

Maryland Annual Big Game Report 2025–2026



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White-tailed Deer & Sika Deer

Introduction

Maryland deer hunters harvested 71,656 deer during the 2025–2026 season (Table 1, Figure 1). The statewide harvest included 29,816 antlered and 37,929 antlerless white-tailed deer; and 1,875 antlered and 2,036 antlerless sika deer. The combined species antlerless harvest consisted of 35,657 does or antlerless bucks and 4,308 button bucks (Table 2, Figure 2). The overall harvest was 15% lower than the 2024–2025 total of 84,201 deer.

The harvest in deer management Region A decreased 11%, from 10,275 deer last year to 9,108 this year. Hunters in the western counties reported 5,463 antlered and 3,645 antlerless deer. Deer hunters in Region B harvested 62,548 deer, down 15% from 73,926 deer harvested last year. A total of 26,228 antlered and 36,320 antlerless deer were reported in this region.

Frederick County had the highest reported harvest with 6,342 deer reported. Carroll and Garrett counties had the second and third highest reported harvest with 5,270 and 5,147, respectively. Dorchester and Baltimore rounded out the top five with 5,106 and 4,779, respectively.

Hunters harvested 6,999 deer on Sundays (Table 3). Sunday deer hunting opportunities, which are established by the state legislature, are available in 20 of Maryland's 23 counties. Opportunities vary by county and are only permitted during certain weeks of the deer hunting season (Table 4).

Archery Season Summary

Each year, archery season in Maryland opens the Friday after Labor Day (September 5 in 2025–2026) and closes on January 31 (unless January 31 is a Sunday and is closed to hunting on Sunday). Resident and non-resident hunters purchased approximately 51,103 and 12,605 archery stamps, respectively, in 2025–2026. The average Maryland hunter who hunts deer with a vertical bow each year (approximately 18,000 hunters) normally does so for about 8–10 days each season; and 23% of these hunters take at least one deer each year with their bow. Approximately 20,000 hunters currently hunt deer with a crossbow in Maryland. The average crossbow hunter hunts with a crossbow for 8–10 days each year and 30–40% are successful in taking at least one deer per year with the weapon.



In 2025–2026:

- The reported archery harvest (vertical and crossbow) decreased 16% from 28,895 deer in 2024–2025 to 24,326 in 2025–2026 (Table 1, Figure 3).
- There were 12,696 antlered deer (52% of the total archery harvest) and 11,630 antlerless deer harvested with crossbows and vertical bows.
- The antlered archery harvest decreased 9% and the antlerless harvest (10,575 does or antlerless bucks and 1,055 button bucks) decreased 22% from the previous year.
- Archery hunters took 1,963 deer (1,123 antlered, 840 antlerless) on Sundays open to archery hunting (Table 3).
- Archery hunters took 34% of all deer harvested in Maryland, the same percentage as in the last four seasons. (Figure 3).
- 83% of the archery harvest was on private lands.
- Crossbow hunters took 7,753 antlered and 6,498 antlerless deer during the archery season (Table 5).
- The crossbow harvest (14,251 deer) represented 59% of the total archery season harvest in 2025–2026, slightly lower than the 60% in 2024–2025 (Figure 4).
- Approximately 10,044 different hunters harvested deer with a crossbow during archery season (compared to 11,875 in 2024–2025).
- Archery hunters harvested 51 deer during the Primitive Deer Hunt Days, February 2–4 (Table 11).



Table 1
Maryland Reported Antlered and Antlerless Harvest for
Archery, Firearm, and Muzzleloader Hunting Seasons
by County, 2025–2026.

County	Archery			Firearm			Muzzleloader			Total		
	Antlered	Antlerless	Total	Antlered	Antlerless	Total	Antlered	Antlerless	Total	Antlered	Antlerless	Total
Allegany	491	293	784	926	582	1,508	322	310	632	1,739	1,185	2,924
Anne Arundel	297	327	624	190	359	549	92	157	249	579	843	1,422
Baltimore	1,173	1,271	2,444	525	944	1,469	310	556	866	2,008	2,771	4,779
Calvert	245	262	507	178	301	479	101	137	238	524	700	1,224
Caroline												
<i>White-Tailed</i>	316	311	627	451	990	1,441	147	321	468	914	1,622	2,536
<i>Sika</i>	0	0		1	2	3	1	0	1	2	2	4
Carroll	976	861	1,837	1,029	1,542	2,571	335	527	862	2,340	2,930	5,270
Cecil	661	678	1,339	474	827	1,301	185	334	519	1,320	1,839	3,159
Charles	398	379	777	295	579	874	181	264	445	874	1,222	2,096
Dorchester												
<i>White-Tailed</i>	198	170	368	378	611	989	122	187	309	698	968	1,666
<i>Sika</i>	528	605	1,133	646	878	1,524	466	317	783	1,640	1,800	3,440
Frederick	1,097	920	2,017	1,343	1,862	3,205	460	660	1,120	2,900	3,442	6,342
Garrett	935	518	1,453	1,553	1,107	2,660	570	464	1,034	3,058	2,089	5,147
Harford	703	688	1,391	377	788	1,165	206	400	606	1,286	1,876	3,162
Howard	478	573	1,051	221	434	655	138	261	399	837	1,268	2,105
Kent	411	323	734	524	1,134	1,658	267	360	627	1,202	1,817	3,019
Montgomery	664	827	1,491	398	765	1,163	167	248	415	1,229	1,840	3,069
Prince George's	217	200	417	171	205	376	78	127	205	466	532	998
Queen Anne's	475	434	909	577	1,218	1,795	219	432	651	1,271	2,084	3,355
Somerset												
<i>White-Tailed</i>	185	170	355	332	820	1,152	115	188	303	632	1,178	1,810
<i>Sika</i>	11	3	14	8	4	12	6	4	10	25	11	36
St. Mary's	406	359	765	276	490	766	153	249	402	835	1,098	1,933
Talbot	278	259	537	309	774	1,083	126	205	331	713	1,238	1,951
Washington	838	663	1,501	1,112	1,139	2,251	387	421	808	2,337	2,223	4,560
Wicomico												
<i>White-Tailed</i>	313	259	572	489	986	1,475	147	280	427	949	1,525	2,474
<i>Sika</i>	49	45	94	59	67	126	55	38	93	163	150	313
Worcester												
<i>White-Tailed</i>	339	205	544	615	1,170	1,785	151	264	415	1,105	1,639	2,744
<i>Sika</i>	14	27	41	31	45	76	0	1	1	45	73	118
Total	12,696	11,630	24,326	13,488	20,623	34,111	5,507	7,712	13,219	31,691	39,965	71,656

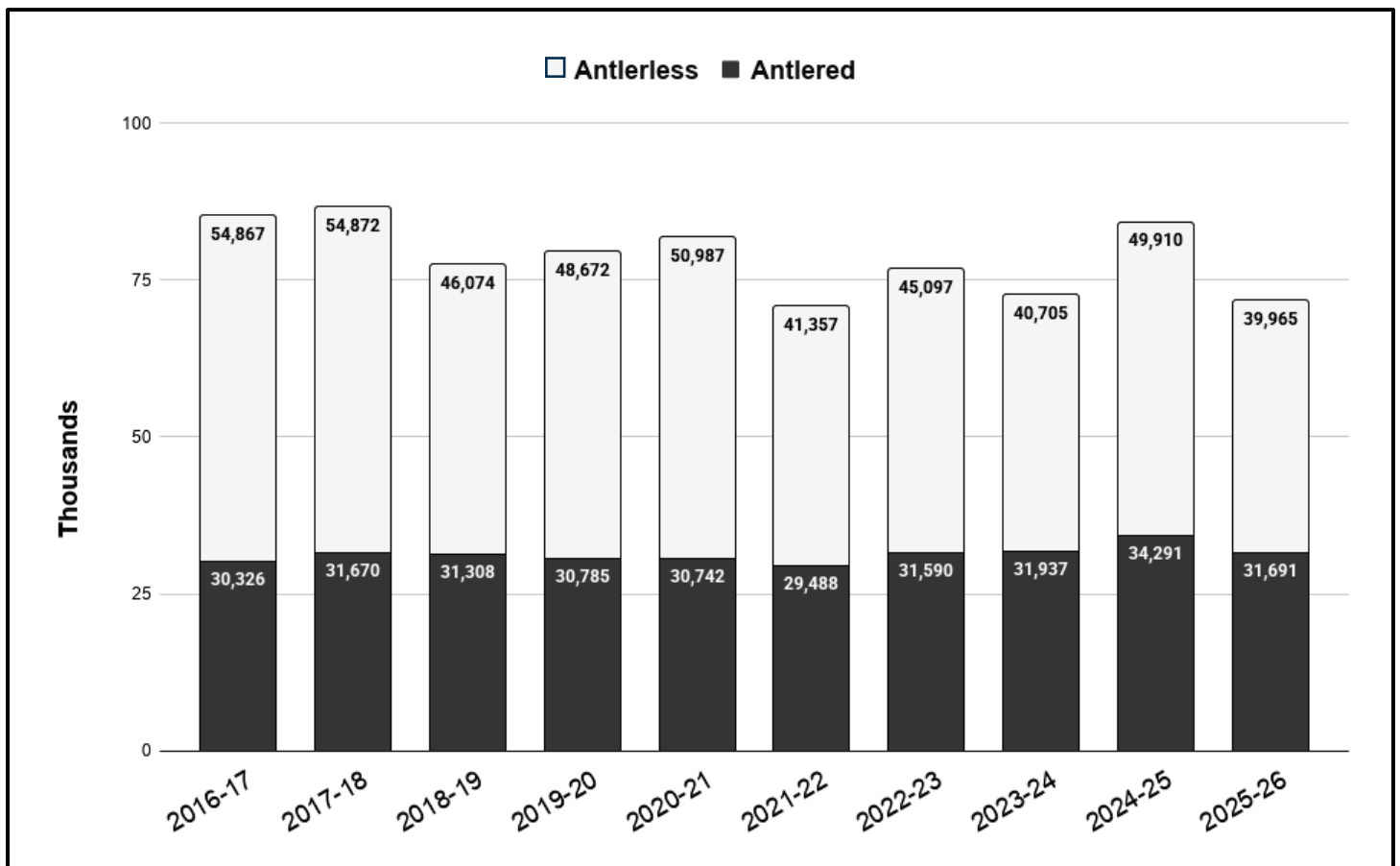


Figure 1
Maryland Reported Antlered and Antlerless Deer Harvest,
2016–2017 through 2025–2026.

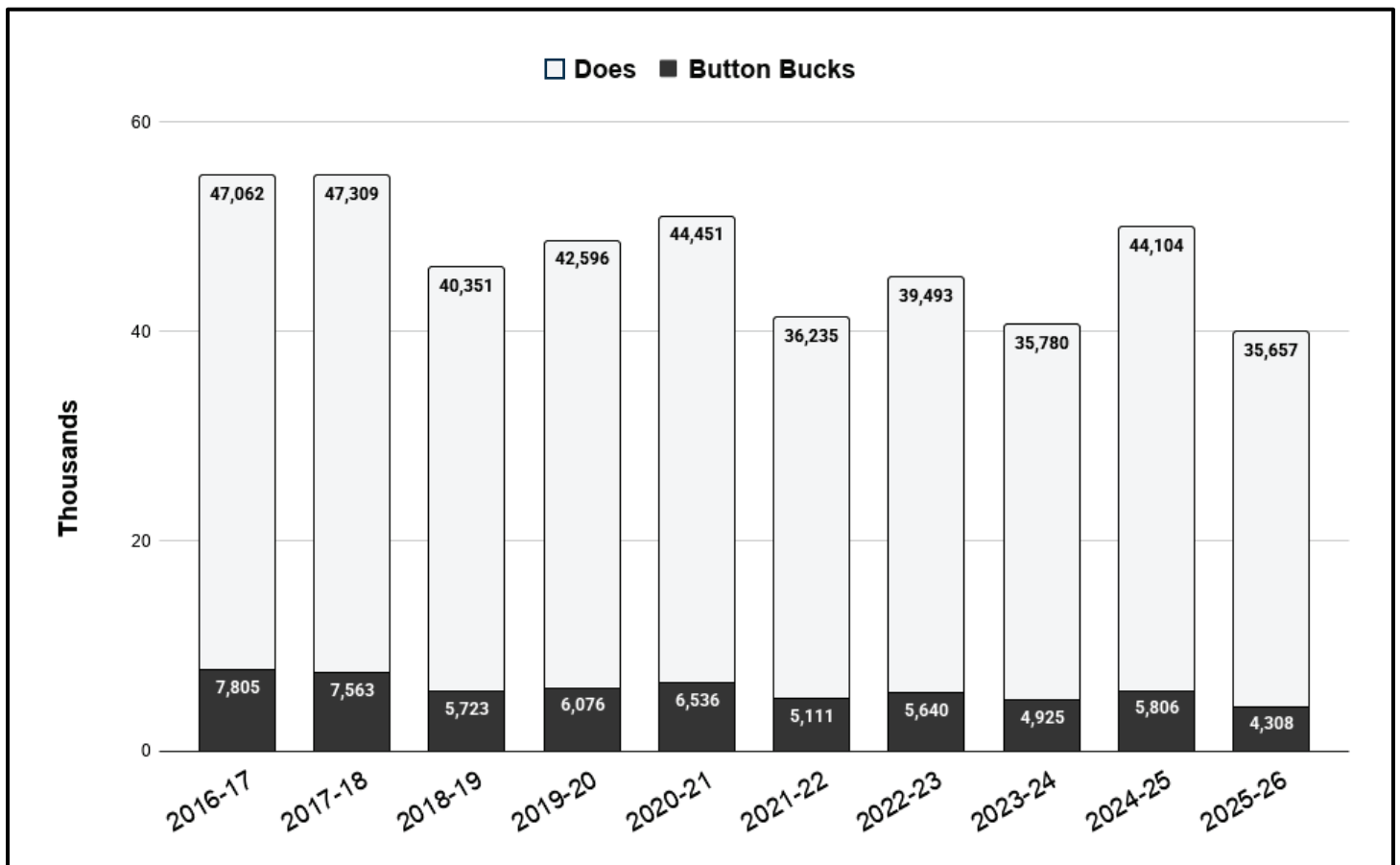


Figure 2
Maryland Reported Button Buck and Doe Harvest,
2016–2017 through 2025–2026.



Table 2
Maryland Reported Button Buck Harvest
by County, 2025–2026.

