



Results of the 2021 Duluth City Bowhunt

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

February 2022

The Arrowhead Bowhunters Alliance (ABA) placed 299 hunters into the 2021 Duluth City Bowhunt. A total of 165 of the 299 hunters harvested a total of 264 white-tailed deer (197 antlerless & 67 antlered males) (Table 1).

Hunter success in 2021 again dropped below 1.0 deer per hunter (Tables 1 and 2). Harvest for the 2021 season was 0.88 ± 0.11 deer / hunter (Table 2). This was the harvest for all registered hunters, including those hunters that failed to harvest any deer. The ABA doesn't know whether failing to harvest a deer in 2021 was the result of not spending much time in the woods, or not even getting into the woods. The statistics for all hunters not reporting any harvested deer were removed from the calculations, and the reported harvest for successful hunters are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Harvest for successful hunters was 1.60 ± 0.11 deer (Tables 1 & 2). Antlerless harvest for the successful hunters averaged 1.19 ± 0.08 antlerless per hunters, slightly lower than last year's observed low, though not significantly so (Tables 1 & 2).

The placement of 299 hunters in 2021 is a slight decline in participation over last season (Blue bars in Figure 1), but entirely in line with that observed since the big decline observed between 2016 and 2017. The percentage of individuals harvesting deer in 2021 was similar to that observed since the big decline in 2013, at 55.2% (Table 1). Of the 299 registered hunters, 165 harvested a deer in 2021 (Figure 2). Total number of harvested deer in 2021 was higher than in 2019, when the lowest number harvested for a season was observed (Blue bars in Figure 3), but still less than what was harvested in 2020. Hunters in 2021 harvested at a similar rate observed since the 2015 season (blue & red lines in Figure 3).

Total harvest had been somewhat stable from 2006 thru 2012, between 500 and 600 animals (blue bars in Figure 3). Beginning with the 2013 season, and continuing thru the 2021 season, harvest dropped well below this level (Figure 3). The number of deer harvested / hunter was essentially flat at about 1.8 deer / hunter from 2007 – 2010, and dropped to approximately 1.0 deer / hunter in 2013 (red line in Figure 3). In 2015, it dipped below 1.0 for the first time. During the first season of the hunt, more than 92% of participating hunters harvested a deer (Figure 1, Table 1). In 2016, that percentage was below 50%, but rose slightly in 2017 and has remained somewhat stable since, between 49% and 62% (Figure 1, Table 1).

Similar to past seasons and in line with the stated goals of this management Hunt, the 2021 harvest was dominated by antlerless individuals (Table 1, Figure 4). Of the 264 deer harvested, 197 (74.6%) were antlerless individuals. The breakdown of antlerless was 130 adult does, 35 fawn does, 31 fawn bucks, and one adult male that shed his antlers before being harvested (Figure 4). These numbers are in line with past years' harvest distribution. This was in spite of the removal of the Earn-a-Buck requirement on Thanksgiving Day, which some thought would lead to a bump in antlered male harvest. After the removal of this requirement, six (6) hunters took advantage of this and harvested an antlered male without having first registered an antlerless individual.

The Duluth City Council has established 42 Designated Hunting Areas (DHAs) throughout the City of Duluth. Harvest among these DHAs is highly variable (Figure 5). DHA 16B once again had the highest harvest in 2021 at 24 deer. Hunters harvested 19 deer from DHA 1. 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 2021, 24 deer



were harvested from Hot Spots (Table 3). Figure 6 shows a map of the City of Duluth with the 42 various DHAs identified, along with the number of deer harvested for each of the DHAs.

For the 17 seasons of the Duluth Bowhunt, total harvest by registered bowhunters is 7192 white-tailed deer; of which 5943 were antlerless while 1249 were antlered males (Table 1). Only 17.4% of the harvest has been antlered males, completely in line with the stated goals of this hunt to reduce antlerless individuals, and thus the reproductive potential of the Duluth deer herd.

When standardized by area (harvest / mile²) harvest trends continue to remain low compared to the early years. Harvest per square mile (mile²) is presented in a map view of the City of Duluth (Figure 7). Figure 8 shows a consistent decline in harvest / mile² throughout the history of the hunt on a city-wide basis. In 2021, harvest / mile² was only about 1/3rd of our first year's harvest (Figure 8), and is in line with the average over the last five seasons, at 6.9 deer / mi². Harvests in excess of 20 deer harvested / mile² were once common (Figure 8, 2006 – 2014 seasons), but these high harvest levels haven't been observed city-wide since.

Overall, the deer harvested / mile² is low (Figures 7 & 8). During the early years of the hunt, the white-tailed deer density was high, as was hunter success, which was relatively constant at just under 2.0 deer / hunter (blue line, Figure 3). After several seasons of high harvest, our hunters began to have a noticeable effect on the herd, and it, along with hunter success, began a five-year decline during what may be referred to as the “declining years” of the Duluth Hunt. 2021 represents the ninth consecutive year of the “Maintenance Phase” of the hunt, where the deer herd seems to have stabilized as has hunter success at a level at or just under 1.0 deer per hunter. Since entering the Maintenance Phase, by all accounts and observations, the deer herd isn't where hunters may like it, but likely where car drivers and gardeners do. Harvest has been hovering between 6 – 8 deer / mile² (Figure 8).

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

This is not new information to us. We've stated before that “success” will be redefined as we move from the phase of depressing the deer herd to one of maintaining it at this low level. Bowhunters have never been successful at total deer herd removal in any urban hunt within the United States. Reduction is possible, and Duluth hunters have demonstrated this. But bowhunters will never completely eliminate white-tailed deer from the landscape. Duluth residents likely would not support a complete elimination of the deer herd. From the hunters' perspective, the definition for success needs to be the continued opportunity to participate in a sport that is a passion of many, in our own backyard. Success from the Duluth community's perspective needs to be the maintenance of the herd at this lower level. Continuing this opportunity provides a service to our community by keeping the herd at current levels. Eliminating this opportunity will no doubt increase the deer herd back to 2005 population levels in a few short years, a level completely unacceptable by the residents, insurance companies, and the Duluth Police Department.

It is important to note that even though our hunters are largely not satisfied with the success rates in recent seasons (Figure 9), it is still significantly higher than the MN Statewide archery success rate, which in 2020 was 21.6% (C. Balzer, MN DNR, personal communication). Clearly, when compared to the past success rates in the city hunt, the success rate is down, but is still relatively high compared to the State (55.2%, Table 1, Figure 9). Our hunters can be expected to harvest a deer every 1.8 years (ABA Data), as opposed to the statewide average of hunters harvesting 1 deer every 4.8 years (C. Balzer, MNDNR, personal communication). There are several hypotheses that may explain this difference in success rates, even given a real or perceived lack of deer in the



woods. Duluth hunters jump thru a lot of hoops to get into this Hunt, and thus are likely to invest more time in the woods. Plus, it is very convenient to hunt in your back yard or after work to jump into a stand three blocks away. It is much less convenient to run up to deer shacks 30 miles out of town, or to leave the city after work and still have the daylight time to get in an evening sit. Without this opportunity, many of our hunters would likely spend much less time in the woods, and their hunting success would reflect that lack of effort.

In addition, there's hunter selectivity that can't be modeled between the City's opportunities (three deer total) and that of the other bowhunters within Minnesota. Most areas of MN limit hunters to a single deer. Due to the unfortunate perceptions propagated by the modern deer hunting media complex, many hunters have been mistakenly led to believe that a "true" hunter only shoots "trophy" bucks. Many hunters throughout the State hunt patiently for the "perfect" deer. Many shot opportunities are passed, especially in most of the State where a hunter can only harvest a single animal. These hunters may, or may not, end up punching their tag. This is entirely a personal decision, made by the hunter. The ABA doesn't judge hunters for making such choices. But it does end up biasing estimates of hunter success lower than would be expected with our current deer densities throughout the State. This may be reflected in the low statewide success of 21.6%. Duluth City hunters are also required by the earn-a-buck regulation to take the first safe and ethical shot opportunity on any antlerless individual. This inflates our success rate higher than it would be in the absence of multiple antlerless tags and the earn-a-buck requirement. Our hunters' success rates may not be truly indicative of deer densities within the City, and probably shouldn't be compared to those outside of the City. We'd only be able to test this hypothesis thru the total elimination of the earn-a-buck requirement for a one or two-year trial basis. This would be an interesting experiment, and one that the ABA Board will be addressing with City Administration and the Deer Review Committee. Clearly our hunters want this (see Appendix 1 for comments).

Deer reduction, while a major component of any urban hunt, is not the only benefit to the City and the participants. There's little argument that the reduction of the deer herd has been effectively accomplished. But the Hunt continues to provide a wonderful and safe recreational opportunity in our own backyards. In addition, many participants rely upon the "free range" meat that they can provide to their families. Continuing the Hunt has additional benefits to society in addition to keeping the deer herd at socially, biologically, and ecologically acceptable levels.

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

The ABA has been preaching to our bowhunters for years to adjust their expectations for the future, especially for those hunters that have participated for the last 17 years. Gone are the days of seeing a dozen deer every evening in the woods. While this Hunt Program continues, those population levels will never be seen again. Hunters that don't have the time or patience to wait for just one or two harvest opportunities in a season are encouraged to hunt elsewhere. What the ABA and law enforcement can't tolerate are hunters 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, hunting illegally in areas not approved by the Duluth City Council or the Duluth Police Department, and shooting



illegally from the ground, all of which occurred during the 2021 season. While lower deer numbers and harvest opportunities are a hard reality for hunters that have been with this Program since inception, it's vital that participants consider the future of the Hunt Program and our continued acceptance by the Duluth residents before choosing to break the law. If these lower deer numbers are not acceptable to individual hunters, the ABA would ask that you pull out a State map and find other areas that may have higher deer densities than what is currently observed within Duluth.

Hunters can start to take matters into their own hands, but this will require self-discipline and self-regulation. Just because the State and City says you can harvest three deer doesn't necessarily mean you have to do so. No one will think less of you as a hunter if you only harvest one deer. If you have a large family and need the three deer, that's also no one's business. But for every female deer that is allowed to walk in year-1 means there could be as many as three deer walking in the woods in year-2. Eliminating the earn-a-buck requirement will go a long way towards rebalancing this herd, and getting the male:female sex ratios back into proper balance, especially if our hunters opt out of harvesting a female deer. Both issues will be discussed by the ABA Board and the Deer Review Committee as we press towards the 2022 Hunt and regulations for the Hunt.



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

	# Hunters Placed	# Hunters Harvesting	Total Harvest	Total Antlerless	Total Antlered	Total Harvest / Hunter	Total Harvest / Successful Hunter	Buck Harvest / Hunter	Buck Harvest / Successful Hunter	Antlerless Harvest / Hunter	Antlerless Harvest / Successful Hunter	% Donated	% Hunters Harvesting a Deer	No. Hunters Harvesting 2+ Deer	% Hunters Harvesting 2+ deer	% Hunters Harvesting a Deer
2005	192	177	333	265	68	1.73	1.88	0.35	0.38	1.38	1.50		92.2%			92.2%
2006	252	196	564	485	79	2.24	2.88	0.31	0.40	1.92	2.47		77.8%	149	59.1%	77.8%
2007	315	252	568	477	91	1.80	2.25	0.29	0.36	1.51	1.89		80.0%	155	49.2%	80.0%
2008	289	220	533	458	75	1.84	2.42	0.26	0.34	1.58	2.08		76.1%	141	48.8%	76.1%
2009	315	247	588	494	94	1.87	2.38	0.30	0.38	1.57	2.00	51.7%	78.4%	153	48.6%	78.4%
2010	339	272	604	515	89	1.78	2.22	0.26	0.33	1.52	1.89	61.8%	80.2%	159	46.9%	80.2%
2011	377	268	587	476	111	1.56	2.19	0.29	0.41	1.26	1.78	57.9%	71.1%	168	44.6%	71.1%
2012	359	274	574	483	91	1.60	2.09	0.25	0.33	1.35	1.76	53.7%	76.3%	162	45.1%	76.3%
2013	391	231	399	346	53	1.02	1.73	0.14	0.23	0.88	1.50	58.3%	59.1%	98	25.1%	59.1%
2014	355	208	451	375	76	1.27	2.17	0.21	0.37	1.06	1.80	51.2%	58.6%	107	30.1%	58.6%
2015	375	209	371	309	62	0.99	1.79	0.16	0.30	0.82	1.48	47.7%	55.7%	102	27.2%	55.7%
2016	352	174	281	235	46	0.80	2.02	0.13	0.26	0.67	1.35	50.4%	49.4%	70	19.9%	49.4%
2017	296	160	290	239	51	0.98	1.81	0.17	0.32	0.81	1.85	52.8%	54.1%	74	25.0%	54.1%
2018	285	157	240	182	58	0.84	1.53	0.20	0.37	0.64	1.16	53.3%	55.1%	70	24.6%	55.1%
2019	283	151	233	179	54	0.82	1.54	0.23	0.36	0.63	1.19	48.9%	53.4%	70	24.7%	53.4%
2020	305	189	312	228	84	1.02	1.65	0.28	0.44	0.75	1.21	47.8%	62.0%	99	32.5%	62.0%
2021	299	165	264	197	67	0.88	1.60	0.22	0.41	0.66	1.19	56.4%	55.2%	78	26.1%	55.2%
Mean	316.4	208.8	423.1	349.6	73.5	1.36	2.01	0.24	0.35	1.12	1.65	53.2%	66.7%	115.94	36.1%	66.7%
Min	192	151	233	179	46	0.80	1.53	0.13	0.23	0.63	1.16	47.7%	49.4%	70.00	19.9%	49.4%
Max	391	274	604	515	111	2.24	2.88	0.35	0.44	1.92	2.47	61.8%	92.2%	168.00	59.1%	92.2%
Sum			7192	5943	1249											



