

HumanDimensions
Research Program

Results of the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey



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Sam Flood, Acting Director
Illinois Department of Natural
Resources

Paul Vehlow
Federal Aid Coordinator

John E. Buhnerkempe
Chief, Division of Wildlife
Resources



William L. Anderson
Program Leader and Principal Investigator
Human Dimensions Research Program
Illinois Natural History Survey

Prepared by
Stacy A. Lischka,
William L. Anderson
and **Linda K. Campbell**



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RESULTS OF THE 2005-2006
ILLINOIS DEER HUNTER SURVEY

JOB COMPLETION REPORT

WILDLIFE HARVEST AND
HUMAN DIMENSIONS RESEARCH PROGRAM

STATE OF ILLINOIS

PROJECT NUMBER: W-112-R-15
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Prepared by
Stacy A. Lischka, William L. Anderson, and Linda K. Campbell
Illinois Natural History Survey
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Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Sam Flood, Acting Director
Illinois Department of Natural Resources

John E. Buhnerkempe, Chief
Division of Wildlife Resources

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ABSTRACT

A random sample of 3,000 potential deer hunters were selected from 2005 Illinois Habitat Stamp stubs. A 7-page questionnaire was mailed to the selected sample in June, 2006. We received 2,045 useable questionnaires (70% response rate). Ninety-two percent of respondents reported purchasing one or more permits to hunt deer in Illinois during the 2005-2006 season. Most Illinois deer hunters used the telephone to register their harvested deer. Slightly more than half of respondents felt that the quality of the deer herd in the Illinois county they hunted most often was “good.” Nearly half of hunters, both archery and firearm, felt that the size of the deer herd in the county they hunted most often was “about right” and had not changed over the previous 5 years. A majority of hunters also felt that the number of deer hunters in the county they hunted most was about right, but had increased over the previous 5 years. Hunters are satisfied with the current hunting season structure and support youth hunting opportunities. Illinois deer hunters are most likely to be motivated to hunt deer by their ability to spend time outdoors and provide meat for their families. Most Illinois deer hunters hunt on private land, but have not experienced difficulty obtaining access to private lands to hunt deer. Most respondents were aware of the presence of CWD in wild Illinois deer and supported the IDNR using any methods necessary to control its spread.

OBJECTIVE

To survey 1 group of forest game (deer, turkey, squirrel, or other) hunters annually to determine their activities, harvests, characteristics, attitudes, and opinions in Illinois.

METHODS

The names and address of 3,000 individuals who indicated on 2005 Illinois Habitat Stamp stubs they had hunted deer the past season were selected for this survey through systematic random sampling. Methods for survey questionnaire mailings and follow-up reminders followed those of Miller et al. (1999). Recipients were mailed a self-administered, 7-page questionnaire, a cover letter and postage-paid return envelope on June

16, 2006 (Appendix A). A thank you/reminder postcard was sent to non-respondents on June 30, 2006. On July 20, 2006 a second questionnaire, cover letter, and return envelope were mailed to non-respondents. The second questionnaire was followed on August 3, 2006 with a postcard thank you/reminder. Data were coded, entered, and analyzed using SPSS 14.0. Summary statistics of results are presented in Tables 1 through 39.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Season Lengths and Bag Limits

In 2005-2006, Illinois deer hunters could legally hunt deer during 4 seasons: archery, firearm, muzzleloader-only, and late winter firearm. In addition, deer hunters under 16 years of age could participate in a special 2-day, antlerless-only hunt. Ninety-eight counties were open to deer hunting during the firearm and muzzleloader hunting seasons. The 2005-2006 youth deer hunting season was open on Oct. 8-9, 2005. The archery deer hunting season was open from Oct. 1- Nov. 17, 2005, Nov. 21-30, 2005, and Dec. 5, 2005 - Jan. 12, 2006 in all counties except Cook, DuPage, Kane (east of Route 47) and Lake Counties, where the archery season extended from Oct. 1, 2006 – Jan. 12, 2006. The firearm season (shotgun, muzzleloader, and handgun) was held November 18-20 and December 1-4, 2005. There was an additional muzzleloader-only season from December 9-11, 2005. The 3-day late-winter antlerless deer season was expanded to 51 counties and regulations were liberalized to allow the use of shotguns and muzzleloaders, in addition to handguns. The late-winter season was held January 13-15, 2006.

Within each season, multiple permit types were available to hunters. Illinois resident youth hunters could purchase an antlerless deer permit for \$10. Illinois resident archery hunters could purchase 1 either-sex permit for \$15, or unlimited combination tags, allowing the harvest of 1 either-sex deer and 1 antlerless deer per tag, for \$26. Illinois resident firearm, muzzleloader, and late-winter firearm hunters could purchase county or site specific, either-sex or antlerless-only permits for \$15 each. Free Landowner-Tenant permits were available to eligible residents for use during archery and/or firearm seasons and allowed permit holders to hunt on their

own land. Regardless of season and type of weapon, hunters could not harvest more than 2 antlered deer in the period from July 1, 2005-June 30, 2006.

Survey Response

We received 2,049 total responses to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey, of which 2,045 were useable, for a response rate of 70%. Ninety-two percent of respondents (n=1,880) reported purchasing one or more permits to hunt deer in Illinois during the 2005-2006 season. Survey respondents had hunted deer in Illinois for an average of nearly 18 years with a firearm and 12 years with a bow and arrow (Table 1). Nearly all respondents (95%; Table 2) were male with an average age of 45 years (Table 3). Hunters resided in 101 of the 102 counties in Illinois (Table 4). Over their lifetimes, respondents had harvested an average of 14 deer with a firearm and 8 deer with bow and arrow (Table 5).