County	Button Buck	Female or Antlerless	Total	% Button Buck
Allegany	104	1,081	1,185	8.8
Anne Arundel	118	725	843	14.0
Baltimore	270	2,501	2,771	9.7
Calvert	96	604	700	13.7
Caroline				
<i>White-Tailed</i>	224	1,398	1,622	13.8
<i>Sika</i>	1	1	2	50.0
Carroll	315	2,615	2,930	10.8
Cecil	194	1,645	1,839	10.5
Charles	130	1,092	1,222	10.6
Dorchester				
<i>White-Tailed</i>	151	817	968	15.6
<i>Sika</i>	98	1,702	1,800	5.4
Frederick	323	3,119	3,442	9.4
Garrett	161	1,928	2,089	7.7
Harford	212	1,664	1,876	11.3
Howard	136	1,132	1,268	10.7
Kent	216	1,601	1,817	11.9
Montgomery	174	1,666	1,840	9.5
Prince George's	61	471	532	11.5
Queen Anne's	260	1,824	2,084	12.5
Somerset				
<i>White-Tailed</i>	140	1,038	1,178	11.9
<i>Sika</i>	0	11	11	0
St. Mary's	169	929	1,098	15.4
Talbot	176	1,062	1,238	14.2
Washington	188	2,035	2,223	8.5
Wicomico				
<i>White-Tailed</i>	178	1,347	1,525	11.7
<i>Sika</i>	7	143	150	4.7
Worcester				
<i>White-Tailed</i>	199	1,440	1,639	12.1
<i>Sika</i>	7	66	73	9.6
Total	4,308	35,657	39,965	10.8

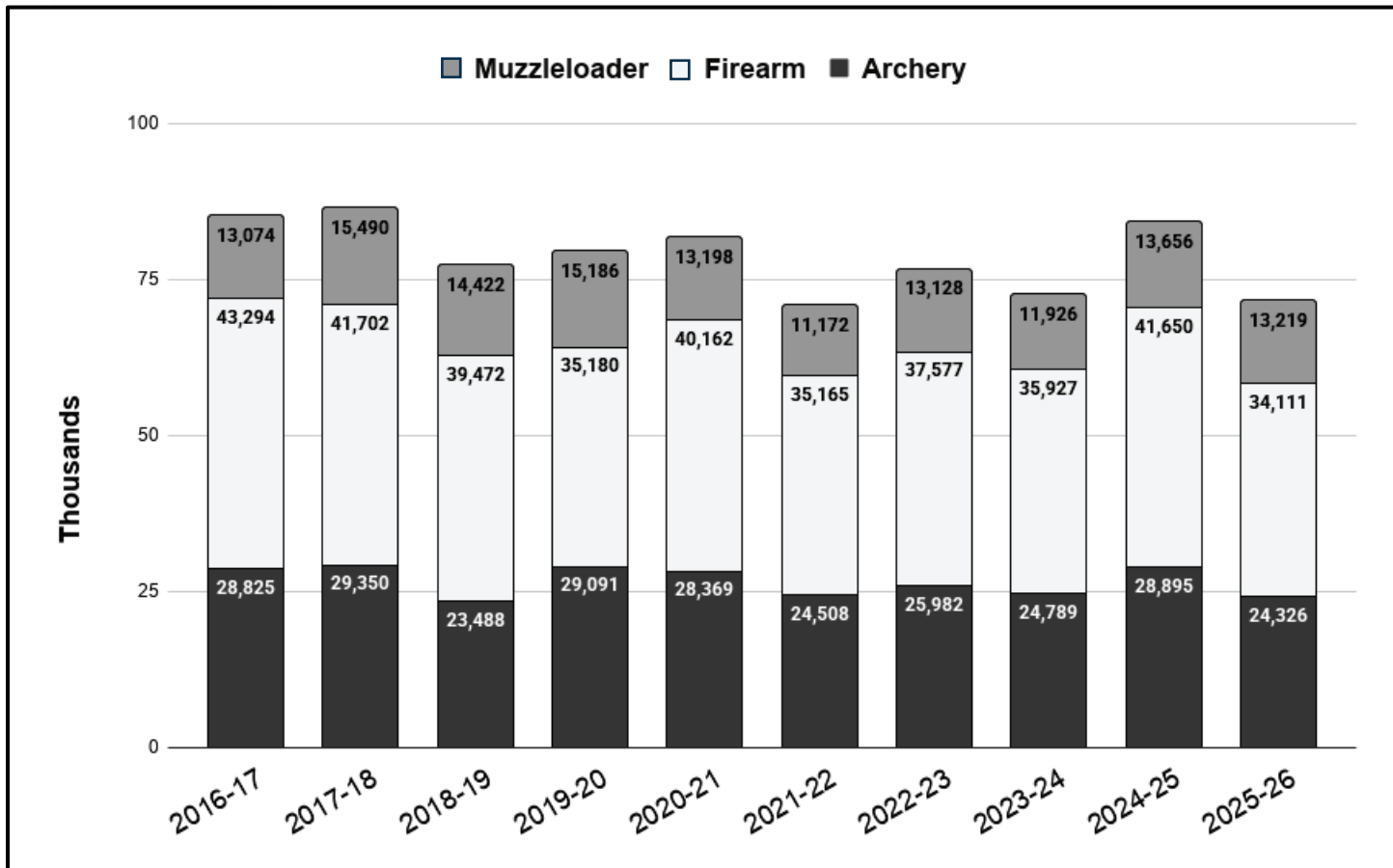


Figure 3
 Maryland Reported Deer Harvest for Archery, Firearms,
 and Muzzleloader Seasons, 2016–2017 through 2025–2026.

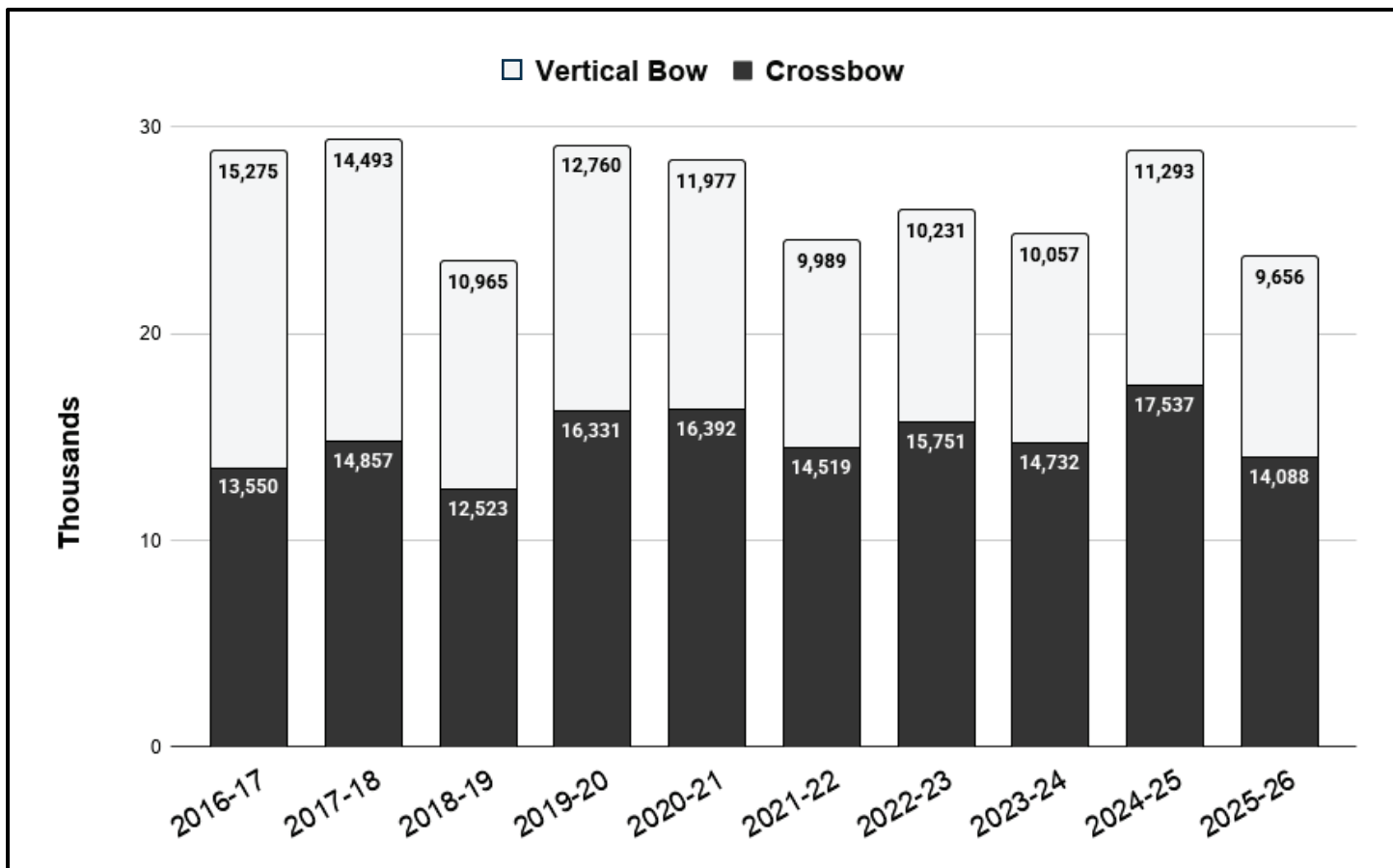


Figure 4
Maryland Reported Crossbow and Vertical Bow Deer Harvest during Designated Archery Season, 2016–2017 through 2025–2026.



Firearm Season Summary

The statewide firearm season begins the Saturday after Thanksgiving and runs for the following two weeks. In Region B, hunters have an additional two or three days of firearm hunting in early January depending on whether Sunday hunting is allowed in the county where they are hunting. Deer taken during managed hunts outside the normal deer seasons are also counted as firearm kills. Approximately 45,000 – 55,000 hunters hunt deer with a firearm each year in Maryland. The average firearm hunter spends 5–6 days each year pursuing deer and approximately 35–45% of firearm hunters bag at least one deer each year.

In 2025–2026:

- The statewide firearm harvest decreased 18%, from 41,650 deer in 2024–2025 to 34,111 deer (Table 1, Figure 3).
- The firearm harvest included 13,488 antlered deer (40% of the total firearm harvest) and 20,623 antlerless deer.
- The antlered harvest decreased by 12%, and the antlerless harvest (18,158 does or antlerless bucks and 2,465 button bucks) decreased 22% from 2024–2025.
- The majority (80%) of the firearm harvest occurred during the two-week season that began the Saturday after Thanksgiving (Table 6).
- Firearm hunters took 48% of all deer harvested in Maryland, a decrease of 1% compared to the last three consecutive seasons. (Figure 3).
- The majority (88%) of the firearm harvest was taken on private property.
- Firearm hunters bagged 3,997 deer (1,439 antlered and 2,558 antlerless) on the Sundays open during the two-week and January firearm seasons; and junior deer hunters harvested 717 deer (505 antlered and 212 antlerless) on the Junior Deer Hunt Sunday (Table 3).
- Junior deer hunters bagged a total of 2,187 deer (1,530 antlered and 657 antlerless) during the Junior Deer Hunt weekend; 12% less than the 2,493 deer taken in 2024–2025. (Table 7).
- Hunters reported 3,333 deer (of which, 78% were antlerless) for the three-day January firearm season (Table 8).

Sunday deer hunting opportunities are available on private lands and designated public hunting lands. The public lands, shooting hours, and dates vary from county to county. See Table 4 for more information.

Table 3
Maryland Reported Sunday Hunting Deer Harvest
by County, 2025–2026.

County	Archery			Firearm			Junior Hunt			Muzzleloader			Grand Total
	Antlered	Antlerless	Total	Antlered	Antlerless	Total	Antlered	Antlerless	Total	Antlered	Antlerless	Total	
Allegany	75	44	119	113	64	177	39	18	57	6	8	14	367
Anne Arundel	9	7	16	7	21	28	6	3	9	*	*	*	53
Baltimore	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Calvert	32	18	50	34	37	71	4	6	10	2	1	3	134
Caroline													
<i>White-Tailed</i>	40	23	63	46	95	141	11	14	25	2	7	9	238
<i>Sika</i>	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Carroll	104	86	190	132	268	400	42	22	64	11	23	34	688
Cecil	74	74	148	44	150	194	14	4	18	4	13	17	377
Charles	39	32	71	38	79	117	6	4	10	4	9	13	211
Dorchester													
<i>White-Tailed</i>	21	9	30	37	99	136	17	3	20	4	6	10	196
<i>Sika</i>	42	48	90	76	121	197	10	6	16	10	13	23	326
Frederick	102	101	203	152	299	451	48	23	71	16	33	49	774
Garrett	129	64	193	161	70	231	107	32	139	5	16	21	584
Harford	53	35	88	55	143	198	3	3	6	*	*	*	292
Howard	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kent	35	23	58	50	140	190	13	3	16	3	20	23	287
Montgomery	51	47	98	29	52	81	15	8	23	4	8	12	214
Prince George's	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Queen Anne's	50	30	80	75	191	266	17	3	20	3	15	18	384
Somerset													
<i>White-Tailed</i>	14	13	27	45	97	142	20	8	28	2	6	8	205
<i>Sika</i>	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
St. Mary's	52	28	80	36	64	100	10	3	13	1	12	13	206
Talbot	26	23	49	31	79	110	11	1	12	1	6	7	178
Washington	103	94	197	124	140	264	48	17	65	12	23	35	561
Wicomico													
<i>White-Tailed</i>	29	16	45	53	132	185	27	14	41	1	4	5	276
<i>Sika</i>	4	3	7	10	15	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	32
Worcester													
<i>White-Tailed</i>	37	22	59	90	199	289	37	17	54	1	7	8	410
<i>Sika</i>	1	0	1	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Total	1,123	840	1,963	1,439	2,558	3,997	505	212	717	92	230	322	6,999

*Sunday hunting was not open during this season in this county.

¹See Table 4 for the Sundays that were open for deer hunting in each county in 2025–2026.

Table 4
Maryland Sunday Deer Hunting Dates, 2025–2026.

SUNDAY DEER HUNTING 2025 2026 (FOR WHITE TAILED AND SIKA DEER) Sunday deer hunting is open with these restrictions, in these counties and locations on these dates.																							
COUNTY	LANDS OPEN	ARCHERY SEASON																FIREARM SEASON				MUZZLELOADER SEASON	
		SEPT. 7	SEPT. 14	SEPT. 21	SEPT. 28	OCT. 5	OCT. 12	OCT. 19	OCT. 26	NOV. 2	NOV. 9	NOV. 16	NOV. 23	JAN. 4	JAN. 11	JAN. 18	JAN. 25	NOV. 16 (JR. HUNT)	NOV. 30	DEC. 7	JAN. 11	DEC. 21	DEC. 28
ALLEGANY	Private & Designated Public	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open		Open	Open
ANNE ARUNDEL	Private Only									Open								Open	Open				
BALTIMORE	None																						
CALVERT	Private Only	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²		Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²
CAROLINE	Private Only	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²		Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²
CARROLL	Private Only					Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open				Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open
CECIL	Private & Designated Public	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open		Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open
CHARLES	Private Only	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²		Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²
DORCHESTER	Private Only	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open		Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open
FREDERICK	Private Only					Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open				Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open
GARRETT	Private & Designated Public	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open		Open	Open
HARFORD	Private Only						Open	Open	Open	Open	Open							Open	Open	Open	Open		
HOWARD	None																						
KENT	Private Only	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open		Open	Open	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open
MONTGOMERY	Private Only	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²		Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²
PRINCE GEORGE S	None																						
QUEEN ANNE S	Private Only	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²		Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²
ST. MARY S	Private & Designated Public	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open		Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open
SOMERSET	Private & Designated Public	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²		Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²
TALBOT	Private Only	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²		Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²
WASHINGTON REGION A	Private & Designated Public	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open		Open	Open
WASHINGTON REGION B	Private Only	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open		Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open
WICOMICO	Private & Designated Public	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²		Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²
WORCESTER	Private & Designated Public	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²	Open ²		Open ²	Open ²	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open ²	Open ²
1 – Designated public lands open to Sunday hunting in Allegany (Billmeyer-Belle Grove WMA, Dan's Mountain WMA, Green Ridge SF, McCoolle FMA, Sideling Hill WMA, Warrior Mountain WMA), Cecil (C&D Canal Lands, Earville WMA, Grove Farm WMA, Old Bohemia WMA), Garrett (Cunningham Swamp WMA, Garrett SF, Mt. Nebo WMA, Potomac SF, Savage River SF), St. Mary's (Salem SF, Saint Inigoes SF), Washington (Indian Springs WMA, Prather's Neck WMA, Sideling Hill WMA), Wicomico (Ellis Bay WMA, Chesapeake Forest Lands, Johnson WMA, Nanticoke River WMA, Wetipquin WMA), and Worcester (Chesapeake Forest Lands, E. A. Vaughn WMA, Hickory Pt. Wildlands, Isle of Wight WMA, Pocomoke SF, Pocomoke River WMA). 2 – Legal shooting hours for deer are one half hour before sunrise to 10:30am on this Sunday (applies only where footnoted). 3 – Designated public lands open to Sunday hunting in Somerset County are those lands leased to hunt clubs for the purpose of hunting.																							