Table 2. Hunter harvest statistics for the 2021 Duluth Bowhunt, along with 2019 and 2020 statistics and the long-term averages. As in Table 1, total harvest / hunter for each deer type reports the harvest for all hunters participating in the Hunt. Harvest / successful hunter removes all of the hunters that failed to register a deer during each season.

	2021	2020	2019	Long-term Duluth Average
Total Harvest/Hunter	0.88 ± 0.11	1.02 ± 0.11	0.82 ± 0.11	1.36 ± 0.24
Buck Harvest / Hunter	0.22 ± .05	0.28 ± 0.05	0.19 ± 0.04	0.24 ± 0.03
Antlerless Harvest / Hunter	0.66 ± 0.08	0.75 ± 0.08	0.63 ± 0.08	1.12 ± 0.21
Harvest / Successful Hunter	1.60 ± 0.11	1.65 ± 0.10	1.54 ± 0.10	2.00 ± 0.20
Buck Harvest / Successful Hunter	0.41 ± 0.08	0.44 ± 0.07	0.36 ± 0.07	0.35 ± 0.03
Antlerless Harvest / Successful Hunter	1.19 ± 0.08	1.21 ± 0.08	1.19 ± 0.07	1.65 ± 0.19

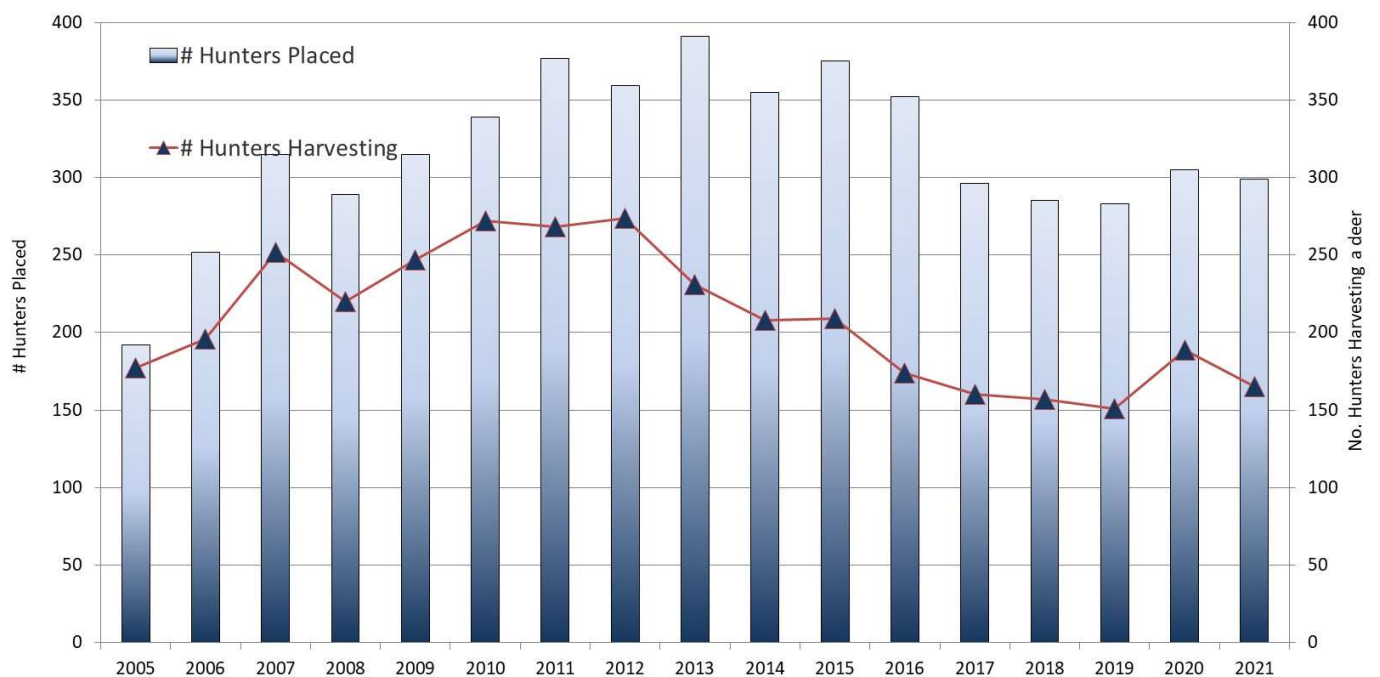


Figure 1. Number of hunters placed (left axis) and the number of those hunters harvesting deer (right axis) in each season of the Duluth City Bowhunt.

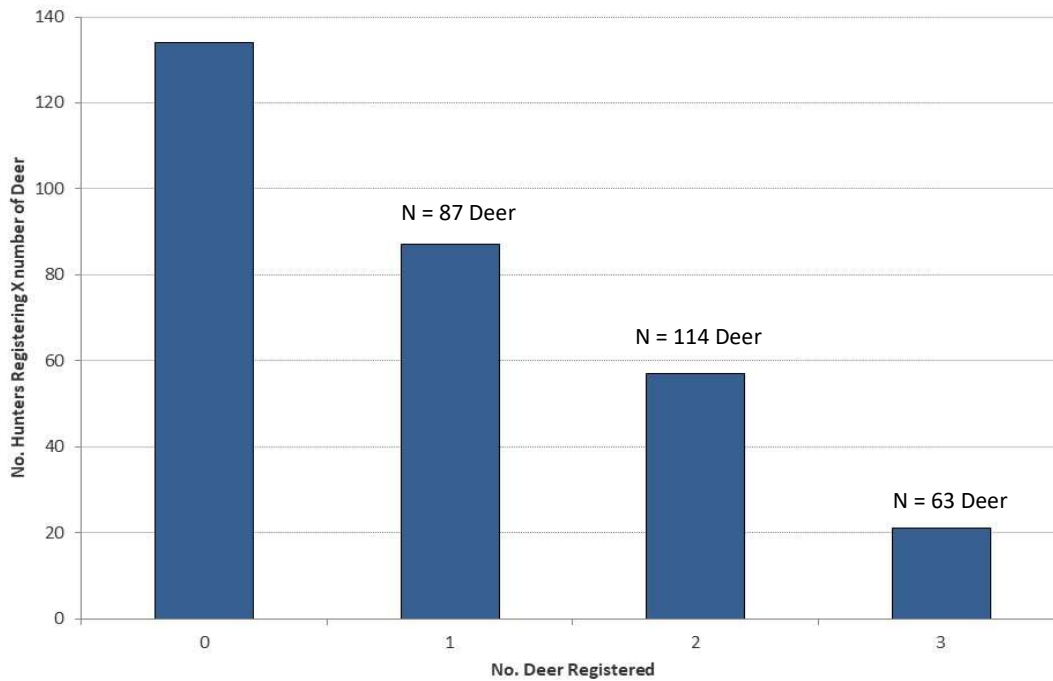


Figure 2. The number of Duluth City bowhunters and the number of deer harvested for the 2021 Duluth City Bowhunt ($N = 299$ hunters). Numbers above indicate the number of deer harvested by each group, e.g. 21 hunters harvested 3 deer for a total of 63 deer. 134 hunters failed to harvest a deer in 2021 (0 on x-axis).

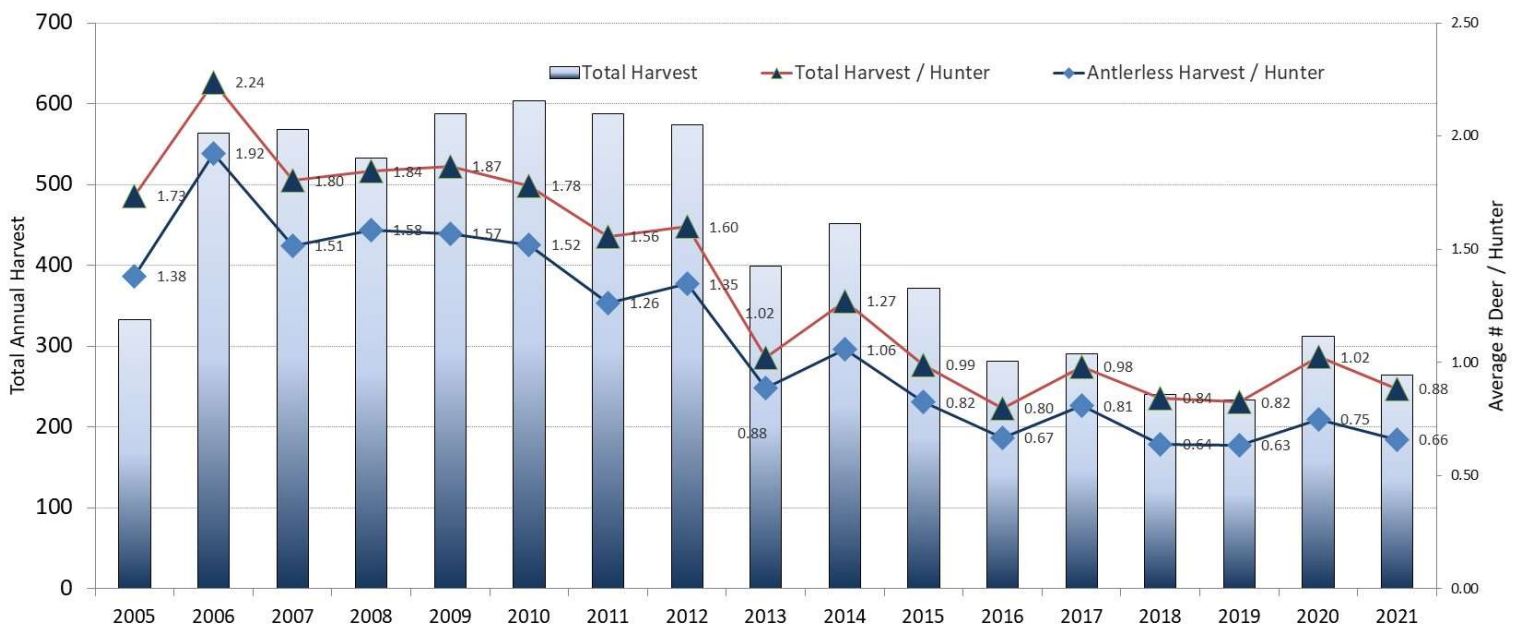


Figure 3. Total harvest (blue bars), average harvest per hunter (triangles and red line), and average antlerless per hunter (blue diamonds) for the 17 seasons of the Duluth City Bowhunt.