Deer Hunting Participation in 2005-2006

Illinois resident deer hunters purchased more archery permits per hunter than firearm permits, and regular archery permits provided over twice as many days hunting as any other permit type (Table 6). In addition to hunting in Illinois, 111 respondents (6%) hunted deer in other states and countries (Table 7). Missouri and Wisconsin were the most commonly visited states among respondents (Table 8).

When survey respondents harvested deer, they were most likely to use the telephone registration system offered by the IDNR to report it (Table 9). As a result, most difficulties encountered as a result of automated registration of harvested deer were related to the phone system, including difficulty placing (11%) or completing (14%) the call or difficulty hearing the automated system when a call was placed (7%; Table 10). Some hunters (13%) also found it difficult to write the harvest registration number on a tag attached to a deer's leg. Attention to these issues would address the majority of complaints about automated harvest registration, thereby, increasing hunter acceptance of the reporting requirement.

In addition to difficulties with the registration system itself, some hunters (18%) experienced difficulty obtaining harvest pins they had requested. Because nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of respondents collect harvest pins, continuing to issue these pins is likely important to many resident deer hunters (Table 11). With the replacement of manned check stations by automated registration, the social significance of the harvest pins may even increase in importance. Efforts to distribute pins to all hunters who register deer and additional sources of pins available to those who encounter problems may address these issues and, again, increase hunter acceptance of the requirement for automated registration of harvested deer.

Perceptions of Trends in Deer Hunter and Deer Numbers

A slight majority (57% of firearm and 53% of archery) of resident deer hunters felt that the quality of the deer herd in the Illinois county they hunt most often was “good” (Table 12). Nearly all respondents (95% of firearm and 94% of archery hunters) rated the quality of the herd positively (excellent, good, or fair). A majority of both firearm and archery hunters (62% and 63%, respectively) felt that the number of deer in the county they hunt most was “about right” (Table 13) and many respondents (48% of firearm and 49% of archery hunters) perceived no change in the number of deer over the previous 5 years (Table 14). A majority of firearm and archery hunters (58% and 62%, respectively) also felt that the number of deer hunters in the county they hunt most often was “about right” (Table 15), however, many respondents (45% of firearm and 49% of archery hunters) felt the number of hunters had increased over the 5 previous years (Table 16). These results indicate that Illinois resident deer hunters are satisfied with the number and quality of deer and deer hunters on Illinois lands. Continued monitoring of satisfaction will allow managers to track the effect of changes to regulations and habitat alterations on hunter attitudes.

Preferences for Season Structure and Regulations

Slightly more hunters prefer a 7-day split regular firearm deer hunting season in Illinois (n=847, 44%) than prefer a continuous 9-day season (n=749, 38%; Table 17). A significant number of respondents (n=352,

18%) indicated they were unsure which structure they preferred. In addition, hunters who participated in the 2006 late winter antlerless hunt were split in their preference for the addition of days to the season with 40% favoring days added after the current season closes, 36% favoring days added before the current season opens and 24% with no opinion (Table 18). These data show no clear preference for the alternate season structures presented in this survey. In addition, a sizeable portion of respondents were unsure about their preferences for a change. This lack of clear consensus suggests that further exploration of factors affecting satisfaction with season structure (length, timing, proximity to holidays, conflicts with other hunting seasons, etc.) may be necessary to make decisions likely to be supported by hunters.

Hunters are in more agreement, however, about changes to regulations for the youth deer hunting season which occurs before the opening of the regular firearm season. A majority of respondents (57%) favored allowing youth participants to harvest any type of deer, regardless of sex or antler size, during the youth hunting season (Table 19). Most hunters (63%) also favored extending the youth season to the 99 counties currently open during the regular firearm deer hunting season (Table 20).

Motivations for Hunting Deer and Factors Affecting Harvest Decisions

Illinois resident deer hunters are motivated to hunt in order to be in the outdoors and interact with nature (34%), provide meat for their family (21%) and to socialize with their friends and family (13%, Table 21). They judge the quality of their hunting experience based on seeing deer within shooting range, regardless of whether they shoot them (47%), seeing deer at any time while hunting (17%) and being outside and interacting with nature (16%, Table 22).

Resident hunters report being most willing to harvest an adult deer on the opening day of regular firearm (32%), muzzleloader (35%) and archery (33%) seasons (Table 23). Most Illinois resident hunters (57%) are willing to harvest 2-3 deer over all hunting seasons in a given year (Table 24) and 61% report being as willing to harvest a doe now as 5 years ago (Table 25). In addition, most hunters (70%) believe that regulations should be designed to harvest enough does to control the negative impacts of overpopulation (deer-vehicle collisions,

crop damage, etc.; Table 26), but many (69%) are concerned that public perception of the effectiveness of recreational harvest as a method of population control will influence the sport of deer hunting in the future (Table 27). These results indicate that, while Illinois hunters are willing to harvest deer to control negative effects of large deer populations perceived by the public, they are concerned factors outside their control will prevent them from doing so. Hunters' willingness to aid in population management may be increased with increased availability and ease of use of food bank donation programs for harvested deer. These programs may also increase the visibility of positive aspects of hunting to the non-hunting public. Efforts such as these may enable increased recreational harvest, limiting negative impacts of large deer populations to all Illinoisans and decreasing the likelihood of legal threats to hunting.

