

DATE: December 9, 2008

TO: Natural Resources Board

FROM: Matt Frank

SUBJECT: 2008 Deer Hunting Season Report

The 9-day gun season ran November 22-30, 2008. Overall, deer hunting license sales are stable for the year. Today's tough economy didn't keep hunters from travelling to Wisconsin to hunt. 2008 was the third safest hunting season. Preliminary harvest numbers indicate that in parts of the state the deer harvest was significantly down. Detailed reports on licensing, safety and deer harvest follow.

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### HUNTING LICENSE SALES

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**Overall, deer hunting license sales are up slightly.**

Nearly 1,400 license agents are using touch screen sales terminals making it easier and faster for them to serve customers using the 3rd generation of DNR's Automated License Issuance System, known as ALIS, introduced in March 2008. . A corporate official from Mills Fleet Farm, traditionally one of the largest sellers of our licenses, polled their staff and shared the following feedback about the new system:

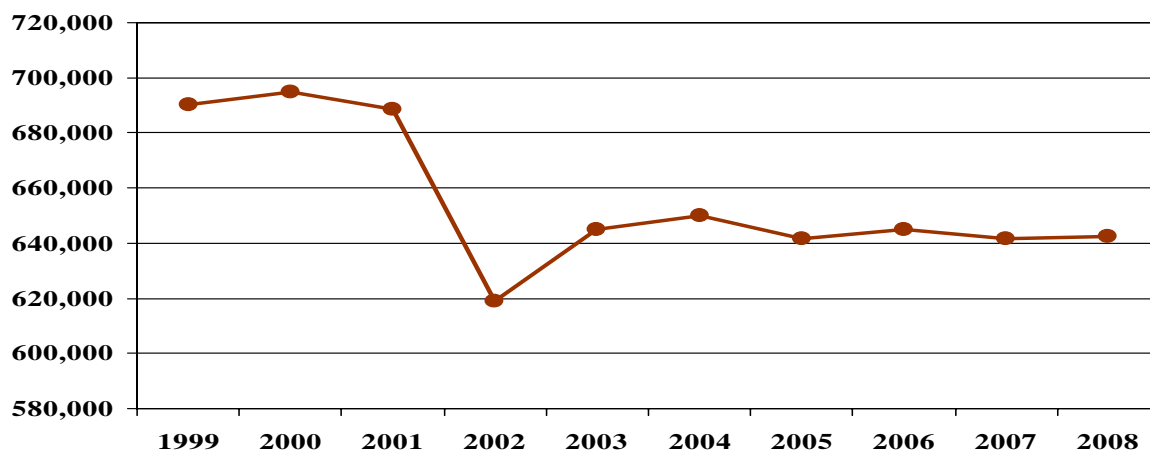
*"Our employees like the ability to scan customer licenses and have all of the customer's information come up at once. It is easy to update a customer's address if necessary. Everyone likes the new system, from employees to the customers, so Mills feels like you've got a winner."*

#### Gun Deer License Sales

At the close of the 2008 gun deer season, 642,419 gun deer licenses had been issued; up 987 from 2007. Of these, 11,196 licenses were issued during the open season. The 10-year history of Gun Deer sales shown below includes Conservation Patron license holders. Additional licenses will be sold during the muzzleloader, December Antlerless and "holiday" hunts that are still to come. A complete breakdown by license type is attached.

#### 10-Year History of Gun Deer Sales

*(includes Conservation Patron licenses)*

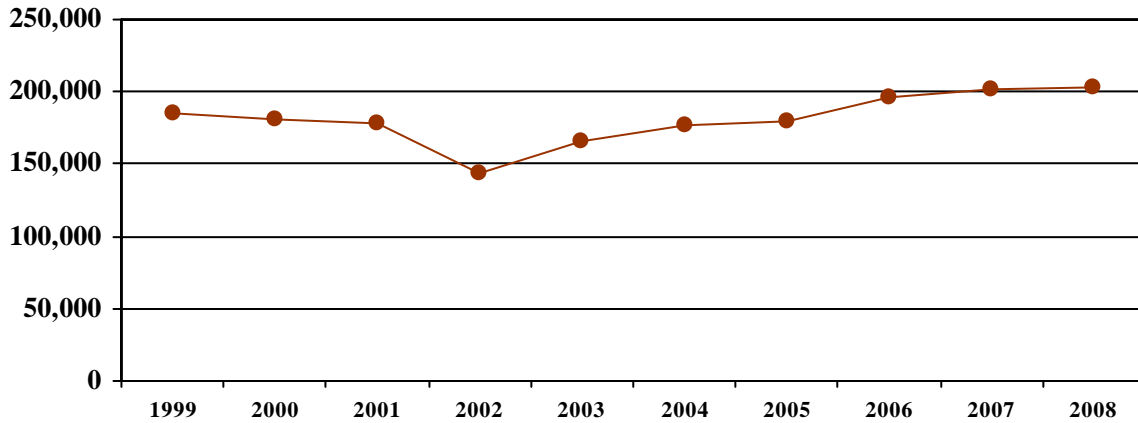


1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
690,194	694,712	688,540	618,945	644,818	649,955	641,771	644,906	641,432	642,419

**Archery License Sales**

There were 203,675 Archery licenses sold in 2008, up slightly over 1 percent from 2007. The 10-year history of Archery sales numbers does not include Conservation Patron licenses. Archery license sales will continue through the late bow season. A complete breakdown by license type is attached.

**10-Year History of Archery Sales**  
*(does not include Conservation Patron licenses)*



1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
185,122	180,559	178,269	144,162	165,122	177,159	179,853	196,726	201,224	203,675

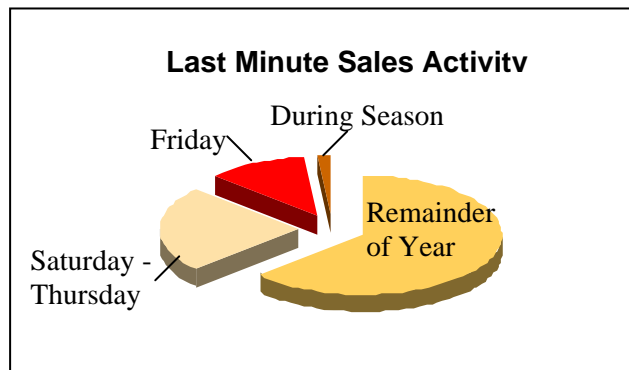
**Other Licenses & Permits**

One antlerless tag valid in any Herd Control or Earn-a-Buck Unit was included with every deer hunting license that was sold. In addition, hunters purchased over 157,518 antlerless deer tags. Of these, 116,935 were issued for Herd Control and Earn-a-Buck units. An additional 40,533 antlerless tags were issued for regular deer management units and 50 to farmers who qualify for free permits. Antlerless permit sales will continue through the remaining deer hunting seasons.

**Last Minute Sales Activity**

More hunters purchased their license early this year because of the October hunt. Sales just prior to the regular deer season show:

- Over 35% of the deer gun licenses sold in 2008 were issued the week prior to the opening of the deer season (compared to 47% last year);
- 12% (74,318) of the deer gun licenses were purchased on the Friday prior to the opening;
- 11,196 licenses were sold during the gun deer season;



- License sales peaked at 201 deer gun licenses sold per minute at 5:30 p.m. on the Friday before gun deer season.

**Where licenses were purchased**

Mills Fleet Farm in Appleton continues to be our highest volume over-the-counter retail location for gun deer purchases. Mills Fleet Farm store locations hold 15 of the top 20 gun deer sales volume locations. DNR Service Centers account for nearly 6% of the total gun deer license sales.

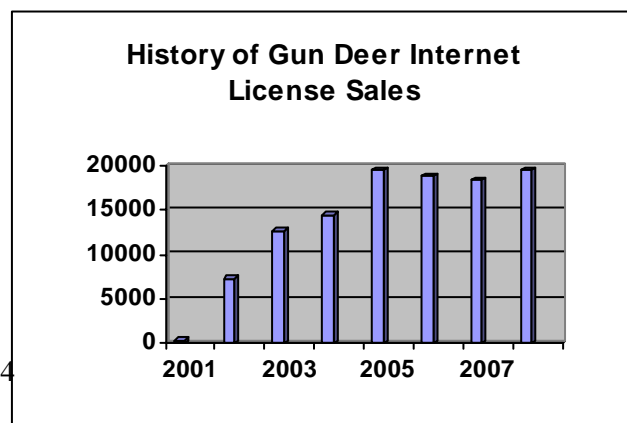
**Top Sales Locations**

AGENT NAME	LICENSES
INTERNET SALES	19,498
MILLS FLEET FARM, APPLETON	12,819
MILLS FLEET FARM, GREEN BAY WEST	8,599
MILLS FLEET FARM, STEVENS POINT	8,059
MILLS FLEET FARM, GERMANTOWN	7,717
MILLS FLEET FARM, GREEN BAY EAST	6,977
MILLS FLEET FARM, MARSHFIELD	6,691
MILLS FLEET FARM, WAUSAU	6,566
MILLS FLEET FARM, HUDSON	6,541
MILLS FLEET FARM, OSHKOSH	6,368
GANDER MOUNTAIN, WAUKESHA	6,356
MILLS FLEET FARM, FOND DU LAC	6,129
GANDER MOUNTAIN, FRANKLIN	5,759
MILLS FLEET FARM, MENOMONIE	5,726
MILLS FLEET FARM, WEST BEND	5,662
MILLS FLEET FARM, MANITOWOC	5,617
MILLS FLEET FARM, BEAVER DAM	5,516
GANDER MOUNTAIN, ROTHSCHILD	5,217
GANDER MOUNTAIN, ONALASKA	4,423
MILLS FLEET FARM, PLYMOUTH	4,294

Among Wisconsin counties (71 of 72 excluding Menominee), the highest numbers of gun deer licenses were sold in: Dane (28,898), Brown (28,307), Washington (24,061), Waukesha (23,302), Marathon (23,260), Outagamie (19,637), Wood (15,684), and Milwaukee (15,532).

**Internet Sales**

The Internet continues to be a popular way for people to purchase their gun deer licenses. For 7 years straight, the Internet has been the highest selling sales location of gun deer licenses. This year, 19,498 licenses were issued online.



### Deer Gun License Sales History

License Type	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Res Conservation Patron	53,891	67,172	77,415	81,314	81,895	81,076	71,041	65,688	55,579	52,168	50,501
Res Jr Patron							3,386	4,165	4,338	4,391	4,658
Resident Sports	91,720	94,061	92,014	86,134	75,122	72,536	77,961	78,365	72,570	68,767	65,544
Res Junior Sports**							4,170	3,332	3,238	3,282	3,564
Resident Gun Deer	491,062	492,423	483,419	480,078	428,724	455,967	459,175	393,922	407,358	411,214	418,747
Res Military							81				
Res Jr Gun*							27	61,504	65,912	64,829	62,876
<b>Resident Gun Deer Totals</b>	<b>636,673</b>	<b>653,656</b>	<b>652,848</b>	<b>647,526</b>	<b>585,741</b>	<b>609,579</b>	<b>615,841</b>	<b>606,976</b>	<b>608,995</b>	<b>604,651</b>	<b>605,890</b>
NR Conservation Patron	1	21	28	25	38	38	54	53	70	91	92
NR Jr Patron							339	495	790	858	839
NR Military Patron									2	4	2
NR Sports	14	130	232	279	277	313	325	384	437	469	490
NR Student Sports							10	20	18	27	25
NR Junior Sports								2,021	2,917	3,219	3,292
NR Military Sports							10	15	9	11	20
NR Gun Deer	32,270	36,387	41,604	40,710	32,889	34,888	33,214	31,498	31,298	31,681	31,430
NR Student Gun							85	170	226	280	198
NR Military Deer							77	137	113	125	118
NR WI Student Jr Gun								2	31	16	23
<b>NR Gun Deer Totals</b>	<b>32,285</b>	<b>36,538</b>	<b>41,864</b>	<b>41,014</b>	<b>33,204</b>	<b>35,239</b>	<b>34,114</b>	<b>34,795</b>	<b>35,911</b>	<b>36,781</b>	<b>36,529</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>668,958</b>	<b>690,194</b>	<b>694,712</b>	<b>688,540</b>	<b>618,945</b>	<b>644,818</b>	<b>649,955</b>	<b>641,771</b>	<b>644,906</b>	<b>641,432</b>	<b>642,419</b>

\*Prior to 2005, numbers shown were for sales of gun licenses to customers turning 12 during the season.

\*\*Prior to 2005, the same Junior Sports license was issued to both residents and nonresidents.

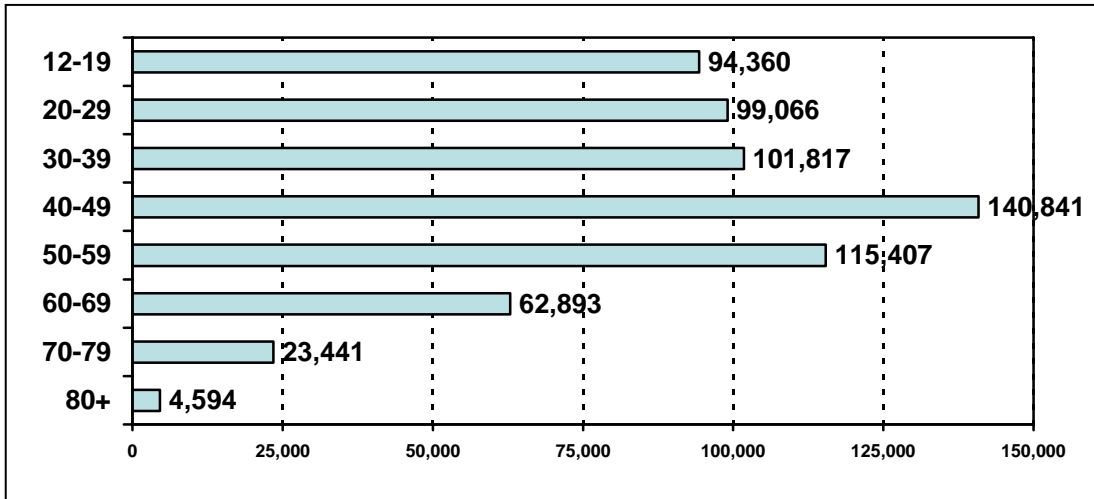
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## Deer Hunters

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Of the 642,419 hunters this gun deer season: 94.3% were Wisconsin residents, 73,400 or 11.4% were youth (under the age of 18); 53,617 or 8.4% were Senior Citizens (65 years of age and older).

