Lottery Night, which allowed the ABA to place all of the ten new applicants that were not placed at Lottery Night. Of the 80 new hunters placed at Lottery Night, 25 were actually placed into their first choice DHA identified at the application process, or 31.2%. Six others were placed into their second choice (7.5%).

Being assigned a public land DHA does not necessarily mean that is where our hunters spend their time or harvest their deer. At the Year End Survey, hunters were asked to indicate where they hunted the most. Figure 32 shows that 58% of the hunters spent the majority of their time hunting on public land assigned during the Lottery Night. An additional 17.6% of hunters spent most of their time on private land within the DHA assigned.

Actual harvest from the database was very similar to the data provided by hunters in the Year End Survey (Table 7), where 60.6% of harvest was recorded from the hunter's assigned DHA, either from public or private land (Figure 33). Hunters harvesting deer on public land NOT in their assigned DHAs were due to two opportunities: 1) having the opportunity to harvest within a Hot Spot located on public land, and 2) late-season DHAs switches that were not in their originally assigned DHA. The ABA looked at the data, and unlike previous seasons, no hunter was identified as having illegally hunted public land outside of an assigned DHA.

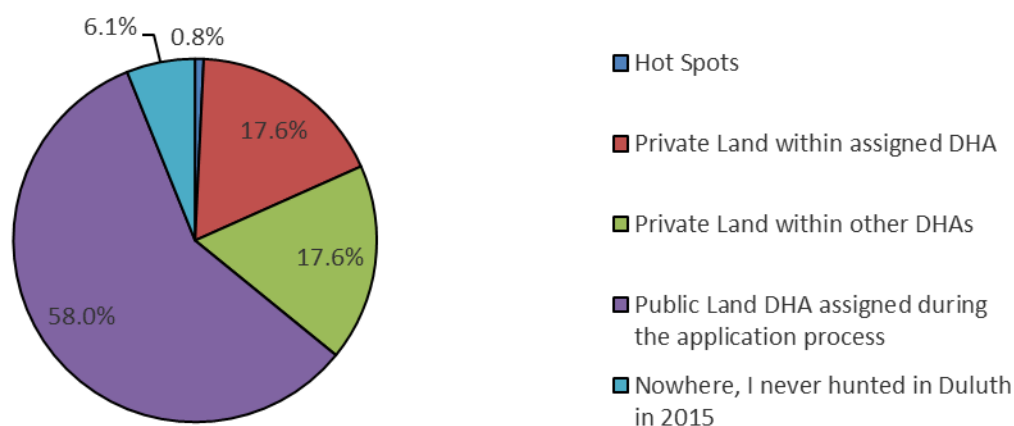


Figure 32. Percentage of hunters identifying in the 2015 Year End Survey where they spent the majority of their time hunting during the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt.

Table 7. Location of Deer harvested relative to the hunters' assigned DHAs in the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt. This is not the amount of time spent hunting each spot, as identified in Figure 32.

Count of Harvest = Assigned		
Harvest = Assigned	Public?	Total
Assigned DHA	Private Land	9.92%
	Public Land	50.67%
Assigned DHA Total		60.59 %
Not Assigned DHA	Private Land	21.18%
	Public Land	2.68%
Not Assigned DHA Total		23.86 %
Opt Out	Private Land	14.48%
	Public Land	1.07%
Opt Out Total		15.55 %
Grand Total		100.00 %

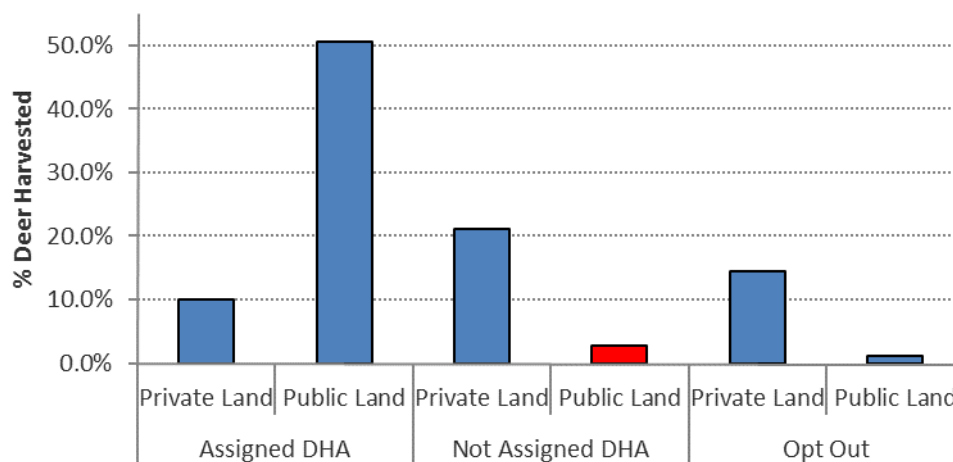


Figure 33. Percentage of deer harvested in public and private lands, and by originally assigned DHAs, for deer harvested in the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt.

Many folks believe that other hunters have their public land “doe” spots and their private land “buck” spots. The data does not support this perception (Table 8; Figure 34). The vast majority of the antlerless harvest did come from public lands, as did the majority of the antlered buck harvest. The ABA is not suggesting that this is not occurring on a case-by-case basis. This is known to occur, based upon the hunter-hunter conflicts that the Board and Hunt Coordinators have to contend with on an annual basis. But the data suggests that this isn’t widespread. Of the two Opt Out hunters that harvested four deer (two antlerless and two antlered males) on public land, one did so following a late-season DHA move. The other was an illegally harvested buck.

Table 8. Location of Deer harvested by deer type, relative to the hunters' assigned DHAs in the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt.

Row Labels	Deer Type Generalized	Count of Deer Type Generalized
Assigned DHA		
Private Land	Antlered Buck	7
	Antlerless	30
Public Land	Antlered Buck	32
	Antlerless	157
Not Assigned DHA		
Private Land	Antlered Buck	11
	Antlerless	68
Public Land	Antlerless	10
Opt Out		
Private Land	Antlered Buck	9
	Antlerless	43
Public Land	Antlered Buck	2
	Antlerless	2
Grand Total		371