Access to Huntable Lands in Illinois

A majority of Illinois resident deer hunters hunted on private lands in both the firearm (85%) and archery (75%) seasons (Table 28). Nearly 1/5 (18%) of archery hunters hunted on both public and private lands in Illinois. Despite the majority of hunters pursuing hunting opportunities on private lands, a minority of respondents indicated encountering difficulty securing a place to hunt in Illinois (firearm season = 36%, archery season = 42%; Table 29). Nearly all respondents (94%) indicated they had gained free access to hunting lands (Table 30). Of those hunters who did pay for access to hunting lands, most (61%) leased property for the duration of a hunting season (Table 31). A considerable number of hunters (39%) reported losing access to huntable areas due to leasing (Table 32) and many of these hunters were unwilling to pay for hunting rights in the future (56%; Table 33). These results indicate efforts taken by the IDNR to maintain free access to private lands for the purpose of hunting deer may ensure continued participation by Illinois deer hunters. As demand for leased hunting property, and, therefore, price of a lease, increases, conflicts over access to huntable lands will likely increase in frequency and intensity. Any actions taken to ensure access into the future will help to diffuse these issues and maintain support for IDNR deer management.

Chronic Wasting Disease in Wild Illinois Deer

Nearly all survey respondents (93%) had heard of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) prior to receiving the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey (Table 34) and only slightly fewer (86%) knew that CWD had been found in wild Illinois deer (Table 35). A majority of respondents (88%) felt that CWD was at least somewhat of a threat to the deer herd in Illinois (Table 36) and 76% felt that CWD may pose a threat to humans (Table 37). One half of respondents (50%) felt that not enough is known about the disease to judge the extent of the risk to humans (Table 37). A majority of respondents (64%) felt that CWD had been introduced into the state in the recent past and the potential exists for spread beyond its current distribution (Table 38). Most respondents (67%) support all management actions necessary, including active monitoring of prevalence, to control the disease (Table 39).

These results indicate an opportunity and need for education of both the hunting and non-hunting public about the epidemiology, risks and management options related to CWD control. Many respondents reported feeling unsure about their responses to CWD related questions and indicated they desired more information about the disease. This uncertainty may lead to exaggerated perception of the risk of CWD to humans. Risk communication research has shown that novel, unknown risks are commonly perceived to be more of a threat than known, experienced risks (Slovic 1987). It is likely that, with directed efforts to disseminate information about CWD and its management, support for management actions would be high, even when actions taken may be otherwise objectionable (e.g. herd reduction). Effective management of zoonotic disease requires knowledge of stakeholder perceptions and efforts to communicate based on perceived risks.

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TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1. Years of deer hunting participation by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey.

	n	\bar{x} (years)	Range (years)	Std. dev. (years)
Years firearm hunting	1891	17.7	1-47	11.7
Years archery hunting	1344	12.4	1-47	9.5

Table 2. Gender of respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey ($n_t=2045$).

	n	%
Male	1938	95%
Female	107	5%

Table 3. Age on January 1, 2006 of respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey.

	n	\bar{x} (years)	Range (years)	Std. dev. (years)
Age	2023	45.1	8-97	15.4

Table 4. County of residence for respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey (n_i= 2045).

County	Number of residents	County	Number of residents	County	Number of residents
Adams	88	Hardin	0	Morgan	14
Alexander	9	Henderson	1	Moultrie	13
Bond	11	Henry	17	Ogle	13
Boone	15	Iroquois	16	Peoria	38
Brown	14	Jackson	8	Perry	26
Bureau	17	Jasper	5	Piatt	19
Calhoun	13	Jefferson	10	Pike	11
Carroll	22	Jersey	45	Pope	4
Cass	4	JoDaviess	19	Pulaski	11
Champaign	38	Johnson	8	Putnam	3
Christian	58	Kane	17	Randolph	37
Clark	8	Kankakee	7	Richland	2
Clay	3	Kendall	6	Rock Island	36
Clinton	15	Knox	23	St. Clair	64
Coles	3	Lake	15	Saline	9
Cook	78	LaSalle	24	Sangamon	76
Crawford	4	Lawrence	1	Schuyler	6
Cumberland	13	Lee	9	Scott	6
DeKalb	10	Livingston	15	Shelby	22
DeWitt	12	Logan	11	Stark	10
Douglas	11	McDonough	6	Stephenson	15
DuPage	23	McHenry	26	Tazewell	18
Edgar	19	McLean	51	Union	4
Edwards	2	Macon	109	Vermilion	10
Effingham	16	Macoupin	45	Wabash	5
Fayette	8	Madison	126	Warren	1
Ford	8	Marion	10	Washington	19
Franklin	43	Marshall	22	Wayne	1
Fulton	15	Mason	12	White	3
Gallatin	6	Massac	1	Whiteside	28
Greene	26	Menard	11	Will	58
Grundy	7	Mercer	14	Williamson	23
Hamilton	13	Monroe	14	Winnebago	63
Hancock	16	Montgomery	9	Woodford	16

Table 5. Number of deer harvested over lifetime by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey.

	n	Total (deer)	% (total deer)	\bar{x} (deer)	Range (deer)	Std. dev. (deer)
Deer harvested with firearm	1796	25,328	72%	14.1	0-150	13.8
Deer harvested with bow and arrow	1196	10,060	28%	8.4	0-100	12.5

Table 6. Permits held, days hunted, and deer harvested by survey respondents during the 2005-2006 deer season in Illinois.

	Permits			Days Hunted		Deer Harvested		
	n	Total	Average/ Hunter	Total	Average/ Hunter	Total	Average/ Hunter	Average/ Permit
Regular Firearm	1455	2,248	1.5	6,201	4.3	1,172	0.8	0.5
Muzzleloader Only	240	302	1.3	606	2.5	101	0.5	0.3
Late Winter Firearm	207	213	1.0	414	2.0	72	0.4	0.3
Landowner/Tenant Archery	186	319	1.7	2,521	13.6	89	0.6	0.3
Landowner/Tenant Archery	222	392	1.8	927	4.2	164	0.8	0.4
Archery	815	1,527	1.9	16,930	20.8	619	0.8	0.4

Table 7. Percentage of respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey who hunted deer in another state or country during 2005-2006 seasons (n_i= 2029).

	n	%
Hunted deer in another state	111	6%
Did not hunt deer in another state	1918	94%

Table 8. Number of Illinois deer hunters who pursued deer in other states or countries during the 2005-2006 deer seasons, as reported by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey (n_i= 111).