**Age of Deer Gun Hunters**

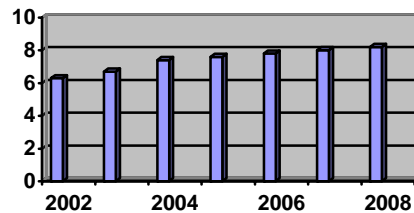


The number of female hunters continues to increase, representing 8.2% of the total number of deer hunters.

A total of 52,497 females purchased a patron, sports or gun deer license (number includes residents and nonresidents) which is up from the 51,287 in 2007.

Over 48% of the female hunters are under the age of 30 years.

**History of Female Hunters (by percentage)**

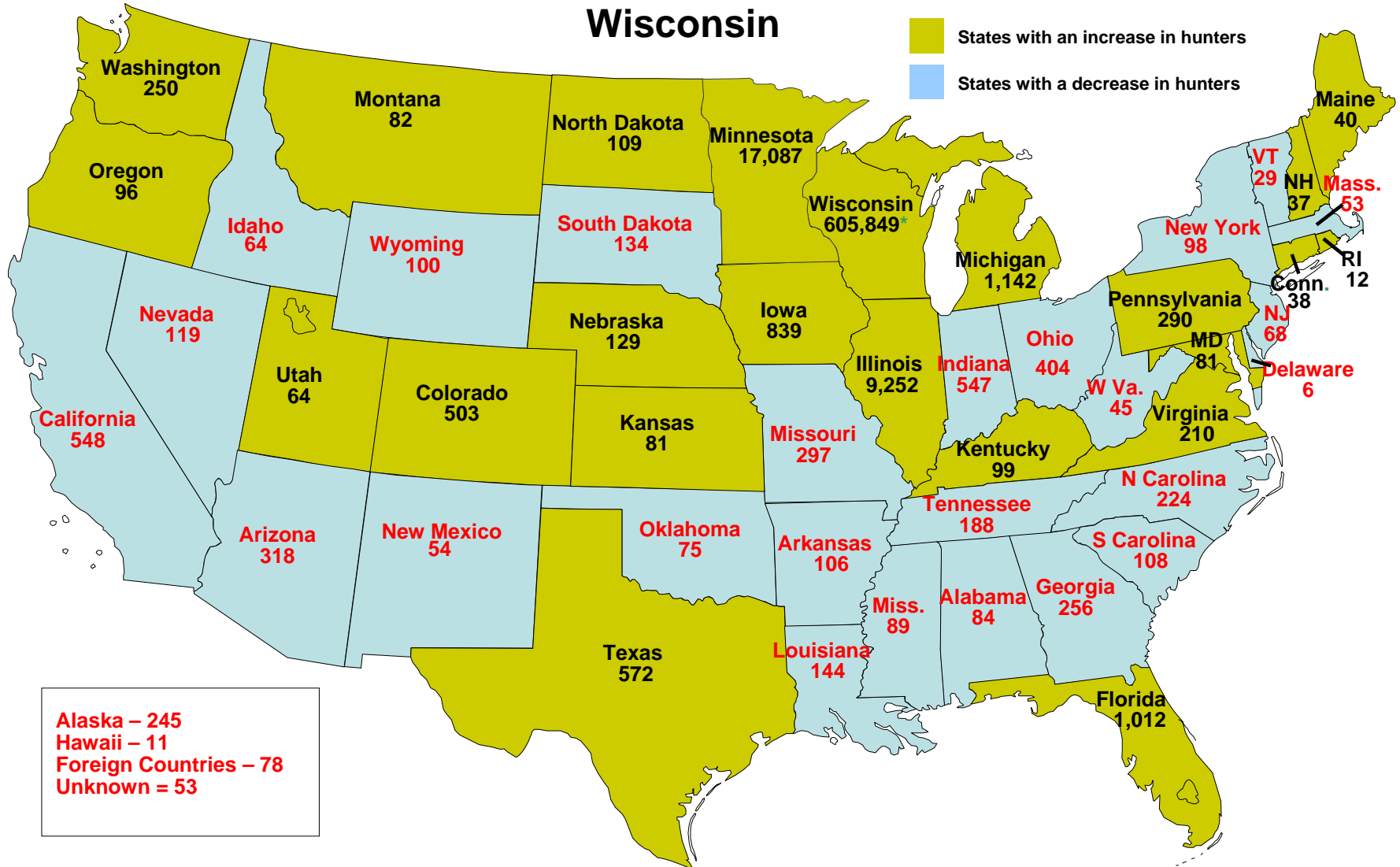


### Nonresident Deer Hunters

Today's tough economy didn't keep hunters away. Hunters throughout the U.S. and several foreign countries purchased a Wisconsin gun deer license. The highest number of nonresident hunters came from Minnesota (17,087), Illinois (9,252), Michigan (1,142), and Florida (1,112), each having increased participation from last year. A map identifying where our nonresident hunters reside follows.

# Residence of 2008 Gun Deer Hunters

## Wisconsin



\*401 People who bought a NR license used a WI address.

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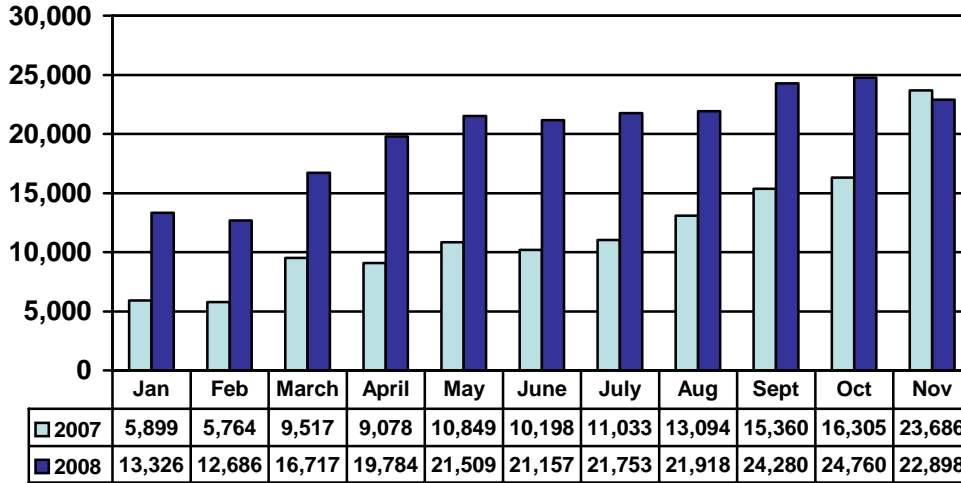
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## Call Center

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Hunters are taking advantage of DNR’s customer call center that is available seven days a week, 15 hours per day. The call center handles over 230,000 calls a year, with 30 percent of calls received on nights and weekends. Staff also respond to internet chats and e-mail messages from customers. During the week prior to the 9-day gun season, operators received 1,200 to 1,400 calls per day, peaking at over 2,000 calls on Friday. Operators responded to 8,328 calls the week before the season opener. This year’s gun deer hunting questions were spread across October and November because of the October hunt.

**2007 vs. 2008**



Operators began receiving calls at 7 a.m. opening morning from tree stands, deer camps and hunters afield. They helped hunters find registration stations, explain earn-a-buck restrictions and clarify rules and regulations. A number of interesting calls were received:

- a female hunter called early Saturday morning asking in a quiet whisper, “I have an albino deer in my sights right now, is it legal for me to shoot it?”
- a hunter called from his tree stand asking about a deer he registered earlier that week. He was instructed to call the local conservation warden. The caller didn’t have anything to write on – the call center operator could hear the hunter carving the telephone number into his tree stand.
- a call was received on Thanksgiving from a hunter who came upon an injured hawk. The call center was able to locate a warden in the area who helped the hunter and his son get the hawk to a rehabilitator.

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## 2008 HUNTING SEASON GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

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### Weather

Other than opening morning with some sub-zero temperatures in the state, the weather throughout the entire season was nearly ideal for deer hunting, with no rain or strong winds. Snow on Sunday night of the opening weekend blanketed some parts of the state with 2 – 4 inches and helped hunters see and track deer throughout the week. Much of the corn was harvested prior to the opener. Those fields that were still standing were hunted hard when being picked during the week.

## **General Observations**

Doubt as to the **accuracy of pre-season deer population estimates** was the most significant issue wardens heard about from hunters in the field. While this sentiment was expressed in most areas of the state, it was most prevalent in the Northern and Northeast Region. Wardens reported that hunters expressed doubt, concern and frustration regarding not seeing deer. Many hunters questioned whether the Earn-a- Buck regulations were actually necessary in many units.

Early in the season as they began checking hunters, wardens reported observations that suggested the harvest would be down in some parts of the state when compared with past seasons. Observations included hearing less shooting, contacting more hunters in the field who had not seen any deer; and observing noticeably fewer harvested deer in vehicles and at camps.

Wardens reported hunters speculating that the lack of deer observed was due to too many wolves, too many bear, hard winter, shooting too many deer in previous years, hunters not moving the deer around, and baiting and feeding. Some suggested the DNR inflated the deer population to sell more licenses.

The intensity of these comments increased as the season progressed, particularly after reports of lower opening weekend preliminary harvest numbers. Initial Department comments suggesting the drop was due to a hard winter conditions and poor fawn recruitment during the last year angered some hunters. Wardens were asked why the fawn recruitment information wasn't released prior to the deer season opening instead of waiting till after the season to provide this information, and why did we maintain the high pre-season population estimates [the information collected over the summer becomes available in November – see Deer Harvest Information Section]. Many stated they believed the pre-season estimates were too high, and felt that EAB units were not necessary. They told wardens they felt the Department lost credibility as a result.

Wardens who have worked in the field for a number of years observed **changes in hunting practices**. Hunters often hunt three or four hours at a time each day, and they may only hunt a few days during the season. Very few groups are hunting all morning, and then doing deer drives during the afternoon, a technique that seemed to be the norm years ago. While similar numbers of licenses were sold, wardens did not see sustained numbers of hunters in the field compared to observations of ten years ago.

This year wardens reported that interest waned earlier than normal and sustained hunting effort fell off quicker than normal the Sunday of opening weekend. While there was a fair amount of pressure on opening day, this effort fell off after a few hours on Sunday and most areas saw no noticeable increase in effort for the remainder of the season. Wardens reported fewer large groups of hunters, fewer people at deer camps throughout the season, fewer multicultural hunting parties, and fewer youth hunters as compared to past years.

On a statewide basis, most wardens report there are fewer deer drives, and those that are taking place are in smaller groups.

**Changing land use and ownership patterns** in the state continue to influence hunter behavior. Wardens in the vicinity of larger tracts of public land report hunters telling them the reason they came north is due in part to the difficulty in being able to find a place to hunt in the southern part of the state. These trends result in some conflict, hunter frustration, concentrations of deer on some private lands, and calls to law enforcement about hunting too close to houses, hunters in an area, hearing shots etc. Often times these calls involve no violations but certainly have the potential to impact the future of hunting in certain areas.

Wardens reported an increasing number of hunters expressing frustration with **baiting and feeding** for deer. See more detail in the section on baiting and feeding.



Wardens in the northern parts of the state reported that hunters were **seeing more bear** prior to and during season. Prior to season, some hunters reported seeing many bear coming into deer baits.

Wardens across the state continue to report hunters leading by example, **passing on deer hunting traditions** to youth. These stories reveal the magic behind the hunt, why people are drawn to the experience, and what they take away from It (see appendix)..

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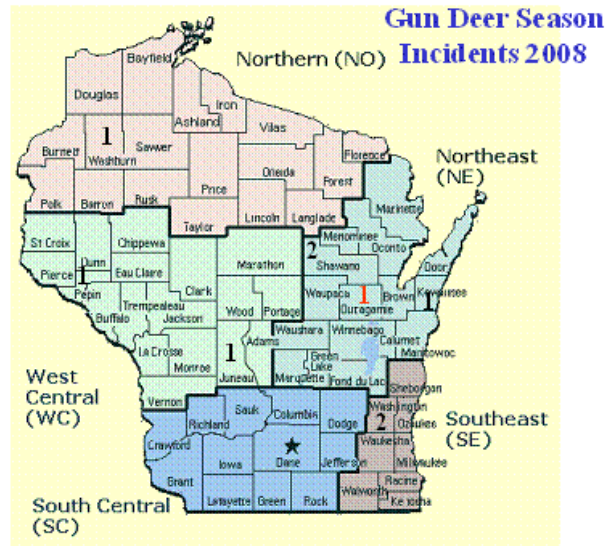
## ENHANCING PUBLIC SAFETY

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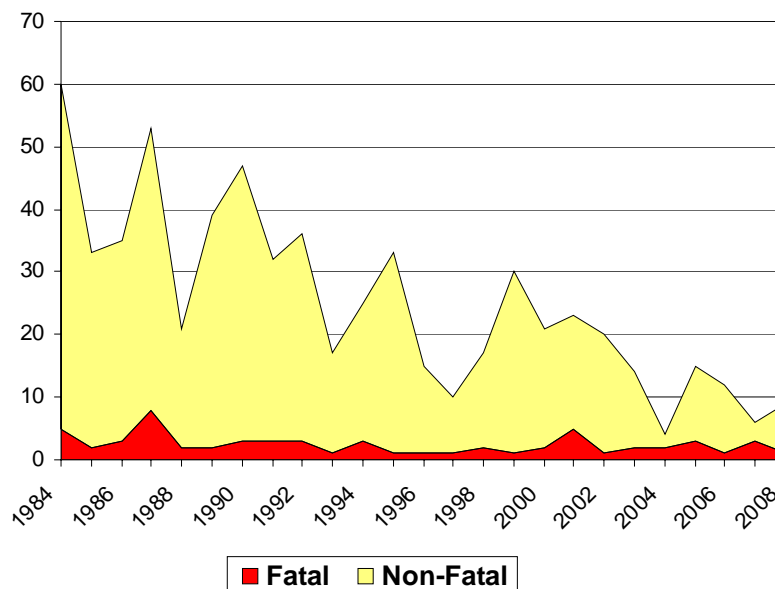
### Hunting Related Shooting Incidents

On the statewide historical scale, **the 2008 Nine-Day Gun Deer Season was the third safest on record.** Our hearts go out to the families who suffered tragic loss of a family member or suffered injury during the season. Our goal is to eliminate all injury and loss of life while hunting. We conduct thorough investigations to learn what happened in these incidents so we can work to prevent such incidents in the future.