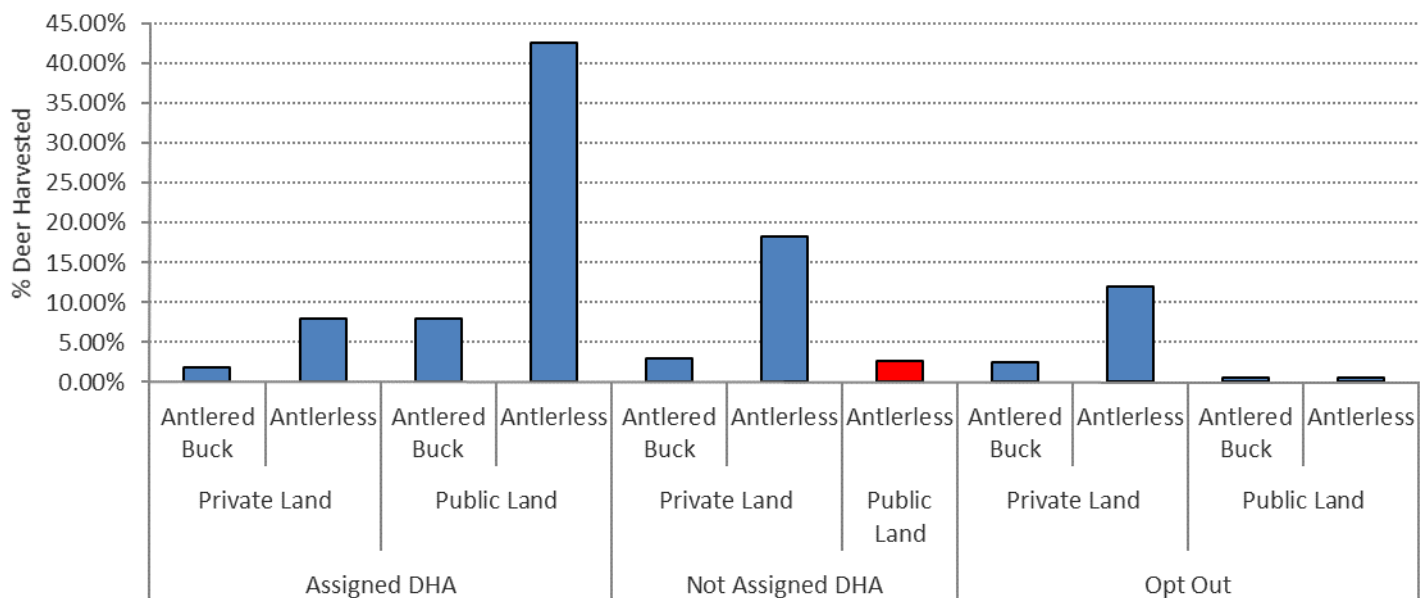


Figure 34. Location of Deer harvested by deer type, relative to the hunters' assigned DHAs in the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt.

Section 4: 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 additional species observation reports. This season saw the lowest participation rate for this survey. Only 131 of the 375 hunters (34.9%) took part in the survey. By comparison, last year's survey response rate was 58.0%, which is quite high for this kind of survey. Our 2015 survey respondents were responsible for a reported 44.0% of the harvest, suggesting that if hunters were successful this season, they were 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. That said, for the 65.1% of the hunters that didn't feel obligated to provide the Board with any feedback, just like if you opt to not vote for politicians, you likewise forfeit your right to complain about what the Board and the City does with respect to the management of this hunt.

Response rate was nearly identical for new and returning hunters. 99 returning hunters and 32 new hunters filled in this survey. This amounts to 34.5% and 36.4% response rate for the two groups of hunters, respectfully. Of these hunters, 96.1% reported that they actually hunted in 2015 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 (99.2%) will likely apply to participate in the 2016 Hunt. One individual indicated that there's just too many rules to follow, and they would not be applying in 2016. This suggests that the 2016 Hunt may not have much room for new hunters to participate.

Respondents reported harvesting 164 of the 373 deer. An additional 21 deer were reported as being wounded, with 11 of these deer reported as being "known to have survived" with nothing more than haircuts or scratches. This gives us a reported wounding rate of 11.4% total, or 5.4% if the presumed surviving deer are removed from the analysis.

Individuals indicated that they bowhunted in other areas outside of the Duluth City Limits in about the same percentage as in 2014 (58.8% in 2015 vs 59.2% in 2014). This may reflect the poor deer numbers in Duluth, and folks seeking venison elsewhere. However, it also reflects the importance of the Duluth hunting opportunity to a vast majority, nearly 60%, of our participating hunters.

Experience as a participant in the Duluth hunt averaged 6.07 ± 0.66 years of experience for all hunters, and 7.51 ± 0.60 years for returning hunters (Figure 35). The ABA is aware of some of our 2015 "new" hunters are returning from previous seasons. The Board is not sure how a "new" hunter can have eleven years of experience hunting in Duluth, given that this is the 11th season. This respondent either is actually a returning hunter or miscounted years of participation. The ABA is encouraged by the large number of returning hunters that have been participating for ten or all eleven seasons (Figure 35).

Hunters were asked about the amount of effort spent in the woods pursuing white-tailed deer. This is to gauge how "serious" our hunters are about their recreation. While the distribution of activity looks similar between the two groups of hunters (Figure 36), significant differences were actually noted. New hunters hunted an average of 16.4 ± 4.4 days, whereas returning hunters spent 22.5 ± 3.0 days afield ($t = -2.3112$, $P = 0.012$). But regardless, having this easy and convenient ability to participate in this sport just outside of our front doors is an opportunity that cannot be taken for granted.

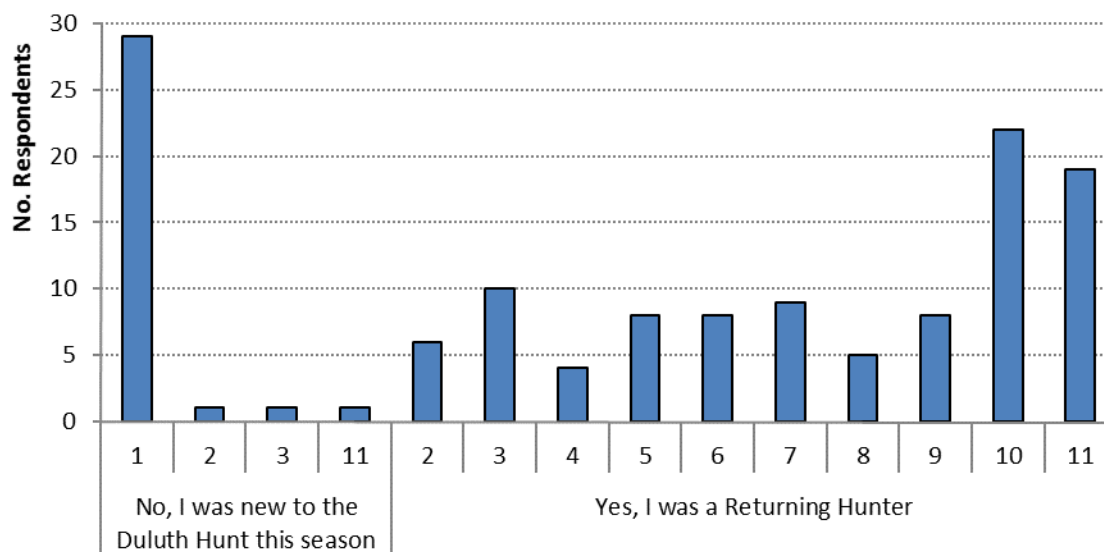


Figure 35. Years of experience in the Duluth City Bowhunt as of the 2015 season, separated by returning hunters and by new hunters that did not participate in 2014. Note many of these “new” hunters have participated previously, but not in 2014.