State/Country	n	State/Country	n
Alabama	1	North Carolina	1
Arizona	1	Ohio	2
Arkansas	3	Oklahoma	1
Colorado	6	Pennsylvania	1
Indiana	7	South Dakota	2
Iowa	4	Tennessee	1
Kansas	1	Texas	1
Kentucky	4	Utah	1
Louisiana	1	Vermont	1
Michigan	4	Virginia	1
Minnesota	1	West Virginia	1
Mississippi	1	Wisconsin	27
Missouri	35	Wyoming	6
Montana	1	Canada	2
Nebraska	1	Mexico	1
New Mexico	1		

Table 9. Deer harvest reported via reporting systems available during the 2005-2006 deer hunting season, as reported by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey.

	n	Total (deer)	% (total deer)	\bar{x} (deer)	Range (deer)	Std. dev. (deer)
Telephone	955	1683	78%	1.8	1-12	1.18
Internet	248	439	20%	1.8	1-8	1.16
Manned check station	71	93	4%	1.3	1-4	0.69

Table 10. Common problems with automated deer registration systems as reported by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey (n_i= 148).

	n	%
Did not receive deer harvest pins	26	18%
Problems with voice recognition	20	14%
Difficulty writing harvest number on tag	19	13%
No/poor cell phone reception prevented call	16	11%
Could not hear voice prompts	11	7%

Table 11. Percentage of respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey who collect Illinois deer harvest pins (n_i= 2010).

	n	%
Collect deer harvest pins	1479	74%
Do not collect harvest pins	531	26%

Table 12. Perception of the quality of the deer herd in the county respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey hunt most often.

	Firearm County (n = 1868)		Archery County (n = 1295)	
	n	%	n	%
Good	1058	57%	691	53%
Fair	426	23%	324	25%
Excellent	298	16%	210	16%
Poor	52	3%	34	3%
No opinion	34	2%	36	3%

Table 13. Perception of the number of deer in the county respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey hunt most often.

	Firearm County (n = 1858)		Archery County (n = 1284)	
	n	%	n	%
About right	1148	62%	813	63%
Too high	374	20%	214	17%
Too low	225	12%	176	14%
No opinion	111	6%	81	6%

Table 14. Perceived change in the number of deer over the previous 5 years in the county respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey hunt most often.

	Firearm County (n = 1859)		Archery County (n = 1287)	
	n	%	n	%
No change	901	48%	630	49%
Increased	581	31%	378	29%
Decreased	270	15%	177	14%
No opinion	107	6%	102	8%

Table 15. Perception of the number of deer hunters in the county respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey hunt most often.

	Firearm County (n = 1869)		Archery County (n = 1300)	
	n	%	n	%
About right	1094	58%	806	62%
Too high	446	24%	275	21%
No opinion	145	8%	123	10%
Dangerously crowded	116	6%	44	3%
Too low	68	4%	52	4%

Table 16. Perceived change in the number of hunters over the previous 5 years in the county respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey hunt most often.

	Firearm County (n = 1870)		Archery County (n = 1295)	
	n	%	n	%
Increased	844	45%	628	49%
No change	770	41%	489	38%
No opinion	165	9%	135	10%
Decreased	91	5%	43	3%

Table 17. Preference for deer hunting season structure among respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey (n_i= 1948).

	n	%
Retain a 7-day split season	847	44%
Change to a 9-day continuous season	749	38%
Unsure	352	18%

Table 18. Preference for changes to the late winter antlerless firearm season dates among respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey who participated in the 2006 late winter antlerless firearm season (n_i= 188).

	n	%
Add days after current season dates (end later)	76	40%
Add days before current season dates (begin earlier)	67	36%
No opinion	45	24%

Table 19. Preference of respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey for allowed harvest during youth deer hunting season (n_i= 1963).

	n	%
Allow harvest of any type of deer, regardless of sex/antlers	1118	57%
No opinion	355	18%
Retain antlerless only restriction	490	25%

Table 20. Preference of respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey for extension of youth deer hunting season to 99 counties open during regular firearm deer hunting season (n_i= 1959).

	n	%
Extend youth season to 99 counties open during regular firearm season	1226	63%
No opinion	454	23%
Do not extend youth season to 99 counties open during regular firearm season	279	14%

Table 21. Motivations for participation in deer hunting as reported by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey (n_i= 2005).

	n	%
Be in the outdoors and interact with nature	672	34%
Provide meat for my family	431	21%
Socialize with friends and family	267	13%
Harvest a trophy buck	224	11%
Get away from daily life	141	7%
Harvest a deer of any type	143	7%
Observe deer and other wildlife	99	5%
Harvest a buck	28	1%

Table 22. Factors determining quality of deer hunt as reported by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey (n_i=1990).

	n	%
Having deer close enough to shoot, regardless of whether I shoot it	936	47%
Seeing deer	339	17%
Being outside and interacting with nature	312	16%
Harvesting a deer of any type	303	15%
Harvesting a trophy buck	67	3%
Harvesting a buck	33	2%

Table 23. Type of deer respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey are willing to harvest on opening day of deer seasons.