There were a total of nine incidents, of which one was fatal (Outagamie County). Shooting at moving deer during deer drives contributed to 56% (5) of all of the incidents during the season, including the fatality. Self inflicted injuries were involved in 44% (4) this season. This was the third time in history that we've had a gun deer season with less than 10 incidents. The first season was in 2004 with only 5 incidents reported. Below is a graph depicting the incidents for the gun deer season since 1984, which clearly shows hunting is safe and getting safer.



### History of Gun Deer Incidents



A positive downturn in trends was the number of juvenile hunters (under age 18) involved in causing hunting incidents. Only one was reported and the shooter was age 13.

The incident rate for this season was 1.4 incidents per 100,000 hunters, well below the national average of three (3) incidents per 100,000.

See the appendix for a synopsis of individual incidents.

Wardens also arrested nine **felons in possession of firearms in the field** in the second year of the DNR - Department of Corrections collaboration to proactively prevent felons and certain misdemeanants (convicted of domestic violence) from going into the field armed in violation of the state law that prevents them from possessing a firearm. The DNR license database was cross matched with the DCC offender database. DCC agents make contact with those offenders who bought any type of firearm license to determine if they illegally possessed firearms contrary to conditions of their supervision or Federal and State Firearm Laws. Offenders who are found to be in violations of the firearm prohibition will be taken into custody and their firearms seized.

. A synopsis of warden-reported interactions with felons in possession is in the appendix.

#### Felons in Possession of a Firearm Cases 2003-2008

Year	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Number	9	16	9	3	10	14

Eight **intoxicated subjects** were removed from the hunting environment during the nine-day hunt (see appendix for synopsis).

Wardens responded to isolated complaints of **hunter harassment** around the state. Warden Pat Novesky (Three Lakes) reports that he investigated three separate cases of hunters harassing other hunters in Forest County. All the complaints dealt with conflict over hunting areas and involved threats or actions that arguably were undertaken to impede lawful hunting. Charges are being reviewed by the District Attorney. A hunter harassment investigation is also ongoing in Columbia County.

Wardens answered emergency calls for nine **search and rescue efforts** during the nine-day season. A synopsis is in the appendix.

**Buildings and vehicles shot** continue to rise. Increasing rural residential development means more building in the landscape. There were a total of (25) homes & barns, (3) cars and (1) tractor struck by bullets or slugs during the 2008 deer gun season.

#### Reported Incidents of Buildings Shot 2005-2008

Year	2008	2007	2006	2005
Number	25	19	15	7

#### Reported Incidents of Buildings & Vehicles Shot by Region and Weapon Type

Region	Buildings			Vehicles		
	Rifle	Shotgun	Unknown	Rifle	Shotgun	Unknown
Northern						
Northeast	2	9	4			

<b>West Central</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>South Central</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1 (tractor)</b>		
<b>Southeast</b>						

**Ground blinds** are reported increasingly popular throughout the state, both on the ground and on elevated platforms. Wardens observed a number of hunters using camouflage ground blinds on public property and overall found good compliance with this new rule. A number of hunters commented how much safer they felt sitting in the blinds knowing that other hunters can see their blind on the ground. Although not required, some ground blinds on private property however did display some blaze orange to provide better visibility to surrounding hunters. Most did not. Some hunters questioned the reasoning for only requiring blaze orange on ground blinds located on state lands and not all lands [DNR currently has authority to regulate the color of blinds only on lands that it owns, manages or controls].

**Rifle use in the newly combined CWD zone** drew considerable public comment and media attention prior to the season. In response, ten townships enacted ordinances prohibiting the use of rifles. Some townships had ordinances in place prior to the 2008 rule change. 134 townships were in the area where rifle use was newly allowed. A table of ordinances and additional observations are in the appendix.

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## COMPLIANCE

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### **Violations during the 2008 Deer Gun Season:**

- Total violations of all kinds decreased by 7% to 1400 violations from 1518 violations in 2007, which was the highest number recorded since the year 2000.
- The top violation in 2008 is illegal use of bait, 308 cases, and 7% lower than the record number of baiting violations in 2007.
- Overall, illegal baiting and feeding violations accounted for 25% of the total number of violations (413 of 1400), a similar percentage to the 2007 season
- Feeding wild animal cases were the fifth most common violations with 54 violations, a decrease of 34% from 2007.
- Thirty three juvenile were cited for violations; a similar number to the average of 31 violations over the past 7 years
- Loaded and uncased guns in vehicles are similar to past years.
- Shooting from vehicles and shooting from within 50 feet of a road type violations declined by 44% from 2007 – 38 violations in 2008 versus 68 violations in 2007. This decline follows a 25% decline in 2007 over 2006.
- Loaning, borrowing and possessing another’s deer license and tag increased by 120% to 33 cases over 2007 and 2006 seasons
- Hunting with an improper license and fraud in obtaining a license increased by 75% for the two categories of violations to 50 cases in 2008, while hunting without a license declined by 16%.

### **Top Ten Violations Encountered by Wardens during the 2008 Deer Gun Season**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Violation</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>% Change</b>
1	Illegal use of bait - Firearms	308	331	254	221	150	-7%
2	Trans. loaded gun in vehicle	129	120	106	102	113	8%
3	Trans. uncased gun in vehicle	97	80	88	75	84	21%
4	Failure to validate tag	72	65	48	67	57	11%
5	Feeding wild animals violations	54	82	45	20	27	-34%

6	Hunt w/in 50' of paved road center	53	62	44	51	75	-15%
7	Hunt from an illegal elevated device	48	30	22	22	20	60%
8	Hunt with improper license	37	32	22	31	61	16%
9	Hunt deer or bear before or after hours	33	30	45	32	27	10%
10	Group deer hunt violation	29	30	14	19	22	-3%

### Summary of Total Violations by Year 2001-2008

Summary by Year	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
<b>Total Number of Violations</b>	1400	1518	1394	1280	1156	1259	1240	1340
<b>Juvenile</b>	33	4	35	45	37	32	28	38
<b>Adult</b>	1367	1514	1359	1235	1119	1227	1212	1302

<b>Total Number of Seizures</b>								
<b>Illegal Deer</b>	176	183	149	200	205	164	172	150
<b>Illegal Bear</b>	7	5	4	6	4	5	3	5
<b>Other</b>	106	144	89	99	72	76	98	99
<b>Carkill Deer</b>	12	9	13	21	17	20	16	20

### Calls to DNR Hotline- During the Nine Day Season Only

Type of call	2008	2007
Found dead deer or other carcass	42	60
Baiting and feeding	27	39
Heard shots; believes poaching	17	26
Hunt within 50 feet of roadways center	37	27
Shoot from a vehicle	12	10
Hunt before or after hours	38	18
Possession of untagged deer	16	12
Possession of illegal deer	11	15
Miscellaneous	187	204
Total hotlines	387	399
Calls to the hotline that were not DNR violations or other calls for service/info	148	150
Total calls	535	549

Illegal **baiting and feeding** was by far the most prevalent violation encountered by wardens during the 2008 deer gun season, accounting for 25% of the enforcement actions. The number of illegal baiting violations was 308, down 7% from the 2007 record of 338. The number of illegal feeding violations decreased 34% from 2007. Wardens continue to encounter a high incidence of baiting and feeding violations in the northern two-thirds of the state, predominantly in the Northern, Northeast and West Central Regions. Baiting and feeding violations continue to decrease South Central and Southeast Regions where baiting and feeding has been illegal now for several years. Baiting and feeding observations are detailed in the appendix.

## 2008 Deer Gun Season Baiting and Feeding Cases by Region

Region	Baiting Cases	Feeding Cases
Northern	123	14
West Central	112	20
Northeast	57	11
South Central	8	8
Southeast	8	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>54</b>

51 **wolves** were “on the air” (tracked by radio collar) during the 2008 regular firearm season. One of the collared wolves from Rusk County was found dead during the deer season. In addition, four non-collared wolves were discovered dead in Vilas, Monroe, Juneau and Adams Counties. An additional collared wolf was discovered killed just prior to the deer season in Ashland County. The suspected illegal kills are currently under investigation.

Three additional collared wolves disappeared during the deer season. Their status is currently unknown. These disappearing wolves included an adult female in the Swamp Creek area east of the Willow Flowage in Oneida County; an adult female in the Hoffman Lake area of south Ashland County northeast of Park Falls, and an adult male in the Dunbar area of northern Marinette County.

### Customer Service and Logistics Observations

Wardens report repeated requests for a consistent and logical process of tagging deer. Overall, it appears people are getting used to the current system of tags. The EAB and herd control tags still confuse some hunters who have the impression that they could be used anywhere, including regular deer management units that were not EAB or Herd Control units. Some hunters continue to believe they can use their buck deer carcass tag on an antlerless deer in EAB and Herd Control Units.

Change the print sequence of the carcass tags, when printed by the ALIS license terminal is suggested to help avoid some mis-tagging of deer. When the ALIS machines print the tags and license, the machines currently print the antlerless “herd control” tag between the buck tag and the license (back tag). Several hunters did report losing their buck tag because they had to rip off their buck tag to access their antlerless tag. In EAB units, hunters are required to tag an antlerless deer first so the normal sequence of use is antlerless tag, then the buck tag.

Earn-a-Buck stickers were reported falling off the back of the carcass tag,. Some hunters did not attach the sticker because they were afraid it would fall off. The adhesive quality for the plastic like carcass tags should be reviewed.

As the Herd Reduction units change each year new people are affected by where they can and can not use the “free” Herd Reduction unit antlerless tags. Some hunters who could not use them in the past now can, and other who have been able to use them for several years in their unit, no longer can. One suggestion received was that maybe the ALIS system can generate a question at the time of license sale to ask if the customer plans on hunting in a Herd Control unit. If not, then not printing out the EAB/Herd Control deer carcass tag (if not requested). The customer could always come back and request their free tag at a later date if they change their mind.

EAB stickers and the illegal and/or improper issuance of EAB stickers continue to be an issue.

Wardens are noticing a concerning trend at the registration stations bordering the EAB and non-EAB area units. The amount of effort taking place by individuals attempting to circumvent the Earn-a-Buck requirements is increasing. Some are misrepresenting where they actually killed the antlerless deer in order to get an EAB sticker, or misrepresenting where a buck was killed to avoid EAB. Several investigations are ongoing regarding these types of violations. Complaints of registering car kills and registering antlerless deer multiple times are also being received.

Some registration stations were found to not be filling in the hunter's customer ID number on EAB stickers, which leads to sharing of EAB authorizations. Wardens also found the EAB stickers and registration tags placed on the counter where customers are seated, making it easy for the less than honest person to simply help themselves and take one. Reports of stickers being sold have also been received. The desire to get a buck authorization sticker even entices some to violate the group hunting law by having others who were not present tag and register an antlerless deer.

**Chronic Wasting Disease Zone** regulations are reported to be working well. Disease monitoring continues. Wardens reported that combining all the CWD units into one CWD management zone was a very positive change to the season framework and reduced confusion. Southeast Region wardens reported the level of confusion related to the deer tagging issues has diminished. The elimination of hunter's choice/either-sex season and the creation of the single CWD management unit have been welcome and have created far less confusion among the hunters. The only problems encountered were people that were not confused, but rather people trying to skirt the Earn-A-Buck requirements. Hunters were definitely targeting the white deer now that they are legal to shoot in the CWD zone. Warden David Walz registered four white deer during the nine day gun season in Jefferson County. Two of the deer were bucks, one being a nine pointer and the other an eight. All are going to be mounted by the hunters with a couple full body mounts planned.

Disease surveillance focused this fall on the CWD Management Zone (CWD MZ), the Northern Region, and around two game farms in Portage County and one in Crawford County. Within the CWD MZ we targeted our disease surveillance efforts in the western core monitoring area, eastern monitoring area, and an area around Devil's Lake State Park within which we tried to sample all adult deer. Throughout the rest of the CWD MZ we offered testing for hunters if they were able to bring their deer to one of our sampling stations. We were able to complete surveillance in our Northern Region this fall thanks to federal funding that Senator Kohl was able to secure for us this year.

Approximately 6600 samples have been collected and posted to our website through the end of the November gun deer season. This number will rise as we get caught up with the data entry associated with our sampling efforts. Department staff increased the effort to collect lymph nodes in the field this fall, rather than collecting heads. That effort was well received by hunters and reduces some of our costs by reducing staffing needs at Black Earth Lab. As of the end of November we have test results back on about 4100 deer with 21 positives posted on our website.

We again had a great group of DNR staff, volunteers, students, and sister agency personnel assisting at our registration stations and at the Black Earth processing center. Those long hours and assistance are greatly appreciated!

Over 1000 deer are estimated to have been donated through the Target Hunger program operating in the CWD MZ. This represents a doubling of the donations received last year. Many thanks to the partners who have joined forces to form this coalition offering a pantry option to hunters in the CWD zone. The Department is covering the costs of testing the deer that are going into the pantry as well as providing funding for the pantry program through cooperative agreements with the various community action coalitions involved.