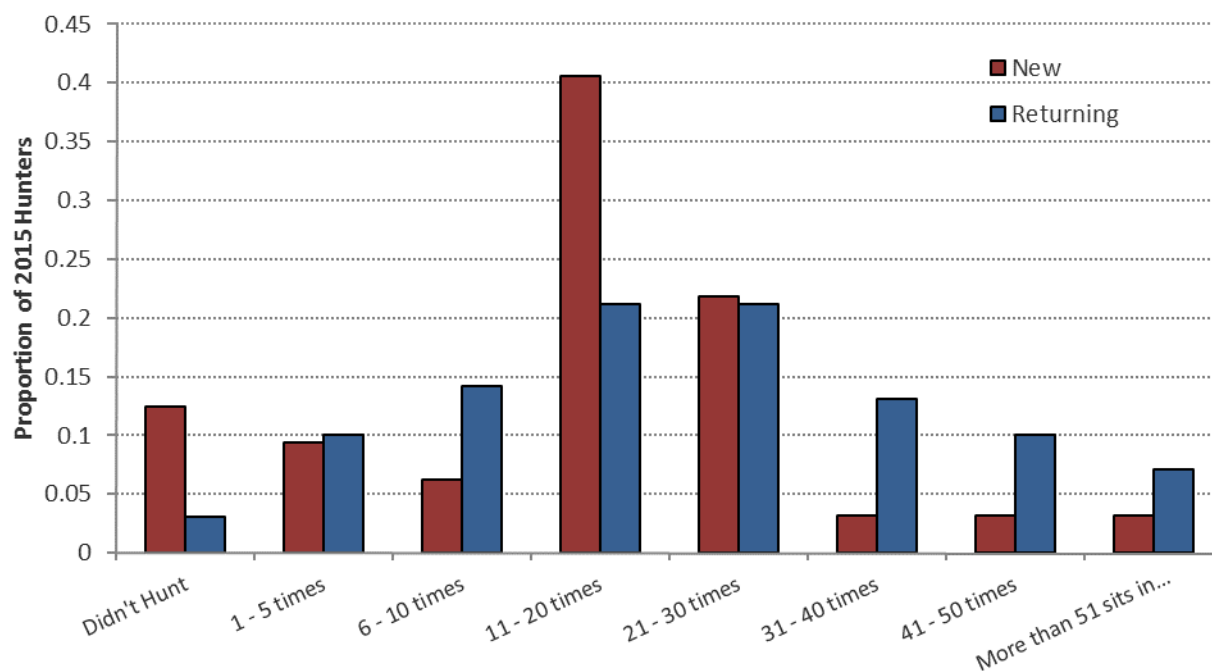


Figure 36. Percentage of new and returning hunters that spent a certain number of times hunting in Duluth during the 2015 Bowhunt Season.

By all accounts, 2015 was a difficult season to put Duluth-raised venison in the freezer. Survey participants were asked whether or not they hunted in other areas. Figure 37 indicates that a majority of both new and returning hunters did bow hunt for white-tailed deer in areas other than Duluth. When asked if hunters participated in the MN State Firearms season, an almost identical 40% of both new and returning hunters indicated that they had hunted during the firearms season (Figure 38). There are likely several reasons for this participation. Many individuals identified as being members of deer camps, either with friends or family, which represent important traditions. Other hunters did report that they took advantage of the firearms season in order to put venison into the freezer, as they were largely unsuccessful here in Duluth. Others reported simply that they love to hunt, and will take advantage of every available opportunity.

The ABA has been asked by City officials on several occasions why our participating hunters don't harvest more antlered male deer than they do. Obviously there are hunter selectivity patterns that are difficult to model and survey. Many hunters just want meat, and don't care about antlers. Other hunters will only harvest a mature "trophy". These reasons are entirely personal choices that our hunters are allowed to make. A third reason may be that our hunters punch their one-and-only "buck" tag during the firearms season. For those participating in the Year End Survey, 12.2% of our hunters reported harvesting a buck with their rifle. If the percentage holds true for the entire Duluth bowhunter population, this could mean as many as 46 of our hunters punched their "buck" tags during the firearms season.

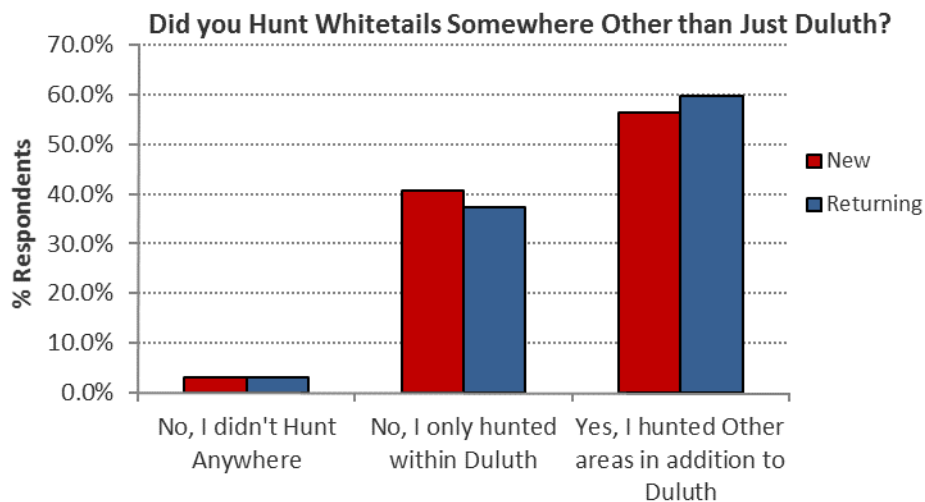


Figure 37. Percentage of year end survey respondents that identified themselves as either new or returning 2015 Duluth hunters, and that indicated whether they bowhunted in areas other than just Duluth.

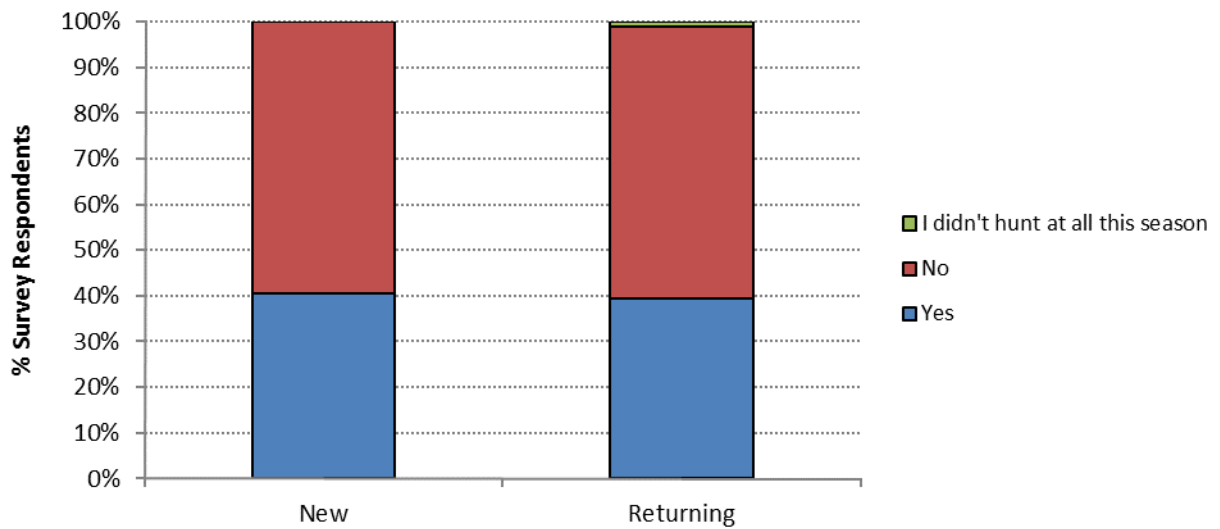


Figure 38. New and returning hunters indicating whether or not they participated in the 2015 Minnesota Firearms Season.

Did you harvest a Buck during the 2015 MN Firearms Season

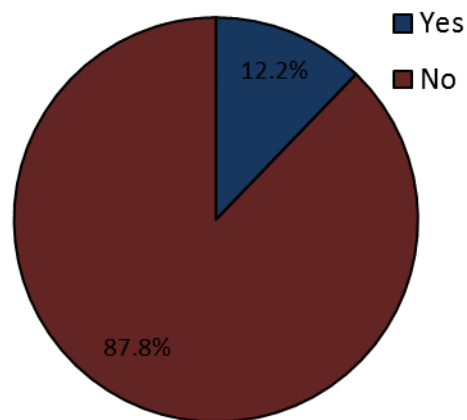


Figure 39. Year End Survey participants indicating whether or not they harvested an antlered male white-tailed deer during the 2015 MN Firearms season.

