Nebraska Deer Hunter Survey
2020

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Executive Summary

In March 2020, we sent an email invitation to 65,130 Nebraska deer hunters who participated in the 2019 fall deer season. At the end of a two-week survey period, we had received 14,872 responses to a 57 question, online survey regarding deer and deer hunting in Nebraska. We summarized responses to most questions by residency and weapons (grouped by archery, firearm and muzzleloader based on a question that asked their preferred weapon for hunting deer). Some questions were summarized by other relevant criteria (e.g., age group). Harvest data from mandatory deer checkstations was also utilized to make some comparisons.

Key Findings:

- 97% of respondents hunted deer in 2019.
- 27% of resident respondents hunted mule deer, while 42% of nonresidents (NR) hunted mule deer, suggesting that Nebraska is an important destination for NR deer hunters pursuing mule deer.
- 59% of survey respondents reported harvesting at least one deer in 2019, however, checkstation and permit data shows that only 49% of hunters overall harvested a deer. It's possible that there is some bias towards successful deer hunters in this survey and that they may be more likely to participate.
- Harvest reporting data when corrected for this participation bias are moderately accurate overall, however antlerless mule deer estimates were 37% higher than the reported harvest.
- Hunter satisfaction with their deer hunting experience in Nebraska is moderately high at 3.5 on a scale of 1-5 (1 = Very dissatisfied, 5 = Very satisfied).
- Most hunters (87%) only hunted one deer management unit (DMU), 11% hunted two DMU, and only 2% hunted three or more DMUs.
- Hunters reported that Wahoo (11%) and Frenchman (10%) were the DMU that they hunted the most often in 2019.
- Hunter participation in various open deer seasons varied greatly, 76% of hunters participated in the November Firearm season, followed by the Archery season (29%), Muzzleloader (17%), Late Antlerless (13%) and the October River Antlerless season (2%).
- November was the most popular time of the season to hunt and the most preferred.
- Time spent scouting, preparing and hunting had little impact on hunters reported success in harvesting at least one deer. Time spent afield varied greatly by residency and weapon group, but very little between successful and unsuccessful hunters.
- When asked about what weapons they used to hunt deer in 2019, Centerfire rifle (78%) is the most popular weapon used to hunt deer in Nebraska. Compound bow (22%) and Inline muzzleloader (14%) were second and third.
- When asked about their single weapon preference, 28% of hunters prefer archery methods, 66% prefer firearm and 6% prefer muzzleloader as their method to hunt deer in Nebraska.
- Crossbow users were asked if they would continue to archery hunt if crossbows were no longer allowed and 62% reported that they would not. The percentage saying no increased as respondent's age increased, indicating that crossbows play an important role in keeping older hunters in the field.
- Close adult family members (30%), close children family members (20%) and adult friends (22%) were the most popular hunting partners. 21% of hunters reported preferring to hunt alone.
- Antler size, perceived age and body size were the most important factors in hunters selecting to harvest a buck. Only 9% of hunters reported shooting the first buck they saw.

- Lack of time and access to hunting land were reported as the two most important factors that prevented hunters from deer hunting more.
- 26% of respondents reported hunting deer on publicly accessible land while 89% reported hunting deer on private land in Nebraska. Only 11% of hunters reported hunting on both Public and Private land.
- 33% of respondents reported losing access to private land in the last 5 year, whereas 36% reported gaining access. Comparatively, 31% reported that access to hunt bucks had decreased while only 12% reported that the amount of ground they had to hunt bucks increased. Access to hunt antlerless deer showed similar results.
- Statewide, 55% of hunters reported that mule deer populations were in the low abundance categories and 11% reported that they were in the high abundance categories. When looking at the primary mule deer range (western 60% of Nebraska) 47% reported that mule deer abundance was low, while 14% reported that abundance was high in the area where they hunted.
- Statewide, 24% of hunters reported that whitetail abundance was low, while 26% reported that they were high in the area they hunted.
- When asked about changing the November firearm season dates, 71% preferred that the season dates stay where they are. Of those that preferred to change the season dates, 43% wanted earlier dates, while 57% wanted later dates. Impact to the herd (buck age structure and buck survival) was the most cited reason for the desire to move the season.
- Only 4% of Nebraska deer hunters currently reside in urban city centers, 63% reside in rural areas.
- Only 3% of Nebraska deer hunters were raised in urban city centers, 73% were raised in rural areas.

Methods

On 10 April 2020, an invitation to participate in a survey related to hunting participation and experiences was sent to 65,130 deer permit holders who had provided an email address in their customer profile. This was 69.1% of all deer permit holders for the 2019 deer seasons. For deer hunters who did not provide an email address, a link to the survey was included on the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission website. Promoted social media posts were used to make sure deer hunters were aware of the webpage option. A reminder email was sent to non-respondents on 17 April 2020, and the survey was closed to participants on 27 April 2020.