CWD management direction will be guided by the 10-year CWD management plan that is under development. The draft plan is posted on the CWD website with over 250 comments offered so far on the plan from around the state. Staff continues to meet with partners, sister agencies and stakeholder groups to review the plan and seek comments. The goal of the plan over the next 10 years is to minimize the area of Wisconsin where CWD occurs and the number of infected deer in the state.

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## DEER HARVEST INFORMATION

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Based on hunter and biologist reports, deer sightings were down for hunters in much of the state. Statewide preliminary registration figures indicate the harvest during the 9-day season was down 19% over 2007 to 276,985 (Table 1, Figure 1). A final pre-hunt population estimate will be complete in February when harvest and population data have been analyzed.

The 2008 nine-day harvest includes 178,145 antlerless deer – a 19% decrease from 2007 and 98,840 antlered bucks - a 21% decrease (Figure 1). Widespread earn-a-buck and Herd Control regulations appear to be moving the deer population downward toward healthy herd goals as intended. The antlerless to antlered buck harvest ratio during the 2008 9-day season was 1.80; higher than it has been previously. There were 56 Herd Control units and 57 Earn-a-buck (EAB) units this year including CWD units (Figure 3). Early harvest figures indicate a reduced buck harvest this year. Credit goes to the Wisconsin hunters for again demonstrating that herd control and EAB seasons can work to manage for healthy deer populations.

The statewide population projection prior to the hunting seasons was 1.5 – 1.7 million deer. Although we estimated the impacts of winter when making the projection last March, subsequently winter weather continued particularly long and there seemed to be a delayed spring throughout the state. Those two factors not only impact deer survival, but also fawn production. The first indicator of reduced fawn production came in early November. The fawn-doe survey is conducted by wildlife managers and cooperators in July, August and September each year. The thousands of observations from throughout the state are then recorded and computerized for analysis. Preliminary results show the statewide 2008 fawn to doe ratio is 14% below the long term average. Supporting that finding, preliminary aging and antler development data indicate there was below average antler development in some areas of the state; likely attributable to the harsh winter last year and late spring this year. We will continue to analyze these data along with deer harvest data when considering population modeling and season structures for next year.

Hunters may be curious about the 2008 pre-hunt **projection** of 1.5 to 1.7 million deer in light of the preliminary 2008 harvest tally. The SAK *estimate* is made only for the population at the end of the hunting season. It is not the pre-hunt **projection**. We will know, with good accuracy, the number of deer killed each fall, and the age and gender distribution in the population. These are the critical data in population *estimation*.

The 2008 harvest and population data, the fawn to doe ratios, and the harvest age structure will provide both a reliable SAK *estimate* for the February 2009 population and also valuable knowledge that will lead to better **projections** in the future. Once all the 2008 season harvest data are in, we will begin the process of calculating an SAK *estimate* of the February 2009 population which will influence the proposed 2009 season structure presented to the Natural Resources Board in April 2009.

Based on results of the 2008 hunt and population modeling exercises, it is possible that there will be fewer Herd Control units and fewer Earn-a-Buck units for 2009. As in all past years, biologists will hold public meetings around the state to review the 2008 hunt and to introduce the 2009 season structure proposal.

## **Other Hunting Seasons – Preliminary Harvest Reports**

- **Early Archery Season** -The early archery season ran from September 13<sup>th</sup> – November 20<sup>th</sup> this year. At this time, there are over 55,000 archery records in the stub database, but this number is increasing daily as data entry catches up.
- **October 4-day antlerless hunt** -The October 4-day antlerless deer hunt ran October 16-19 in herd control, EAB and CWD units. 327,365 hunters purchased a gun deer license prior to the October season. Of those, 83,252 were purchased during the week prior to the October hunt. As of December 1, there are approximately 37,000 antlerless deer stubs entered in the database with more data being entered each day.
- **Youth Gun Deer Hunt** - In the seventh youth gun deer hunt—the third year in which it was a separate weekend (October 11-12)- almost 4,000 harvest records have been entered. The Youth Hunt started in 2002 through the recommendations of the Deer 2000 and Beyond Project. Youth hunters can harvest one buck with their regular Gun Buck Deer Carcass Tag and antlerless deer per Antlerless Deer Carcass Tag valid for the unit they were hunting. The hunt was held in all deer management units statewide, with the exception of some state park and non-quota areas. Any hunter age 12 – 15 that had successfully completed a Hunter’s Education course could participate in the hunt. This year, the Department received a large number of inquiries about the hunt as well as a lot of positive feedback.
- **Gun Deer Hunt for Hunters with Disabilities** - The 2008 Gun Deer Hunt for Hunters with Disabilities was held October 4 - 12, 2008. Over 100 sponsors enrolled more than 62,000 acres of land to disabled hunters with Class A, long-term Class B, or Class C disabled hunting permits. The DNR’s Gun Deer Hunt for Hunters with Disabilities Program first began in 1990 to give disabled hunters an opportunity to hunt deer while mild temperatures persist and mobility is relatively unhampered. These hunts are sponsored by private individuals or organizations and almost entirely take place on privately-owned lands. Since the programs inception, the DNR has encouraged private landowners and organizations to become involved and sponsor a hunt. Unfortunately, no harvest information is available from these hunts. Reports from hunting camp representatives and individual disabled hunters, however, indicate the disabled hunting program continues to be a huge success. For many disabled hunters, the hunting experience itself is what’s most cherished, rather than harvesting a deer. Steady increases in sponsorship and participation have been observed each year and the popularity of the program continues to soar. We are committed to making opportunities available to everyone regardless of their physical abilities or limitations. We are proud of the continued success of this program and we look forward to acquiring more sponsors and participants in years to come.



**Table 1. Wisconsin's Preliminary 9-Day Regular Firearm Deer Season Registration Totals 2007 - 2008**

<b>NER NINE-DAY CALL-IN REGISTRATION</b>									
	<b>2007</b>			<b>2008</b>			<b>2007 vs. 2008</b>		
<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>ANTLERLESS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>ANTLERLESS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>ANTLERLESS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Brown	378	1004	1382	268	773	1041	-29.10	-23.01	-24.67
Calumet	471	1155	1626	402	963	1365	-14.65	-16.62	-16.05
Door	1108	2039	3147	900	1461	2361	-18.77	-28.35	-24.98
Fond du Lac	1196	2145	3341	1028	1991	3019	-14.05	-7.18	-9.64
Green Lake	1298	2508	3806	1225	2169	3394	-5.62	-13.52	-10.83
Kewaunee	693	1658	2351	612	1374	1986	-11.69	-17.13	-15.53
Manitowoc	837	2065	2902	645	1541	2186	-22.94	-25.38	-24.67
Marinette	4322	3914	8236	2804	2579	5383	-35.12	-34.11	-34.64
Marquette	2008	4394	6402	1825	3529	5354	-9.11	-19.69	-16.37
Oconto	2988	3476	6464	1991	2221	4212	-33.37	-36.10	-34.84
Outagamie	1651	3248	4899	1168	2292	3460	-29.25	-29.43	-29.37
Shawano	2618	5085	7703	2238	3066	5304	-14.51	-39.71	-31.14
Waupaca	4167	8037	12204	3076	5716	8792	-26.18	-28.88	-27.96
Waushara	1748	3558	5306	1571	2893	4464	-10.13	-18.69	-15.87
Winnebago	605	1268	1873	500	1039	1539	-17.36	-18.06	-17.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>26088</b>	<b>45554</b>	<b>71642</b>	<b>20,253</b>	<b>33,607</b>	<b>53,860</b>	<b>-22.37</b>	<b>-26.23</b>	<b>-24.82</b>

<b>SCR NINE-DAY CALL-IN REGISTRATION</b>									
	<b>2007</b>			<b>2008</b>			<b>2007 vs. 2008</b>		
<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>ANTLERLESS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>ANTLERLESS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>ANTLERLESS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Columbia	2074	4100	6174	2113	4056	6169	1.9	-1.1	-0.1
Dane	806	1506	2312	779	1813	2592	-3.3	20.4	12.1
Dodge	1270	2778	4048	1291	3066	4357	1.7	10.4	7.6
Grant	2372	4362	6734	1945	4577	6522	-18.0	4.9	-3.1
Green	628	1454	2082	546	1221	1767	-13.1	-16.0	-15.1
Iowa	1231	2177	3408	1112	2172	3284	-9.7	-0.2	-3.6
Jefferson	681	1725	2406	846	1977	2823	24.2	14.6	17.3
Lafayette	1023	1400	2423	766	1885	2651	-25.1	34.6	9.4
Richland	1256	2475	3731	1564	2855	4419	24.5	15.4	18.4
Rock	352	862	1214	395	1184	1579	12.2	37.4	30.1
Sauk	2316	4597	6913	2240	4257	6497	-3.3	-7.4	-6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>14009</b>	<b>27436</b>	<b>41445</b>	<b>13597</b>	<b>29063</b>	<b>42660</b>	<b>-2.9</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>2.9</b>

<b>SER NINE-DAY CALL-IN REGISTRATION</b>									
	<b>2007</b>			<b>2008</b>			<b>2007 vs. 2008</b>		
<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>ANTLERLESS</b>	<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>ANTLERLESS</b>	<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>ANTLERLESS</b>	<b>TOTAL*</b>
Kenosha	88	149	237	79	168	247	-10.2	12.8	4.2
Milwaukee	2	4	6	2	3	5	0.0	-25.0	-16.7

Ozaukee	206	392	598
Racine	126	349	475
Sheboygan	539	1073	1612
Walworth	136	361	497
Washington	739	1347	2086
Waukesha	339	801	1140
<b>Total</b>	<b>2175</b>	<b>4476</b>	<b>6651</b>

169	285	454
132	306	438
503	992	1495
193	526	719
561	1259	1820
347	843	1190
<b>1986</b>	<b>4382</b>	<b>6368</b>

-18.0	-27.3	-24.1
4.8	-12.3	-7.8
-6.7	-7.5	-7.3
41.9	45.7	44.7
-24.1	-6.5	-12.8
2.4	5.2	4.4
<b>-8.7</b>	<b>-2.1</b>	<b>-4.3</b>

**NOR NINE-DAY CALL-IN REGISTRATION**

COUNTY	<u>2007</u>		
	BUCKS	ANTLERLESS	TOTAL
Ashland	1809	1736	3545
Barron	3307	5810	9117
Bayfield	3505	4544	8049
Burnett	2261	4026	6287
Douglas	3550	4306	7856
Florence	1314	1471	2785
Forest	1291	1024	2315
Iron	857	679	1536
Langlade	1885	2704	4589
Lincoln	2331	3177	5508
Oneida	2465	3320	5785
Polk	3364	6099	9463
Price	2279	2987	5266
Rusk	2374	4085	6459
Sawyer	2437	3296	5733
Taylor	2303	4240	6543
Vilas	1404	2085	3489
Washburn	2379	4032	6411
<b>Total</b>	<b>41115</b>	<b>59621</b>	<b>100736</b>

<u>2008</u>		
BUCKS	ANTLERLESS	TOTAL
1219	1289	2508
2563	4551	7114
2352	3212	5564
1603	2865	4468
2123	3458	5581
944	467	1411
774	478	1252
542	467	1009
1255	1789	3044
1473	2152	3625
1263	1797	3060
2658	5014	7672
1559	1839	3398
1692	2642	4334
1820	2749	4569
1823	3223	5046
928	990	1918
1929	3184	5113
<b>28520</b>	<b>42166</b>	<b>70686</b>

<u>2007 vs. 2008</u>		
BUCKS	ANTLERLESS	TOTAL
-32.6	-25.7	-29.3
-22.5	-21.7	-22.0
-32.9	-29.3	-30.9
-29.1	-28.8	-28.9
-40.2	-19.7	-29.0
-28.2	-68.3	-49.3
-40.0	-53.3	-45.9
-36.8	-31.2	-34.3
-33.4	-33.8	-33.7
-36.8	-32.3	-34.2
-48.8	-45.9	-47.1
-21.0	-17.8	-18.9
-31.6	-38.4	-35.5
-28.7	-35.3	-32.9
-25.3	-16.6	-20.3
-20.8	-24.0	-22.9
-33.9	-52.5	-45.0
-18.9	-21.0	-20.2
<b>-30.6</b>	<b>-29.3</b>	<b>-29.8</b>

**WCR NINE-DAY CALL-IN REGISTRATION**

COUNTY	<u>2007</u>		
	BUCKS	ANTLERLESS	TOTAL
Adams	1,825	3,505	5,330
Buffalo	1,904	4,367	6,271
Chippewa	2,596	5,170	7,766
Clark	3,484	7,201	10,685
Crawford	1,573	2,786	4,359
Dunn	2,009	4,830	6,839
Eau Claire	1,501	3,078	4,579
Jackson	3,321	6,394	9,715
Juneau	1,945	3,918	5,863
La Crosse	1,466	2,537	4,003
Marathon	3,976	6,747	10,723

<u>2008</u>		
BUCKS	ANTLERLESS	TOTAL
1,364	2,682	4,046
1,664	3,851	5,515
2,231	4,250	6,481
3,310	6,224	9,534
1,105	2,951	4,056
1,657	3,992	5,649
1,155	2,431	3,586
2,598	5,404	8,002
1,705	3,177	4,882
1,328	2,447	3,775
3,033	4,908	7,941

<u>2007 vs. 2008</u>		
BUCKS	ANTLERLESS	TOTAL
-25.26	-23.48	-24.09
-12.61	-11.82	-12.06
-14.06	-17.79	-16.55
-4.99	-13.57	-10.77
-29.75	5.92	-6.95
-17.52	-17.35	-17.40
-23.05	-21.02	-21.69
-21.77	-15.48	-17.63
-12.34	-18.91	-16.73
-9.41	-3.55	-5.70
-23.72	-27.26	-25.94

