



SUMMARY OF 2004-2005 ILLINOIS DEER SEASONS



Forest Wildlife Information Series #05-02

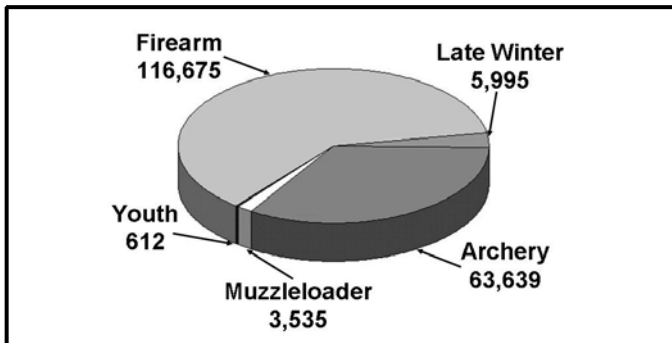
August 2005

Introduction



Illinois deer hunters harvested 190,456 whitetails during 2004, surpassing the previous year's harvest of 168,762 by 11%. Harvest increased across all seasons. With significant changes occurring to what was previously known as the handgun season, including an increase in permit availability and the choice of several firearm types, the late winter season saw a 279% increase in harvest. Deer harvest within the youth season increased 60%, followed by a 14% increase in the muzzleloader harvest. The firearm and archery season harvest both increased 9% from the previous year. A breakdown of deer harvest by season is provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1. 2004 Illinois deer harvest by season



Chronic Wasting Disease in Illinois

Prior to the 2004-2005 firearm deer season, 65 CWD-positive deer in northern Illinois had been identified by various surveillance methods. Primary areas of infection were northeast and southeast of Rockford along the Boone-Winnebago county line, with scattered cases occurring as far east as McHenry County, and as far south as northern DeKalb County.

During the firearm season, IDNR biologists collected 4,011 usable tissue samples from harvested deer in 32 counties for CWD testing. Thirteen CWD-positive individuals were found in four counties: Boone [4], DeKalb [1], McHenry [4], and Winnebago [4]. Additional positives were identified from testing of suspect (sick) animals (4); archery harvest (2); deer taken using urban Deer Population Control Permits (3); and deer taken by agency sharpshooters (9). In all, 31 deer were found to have CWD during the 2004-2005 seasons, and a total of 96 positive deer have been identified since the disease appeared in the state. The disease remains confined to the four counties listed above.

Season Results

Firearm: The 7-day 2004 firearm deer season consisted of one 3-day segment (Friday - Sunday, Nov. 19 - 21) and a second 4-day segment (Thursday - Sunday, Dec. 2 - 5). Statewide corn harvest was more than 95% complete by the onset of firearm season.

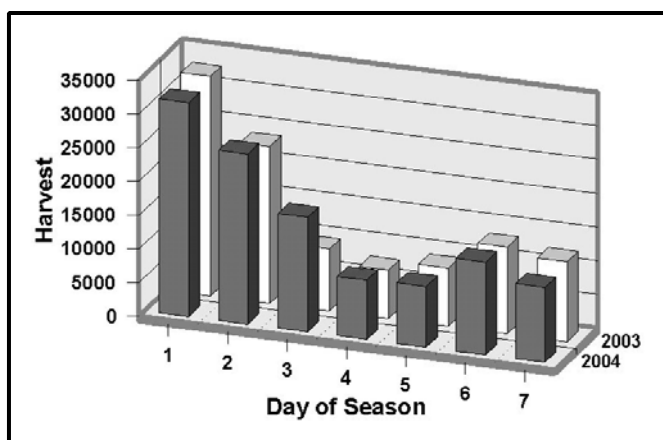
IDNR's Permit Office issued 304,488 county-specific firearm deer permits, resulting in 114,945 deer harvested in the 98 counties open to firearm deer hunting. An additional 4,161 permits (excluding standby permits issued at the sites) were issued for special hunt areas (public lands), with a harvest of 1,730 deer. In comparison, 104,271 deer were harvested using 284,876 county permits in 2003, and special hunt areas accounted for 1,602 deer with 3,854 permits. Hunters with muzzleloading-only permits took 1,782 deer during the second weekend of the 2004 regular firearm deer season. Table 1 presents the number of permits issued and resulting harvest on a statewide basis. Average permit success rates during 2004 increased slightly from 35% to 37%, with the success rate for a full-season either-sex permit remaining at 39%. Daily harvest rate was somewhat lower on the first day of the season than the previous year (Figure 2), but increased on the second day, and significantly increased on the third day of the season. Harvest during the final four days was similar to that of the previous year.