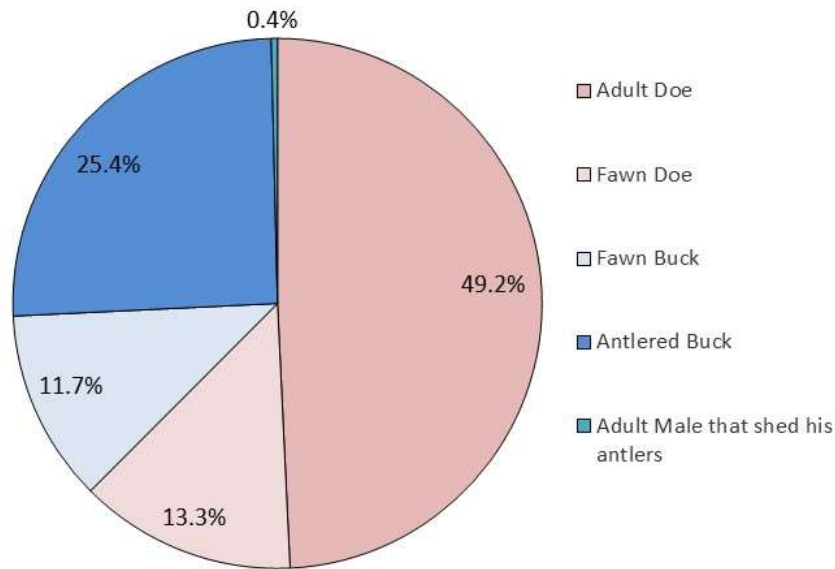


Figure 4. Breakdown of harvest by deer type for the 2021 Duluth Bowhunt.

Table 3. Harvest within Hot Spots during the 2021 Duluth City Bowhunt. Harvest within Hot Spots is limited to antlerless only.

Description	No. Antlerless Harvested
E Superior St	1
Lakeside	1
Little Ely	12
Sneve	4
Wabasha	6
TOTAL	24

Total Harvest by DHA

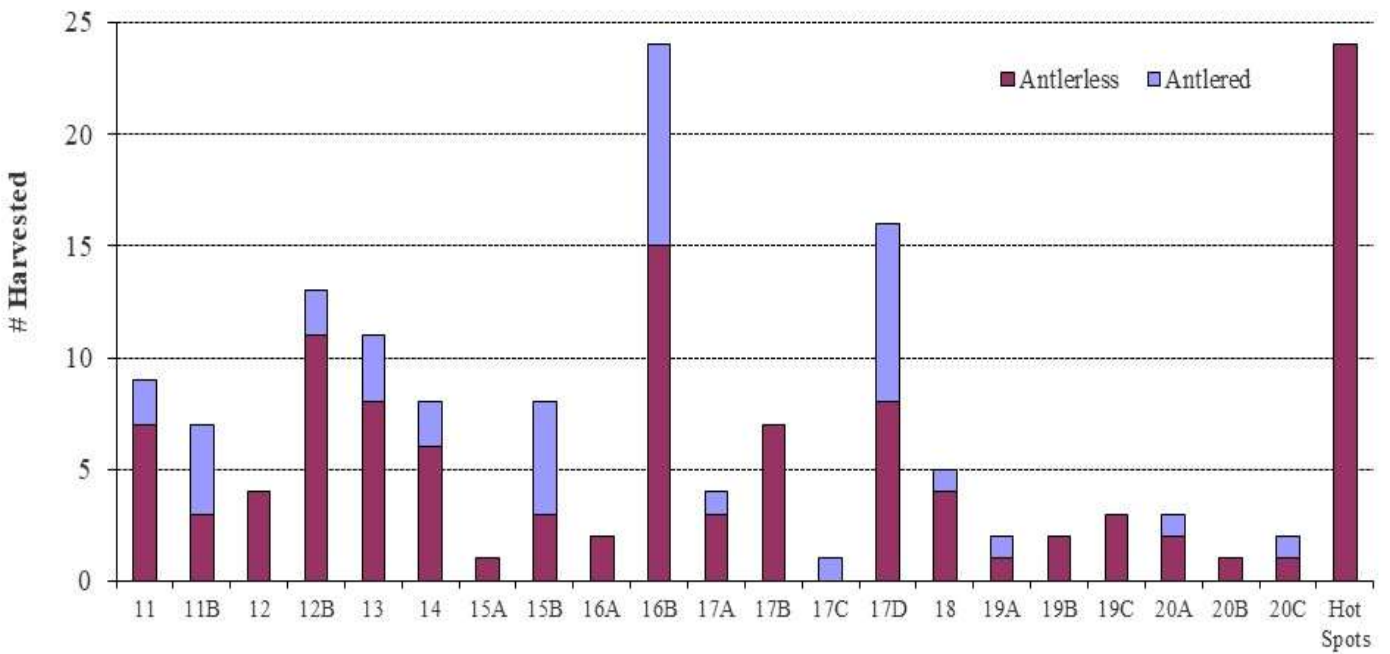
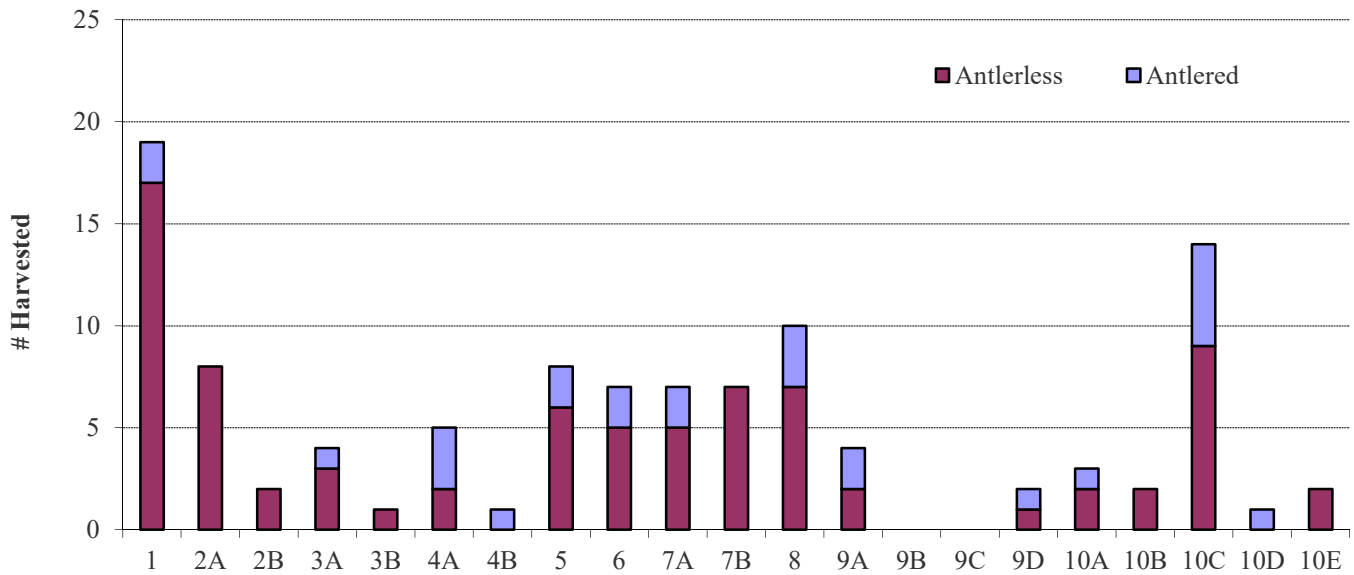


Figure 5. Number of deer harvested by deer type (Antlerless or Antlered) within each of the 42 designated hunting areas (DHAs) within the City of Duluth during the 2021 bowhunt.

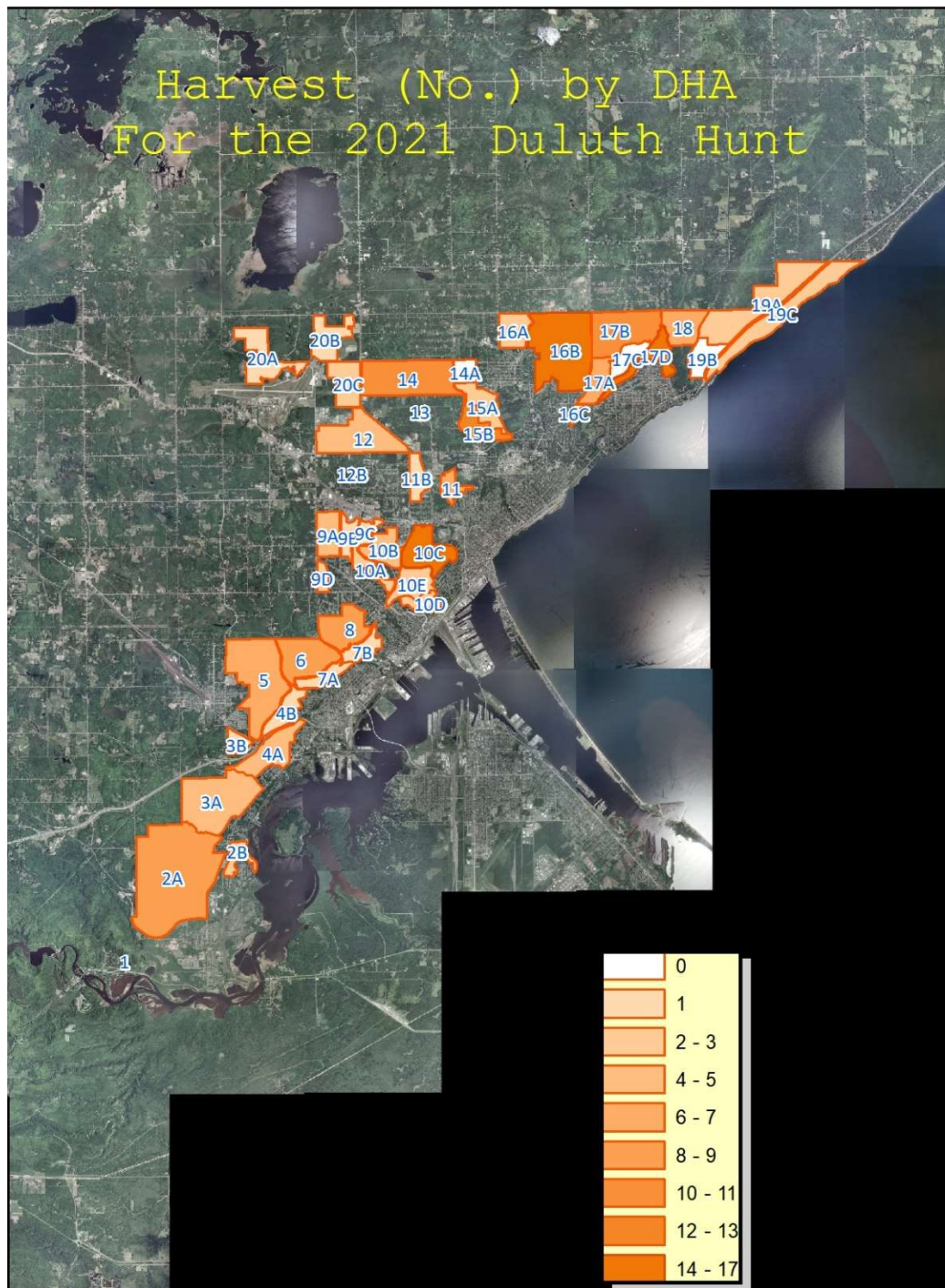


Figure 6. Map of the City of Duluth, along with harvest (number of deer) within each of the 42 Designated Hunting Areas during the 2021 Duluth City Bowhunt. DHAs are labelled on the map. The color of the DHA indicates the number of deer harvested as identified in the legend at the right.