Muzzleloader Season Summary

The 2025–2026 statewide antlered muzzleloader season included three days in October (October 16–18) and two weeks beginning in mid-December (December 20–January 3). Region A antlerless muzzleloader season also included the same three days in October (October 16–18) as well as eight days in late December and early January (December 27–January 3). Region B antlerless muzzleloader began with nine days in October (October 16–18; 20–25) in addition to two weeks in December and early January (December 20–January 3) to provide for additional deer population management through antlerless deer harvest. The October muzzleloader season is set annually to begin the first Thursday after the 15th of the month.

Resident and non-resident hunters purchased approximately 42,985 and 8,782 muzzleloader stamps, respectively, in 2025–2026. The stamps are required to hunt deer during the muzzleloader season. It is estimated that 20,000–30,000 hunters hunt during this season. Those that pursue deer with a muzzleloader do so for 1–3 days for each of the early and late seasons. Approximately 20–25% of muzzleloader hunters are successful in harvesting at least one deer in any given year.

In 2025–2026:

- The muzzleloader harvest totaled 13,219 deer compared to 13,656 deer in 2024–2025, a 3% decrease (Table 1, Figure 3).
- There were 5,507 antlered deer and 7,712 antlerless deer harvested with muzzleloaders. Antlerless deer represented 58% of the total muzzleloader harvest.
- The antlered harvest increased 10% and the antlerless harvest (6,924 does or antlerless bucks and 788 button bucks) decreased 11% from the previous year.
- Muzzleloader hunters took 18% of all deer harvested in Maryland, the same as last season (Figure 3).
- The October muzzleloader harvest was 8,572 deer (4,083 antlered and 4,489 antlerless); a 5% increase from the previous year's harvest of 8,149 deer (Table 9).
- The December muzzleloader harvest totaled 4,647 deer (1,424 antlered and 3,223 antlerless); a 12% decrease from the previous year's harvest of 5,255 deer (Table 10).
- The October muzzleloader season accounted for 65% of the total muzzleloader harvest for the year.
- Muzzleloader hunters took 88% of their total harvest on private lands.
- Muzzleloader hunters harvested 244 deer with primitive flintlock or percussion sidelock muzzleloaders during the Primitive Hunt Days, February 2–4 (Table 11).

Public Property Deer Management

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides assistance to local governments, communities, and publicly owned properties that choose to address deer management issues. Public entities that desire to conduct hunts outside of the regional deer hunting season framework may do so with prior approval from DNR. Managed hunts are used to help control deer populations under special conditions on properties where stricter control of hunters is required. This allows each facility to manage deer hunting to complement their mission. Military bases, airports, and agricultural research facilities, as well as state, county, and municipal parks, have developed deer hunting programs in conjunction with DNR.

To improve opportunities for the public to qualify for managed hunts, DNR cooperates with organizations and shooting ranges that offer a shooter qualification program. This program provides public access to shooting ranges where hunters can become certified in the standards required to apply for managed hunts held across the state. When they have successfully passed the program, they receive a statewide shooter qualification card. Appendix II provides a summary of the total deer taken on Maryland public lands during the 2024–2025 hunting seasons. Some of these public lands are part of the managed hunting programs described here.

Table 5
Maryland Reported Crossbow Deer Harvest
by County, 2025–2026.

County	Archery Season			Muzzleloader/Firearm Seasons			Grand Total
	Antlered	Antlerless	Total	Antlered	Antlerless	Total	
Allegany	345	166	511	31	33	64	575
Anne Arundel	173	206	379	41	56	97	476
Baltimore	667	685	1,352	124	186	310	1,662
Calvert	172	160	332	25	32	57	389
Caroline	181	156	337	25	26	51	388
Carroll	543	437	980	63	68	131	1,111
Cecil	381	388	769	45	84	129	898
Charles	232	223	455	44	34	78	533
Dorchester							
<i>White-Tailed</i>	134	88	222	14	15	29	251
<i>Sika</i>	317	353	670	38	35	73	743
Frederick	694	482	1,176	75	75	150	1,326
Garrett	655	312	967	62	50	112	1,079
Harford	441	393	834	51	63	114	948
Howard	289	355	644	44	88	132	776
Kent	242	156	398	25	23	48	446
Montgomery	363	423	786	59	69	128	914
Prince George's	117	105	222	18	24	42	264
Queen Anne's	280	210	490	33	45	78	568
Somerset							
<i>White-Tailed</i>	122	113	235	10	18	28	263
<i>Sika</i>	10	2	12	2	0	2	14
St. Mary's	274	236	510	48	58	106	616
Talbot	167	172	339	18	18	36	375
Washington	545	392	937	50	54	104	1,041
Wicomico							
<i>White-Tailed</i>	198	143	341	13	29	42	383
<i>Sika</i>	21	22	43	0	4	4	47
Worcester							
<i>White-Tailed</i>	181	108	289	12	18	30	319
<i>Sika</i>	9	12	21	1	0	1	22
Grand Total	7,753	6,498	14,251	971	1,205	2,176	16,427

Table 6
Maryland Reported 2-Week Firearm Season
Deer Harvest by County, 2025–2026.

County	Antlered	Antlerless	Total
Allegany	808	541	1,349
Anne Arundel	107	221	328
Baltimore	446	758	1,204
Calvert	152	255	407
Caroline			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	386	839	1,225
<i>Sika</i>	1	2	3
Carroll	832	1,244	2,076
Cecil	398	690	1,088
Charles	251	500	751
Dorchester			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	294	507	801
<i>Sika</i>	382	489	871
Frederick	1,090	1,483	2,573
Garrett	1,280	1,035	2,315
Harford	313	635	948
Howard	154	305	459
Kent	413	936	1,349
Montgomery	292	358	650
Prince George's	144	182	326
Queen Anne's	478	1,013	1,491
Somerset			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	261	685	946
<i>Sika</i>	7	4	11
St. Mary's	220	410	630
Talbot	248	681	929
Washington	930	955	1,885
Wicomico			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	392	805	1,197
<i>Sika</i>	50	44	94
Worcester			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	489	904	1,393
<i>Sika</i>	5	4	9
Total	10,823	16,485	27,308

Table 7
Maryland Reported Junior Deer Hunt
Harvest by County, 2025–2026.

County	Antlered	Antlerless	Total
Allegany	117	39	156
Anne Arundel	12	7	19
Baltimore¹	30	16	46
Calvert	11	12	23
Caroline			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	37	29	66
<i>Sika</i>	0	0	0
Carroll	138	73	211
Cecil	44	20	64
Charles	33	20	53
Dorchester			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	34	17	51
<i>Sika</i>	19	10	29
Frederick	182	74	256
Garrett	273	69	342
Harford	22	11	33
Howard	15	5	20
Kent	54	20	74
Montgomery	45	33	78
Prince George's	10	2	12
Queen Anne's	48	19	67
Somerset			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	39	25	64
<i>Sika</i>	0	0	0
St. Mary's	33	19	52
Talbot	38	11	49
Washington	140	41	181
Wicomico			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	73	40	113
<i>Sika</i>	3	2	5
Worcester			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	80	43	123
<i>Sika</i>	0	0	0
Total	1,530	657	2,187

¹ Saturday only.

Table 8
Maryland Reported 3-Day January Firearm Season
Deer Harvest by County, 2025–2026.

County	Antlered	Antlerless	Total
Allegany	*	*	*
Anne Arundel	11	21	32
Baltimore	40	111	151
Calvert	15	34	49
Caroline			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	28	122	150
<i>Sika</i>	0	0	0
Carroll	59	225	284
Cecil	32	116	148
Charles	10	55	65
Dorchester			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	24	67	91
<i>Sika</i>	87	194	281
Frederick	71	305	376
Garrett	*	*	*
Harford	18	111	129
Howard	14	58	72
Kent	43	156	199
Montgomery	32	66	98
Prince George's	7	19	26
Queen Anne's	51	186	237
Somerset			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	32	110	142
<i>Sika</i>	1	0	1
St. Mary's	13	52	65
Talbot	23	82	105
Washington	42	143	185
Wicomico			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	24	141	165
<i>Sika</i>	6	21	27
Worcester			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	42	213	255
<i>Sika</i>	0	0	0
Total	725	2,608	3,333

Table 9
Maryland Reported Early Muzzleloader Season
Deer Harvest by County, 2025–2026.

County	Antlered	Antlerless	Total
Allegany	247	154	401
Anne Arundel	60	89	149
Baltimore	219	319	538
Calvert	72	76	148
Caroline			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	107	177	284
<i>Sika</i>	1	0	1
Carroll	254	346	600
Cecil	150	213	363
Charles	123	157	280
Dorchester			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	90	111	201
<i>Sika</i>	372	202	574
Frederick	324	381	705
Garrett	424	221	645
Harford	155	246	401
Howard	106	165	271
Kent	207	192	399
Montgomery	112	134	246
Prince George's	52	67	119
Queen Anne's	162	249	411
Somerset			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	92	135	227
<i>Sika</i>	5	2	7
St. Mary's	115	146	261
Talbot	95	111	206
Washington	289	229	518
Wicomico			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	97	178	275
<i>Sika</i>	46	24	70
Worcester			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	107	165	272
<i>Sika</i>	0	0	0
Total	4,083	4,489	8,572

Table 10
Maryland Reported Late Muzzleloader Season
Deer Harvest by County, 2025–2026.

County	Antlered	Antlerless	Total
Allegany	75	156	231
Anne Arundel	32	68	100
Baltimore	91	237	328
Calvert	29	61	90
Caroline	40	144	184
Carroll	81	181	262
Cecil	35	121	156
Charles	58	107	165
Dorchester			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	32	76	108
<i>Sika</i>	94	115	209
Frederick	136	279	415
Garrett	146	243	389
Harford	51	154	205
Howard	32	96	128
Kent	60	168	228
Montgomery	55	114	169
Prince George's	26	60	86
Queen Anne's	57	183	240
Somerset			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	23	53	76
<i>Sika</i>	1	2	3
St. Mary's	38	103	141
Talbot	31	94	125
Washington	98	192	290
Wicomico			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	50	102	152
<i>Sika</i>	9	14	23
Worcester			
<i>White-Tailed</i>	44	99	143
<i>Sika</i>	0	1	1
Total	1,424	3,223	4,647

Table 11
Maryland Reported Primitive Deer Hunt Days
Harvest by County, 2025–2026.

County	Archery			Muzzleloader			Total		
	Antlered	Antlerless	Total	Antlered	Antlerless	Total	Antlered	Antlerless	Total
Allegany	0	1	1	0	14	14	0	15	15
Anne Arundel	2	2	4	3	2	5	5	4	9
Baltimore	0	5	5	1	5	6	1	10	11
Calvert	0	2	2	1	1	2	1	3	4
Caroline	0	1	1	2	11	13	2	12	14
Carroll	0	1	1	3	10	13	3	11	14
Cecil	0	0	0	2	1	3	2	1	3
Charles	1	3	4	2	3	5	3	6	9
Dorchester									
<i>White-Tailed</i>	0	1	1	3	9	12	3	10	13
<i>Sika</i>	3	4	7	19	28	47	22	32	54
Frederick	0	2	2	4	14	18	4	16	20
Garrett	1	2	3	0	26	26	1	28	29
Harford	1	3	4	0	13	13	1	16	17
Howard	1	0	1	1	2	3	2	2	4
Kent	0	0	0	3	12	15	3	12	15
Montgomery	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	3	3
Prince George's	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	3
Queen Anne's	0	1	1	1	10	11	1	11	12
Somerset	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	2	2
St. Mary's	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	3	3
Talbot	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	3
Washington	3	3	6	1	9	10	4	12	16
Wicomico									
<i>White-Tailed</i>	1	1	2	3	6	9	4	7	11
<i>Sika</i>	2	1	3	1	1	2	3	2	5
Worcester	0	1	1	3	2	5	3	3	6
Total	15	36	51	53	191	244	68	227	295

Suburban Deer Management

Deer management in suburban areas ranks as one of the most difficult challenges facing wildlife agencies throughout the country. DNR is charged with managing deer across the state's varied landscape for a diverse public that has different opinions on how deer should be managed. This includes the large urban/suburban corridor in the midsection of the state.

As development continues in Maryland, the conversion of forested and agricultural lands into housing developments can actually improve habitat conditions for deer. Developed areas provide more than adequate food resources and they often offer refuge from hunting. As a result, deer numbers can increase rapidly in these areas. High deer numbers lead to a greater number of negative interactions with suburban residents, decreasing the residents' tolerance of deer and increasing the demand on the department to somehow regulate the population.

Safety concerns and social considerations in urban areas often prevent the use of common lethal deer population control measures (i.e., hunting). Non-lethal control measures, such as fencing and repellants, can help reduce deer problems, but they do not eliminate them.

Increasing deer-vehicle collisions, damage to ornamental plants and gardens, and damage to natural habitats are some of the problems that persist when the deer population is not directly managed and reduced. Oftentimes, when public tolerance levels have been surpassed, lethal control methods are considered as a last resort. At this point, DNR provides its professional opinion as to what, if any, lethal method (i.e., managed hunt, professional sharpshooting, etc.) is feasible for a particular scenario. Often, a combination of non-lethal and lethal techniques is recommended to help resolve the problem. DNR will continue to evaluate any new deer management techniques as they are created and promote effective methods that help reduce deer-human conflicts.

Non-Hunting Mortality

Factors that cause mortality in deer other than hunting include disease, fawn predation (from bears, coyotes, bobcats, fishers, feral dogs, etc.), collisions with vehicles, harvest using Deer Management Permits, and harvest via sharpshooting.

To monitor deer mortality due to deer-vehicle collisions, DNR primarily uses data provided by State Farm Insurance Company. State Farm estimates total animal-vehicle collisions based on its share of the insurance business for each state and the number of accidents reported by their clients. Annually, they project between 25,000–35,000 deer-vehicle collisions each year, with an estimated 29,589 in 2025.