Monroe	2,714	4,050	6,764	2,143	4,222	6,365	-21.04	4.25	-5.90
Pepin	682	1,528	2,210	638	1,508	2,146	-6.45	-1.31	-2.90
Pierce	1,390	2,861	4,251	1,306	2,689	3,995	-6.04	-6.01	-6.02
Portage	2,204	4,390	6,594	1,877	3,092	4,969	-14.84	-29.57	-24.64
St. Croix	1,008	2,003	3,011	692	1,671	2,363	-31.35	-16.58	-21.52
Trempealeau	2,875	6,679	9,554	2,283	4,975	7,258	-20.59	-25.51	-24.03
Vernon	2,694	4,730	7,424	2,059	4,664	6,723	-23.57	-1.40	-9.44
Wood	2,587	4,765	7,352	2,336	3,789	6,125	-9.70	-20.48	-16.69
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,754</b>	<b>81,539</b>	<b>123,293</b>	<b>34,484</b>	<b>68,927</b>	<b>103,411</b>	<b>-17.41</b>	<b>-15.47</b>	<b>-16.13</b>

<b>Statewide Totals</b>									
	<b>*2007 Figures</b>			<b>*2008 Figures</b>			<b>*2007 vs. 2008</b>		
	<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>ANTLERLESS</b>	<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>ANTLERLESS</b>	<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>ANTLERLESS</b>	<b>TOTAL*</b>
	<b>125,141</b>	<b>218,626</b>	<b>343,767</b>	<b>98,840</b>	<b>178,145</b>	<b>276,985</b>	<b>-21.02</b>	<b>-18.52</b>	<b>-19.43</b>

Figure 1. 9-Day gun deer kill and gun license sales (1993-2008)

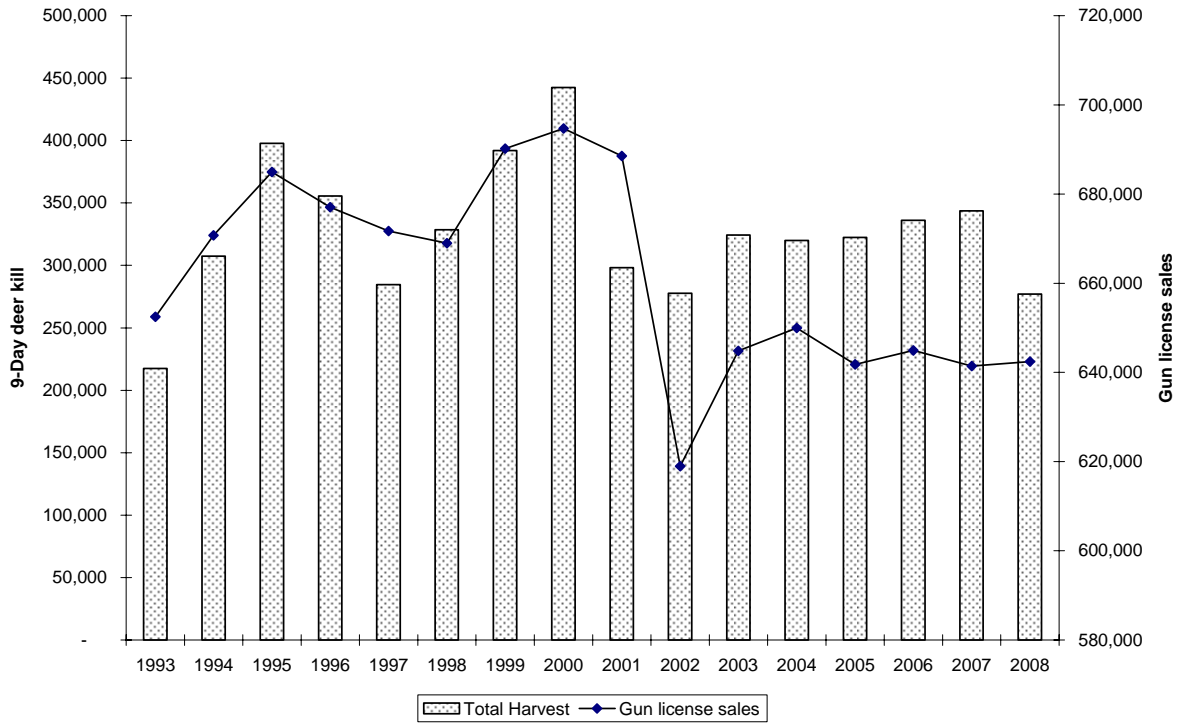


Figure 2. 9-Day gun hunt antlered and antlerless harvest 1993- 2008

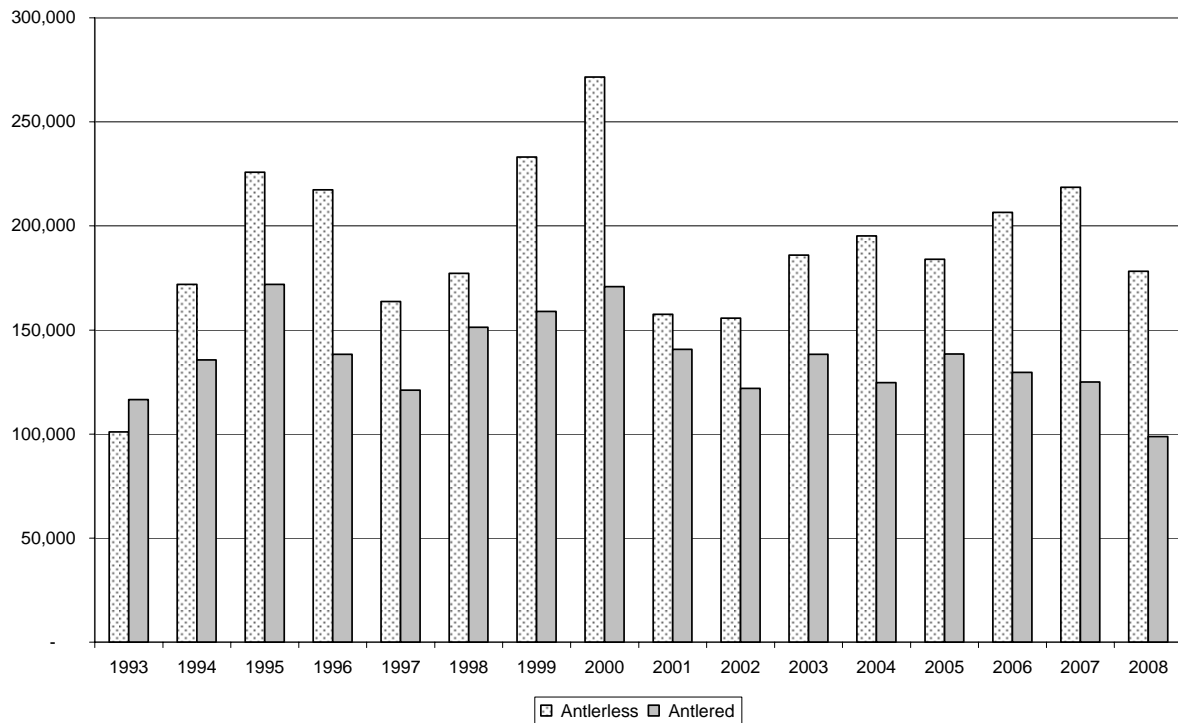
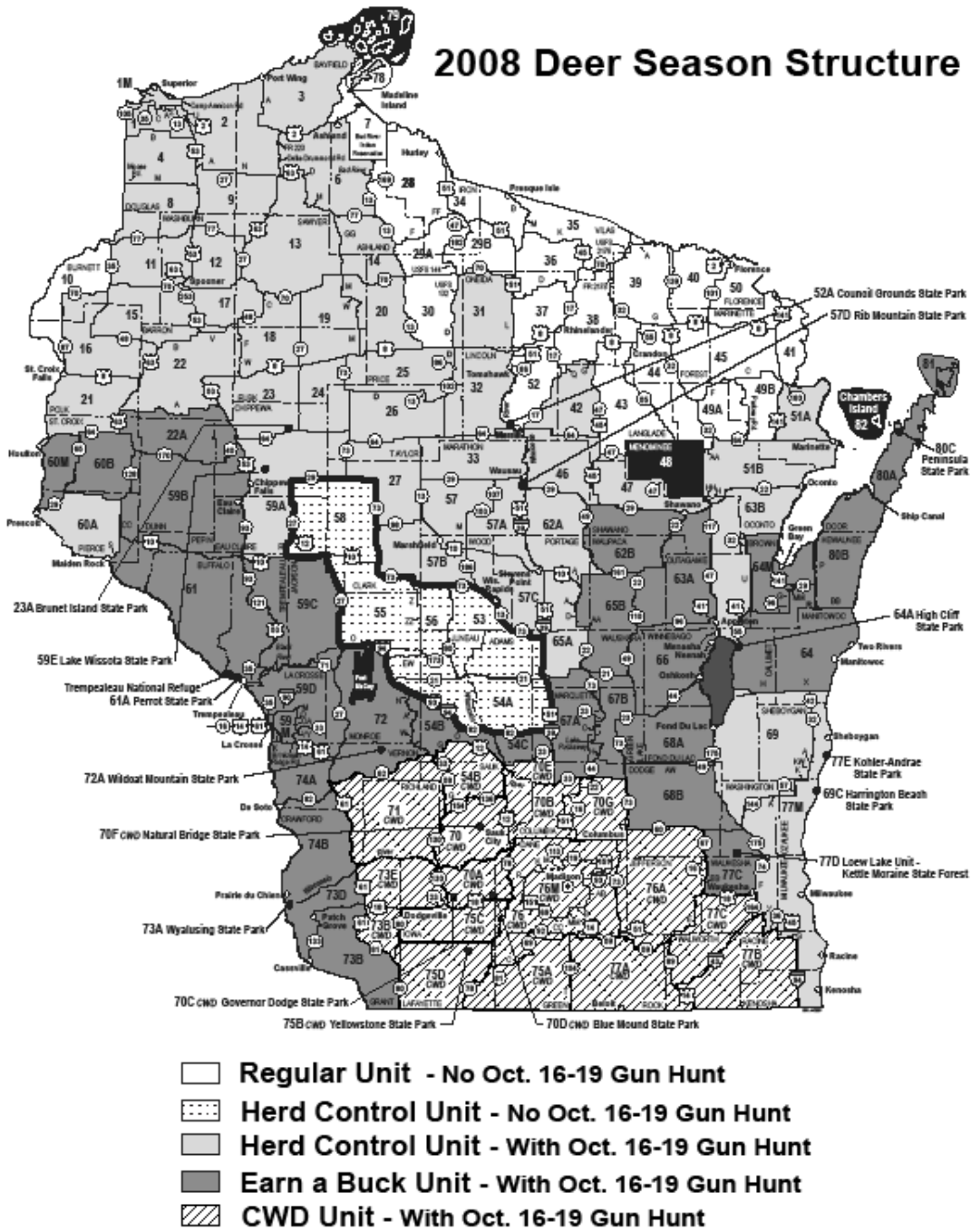


Figure 3. 2008 Deer season structure.



## APPENDIX

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### HUNTERS LEADING BY EXAMPLE – Passing on the Tradition

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These stories reveal the magic behind the hunt, why people are drawn to the hunting experience, and what they take away from it. This portion of the report is designed to communicate the human interest and social value of the deer hunting experience from the eyes of the warden in the field.

Warden Doug Bilgo (Campbellsport) contacted a hunter who was parked with flashers on along the road after the close of season. The hunter found two guns in cases, and two storage boxes that were lying on the roadway near an intersection in the Kettle Moraine State Forest – Northern Unit. Unable to locate an owner name, Warden Bilgo collected the items and took them to the DNR Office and advised the Fond du Lac Sheriff's Department. Bilgo was contacted by the owner about 1 hour later. There were cheers when Warden Bilgo informed the hunter that he had the guns and gear. The items were returned that evening.

Warden Mike Stahl (Oconto Falls) reported several hunters found a large buck lying in the middle of STH 32 north of Suring. They brought the deer to a local registration station and it was returned to the rightful owner.

Warden Ted Dremel (Waupaca) contacted a hunter as he was dragging a large antlered buck he harvested on public hunting grounds in Iola Township, Waupaca County. Another hunter walked past and was beginning his hunt. The hunter who harvested the large buck told the hunter walking past he could hunt his stand. This was the same location where the hunter had just harvested the buck. The hunter was grateful and said he did not have a lot of time to scout prior to the season. When Warden Dremel saw this hunter a few days later hunting on the same property, he informed him that he had shot an antlerless deer from the same stand later that day. Both hunters helped remove the stand and drag the antlerless deer to the road at the end of hunting hours.

Warden Boyd Richter, Rock County, and Recreational Safety Warden Jon King observed a group of hunters dragging a deer that they had harvested on private land leased for public hunting. Warden Richter found that a 12 year old in the group had harvested his first deer and the 12 year old had dragged the deer across a field with the help of another young hunter, but still had a couple hundred yards of uphill drag ahead. Richter offered to help him drag the deer the final distance, and congratulated the 12 year old for harvesting his first deer.

Warden Michael Green of Wisconsin Dells checked several hunters and their families with 12-year old boys and girls with their first deer. Warden Green checked a hunting group that had a grandfather, father, and son all with bucks they harvested on the same day. They were having a photo made to hang in their hunting cabin. The grandfather said many things had changed over the years but the family hunting tradition had always stayed the same.

A man called Warden John Buss of Sauk County and turned himself in for violating the Earn-a-Buck rules. The man stated that his 12 year old son shot a buck when neither he nor his son had a buck authorization sticker. The father explained that he has not hunted for almost 20 years, but when his son turned 12 this past year he wanted his son to have the deer hunting experience. The father and son stayed over night in a camper, had a campfire and then cooked breakfast in the morning before setting out. The son and father hunted on opening day and had a great day until the son shot a buck by mistake. Wardens Buss and Deputy Warden Travis Hilliard met with them and determined that since they had immediately turned themselves in, that no citations would be issued.