Reponses and Representativeness

At the closing of the survey, a total of 14,872 deer hunters had completed the survey, including 785 through the NGPC website. Of the 65,130 invitations sent out, 3,777 were unusable, resulting in an effective sample size of 61,342. Total response rate then is 24.2% Table 1 compares simple demographics among all permit buyers, the email sample, and all invited respondents (necessarily this excludes hunters who participated through the website link because they were anonymous). The demographic characters we examined were residency status (resident/non-resident), sex (male/female), and age (median/mean).

Demographic	Level	Permittees	Sample	Respondents
Residency Status	Resident	83.6%	81.6%	72.9%
	Non-resident	16.4%	18.4%	27.1%
Sex	Male	89.1%	89.7%	93.0%
	Female	10.9%	10.3%	7.0%
Age	Median	38	39	47
	Mean	40	40	46
	Max	112	-	91
	Min	9	-	10

As these data indicate, the email sample was well representative of the population of all permit buyers as a whole. However, there were some potential biases among the respondents. Non-residents are over represented among respondents compared to all permittees and the email sample. Likewise, more males completed the survey than expected. Neither of these differences appear too overwhelming. There still appears to be an 80/20 percent split between residents and non-residents in all groups, and about 90/10 percent split between men and women. However, the respondents were nearly a decade older than either the permit buyers or the email sample. The figures below show the distribution of ages in 10-year blocks for the email sample (Figure 1) and the respondents (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Age distribution of Permittee Sample
Bin Width = 10 years
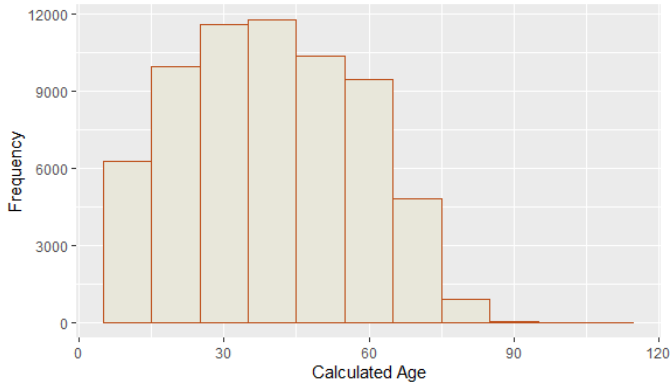
Figure 2. Age distribution of Respondents
Bin Width = 10 years
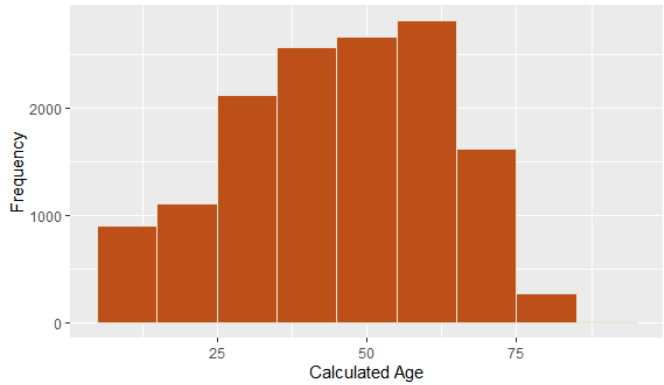
Question 3 asked if hunters were successful harvesting a deer during the 2019 season and overall 59.0% of hunters reported they had killed at least 1 deer. Harvest data indicate that 48.7% of hunters were successful at taking at least one deer, so there is potential for responses to biased towards successful hunters.

Many hunters "identify" with a particular weapon group and as managers we are interested in what those particular groups think about certain issues. To address this issue, we asked what weapons the hunters used (Q17) and what their preferred weapon was (Q21). We categorized hunters into the 3 main categories of "Archery", "Rifle" and "Muzzleloader" based on their answer of their preferred weapon.

Favorite	n	percent	Category	Cumulative Percent
Compound bow	3114	22.2%	Archery	28.3% (3973)
Longbow or Recurve bow	172	1.2%		
Crossbow	679	4.8%		
Spear	8	0.1%		
Centerfire/Highpower long rifle	8952	63.7%	Firearm	65.9% (9267)
Pistol	48	0.3%		
Shotgun (slug)	62	0.4%		
Straightwall cartridge rifle	205	1.5%		
Flintlock muzzleloader	24	0.2%	Muzzleloader	5.7% (805)
Inline muzzleloader	622	4.4%		
Percussion cap muzzleloader	159	1.1%		

Appendices

The answers to questions that were listed under the "other" option are included in appendices to this document and can be acquired from the authors by request.

Results

Hunt and Harvest Results

Q1. Did you hunt deer during the 2019 season?