Negative impacts to farmland are also of concern when deer populations are not managed or reduced. Farmers and landowners can obtain a Deer Management Permit from DNR when deer are causing damage to commercial crops. Deer Management Permits allow farmers to harvest antlerless deer on their property outside of the regular state hunting seasons and bag limits. In 2025, 10,296 deer were taken with Deer Management Permits compared to 11,501 deer in 2024 (Table 12). Significantly higher planting costs continue to cause farmers to control deer more intensely than they have in the past. While regulated hunting remains the most effective way to control deer statewide, Deer Management Permits are a valuable tool for farmers to protect their livelihood.

In areas where lethal control of deer via regulated hunting is not feasible due to urbanization or security issues (i.e., military bases), public and private landowners may obtain a Deer Cooperator Permit. Sharpshooting deer via a Deer Cooperator Permit is a viable, lethal alternative for controlling deer numbers. A limited number of farmers also use the permit at night in particularly problematic areas to reduce deer damage to their crops. Permittees must pass written and shooting exams in order to obtain the permit and must submit an Operational Plan for approval. Most of these permits are limited to January 15 through April 15. During 2025, 1,491 deer were harvested under authority of these permits in Maryland. County and/or federal officials, as well as a few private groups, remove the majority of deer taken with this method.

Over the past decade, there has been increased concern about predation on deer in the United States. These concerns often are focused on coyotes, and particularly in the southeastern part of the country. In Maryland, these concerns are more pronounced in the western counties, where bears and coyotes are more abundant. Currently, reproductive data that the Deer Project collects does not indicate coyotes or bears are having a significant impact on the deer population in Maryland. In some counties, fawn recruitment, based on the annual hunter harvest, has declined to relatively low numbers during some years, but the deer population remains stable. While the deer population is significantly lower than it was 20 years ago, the decline can be largely attributed to the relatively high percentage of antlerless deer taken during the hunting season.

While there is no doubt that coyotes and bears are depredating fawns, Maryland's long-term deer data, along with research and experience from nearby states, indicate that their effect is minimal. Most white-tailed deer give birth to fawns within a two- to four-week period in May and June, which overwhelms predators like coyotes and bears. During that time, there are far more fawns on the ground than can be consumed by predators, thus ensuring that an adequate number will survive to reproduce in coming years. The Deer Project will continue to monitor fawn recruitment rates, as well as coyote and bear populations, in Maryland, and will develop alternative management strategies as the need arises.

Deer Population

Maryland's white-tailed deer population prior to the 2025–2026 hunting season was estimated at 271,747 deer, approximately 14.2% higher than the previous 5-year average of 238,054 deer. Trends in deer abundance are commonly monitored using harvest estimates and the age structure of the deer herd. These methods work well in areas where hunters have access to most of the land but are much less reliable for urban/suburban deer populations where hunting occurs sporadically.

Liberal antlerless regulations have slowed or halted deer population growth in many areas outside the Washington D.C. to Baltimore suburban corridor. In some rural counties, the deer population has declined. The Department of Natural Resources is currently investigating additional ways to control deer in the suburban corridor where hunting is limited by a lack of land access.



Table 12
Maryland Reported Crop Damage Mortality
by County, 2025–2026.

County	No. Permits Issued	No. Shooters Authorized	No. Successful Shooters	No. Deer Authorized to Harvest	Whitetail Males Harvested	Whitetail Females Harvested	Sika Males Harvested	Sika Females Harvested	Total Harvested	Tags Utilized (%)
Allegany	62	310	66	559	20	174	0	0	194	35
Anne Arundel	33	200	29	1,010	9	69	0	0	78	8
Baltimore	95	641	128	1,633	43	499	0	0	542	33
Calvert	24	147	27	705	11	46	0	0	57	8
Caroline	49	257	86	780	28	343	0	0	371	48
Carroll	205	1,481	255	4,995	95	868	0	0	963	19
Cecil	36	199	48	673	37	166	0	0	203	30
Charles	56	314	64	1,940	26	204	0	0	230	12
Dorchester	84	703	158	2,150	25	389	15	270	699	33
Frederick	154	926	201	3,250	68	719	0	0	787	24
Garrett	475	2,840	618	5,540	166	1,740	0	0	1,906	34
Harford	59	471	81	1,091	29	251	0	0	280	26
Howard	50	464	82	1,250	22	265	0	0	287	23
Kent	45	345	103	890	48	388	0	0	436	49
Montgomery	54	464	94	1,435	23	319	0	0	342	24
Prince George's	31	239	38	1,070	8	156	0	0	164	15
Queen Anne's	56	375	107	1,030	31	433	0	0	464	45
Somerset	39	338	50	820	14	188	0	1	203	25
St. Mary's	63	483	71	1,960	14	169	0	0	183	9
Talbot	65	439	98	1,145	40	344	0	0	384	34
Washington	118	702	167	2,035	58	586	0	0	644	32
Wicomico	76	519	103	1,359	37	362	3	31	433	32
Worcester	91	644	110	1,851	48	398	0	0	446	24
Statewide	2,020	13,501	2,784	39,171	900	9,076	18	302	10,296	27

Chronic Wasting Disease

In 2025–2026, the DNR sampled submitted 2,073 samples for laboratory testing for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and detected 69 deer carrying the disease. All the positives were from within the existing CWD Management Area. The Chronic Wasting Disease Management Area currently includes all of Allegany, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery and Washington counties.

Maryland first detected CWD in November 2010 in Green Ridge State Forest near an area where chronic wasting disease is present in West Virginia. To date, the DNR has detected the disease in 354 deer out of 17,779 tested.

CWD is a disease of the brain and nervous system that causes death in cervids (members of the deer family). The disease is classified as a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy and attacks the brain of cervids, producing small lesions that eventually result in death. CWD was historically a western U.S. disease, but since 2001 it has been detected in numerous states east of the Mississippi River, including the mid-Atlantic states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. To date, 37 states and five Canadian provinces in North America have documented CWD in their deer, elk, or moose populations (free-ranging, captive, or both). The disease has also been detected in Finland (free-ranging moose), Norway (free-ranging reindeer), South Korea (captive elk from Canada), and Sweden (free-ranging moose).

Concerns over CWD should not stop hunters from enjoying the hunting season or any venison they may acquire. CWD has not been shown to be transmissible to humans. However, it is recommended that hunters field-dressing or butchering deer take the same precautions as they might to protect against other pathogens or diseases. Additional information on the proper handling of harvested deer and chronic wasting disease management can be found in Appendix I.

DNR continues to cooperate with various research institutions concerning CWD. Currently, staff are participating in a multistate effort coordinated by Cornell University to identify the most effective surveillance strategies for the disease.

Deer Research and Data Use

In 2025–2026 department staff and volunteers examined 4,818 deer at butcher shops across the state during the muzzleloader and firearm seasons. At the butcher shops, sex and age of the deer were determined and antler measurements were recorded for bucks. Deer were also checked for evidence of illness or disease. The yearly sample of harvested deer provides valuable information that is used to estimate deer population numbers and to detect any changes in the deer herd reproductive potential. It is also used to monitor the overall health of deer and the effects of changes to seasons and bag limits made to better manage deer populations.

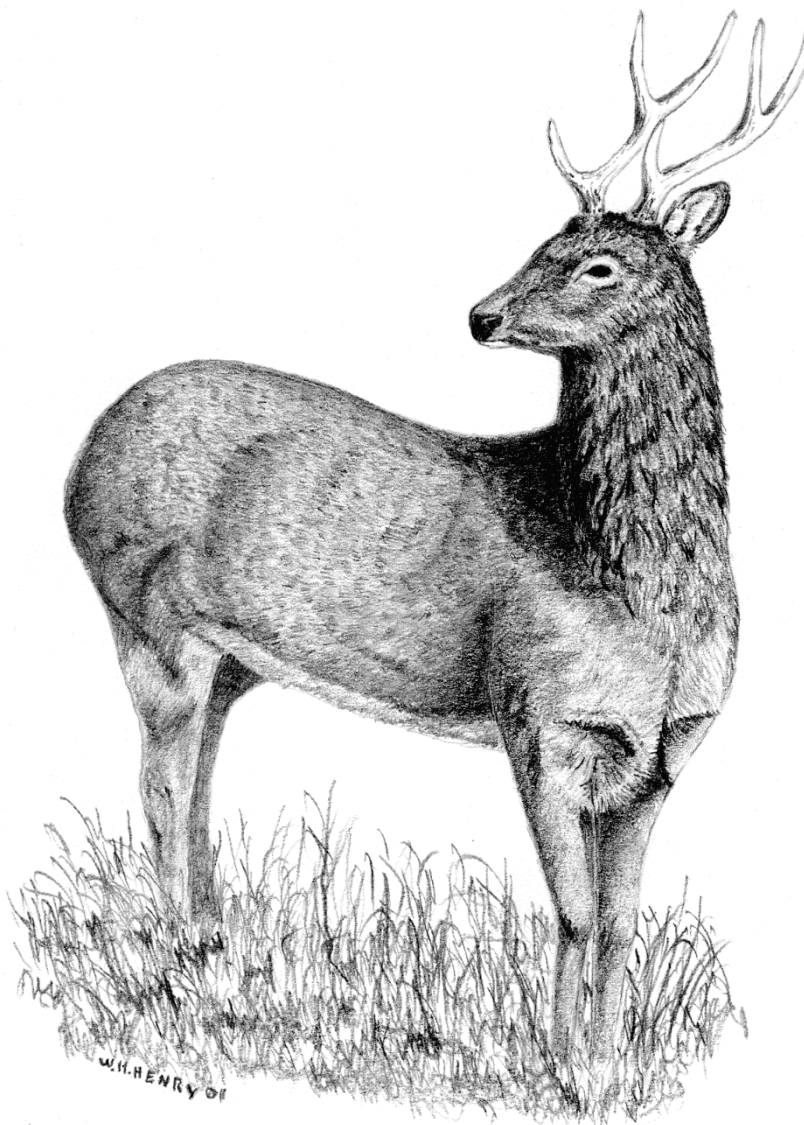
Staff and volunteers determine the age of each deer by the wear and replacement of its teeth. As young deer get older, their milk teeth are replaced with permanent teeth. As adult deer age, their permanent teeth begin to wear down. This wear enables biologists to reliably categorize deer as fawns (less than one year old), yearlings (approximately 1.5 years old) or adults (two years and older). The proportions of deer in each age class and their gender are then used in reconstruction models to develop and follow trends in the state's deer population.

The antler beam circumference measurements of yearling bucks that are brought to butcher shops are used as indicators of the reproductive potential and health of the deer herd. Yearling males in good habitat with moderate deer numbers will have larger antler beam diameters than those in higher populations or poorer habitat. Abundant food and modest competition translate into more energy available for antler growth. This is most evident in the yearling age class. Trends in these measurements can indicate deer herd overpopulation and habitat degradation.

Overall, Maryland's long-term data for these indicators show healthy, productive deer populations across the state. The percentage of yearling bucks in the harvest remains very healthy and has shown a positive declining trend in recent years. However, the average number of antler points and the average antler beam diameter for yearling bucks have also been declining. This data will continue to be monitored closely in the coming years, but the declining trend may be an artifact of the sampling that now occurs at butcher shops.

Deer examined at the butcher shops are also examined for evidence of hemorrhagic disease (HD), a viral disease spread by biting midges. HD, or "blue-tongue," commonly appears in late summer and early fall. Deer that have survived hemorrhagic disease and are harvested will exhibit hooves with sloughing or peeling tissue. These deer are still suitable for human consumption. Hemorrhagic disease occurs annually in Maryland, although it varies in intensity. The results of this annual statewide examination are reported to the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study in Athens, Georgia as part of a nationwide survey. This study is one of the oldest and most complete nationwide wildlife disease investigations in the country.

HD outbreaks typically occur every three to five years and may affect 10–20%, or more, of a local deer population. While HD is often fatal to deer, the disease poses no threat to humans. Maryland supports a healthy white-tailed deer population that is routinely subject to HD outbreaks and easily recovers from the localized effects of the disease. During the fall of 2025, there was an outbreak in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Cecil, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties. The Department of Natural Resources tested some deceased deer for HD and found strains EHDV-2 and EHDV-6 present in 2025. The Department will continue to monitor HD in the coming years.



Archery Hunter Survey

The annual [Archery Hunter Survey](#) continued during the 2025–2026 season; however, those data are still being analyzed and were not available for inclusion in this report. During the 2024–2025 season, archery hunters reported observing 15.22 white-tailed bucks and 38.82 white-tailed does per 100 hours hunted statewide. In the eastern coastal region where Sika deer inhabit, hunters reported observing 1.97 stags and 3.45 hinds per 100 hours. Hunters also observed 2.12 adult does for every adult buck and 0.54 fawns for every adult doe for white-tailed and Sika deer combined during the 2024–2025 season.

The Archery Hunter Survey provides observational data about furbearers, deer and other wildlife. Archery hunters record the number of animals observed during each hunt, number of hours they hunt, county of hunt and other specific details about each hunt. If you are an archery hunter and would like to participate, contact Josh Tabora at 240-609-5100 or by email at Josh.Tabora@maryland.gov. Forms are also available on the DNR website, at https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/hunt_trap/bhsurvey.aspx.

Regulatory and Legislative Changes for the Coming 2026–2027 Season

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources hosted its biennial regulatory review process during 2025–2026 for the coming two hunting seasons beginning in 2026–2027. As part of the process, the department hosted stakeholder meetings and posted the proposed regulations online for review and comment. Comments were also accepted via telephone and letter/email. The following regulations related to deer hunting were created or modified:

- Muzzle energy requirements for rifles were modified to allow the use of any rifle .30 caliber (7.62mm) and larger regardless of the muzzle energy produced.
- Drones (unmanned aircraft systems) cannot be used to hunt, trap, or pursue wildlife with the exception that a drone may be used to assist in the recovery of a wounded or expired animal.
- Hunters with a Universal Disability Pass who are hunting from a vehicle may use straight-walled cartridge rifles during the muzzleloader season.
- Legislatively, Sunday hunting was permitted in Baltimore City and the archery safety zone in Baltimore City was reduced to 50 yards. Sunday hunting hours were expanded in Kent, Talbot, and Wicomico counties. In addition, the venison donation tax credit was increased from \$300 to \$600. Hunters should consult the 2026–2027 [Guide to Hunting and Trapping](#) for more information regarding these regulatory and legislative changes at <https://dnr.maryland.gov/huntersguide/pages/default.aspx>.