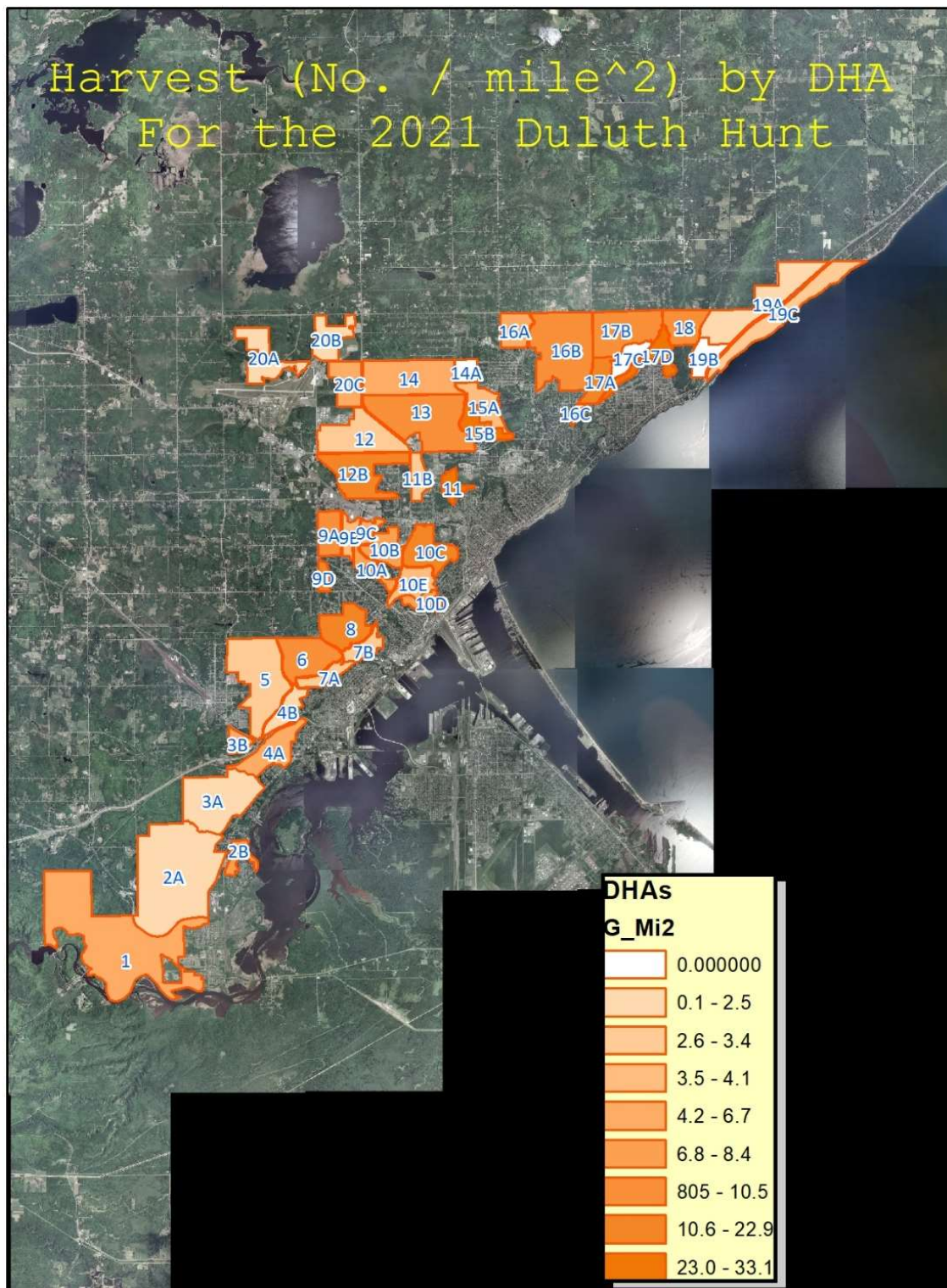


Figure 7. Map of the City of Duluth, along with harvest per mile² within each of the 42 Designated Hunting Areas during the 2021 Duluth City Bowhunt. DHAs are labelled on the map. The color of the DHA indicates the number of deer harvested per mile² as identified in the legend at the right.

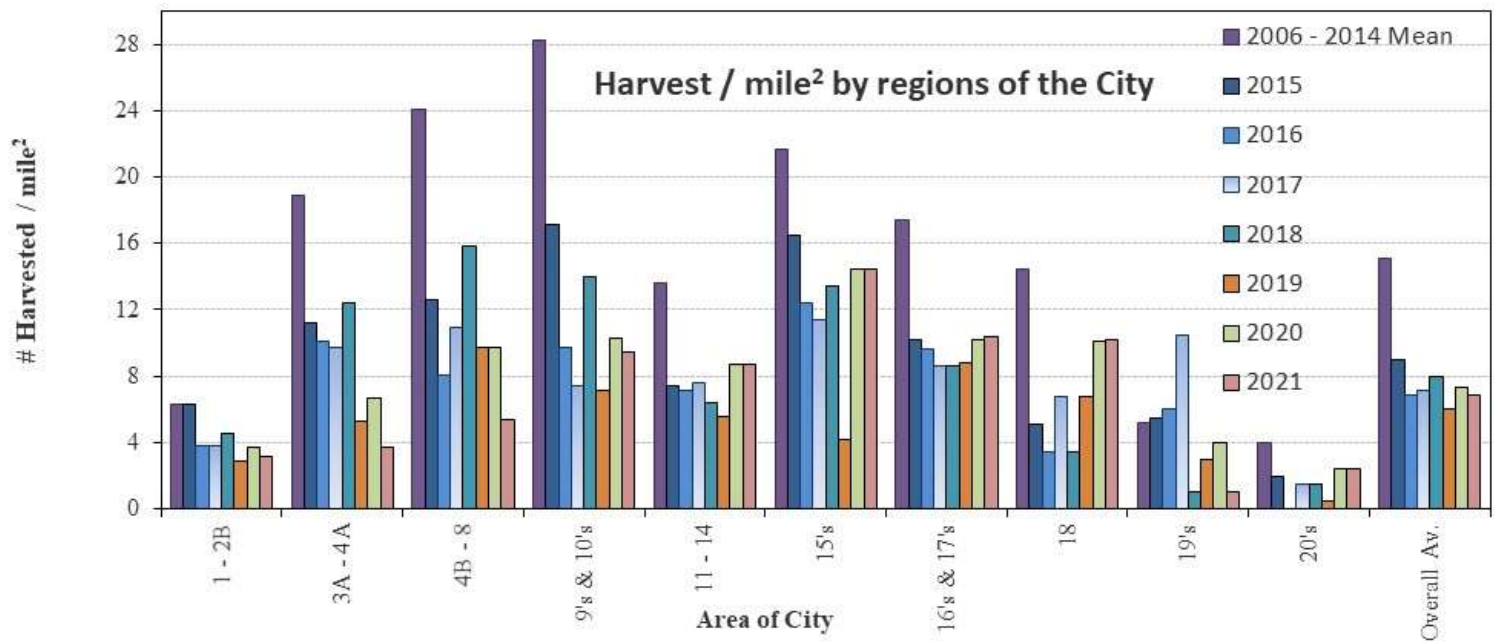


Figure 8. Harvest / mile² in various areas of the City of Duluth. Data presented is for the 2015 – 2021 seasons, and the long-term average (mean).

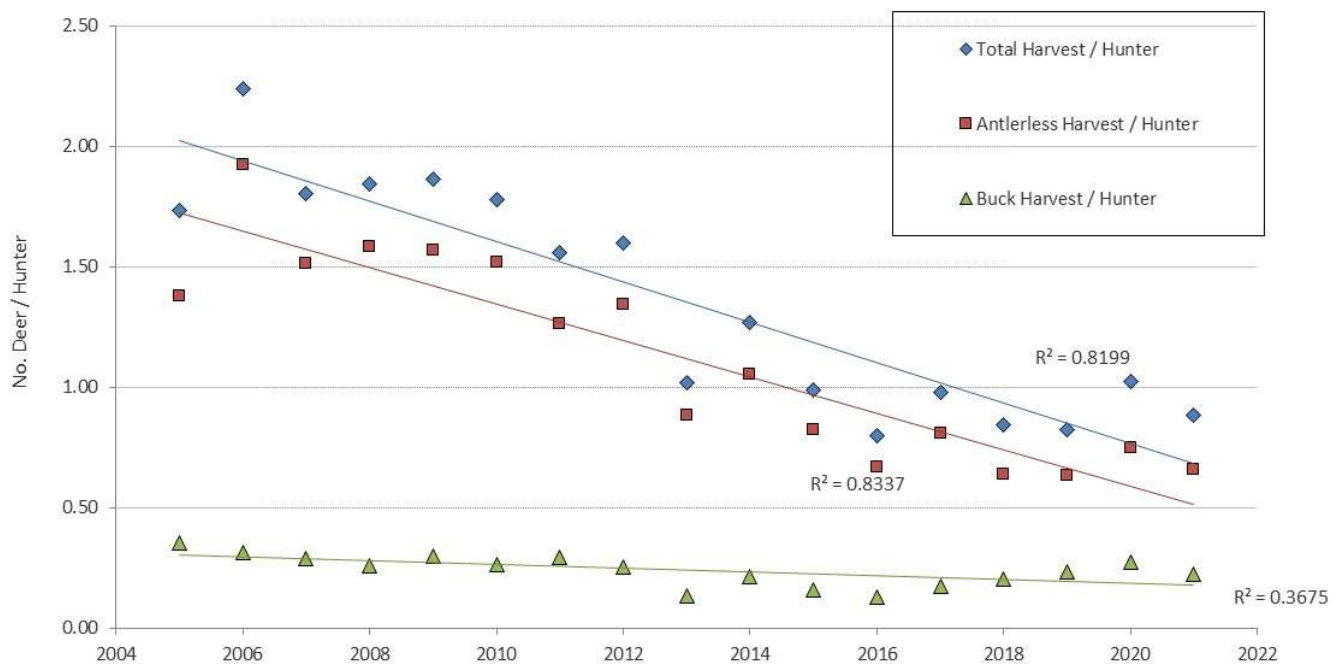


Figure 9. Harvest / hunter statistics for the 17 years of the Duluth City Bowhunt.

General Hunt details for the 2021 season

Private Lands

Hunters may access and hunt on any private property, with permission, within any of the DHAs. Harvest from private lands accounted for 45.1% of the 2021 harvest (Figure 10). A general misconception among some of the hunters, especially new ones, is that one needs access to private land in order to harvest deer, and specifically antlered males. Figure 11 breaks down harvest on public and private lands by deer type, and demonstrates that deer are still found on the public tracts of land within the City. In fact, more antlered and antlerless deer were both taken from public lands (Figure 11). 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.

Not all of the DHAs are created equally in terms of the portion of public and private lands within their boundaries. Figure 12 breaks down harvest within the various DHAs by public and private. Clearly DHAs such as DHAs 1, 2A, 2B, 4A, 6, 8, 11, 14, 18, & 19A are dominated by City-owned public lands, whereas 9D, 12B, 13, 15B, 16B, & 17D for example, seem to have more opportunities available on private lands.

Hot Spots

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

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

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

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



Public vs. Private Land Harvest Total No. Deer

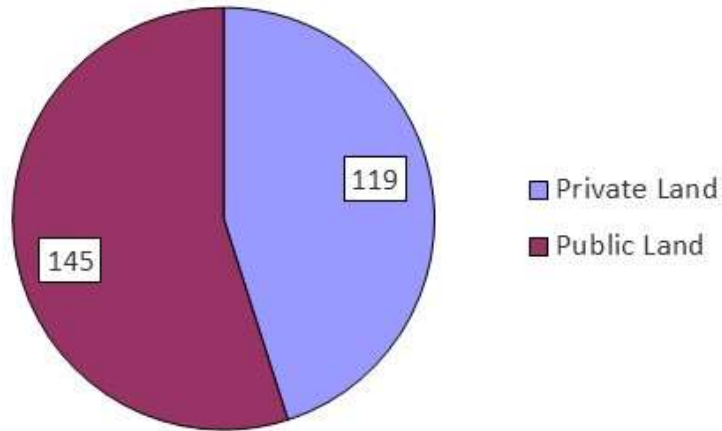


Figure 10. Harvest on public and private lands within the designated hunting areas during the 2021 Duluth City Bowhunt.