	Nonresident	**Resident**	**Total**
No	1.9% (73)	2.9% (296)	2.6% (369)
Yes	98.1% (3740)	97.1% (9979)	97.4% (13719)

Q2. Which species of deer did you pursue? (Select all that apply.)

Response	**Residency**		**Weapon Preference**			**Overall**
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
Whitetail Only	73.4%	58.0%	72.4%	68.4%	63.2%	69.2%
Mule Deer Only	7.4%	17.9%	7.7%	11.4%	11.0%	10.3%
Both Species	19.2%	24.5%	19.9%	20.3%	25.7%	20.5%

Q3. Did you harvest at least one deer during the 2019 season?

Response	**Residency**		**Overall**
	Resident	Nonresident	
Hunter Survey (% Success)	58.1%	61.4%	59.0%
Harvest Data (% Success)	48.0%	52.9%	48.7%

Q4-8. What species of deer did you harvest? How many deer did you harvest?

Response	**Whitetail**		**Mule Deer**	
	Buck	Antlerless	Buck	Antlerless
Survey Reported Harvest	5,552	3,944	1,549	663
Survey Estimated Statewide (no correction)	37,134	26,379	10,360	4434
Survey Estimated Statewide (corrected for success bias)	30,650	21,773	8,551	3,660
Checkstation Data	29,899	19,191	8,548	2,672
Difference between methods (Corrected vs Checkstation Data)	751 (3%)	2,582 (13%)	3 (0.04%)	988 (37%)

Satisfaction

Q9. What is your overall level of satisfaction with your deer hunting experience in Nebraska?

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
Very Unsatisfied (1)	6.9%	6.6%	6.4%	7.0%	6.3%	6.8%
Unsatisfied (2)	9.8%	7.2%	9.7%	8.8%	8.6%	9.1%
Neutral (3)	18.0%	13.9%	19.0%	15.7%	19.5%	16.9%
Satisfied (4)	27.6%	24.0%	28.7%	25.7%	26.7%	26.6%
Very Satisfied (5)	**37.7%**	**48.3%**	**36.2%**	**42.7%**	**38.8%**	**40.6%**
Total Responses (n)	**9,927**	**3,724**	**3,906**	**8,912**	**778**	**12,651**
Overall Category Score	**3.44**	**3.67**	**3.41**	**3.55**	**3.47**	**3.50**

Answers from Q11 were used to analyze satisfaction scores by unit:

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
Blue Northwest	3.33	3.53	3.31	3.37	3.31	3.34
Blue Southeast	3.28	3.60	3.27	3.37	3.47	3.34
Buffalo	3.50	3.81	3.38	3.61	3.50	3.54
Calamus East	3.62	4.05	3.81	3.68	3.53	3.69
Calamus West	3.61	3.86	3.68	3.69	3.71	3.69
Elkhorn	3.36	3.71	3.33	3.39	3.61	3.39
Frenchman	3.55	3.61	3.43	3.66	3.30	3.58
Keya Paha	3.80	4.00	3.84	3.98	3.00	3.88
Loup East	3.60	4.01	3.42	3.69	4.19	3.64
Loup West	3.57	3.95	3.46	3.68	3.71	3.64
Missouri	3.44	3.69	3.48	3.52	3.57	3.51
Pine Ridge	3.30	3.32	3.19	3.35	3.39	3.31
Plains	3.52	3.68	3.45	3.69	3.00	3.58
Platte	3.58	3.66	3.44	3.67	3.83	3.61
Republican	3.28	3.55	3.31	3.39	3.31	3.36
Sandhills	3.61	3.72	3.67	3.68	3.73	3.68
Upper Platte	3.55	3.84	3.68	3.70	3.13	3.66
Wahoo	3.31	3.69	3.31	3.35	3.30	3.33
Overall Category Score	**3.44**	**3.67**	**3.41**	**3.55**	**3.47**	**3.50**
Range	**3.28-3.80**	**3.32-4.05**	**3.27-3.84**	**3.35-3.98**	**3.00-4.19**	**3.33-3.69**

Deer Management Units

Q10. How many deer management units did you hunt in during the 2019 season? (n=13,455)