Prior to the 2008 season, Warden Mike Nice of Richland County was contacted by an experienced hunter who said he was available to assist any youth from the area who might not otherwise get a chance to gun

deer hunt. Warden Nice made a contact with a young man who had previously been involved with the youth hunting programs. The young hunter was extremely excited when Warden Nice mentioned he had the opportunity to go with an experienced hunter who also outfitted other hunters. A phone call from the hunter during the gun deer season revealed the young hunter had seen many deer and harvested a buck and a doe. Most of all, the hunter expressed how the youth was extremely respectful and appreciative of having the opportunity to go gun deer hunting. The hunter stated it was one of the most fulfilling moments he's had in the field.

A young man in Columbia County called the Hotline to report himself to Warden Paul Nadolski for shooting a buck when no one in his party had a buck sticker. The hunter accepted that he might get a citation, but field dressed and brought the deer out so that it wasn't wasted.

Sheboygan County Warden Mike Clutter reported noticing several young women (11 – 15 years old) accompanying their fathers this year. Some of the girls were hunting and others were tagging along to see what it was all about, but they all seemed to be enjoying the experience and the dads were happy to have them along.

Walworth County Warden Jason Roberts spoke with a group of four hunters that included dad, mom, daughter and son. They hunt exclusively in the state forest and they had harvested two does during their hunt. Mom and Dad each took one of the kids and each two-person group had shot a doe. They said they were out on the last day of the season to "break the tie." The daughter also told the warden about the big buck she let walk by because she did not have an Earn-a-Buck sticker.

Milwaukee County Warden Nick Blankenheim checked a hunter in Kenosha County who was coming out of his stand on a farm field with his seven year old brother. The hunter said he wanted to teach his brother about hunting ethics and traditions. Warden Blankenheim stressed to the hunter how important it is to get the younger generations into the field and thanked the hunter for passing on hunting traditions.

Warden Jim Jung, Rhinelander, reports that on the last day of season he contacted a first year hunter in the woods with his father on timber company lands. The youth had attended the 2008 Youth Heritage Day in Rhinelander and was still excited about his first year hunting although they had not had any luck.

Warden Brad Biser of Brule encountered a retired hunter who had spent time with his grandson and they had shot a deer. The retired hunter felt good he was able to spend some time with his grandson because he was unable to spend time with his sons growing up because of working during the hunting seasons.

Langlade County Warden Andy Dryja talked with a 12 year old boy who shot a nub buck opening day and then shot a five point buck on Monday. They were the first deer that the young man ever shot. The subjects had pictures and detailed stories about the hunt. The young man got to experience something that many young people overlook – the entire aspect of hunting, shooting deer, enjoying quality time with his family, the outdoors etc. It was easy to see that the boy's dad and grandfather were prouder than he was.

Warden Kyle Kosin working in Rusk County contacted a father and son at a hunting camp on Sunday. The father proudly showed Kosin a large eight point buck and a smaller six point buck. The father and son informed Kosin of the entire story about how the father and son had shot both deer while hunting together in the same stand. The father explained to Kosin that the son couldn't get a shot at the first buck and begged his father to shoot it, so the father shot and killed it. They tagged and field dressed the buck together. The father and son then climbed back into the stand to continue hunting. A few minutes later the father saw a younger buck coming through the woods, and the son made a perfect shot.

Warden Sue Miller (Hayward) reported meeting a very proud 14 year old female hunter who had just harvested an antlerless deer during a family deer drive in the Clam Lake area. Her stepfather taught her how to properly tag and field dress the deer, which she did on her own.

Warden Dave Swanson (Minong) reported that 18 year old Nick Owens (Minong) was scouting potential hunting spots on Tuesday of the regular gun deer season. During his travels, Nick passed a parked truck with what appeared to be an upset hunter on a cell phone. Nick decided to stop and see if the hunter was okay. The hunter stated that she had shot a buck and knew that she would not be able to retrieve it on her own. She had called a member of her hunting party for assistance but was unsuccessful. Nick graciously offered to assist her. They teamed up and located the spot the deer had been standing when she shot it. Using skills learned from a family that hunts together, Nick located the blood trail which they then followed successfully to where they spotted the dead deer. The buck sported a beautiful 17 point rack. She proudly tagged her buck and Nick field dressed it. They teamed up to drag the buck back to the hunter's truck. After dragging the heavy buck through rough terrain they discovered that they could not lift the buck into the truck. Another group of hunters happened along and stopped to help load the buck.

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## SYNOPSIS OF ACCIDENT INCIDENTS BY REGIONS

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### **Northeast Region**

11-23-08 Outagamie County – Fatal hunting incident: Involving a four person hunting party – 3 were standers on a drive and one hunter was the driver. The driver was walking a grassy field to drive deer to the three standers. A doe crossed between the shooter and the victim. The shooter shot twice missing the deer and striking the victim once in the chest. The victim was located on the other side of a line of trees and thick brush that blocked the view between the shooter and the victim, who were about 200 yards apart. The shooter was using a shotgun.

11-23-08 Shawano County – Non-Fatal Hunting Incident: Shooter/victim saw a deer coming into shooting range. The Shooter/Victim was raising the gun to get ready for a shot at the deer. The Shooter/Victim was using a 20 gauge single shot break action shotgun. The shooter/victim was pulling back the hammer on the firearm when the hammer slipped from his thumb causing the firearm to discharge striking the victim in his left foot between the big toe and the next toe over.

11-23-08 Shawano County – Non-fatal hunting Incident: The shooter and victim were part of the same three person deer drive. A buck ran back between the victim and shooter. The shooter fired three shots at the buck. The second shot is believed to be the shot that struck the victim in the shoulder. The shooter and victim were separated by thick brush. The victim was located on the edge of field and the shooter moving through a brushy low spot located between two fields. The shooter was not able to see the victim. The shooter was using a shotgun.

11-26-8 Kewaunee County – Non-fatal hunting incident: The shooter/victim removed his shotgun from his vehicle and loaded it with five shotgun slugs. The shooter/victim leaned against his car which was parked in a farm field access driveway. The shooter/victim placed the muzzle of his shotgun on his left foot while waiting for the standers of the planned deer drive to get into position. The shooter/victim was wearing wet or damp gloves which may have caused his hand to slip from the stock of the firearm resulting in his finger hitting the trigger causing the shotgun to discharge. The 12 gauge slug entered to top of the shooter/victim's left foot between the big toe and next toe. The slug went through his left foot and lodged about four inches beneath it in the ground.



## **Northern Region**

Warden Lance Burns (Gordon) Paul Martin (Webster) with several other wardens investigated a hunting incident in Burnett where a subject shot his toe with a rifle, initially claiming it was while he was showing a friend how to unload a rifle. Interviews and investigation revealed the subjects were road hunting and were going to shoot a deer from their vehicle. After the deer ran, the subject tried to unload the rifle in the vehicle and it discharged into his foot and went through the floor board and into the tire. It was also discovered the subject was not a licensed hunter.

## **Southeast Region**

Washington County Warden Bob Lee, assisted by wardens Bill Mitchell and John Plenke led an investigation of a shooting incident near Hartford on Sunday of the opening weekend. A group of 16 hunters were making a deer drive when a deer ran toward the standers. Eight shots were fired at the deer by three different members of the hunting party. The victim was a stander and was shot by another stander who was 163 yards away. The shooter could not see the victim.

On the second Saturday of the nine day season, Southeast Region Wardens Mike Clutter, Bob Lee, Kevin Mickelberg, Randy Stark, Bill Mitchell and Mark Pearce investigated a hunting incident in Farmington Township, Washington County. Two friends were driving a standing cornfield with two other hunters posted outside the field. One of the drivers shot at a deer through the standing corn, missed the deer, and struck the other driver. The victim suffered a broken lower left leg and tissue damage.

## **West Central Region**

On Monday, November 24, Warden Bill Wrasse (Durand) investigated a self-inflicted incident where an 18 year old deer hunter was trying to re-holster his pistol when it discharged. The bullet struck his leg twice, once above the knee and once below, striking 3 arteries. The victim's hunting partners kept their composure and got the victim to the hospital quickly.

On Thanksgiving morning, Warden Matt Weber (Necedah) was dispatched to the location of a 13 member deer drive which took place in Meadow Valley Wildlife Area in Juneau County. Four members of the party fired shots at a running deer. One of the bullets struck a hunter from a different group above the hip. He was transported by ambulance to the Tomah Hospital. The accident is still under investigation.

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## **SYNOPSIS OF FELONS IN POSSESSION OF FIREARMS CASES**

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- Warden Jill Schartner of Drummond made contact with a hunter driving slowly down a back road, with the window down. During her contact with the subject he was found to be driving with an expired driver's license, he was a felon in possession of two firearms, he had a stun gun tucked in the driver's side door and an opened switch blade at his feet. He was also found to have been smoking marijuana while driving, and the still warm pot pipe in his hand was seized by Warden Schartner. He then handed two bags of marijuana to Warden Schartner. He was arrested on 9 charges.
- Warden Amie Egstad of Bayfield checked a hunter with too much bait. After documenting the evidence and taking down information, Warden Egstad walked back out to her squad where a criminal history check was done on the subject. The subject was a felon who was not allowed to

possess firearms. Warden Egstad waited for the subject to walk back out and the subject was arrested.

- Warden Tom Heisler (Winter) and Deputy Warden Kathy Oginski made contact at a hunting camp of a person known to be a convicted felon. Investigation revealed the subject was deer hunting this year and previous years. His firearm was recovered under a bed in the trailer. Citations were issued for group deer hunting violations also.
- Warden Ben Nadolski (Waupun) assisted the Fond du Lac County Sheriff's Department with a trespass complaint. One of the subjects involved in the trespassing violation was a convicted felon, who also had a revoked driver's license. He was arrested for being in possession of a firearm, but would not admit to having driven his vehicle; instead, he insisted that his 14 year old son had driven him there. A further check revealed that the shotgun was reported stolen last year from the city of Fond du Lac.
- Warden Mark Schraufnagel (Shawano East) observed an individual dressed in blaze orange operating an ATV on the roadway. Warden Schraufnagel observed that the subject had a gun case strapped to the front of the ATV. He activated his emergency lights to stop the subject. The subject failed to stop the ATV and accelerated past Warden Schraufnagel. Warden Schraufnagel pursued the subject through agricultural fields with the pursuit ending back at the subject's residence. The subject ran into a garage with the firearm and then exited the garage where he was arrested and handcuffed. When asked why the subject ran from the Warden he stated that he was a convicted felon. Warden Schraufnagel seized the firearm and the subject was transported to the Shawano County Jail.
- Warden Boyd Richter, Rock County and Recreational Safety Warden Jon King checked an area where a convicted felon was reported to be hunting. The suspect was located hunting and in possession of a 12 gauge shotgun. Richter seized the gun and advised the suspect he would be charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm.
- Warden Paul Nell of Horicon and Deputy Warden Brenda VonRueden of Madison were working in Theresa Marsh State Wildlife Area when they saw a group of hunters standing around a dead deer. As the wardens approached they saw the deer was untagged and determined who had shot it. The wardens discovered that the hunter was a convicted felon and had a warrant for his arrest.
- Warden Paul Nell of Horicon and Deputy Warden Brenda VonRueden were working on the west end of the Horicon Marsh when they saw deer hunters and began to walk across a field to contact one of the hunters. A second hunter across the field from them ran away. The wardens tracked the hunter and found his blaze orange clothes, back tag, and shotgun hidden near a tree. With the assistance of the Dodge County Sheriff's Department, a perimeter was established and the wardens found the hunter in a marshy area. It was determined the hunter was a convicted felon and was using his a borrowed gun deer license. The hunter was arrested for being a felon in possession of a firearm, obstruction, hunting deer without a license and possession of drug paraphernalia. He was taken to the Dodge County Jail.
- Wardens Joe Frost and Martin Stone, and Deputy Wardens Alan Erickson and Chad Breuer worked complaints of a person hunting without a license during a period of revocation in Grant County. Wardens found the person wearing his girlfriend's backtag while he had been hunting deer. He was arrested for two outstanding warrants. His companion, who was the driver of the vehicle, was a convicted felon in possession of a firearm and had been hunting without a gun license but was wearing his archery backtag. He was arrested for being a felon in possession of a firearm, operating a vehicle after revocation and a probation hold. Numerous charges are pending.

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## SYNOPSIS OF INTOXICATED SUBJECTS INCIDENTS

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- Wardens Bill Miller (Adams) and Nate Furlong (Recruit) had two cases of intoxicated hunters during the season. One was hunting over bait and had a BAC of .20. The other hunter had a BAC of .13 and was hunting after hours. As the wardens approached him, the hunter pointed his loaded rifle at them using his scope to see who the wardens were. Charges are pending in both cases.
- Warden Dave Youngquist of Iowa County found a hunter sitting at the base of a tree and when he got closer he further observed a marijuana pipe sitting on the lap of the hunter. The subject said that he had smoked about a bowl of marijuana and that he had more in his coat pocket. He was booked into jail for possession of THC and paraphernalia.
- Wardens Tyler Strelow, Dane County and Deputy Warden Cody Kanable observed an ice shack placed in a field being used as a deer stand. Wardens contacted the hunters and found that one person was under the influence of an intoxicant and had been smoking marijuana while hunting, and another person had been smoking marijuana while hunting. The impaired hunters were found to be in possession of loaded firearms. Wardens Strelow and Kanable arrested both hunters and booked them for criminal misdemeanor charges.
- Warden Tyler Strelow, Dane County, observed a group of three hunters doing a deer drive at approximately 8:00 AM. Warden Strelow made contact with the hunters to check licenses. Warden Strelow noticed that one of the hunters strongly smelled of an intoxicant. Warden Strelow performed field sobriety tests on the hunter and found him to be under the influence of an intoxicant. Warden Strelow booked him into the Jefferson County Jail on a criminal misdemeanor charge for going armed with a firearm while intoxicated. The hunter was also found to have two active warrants.
- Warden Paul Nadolski received a Hotline call of an intoxicated hunter near Doylestown in Columbia County. The suspect was found sleeping on the ground with a loaded .30-30 under his tree stand. The subject was arrested and an initial test of his blood showed that he had three times the legal limit to be operating a vehicle, let alone handling a firearm.
- Warden Ted Dremel (Waupaca) and Regional Warden Byron Goetsch (Green Bay) responded to the report of a self inflicted gun shot wound victim that was transported to the Waupaca Hospital. Investigation revealed that this person, who was not hunting, was using a .357 caliber handgun to fell a tree. As the tree fell, from shooting at the tree's trunk, part of the tree struck the victim's arm causing firearm to inadvertently discharge with the bullet entering the victims lower leg. Investigation also found that that this person had been drinking and was arrested for possession of a firearm while intoxicated.