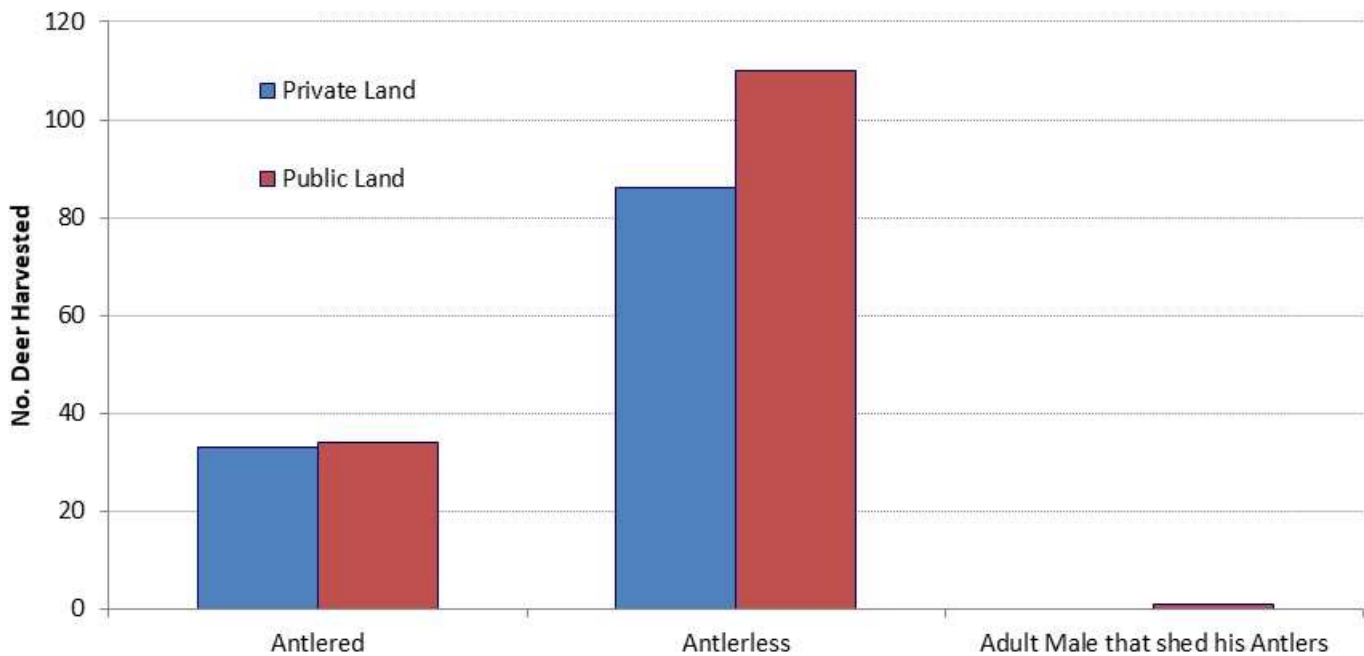


Figure 11. Harvest by deer type on public and private lands within the designated hunting areas during the 2021 Duluth City Bowhunt.

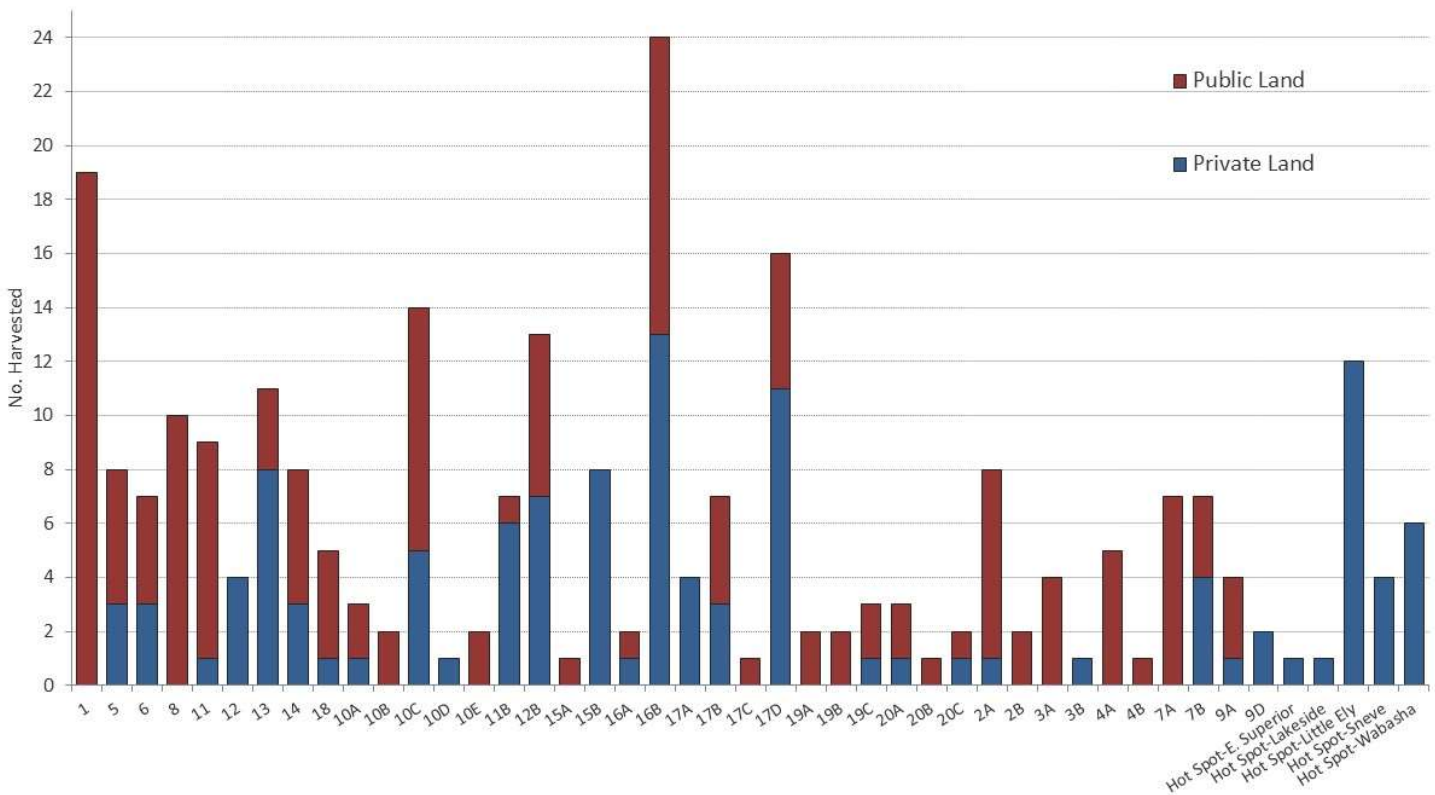


Figure 12. Harvest by Designated Hunting Area on public and private lands during the 2021 Duluth City Bowhunt.

Hearts:

Again in 2021, Duluth hunters were asked to save hearts from their harvested white-tailed deer. Hearts are used by the University of Minnesota – Duluth Medical School for dissection and anatomy. Medical School personnel approached the ABA many years ago, requesting hearts for their future surgeons to learn fine and intricate heart anatomy. Fresh hearts have much finer detail in the arteries and capillaries than do formalin-preserved ones. Hearts were turned over in early November. In 2021, 48% of our hunters indicated that they participated in this opportunity to give back to the community (Figure 13), well below participation rates of the past, which even in 2016 was as high as 60%. This is a wonderful opportunity for hunters to give back to the community that has opened up their backyard for our bowhunting recreation. After near constant badgering to save hearts, the ABA finds it hard to believe that 38 hunters “forgot” to save hearts (Figure 13). The ABA believes that these forgot’s should really be “no, I don’t intend to bother with this, it’s just not important to me”. The ABA Board struggles with how to make this Program relevant to our hunters, and to encourage continued / further participation. We received prizes from one of our participating hunters, and gave out four prizes to hunters that turned in hearts. We hope to continue this again in 2022. The ABA is immensely grateful to those hunters that went out of their way to collect, store, and ultimately deliver these hearts. The Board would encourage ALL hunters to participate in the future. This is especially important given that harvest is likely to continue to decline, meaning there will be fewer hearts available to collect, and UMD needs approximately 75 hearts each fall. Every heart will be important in 2022! And to be clear, hearts do not need to be solely collected from Duluth nor do they need to be white-



tailed deer hearts. UMD will take hearts from bear, moose, elk, antelope, mule and white-tailed deer, and any other mammal legally harvested outside of the City.

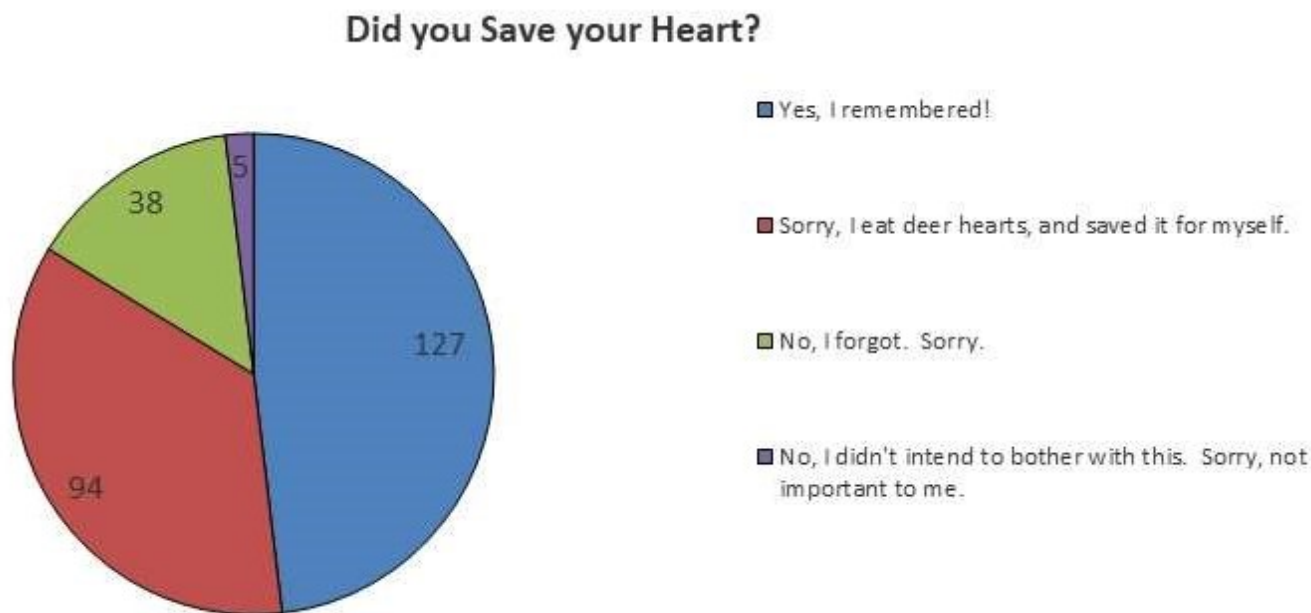


Figure 13. Responses from hunters asked to save deer hearts for the UMD-Medical School during the 2021 Duluth City Bowhunt.

Enforcement Issues

Every season, hunters seem concerned with stories that they've heard thru the rumor mill. The main concern seems to be that the ABA knows about infractions, and has dealt with the offending hunters. While the ABA is not in a position to give out specifics and details about adjudicated cases, we can give out generalities. We also aren't able to give any details about cases where the offending hunters have yet to be issued citations. During the 2021 Hunt, the ABA was made aware of these offenses:

- 1) One hunter was required to move a stand that was placed on private land, but on their property line overlooking public DHA property;
- 2) One hunter harvested a deer from the ground and was issued a citation;
- 3) A non-ABA hunter was issued a citation for illegally hunting within a DHA, and placing bait for the purpose of attracting deer. The ABA has no jurisdiction over this hunter;
- 4) A non-ABA landowner was cited for illegally hunting and harvesting a deer on their private property;
- 5) Several illegal stands were removed by ABA Board members and by law enforcement;
- 6) Two landowners were caught hunting on their private property without having obtained the required City Permit.
- 7) Two residents were educated on the City Ordinance banning the feeding of deer.
- 8) A non-ABA hunter and stands were removed from the City.



Year End Survey:

At the conclusion of every season in the Duluth City Bowhunt, our hunters are asked to complete a Year End Survey. This survey is 100% anonymous. Participants are asked several questions, ranging from wounding deer to observational reports. This year, survey participation was not as high as in 2020. 182 of the 299 participating hunters (60.9%) took part in the survey. By comparison, survey response rate were 74.4% in 2020. Our 2021 survey respondents were responsible for a reported 68.2% of the harvest, suggesting that if hunters were successful this season, they were perhaps only slightly more likely to participate in the Year End Survey. The ABA Board is very grateful for those hunters that took the time to provide feedback to the Board and to the City of Duluth. All comments will be shared with the City (Appendix 1).