	Regular Firearm Season (n = 1760)		Muzzleloader Season (n = 548)		Archery Season (n = 1175)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
First adult deer	558	32%	190	35%	385	33%
First deer of any type	517	29%	142	26%	367	31%
Trophy buck only	337	19%	108	20%	172	15%
Buck only	212	12%	54	10%	101	9%
First antlerless deer	136	8%	54	10%	150	13%

Table 24. Number of deer respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey are willing to harvest in all deer hunting seasons combined, given permit fees at current levels (n_i= 1957).

	n	%
2-3 deer	1113	57%
3-6 deer	525	27%
1 deer	195	10%
7-10 deer	73	4%
More than 10 deer	51	3%

Table 25. Change in willingness to harvest does in 2005-2006 over 2000-2001 as reported by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey (n_i= 2007).

	n	%
Equally willing to harvest a doe now	1231	61%
More willing to harvest a doe now	656	33%
Less willing to harvest a doe now	120	6%

Table 26. Support for deer hunting regulations intended to harvest enough does to control deer populations and reduce negative deer-human interactions as reported by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey (n_i= 2013).

	n	%
Regulations should be designed to harvest enough does to control deer populations	1416	70%
Undecided	320	16%
Regulations should not be designed to harvest enough does to control deer populations	277	14%

Table 27. Perception of respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey of the extent to which public attitudes about the effectiveness of deer hunting as a method of population control will influence the sport of deer hunting in Illinois (n_t= 1999).

	n	%
Some influence	901	45%
Considerable influence	477	24%
Little to no influence	408	20%
No opinion	213	11%

Table 28. Type of land hunted by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey in firearm and archery seasons (n_t= 1956).

	Regular Firearm Season (n = 1717)		Archery Season (n = 1123)	
	n	%	n	%
Private land	1461	85%	840	75%
Public land	163	10%	79	7%
Public and private land	93	5%	204	18%

Table 29. Difficulty in obtaining a place to hunt deer in Illinois encountered by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey (n_t= 1940).

	Regular Firearm Season (n = 1735)		Archery Season (n = 1140)	
	n	%	n	%
No difficulty	1112	64%	667	59%
Some difficulty	391	23%	308	27%
Considerable difficulty	232	13%	165	15%

Table 30. Percentage of respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey who paid for hunting rights during 2005-2006 deer hunting season (n_t= 1944).

	n	%
Did not pay for hunting rights	1830	94%
Paid for hunting rights	114	6%

Table 31. Types of payments made for hunting rights by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey during the 2005-2006 deer hunting season (n_t= 114).

	n	%
Season-long lease	69	61%
Other	17	15%
Short-term lease or daily fee	15	13%
Work on land/farm	12	11%
Through an outfitter	1	1%

Table 32. Percentage of respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey who lost free hunting access on land in Illinois due to leasing between 2003 and 2006 (n_t= 1940).

	n	%
Did not lose access due to leasing	1184	61%
Lost access due to leasing	756	39%

Table 33. Willingness of respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey to pay for access to deer hunting lands in Illinois (n_t= 1555).

	n	%
Not willing to pay for hunting rights	1084	56%
Willing to pay for hunting rights	471	24%
Undecided	391	20%

Table 34. Percentage of respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey who had heard of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD; n_t= 2020).

	n	%
Had heard of CWD	1886	93%
Had not heard of CWD	105	5%
Not sure	29	1%

Table 35. Percentage of respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey who knew CWD had been found in Illinois deer (n_t= 2014).

	n	%
Knew CWD had been found in Illinois deer	1736	86%
Did not know CWD had been found in Illinois deer	233	12%
Not sure	45	2%

Table 36. Perception of level of threat posed to Illinois deer herd by CWD reported by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey (n_t= 2009).

	n	%
Somewhat of a threat	1154	57%
Serious threat	615	31%
No opinion	147	7%
No threat	93	5%

Table 37. Perceptions of risk to human health resulting from CWD reported by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey (n_t= 1978).

	n	%
May pose risk to humans but not enough is known about the disease	994	50%
Can infect humans if consume meat from infected animal	520	26%
Poses risk only to deer	204	10%
Risk to humans is greatly exaggerated	151	8%
Don't know enough to judge risk	69	3%
Other	40	3%

Table 38. Opinions about CWD introduction reported by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey (n_t= 2024).

	n	%
CWD was introduced in the past several years and may spread to other parts of the state	1293	64%
CWD has always been here and we didn't know about it	336	17%
No opinion	321	16%
CWD was introduced in the past several years but probably will not spread	74	4%

Table 39. Preference for actions taken by IDNR to manage CWD reported by respondents to the 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey (n= 2019).

	n	%
IDNR should monitor distribution and rate of infection and use all necessary measures to manage	1353	67%
IDNR should monitor distribution and rate of infection and use hunting programs to manage	381	19%
No opinion	209	10%
IDNR should monitor distribution and rate of infection, but take no action to manage disease	56	3%
CWD is not a threat and IDNR should do nothing to manage it	20	1%

Appendix A. 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey instrument and mailings.

Figure 1. Cover letter 1 sent with 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey.



ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY



Dear Illinois Deer Hunter,

You are one of a select group of Illinois hunters asked to provide information about your deer hunting activities during the 2005-2006 hunting season and your opinions related to deer hunting in Illinois. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to us as soon as possible. The information you and other selected hunters furnish our biologists is vital to help guide deer management programs that optimize hunting opportunities, maintain or improve hunter satisfaction, and allow for effective management.

This survey is limited to those hunters selected. Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire, and provide your opinions on the appropriate questions even if you did not hunt during the 2005-2006 season. A postage-paid envelope is provided for returning the questionnaire to us.