Figure 6. Number of Deer Management Units Respondents Reported Hunting

Bin Width = 1 years (Max reported = 18)
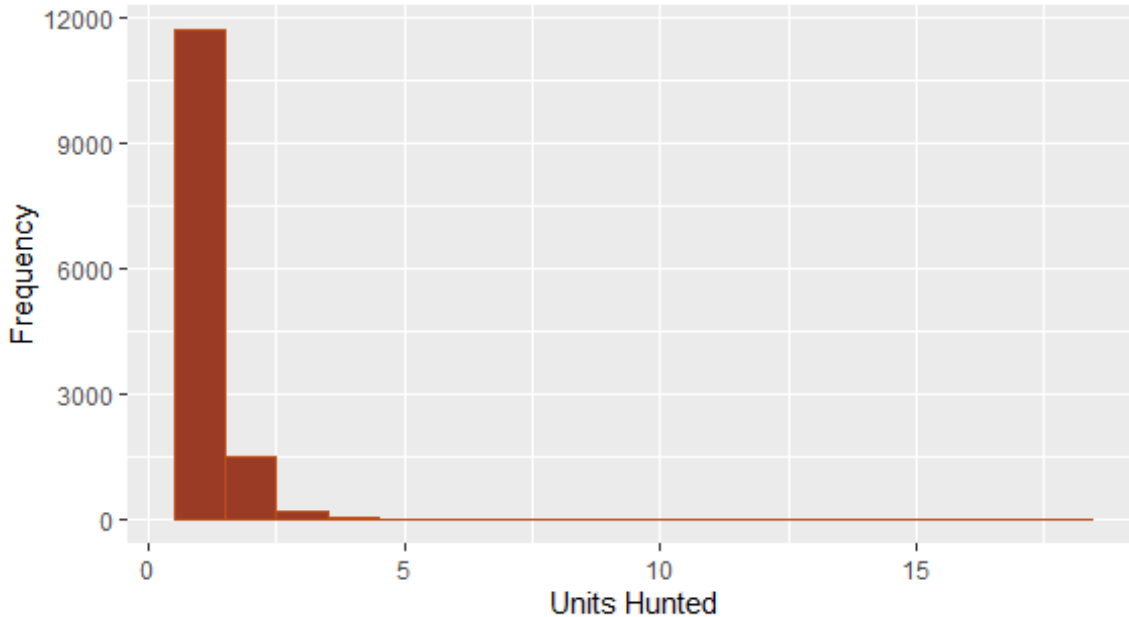
How many units did you hunt?

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
1	**84.7%**	**92.5%**	**77.3%**	**91.4%**	**92.1%**	**86.8% (11,678)**
2	13.0%	6.3%	18.6%	7.6%	7.9%	11.2% (1,507)
3	1.7%	0.5%	2.7%	0.7%		1.4% (182)
4	0.4%	0.3%	0.9%	0.1%		0.4% (50)
5	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%		0.1% (16)
6	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%			0.1% (10)
7		0.1%				<0.01% (2)
8						0
9						<0.01% (1)
10					0 reported combined	0
11						<0.01% (2)
12	0.1% combined	0.2% combined	0.2% combined	0.1% combined		<0.01% (3)
13						0
14						0
15						<0.01% (1)
16						0
17						<0.01% (1)
18						<0.01% (2)
Average	**1.11**	**1.19**	**1.30**	**1.10**	**1.26**	**1.17**

Q11. Which deer management unit did you hunt most often during the 2019 season? (Compare categories to the overall to see influences)

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
Blue Northwest	8.9%	2.2%	8.4%	6.7%	5.1%	7.1%
Blue Southeast	9.8%	6.4%	10.4%	8.2%	8.8%	8.9%
Buffalo	7.0%	3.1%	6.0%	5.9%	5.8%	5.9%
Calamus East	2.1%	1.1%	1.1%	2.1%	2.5%	1.8%
Calamus West	2.5%	3.2%	2.1%	2.9%	2.2%	2.6%
Elkhorn	7.8%	2.0%	5.9%	6.4%	6.2%	6.2%
Frenchman	7.4%	**16.5%**	10.2%	**10.0%**	7.4%	9.9%
Keya Paha	3.2%	6.1%	3.4%	4.1%	4.1%	4.0%
Loup East	6.6%	2.3%	4.6%	5.9%	4.2%	5.5%
Loup West	3.0%	1.6%	1.9%	3.0%	2.9%	2.7%
Missouri	6.0%	6.0%	5.3%	6.2%	6.2%	6.0%
Pine Ridge	2.9%	11.4%	4.3%	5.6%	5.0%	5.2%
Plains	2.0%	3.9%	1.8%	2.7%	3.6%	2.5%
Platte	5.0%	8.9%	6.0%	6.1%	5.5%	6.1%
Republican	7.4%	7.3%	8.2%	6.9%	7.7%	7.3%
Sandhills	2.4%	11.8%	4.1%	4.9%	**9.8%**	5.0%
Upper Platte	2.5%	3.9%	2.5%	3.0%	4.0%	2.9%
Wahoo	**13.5%**	2.3%	**13.7%**	9.2%	9.0%	**10.5%**

Time Spent Hunting Deer in Nebraska

Q12. During which deer season(s) did you hunt in 2019?

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
Archery	29.3%	27.3%	**79.9%**	7.7%	13.9%	28.8%
Oct River Antlerless	2.3%	0.9%	2.4%	1.6%	1.9%	1.9%
November Firearm	**83.1%**	**58.6%**	45.5%	**92.1%**	52.2%	**76.4%**
Muzzleloader	18.0%	13.5%	17.7%	10.9%	**80.3%**	16.8%
Late Firearm Antlerless	15.0%	8.6%	12.4%	13.1%	18.9%	13.2%
Total Responses (n)	**9,954**	**3,728**	**3,910**	**8,951**	**783**	**13,862**

Q15. During which of the following periods did you hunt deer in 2019? Check all that apply. Results will total more than 100%.