Response rate was different between returning hunters (57.7%) and new hunters (75.5%), suggesting to the ABA that returning hunters must be satisfied with the Hunt and have no suggestions for the Board or the City Administration. That, or our returning hunters are just sick and tired of jumping thru hoops and just want to go ice fishing. 142 returning hunters and 40 new hunters filled in this survey. Of these hunters, 93.1% reported that they actually hunted in 2021 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 (94.5%) will likely apply for the 2022 Hunt. Eight (8) individuals indicated that they were still undecided as to whether or not they will apply in 2022. One hunter indicated that they would not be applying due to too many hoops, regulations, and too few deer. One hunter indicated that life won't allow them to apply in 2022.

Survey respondents reported harvesting 180 of the 264 deer. An additional 23 deer were reported as being wounded, with 14 of these deer reported as being "known to have survived" with nothing more than haircuts or scratches. This gives a reported wounding rate of 11.3% total, and 4.4% if the presumed surviving deer are removed from the analysis. This 11.3% is very similar to reported wounding rates in the past.

Earn-A-Buck Requirement:

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



Official, Unofficial, and Bike Trails

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

The City asked that we once again survey our hunters on the official and "unofficial" trails within the City. The first question that the City included asked the hunters to rank how their experience has been over the last five years with respect to the entire network of trails throughout the City. A ranking of "1" indicated that the trail system had impacted their hunting experience, and had led to conflicts with other user groups. A rank of "5" indicated that the hunter had an excellent experience with the trail system, and had not experienced any issues or conflicts. The average response was 3.1 ± 0.2 (median value 3), which is EXACTLY what it was in 2021. This suggests a middle-of-the-road reaction for our hunters (Figure 14) and no change in the last year.

Appendix 2 contains comments from our hunters and locations of some "unofficial" trails that City officials may need to investigate.

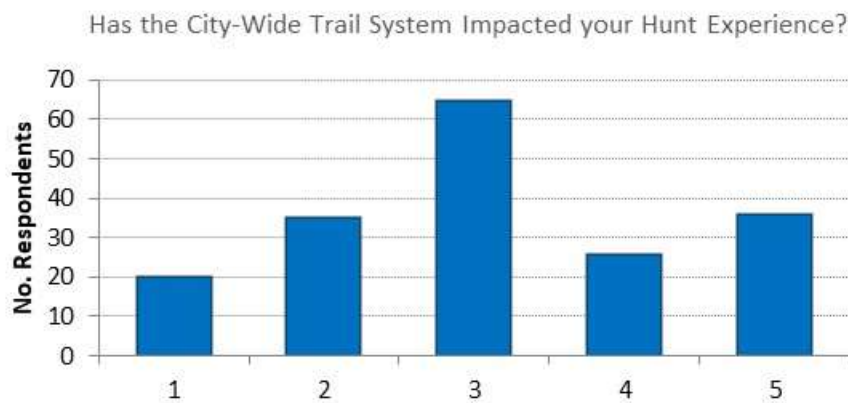


Figure 14. Participants in the 2021 Year End Survey indicating their experience with the city-wide network of trails within the Duluth City woods. Responses ranged from 1 (bad experience, including conflicts with other user groups) to 5 (positive experience with no conflicts).

Homelessness in Duluth

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

Only 25 hunters reported in the year end survey as having had issues with presumed homeless individuals while participating in the Hunt. These 25 hunters reported having multiple issues (Table 4.) The two overwhelming complaints were garbage being left in the woods and make-shift shelters being set up within the hunting areas. The DHAs reported by our hunters is presented in Table 5, with DHAs 1 & 4A having the most reported encounters.

Table 4. Number of reported encounters hunters had with presumed homeless individuals while participating in the 2021 Duluth Hunt.

Complaint	Count of Complaint
Garbage left in the woods	6
Shelters erected near your hunting setup location	4
Theft	2
Abandoned shelter and garbage in 7A. 46.75391, -92.16589	1
Garbage left in the woods, Shelters erected near your hunting setup location	11
Garbage left in the woods, Shelters erected near your hunting setup location, Disruptive behavior, Trespassing	1
I had no problems, and this question is strange. Why would it matter if someone is homeless? Any of these would be a problem regardless of someone's housing situation	1
Individual walking past my stand at ~60 yards while I was hunting. They did not appear to know I was there. There were also a tent or two set up in the woods just south of the soccer fields that I noticed when scouting for stand locations.	1
Grand Total	27



Table 5. List of DHAs where hunters had encounters with presumed homeless individuals while participating in the 2021 Duluth Hunt.

DHA	Count of Which DHAs did you experience any issues with suspected homeless individuals
1	3
10B	1
10D	1
2A	1
2B	1
3A	2
4A	3
4B	2
7A	2
Behind CUB Foods on Central Entrance	1
19C	1
19B	1
10 s	1
10E	2
Grand Total	22

Comments from the Masses:

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

“Do you have any ideas or suggestions for improving the Hunt in 2022?”

As expected, the responses were all over the place. Many comments were useful. Several were obviously held by a small minority of individuals. But all comments are included in Appendix 1. For the third year in a row, not one single comment was logged about allowing baiting to improve harvest opportunities. So perhaps a decade of education has yielded results.

A brief summary of the key comments follows:

1) Get rid of earn-a-buck. The ABA has proposed elimination of the earn-a-buck requirement for the last six (6) years. It has been repeatedly denied by the Duluth Hunt Review Panel. They did approve of the suspension of this requirement for late in the 2017 thru 2021 seasons. This will be evaluated and discussed again. There were many comments in favor of allowing hunters to put venison into the freezer at any point during the season.

2) Too few deer left in the City. Yes, our hunters have done a fabulous job at decreasing the deer herd. But the ABA does not set limits. This is a MN DNR decision. And perhaps the City residents don’t share this opinion.

3) Drive thru Orientation. Due to Covid, returning hunters were not required to attend mandatory orientation night. They merely drove up, grabbed their stand tags, rules manual, maps, and ID card, and left. This largely worked well for all, and was appreciated by the returning hunters. However, the ABA did have several issues with hunters violating rules, and the general excuse was, *“I didn’t know about that”*.



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

Andrew Frieland
Camron Vollbrect
Doug Coda
Jesse DeWitte
Kerry Lapcinski
Matt Anderson
Max Werdin
Mike Dodge
Seth Hartman

Bruce Fehringer
Dean Danielson
Gary Rabold
Joe Austin
Tony Marino
Brandon Mandt
Michael Mangan
Scott Schafer
Tim Key

Board Members for 2021:

Phillip Lockett, President
Phillip Mannon, Chairman
Brian Borkholder, Secretary / Treasurer
Alan Vorderbruggen

Tom Florestano
James Dexter (*retired, thank you for your service*)
Jordan Buetow
Katrina Wood (*retired, thank you for your service*)

Thank you to all who made it this far in the Report. Your perseverance is applaudable, though your choice to do so is questionable. On behalf of the Arrowhead Bowhunters Alliance, we thank all of those individuals that participated in the 2021 Duluth Bowhunt, and who made this another successful, albeit difficult, season. See you in the woods in 2022!



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 2022?” Hunter comments are in the left-hand column. Responses from the Arrowhead Bowhunters Alliance are in the right-hand column. Comments are as submitted. No attempt was made to correct grammar or spelling.

Do you have any ideas or suggestions for improving the Hunt in 2022?	ABA Response
<p>Look into hunting from the ground. I understand it's about safety of arrow travel that we are in trees. However we all take bow hunter safety and know if we should take a shot given the background behind the deer. Sometimes I don't feel like going in a tree if it's cold and windy so ground hunting would be nicer. Once again I understand why we are in trees just thought I'd give a thought</p>	<p>I'd like to say you're right, but in the heat of the moment, the ABA knows of several shots that have been taken that could have resulted in tragedy had things gone a bit differently. Unfortunately, we sold this Hunt to the public by guaranteeing that arrows would be traveling down and into the ground, and not horizontally. Bow safety doesn't seem to matter in the heat of the moment, when a trophy or even the first antlerless is standing broadside 25 yards away and the hunter is desperate.</p>
<p>It think the ABA does a great job! Thank you.</p>	<p>Thank you, and you're welcome</p>
<p>The ABA has made some very important and much appreciated improvements over the years. Thank you for all your hard work and going to bat for us hunters dealing with the city.</p>	
<p>Get the hint not to fill all your antlerless tags earlier than this year. I understand it should be subtle hints since it is a management hunt.</p>	<p>See comment above. Many folks don't feel satisfied as a hunter unless they "tag out" and fill all of their tags</p>
<p>NO</p>	
<p>thanks for all you do</p>	<p>You're welcome</p>



<p>I don't know how to keep saying the same thing in the survey year after year, but the trend has continued, as far as this being the worst year yet. That goes for the amount of deer seen and the quality of deer seen.</p> <p>As someone who enjoys the woods, beyond hunting, it would be nice to see deer or even a single deer when walking the trails through the woods in Duluth. I put on over 100 miles hiking/biking throughout various DHA's during the fall and the amount of deer I saw can be counted on 1 hand. It's sad that we, as a group, have slaughtered this population to the numbers that we have and although hard to say, I feel that this hunt needs to be shut down for a period of time.</p> <p>I don't know what the answer is, whether that be every other year, or other management methods are used such as bucks only. Can we implement a presentation on Quality Deer Management? Bork had a good message about not shooting does in December on his last email, but overall the deer population is EXTREMELY LOW in Duluth.</p>	<p>You are definitely NOT in the minority. However, we fear that if we give up the Hunt for even a year, we may not ever get it back. The political winds may have changed. To keep this opportunity going, we need to do a better job of policing ourselves, and not allowing someone else to police our harvest activities. While the State and City may say that each of us is allowed three (3) deer, perhaps each of us needs to do some reflection and decide if this is the best for the quality of the Hunt and the herd. Maybe it is for some. Likely it isn't for most. No one forces any of our hunters to shoot all three deer within the City limits. There are ample options outside of the City. Instead of giving up this hunt for a year (or indefinitely), perhaps our hunters need to make some difficult decisions for themselves.</p>
Nope it was great	
With the expansion of trails adjusting setback limits from trails would be appreciated. 3A has a large snowmobile trail and there are a lot of areas I would have hunted had it not been for the setback distances.	We were successful in lowering the setback distances this year. We likely won't be able to decrease them much further. But we can discuss with the Deer Review Committee
Pickup site in town.	Pickup site for what specifically?
Doing a great job	
No issues, keep everything same next year.	



<p>I think in the year end summery we should all know what hunters broke what rules, who is removed from the hunt and what they did. Lots of talk and rumors going around about illegally shot deer by a few city hunters. No confirmation on this but as law bidding hunters, I think we all have the right to know if someone was doing something illegal. A few bad hunters could ruin this hunt for all of us. I think its fare they get the spot light for what happen that reflects on us all as a whole. I also think the earn a buck requirement could be lifted since the population appears to be down. I spoke with many hunters who only seen bucks and not a doe to harvest. Only my thoughts.</p> <p>Thanks for all you guys do!</p>	<p>This report now includes a general list of offenses that were addressed this year. The ABA will likely broach the earn-a-buck requirement again this year with the Deer Review Committee. If nothing else, it would be an interesting experiment to see what harvest may look like in the absence of this requirement for the full year.</p>
<p>Removing earn a buck</p>	<p>The ABA will likely broach the earn-a-buck requirement again this year with the Deer Review Committee. If nothing else, it would be an interesting experiment to see what harvest may look like in the absence of this requirement for the full year.</p>
<p>Have a lottery for early buck opportunities where a certain amount of randomly selected hunters are allowed to bypass the "earn a buck" rule. This would make the hunters happy and also help reduce the deer herd for the city.</p>	<p>Maybe allow hunters that turn in X number of hearts for UMD get a free "get out of earn-a-buck" pass?</p>
<p>I think that there should be discussion on implementing clearly defined rules and regulations for dispatching a wounded deer. There isn't any mention of this in the current rule book. If a bad shot is made on a deer and that deer is found to be alive, the current regulations state "All hunting will be restricted to tree stands, or in some instances, ground blinds as identified below. Under no circumstance will hunting on foot be permitted". How do you legally dispatch this animal then? Seems like a misuse of resources to call Law Enforcement or the ABA board to finish off a wounded deer. I think it would be beneficial for all to have a clearly defined stance on finishing wounded deer.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, with a few illegally shot deer from the ground, law enforcement actually prefers to know when our hunters need to dispatch a deer from the ground. If the deer is not getting up, in most cases law enforcement and the ABA will ask you to dispatch the deer. If the deer is walking around with an arrow sticking out, law enforcement requires the ABA be involved with this type of recovery. This prevents hunters from "dispatching" a deer they may come across while walking in the woods.</p>
<p>With so many bike trails is there a possibility of relaxing the setback for bike trails?</p>	<p>The setback was relaxed two years ago. We aren't likely to get it reduced much further.</p>