Table 1. Firearm deer harvest by permit type during 2004

| Permit Type ⁽¹⁾ | Permits Issued | Deer Harvested | Permit Success | % of Harvest |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| E-S/ Full | 152,858 | 60,068 | 39% | 51% |
| E-S/1st | 493 | 146 | 30% | <1% |
| E-S/2nd | 3,773 | 863 | 23% | <1% |
| A-O/Full | 65,599 | 29,756 | 45% | 26% |
| A-O/1st | 626 | 136 | 22% | <1% |
| A-O/2nd | 151 | 48 | 32% | <1% |
| E-S/Free L-T | 42,282 | 11,069 | 26% | 9% |
| A-O/Free L-T | 42,282 | 11,199 | 26% | 10% |
| E-S/Paid L-T | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| NRL/E-S | 1,084 | 403 | 37% | <1% |
| NRL/A-O | 758 | 260 | 34% | <1% |
| E-S/Muzzle ⁽²⁾ | 15,796 | 1,235 | N/A | 1% |
| A-O/Muzzle ⁽²⁾ | 3,879 | 547 | N/A | <1% |
| Other ⁽³⁾ | N/A | 945 | N/A | <1% |
| Total | 329,581 | 116,675 | 37%⁽⁴⁾ | 100% |

- (1) E-S = either-sex permits; A-O = antlerless-only permits; L-T = landowner-tenant permits; NRL = nonresident landowner permits.
- (2) Permits issued for the muzzleloading-only season that could be used during the second regular firearm season.
- (3) Represents deer tagged with site-specific standby permits or unidentified/incorrectly used permit types.
- (4) Total does not include muzzleloading or "Other" data.

Figure 2. Daily harvest during the 2004 firearm deer season.



The 2004 firearm season opened with significant rainfall in all areas of the state, with measurable amounts nearing one-half inch in the north, and well over one-half inch in the south. Temperatures for the first three days of the season were in the upper forties and fifties to near sixty degrees in the central and southern areas of the state. There was a significant drop in temperature in northern Illinois on the third day of the season, when low temperatures were near freezing. Temperatures for the 2nd firearm season ranged from lows in the upper twenties to highs in the fifties for the central and southern portions, with northern Illinois seeing temperatures from the teens to the thirties.

The statewide 2004 firearm harvest is summarized by age and sex in Table 2. *Note:* age or sex data were lacking for 10,487 deer. Concern for traffic safety was the primary reason information was not collected for these deer (i.e., when hunter traffic backed up on major roadways at check stations, checkers only tagged deer and collected hunter permits, but did not age deer). The sex composition of the 2004 firearm harvest was 41% females and 59% males.

Table 2. Sex and age composition of the 2004 firearm deer harvest*

| Age | Males | % of Males | Females | % of Females | % of Total |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| Fawn | 15,162 | 24% | 11,167 | 26% | 25% |
| 1 ½ | 19,443 | 31% | 12,574 | 29% | 30% |
| 2 ½ | 18,209 | 29% | 12,785 | 30% | 29% |
| 3 ½ | 8,382 | 13% | 4,969 | 11% | 13% |
| 4 ½+ | 1,840 | 3% | 1,657 | 4% | 3% |
| Total | 63,036 | 100% | 43,152 | 100% | 100% |

* There were an additional 10,487 deer checked through the check stations with no age or sex recorded.