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
1-15 Sept.	8.3%	4.6%	20.8%	1.7%	3.5%	7.3%
16-31 Sept.	10.8%	3.0%	24.5%	2.2%	4.0%	8.7%
1-15 Oct.	16.0%	3.8%	34.1%	3.8%	6.3%	12.7%
16-31 Oct.	21.4%	8.0%	49.6%	4.7%	7.1%	17.8%
1-15 Nov.	46.4%	31.5%	**65.2%**	34.0%	23.3%	42.4%
16-30 Nov.	**68.7%**	**49.1%**	49.7%	**71.2%**	42.4%	**63.3%**
1-15 Dec.	20.2%	10.7%	28.4%	9.0%	**61.6%**	17.6%
16-31 Dec.	18.1%	6.6%	23.1%	8.1%	52.1%	14.9%
1-15 Jan.	14.9%	7.9%	13.8%	12.0%	19.9%	13.0%
16-31 Jan.	2.9%	0.9%	2.6%	2.2%	2.6%	2.3%

Q16. Regardless of when you actually hunted, which period would be your most preferred/favorite to hunt? Check one.

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
1-15 Sept.	1.3%	2.6%	4.5%	0.5%	0.4%	1.6%
16-31 Sept.	1.1%	1.9%	3.3%	0.4%	0.6%	1.3%
1-15 Oct.	2.1%	2.2%	4.2%	1.3%	1.6%	2.2%
16-31 Oct.	8.3%	5.3%	17.5%	3.4%	5.7%	7.5%
1-15 Nov.	**44.5%**	**41.1%**	**55.3%**	41.0%	14.8%	**43.6%**
16-30 Nov.	34.1%	34.1%	10.2%	**45.9%**	17.0%	34.1%
1-15 Dec.	4.0%	6.0%	2.7%	2.8%	**35.2%**	4.6%
16-31 Dec.	2.5%	2.4%	1.5%	1.3%	21.5%	2.5%
1-15 Jan.	1.5%	3.8%	0.6%	2.8%	2.3%	2.1%
16-31 Jan.	0.5%	0.6%	0.2%	0.6%	0.9%	0.5%

Q13. How many days did you spend afield scouting or preparing to hunt deer ahead of the 2019 season? This question was cross-referenced with the respondent's reported success of harvesting at least one deer to evaluate the amount of time spent afield relative to success.

Reported harvesting a deer	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
No	4.21	1.95	4.41	3.24	3.37	3.59
Yes	3.87	1.81	4.50	2.78	3.49	3.25
Total Average	4.02	1.86	4.46	2.96	3.49	3.39

Q14. How many days did you hunt deer in Nebraska during the 2019 season?

Reported harvesting a deer	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
No	8.38	5.48	11.73	5.60	8.63	7.63
Yes	8.99	4.78	14.12	5.05	9.68	7.80
Total Average	8.76	5.04	13.14	5.26	9.27	7.74

Deer Hunting Weapons Use

Q17. Which of the following weapons did you use to hunt deer during the 2019 season? (n = 13,648)