<p>The Earn A Buck program is getting difficult, I hardly saw a doe this year and passed on bucks because of that and think that rule should be dropped for a couple years. We need to come up with a plan for the dogs chasing deer with and without their owners, it's out of control how many dogs are running deer past me, and have video to prove that.</p>	<p>The ABA will likely broach the earn-a-buck requirement again this year with the Deer Review Committee. If nothing else, it would be an interesting experiment to see what harvest may look like in the absence of this requirement for the full year. Don't know what to tell you about dogs. It's illegal to run your dog off leash. But in most cases, law enforcement is likely too busy to address this. Sorry.</p>
<p>I wouldn't mind if 17C was opened up earlier. Maybe coincide with the thanksgiving rule change of a doe first? Or the start of the season. I'm sure it's a city thing but it would be nice.</p>	<p>We wouldn't mind this either, but the autumn bird banders are in charge of this rule. We can't start hunting until they've pulled their mist nets and have finished banding for the season.</p>
<p>I know the ABA has been advocating for this... DNR please drop the earn a buck restriction</p>	<p>The ABA will likely broach the earn-a-buck requirement again this year with the Deer Review Committee. If nothing else, it would be an interesting experiment to see what harvest may look like in the absence of this requirement for the full year.</p>
<p>Get rid of the earn a buck. Not many deer left in the city.</p>	<p>The ABA will likely broach the earn-a-buck requirement again this year with the Deer Review Committee. If nothing else, it would be an interesting experiment to see what harvest may look like in the absence of this requirement for the full year.</p>
<p>I like the way the hunt is ran. There is certainty fewer deer but I guess that would be a result of the hunters doing there job in a municipal management hunt. It chaps my ass to think the council would entertain discontinuing the bow hunt. I think the footprint left by bow hunters in this town is so minimal a non hunter would be hard pressed to find any evidence of our presence. Although I didn't encounter any homeless camps this year...first time. The trash and footprint left by them is awful and there garbage and belongings stay out there indefinitely in some cases. As far as the bike trails, I'm not impressed!!! I could think of better things to do to an environment than take equipment into the woods and carve clay trails throughout the woods which inhibits excessive erosion. Last time I checked water runs down hill and at the bottom of the hills are the creeks. So in closing I'm very happy with everything except the last two talking points??</p>	<p>Couldn't agree with you more.</p>
<p>nice work all thank you.</p>	<p>Thank you</p>



Drop the earn a buck. Proctor did! By the time thanksgiving comes around 75% of the buck activity is done and a number of hunters are done hunting for the season by then. Prolly a good reason very few bucks were shot after thanksgiving an registered by hunters that did not previously harvest a antlerless. Open up buck hunting in hot spots. Because honestly... what's the difference? Yes I understand the city makes the rules... is any of the city council hunters? Without asking I would imagine there is quite a few bikers and trail walkers! ABA you guys do a great job and always have... you asked for comments, concerns...	If the ABA can't get rid of the earn-a-buck for a trial year, perhaps we can propose getting rid of it at the start of the MN Firearms season?
There really just doesn't seem to be as many deer this year. Are numbers low? Removing the earn a buck if possible. I could have shot bucks I've seen early in the season but did not have a doe. I do think public use and trail systems have made an impact on hunting. Also, I do appreciate the the application process and easiness for returning hunters and picking up our tags and rules.	Thank you
Enough with the trails. Are people so inept that they can't just walk without leaving a track in the woods. So sad	So sad indeed
Great and successful season for me very happy	
It would be nice to take more than one buck for this hunt. I know we have to abide by the state law of one buck, but I'd shoot forks or spikes in addition to does. I realize the theory behind shooting does to reduce the population but bucks do damage to personal property.	You are correct. But current MN State Statute allows for one buck per hunter per year. I'm not thinking a small group from Duluth can change MN State law.
Remove the earn a buck. The population is low enough looking at the past years numbers compared to harvest numbers now. Also I personally had to let 11 different bucks walk this 2021 season due to not getting any opportunities at an antlerless deer. Witch being a management hunt i never did get to shoot an antlerless deer but taking a buck in late December. Lift the restriction alot of people are in this hunt for meat not the trophies	The ABA will likely broach the earn-a-buck requirement again this year with the Deer Review Committee. If nothing else, it would be an interesting experiment to see what harvest may look like in the absence of this requirement for the full year.



<p>Allow me to suggest that directives from the ABA be less threatening which often include exclusion from the following year's hunt. Less serious violations could be considered as warnings of which a hunter is allowed so many prior to being kicked out of the hunt. The set back rule change was a very good decision. Thank you for doing so. Also, I appreciate all the time and effort put forth by members of the ABA. Good job. The hunt has definitely been a success even though I had a trophy buck eating our flowers off our front steps during hunting season. Thank you.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, the threat of losing hunting privileges is often all that keeps a few of our hunters on the straight and narrow. The ABA and our law enforcement already spends a ridiculous amount of time on rules infractions. Honestly, we're tired of folks wanting to bend this rule this way, or seeing just how far they can push an issue. We'd just prefer they hunt elsewhere. If a hunter can't follow, or doesn't want to follow, the rules established by the City, we'll encourage them to leave for areas with fewer regulations.</p>
Nope. Great job.	Thank you
<p>There are a tremendous amount of permanent tree stands in unit 2a on public land. There was also a fair amount of baiting and feeding that I saw near these stands during rifle season</p>	<p>Did you contact MN DNR law enforcement? Baiting can't be addressed if we aren't aware of where it's occurring.</p>
<p>Allow bucks to be taken in hotspots. At least after the date the doe first requirement is lifted.</p>	<p>Probably not going to happen. To many folks (maybe not you), antlers have more behavior-altering power than does crack cocaine. We tried this once. We got numerous complaints about the one and only buck taken. It was a basket 8, but by the time the rumors swirled throughout the bowhunting community, you'd have thought the hunter shot the new State record. It didn't help that it was one of my buddies. In addition to the rumors, the stupid "good old boys" mantra reared it's ugly head. Too much hassle. Not worth it to the Board.</p>
<p>You all do a fantastic job, but especially that Vorderbruggen guy.</p>	
<p>only allow 2 deer or be able to harvest a buck with out the earn a buck rule</p>	
<p>Eliminate earn a buck...not many deer any more</p>	<p>The ABA will likely broach the earn-a-buck requirement again this year with the Deer Review Committee. If nothing else, it would be an interesting experiment to see what harvest may look like in the absence of this requirement for the full year.</p>



2 deer limit.	Self-policing may be the key here.
YES. We need to grow the herd again to allow a sustainable harvest: 1) Reduce the number of deer allowed per hunter to one. 2) Restrict the hunt to city residents with exceptions. 3) Do a drawing for a set number of antlered permits.	1) Folks may need to police themselves and put on limits to their own harvest; 2) "With exceptions"? Who gets to decide what exceptions are allowed and what are not? 3) Antlered individuals aren't limited in the City. They run rampant. Do you mean allow a randomly drawn pool of hunters to not have to harvest an antlerless first?
No	Yes
Do away with earn a buck after Mn rifle season	That's only three days before it currently is lifted. How about at the START of the MN Firearms season?
<p>Reduce the number of deer that can be taken in DHAs with low and very low deer densities. e.g. two deer limit instead of three, and suggest shooting a fawn buck if possible instead of adult doe for earn a buck to maintain deer numbers in low density DHAs and even increase numbers slightly in very low density DHAs. I started hunting in the city hunt to see more deer than out in the countryside where wolves have kept the numbers down after the decimating winter about 8-10 years ago. My original DHA this year had similar numbers as wolf territory (very low density).</p> <p>Second suggestion is for weekly reports to show the current year's results compared against a three year average for the previous three years so people can compare current year to average of results for last three years.</p>	<p>We don't have deer density estimates. I think the key is to ask folks to exercise some restraint, and not be whacking deer just because the State says it's sustainable.</p> <p>Current weekly summaries likely shows what you are asking, if Bork did a better job of explaining the gobbeldy-gook he spews out on a weekly basis.</p>
It was a great season and I really appreciate a chance to hunt close to home	
No, great job!	Thank you
Drop the earn a buck requirement. The only opportunity I had this year was a buck, but I hadn't shot a doe. So instead of harvesting 1 I harvested 0 deer. If the earn a buck requirement can't be ended, move the deadline up to Halloween.	The ABA will likely broach the earn-a-buck requirement again this year with the Deer Review Committee. If nothing else, it would be an interesting experiment to see what harvest may look like in the absence of this requirement for the full year.
Thank you to the entire ABA for organizing this hunt!	Thank you



None, it is and was amazing as usual, can't wait to come back again next year ??????	
I would like to have a better understanding on the lottery system. I was confused on how some hunters with no returner status were placed in public DHAs prior to the lottery with no returning status showing on the sheets. (I noticed this as it was the zone I was hoping to be placed in, and there were 0 available spots before the lottery even stated.) Was it possibly a 2nd year hunter? Not making any stink about it as I know there was probably a good reason for this, as you guys are very organized and do a great job. Just trying to get a better understanding of the lottery for next year!	Contact Bork with specific questions or concerns. He's more than happy to walk anyone thru the process. If you are at all concerned, consider showing up to his house early and he can show you how it was all set up.
Remove earn a buck. Killing a doe any time of the season decreases population by up to 3 the following year, no mater what time in the season you shoot it. Deer is dead wether it is bred or not.	The ABA will likely broach the earn-a-buck requirement again this year with the Deer Review Committee. If nothing else, it would be an interesting experiment to see what harvest may look like in the absence of this requirement for the full year.
Remove the earn a buck	The ABA will likely broach the earn-a-buck requirement again this year with the Deer Review Committee. If nothing else, it would be an interesting experiment to see what harvest may look like in the absence of this requirement for the full year.
Dump the earn-a-buck at the start of rifle season	The ABA will likely broach the earn-a-buck requirement again this year with the Deer Review Committee. If nothing else, it would be an interesting experiment to see what harvest may look like in the absence of this requirement for the full year.
For zones surrounding the airport where there typically are not hikers, skiers, bikers, etc I think it would be helpful to place signs around the perimeter of the land stating it is not open to public hunting. It sounds like it has been an ongoing issue of having illegal hunters in those areas. In most scenarios those individuals likely are aware they are trespassing and hunting illegally but some may not know, or may be unsure. I think posting signs could possibly help eliminate some of the illegal hunters. If there are signs, they may be less likely to hunt illegally since they won't be able to plead the case that they didn't know. I would even be willing to volunteer to post the signs!	Good suggestion. You are correct, illegal poaching is RAMPANT off of the Martin Road. The ABA will make sure to point this out to the City and to law enforcement.
I feel it is administered pretty darn well. Never did get a report on the liver sample sent in.	It takes MN Dept of Health some time to run the samples. I didn't turn over any of the samples in my freezer until the week before Christmas.