IDNR biologists annually monitor the age structure of the antlered buck harvest. This serves as an index of the mortality rate, most of which is accounted for by hunter harvest. Limiting buck mortality at acceptable levels, while controlling population levels through adequate doe harvest, ensures that mature bucks are plentiful in the population, and doe:buck ratios are low. The proportion of yearling bucks in the antlered harvest during the 2004 firearm season was 41%, equal to the previous year. Age composition of the antlered buck harvest is reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Age structure of antlered bucks taken during the 2004 firearm season for which age data are available

| Age | Total | Percent of total* |
|------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1 ½ | 19,443 | 41% (41%) |
| 2 ½ | 18,209 | 38% (37%) |
| 3 ½ | 8,382 | 17% (18%) |
| 4 ½+ | 1,840 | 4% (4%) |
| | 47,874 | 100% |

* Figures in parentheses represent 2003 percentages.

Muzzleloading: The 2004 muzzleloader season was held December 10 - 12. Muzzleloader permit allocation increased from the previous year, with 15,796 either-sex and 3,879 antlerless-only permits issued. In addition, the muzzleloader harvest of 3,535 represents nearly a 14% increase over 2003 totals, following a 135% increase in that year (Table 4). Hunters with muzzleloading-only permits accounted for 74% of the harvest, with the remaining 26% taken primarily by landowners with unfilled property-only firearm permits ("free" landowner permits).

Table 4. Harvest by permit type during the 2004 muzzleloading deer season

| Permit type ⁽¹⁾ | Male | Female | Total Harvest | Percent of Harvest |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|
| E-S/Muzzle | 1051 | 949 | 2009 | 57% |
| A-O/Muzzle | 105 | 510 | 617 | 17% |
| E-S/Free L-T | 223 | 147 | 374 | 11% |
| A-O/Free L-T | 91 | 338 | 430 | 12% |
| NRL/A-O | 1 | 22 | 23 | <1% |
| NRL/E-S | 9 | 28 | 37 | 1% |
| Other ⁽³⁾ | 17 | 28 | 45 | 1% |
| Totals | 1497 | 2022 | 3535 | 100% |

(1) E-S = either-sex permits; A-O = antlerless-only permits, L-T = landowner-tenant permits; NRL = nonresident landowner.

(2) Totals for male and female do not include 16 deer for which sex was not identified.

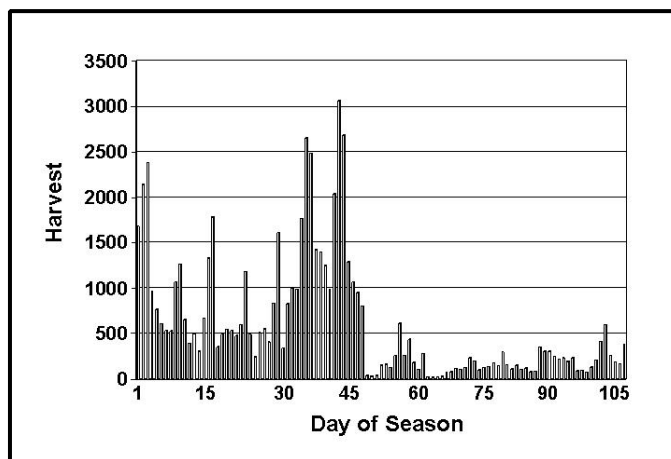
(3) Includes site-specific standby permits and improperly-used permit types

Archery: In counties closed to firearm deer hunting, the 2004-2005 archery season consisted of 105 days from October 1, 2003 through January 13, 2005, while in counties open to firearm deer hunting the season consisted of 98 days. Resident hunters could purchase unlimited numbers of over-the-counter combination permits (each consisting of one either-sex and one antlerless-only tag), but harvest was limited to a maximum of two antlered deer during all seasons (including archery, firearm, and muzzleloader.) Archery harvest increased significantly, from 57,802 in 2003 to 63,639 in 2004 (+9%). The ratio of bucks to does in the harvest was 53:47%. Archery harvest results by county are included in Table 6.