Response	Overall
Longbow	1.3%
Compound Bow	21.8%
Crossbow	8.8%
Spear	0.1%
Centerfire Rifle	**77.8%**
Straight wall Rifle	2.0%
Pistol	1.2%
Shotgun (slug)	0.8%
Flintlock Muzzleloader	0.2%
Perc. Cap Muzzleloader	3.0%
Inline Muzzleloader	14.2%
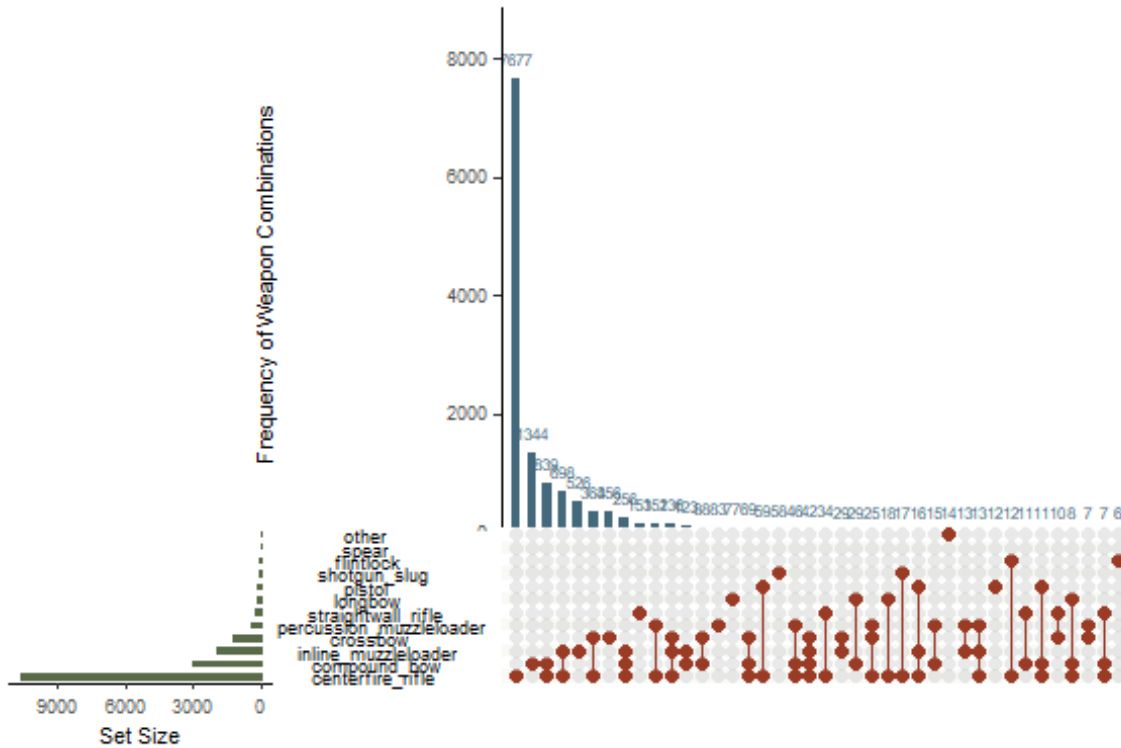
How many different weapon categories did hunters use?

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall	
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	Count	Percent
1	**63.8%**	**91.8%**	**60.0%**	**79.4%**	**53.8%**	**10,308**	**75.5%**
2	26.7%	7.3%	28.7%	16.4%	36.9%	2,552	18.7%
3	8.3%	0.8%	9.7%	3.6%	8.2%	675	4.9%
4	1.0%	0.1%	1.4%	0.4%	1.0%	95	0.7%
5	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	14	0.1%
6	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2	0.0%
7	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%
8	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%
9	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1	0.0%
10	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%
11	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1	0.0%

Q19 and 20 were asked of those that stated they had hunted with a crossbow.

Q19. Did you return to archery due to being able to use a crossbow?

Response	Hunters	percent
No	440	36.8%
Yes	756	63.2%

Q20. Would you continue archery hunting if crossbows were not allowed?

Still Hunt	Hunters	percent
No	741	62.0%
Yes	454	38.0%

Age breakdown of Q20 answers.
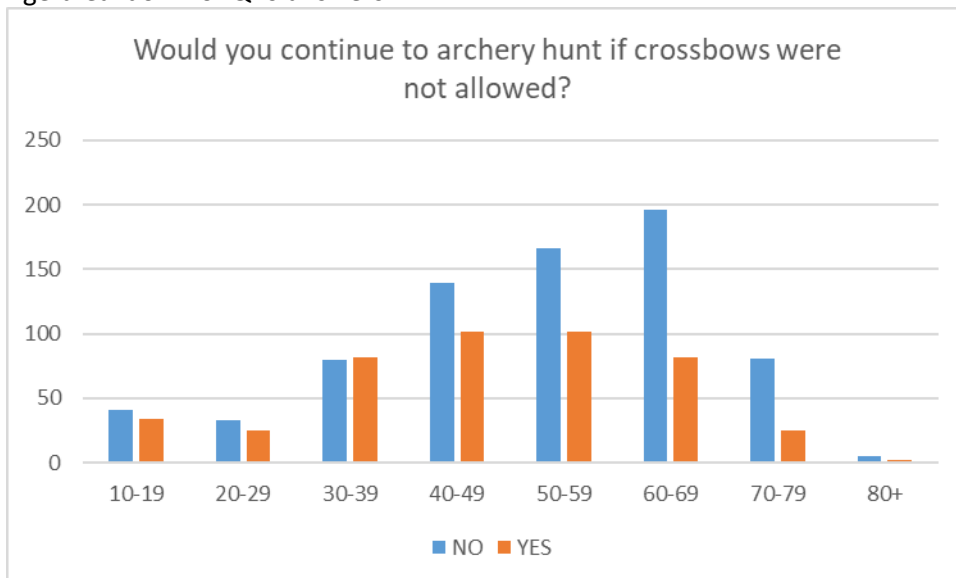
Q21. Which is your preferred weapon type for hunting deer?