Appendix I

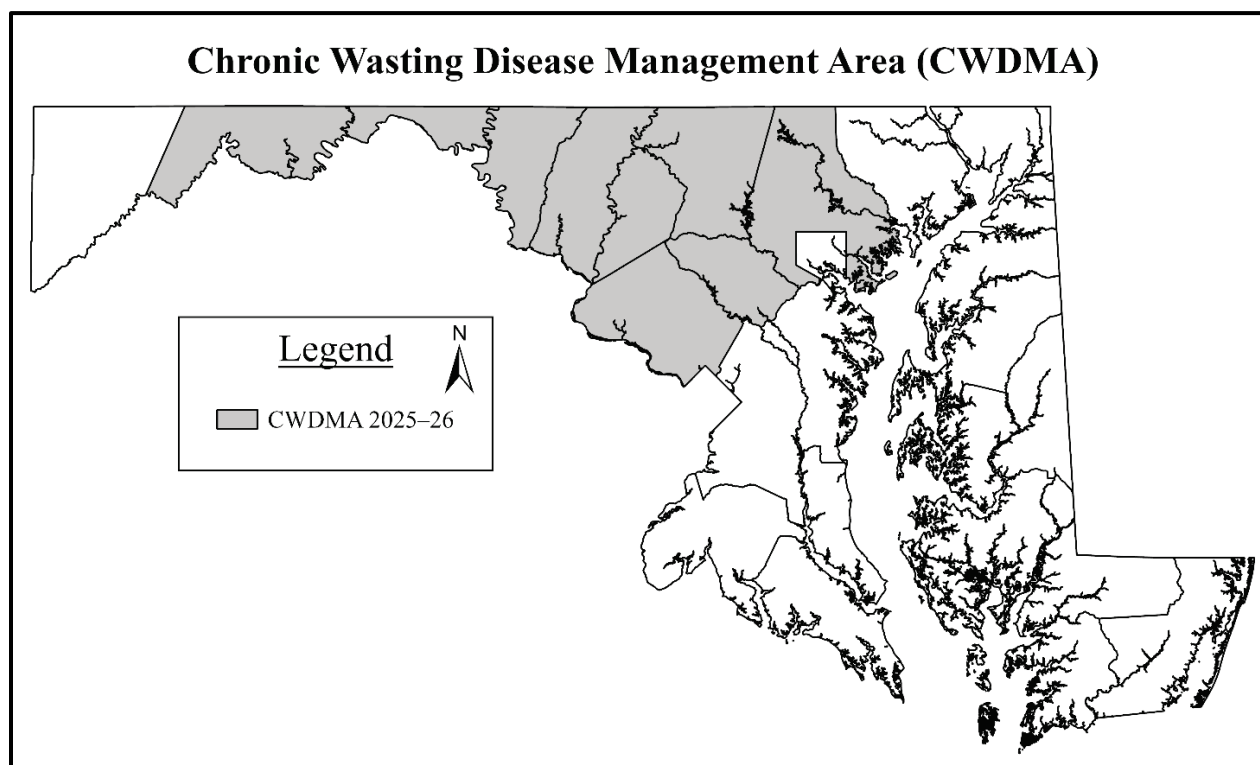
Chronic Wasting Disease in Deer

The following common-sense precautionary measures are recommended for the safe handling, field-dressing and home processing of venison:

- Avoid shooting or handling a deer that appears sick.
- Wear latex or rubber gloves when field-dressing or butchering deer.
- Remove all internal organs.
- Remove the meat from the bones and spinal column if home processing a deer.
- Do not use household knives or utensils when field-dressing or home processing a deer.
- Avoid cutting through bones or the spinal column (backbone).
- Never eat a deer's brain, eyeballs, spinal cord, spleen or lymph nodes.
- If you saw off antlers or through a bone, or if you sever the spinal column with a knife, be sure to disinfect these tools prior to using them for the butchering or removal of meat.
- Remove all fat, membranes and connective tissue from the meat. Note that normal field-dressing and trimming of fat from meat will remove lymph nodes.
- Always wash hands and instruments thoroughly after dressing and processing game meat.
- Use a 50/50 solution of household chlorine bleach and water to disinfect tools and work surfaces. Wipe down counters and let them dry; soak knives for one hour.

Chronic Wasting Disease Management

Due to the detection of chronic wasting disease in several counties in Maryland, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources has implemented several measures that are intended to prevent the unintentional spread of chronic wasting disease to other locations in Maryland or to other states. The changes outlined below apply only to the Chronic Wasting Disease Management Area (CWDMA), which is currently defined as all of Allegany, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery and Washington counties.



Whole deer carcasses or deer parts cannot be transported out of the Chronic Wasting Disease Management Area unless they are transported to an approved processor or taxidermist (https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/hunt_trap/CWD_in_Maryland.aspx), apart from the following exceptions:

- Meat with no part of the spinal column, backbone, or head attached,
- Hind quarters and front shoulders with no spinal column or backbone attached, (hunters MUST have checked in their deer and obtained a confirmation number to transport a quartered deer)
- Cleaned hide with no head attached,
- Skull plate cleaned of all meat and brain tissue,
- Antlers with no meat or soft tissue attached,
- Finished taxidermy mounts or tanned hides,
- Whole deer carcasses or parts being transported directly to the meat processors or taxidermists listed below, or to the landfill located within Allegany, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, or Washington counties.

Please check the Maryland Department of Natural Resources website, at https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/hunt_trap/CWD_in_Maryland.aspx, for updates on chronic wasting disease surveillance and management. Hunter assistance and cooperation is essential to the department's efforts to monitor and manage chronic wasting disease.

Carcass Importation Ban

The primary objective in the management of CWD is to prevent or slow its spread into new areas. One possible mode of disease transmission is by the movement and disposal of infected carcasses. To minimize the risk for disease spread, Maryland, along with many other states, has adopted regulations that prohibit the importation of whole carcasses and certain carcass parts of deer, moose and elk harvested from states that have CWD.

A person may bring only the following parts of a dead deer, elk, or moose into Maryland from another state or province's designated CWD containment, surveillance, or management area, unless the final destination of the carcass is within the Maryland Chronic Wasting Disease Management Area or with a chronic wasting disease-approved Maryland processor or taxidermist:

- Meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached.
- Hindquarters and front shoulders with no spinal column or backbone attached.
- Cleaned hide with no head attached.
- Skull plate cleaned of all meat and brain tissue.
- Antlers with no meat or soft tissue attached.
- Upper canine teeth, also known as buglers, whistlers or ivories.
- Finished taxidermy mount or tanned hides.

Importation of whole deer, elk, moose or carcasses of other members of the deer family, *Cervidae*, is prohibited from CWD positive areas identified within the United States and Canadian provinces. The latest information on CWD positive areas in the United States and Canada can be found on the USGS website at <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/nwhc/science/expanding-distribution-chronic-wasting-disease>.

Any person who imports or possesses a cervid carcass or part of a cervid that was tested for chronic wasting disease in another state or province and is notified that the cervid tested positive, must report the test results to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources within 24 hours of receiving such notification by telephone at 301-842-0332 or by email to: kevin.lamp1@maryland.gov.

If you hunt deer, elk, moose or other cervids in other states and/or provinces, particularly those in which CWD has been detected, check with the respective fish and wildlife agencies regarding special regulations or specific advice for hunters. Also check with your home state fish and wildlife agency to ensure that animals lawfully killed elsewhere may be imported and possessed in your state. Additional information can be found at the CWD Alliance website www.cwd-info.org.

Taking Deer Carcasses out of Maryland

Because Maryland is considered a CWD positive state, deer hunters must follow carcass importation regulations in other states when they transport a deer carcass out of Maryland (see www.cwd-info.org). The surrounding states of Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia each have specific regulations as to whether they will allow whole deer carcasses or only parts of carcasses to enter from Maryland. Likewise, the regulations for each of these states vary as to whether they apply to deer from anywhere in Maryland, or just to deer taken within the CWDMA. Hunters are strongly encouraged to check state regulations before transporting deer carcasses. Travelers may pass through Maryland with cervid carcasses, provided that no parts are disposed of or remain in the state.



Appendix II
Maryland Reported Public Hunting Area
Antlered and Antlerless Harvest by County, 2025–2026.

Public Land	Antlered	Antlerless
Allegany		
Belle Grove WMA	6	3
Billmeyer WMA	6	8
Dan's Mountain WMA	97	34
Green Ridge SF	232	159
McCoole Fishery Management Area	1	0
Rocky Gap SP	12	7
Sideling Hill WMA	2	1
Warrior Mountain WMA	66	61
Anne Arundel		
Crownsville CWMA	3	4
Davidsonville Receiver Station	3	6
Fort Meade	26	19
Holly Beach Farm NRMA	6	5
Patapsco Valley SP	6	9
Sandy Point SP	6	5
Severn Run NEA	4	2
Smithsonian	15	32
Baltimore		
Gunpowder Falls SP	71	89
Gwynnbrook WMA	4	7
Liberty Watershed	25	35
Loch Raven Watershed	91	119
North Point SP	9	8
Patapsco Valley SP	20	27
Prettyboy Watershed	128	147
Soldiers Delight NEA	17	66
Calvert		
Biscoe Gray Heritage Farm CWMA	2	1
Calvert Cliffs SP	6	11
Hall Creek NRMA	3	2
Huntingtown Area	1	2
Parkers Creek WMA	8	34
Hughes Tree Farm CWMA	1	2
Caroline		
Chesapeake Forest Lands	5	9
Idylwild WMA	33	53
Tuckahoe SP	2	9

Public Land	Antlered	Antlerless
Carroll		
Avondale WMA	5	7
Farver CWMA	2	0
Hahn CWMA	2	0
Hanover Watershed	20	12
Liberty Watershed	70	88
Maring CWMA	5	4
Morgan Run NEA	21	45
Patapsco Valley SP	24	30
Sawmill-Spiegel CWMA	15	32
Woodbrook CWMA	9	12
Cecil		
Bohemia River NRMA	8	16
C and D Canal Lands	13	16
Earleville WMA	5	7
Elk Neck SF	23	27
Elk Neck SP	24	38
Fair Hill NRMA	51	105
Grove Farm WMA	21	8
Old Bohemia WMA	12	13
Charles		
Blossom Point Field Test Facility	1	4
Cedar Point WMA	11	23
Cedarville SF	5	6
Chapel Point SP	20	21
Chapman SP (Mt. Aventine)	2	7
Chicamuxen WMA	3	1
Doncaster SF or Tayloes Neck	1	12
Indian Creek NRMA	5	9
Indian Head Naval Ordinance Area	13	22
Myrtle Grove WMA	24	22
Nanjemoy Creek WMA	4	4
Nanjemoy WMA	2	0
Popes Creek WMA	5	11
Riverside WMA	5	3

Public Land	Antlered	Antlerless
Dorchester		
Blackwater NWR		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	32	31
<i>Sika</i>	208	282
Chesapeake Forest Lands		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	53	73
<i>Sika</i>	75	69
Fishing Bay WMA		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	3	3
<i>Sika</i>	71	83
LeCompte WMA		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	3	3
<i>Sika</i>	9	6
Linkwood WMA		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	8	15
<i>Sika</i>	1	3
Taylor's Island WMA		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	1	0
<i>Sika</i>	7	14
Frederick		
Cunningham Falls SP, Thurmont Watershed	36	41
Emmitsburg Watershed	1	5
Frederick City Watershed	51	65
Ft. Detrick	6	11
Heaters Island WMA	2	12
Monocacy NRMA	37	30
South Mountain SP	18	23
Urbana Fishery Management Area	1	12

Appendix II – continued –
Maryland Reported Public Hunting Area
Antlered and Antlerless Harvest by County, 2025–2026.

Public Land	Antlered	Antlerless
Garrett		
4H Center	3	5
Cunningham Swamp WMA	5	4
Deep Creek Lake SP	12	10
Frostburg Watershed	14	10
Garrett SF	110	105
Mount Nebo WMA	41	37
Potomac SF	65	46
Sang Run SP	3	11
Savage River SF	296	257
Wolf Den Run SP	10	16
Youghiogheny NEA	13	4
Youghiogheny Reservoir	10	2
Harford		
Aberdeen Proving Ground	52	70
Gunpowder Falls SP	7	19
Rocks SP	15	25
Stoney Demonstration Forest	7	7
Susquehanna SP	15	33
Howard		
Hugg-Thomas WMA	11	28
Patapsco Valley SP	29	48
Patuxent River SP	54	70
Triadelphia/Rocky Gorge (WSSC)	29	25
Kent		
Cypress Branch SP	2	5
Eastern Neck NWR	17	24
Millington WMA	42	50
Sassafras NRMA	24	18
Montgomery		
Cherrington CWMA	14	13
Islands of the Potomac	5	5
Mckee-Beshers WMA	23	27
Patuxent River SP	45	48
Seneca Creek SP	63	86
Seneca Schaeffer Farm Tract	8	24
Strider WMA	8	8
Triadelphia/Rocky Gorge (WSSC)	9	17

Public Land	Antlered	Antlerless
Prince George's		
Aquasco Farms CWMA	12	17
Belt Woods NEA	6	6
Beltsville	27	25
Billingsley Tract (Patuxent River Park)	4	6
Brandywine Receiver Station	3	8
Cheltenham WMA	3	1
Gardner Road Park	1	3
Marlboro Natural Area CWMA	1	3
Merkle NRMA	6	7
Milltown Landing NRMA	8	13
Nottingham NRMA	9	7
Patuxent WRC (Central Tract)	1	4
Queen Anne Bridge Rd. CWMA	11	4
Rosaryville SP	2	2
Spice Creek (Patuxent River) NRMA	6	5
Triadelphia/Rocky Gorge (WSSC)	3	0
Queen Anne's		
Browns Branch WMA	16	17
Tuckahoe SP	8	24
Wye Island NRMA	42	65
St. Mary's		
Elms' CWMA	1	3
Greenwell SP	4	8
Historic St. Mary's City CWMA	2	4
Myrtle Point CWMA	4	4
Newtowne Neck SP	6	15
Patuxent Naval Air Station	23	31
Point Lookout SP (Jacobs Property)	4	2
Saint Clements SP	0	0
St. Inigoes SF	3	6
St. Mary's River SP or Salem Tract	18	25

Public Land	Antlered	Antlerless
Somerset		
Cedar Island WMA	0	1
Chesapeake Forest Lands		
White-Tailed	48	109
Sika	2	4
Deal Island WMA		
White-Tailed	5	25
Sika	5	3
Fairmount WMA		
White-Tailed Deer	1	5
Sika	1	0
Maryland Marine Properties WMA	0	0
Pocomoke Sound WMA	1	2
South Marsh Island WMA	0	0
Wellington WMA	3	3
Talbot		
Seth CFL	3	0
Washington		
Fort Frederick SP	1	6
Greenbrier SP	15	37
Hagerstown Watershed	1	0
Indian Springs WMA	64	37
Maryland Correctional Training Center	12	22
Prather's Neck WMA	8	2
Sideling Hill WMA	8	9
South Mountain SP	46	53
W. Maryland Ag. Research Station (B)	1	0
Woodmont NRMA	17	15

Appendix II – continued –
Maryland Reported Public Hunting Area
Antlered and Antlerless Harvest by County, 2025–2026.