Conflicts in the Woods:

Those that participated in the Year End Survey indicated that most (75%) had zero conflicts or incidents in the woods in 2015 (Figure 40). This is actually down from earlier seasons, suggesting that our hunters may have experienced more conflicts this season than in 2014. Last year, 84% of respondents reported no conflicts in the woods. A disturbingly large number of respondents (5%) reported issues with presumed non-ABA hunters. This is consistent with reports the ABA received throughout the season, often days or weeks after the fact. The Board can't do anything about that. You need to contact Duluth PD when you run into these hunters. And you need to do so while the illegal hunter is in the woods. Our hunters have jumped thru a lot of hoops to participate in this Hunt. To allow others to do so illegally is not fair to those of us who are legal. Please call the police.

6% of survey participants reported having problems with other ABA hunters. You were instructed at Orientation Night to play nicely with each other. This value really should be very close to 0%. If you are having issues with ABA hunters, please contact your HC or the Board when this happens. This has become an all-too-familiar problem. The ABA Board will review specific cases and perhaps change the Rules manual to make discipline more severe for folks that simply refuse to play nicely and share the woods.

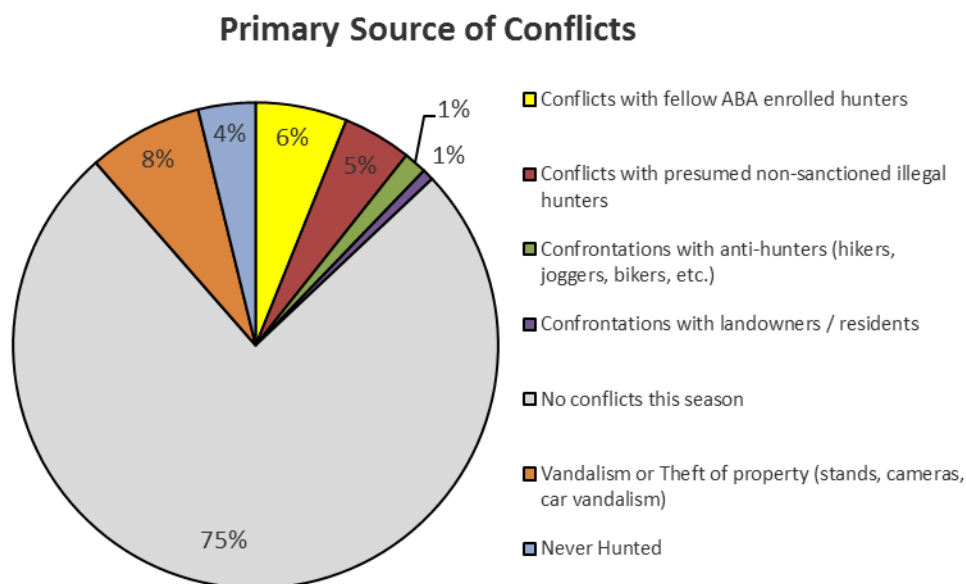


Figure 40. Source of conflicts identified by participants in the 2015 Year End Survey.

Other Critters:

When asked about other species observed in the woods, survey respondents reported seeing or getting trail camera images from several black bear and coyote (Figure 41). No cougars were reported, unlike in previous seasons.

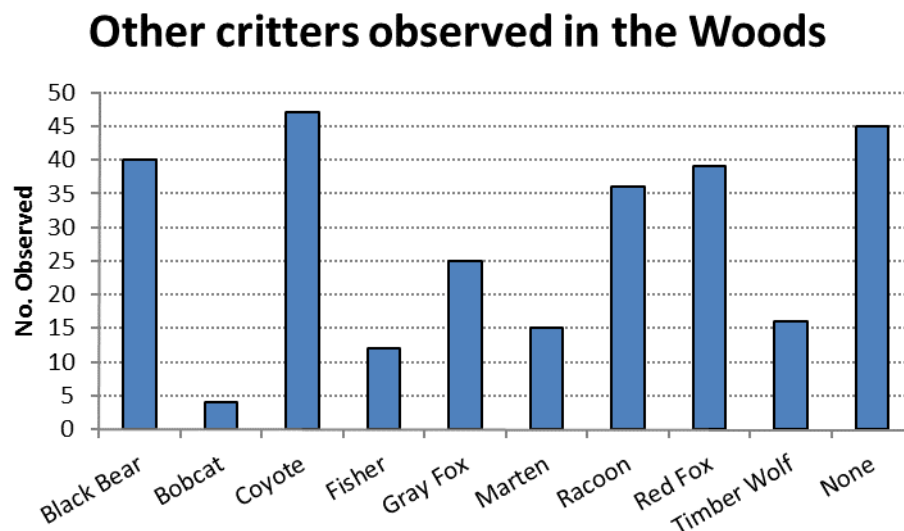


Figure 41. Other species observed while participating in the 2015 Duluth City Bowhunt.

Metro Designation:

Again in 2015, the MNDNR maintained Duluth as a Metro Hunt. No other issue seemed to polarize our hunters as did this one. This designation allowed our hunters to harvest as many antlerless individuals that they wanted to. While some folks took advantage of this new designation, many opposed it. Contrary to rumors on the internet and Facebook, the ABA is not aware that any laws were broken by the two hunters that did shoot more than five deer.

Support actually rose from 2014 levels, up to 48.1% (Figure 42) from a 2014 support of 42%. Survey participants are almost exactly split in their suggestion for the 2016 hunt, with virtually the same percentage recommending; 1) that the MNDNR keep the Metro designation; 2) that the MNDNR revert back to the five (5) deer limit; or 3) that the MNDNR reduce the bag limit even further (Figure 43).

Did you support the MNDNR's Metro Designation for 2015?

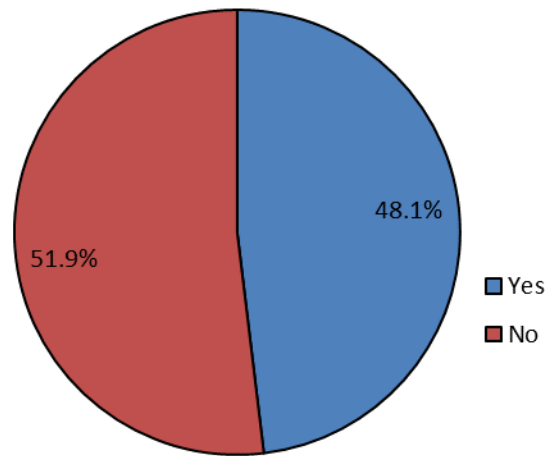


Figure 42. Participants in the 2015 Year End Survey indicating their support or non-support for the continued Metro designation for the City of Duluth.

Suggestions for 2016 Hunt

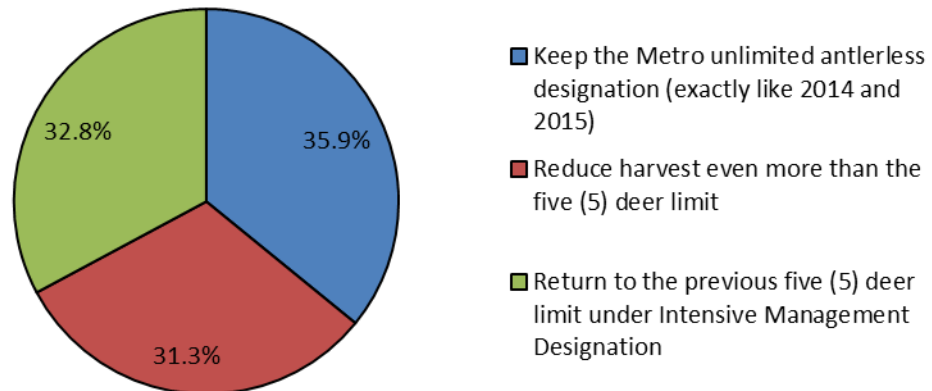


Figure 43. Participants in the 2015 Year End Survey indicating their recommendations for the continued Metro designation for the City of Duluth.