If you are interested in the summary results of this survey, or other hunter and trapper surveys, please visit <http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu/cwpe/hd/>. For more information about wildlife in Illinois, visit <http://dnr.state.il.us/orc/wildliferesources/>.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

William L. Anderson
Wildlife Harvest and Human Dimensions Research Program

Figure 2. Cover letter 2 sent with 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey.



ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY



Dear Illinois Deer Hunter,

As one of a select group of Illinois hunters, you have been asked to provide information about deer hunting in Illinois. We recently mailed you a survey questionnaire regarding your hunting experiences during the 2005-2006 season and your opinions related to deer hunting. We have not received your completed questionnaire at this time. Perhaps you recently mailed the questionnaire and it has not yet arrived in our office. If so, we thank you.

If you have not returned your completed questionnaire to us, please do so as soon as possible. Another copy of the questionnaire is enclosed. **The information you and other selected hunters furnish our biologists is vital to help guide deer management programs that optimize hunting opportunities, maintain or improve hunter satisfaction, and allow for effective management.**

This survey is limited to those hunters selected. Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire, and provide your opinions on the appropriate questions even if you did not hunt during the 2005-2006 season. A postage-paid envelope is provided for you to return the questionnaire to us.

If you have questions, please call us at (217) 244-5121. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

William L. Anderson
Wildlife Harvest and Human Dimensions Research Program

Figure 3. Postcard reminders sent after 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey.

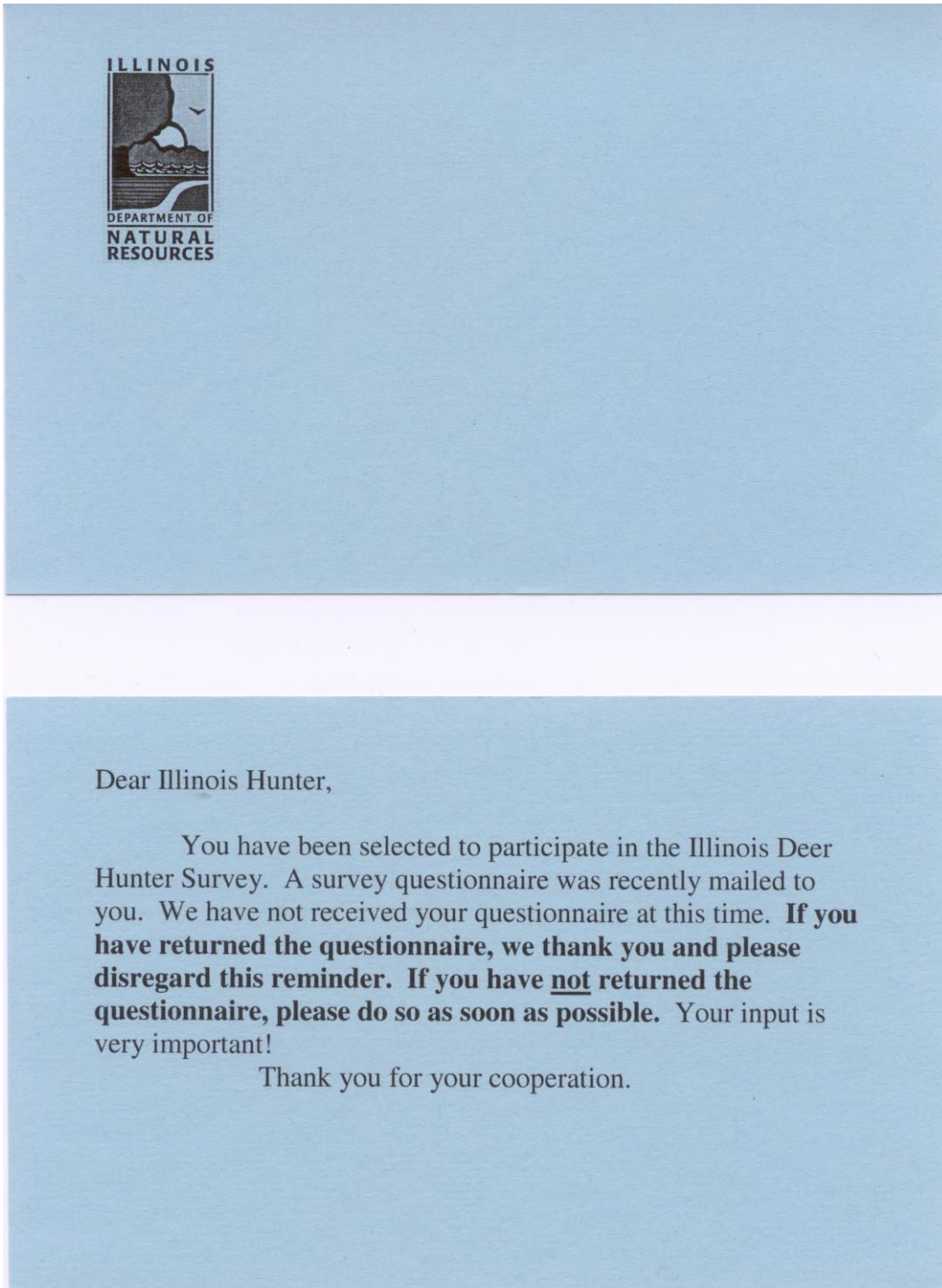


Figure 4. 2005-2006 Illinois Deer Hunter Survey instrument.

Illinois Deer Hunter Survey



Your comments are welcome but please write them on a separate sheet of paper to receive proper

2005 – 2006 Season

ALL RESPONSES ARE CONFIDENTIAL

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

Postage-paid return envelope provided



Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Division of Wildlife Resources
and the
Illinois Natural History Survey



The Department of Natural Resources is requesting disclosure of information that is necessary to accomplish the statutory purpose as outlined under the Illinois Compiled Statutes, The Wildlife Code, Chapter 520. Disclosure of information is voluntary.