The rate of harvest during the statewide archery season peaked in early to mid-November during the rut. The weekend of November 13 -14 ranked highest in harvest, with over 3,000 deer killed on that Saturday. Harvest on opening day of the season (October 1) ranked tenth with almost 1,700 deer taken.

Daily archery harvest for the 2004-2005 season is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Daily archery harvest during 2004-2005



Late Winter Season: What was previously the handgun season was liberalized to allow the use of not only handguns, but also muzzleloaders and shotguns. Permit allocation increased dramatically from the previous year because of the opening of several new counties. While the handgun season previously had been held in only 26 counties, 43 counties were opened to hunting during this year's season. As a result, 17,898 antlerless-only permits were issued for the 2004-2005 season (Jan 14-16) compared to 10,632 permits for 2003-2004. Hunter success averaged 26%, with a total of 5,995 deer harvested (Table 5).

Table 5. Late Winter harvest results by county - January 2005

| County | Late Winter Permits Issued | Total Harvest ⁽¹⁾ | Hunter Success ⁽²⁾ | Antlerless Males ⁽³⁾ | Female |
|------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|
| Adams | 737 | 244 | 24% | 40 | 176 |
| Brown | 442 | 193 | 31% | 30 | 123 |
| Bureau | 421 | 116 | 24% | 34 | 82 |
| Calhoun | 360 | 174 | 37% | 60 | 113 |
| Carroll | 203 | 44 | 18% | 6 | 38 |
| Cass | 113 | 21 | 13% | 8 | 13 |
| Clark | 367 | 117 | 26% | 20 | 95 |
| Clay | 318 | 112 | 23% | 32 | 80 |
| Crawford | 278 | 105 | 29% | 29 | 76 |
| Fayette | 744 | 265 | 28% | 66 | 199 |
| Franklin | 167 | 61 | 27% | 20 | 41 |
| Fulton | 817 | 198 | 19% | 42 | 155 |
| Greene | 446 | 186 | 29% | 34 | 151 |
| Hamilton | 136 | 100 | 52% | 8 | 91 |
| Hancock | 415 | 163 | 30% | 21 | 142 |
| Jasper | 514 | 204 | 35% | 49 | 154 |
| Jefferson | 711 | 240 | 27% | 55 | 180 |
| Jersey | 218 | 70 | 15% | 11 | 59 |
| JoDaviess | 934 | 199 | 18% | 43 | 155 |
| Knox | 291 | 82 | 25% | 23 | 59 |
| Lasalle | 227 | 51 | 18% | 14 | 37 |
| Lawrence | 148 | 71 | 36% | 11 | 59 |
| McDonough | 212 | 79 | 29% | 19 | 60 |
| Macoupin | 607 | 145 | 17% | 15 | 129 |
| Madison | 282 | 46 | 13% | 19 | 27 |
| McLean | 273 | 67 | 22% | 22 | 45 |
| Marion | 328 | 150 | 27% | 21 | 129 |
| Montgomery | 190 | 55 | 14% | 12 | 43 |

(Table 5, Continued)

| County | Late Winter Permits Issued | Total Harvest ⁽¹⁾ | Hunter Success ⁽²⁾ | Antlerless Males ⁽³⁾ | Female |
|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Morgan | 320 | 114 | 29% | 29 | 83 |
| Ogle | 474 | 94 | 19% | 28 | 66 |
| Peoria | 353 | 101 | 25% | 18 | 79 |
| Perry | 603 | 203 | 28% | 31 | 170 |
| Pike | 1,096 | 559 | 43% | 67 | 484 |
| Randolph | 718 | 212 | 22% | 39 | 167 |
| Richland | 255 | 107 | 36% | 33 | 74 |
| Schuyler | 557 | 189 | 28% | 48 | 138 |
| St. Clair | 448 | 95 | 18% | 14 | 80 |
| Scott | 150 | 50 | 28% | 13 | 36 |
| Washington | 274 | 92 | 22% | 20 | 72 |
| Wayne | 562 | 283 | 39% | 55 | 226 |
| White | 259 | 134 | 40% | 16 | 118 |
| Whiteside | 281 | 44 | 13% | 11 | 33 |
| Williamson | 649 | 130 | 18% | 24 | 104 |
| Other ⁽⁴⁾ | N/A | 30 | N/A | 9 | 21 |
| Total | 17,898 | 5,995 | 26% | 1,225 | 4,674 |