Comments from the Masses:

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

“Given what you saw this season in the woods, what are your suggestions on how we should proceed with the Hunt in 2016?” (Appendix 1, page 42);

“Do you have any ideas or suggestions for improving the Hunt in 2016?” (Appendix 2, page 49);

Well, as can be expected, the responses were all over the place. Many comments were useful. All comments are included in Appendices 1 and 2. A brief summary of the key comments follows:

1) Baiting is illegal by State law. Feeding deer is illegal by City Ordinance. The ABA cannot and will not advocate for deer baiting. This issue comes up each season. It will never be legal. It is in Wisconsin. Please go there to bait and hunt.

2) MN DNR sets seasons and bag limits. The ABA can express your concerns to the State, but the ABA cannot change State limits. Please express your concerns to MN DNR.

3) The ABA proposed elimination of the earn-a-buck requirement for the 2015 Hunt. It was denied by the Duluth Hunt Review Panel. We will raise the issue again for the 2016 Hunt.

4) This is not a trophy buck hunt. This is a management hunt. We will never advocate for antler-point restrictions or minimum inch requirements. The definition of a “trophy” is a personal issue, and is not one to be legislated. What is a trophy to one hunter may be too small for another. Some hunters don’t care about antlers, as they make lousy chili. And that is perfectly fine. The ABA’s position is that any deer legally and ethically harvested with archery equipment is a trophy, be it a fawn, adult doe, spike buck, or 170-incher.

5) If you see any illegal activity, contact law enforcement immediately. The ABA is a group of volunteers that are charged with managing people. We are not law-enforcement officers. The Duluth Police Department enforces City Ordinances related to this hunt, and in many cases the Duluth Hunt Rules. MNDNR enforces State game laws. Call either of these two departments. Email the ABA Board to inform us that there’s been illegal activity reported to the appropriate agency. If you see someone breaking any Hunt Rule, you may contact Duluth PD and /or the ABA. Often we are asked to enforce Rules after-the-fact, which is impossible. We need to know when the rules are being broken if we are to have a chance at rule enforcement.

Board Members for 2015:

Phillip Lockett, President

Brian Johnson

Phillip Mannon, Chairman

Ronnie Lillo

James Dexter

Leif Birnbaum

Alan Vorderbruggen

Brian Borkholder, Secretary / Treasurer

Katrina Wood

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 2016?” Hunter comments are in the left-hand column. Response from the Arrowhead Bowhunters Alliance is in the right-hand column.

Given what we saw this season in the woods, what are your suggestions on how we should proceed with the Hunt in 2016?	ABA Comments
2 Deer limit with no earn a buck. Party hunt if you need to keep killing.	MNDNR sets limits
2 or 3 deer limit	MNDNR sets limits
5 deer limit	MNDNR sets limits
5 deer limit	MNDNR sets limits
All was good in my world.	
Allow more than two stands per hunter. Some zones are so big that it's tough to cover ground unless you use a climber.	Too many hunter-hunter conflicts. Consider working with your fellow hunters to share stands within DHAs. More opportunities that way, especially when others are not hunting
Antler restrictions and eliminate unlimited antlerless tags.	MNDNR sets limits. This is not a trophy buck hunt, it is a management hunt. We do not manage for trophy potential. The decision to shoot a buck or not is entirely a personal one, and there is no right or wrong decision. Every animal harvested ethically and legally with a bow is a trophy.
As far as administration of the hunt, I believe the ABA is doing an excellent job and I appreciate the many volunteer hours that the ABA puts into the hunt. I would suggest a reduction, or cap, in the amount of hunters and possibly increasing the earn a buck to a two doe harvest prior to being able to shoot a buck as a compromise. I do realize that proposal would not go over well with both the city council and most city bowhunters. One can always dream.	Two does is likely to result in more poor shots, more wounded deer, or more phantom deer being registered. We would also need volunteers to give up their spot in this hunt in order for us to reduce hunter numbers. Any volunteers?
Change to any deer - buck or doe	We tried in 2015. Will try again in 2016
Clearer designations and protocol on illegal hunters within city hunt zones both during rifle season and bow season	We are clear at Orientation Night. Call Duluth PD and / or MNDNR Conservation Officers
continue as you have in the past	

Continue to promote that this is a management hunt. Our goal is to reduce the deer herd within the city. There are big antlered deer in the woods, but it is our goal to reduce the population of deer within the city to reduce vehicle/deer collision, deer eating citizens' gardens/flower, nuisance deer, etc. I have personally had neighbors tell me to only shoot does without fawns, and shoot on P&P bucks. From Bork's reports, I'd say we are doing a great job on reducing the herd.	We try to promote this message. Unfortunately the deer hunting shows preach that real hunters ONLY shoot 170+ inch "trophies". This has done a great disservice to our sport. The Board continues to preach that all deer ethically harvested with archery equipment are trophies, including fawns and spike bucks.
don't over load 19a with new hunters	New hunters have every bit a right at 19A as to returning ones. They have to hunt somewhere.
Drop the metro crap one or two is plenty of deer for anybody! Drop unlimited kill.	MNDNR sets limits
This is a mgmt hunt, not a slaughter.	MNDNR sets limits. Metro Designation implies high harvest.
Drop unlimited kill.	MNDNR sets limits
This is a mgmt hunt, not a slaughter.	
Eliminate metro hunt. Return to 5 deer limit. Split off City from remainder of 182 and make remainder Lottery designation.	MNDNR sets limits
Enforce the illegal hunting laws. Even though we were in a large area, I should not have to deal with the junk I did deal with after the lengthy process of getting into the Duluth Hunt. Everyone deserves a chance to hunt and there are plenty of WMA/ public land to hunt outside of the city. Perhaps the offenders should be made aware of this by the city of Duluth Police Department. It could be done in a way that is non-confrontational to be more accepted. This is the only reason that I would consider not joining the Duluth Hunt next year.	The ABA is not enforcement. Duluth PD and MNDNR are the enforcers. ABA manages people, and not deer.
Everything the same except a one or two deer limit.	MNDNR sets limits
Expand the zones a little. I think there are a lot of areas where the deer have moved to which we can not hunt because they aren't in any of the zones.	We work each season with the City to expand DHAs wherever feasible. Hot Spots are always an option.
five or less deer per hunter and keep the earn a Buck. You must first shot a Doe or antlerless before you can shot a Buck.	MNDNR sets limits
Get rid of earn a buck	We tried last year. Will try again in 2016
Get rid of earn a buck. I pass on bucks almost every year an they are the deer ruining my trees.	We tried last year. Will try again in 2016

Get rid of the earn a buck. Allow taking of any sex of deer. Cars still hit bucks, and they still eat my hostas!

We tried last year. Will try again in 2016

Given the low number of deer in my area (but I believe the herd is down in most of Duluth), it seems unnecessary to have an "earn a buck" rule. I am a meet hunter and happy to take whatever (usually do not like to shoot fawns). I fully understand that there are "buck" hunters that will only shoot bucks if permitted to do so. I'm not sure how to balance these issues but support the "earn a buck" to better manage the deer herd.

We tried in 2015. Will try again in 2016

Hunters in the hunt need a clear process for dealing with issues like illegal hunters and ABA hunters who aren't abiding by the rules. When issues arise, it's hard to get clear direction on a process to remedy the issue.