This study is funded by the federal Wildlife Restoration fund through your purchase of hunting arms and ammunition.

Section 1. Deer Hunting in Illinois. Please answer the following questions with respect to your deer hunting in Illinois.

1. Did you purchase one or more permits to hunt deer in Illinois during the 2005-2006 seasons?

_____ Yes _____ No (Please go to **Section 3**)

1a. What type of permits did you have, how many days did you hunt, and how many deer did you harvest using each type of permit during the 2005-2006 deer seasons? (Count part of a day as a whole day)

Permit type	Number of Permits	Number of Days Hunted	Deer Harvested	County Hunted <u>Most</u> Often
Regular Firearm	_____	_____	_____	_____
Muzzleloader Only	_____	_____	_____	_____
Late-Winter Antlerless Firearm	_____	_____	_____	_____
Landowner/Tenant Archery	_____ ^a	_____	_____	_____
Landowner/Tenant Firearm	_____ ^a	_____	_____	_____
Archery	_____ ^a	_____	_____	_____

^a Count as 1 permit for each deer allowed.

2. If you harvested one or more deer during the 2005-2006 season, which of the new automated reporting systems did you use to report your harvest? (Note: Manned check stations were used in a few counties)

_____ Number of deer reported by on-line check-in system (internet)

_____ Number of deer reported by telephone system (toll-free)

_____ Number of deer reported at manned check stations

2a. Did you encounter any problems in using the new automated deer harvest reporting systems?

_____ Yes _____ No

2b. If “Yes”, please explain the problems: _____

3. Do you agree or disagree with the idea of changing the regular firearm deer season in Illinois from the current split 7-day season to a continuous 9-day season? The 9-day season would begin on Saturday and end the following weekend on Sunday.

_____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Undecided

4. How many deer would you be willing to harvest in a year (all seasons combined), assuming that permit fees remain at their current costs?

_____ 1 deer _____ 2-3 deer _____ 3-6 deer _____ 7-10 deer _____ More than 10 deer

5. Would you be willing to harvest additional deer if you could conveniently donate them (with no processing costs) to charities that feed the hungry?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Undecided

6. What type of deer would you be willing to shoot on opening day of the season? (Circle appropriate number for each season that applies to you)

Season	First Deer of Any Type	First Antlerless Deer	First Adult Deer	Buck Only	Trophy Buck Only
Regular Firearm Season	1	2	3	4	5
Muzzleloader Only	1	2	3	4	5
Archery	1	2	3	4	5

7. Do you agree or disagree with the idea of changing the youth deer hunting season to allow youths to harvest deer of any type, regardless of sex or presence/absence of antlers? (Note: Current regulations allow youths to harvest antlerless-only deer during the youth season)

_____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ No opinion

8. The current Youth Deer Season is open only in those counties that have been open for the Late-Winter Antlerless Deer Season (previously called “Handgun Deer Season”). What do you think about extending the Youth Deer Season to the 99 counties now open during the Regular Firearm Season?

_____ Support changing _____ Do not support changing _____ No opinion

9. The 2005-2006 Late-Winter Antlerless Deer Season was held on January 13-15 (Friday-Sunday immediately after close of archery season) in those counties with high deer populations. If this season were lengthened (for the purpose of increasing the harvest of antlerless deer), which of the following would you prefer?

_____ (1) Adding days to the front of the season, so that it started earlier but ended on the same date.

_____ (2) Adding days to the end of the season, so that it started on the same date but ended later.

_____ (3) No opinion.

Section 2. Hunter Access. Deer hunters often complain about having difficulty finding a place to hunt in Illinois. To help the IDNR address this issue, please answer the following questions.

1. On what type of land did you deer hunt during the 2005-2006 seasons in Illinois? (Circle appropriate number for each season that applies to you)

Season	Public Land	Private Land	Both Public and Private Land
Regular Firearm Season	1	2	3
Archery Season	1	2	3

2. Did you pay someone for the right to hunt deer on their property during the 2005-2006 seasons in Illinois?

_____Yes _____No

- 2a. If “Yes”, what was the nature of payment? (Check one)

- _____ (1) Season-long lease
 _____ (2) Short-term lease or daily fee
 _____ (3) Through an outfitter
 _____ (4) Other (write in: _____)

3. Would you be willing to pay someone for the right to hunt deer on their property in Illinois?

_____Yes _____No _____Undecided

4. During the past 3 years, have you lost a “free” place to hunt deer in Illinois because the land was leased to someone else?

_____Yes _____No

5. Rate the level of difficulty you had in obtaining a place to hunt deer during the 2005-2006 seasons in Illinois? (Circle appropriate number for each season that applies to you)

Season	No Difficulty	Some Difficulty	Considerable Difficulty
Regular Firearm Season	1	2	3
Archery Season	1	2	3

Section 3. Deer Hunting Participation and Motivation. This section is designed to explore your hunting participation patterns and the reasons why you hunt. Our goal is to better understand deer hunters and to make their hunting experiences more satisfying and convenient.