Public Land	Antlered	Antlerless
Wicomico		
Blackwater NWR		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	1	1
<i>Sika</i>	1	1
Chesapeake Forest Lands		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	93	135
<i>Sika</i>	17	11
Ellis Bay WMA		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	2	13
<i>Sika</i>	10	7
Johnson WMA	1	3
Nanticoke WMA		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	8	22
<i>Sika</i>	10	13
Wetipquin WMA		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	1	5
<i>Sika</i>	0	1
Wicomico Demo Forest CFL		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	10	9
<i>Sika</i>	1	0
Worcester		
Assateague NS		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	4	12
<i>Sika</i>	33	59
Assateague SP		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	0	1
<i>Sika</i>	6	8
Chesapeake Forest Lands		
<i>White-Tailed Deer</i>	58	76
<i>Sika</i>	1	0
E.A. Vaughn WMA	28	37
Hickory Point		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	4	2
<i>Sika</i>	0	1
Isle of Wight WMA	1	1
Pocomoke River WMA	13	12
Pocomoke SF		
<i>White-Tailed</i>	52	89
<i>Sika</i>	2	2

CFL- Chesapeake Forest Land

CWMA- Cooperative Wildlife Management Area

FMA- Fishery Management Area

MNCPPC- Maryland-National Capital Park and
Planning Commission

NEA- Natural Environment Area

NRMA- Natural Resources Management Area

NS- National Seashore

NWR- National Wildlife Refuge

SF- State Forest

SP- State Park

WMA- Wildlife Management Area

WRC- Wildlife Research Center

WSSC- Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

Wild Turkey

Introduction

Wild turkeys are an important game bird in Maryland, providing recreation and enjoyment for many hunters, wildlife enthusiasts and citizens. Although turkey populations were dangerously low less than a century ago, conservation efforts have brought the species back from the brink of extinction. Maryland DNR uses a variety of surveys, hunting statistics and research data to ensure that wild turkey populations remain healthy.

Following a period of stabilization in the 2000s, the statewide wild turkey population has increased and now numbers over 50,000. Population trends and turkey densities vary over time and among regions, likely due to habitat, weather and reproductive success. On average, reproductive success in the summer of 2025 was below average throughout the state.

Approximately 10,000 hunters annually pursue turkeys in the spring, fall or winter hunting seasons in Maryland. In the 2026 spring season, hunters reported harvesting 5,094 turkeys, a slight increase from 2025. Harvest was very low during the fall and winter turkey seasons, with 57 and 19 turkeys reported, respectively. Interest in fall and winter turkey hunting has declined over time, with most hunters focused on spring season hunting.

More detailed information about wild turkey populations, hunting statistics and surveys can be found in the following report.



Population Status

Maryland's estimated statewide wild turkey population has increased slightly over the last 10 years, but regional variation is evident (Figure 1). In western Maryland, turkey numbers have remained relatively stable. The rapid growth and expansion seen in the central region in the 2010s appears to have stabilized, but populations continue to increase in the southern region. The upper eastern shore population continues to grow slowly at an estimated 2.8% per year. On the lower eastern shore, turkey numbers significantly declined in the mid-2000s but have increased recently in some areas.

Density indices (2024–26 average spring turkey kill per forested mi²) are categorized as high in 14 counties (>1 kill/mi²), moderate in eight counties (0.5–1.0 kill/mi²), and low in only one county (<0.5 kill/mi², Table 1, Figure 2). The highest densities of turkeys are still found in the western mountains, the eastern region and portions of the southern region.

The summer wild turkey observation survey estimated below-average reproductive success in summer of 2026 with a statewide index of 2.0 poult observed per hen (Figure 3). Most regions observed moderate production with 2.0 to 2.3 poults per hen, except for the Lower Eastern Shore Region where production was considerably lower. Poult per hen ratios at or above 2.0 can be considered a general threshold where production should be adequate to replace typical annual losses of adult turkeys. The highest reproductive success was noted in the Southern and Upper Eastern Shore regions. A detailed summary of the summer survey can be found here: https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/wt_observe_survey.pdf.

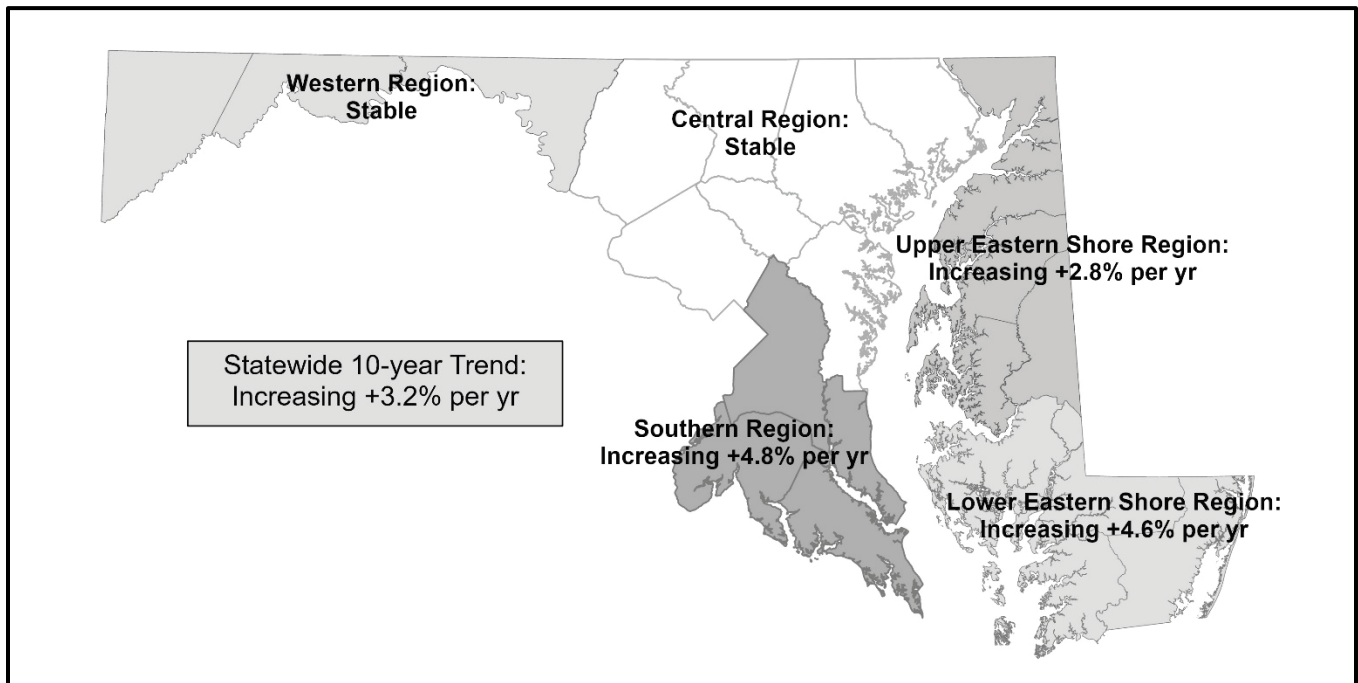


Figure 1
Maryland Estimated 10-year Wild Turkey Population Trends
By Region Based on Spring Turkey Harvest, 2017–2026.

Table 1
Maryland Reported Spring Gobbler Season Harvest, 2020–2026.

County	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	% Change 2025–26	10-year Average	Average kill/ sq. mi. 24–26
Allegany	286	266	282	483	345	314	372	18.5	317	1.10
Anne Arundel	81	64	85	136	106	118	101	-14.4	87	0.66
Baltimore	65	53	82	101	89	71	85	19.7	71	0.39
Calvert	82	58	72	99	107	101	100	-1.0	82	0.95
Caroline	180	149	168	174	151	162	192	18.5	161	1.75
Carroll	93	104	94	132	125	118	130	10.2	108	1.18
Cecil	94	80	67	95	86	112	130	16.1	91	0.85
Charles	369	353	334	445	472	445	452	1.6	387	1.69
Dorchester	211	197	170	180	211	226	216	-4.4	215	1.23
Frederick	348	281	343	391	322	281	294	4.6	321	1.32
Garrett	387	374	436	579	546	506	542	7.1	464	1.24
Harford	88	104	91	128	105	98	108	10.2	108	0.71
Howard	34	35	51	61	40	43	46	7.0	40	0.58
Kent	206	151	160	184	130	184	193	4.9	172	2.35
Montgomery	162	154	164	206	150	121	137	13.2	151	0.96
Prince George's	109	99	115	164	135	129	123	-4.7	115	0.69
Queen Anne's	144	120	144	170	191	186	240	29.0	162	2.08
Somerset	171	180	176	199	202	175	184	5.1	172	0.99
St. Mary's	226	187	204	253	226	282	293	3.9	225	2.47
Talbot	95	80	84	96	95	119	102	-14.3	93	1.67
Washington	439	345	400	515	445	406	382	-5.9	423	2.30
Wicomico	193	181	193	215	238	254	242	-4.7	199	1.70
Worcester	240	295	293	350	442	400	430	7.5	309	1.75
Statewide	4,303	3,910	4,208	5,356	4,959	4,851	5,094	5.0	4,472	1.29

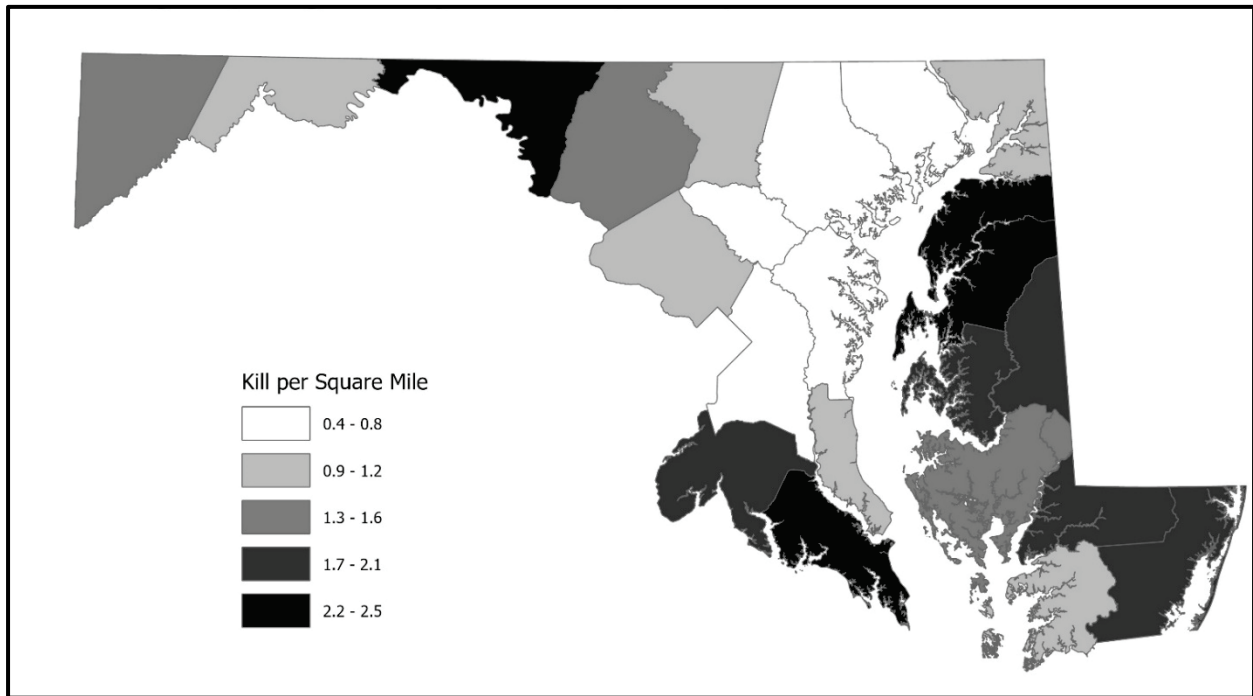


Figure 2
Maryland Wild Turkey Density Indices Based on the Average Spring Turkey Harvest Per Square Mile of Forest, 2024–2026.

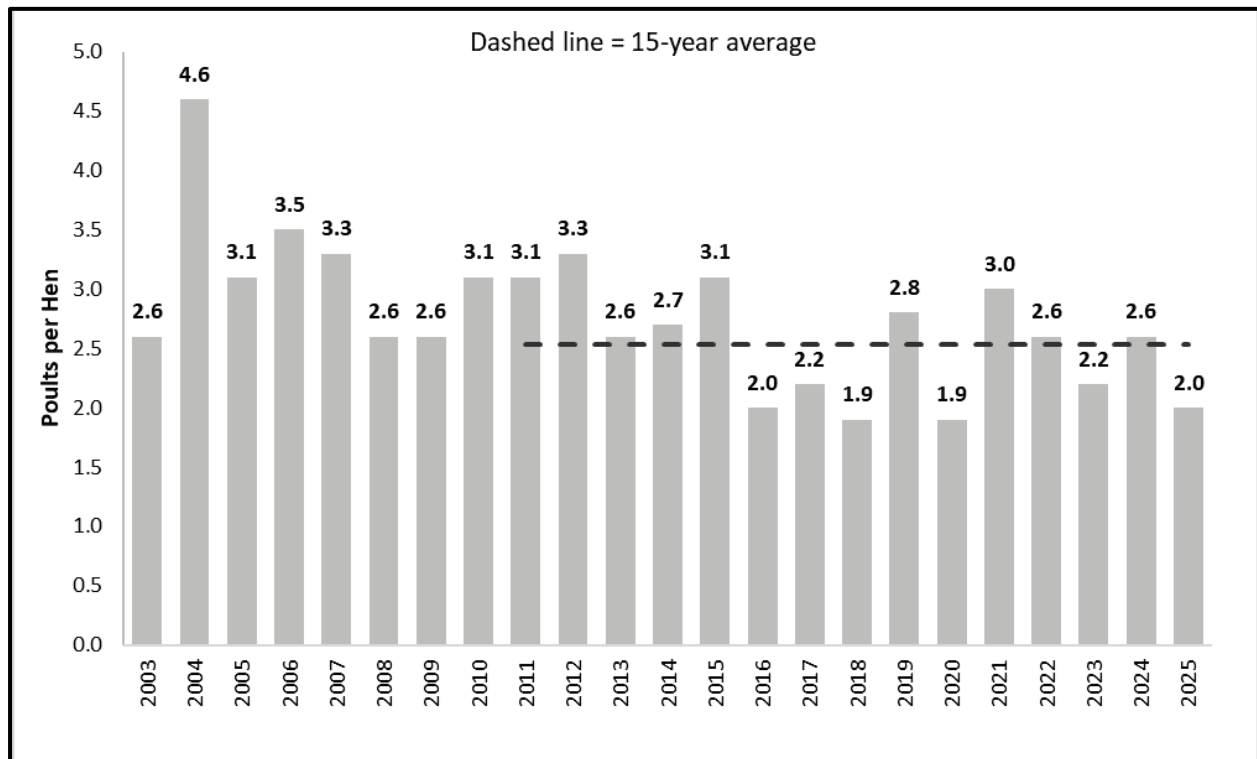


Figure 3
Average Number of Poults per Adult Hen Reported by Participants in the Summer Wild Turkey Observation Survey, 2003–2025.

Fall Season

Hunters reported taking 57 wild turkeys during the 9-day fall season in 2025. The harvest was lower than the 2024 fall season harvest of 104 and the 10-year average (Table 2, Figure 4). The fall season is limited to the three westernmost counties in Maryland. Adult males comprised 39% of the harvest while adult females were estimated to account for 27%. The proportion of juveniles in the harvest was 35%.

Table 2
Maryland's Fall Turkey Season Harvest, 2019–2025.