- (1) Includes deer harvested on unused free landowner permits from the firearm season.
- (2) Calculated using only Late Winter Permits; does not include harvest when landowner permits were used.
- (3) Totals for male and female do not include 96 for which sex was not identified.
- (4) Includes deer harvested on special hunt areas, and those illegally harvested in counties not open to hunting during the Late Winter season.

Recent Harvest Trends

Recent trends in Illinois whitetail harvest have shown a steady increase over the past few years, culminating with the record harvests for the 2004 season (Fig. 4). While deer populations and harvests were relatively stable during the years following the 1995 season, herd growth has occurred since that time. Biologists are making a concerted effort to increase harvests through a variety of seasons to bring herds to more acceptable levels in those parts of the state which have been most impacted.

Figure 4. Recent trends in Illinois deer harvest

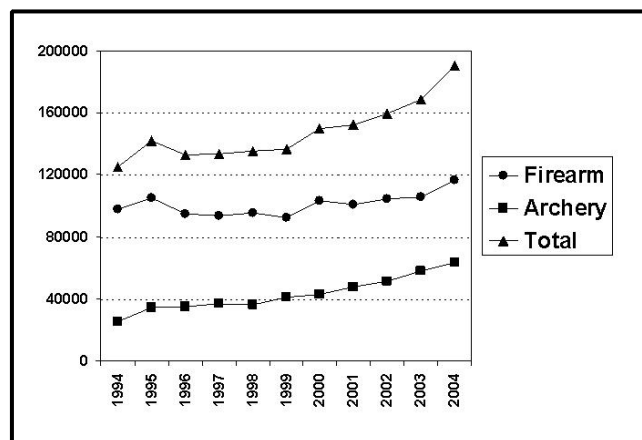


Table 6. Firearm and archery harvest by county, 2004-2005 season

| <u>County</u> | <u>Firearm Permits</u> | <u>Firearm Harvest</u> | <u>Archery Harvest</u> | <u>County</u> | <u>Firearm Permits</u> | <u>Firearm Harvest</u> | <u>Archery Harvest</u> |
|---------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Adams | 8080 | 3078 | 1258 | Macoupin | 6696 | 2484 | 1101 |
| Alexander | 1529 | 459 | 172 | Madison | 3724 | 1217 | 1085 |
| Bond | 3085 | 1124 | 448 | Marion | 5301 | 2146 | 1224 |
| Boone | 1193 | 271 | 224 | Marshall | 1954 | 749 | 367 |
| Brown | 4420 | 1776 | 926 | Mason | 1739 | 725 | 567 |
| Bureau | 3825 | 1665 | 811 | Massac | 1976 | 675 | 347 |
| Calhoun | 4353 | 1845 | 1237 | McDonough | 2855 | 1214 | 488 |
| Carroll | 3239 | 1184 | 507 | McHenry | 2757 | 570 | 623 |
| Cass | 2436 | 976 | 693 | McLean | 2299 | 812 | 605 |
| Champaign | 700 | 254 | 357 | Menard | 1643 | 670 | 423 |
| Christian | 1942 | 649 | 399 | Mercer | 2645 | 923 | 279 |
| Clark | 3292 | 1383 | 620 | Monroe | 3281 | 1229 | 352 |
| Clay | 3660 | 1504 | 600 | Montgomery | 4023 | 1500 | 732 |
| Clinton | 2920 | 1081 | 486 | Morgan | 3176 | 1339 | 726 |
| Coles | 1938 | 740 | 569 | Moultrie | 519 | 212 | 241 |
| Cook | 0 | 0 | 179 | Ogle | 3761 | 1341 | 770 |