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## SYNOPSIS OF SEARCH AND RESCUE EFFORTS

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Being ready to respond to emergencies to enhance public safety is a major goal of the warden service. Wardens responded to nine requests for search and/or rescue assistance in Clark, Sheboygan, Monroe, Rock, Fond du Lac, Manitowoc, Door, Waupaca and Shawano, Counties during the nine day deer gun season.

- Wardens Ken Thomson (Fall Creek), Barry Fetting (Marshfield), Juan Gomez (Recruit), and Andy Lundin (Recruit) responded to a report of a hunter found deceased in the Clark County Forest. Upon arrival, the wardens, along with deputy sheriffs, did locate the deceased 54-year old hunter. Preliminary investigation revealed that the hunter had been complaining of chest pains earlier in the day. The suspected cause of death is natural causes. The family was on scene and made the initial 911 call.
- Warden Matt Modjeski (Sparta) assisted the Monroe County Sheriff's Department with locating an overdue hunter with Multiple Sclerosis and a disabled vehicle on the Big Creek DNR land near Cataract. The hunter had been unable to get out of his vehicle for over 10 hours.
- Warden Mike Dieckhoff, Rock County, received a call from Rock County Dispatch of a hunter that had not returned from his stand as expected at 8:30 am. The hunter's family had spent time looking and were unable to locate the missing 47 year old man. Warden Dieckhoff and Deputies went to walk the 17 acre property and were able to locate the missing hunter below his tree stand. The hunter had fallen from the stand due to a medical problem that also resulted in limited ability to communicate. EMS was contacted and the hunter was air lifted to the hospital.
- Warden Mark Pearce Sheboygan County assisted with a lost hunter on the Sheboygan Marsh at closing ours on Sunday night near Hulls Crossing Drive during a snowstorm. The hunter was lost about ¼ mile from the parking lot. Warden Pearce heard a shot 14 minutes after close followed by shouts for 'help'. The subject was able to work his way out of the woods by homing in on the warden's squad LE lights and siren. The subject suffered no injuries associated with this incident.
- Warden Doug Bilgo (Campbellsport) was contacted by the Fond du Lac Sheriff regarding a 911 call that two hunters were lost in the woods from the prior night someplace in the Northern Unit of Kettle Moraine State Forest. The lost hunters had a cell phone but could only call out on 911. A Sheriff's Officer found the hunter's vehicle parked on the entrance road to the Mauthe Lake Recreation Area. The hunters were able to hear the siren from emergency vehicles and walked out. After spending the night in the woods the father and son were checked out by Kewaskum Rescue and released.
- Warden's Schraufnagel and Environmental Warden Stefan Fabian (Green Bay) assisted the Shawano County Sheriff's Department and Search and Rescue personnel with a waterfowl hunter in a capsized canoe on Shawano Lake. The hunter had attempted to rescue his dog which had fallen through the ice 200 yards from shore. While attempting to rescue the dog the canoe capsized. The hunter was able to make it back to shore. The dog was rescued by the Search and Rescue team.
- Warden Ryan Volenberg (Two Rivers Marine assisted the Two Rivers Police and Fire Departments with recovery of three youth who had broken through river ice. Two of the youth were found 45 minutes after falling through and eventually died.
- On the Monday of the Gun Deer season, Warden Mike Neal (Sister Bay MEU) was contacted by the Door County Dispatch for a 911 call that they had received that involved a bunch of yelling in the background. Upon plotting the latitude and longitude of the call origin, it was determined that it was in the area between two roads. Given the concern for the possibility of an injured hunter, Warden Neal and Sheriff's Deputies began a search of the area. Several other 911 calls were received and it was determined that the calls were coming from multiple locations from the same phone. After two hours it was determined that a child who was on a school bus had been given a cell phone and had been dialing 911. The child was found at school with no problems.

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## SYNOPSIS OF CASES REPRESENTATIVE OF DEER SEASON ARRESTS

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- Warden Michael Disher (Chilton) and Warden Supervisor Todd Schaller (Oshkosh) contacted 11 hunters on private land in Calumet County (where baiting is not allowed.) All subjects were hunting or had already shot deer over bait consisting of apples, corn, and pumpkins.
- Wardens Michael Kitt (Marinette) and Ben Treml (Green Bay) observed a deer drive taking place where one stander was posted on a road and another stander was perched on top of a vehicle holding an uncased gun. Wardens apprehended one subject for hunting from the roadway, and the other for hunting without a license, and hunting during a period of revocation. Interestingly, a firearm seized in the violation turned out to be the same one that Warden Mike Stahl (Oconto Falls) seized 2 years earlier. The court had returned the gun to the hunter after his privileges were revoked for possession of two illegal deer.
- Warden Joe Paul (Lakewood) and Chief Warden Randy Stark (Madison) contacted seven hunters on opening day who were hunting over numerous hay bales, pumpkins, various deer feed blocks, mineral blocks, and five 55 gallon drums of corn set up as timed gravity feeders.
- Warden Mark Schraufnagel (Shawano County) received a complaint of a landowner posting state land as private property. Warden Schraufnagel used his GPS to mark the trespassing signs and then determined that the landowner had posted state land as “private” more than 200 yards away from his property line. The landowner received a citation and was instructed to remove the sign.
- Two subjects were driving the back roads of northern Waupaca County when they spotted a buck running through a picked cornfield and chased it with a car. They eventually hit the deer, knocking the buck down and breaking off one antler. The driver then jumped out, looked around, and put the buck in his trunk without field dressing the animal, and took off. Nearby hunters observed this operation and recognized the distinctive vehicle. They called in the violation. Warden Todd Wippermann (Clintonville) and Warden Ben Treml (Green Bay) apprehended the subject after he took the buck to another location, field dressed it, and then placed his carcass tag on the remaining antler. The same driver has previous arrests for shooting at sandhill cranes with a rifle.
- While working in Marquette County, Regional Warden Byron Goetsch (Green Bay) investigated a Hotline complaint alleging that a hunter intentionally broke the antlers off of a legal buck at a registration station so he could register it as an antlerless deer. While this information was confirmed, the resulting investigation also led Warden Goetsch to other hunters in this same group who were hunting without any blaze orange clothing, not displaying backtags, hunting with resident deer licenses when in fact they were not Wisconsin residents, and in one case, hunting deer without any license. The person without a license was found hiding in an enclosed elevated deer stand to avoid detection. Charges are pending in this case.
- A group of three hunters were contacted mid-week standing along the roadside next to their vehicle in Manitowoc County by Wardens Robert Stroess (Manitowoc) and Ryan Volenberg (Two Rivers). The wardens observed two uncased, loaded shotguns in the truck. The third hunter was holding his shotgun. Warden Stroess looked at the hunters and did a double-take, as two of the hunters were subjects that Wardens Volenberg and Stroess caught shining and shooting deer two weeks earlier. These subjects turned out to be the same two hunters who had their loaded, uncased shotguns in the truck.

- Wardens Robert Stroess (Manitowoc) and Ryan Volenberg (Two Rivers) observed a vehicle with a Minnesota license plate and checked the hunter driving the vehicle. They found that he had purchased a resident license fraudulently as he had moved out of Wisconsin early in 2008. He was cited for fraudulently obtaining a resident license.
- Warden Kelly Crotty (Florence) observed a small deer hanging near a camper but he could see the deer was untagged. After determining no one was at the camper, Warden Crotty waited for the hunting party to return. Warden Tim Price (Eagle River) also responded before the party returned. One truck with three subjects arrived at the camp shortly after dark. One of the hunters admitted to killing the buck fawn earlier that day and stated that he planned to tag the deer (although he didn't have the required antlerless bonus permit). Further investigation revealed this subject along with another member of the party had earlier been shining deer. An uncased .22 rifle was in the vehicle at the time and later retrieved from the car trunk. The deer along with one rifle was seized, and a criminal charge is pending along with several civil citations.
- Warden Rich Thole (Boulder Junction) worked near state land on opening day. The first four hunters that Warden Thole checked were hunting over illegal baits. The subjects all dumped a 50 pound bag of shelled corn at their hunting site. Two of the subjects also placed mineral licks or powders along with the shelled corn.
- A concerned deer hunter called in a report of seeing a wounded bear and gave an approximate location where the bear was sighted. Warden Stu Pfeiffer (Mercer) spoke to two hunters who said they had seen bear tracks but didn't know anything about a bear being shot. Warden Pfeiffer back tracked the bear to where its tracks were covered by two sets of human tracks, and from the tracks it was apparent that a hunter had climbed down from a tree stand and walked out into a marsh where his tracks joined with the bear tracks. The tracks showed that the hunter followed the bear for a short distance before returning to a cabin. Warden Pfeiffer went to the cabin where he eventually located a hunter who admitted to shooting the bear. The hunter was charged with hunting bear during the closed season and failure to make a reasonable effort to retrieve downed game.
- Warden Amie Egstad of Bayfield was driving up a fire road where two vehicles were parked in the wrong lane. The hunters, all from the same family, said they were from the Manitowoc area. When asked about the Minnesota plates on one vehicle, one of the hunters said he was from Wisconsin, but his wife had just purchased the car in Minnesota. An investigation indicated the subject was really from Minnesota, and when confronted, he admitted he was living in Minnesota and had been buying resident licenses for a long time. Citations were issued for fraud in obtaining the deer licenses.
- Warden Amie Egstad observed a vehicle parked off one of the fire roads in the national forest in Bayfield County. Warden Egstad ran the plate and recognized the owner's name as a subject having citations currently in court in Bayfield and Dodge Counties for illegal baiting, group deer hunting violations, and possession of protected animals. Egstad walked in and found the hunter was hunting over too much bait.
- Warden Lance Burns worked with a Douglas County Sheriff's Deputy on complaints of illegal stands and illegal ATV use on county property. The two issued more than 20 citations for illegal deer stands, illegal ATV use, uncased and loaded firearms, illegal bait, gravity feeders and unregistered ATVs.
- Wardens Jeremy Peery and Kyle Kosin in Rusk County contacted hunters and found four illegal deer feeders on one property and two illegal feeders on the neighboring property. One subject informed the wardens that he had to put the corn out because his neighbor was baiting very

heavily. Wardens Peery and Kosin seized three electric 55 gallon barrel feeders, two large metal culvert gravity feeders, one large PVC pipe gravity feeder and two gravity feeders which were constructed out of natural wood logs.

- Wardens Jeremy Peery and Kyle Kosin in Rusk County investigated a case in which a Minnesota resident has been purchasing Wisconsin resident licenses. The hunter was not wearing blaze orange and admitted that he owns a cabin in Ladysmith, but lives and works in Minnesota during the week. The hunter displayed his Wisconsin driver's license. The residency issue was investigated further and found that the subject has the Wisconsin property tax information mailed to a Minnesota address, and has a vehicle registered to a Minnesota address. When the subject was later contacted, it was found that he shot a deer in the meantime. Warden Kosin informed the hunter that he was hunting with an improper license and the deer was seized.
- Warden Dan Michels of Park Falls investigated a subject whose hunting and fishing privileges were revoked from past deer hunting violations. Warden Michels found the subject in the woods wearing full camouflage hunting deer on public land. Criminal and civil charges will be issued.
- Warden Chris Spaight (Grantsburg) received a Hotline contact regarding possible group deer hunting violations and hunting in the wrong zone. Warden Spaight and Warden Paul Martin (Webster) contacted the group and found two fawns in the back of the truck that had tags attached, but not validated. The wardens learned that the group had planned to place un-validated tags on the deer until they got the deer into a herd control unit and then validate herd control tags to get the deer registered. In addition to that incident, Warden Spaight learned of another deer that was shot earlier in the day that was at a residence a short distance away. He found that the untagged deer was hidden in the back of an abandoned truck, and its ear was slit where a tag had been placed. Warden Spaight eventually learned that the person who tagged that deer had to be called by radio to come because he wasn't even out hunting. Several citations were issued and the deer were seized.
- Warden Jon Hagen (Spooner) and Regional Warden Dave Zebro (Spooner) noticed a flashlight in a field after the close of the hunting hours. Warden Hagen dropped off Warden Zebro to get a closer look. Warden Zebro observed two subjects had transported a deer by ATV from the field to a residence. Warden Hagen made contact with the subjects and discovered an untagged buck behind one of the ATV's. Upon further investigation a loaded firearm was found on the ATV and the borrowed tag was discovered.
- Warden Sue Miller (Hayward) put together information from three separate reported incidents and solved a string of illegal activity. On Sunday of opening weekend Warden Miller received information about a shot fired at 6:15 AM from a loud truck. Later she warned two local men for hunting within 1700 feet of a hospital. And she noted the truck they were driving as it was very noisy when it was started. On Wednesday, she received another shooting complaint within 100 yards of a church in the same area with the same loud truck being described. Warden Miller initiated contact with the truck owner which resulted in the apprehension of two men who shot at a deer after hours from the vehicle within 100 yards of the church. In addition, Warden Miller was able to close the complaint regarding the Sunday morning shooting which she learned was also a shot at a deer from the truck window by the same subjects.
- Warden Dave Swanson (Minong) apprehended two subjects that had shot a small buck at night, out of their cabin window, over a lighted and baited area. Two occupants of the cabin approached the buck with an ATV, flashlight and knife to field dress it. They had just completed the task when one of the subjects heard foot steps very close behind them. One subject said in a whispered voice "who's there?" The whispered reply of "game warden" was not exactly what they wanted to hear.