Clear directions were given out at Orientation. If it's state laws, contact MNDNR. City laws, call Duluth PD. All laws, email the ABA and let us know.

I didn't spend enough time in the Duluth woods this year to comment.

Next year, right?

I feel that they should allow a person to shoot a buck without a doe first for 2 years, that would help everything, lot of hunters want just 1 buck and for those people that want to bring herd back it would save on a lot of antlerless deer that can reproduce, let em kill a buck and leave the woods

We tried in 2015. Will try again in 2016

I feel there are a lot of people baiting in Duluth pulling deer from honest hard working hunters like me! I think you need to be spot checking guys that shoot monster bucks within days of season start and verify doe harvest. Find it very difficult to believe that they shot a doe and monster buck in a couple days! Hunted 29 days this year and never shot a doe, think about it!!! Something is not right. Might want to check family year in and year out they shoot huge bucks!

There are, and they are illegal. Contact both Duluth PD and MNDNR Conservation.

I know it's not your decision but get rid of earn a buck. I could have killed 3 bucks in my spot. Also my friend had to pass on the biggest deer he had ever seen.

We tried in 2015. Will try again in 2016

I like it as it is. You guys have this all dialed in; I'm impressed and pretty excited to have this opportunity available.

Can't secure website against hacking jack-wagons intent on shutting down whatever they can.

Oh...secure the website a bit more.

I wish we had a list of the hunters in each designated area--once we were assigned.

List is provided to HC's. It's up to them to share or not. Some hunters prefer privacy.

I would support taking a buck at any time. I saw 95% bucks from my stand this year. If we are to reduce deer numbers in Duluth I would bet our numbers would be way up right now if bucks could be taken. I think a lot of the hunters that didn't get a deer this year could have shot a buck from their stands if it was allowed.

We tried in 2015. Will try again in 2016

Id like to see a earn a buck 1 doe 1 buck. The deer numbers are way way down in my opinion.

We tried in 2015. Will try again in 2016

Just ONE

If you have a rule in the rule book enforce it.

Call us to report violations. We can't act upon them if we aren't aware of any violations.

ABA has not done that since Jeff Murray left

Keep hunt going as in past, just reduce limit to 2 antlerless & 1 buck. Remove earn a buck requirement. If some one does not want a doe, don't make them shoot it. Save the doe for someone who wants the meat. Also a lot of small fawns being shot just to earn a buck. Get with the times.

MNDNR sets limits

Keep it the same.

Keep it the way it is

Keep the same management policies is place.

Kick whiners out of the hunt if they are going to whine about another hunter using the same private land as access to the public land. Especially if they are going to make false accusations.

Unfortunately, whining isn't illegal. Annoying? Certainly. But our society has trained individuals to whine to get their way.

Less doe tags everything else was good.

MNDNR sets limits

Less hunters in zone 1. Every good tree had a stand in it. Difficult to not impact others hunts with so many hunters. Limited deer numbers perhaps pressure hunters to take less than perfect shots resulting in some wounded deer.

You willing to give up your spot to lower the hunter numbers? Someone will have to give up their spot.

let's start baiting. If the goal is to reduce, let's do it.

Illegal per State law and City Ordinance.

Loved Bork's weekly emails! Great humor and good data!

You may be the only one!

Lower the number of antlerless tags next year

MNDNR sets limits

make a less limit we want this hunt to go on forever Duluth is a beautiful place to hunt

MNDNR sets limits

maybe get rid of the metro designation

MNDNR sets limits

more buck tags

MNDNR sets limits

New bike trails in my areas. Limited my access. Nice to be closer to trails. I don't think 5 deer limit or unlimited makes much difference on overall numbers but if the idea is to still reduce the deer in the city it can't hurt to keep it

New bike trails in my areas. Limited my access. Nice to be closer to trails. I don't think 5 deer limit or unlimited makes much difference on overall numbers but if the idea is to still reduce the deer in the city it can't hurt to keep it

No

No

No

No big changes. Maybe less Hunters

No change

No new hunters. Reduce the number through attrition. Reduce the limit. Eliminate the earn a buck rule.

We tried dropping earn a buck in 2015. Will try again in 2016

No recommendations

No specific recommendations. I'm too new to know yet.

No. I think you guys are doing a great job no matter what others may say

None

none

None

None. Good job.

nope, good job

One doe and one buck!

MNDNR sets limits

Recommend 3 deer limit.

MNDNR sets limits

Reduce deer harvest limit and keep up the great work ABA. Thank you for all everyone does.

MNDNR sets limits

Reduce hunters to returning only. Do not add new hunters even if returning hunters don't come back

Reduce the harvest. At this pace there will not be a need for the hunt in a couple of years, and nobody will be able to enjoy this hunt. Some of us might agree that we are already there!

MNDNR sets limits

Reduce the number of tags if it is at all possible. And also maybe reevaluate how many hunters are assigned to each DHA so that one DHA is not more crowded than the next. Keep the number of hunters per DHA acre consistent.

MNDNR sets limits

Report people for private landowners (not hunters) who feed deer which results in disrupting their normal feeding patterns and created safe areas for them.

Also, more areas where deer are seen congregating should be opened up.

Also, if the purpose of the hunt is to get rid of the deer population in Duluth, maybe ask for an exemption for the baiting rule...especially in November/December. We won't be attracting deer if we just bait for 1.5 months. We will be getting them out of Duluth - or something where you can bait but only harvest antlerless.

You should call in landowners. It's a city ordinance that banned recreational feeding of deer. Potential hot spots can be called in to the ABA for review. Baiting statewide is illegal.

Return to 5 deer limit, or better yet, 2 deer limit.

MNDNR sets limits

same

same. i would say more hot spots but i haven't been able to get into one for 4-5 years now. so i gave up.

i do think we are pushing the deer down into the city further and the only way to push them back is pressure.

I think its a ogod hunt. its reaching the management goals (kill all you can) and still offers good hunting opportunity. we need to keep people interested or it could fall apart. its a double edge sword and i think you guys have done a great job.

Shoot a bear

Not by the ABA. We've been asked. We don't want it.

Shoot any deer that comes by

Shoot more does and have a 130 inch minimum on bucks

See other comments about trophy vs management hunting.

Since 171 hunters of 375 did not kill a deer, perhaps cut back on the number of new entries. The hunters who scout still seem to do well.

Since there are fewer deer, how about reduce the number of hunters. Limit to just Duluth residents - they are the ones putting the most time and effort in. With fewer hunters running around in the woods, I think they will be more successful. I have noticed additional hunting pressure from the out-of-towners that are not as familiar with the woods around Duluth push deer out of areas and make things more difficult. I had to change my tactics a lot to be successful.

Stay same

Take out the shoot a Doe first rule, it took allot of effort to finally shoot a Doe this yr, I think it made hunters desperate to get there Doe by taking shots they wouldn't have normally taken,

We tried in 2015. Will try again in 2016

The population of deer seems to me stable and managed in my area. Continuing forward with an intensive (5) or even managed (2) classification would keep it that way. Nor do I see the same amount of road kill deer as I had seen in previous years. There will always be confrontations with deer and vehicles unless we eradicate the deer completely, but that would make me sad as there would no longer be a need for a metro hunt.

MNDNR sets limits

This is a management hunt so if the deer numbers are down, the objective is being met whether it's the hunters, predators, or hard winters reducing the herd. We can't manage the hunt/heard for the hunters. Make no changes.

Two deer Max next year, no more than one one buck, no earn a doe requirement.

