

## Proposed 2014-2015 Deer Bag Limits Discussion

### 1) Objective

- a. In Ohio deer management units are defined as the 88 counties. Each county has a goal and in most counties, populations have been above goal for some time. In 2007 we introduced the \$15 antlerless permit and doubled county bag limits for the first 8 weeks of the season, in an attempt to reduce populations toward these goals. We have made tremendous strides over the past seven years. Progress was first evident two years ago and as a result; bag limits were reduced in nearly every county in 2013-14 in an effort to reduce the antlerless harvest. In most areas of the state, further reductions in the antlerless harvest are needed.
  - i. In summary, we believe that past liberal seasons have led to a reduction in deer populations in most counties. As these counties approach their respective goals, pressure on the antlerless deer needs to be reduced.
  - ii. **It is important to understand that our goal with the proposed changes is not to regrow the population, but to stabilize it.**

### 2) Proposed Bag Limits- A hunter cannot exceed an individual county bag limit and may only take 1 antlered deer in Ohio per license year.

- a. 2 Deer counties- Hunters can take two deer. No more than one deer may be taken with an antlerless permit. (Hunters can use 2 either sex permits; or 1 either-sex permit and 1 antlerless permit.)
- b. 3 Deer counties will be divided into two groups
  - i. 3 Deer counties where hunters can use only either-sex permits. Hunters can take three deer. The antlerless permits are NOT valid. (Hunters can use 3 either-sex permits only.)
  - ii. 3 Deer counties where hunters can use a combination of either-sex and antlerless permits. Hunters can take three deer. No more than one deer may be taken with an antlerless permit. (Hunters can use 3 either-sex permits; or 2 either-sex permits and 1 antlerless permit.)
- c. 4 Deer counties- Hunters can take 4 deer. No more than one deer may be taken with an antlerless permit. (Hunters can use 4 either-sex permits; or 3 either-sex permits and 1 antlerless permit.)

### 3) Justification

- a. Why are we removing the antlerless permit from some counties and not others? Simply put, to reduce the antlerless harvest. These permits are a tool implemented in 2007 to increase the amount of harvest pressure on antlerless deer and reduce populations. Now that populations are at or nearing goal in most counties, this is one of the tools we "put back in the toolbox" in order to ease some of the harvest pressure on antlerless deer.

- b. How will this work?
  - i. First, this change will not affect our single permit buyers (about two-thirds of our hunters). Nor will it affect landowners. It does have the potential to affect around two-thirds of our multi-permit holders that buy a combination of either-sex and antlerless-only permits.
  - ii. A closer look at multiple permit buyers
    - 1. Multi-permit buyers (hunters who only purchase 2 permits account for 75% of this group) fall into two groups:
      - a. Hunters who purchase only either-sex permits.
      - b. Hunters who purchase a combination of either-sex and antlerless permits.
    - 2. In 2013-14, there were twice as many hunters who purchased a combination of permits (68k) compared to hunters who purchased only either-sex permits (32k).
    - 3. In addition, combination permit buyers outnumber either-sex permit holders by more than 2 to 1 and combination permit holders are also more than twice as likely to buy multiple permits in a single transaction compared to either-sex permit holders. In other words, the buying habits of the combination permit hunters commit them to harvesting multiple deer (if the tag goes unfilled, it is viewed as a waste of money). Whereas the majority of either-sex permit buyers adopt the fill and buy (one at a time) approach.