



2008 Deer Harvest by Town in Maine  
Total = 21,061 (preliminary)

## Maine Deer Harvest Highlights 2008

2008 marked the 23rd season of the any-deer permit system. A total of 51,850 any-deer permits were allocated to 11 WMDs, including 267 Superpack (bonus) any-deer permits issued in WMDs 17, 22 and 23 to achieve district specific doe harvest quotas. Of the permits available, 10,370 (20%) were issued to qualifying landowners in an early, separate lottery. Any-deer permits are WMD and hunter specific; they may be used during the regular firearms (November 1<sup>st</sup>-November 29<sup>th</sup>) and muzzleloader (December 1<sup>st</sup>-December 13<sup>th</sup>) seasons. Superpack licenses were allocated to 2.5 % of the any-deer permits in wildlife districts with 5,000 or more permits as "Bonus Deer" permits. This allowed Superpack license holders to take two deer, one of which must be antlerless.

Although antlered bucks (3" minimum antler length) were legal quarry for all hunters during all deer seasons, only hunters who possessed a valid any-deer or bonus permit license could legally take a doe or a fawn during these firearms seasons. Sundays were closed to all hunting and the opening Saturday of the regular firearms season was reserved for Maine residents only.

Our expanded archery season targets locations in which deer populations are under-harvested primarily due to firearms discharge bans and residential sprawl. The expanded archery season had no limit on antlerless deer (either-sex) and ran for 85 hunting days (Sept. 6<sup>th</sup> to Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>). The statewide (Special) archery season from October 2<sup>nd</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup> had some new changes in 2008, deer of either sex could only be hunted in WMDs that had Any Deer permits allotted to them, all other WMDs were bucks only.

Overall 21,061 (preliminary as of March) deer were registered during 2008. During the expanded and special archery seasons 1,853 were taken. This equates to a 14% decrease in the expanded zones and a 23% decrease during the regular archery season over 2007; the Youth Day harvest of 509 also showed a decrease over 2007 by 52%. The regular firearms season's overall harvest of 17,650 was a 25% decrease from the previous year. For the third year a special license allowed crossbow hunting during the regular firearms season. Finally muzzleloaders also experienced a decrease with an overall harvest of 1,049 for a decrease of 47% over 2007.

A harvest quota of 6,280 adult does was set in 2008 to meet deer management objectives in Maine's 29 WMDs. These quotas included anticipated harvests resulting from the either-sex archery and youth-day seasons. Doe quotas ranged from 0 in 18 WMDs (districts 1-14, 18, 19, 27, and 28), to 1,045 does in WMD 17; Any-Deer and Superpack permittees tagged 1,827 fawns, while archers and youth day hunters tagged 516 young of the year. Overall, 7,497 antlerless deer were registered by hunters and the statewide adult doe harvest totaled 5,154 or 18% below pre-season set quotas.

The statewide harvest of antlered bucks (13,564) in 2008 was within 6% of our projected buck harvest. The top 5 buck-producing WMDs (per sq. mi.) during 2008 were (in descending order) districts 24, 21, 29, 22 and 23, all in central and southern Maine. Among the 13,566 antlered bucks taken in 2008, roughly 5,019 (37%) were 1 ½ year-olds (yearlings), while more than 3,392 (25%) were mature bucks (4 ½ to 15 ½ years old). Male fawns are reported with antlerless deer.

Maine's statewide post-hunt population was estimated at 199,600 deer or 6.9 deer / mi<sup>2</sup> during 2008. Due to a very severe winter, deer population management in 2009 will focus on protecting the female segment of our statewide population through a reduction of permits to compensate for additional projected winter mortality and lower productivity and recruitment.