Favorite	n	percent	Category	Cumulative Percent
Compound bow	3114	22.2%	Archery	28.3% (3973)
Longbow or Recurve bow	172	1.2%		
Crossbow	679	4.8%		
Spear	8	0.1%		
Centerfire/Highpower long rifle	8952	63.7%	Firearm	65.9% (9267)
Pistol	48	0.3%		
Shotgun (slug)	62	0.4%		
Straightwall cartridge rifle	205	1.5%		
Flintlock muzzleloader	24	0.2%	Muzzleloader	5.7% (805)
Inline muzzleloader	622	4.4%		
Percussion cap muzzleloader	159	1.1%		

Q22. What is the most important reason you prefer the weapon type you selected above?

Response	Weapon Preference			Overall
	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
Efficiency	2.6%	**45.7%**	2.7%	**30.8%**
Provides a challenge	**58.0%**	1.6%	**36.7%**	19.8%
It is what I own	1.9%	28.1%	5.6%	19.3%
Length of associated season	25.6%	3.3%	30.4%	11.2%
Timing of associated season	9.2%	11.1%	22.3%	11.2%
Simplicity of use	2.4%	9.8%	1.7%	7.2%
Cost	0.3%	0.4%	0.6%	0.4%

Hunt Companions and Motivation

Q25. During a typical deer hunt, who did you hunt with most often?

Hunting Companion	Hunters	percent
Adult close family member	4152	**29.5%**
Adult friend	3068	21.8%
I usually hunt alone	2882	20.5%
My own children	2871	20.4%
Adult extended family member	623	4.4%
Related children	312	2.2%
Co-worker	118	0.8%
Other children	37	0.3%

Q26. Thinking specifically of deer hunting, which of the following statements best describes why you go hunting? Choose only one.

Reasoning for Hunting	Hunters	percent
To acquire meat for me and my family	4058	**28.9%**
To be with friends and family	2845	20.2%
To be close to nature	2129	15.1%
Deer hunting is part of my identity	2016	14.3%
For the excitement or thrill	1392	9.9%
To acquire trophy bucks	727	5.2%
To participate in game management	334	2.4%
To acquire or hone my hunting skills	292	2.1%
Other	199	1.4%
To get exercise	33	0.2%
To harvest as many deer as possible	27	0.2%
For business reasons	4	0.0%

Q28. When choosing to harvest a buck, what is your primary consideration in doing so?

Why a buck?	Hunters	percent
Rack quality/number of points	6349	45.5%
Estimated age	3417	24.5%
Body size	2964	21.2%
I select the first buck I see	1223	8.8%

Q29. When choosing to harvest an antlerless deer, what is your primary consideration in doing so?

Why antlerless?	Hunters	percent
Body size	7411	54.0%
Does without fawns	3634	26.5%
Estimated age	1687	12.3%
I select the first antlerless deer I see	1000	7.3%

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Q30. Please rank the following items from 1 to 4, where 1 is the most preferred and 4 is the least preferred, based on your preference to hunt. Use each number only once. Mean and SD of the ranks of deer-type preferences for respondents. A rank of 1 = most preferred, and 4 = least preferred.

Whitetail, Antlered	Whitetail, Antlerless	Mule Deer, Antlered	Mule Deer, Antlerless
1.5	2.6	2.2	3.6
0.79	0.99	1.08	1.06

Q31. Which, if any, of the following factors prevented you from going deer hunting in Nebraska more frequently than you would have liked? (Select all that apply.)

Factor	Hunters	Percent
No Time: Other Commitments	5791	43.0%
No Time: Work	4147	30.8%
Land Access Restrictions	3220	23.9%
Travel Distance Too Great	2433	18.1%
No Access to Hunting Land	2312	17.2%
Low Deer Abundance	1758	13.1%
None	1746	13.0%
Permit Price Too High	1179	8.8%
Have Enough Deer for Food	1002	7.4%
High Travel Costs	704	5.2%
No Time: Other Recreations	546	4.1%
No Permits Available in Preferred Unit	429	3.2%
Fear Danger from Other Hunters	371	2.8%
Other	373	2.8%
Loss of Hunting Partners	349	2.6%
Cannot have >2 ES permits	266	2.0%
Lack of Interest	92	0.7%
Too Many Poachers/Unethical Hunters	0	0.0%
Health/Age Concerns	0	0.0%
Too Many Other Hunters	0	0.0%

Access to Hunting Land and Use of Land Types

Q33. Please select the land-ownership categories below that best describes the land where you hunted deer in Nebraska during the 2019 deer season. (Select all that apply.)