County	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	%Change 2024–2025	10-year average
Allegany	22	36	33	38	18	29	22	-24.1	29
Garrett	53	32	30	34	40	57	23	-59.6	43
Washington	16	16	18	27	17	18	12	-33.3	20
Total	91	84	81	99	75	104	57	-45.2	91



Winter Season

Hunters reported taking a record-low 19 wild turkeys during the 2026 winter turkey season that was open January 22–24 statewide (Table 3, Figure 4). Poor weather likely reduced hunter participation. Adult males comprised 63% of the harvest with the remainder females and juveniles. The winter turkey season was established in 2015 to provide hunters additional turkey hunting opportunities while minimizing conflicts with other hunting seasons.

Table 3
Maryland's Winter Wild Turkey Season Harvest, 2020–2026.

County	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Average
Allegany	2	4	4	10	2	2	0	4
Anne Arundel	2	0	4	7	2	1	0	2
Baltimore	1	3	7	3	1	1	0	2
Calvert	2	0	0	3	0	4	0	1
Caroline	5	4	5	1	2	4	3	4
Carroll	5	1	3	5	0	1	0	2
Cecil	3	4	2	1	0	0	0	2
Charles	1	8	0	7	3	3	1	4
Dorchester	3	6	1	3	1	3	0	6
Frederick	3	12	3	9	2	2	3	5
Garrett	9	7	4	4	4	4	2	6
Harford	0	5	3	3	0	0	1	2
Howard	1	0	4	0	1	1	0	1
Kent	6	2	0	0	0	0	1	2
Montgomery	1	3	2	2	2	2	1	2
Prince George's	5	7	1	0	0	0	0	2
Queen Anne's	4	3	1	1	2	3	1	3
Somerset	6	3	4	3	1	1	2	3
St. Mary's	13	6	9	6	4	2	1	6
Talbot	4	3	0	0	1	0	0	1
Washington	3	5	3	7	1	3	2	5
Wicomico	1	3	4	3	1	5	0	3
Worcester	2	0	3	6	6	0	1	3
Total	82	89	67	84	36	42	19	71

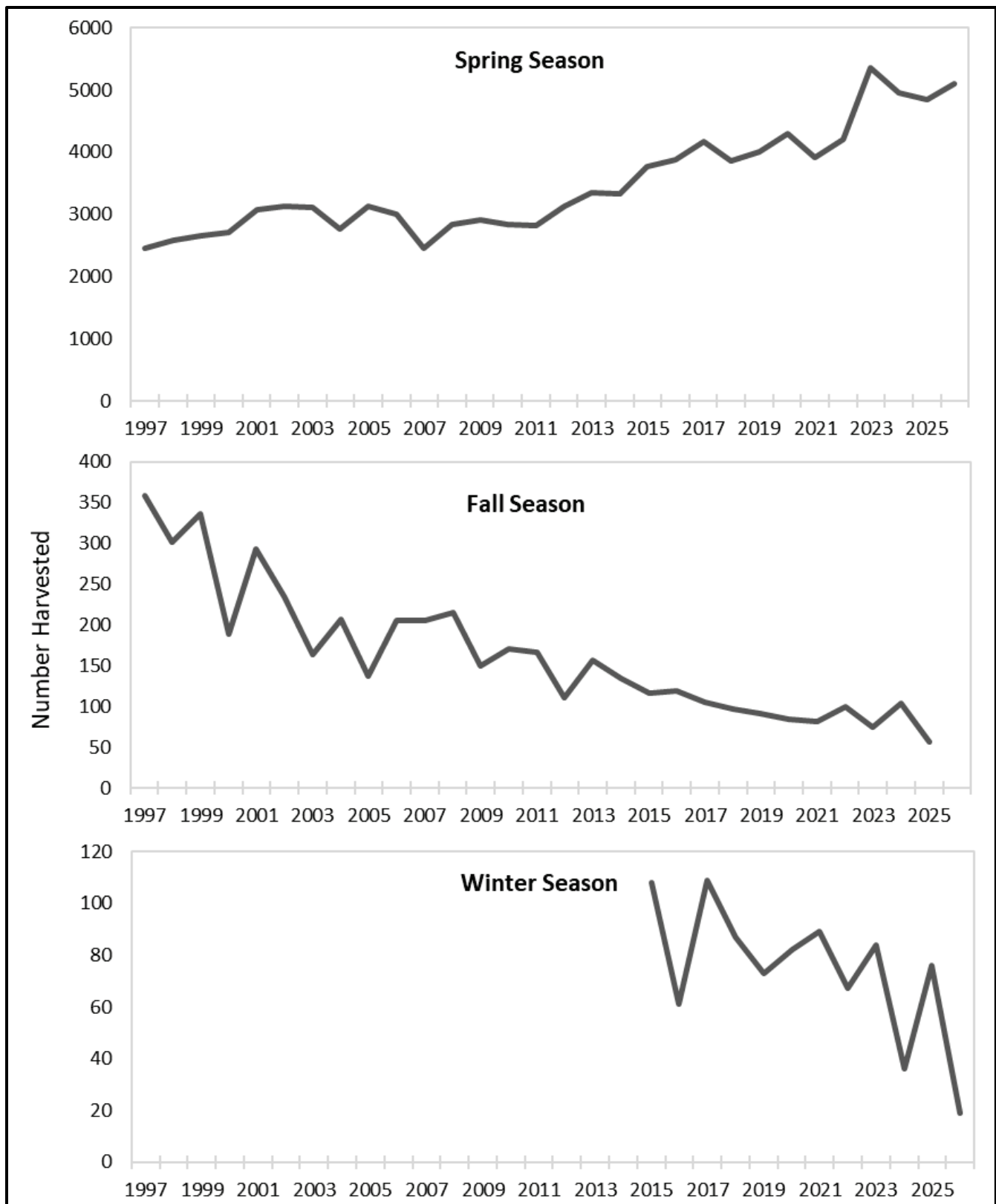


Figure 4
Reported Maryland Wild Turkey Harvest by Season, 1997–2026.

Spring Season

Maryland hunters harvested a total of 5,094 wild turkeys during the 2026 spring turkey season (Table 1, Figure 4). The harvest was slightly higher than the 2025 season total but remained below the record harvest of 5,356 set in 2023. Favorable weather during the season and a high number of two-year-old gobblers available likely contributed to the increase.

Youth hunters harvested 441 turkeys, representing 8% of the total harvest, on the weekend prior to the regular season. As in the past, a large proportion of gobblers (45%) were taken during the first week of the regular season. Adult gobblers comprised a record-high 89% of the total harvest (Figure 5).

Garrett County reported the highest harvest with 542 turkeys, followed by Charles County (452) and Worcester County (430). Allegany and Washington counties also reported over 300 birds each. Public land accounted for 17% of the total harvest.

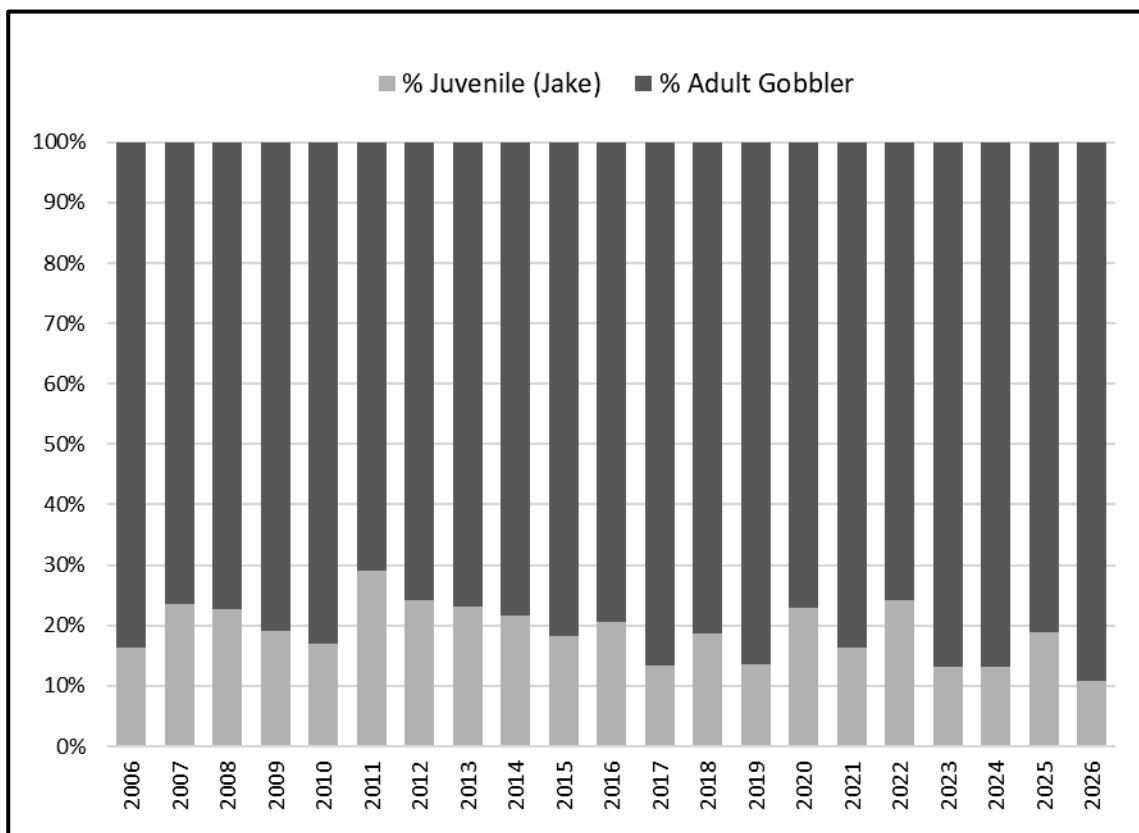


Figure 5
Percentage of Juvenile and Adult Gobblers Harvested
During Spring Turkey Seasons, 2006–2025.

Hunter Participation

The annual hunter mail survey estimates that the total number of Maryland turkey hunters peaked in the mid-1990s but has remained generally stable over the last 15 years at about 10,000. Most turkey hunters (over 90%) participate in the spring season. In recent years, spring hunters hunt an average of 5 days per season, with about 30 percent successful in taking at least one turkey. Participation in fall turkey hunting has declined by over 80 percent, with only about 1,000 hunters remaining. Success rate in the fall season is typically about 10 percent. An estimated 1,000 hunters pursue turkeys during the winter season statewide.

Wild Turkey Research

MD DNR conducted field work in 2023–2025 as part of a comprehensive research project in collaboration with various universities, state and federal agencies, and non-profit partners in the Mid-Atlantic region. Objectives include assessing the impact of weather, predators, habitat and disease on turkey survival and reproduction. A total of 198 hens were captured and radio tagged. A progress report from the 1st half of the project with preliminary results can be found at https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/MD-wild-turkey-research-project-update_9_24.pdf. Additional analyses are currently being conducted, and a final report is expected to be completed in 2026.

To determine gobbler harvest and survival rates, 643 male turkeys were captured and leg-banded since 2023. Statewide, the percentage of adult gobblers harvested annually has ranged between 25% and 31%, while juvenile (jake) harvest rates have been 8%–11% (Figure 6). Survival estimates range from 51% to 61% for adults and 84% to 89% for juveniles (Figure 7). Regional differences in gobbler harvest and survival rates will become clearer with additional years of banding.

A survey of Maryland turkey hunters was conducted in 2025 to assess preferences and opinions regarding turkey management, population trends, and regulations. Overall, hunters were satisfied with current turkey hunting regulations, but most indicated that they would support changes if population data warranted it. A complete summary of results can be found here: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/2025-Turkey-Hunter-Survey-results-summary.pdf>.

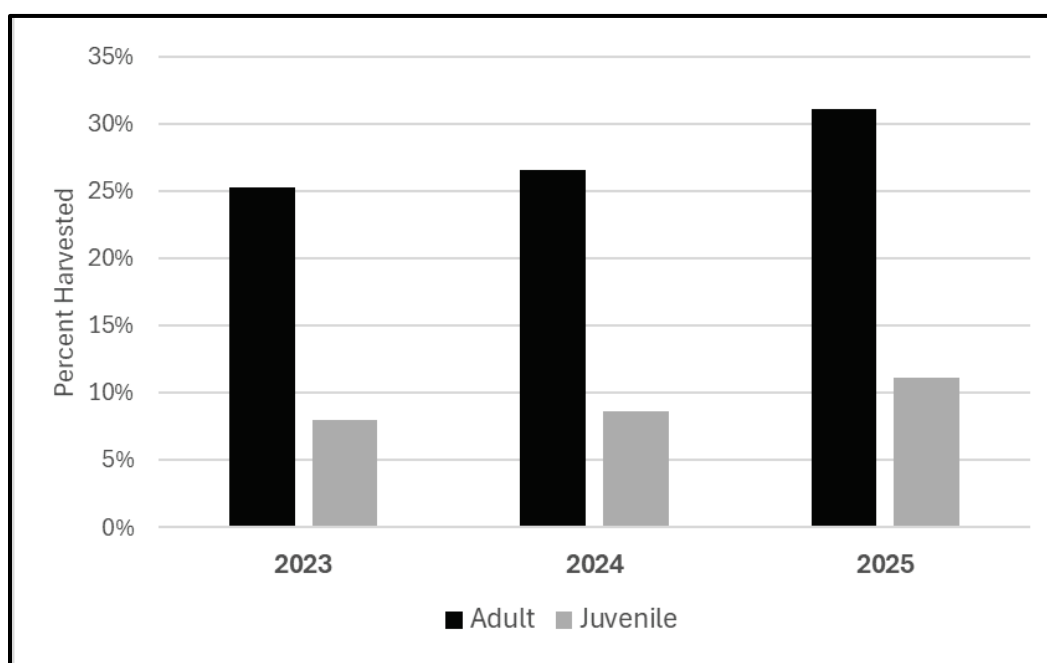


Figure 6
Estimated Annual Harvest Rates of Male Gobblers, 2023–2025.

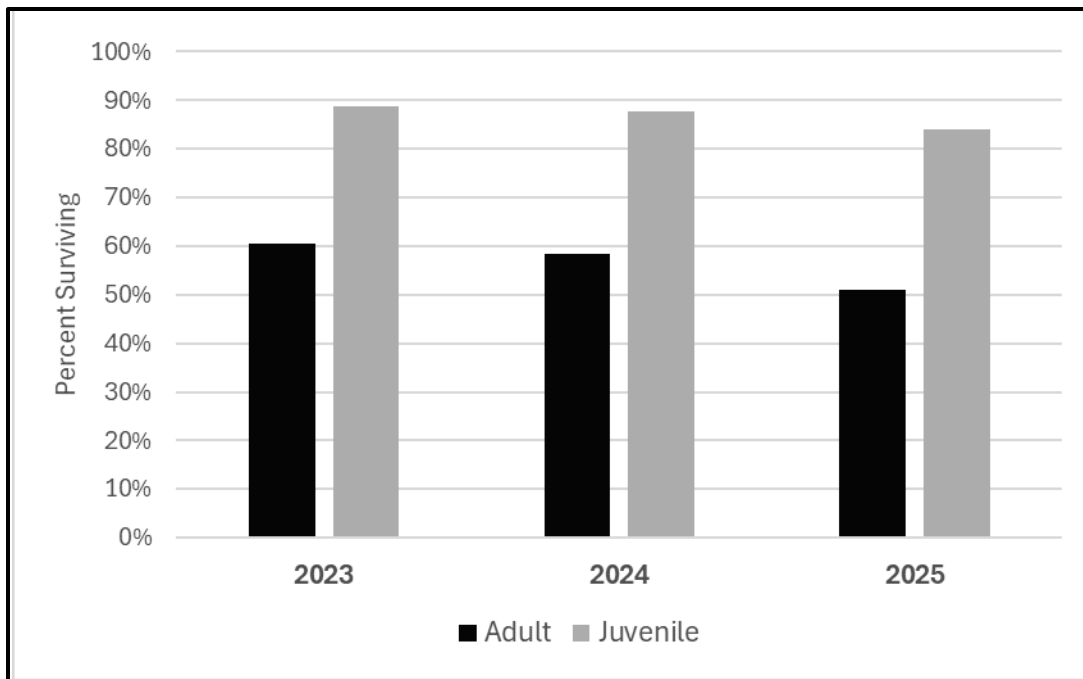


Figure 7
Estimated Annual Survival Rates of Male Turkeys, 2023–2025.