I think it works, except the stand 5 ladder tree and bow hook and the likes, got pic of her with one of my ladder trees in her hand	I have no idea what you're trying to communicate here
None	No comment either
No earn a buck!	Agreed. We'll talk with the City
Reduce set backs from hiking trails	We've tried. Not sure what else to try.
Remove or adjust the no hunting area in 20A near the fence	It was actually adjusted last year, and we lost a chunk of woods. Something to do with the Air Base and National Security. Or so we were told
Don't give the guys that dont hunt and plug up good DHA's the opportunity to plug up DHA's for us that actually hunt.	I'm sure folks don't apply with the intention of never hunting. That's expensive and time consuming (prof test, Orientation, City hunt fee, etc.). Life happens. Kids get sick. Jobs suck. Divorce. Sick parents. This list is endless. If someone thinks they have time to hunt and apply, the ABA will place them into the DHA of their choice at Lottery.
Thanks to everyone who makes this hunt happen.	Thank you!
Hey Bork, I had emailed you during the season about the idea of earning "heart points." Once a hunter has turned in the required number of hearts (that number would be determined by the board), they would not have to "earn-a-buck" the following year. Another idea would be ABA sponsored community service within the city. Something where if hunters volunteered a certain number of hours to pick up trash on the trails or in the woods, they would be exempt from the earn-a-buck.	Great idea on the hearts! Thanks for the reminder. The ABA used to coordinate a clean-up effort along Skyline Parkway. Interest waned over the years, and eventually only a few actually showed up. This effort was spearheaded and lead by our hunters, and not by the Board. If you or any other hunter would like to set something like this up again, the Board will certainly advertise it for you. I doubt we can set that up for a buck exemption. But the City will see this and they can discuss the merits of such a plan.
No	No also
Eliminate the earn a buck requirement. 2021 had the lowest deer sightings per sit since the inception of the hunt. It was dismal, with many sits of no sightings. The hunt has been very effective and resulted in the population reduction desired. Allowing harvesting of a buck without first harvesting a doe could result in further reduction of deer in the City.	Agreed. We need to press the City Admin on this
No you guys are doing a great job!	Thank you!
Nope	Yep



Thanks for doing what you do to allow this hunt to take place. It certainly is a privilege to be able to hunt so close to home.	Thank you.
For any gathering's be centrally located I think most hunters are living in the west. Liberals live east.	Ha!
<p>I don't know how to say this but the beginning of year meeting seemed inviting to illegal activities. As a new city hunter, it was odd hearing the instructors say something like "it's illegal to do that, but we (the DHA) are never going to look for it" I think it was in reference to stand locations.</p> <p>Also, I think it should be noted to talk about the "why" of the hunt. I think hunters need to understand that this is a privilege to do this in the city and it ultimately relies on the approval of the city and therefore the public.</p>	<p>I think the context was that the ABA volunteers don't go looking for citations to issue. We all have jobs. If someone finds your illegal activity and points it out to us, we will address it. That said, most hunters aren't measuring the distance of your stand to a bike trail or the corner of a garage. If a landowner believes you're too close to their property, then we will address it. It comes down to discretion and being invisible to the public. I hope folks who read this stupid report understand the importance of recognizing the privilege that it is to hunt here. Agree with your point 100%</p>
No. Great job ABA	Thank you.
none	
Omit earn-a-buck at the start of rifle season	Agreed.
Allow harvest of bucks nov 1	
Become a Packers Fan!!!!	Oh H@#\$ no!!!! Never gonna happen. I've still got too much Chicago blood coursing thru my veins. I'm a Cubs and Bears fan. I may not support the front offices or the owners, but I'll NEVER pull for the stupid Cheesehead goofballs from Green Bay!!!
It would be nice to start managing the herd now instead on reducing the herd. We have done our job in reducing deer numbers. I feel its time to start managing the herd to keep what we do have left healthy. The buck to doe numbers are way out of whack in my opinion. I know its a herd reduction hunt but feel a few years to help equal out the herd would be healthy.	I think we've been trying to communicate to our hunters that we're in the Maintenance Phase of this Hunt. Go back and review old reports. Unfortunately, there's still a group of hunters that believe if the MNDNR says it's ok to shoot a whackload of deer, then this is ok for the herd. There's a group of hunters that define a successful hunt as filling out all available tags, not necessarily what the freezer requires. And until we can get rid of earn-a-buck, the sex ratio will continue to be unhealthy.
Drive up orientation works well for returning hunters, keep doing that.	Unfortunately, hunters forget about the basic rules. We may have to have in-person meetings every few years as our workload gets quite full chasing down knuckleheads that "forget" about following rules. If you're forced to attend in-person Orientation in the near future, blame your fellow hunters.



Keep up the good work. I don't know of any changes needed at this point. I miss the in-person orientation because that's usually the only opportunity I have to visit with other hunters. However, the drive-through orientation is more efficient and necessary due to the pandemic. You guys are doing a great job.	
Removing earn a buck	We're working on this. City needs to agree.
Thanks for the work you folks put in to make this hunt go!	You're welcome
Bork's mother raised a fine son. You should keep him around.	Ha!
Crack down on rifle hunters in city limits!!! It's terrible	Law enforcement is aware of the issue. Unfortunately, they can be spread pretty thin at times and more pressing issues always arise to the top.
Maybe a little education on obtaining permission on private land. If a hunter approaches a land owner and are told they have a hunter don't pressure them to also let them hunt the property, be respectfull.	Hopefully the offending hunters see this and take it to heart. Thanks for the reminder.
Loose the earn a buck requirement	We're working on this. City needs to agree.
Have the Game Wardens come sit in the woods and listen to all the gun shots in the city on rifle opener! Lots of cheaters out there. Oh, and let everyone know who broke rules during the hunt so we know who makes us look bad. I heard of a few rule breakers out there this year.	Law enforcement is aware of the issue. Unfortunately, they can be spread pretty thin at times and more pressing issues always arise to the top. Unfortunately, I'm not sure of the legalities of tattling on offenders. Probably the best way is to look at the public records. That won't get the ABA sued.
Less Trails. Leash laws need to be followed on public property. Every year dogs jump deer while I'm in the woods.	Never gonna happen. City wants more and more trails. We just have to keep beating this drum until the City understands our perspective.
Yes antler restriction should come off opening of Rifle season	Agreed.
Thank you!!!!	You're welcome
<p>The ABA and all of it's folks I can't say enough good about. Regarding deer numbers and sightings it could have just been lack of natural foods in my location/zone this year but it's the lowest deer numbers I've seen in the three years I've hunted in the city hunt. In fact running about 8 cameras I was lucky to get a picture of a doe maybe every second or third week between all 8 cameras as it would randomly pass through my areas I have had luck in previously.</p> <p>Either just low numbers of deer for some reason or they just shifted to different bedding and feeding areas all together. Will be curious to see collectively in the survey's if everyone had way less sightings and deer in general or if for me was just a shift in deer bedding/food patterns. For me with the extreme lack of deer sightings and activity on my cameras it was hard to have the enthusiasm to sit more then I did in town. I elected to sit more in areas without the earn a buck in place and with higher deer numbers this year. I'm still very much excited about 2022 city hunt though!!</p>	<p>After reviewing these comments, I'm sure you'll see that you were not alone this year. No one seems to like the earn-a-buck and most folks seemed to have issues with seeing deer.</p>



Thanks for all of your efforts.	You're welcome
Get rid of the earn a buck, I'd have harvested a deer for sure (not a trophy) had I been able to. I understand the theory of it, but in mine and others I know cases, we would have assisted in killing a deer this year had I not been required to shoot a doe.	We're working on this. City needs to agree.
nope, well run program	Thank you
Get rid of earn a buck	We're working on this. City needs to agree.
no 4x4 motorized vehicle's put it in the rules too many hunters too many poachers	There's a City Ordinance that clearly states that ATVs are not allowed on City-owned lands. So this doesn't need to be in the ABA rules. It's been an Ordinance for a lot longer than our hunt.
itd be nice to do away with having to shoot a doe first, just let us hunt without the pressure of shooting doe first	We're working on this. City needs to agree.
No improvement on your end, just mine.	
I think the commercial ground blind requirement should be lifted. I don't believe it serves any valid public or hunting related purpose. It seems an artifact of thoughts about the public's reaction to hunters when this all started. I think with homeless camp sites all over people are now more alarmed to see a blind in the middle of the woods than they would be a hunter in a thoughtful spot. Moreover, they are more likely to see the blind than they would be the hunter so the blind creates the issue/contact. Review of proposed ground hunt location is perfectly valid, it's the commercial blind requirement that is the issue. If folks want to use them great. If we don't, it should not be required if the hunter's location/shot/vantage point is safe and ethical.	The ABA believes that we need to be held to a higher standard. With natural materials, hunters are less likely to remove / deconstruct these after the season; soon we have make-shift blinds and junk littering the woods for the public to see. Further, how are Hunter Stand Tags affixed to these? How do we identify legal vs illegal hunters if folks were just using natural materials for blinds and the stand tags have been removed? Lastly, how do we prevent folks from hunting off the ground and stating they were using a make-shift natural ground blind? Ground hunting can be very dangerous in areas adjacent to neighborhoods. We absolutely CAN NOT have arrows sailing into neighborhoods. This is why there's an elevated stand requirement, and why the ABA and Hunt Coordinator must approve of EVERY ground blind.



Well the earn a buck is like whipping a dead horse but I'll mention anyway I guess. A lot of hunters aren't seeing does or any deer at times. I know a decent amount of people that don't get a deer because of the earn a buck requirement. They passed on multiple bucks Big and small in Sept and Oct. I don't know how much harvest numbers would change if the earn a buck was taken out of it.

I'd like to see the setbacks on the hiking trail be reduced to that of the bike trails. Some of them are Dual purpose and with a bunch of the new bike trails and storm damage that we've had over the years have shifted deer movement in some DHAs to areas that are pretty tight with hiking and biking.

I'd like to see more places open to Hunting with in the city. There a quite a few decent sized tracks of land outside the current DHAs that are very huntable but are currently not huntable.

One thing i'd be curious on is action taken by the board or COs on complaints or breaking of the ABA rules. Can be a end of the year thing or a running report through out the year. More of a hassle when I know most have a full plate already. Just a "got a call of an illegal stand, hunter identified and removed from hunt and lost returns status" or some thing like that.

Earn a buck has been addressed. Setbacks will be addressed again. Let us know of the "decent sized tracks of land" that you have in mind, and we'll look into those. If a complaint is sent to the Board, we pass those on to law enforcement. Often we don't hear from law enforcement for months, as it often takes this long to settle a case.



Appendix 2. Survey respondents were asked to identify “unofficial” trails. These are included here for the City’s Parks & Trails Coordinator. These comments are directly from the Year End Survey and have not been altered or corrected for grammar or spelling.

By the pond in zone 12B a lot of people walk back there and there was people cutting down Christmas trees.

Cemetery (forest hill)

DHA 14, starting from west side of Gnesen Road opposite the Hartley Park trailhead, with occasional orange flagging. Looks like it was laid out for biking.

In DHA1 ATV trails by Mission Creek

My issue is with private land in an HOA. Increased trail mileage and usage has reduced the area available to hunt and deer habitat where they are undisturbed.

Not aware of unofficial trails

off trails in Hartley

Ok, no trails discovered.

Owatana St area.

there are a ton of new trails in 16B north of the cemetery. I cant beleive these are all legal

This is on private land so it is based on owners allowing use of trails to others. Nothing we can do to stop the making of these trails on private land. I understood this and knew what could happen on the trails. Overall not a bad experience with people on them.

Within DHA 10B, there are no unofficial trials, but there are several unofficial disc golf holes set up. There are tee boxes marked off with logs and flagging and "holes" comprised of 18" long pieced of 2" PVC hanging from trees. I'd be willing to show someone from the City a couple of the "holes" if that would be helpful.

Yes



Appendix 3. Survey respondents were asked to identify garbage locations observed while in the field hunting. These are included here for the City's Parks & Trails Coordinator. These comments are directly from the Year End Survey and have not been altered or corrected for grammar or spelling.

19B- west side of Lester Park Golf Course Driving Range- Homeless Camp in between clearing and highway

46.67344, -92.29217 small piles of garbage at trailhead

46.7387- 92.1973

46.75391, -92.16589

46.77407, -92.12822 - broken and bent road sign thrown off cliff.

Above 80th Ave W

Airport authority property near airport road

along skyline parkway in magney snively. it's constant.

antena farm areas

Area around the Piedmont trailhead

Becks road I usually take upon myself to clean every year

I personally cleaned up my hunting area years ago and it's still a work in progress because the cityites you put in the woods the more trash you get

It's everywhere! Pick a spot an go look!

Miller Creek

Mission Creek Bike Trail parking areas, cleaned up a number of times by myself and other hunters in my zone.

Another is on 108th (in Gary) between Dickson St. and Becks Road, and another where the powerline crosses becks road closest just west of 108th.

north off DWP trail, 200 yards west from Redruth Rd dead end parking area, in DHA 4A. Former homeless camp with lots of garbage.

Picked it up

Unit 11 looks to have once been a city dump site. So there is garbage remnants everywehre.

Wasn't a bunch but I know I pick up can almost every time out

We picked it up already

Zone 1 in woods about a 1/2 mile to the left of dump

Zone 20c in multiple locations