MNDNR sets limits

We need to remove the earn a buck rule!!!!!!!! I seen a couple of doe but nothing that o felt comfortable shooting at. I want to get meat in the freezer!!! I seen a buck that I could have shot and actually got a deer this year instead of getting nothing!!

We tried in 2015. Will try again in 2016

Would be nice to take a management buck,numbers are now very lopsided.

We tried in 2015. Will try again in 2016

You are all dedicated to this beast of a hunt to coordinate keep up the good work I don't envy any of you!!!

You did a great job, No suggestions

Thank you

Appendix 2. Suggestions received from hunter filling in the Year End Survey when asked, “Do you have any ideas or suggestions for improving the Hunt in 2016?” Hunter comments are in the left-hand column. Response from the Arrowhead Bowhunters Alliance is in the right-hand column.

Do you have any ideas or suggestions for improving the Hunt in 2016?	ABA Response
More has to be done about baiting even if you are not sitting over it when you get caught its not hunting its cheating and you should raise the consequences for it!!!	We turn over all baiting cases to MNDNR. Please contact TIP when you observe this. The Board's position is to remove baiters for five (5) seasons
<p>5 deer limit</p> <p>A bald guy with a red beard trespassed on my property the day before season opened. I busted him on trail cam IN MY YARD! THE MOWED PART that butts up to the woods. He was looking in the woods where I hunt. Assuming he was a city hunter with a blatant disregard for others privacy. No one was home when he strolled the property.</p>	MNDNR sets limits
<p>A late season buck hunt if u don't have a Dow yet</p> <p>All is well with the hunt.</p>	<p>Interesting suggestion</p> <p>Thank you</p>
<p>Allow baiting Most of the deer I have taken and my friends in the city have corn in their belly</p>	<p>This is a MN State Law and a Duluth City Ordinance. Baiting is illegal, and will always be.</p>
<p>Antler restrictions and eliminate unlimited antlerless tags.</p>	<p>MNDNR sets limits. This is not a trophy buck hunt, it is a management hunt. We do not manage for trophy potential. The decision to shoot a buck or not is entirely a personal one, and there is no right or wrong decision. Every animal harvested ethically and legally with a bow is a trophy.</p>
<p>Bouns points to many hunters trying to get in</p> <p>Clarity on the process to deal with issues with ABA hunters hunting out of zone and illegal hunters.</p>	<p>There is, it's called "returning hunter status"</p> <p>Contact your HC and the ABA Board, or better yet, Duluth PD. These instructions are pretty clearly given out at Orientation Night.</p>
<p>Consider having elections for new members on the board. Don't take anything personally, but new blood is needed.</p>	<p>Feel free to contact the Board and volunteer. We are not "elected". We are volunteers that continue to be harassed and lambasted for our positions. One member stated it best, "If you want to be completely alienated in the Duluth bowhunting community, volunteer to be a Board member".</p>

Consider just handing it over to Duluth, pick up your tag just like Hermantown or Proctor

I don't see any value in the ABA

Duluth wants nothing to do with this hunt. It would be far easier on all of us if they would just take over the headaches of this hunt.'

Design in more flexibility in the orientation nights. You plan them in the middle of the summer when many are on camping trips - vacations - etc... with their kids and grandkids. To have an opportunity to be with your kids is very valuable family time. To miss that due to having to attend an orientation session that you have heard repeatedly for 10 years seems unfair. I realize that we are given important information, but maybe additional times or spreading them out would really help some people out... Please give it some consideration.

We offer a weekend and weekday orientation night. Board members already volunteer two nights. You need us to give up more of our family and kid time to accommodate everyone else's schedules? That doesn't seem fair to any of us.

Don't bend the rules for anyone. If you're caught breaking the law, (stealing ,baiting etc.) out for good. Can't follow simple rules (reporting wounded deer) ... Good bye, Hunt some where else.

The Board agrees. Too bad the City won't support this decision. Communicate this sentiment with your Council member

don't over load 19a with new hunters

What's a reasonable number?

-Follow through for people not following rules, etc. You make a mistake, your out.

-Hunters claiming spots and confronting fellow ABA hunters about it-remove them from Duluth.

-Work with Duluth PD in the off season to put up signage around outskirt areas frequently infiltrated with rifle hunters-they were often very confrontational with bow hunters (were shooting THEIR deer), build eye sore stands, dump their garbage, gut piles and carcasses. Even harass bikers and hikers for scaring away their deer. I will and have volunteered to help.

Some good points and comments.

-make saving hearts and/or livers mandatory (unless skewered)

-ask every hunter to at least offer to volunteer once every 5 years (even just help setting up orientation, maps, whatever). Bork does a lot, if others only knew they would keep their complaints to themselves.

get rid of the Metro Designation (unlimited harvest)

MNDNR sets limits

Great job and thank you for the opportunity to hunt close to home!

Thank you

Have fewer hunters. Too many hunters fighting over the public land.

You volunteering to give up your spot in 2016?

Hunt is run fine by ABA. DNR needs to reduce limit.

MNDNR sets limits

I believe that being in the Duluth Deer hunt is privilege. However if the number of hunter is restrict than there should be a residence requirement. The hunters should be from the area, example Duluth, Hermantown, Rice lake, not from the Twin Cities, Cloquet etc.

I eat the hearts, stop trying to guilt trip me into donating them.

I attended the second orientation. It was very fast and to the point, please keep this for next year!

Thanks for you hard work. Keep it up.

We aren't singling you out on the hearts. If Bork doesn't continually remind / guilt folks, no one would remember to save them. Eating them is fine. Don't take everything personally.

I enjoyed the hunt, I was successful which definitely helps. Maybe allow hunting on private land outside DHA's.

Can't hunt outside of DHAs. City Ordinance, unless specific spots (hot spots) are approved of by the Duluth Police Dept.

I had issues with dogs chasing deer in 7A this year, had my release on bow getting ready to shoot a doe and a dog showed up chasing a deer and mine took off also. This is not an isolated case, couple years ago same thing happened but with different dog.

I think it goes well.

Thank you

I think that you guys did a great job dealing with the numbers of hunters. As a first timer it would have been nice to be teamed up with a returning hunter in order to get some of the info that would be beneficial other than rules. Our hunt coordinator was not at the lottery night or the orientation night and maybe that is why I was feeling a little less informed. Maybe I should have taken the extra step to try to meet with him. He did respond to emails and I appreciated that. Overall Nice job on leaderships part.

You are always welcome to contact an ABA Board member.

I think u guys do a great job thank you and keep up the good work

Thank you

I think you guys do a great job, especially with the pay you receive! LOL! Seriously, without your time and dedication, this hunt wouldn't exist. I wish more people understood that. I can't say the same for the DNR, however. Getting tired of the baiters.

Thank you

Illegal hunters and poachers seemed to be a problem in the western part of town this season. I don't have any suggestions on how to deal with that other than continued hunter education. Hunters need to be told how and what evidence to gather (what types of photos or other things they should do) as well as who to call. It needs to be stressed that they need to call right away.

We have a suggestion: Call MNDNR or Duluth PD!

I'm sorry, but the orientation is tedious. Maybe no way to get around it. Could returning hunters have some sort of shortcut?

Unfortunately, most of the issues we have every season are with returning hunters not paying attention or intentionally violating rules. And when it comes down to a court official, we must prove that the illegal hunter was present and made aware of the rules.

I'm still amazed at how cleanly you organize a bunch of meatheads like us.

It's been a blood bath. Reduce hunters (Lottery), 2 deer limit. I would rather sit out a season for a higher quality hunt (Carrot) then continue your way and not see many deer. It been a fun ride, is it over?

Unfortunately, we have achieved our promise to the City Council and Duluth residents. We promised to reduce the deer herd. Now we're all suffering.