1. How many years have you hunted deer?

_____ Years with firearm _____ Years with archery

2. How many deer have you harvested (shot and successfully retrieved) in your lifetime?

_____ Number of deer harvested with firearm

_____ Number of deer harvested with archery

3. Are you more or less willing to harvest a doe now than you were 5 years ago?

_____ More _____ Same _____ Less

4. Why do you deer hunt? (Please indicate your top 4 reasons by writing in "1" for first reason, "2" for second reason, "3" for third reason, and "4" for fourth reason)

_____ (a) To socialize with friends and relatives

_____ (b) To harvest a trophy buck

_____ (c) To be in the outdoors and interacting with nature

_____ (d) To get away from day-to-day life

_____ (e) To harvest a deer of any type

_____ (f) To observe deer and other wildlife

_____ (g) To provide meat for my family

_____ (h) To harvest a buck

5. Which of the following most closely describes your PERCEPTION of a quality deer hunt? (check one)

_____ (1) Seeing deer

_____ (2) Having a deer close enough to shoot, regardless of whether you shoot it

_____ (3) Harvesting a deer of any type

_____ (4) Harvesting a buck

_____ (5) Harvesting a trophy buck

_____ (6) Just being outside and interacting with nature

Section 4 Deer Populations. The IDNR walks a fine line between managing for more deer and managing for fewer deer. Most hunter groups would like to see the state's deer population increase or, at the very least, stabilized at current levels. On the other hand, many farmers, orchard owners, and vehicle safety advocates prefer reduced deer populations. As the IDNR attempts to strike a balance, please assist us in this process by answering the following questions.

1. What is your opinion of the number of DEER in the county where you hunt most? (Circle the number for appropriate response in each row)

County where you...	Too Low	About Right	Too High	No Opinion
Firearm hunt most	1	2	3	4
Archery hunt most	1	2	3	4

2. Is the number of DEER in the county where you hunt most higher, lower, or about the same as 5 years ago? (Circle the number for appropriate response in each row)

County where you...	Lower	About the Same	Higher	No opinion
Firearm hunt most	1	2	3	4
Archery hunt most	1	2	3	4

3. What is your opinion of the number of deer HUNTERS in the county where you hunt most? (Circle the number for appropriate response in each row)

County where you...	Too Low	About Right	Too High	Dangerously Crowded	No Opinion
Firearm hunt most	1	2	3	4	5
Archery hunt most	1	2	3	4	5

4. Is the number of deer HUNTERS in the county where you hunt most higher, lower, or about the same as 5 years ago? (Circle the number for appropriate response in each row)

County where you...	Lower	About the Same	Higher	No Opinion
Firearm hunt most	1	2	3	4
Archery hunt most	1	2	3	4

5. How would you rate the quality of the deer herd in the county where you hunt most? (Circle the number for the appropriate response in each row)

County where you...	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
Firearm hunt most	1	2	3	4	5
Archery hunt most	1	2	3	4	5

6. From your perspective, should Illinois' deer hunting regulations be designed with the intention of harvesting enough does to control the deer population, thereby reducing crop damage, vehicle-deer accidents, and other deer-human conflicts sufficiently to satisfy the concerns of most citizens, both hunters and non-hunters?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Undecided

7. In your opinion, to what extent will the general public's perception of the effectiveness of deer hunting as a means of population control influence the SPORT of deer hunting in Illinois?

_____ Little or none _____ Some _____ Considerable _____ No opinion

Section 5 Chronic Wasting Disease. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) has been found in deer and elk populations in several Midwestern states, including Illinois. In response to this disease, the IDNR may have to make some difficult management decisions with respect to the future of the state's deer herd. Please answer the following questions to give us your insights and opinions regarding this important issue.

1. Prior to receiving this questionnaire, had you ever heard about "Chronic Wasting Disease" (CWD) in deer and elk populations?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Not sure

2. Again, prior to receiving this questionnaire, were you aware that Chronic Wasting Disease had been found in Illinois deer?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Not sure

3. Which of the following statements best describes your opinion of Chronic Wasting Disease as a risk to humans and human health? (Check one)

- _____ (1) Poses risk only to deer
- _____ (2) May pose risk to humans but not enough is known about the disease
- _____ (3) Can possibly infect humans if they consume meat from an infected animal
- _____ (4) Risk to humans is greatly exaggerated
- _____ (5) Other (write in: _____)

4. Which of the following statements best describes your opinion of how serious Chronic Wasting Disease is as a threat to the Illinois deer herd? (Check one)

- _____ (1) No threat
- _____ (2) Somewhat of a threat
- _____ (3) Serious threat
- _____ (4) No opinion

5. Which of the following statements best describes your overall assessment of Chronic Wasting Disease in Illinois? (Check one)

- (1) CWD has always been here and we just didn't know about it
- (2) CWD was introduced within the past several years and may spread to other parts of the state
- (3) CWD was introduced within the past several years but probably poses no risk of spreading
- (4) No opinion

6. What approach do you believe the IDNR should take in responding to Chronic Wasting Disease in Illinois? (Check one)

- (1) CWD is not a threat and IDNR should do nothing about it
- (2) IDNR should monitor the distribution and rate of CWD infection but take no action to fight the disease
- (3) IDNR should monitor the distribution and rate of CWD infection, and use only existing hunting programs to fight the disease
- (4) IDNR should monitor the distribution and rate of CWD infection, and use every necessary measure (including hunting) to fight the disease
- (5) No opinion

Section 6 General Information. The following questions provide important information that helps us understand more about the people involved in deer hunting in Illinois. Please tell us something about yourself by completing the following questions. All responses are kept confidential.

1. Did you deer hunt in another state during the 2005-2006 seasons?

Yes - what state(s): 1) _____, 2) _____, 3) _____
 No

2. Do you collect Illinois deer harvest pins? Yes No

3. What is your county of residence? _____ County

4. What is your gender? Male Female

5. Please give your age as of January 1, 2006. _____ Years

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ASSISTANCE!

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources receives federal assistance and therefore must comply with federal anti-discrimination laws. In compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act, the Illinois Constitution, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended, and the U.S. Constitution, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility, please contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, Department of Natural Resources, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271, (217) 782-7616 or the Officer of Human Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.