- Warden Jesse Ashton (Luck) and Deputy Warden Tamara Larson were working a rural area near Frederic when they observed a slow moving truck driving without headlights at around the close of hunting hours. Warden Ashton pulled up to the intersection where the vehicle had turned and he watched it proceed at a slow rate of speed. Warden Ashton observed brake lights, then reverse lights, and then the subject shot at a doe from the back window of the truck with a rifle. Citations were issued to the vehicle operator and the shooter.
- Warden Jesse Ashton (Luck) reported three different cases of subjects shooting deer from vehicles and from the roadways onto private property without permission. In all three cases witnesses were able to get plate numbers and with the assistance of the Polk County Sheriff's Department and the Amery Police Department all three subjects were apprehended. Citations were issued and all three deer were seized.
- Walworth County Warden Jason Roberts was on patrol near Whitewater when he saw movement in a tree behind someone's home. Warden Roberts walked through the woods by following the footprints from the road and found an individual was sitting in a tree stand in full camouflage. Warden Roberts discovered the hunter did not have his back-tag attached, and that there was corn spread out under his tree stand. Warden Roberts issued citations for illegal bait, no blaze orange and no back-tag.
- Wardens Brad Peterson (Ellsworth), Paul Sickman (Hudson), and Warden Supervisor David Hausman (Baldwin) worked a shine and shoot complaint in St. Croix County. On the last morning of the deer season, the suspect vehicle was observed shining a spotlight at 5:50 am. Wardens found the two subjects in possession of 2 rifles and a shotgun. This offense occurred in a very urbanized area so there was also a significant safety concern.
- The deer decoy was staged near Ontario in an area of past complaints. A truck stopped 28 minutes after the decoy was in place. A subject stood on the road and shot 3 times at the decoy and then began to reload his gun. Warden Adam Hanna (Recruit) and Special Warden Mike Williams stopped the man from shooting up the decoy even more. Warden Shawna Stringham (Viroqua) responded to issue citations. The same subject was cited one week prior on opening day for an uncased gun in a vehicle after he was observed road hunting in the same area of the county.
- Wardens Dale Hochhausen (Stoddard) and Mike Cross (Prairie du Chien) checked two parties of hunters. The wardens discovered eighteen violations at 2 hunting camps, and seized four deer and a firearm from the two parties. Violations included hunt without gun deer license (2 counts), archery hunt in an area closed to archery hunting (3 counts), uncased bow in a vehicle, possess another person's backtag, loan/borrow another person's EAB sticker, fail to immediately tag a deer (3 counts), hunt without a backtag, transport a buck deer in an EAB unit without antlerless harvest verification, unregistered ATV and underage operation of an ATV.
- On the Friday before the opening day, Warden Wade Romberg (Friendship) contacted one individual hunting in camouflage from a stand while in possession of a loaded rifle. He was also hunting over illegal bait.
- Warden Matt Weber (Necedah) and Supervisor Korey Trowbridge (Black River Falls) contacted 2 hunters who were hunting on private property wearing camouflage. They also were not wearing back tags. They said that they decided to wear camouflage so the deer would not see them.
- Warden Matt Weber (Necedah) observed a hunter who was hunting from the roadway. When contacted, he told Warden Weber he had lost his credit card and was looking for it. The hunter



also said “it’s not like I am part of a deer drive.” Minutes later, his hunting party walked out of the woods after completing a deer drive.

- Warden Matt Modjeski (Sparta) received a call reporting a buck that had been snared and later shot. While investigating, Wardens Modjeski and Mark Little (Tomah) found all four legs and the meat from the carcass had been removed prior to registration.
- Warden Joe Frost of Iowa County assisted the Grant County Sheriff’s Department on the Friday before gun season with a vehicle a deputy had stopped shining after hours. Two individuals were shining for deer and raccoons with two guns including a loaded and uncased .22 rifle in the truck. They shot at one raccoon from the vehicle. Another dead raccoon in the truck was taken two days earlier using similar illegal methods.
- Wardens Shawna Stringham, Mike Nice, Adam Hanna and Dale Hochhausen investigated a deer case involving the illegal shining and shooting of deer at night in the Ontario area. Wardens stopped two individuals who were road hunting and determined they had a loaded rifle in their truck. Investigation showed that a deer in the back of the truck was shot the previous night while using the headlights of the truck and it was determined that the suspects were also involved in shooting another buck from the road. Both individuals produced disabled permits and initially claimed they were operating under their authority but later admitted to abusing the disabled permits by using them as a cover to road hunt deer.
- Warden Nick Webster of Green County observed a subject twice in the morning of the second day of the nine day deer season driving in a suspicious manner. Later that morning when Warden Webster and Recreational Safety Warden Jon King of Madison, rounded a corner, the wardens observed the same subject hunting in a crouched position between the road edge and the field fence line. Measurements revealed the subject was hunting 28 feet from the centerline of the roadway. One citation was issued for hunting within 50 feet of the roadway and the firearm was seized.
- Warden Dave Wood, Dane County, contacted a hunter operating an ATV illegally on a roadway after dark. The operator had an uncased, loaded 30.06 rifle in a rack on the front of the ATV. He said that he hadn’t unloaded the rifle because he was late for bowling. Warden Wood issued a citation for transport a loaded firearm on a vehicle and gave warnings for an uncased firearm, illegal operation of ATV on roadway, and hunt after legal hours.
- Wardens David Walz, Watertown, and Paul Nell, Dodge County, received a complaint of a hunter in Dodge County driving around on an ATV with an uncased firearm near a cornfield that was being picked. The wardens located the hunter observing him take off in pursuit of deer exiting a corn field with the loaded/uncased firearm on the ATV as deer were pushed out of the corn by the combine. He attempted to cut the deer off on the neighboring property but was unsuccessful. The wardens issued two citations for the loaded/uncased firearm and gave warnings for no back tag displayed, an unregistered ATV and attempting to chase after the deer with the ATV.
- Warden Nate Kroeplin, Dane County, concentrated on working late hunters as he gets complaints every year about late shots. On the opening day Warden Kroeplin contacted a hunter who was still sitting in his tree stand with a loaded gun at 5:03 p.m. when hunting hours closed at 4:47 p.m. It was dark enough that Warden Kroeplin had to use a flashlight to read the hunter’s backtag.
- Warden Catherina Nooyen and Supervisor Ronald Cork responded to a shooting off the roadway complaint that occurred in Dodge County. The wardens were able to pinpoint the location of the shooter at the time of the incident, which was within 50 feet of the roadway’s center. While speaking with the suspect, he admitted to shooting at a buck at the incident location but he

believes he was far enough off the road to be legal. Based on the location of two shell casings and the hunter's foot prints, along with statements from the citizen who got a vehicle license number, the suspect will be cited for hunting within 50 feet of the center of the roadway.

- Warden Michael Green of Wisconsin Dells issued citations to an individual for shooting a doe from his vehicle in the Village of Lake Delton. The individual left the deer lay and went home for Thanksgiving dinner.
- Warden Casey Krueger and Warden Supervisor David Holmes were working near the Friesland area when they observed a deer drive finishing up and the hunters get into a pick up truck and drive back to the area where the deer drive started. The hunters were observed with four uncased rifles inside the cab of the vehicle. The subjects also were found to have shot two deer on the deer drive and not tagged the deer.

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### **BAITING AND FEEDING FIELD OBSERVATIONS**

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- Increased efforts to conceal illegal baiting activity have been observed in some areas.
- Wardens continue to report that with the smaller land parcels being bought by hunters and non-hunters, an increasing number of hunters are relying on bait to draw and hold deer on small parcels. Wardens continue to report non-hunting small parcel owners and homeowners in subdivisions feeding the deer to hold them in those areas. Consequently, wardens are seeing competing motives and conflict between those non-hunting landowners who "feed" deer to hold the deer on their property to protect the deer, and those hunting landowners who "bait" deer to hold deer on their property to harvest them.
- Progress is being made regarding the size of the illegal bait piles. While wardens still encounter some very large bait sites of the several hundred gallon size, most illegal bait piles are smaller – under 25 gallons.
- Wardens in the north report that significant over baiting is taking place the weekend before the season. Some of those contacted for this violation indicate they are from out of the area and place a large amount of bait out the weekend before to hold the deer on their property for the week. They indicate they are at a disadvantage because the local people can bait daily.
- Most cases are made on the opening day, with the vast majority of those made opening morning. This is when wardens have the highest probability of finding someone on an illegally baited stand. The odds of finding someone hunting an illegally baited stand go down quickly after opening morning. Working baiting and feeding complaints is a priority from a disease prevention standpoint, but it is also a mileage intensive endeavor during extremely difficult budgetary times. Consequently, due to the budget situation, wardens did less pre-season scouting to prioritize and save mileage for patrols and complaint response during the season.
- Wardens are seeing an increased use of trail cameras, reporting that many hunters with trail cameras indicate that the cameras reveal that during season, the deer only come to the baits after dark.
- Particularly in the northern portion of the state, wardens continue to see an increase in ATV use (some illegal) in conjunction with transporting and placing bait.
- The \$530 penalty for illegal baiting at times does not seem to be enough of a deterrent. Many people wardens contact know what the fine is but choose to risk it anyway.
- The baiting and feeding behavior observed in some cases seems related to land use patterns. Many violations are found on private lands, owned by absentee landowners. Most of these tracts are small, less than 40 acres in size. Although there are significant areas of land open to the public in these areas, many of these hunters want to hunt on their property, even if it is only 5 acres in size. It is not uncommon to find 3 or 4 hunters hunting on a parcel of 10 acres or less, all using illegal bait to trying to draw deer onto their property.

Very similar to the past few years, wardens heard the following general themes from hunters during conversations with hunters in the field:

- Frustration about baiting and feeding for deer.
- An increasing number of hunters feel baiting and feeding for deer should be eliminated.
- The general perception that baiting and feeding is altering deer movement patterns during the season.
- Legal hunters feel penalized when illegal bait piles show up near their traditional hunting areas as deer patterns change once they are influenced by the large illegal baits.
- Wardens continue to hear some hunters, both those on private property and those who hunt on public lands, that while they'd not otherwise bait, they feel they must place bait to compete and have an equal opportunity at harvesting deer.

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**CWD ZONE RIFLE USE OBSERVATIONS**

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**Current townships in CWD Zone with Local Ordinances Restricting Rifle Use**

<b>Region</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Town</b>	<b>Ordinance enacted to restrict rifle use</b>
SCR	Dane	Cottage Grove	Yes
SCR	Dane	Rutland	Yes (on books since 1959)
SCR	Dane	Dunkirk	Yes
SCR	Jefferson	Milford	Yes
SCR	Jefferson	Oakland	Yes
SCR	Jefferson	Waterloo	Yes
SER	Waukesha	Eagle	Yes--Not larger than a .22- passed Town Board on Sept. 17
SER	Waukesha	Ottawa	Yes--Not larger than .22- Town Board Meeting Oct 13, 2008
SER	Waukesha	Mukwonago	Yes--Not larger than a .22(on books prior to CWD change)
SER	Waukesha	Waukesha	Yes--Not larger than a .22(on books prior to CWD change)
SER	Waukesha	Genesee	Yes--Not larger than a .22(on books prior to CWD change)
SER	Waukesha	Oconomowoc	Yes--Not larger than a .22(on books prior to CWD change)
SER	Waukesha	Summit	Yes--Not larger than a .22(on books prior to CWD change)

One township in Jefferson County passed an ordinance banning rifles only a week before the season opened. They then posted signs on DNR properties which were subsequently taken down by DNR staff. One hunter in this township had traded his shotgun in shortly before the opener for a rifle only to learn that the township passed the ordinance just before the season. He was just a little upset and was referred to the town chairperson.

There was considerable hunter confusion regarding rifle and shotguns in Waukesha County. Wardens reported that many hunters were encountered that had read the deer regulations and were using rifles to hunt deer in areas that have local ordinances prohibiting rifles. The only way for these hunters to know about the local ordinances is to visit individual townships.

There was one incident in the CWD zone on opening day that wardens investigated. Wardens Catherina Nooyen and Heather Gottschalk responded to a shooting incident in the town of Lowell in Dodge County, where two tractor door cab windows were shot out while the tractor was parked in a cornfield. The operator of the tractor was sitting in the tractor seat at the time and waiting for its attached hopper to be filled up with corn from a combine, which was cutting corn in the field. Wardens canvassed the area and contacted the only individuals in the area, a father and son who were deer hunting in the same cornfield. Both were using rifles in an area that used to be shotgun only. The father was in the cornfield looking for a doe he had previously shot at. His 18 year old son was positioned on the opposite end of the cornfield from the tractor. According to interviews conducted at the scene, the 18 year old shot and killed a doe around the same time as the incident. The investigation was turned over to the Dodge County Sheriff's Department. Distance from shooter to the tractor is estimated at 300 yards.

The Southeast Region Wardens did not report any negative issues associated with rifle use in former shotgun areas, though the use of rifles in the newly combined CWD zone received a lot of attention prior to the season.

In Walworth County, Warden Jason Roberts noted that hunters appeared to embrace the change. He reported it was hard to find a hunter that was not using a rifle. Racine County Warden Michael Hirschboeck estimated about 70% of the hunters continuing to utilize shotguns while approximately 30% chose to use a rifle.

Over half of the hunters checked in the field in northern Jefferson County and southern Dodge were using rifles during the 9 day hunt. Many used the rifles when on stand, and then switched to shotguns when they started doing deer drives.

Warden Jeff King reported no issues with the first rifle hunt in decades in Lafayette County. Warden King observed that the majority of the hunters afield have switched to rifles. While patrolling, Warden King observed one farm in the county that had signs posted indicating "Shotgun Hunting Only". Warden King is also aware of several farmers who imposed shotgun only restrictions on their land. Warden King interviewed dozens of hunters about the use of rifles and most were very pleased with the change.

Warden Nick Webster of Green County fielded questions from concerned hunters and non-hunters in regards to the new law change to allow rifles for hunting deer in almost all of the CWD MZ. During the season Warden Webster observed that there were some landowners who would only allow shotguns to be used on their land, but Warden Webster observed that most hunters were using rifles in Green County.