Just cancel earn a buck for a couple years, and ya i know prolly not your decision but bring it up again, otherwise i feel you guys are doing a great job and i really do appreciate all your hard work and time u guys put into this hunt, thank u much

We broached this in 2015, and were denied. We will try again in 2016.

Just increasing trails going up. And proximity to trails limited

Just increasing trails going up. And proximity to trails limited

Keep doing what you're doing. It seems like a pretty fluid learning process year to year.

Keep up the good work!

Keep up the humor in the emails!

Two headed coin. Some like Bork's humor. Others hate it. He's cut back greatly from the first years of the hunt because of complaints. But thanks!

Limit the amount of total hunters in the city to 300 or 350. The hunt #'s keep growing every year and there's a lot of hunter traffic in the public land zones, not to mention hunters are starting to hunt more and more private land. I know the objective is to reduce the deer herd, which it's working. However, the deer are getting more and more educated every year, the more hunter traffic the more nocturnal these deer become.

You willing to give up your spot to lower the hunter numbers? Someone will have to give up their spot.

Lots of regulations, although most are justified. The only idea I would offer as a change is allow more use of ground blinds or relax the tree stand height a bit, for those of us who are extremely scared of heights even 12 ft is a bit scary

12 feet is written into the City Hunt Ordinance. You can always petition the ABA and your HC to be allowed ground blinds for specific locations. Don't be afraid to ask. What's the worst thing that can be said, "no"?

Make Bork's position permanent.	Bork is now a short timer. It may be time for others to begin self-evaluation and consider stepping up to assist and ultimately take over.
Make mandatory requirements MANDATORY	We try when we are made aware. Please call us or Duluth PD to report infractions.
Maybe consider getting some new board members involved. Im not saying that you guys don't do enough just saying maybe a few new minds and voices would benefit the hunt!	Feel free to contact the Board and volunteer. We are not "elected". We are volunteers that continue to be harassed and lambasted for our positions. One member stated it best, "If you want to be completely alienated in the Duluth bowhunting community, volunteer to be a Board member".
Maybe less new hunters? A cap of how many actual hunters are allowed to hunt with the returning hunters still getting preference because most returning hunters have shown the responsibility and actually do everything asked if them to be in the hunt. I guess less new and a cap on existing.	You willing to give up your spot to lower the hunter numbers? Someone will have to give up their spot.
Most arguments I see are hunter to hunter and can easily be boiled down to everyone wants to shoot a big buck, I honestly feel that this will be the demise of our hunt if not address for we are not a unified group against the anti's and looks foolish on our part when we all can't get along.	The ABA couldn't agree more.
my heart was cut open or i would have saved it. i did save a liver.	The liver study came to an end this season. UMD will take any hearts that you are willing to save. Some of our hunters have saved bear, moose, and mountain goat hearts. All are usable and appreciated!
I would be willing to save hearts and livers from my other deer if they want them too	
No	
No	
No	
No	
No, it works well. Great communication	
none	
None	
None	
Nope	

Not really....thanks to ABA workers who volunteer so much to enable the hunt to happen.

Thank you

nothing. Thanks

Personally, I do not agree with the party hunting lottery. I hunt alone, sometime with friends. Some zones are so limited, that if someone in the party gets drawn, the zone is full or almost full. I can understand father/son hunting together, but friends, no. My second year in the hunt I signed up with three friends. We did not choose to party hunt together. We all were in different zones, had lots of great stories, harvested deer, and all were fortunate to harvest antlered deer.

The ABA Board will be addressing this issue for the 2016 hunt

Remove the earn-a-buck

We tried in 2015. Will try again in 2016

Removing the earn a buck!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

We tried in 2015. Will try again in 2016

Report people for private landowners (not hunters) who feed deer which results in disrupting their normal feeding patterns and created safe areas for them.

Also, more areas where deer are seen congregating should be opened up.

Also, if the purpose of the hunt is to get rid of the deer population in Duluth, maybe ask for an exemption for the baiting rule...especially in November/December. We won't be attracting deer if we just bait for 1.5 months. We will be getting them out of Duluth - or something where you can bait (if you register that you are baiting) but only harvest antlerless. I just want the meat...couldn't care less about the antlers.

You should call in landowners. It's a city ordinance that banned recreational feeding of deer. Potential hot spots can be called in to the ABA for review. Baiting statewide is illegal. The ABA has been asked about running a bear hunt. We don't want any of this responsibility. Too many downsides for the limited upsides. City Ordinance allows for ONLY archery hunting of whitetails. Small game hunting would need to go back to the City Council.

Also, people should be able to call in bears for bow hunters to take. Maybe open up some hot spots for bears and let the most accurate (even more accurate than for deer) hunters take them. For bears, stick to residents within 10 miles of Duluth and make it unlimited?

Any chance we could also start getting rid of coyotes, skunks, raccoons if we have a small game license? Coyotes kill many pets and are getting more aggressive. Won't be long till they go after kids.

Returning hunters only for a couple of years to get overall number of hunters down then go back to the way it was keeping the lower total number

Revisit publicly accessible lands in each DHA and how many hunters allowed in them. Property is always selling, roads changing, etc. Even though there could be a lot of land to hunt, it may not be accessible. Also, get some better maps produced - it's not that hard when you have GIS professionals at both the city and county. The SLC Land explorer works ok, but with the ease of ArcGIS Online, think something better could be made specifically for the ABA.

see previous response on hunter cap and two doe harvest requirement.

Shoot doe and let the small bucks walk put a130 inc minimum on the Bucks harvested !!!!

This is not a trophy buck hunt, it is a management hunt. We do not manage for trophy potential. The decision to shoot a buck or not is entirely a personal one, and there is no right or wrong decision. Every animal harvested ethically and legally with a bow is a trophy.

Shoot what u deer u want and points for years u been in the hunt

We already have "returning" status approved by the City. There's points. We tried getting earn-a-buck suspended. Didn't work. Will try again.

Since there are fewer deer, how about reduce the number of hunters. Limit to just Duluth residents - they are the ones putting the most time and effort in. With fewer hunters running around in the woods, I think they will be more successful. I have noticed additional hunting pressure from the out-of-towners that are not as familiar with the woods around Duluth push deer out of areas and make things more difficult. I had to change my tactics a lot to be successful.

You willing to give up your spot to lower the hunter numbers? Someone will have to give up their spot.

Stay same

Take out Doe first

Tried. Will try again

Thank You !

Thanks for volunteering

Thanks to all the volunteers

Thanks to the ABA Board and Hunt Coordinators for volunteering their time to make the Duluth Hunt a success. This years orientation was much improved over previous years. Congrats to the ABA Board.

For those hunters that knowingly violate any of the rules, they should lose their Duluth Hunt privileges immediately and depending on the circumstance for future years as well. I think during orientations we should continue stressing it is a privilege to be part of the Duluth Hunt.

This was my first year and I think you guys are doing a great job. Thanks for the opportunity to hunt some cool spots and harvest some deer

Work hard to catch the thieves and poachers.

Work harder to call Duluth PD and MNDNR CO's to get them into the woods to catch the lawbreakers. ABA is not enforcement. We are hunt / people managers.

Would be nice to switch DHA's sooner than late November.

Hunters asked for late-season switching to NOT occur until the rut is over. Too many chances of getting hunt locations ruined by careless scouting.

You guys are doing great. Keep it up.

I know you support it but please take another shot at allowing a buck to be taken at any time. I believe our numbers would improve significantly.

We will try again in 2016.

You guys do a nice job. Thank you for all you do.

you're doing a great job