Black Bears

Introduction

Maryland bear hunters harvested 89 bears during the 2025–2026 6-day season (Figure 1), a 29% decrease from the 125 harvested during the 2024–2025 season. Hunters harvested 62 bears in Garrett County, 12 bears in Allegany County, 8 bears in Frederick County, and 7 bears in Washington County.

In 2025–2026:

- The harvest was comprised of 44 male bears and 45 female bears.
- The heaviest bear taken was a male in Frederick County weighing 534 pounds.
- Male bears had a mean estimated live weight of 191 pounds and female bears had a mean estimated live weight of 149 pounds.
- The vast majority of the harvest (85 bears) were taken with rifles, 2 with shotguns, 1 with a muzzleloader, and 1 with archery equipment.
- Thirty-seven of the bears were harvested on public land and the other 52 were harvested on private land.

Black Bear Management

Black bears are predominantly located in Maryland’s four western counties (Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington). However, the population continues to expand, and bear sightings east of the occupied range are not uncommon. While most of these reported sightings are young bears that are dispersing, there have been several reports of sows with cubs outside of the western counties. As the bear population expands and occupies additional counties, the department will adjust management practices accordingly.

The DNR Bear Project manages black bears using a mix of lethal and non-lethal techniques under guidance of a bear management plan. Along with the annual bear hunt in the four western counties, the department conducts extensive public outreach about living with black bears and uses non-lethal aversion techniques for problematic bears whenever possible. Agricultural damage permits are also available for farmers experiencing crop damage from bears. These permits allow farmers suffering bear damage to lethally remove one bear from the affected property annually.

The Bear Project uses multiple methods to monitor Maryland’s bear population status. The population has been periodically directly estimated using DNA mark-recapture techniques. One such study with the University of Maryland commenced in the summer of 2025 and will conclude in 2028. The Department also uses several indices to monitor population trends, including the number of bears killed annually on Maryland roadways and by other non-hunting causes (Figure 2) and sightings reported to the Department (Figure 3). These indices suggest Maryland’s bear population remains healthy and is expanding eastward.

Regulatory and Legislative Changes for the Coming 2025–2026 Season

Starting July 2026, an indefinite Black Bear Lottery Preference Point grace period will be introduced. Anybody who purchased a Maryland Black Bear Lottery Application or Preference Point will retain their preference without the need to purchase an additional application or preference point. Hunters will still need to apply for the lottery if they would like to hunt during the 2026–27 black bear season.

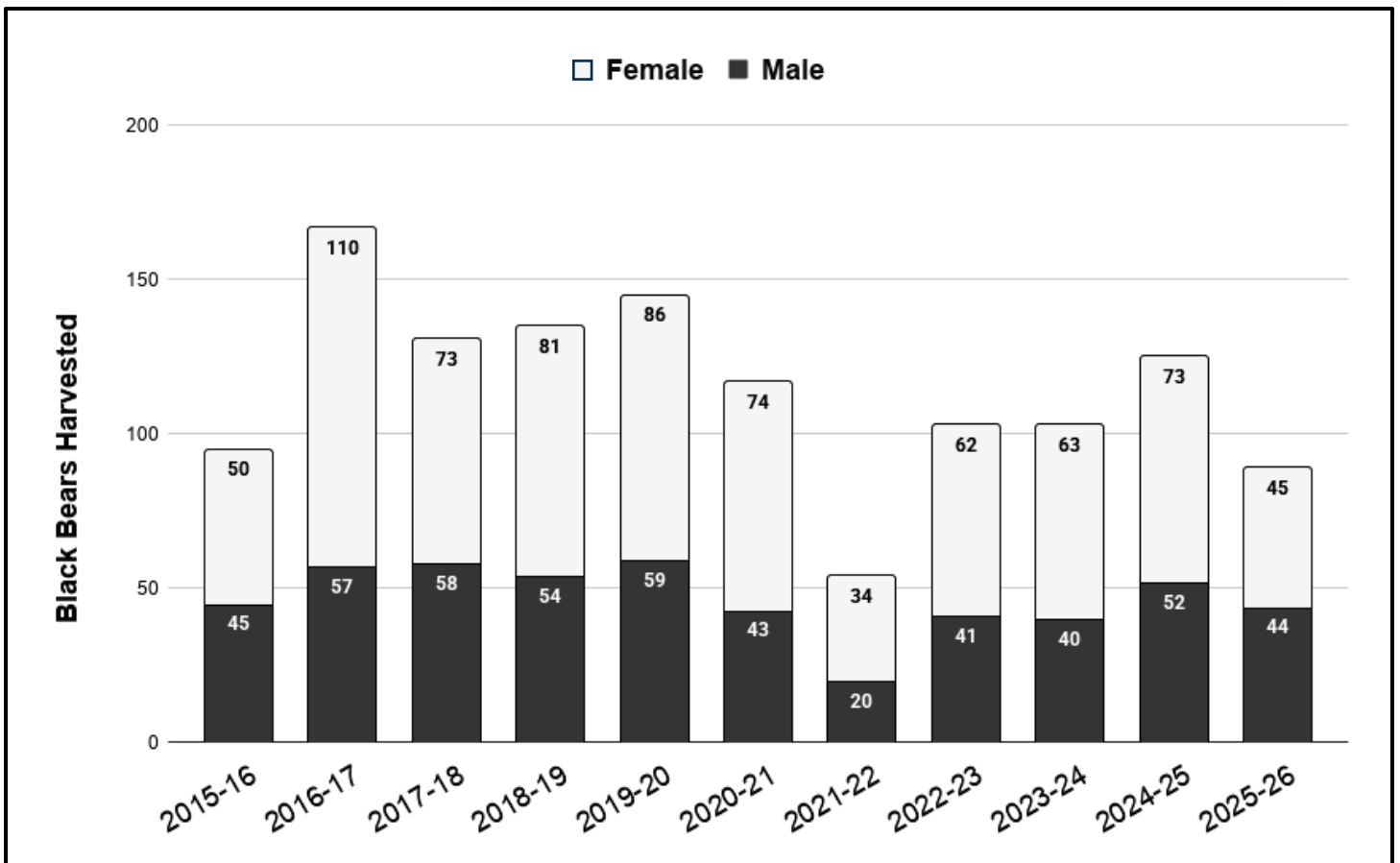


Figure 1
Reported Male and Female Black Bear Harvest,
2016–2017 through 2025–2026.

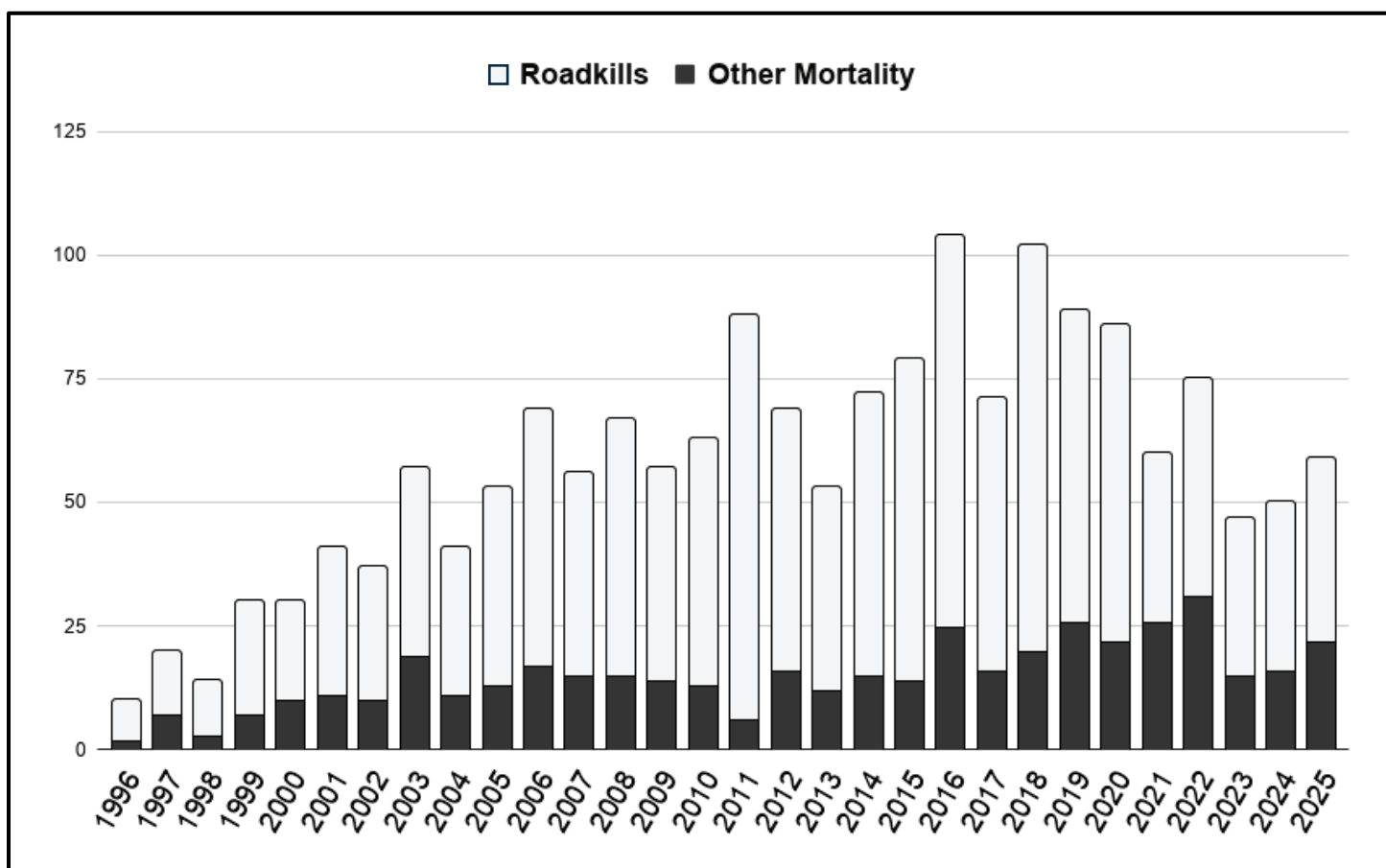


Figure 2
Reported Roadkill and Other Non-hunting
Black Bear Mortalities in Maryland, 1996–2025.

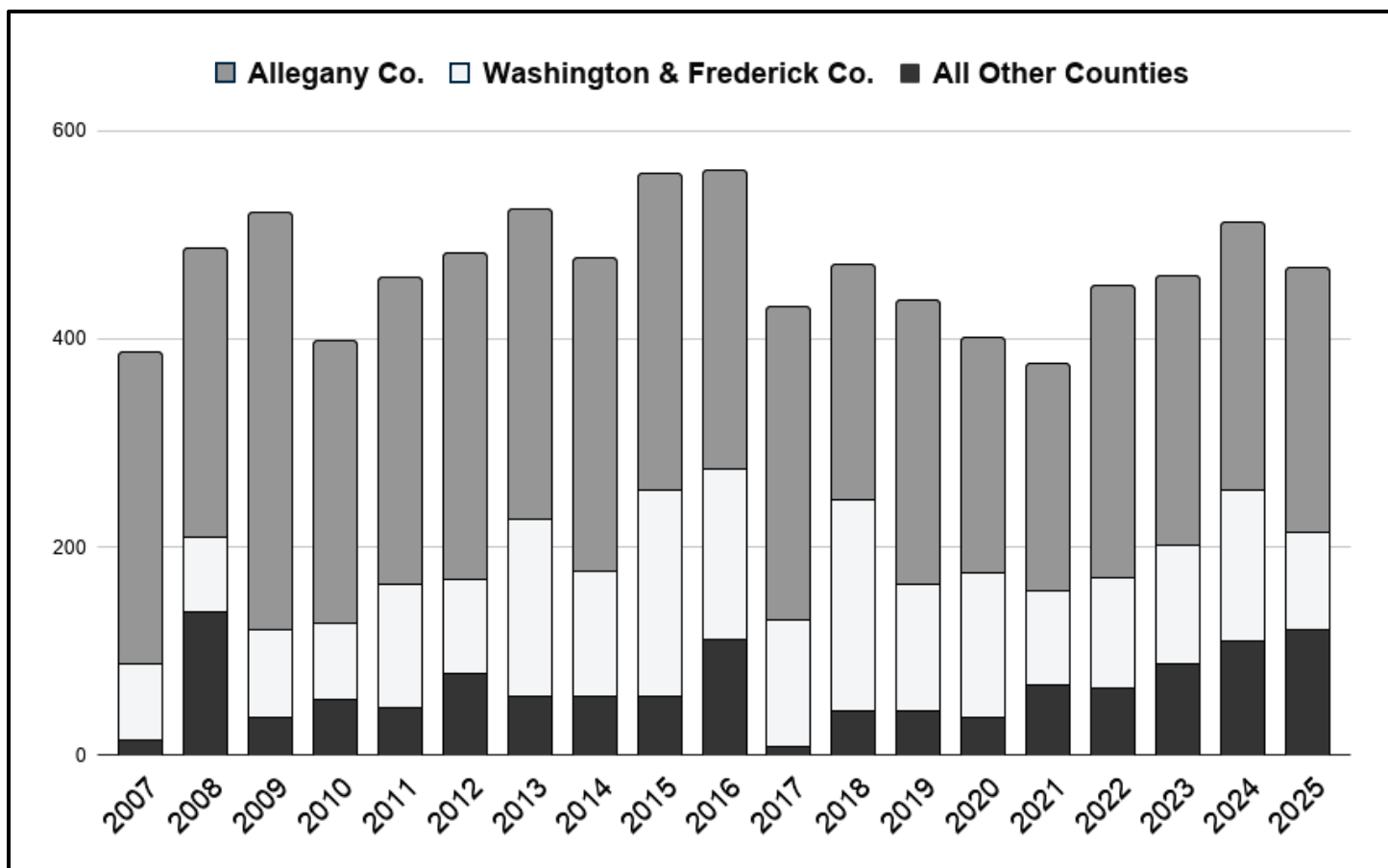


Figure 3
 Statewide (Excludes Garrett County) Black Bear Sightings
 Within and Outside of the Occupied Black Bear Range
 (Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, and Washington Counties) From 2007–2025.