| Crawford | 3030 | 1291 | 798 | Peoria | 4199 | 1626 | 1259 |
| Cumberland | 2335 | 851 | 308 | Perry | 4513 | 1677 | 741 |
| DeKalb | 1275 | 326 | 292 | Piatt | 433 | 165 | 242 |
| DeWitt | 887 | 378 | 381 | Pike | 9729 | 4256 | 3769 |
| Douglas | 654 | 225 | 171 | Pope | 6630 | 2153 | 859 |
| DuPage | 0 | 0 | 76 | Pulaski | 1935 | 753 | 267 |
| Edgar | 1739 | 770 | 423 | Putnam | 1270 | 558 | 275 |
| Edwards | 1578 | 656 | 261 | Randolph | 6347 | 2407 | 910 |
| Effingham | 3349 | 1148 | 451 | Richland | 2449 | 1052 | 462 |
| Fayette | 6219 | 2248 | 789 | Rock Island | 2510 | 902 | 569 |
| Ford | 424 | 66 | 63 | Saline | 2778 | 1005 | 461 |
| Franklin | 3628 | 1317 | 862 | Sangamon | 2607 | 987 | 809 |
| Fulton | 7480 | 2821 | 1602 | Schuyler | 4996 | 1940 | 749 |
| Gallatin | 1883 | 674 | 300 | Scott | 1725 | 827 | 307 |
| Greene | 4400 | 2104 | 933 | Shelby | 3803 | 1344 | 771 |
| Grundy | 1521 | 451 | 439 | St.Clair | 3525 | 1160 | 788 |
| Hamilton | 3590 | 1472 | 572 | Stark | 756 | 320 | 189 |
| Hancock | 5162 | 2313 | 726 | Stephenson | 3074 | 969 | 442 |
| Hardin | 2923 | 954 | 401 | Tazewell | 2520 | 865 | 712 |
| Henderson | 1985 | 794 | 264 | Union | 5474 | 1968 | 699 |
| Henry | 2353 | 886 | 502 | Vermilion | 2502 | 853 | 1055 |
| Iroquois | 1940 | 644 | 456 | Wabash | 943 | 404 | 248 |
| Jackson | 7349 | 2561 | 721 | Warren | 1736 | 734 | 283 |
| Jasper | 3236 | 1337 | 647 | Washington | 4042 | 1517 | 544 |
| Jefferson | 5848 | 2516 | 1520 | Wayne | 4625 | 1974 | 870 |
| Jersey | 3395 | 1290 | 726 | White | 2542 | 1164 | 561 |
| JoDaviess | 6825 | 2528 | 679 | Whiteside | 2488 | 884 | 509 |
| Johnson | 5596 | 1867 | 537 | Will | 1341 | 346 | 984 |
| Kane | 416 | 81 | 478 | Williamson | 5458 | 1696 | 891 |
| Kankakee | 978 | 233 | 289 | Winnebago | 2291 | 622 | 489 |
| Kendall | 501 | 130 | 197 | Woodford | <u>2488</u> | <u>1048</u> | <u>618</u> |
| Knox | 4024 | 1700 | 844 | | | | |
| Lake | 0 | 0 | 572 | Totals¹ | 304,488 | 114,945 | 63,639 |
| LaSalle | 3562 | 1302 | 1383 | | | | |
| Lawrence | 1972 | 854 | 552 | | | | |
| Lee | 2386 | 853 | 599 | | | | |
| Livingston | 1527 | 531 | 327 | | | | |
| Logan | 1126 | 495 | 269 | | | | |
| Macon | 702 | 307 | 481 | | | | |

¹ Firearm totals do not include permits issued for, or deer harvested on, special hunt areas.