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
Public Land	19.5%	**31.7%**	31.6%	18.4%	29.1%	22.8%
Private Land: OFW	5.3%	6.7%	7.9%	4.6%	7.3%	5.7%
Private: Other Program	2.4%	3.8%	4.0%	2.2%	3.4%	2.8%
Private Land: Own	19.8%	4.1%	14.5%	16.2%	13.8%	15.6%
Private Land: Family	35.2%	16.0%	24.5%	32.9%	24.0%	30.0%
Private Land: No Fee	**45.9%**	31.6%	**42.4%**	**41.1%**	**51.1%**	**42.0%**
Private Land: Guide Fee	0.4%	12.1%	4.3%	3.1%	4.4%	3.5%
Private Land: Own Lease	5.2%	10.2%	9.1%	5.6%	4.4%	6.5%
Private Land: Others Lease	1.1%	2.3%	1.8%	1.3%	1.0%	1.4%
Private Land: Work Trade	2.6%	1.2%	2.7%	2.0%	2.8%	2.3%
Private Land: Goods Exchange	1.4%	1.1%	1.5%	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%

Grouped by type of access responses:

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
Public Access	21.6%	35.3%	34.9%	20.7%	31.6%	25.3%
- Public Access Only	9.1%	27.7%	18.9%	12.1%	14.9%	14.2%
Private Access	89.8%	71.0%	80.6%	87.0%	84.3%	84.7%
- Private Only	77.3%	63.4%	64.6%	78.4%	67.6%	73.6%
Free Access (no fees paid for hunting access)	94.1%	76.5%	87.8%	90.2%	91.7%	89.3%
Paid Access (fees paid for hunting access)	6.4%	23.9%	14.9%	9.8%	9.4%	11.1%
Trade Access (trade of goods or services for access)	3.8%	2.1%	4.0%	3.0%	3.7%	3.3%
Total Responses (n)	10,161	3,765	3,895	8,898	778	13,679

Q34. Have you lost access to any private land for deer hunting in Nebraska in the last 5 years?

Lost Acres?	Hunters	Percentage	Nonresident	Resident
No	9461	67.4%	83.2% (3151)	61.6% (6310)
Yes	4568	32.6%	16.8% (634)	38.4% (3934)

Q35. Have you gained access to private land for deer hunting in Nebraska in the last 5 years?

Gained Acres?	Hunters	Percentage	Nonresident	Resident
No	9041	64.5%	64.6% (2449)	64.4% (6592)
Yes	4986	35.5%	35.4% (1340)	35.6% (3646)

Q36. In the past five years, has the overall amount of private land that you have access to hunt antlered deer in Nebraska:

Access Change	Hunters	Percentage	Nonresident	Resident
Decreased	4237	30.7%	18.2% (659)	35.1% (3578)
Increased	1676	12.1%	11.8% (426)	12.3% (1250)
Remained the same	7904	57.2%	70.1% (2538)	52.6% (5366)

Q37. In the past five years, has the overall amount of private land that you have access to hunt antlerless deer in Nebraska:

Access Change	Hunters	Percentage	Nonresident	Resident
Decreased	3618	26.3%	16.0% (574)	30.0% (3044)
Increased	1847	13.4%	12.6% (453)	13.7% (1394)
Remained the same	8274	60.2%	71.4% (2565)	56.3% (5709)

Q38. What percentage of your deer hunting trips in Nebraska during the 2019 season were on public land, or private land enrolled in a public access program such as Open Fields and Waters?

Percentage Range	Hunters	Percentage	Nonresident	Resident
less than 10%	10041	73.6%	63.5% (2321)	77.3% (7720)
11-20%	430	3.2%	2.8% (102)	3.3% (328)
21-30%	308	2.3%	1.8% (65)	2.4% (243)
31-40%	146	1.1%	0.8% (30)	1.2% (116)
41-50%	293	2.1%	2.3% (84)	2.1% (209)
51-60%	176	1.3%	1.3% (49)	1.3% (127)
61-70%	100	0.7%	0.5% (19)	0.8% (81)
71-80%	117	0.9%	0.6% (23)	0.9% (94)
81-90%	180	1.3%	1.1% (42)	1.4% (138)
91-100%	1855	13.6%	25.2% (921)	9.3% (934)

Q39. Have you started paying for access to land to hunt deer during the past 5 years?

Start Paying?	Hunters	Percentage	Nonresident	Resident
No	12380	88.4%	79.8% (3014)	91.6% (9366)
Yes	1624	11.6%	20.2% (761)	8.4% (863)

Population Status Perspective

Q40-41. Below, for each species, please indicate your perception of population size where you hunt. If the species does not occur where you hunt, leave it blank.

Mule deer (Statewide, n = 8,925)

Mule Deer	Nonresident	Resident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	Overall
1) Much too low	25.4%	**36.7%**	**36.1%**	32.5%	27.5%	33.2%
2) Low	23.8%	21.0%	23.0%	21.4%	23.5%	21.9%
3) About right	**40.9%**	30.6%	33.4%	**33.8%**	**36.6%**	**33.8%**
4) High	8.2%	8.5%	6.3%	9.1%	9.9%	8.4%
5) Much too high	1.6%	3.1%	1.2%	3.3%	2.5%	2.7%
Average Score	2.37	2.20	2.13	2.28	2.36	2.25

Mule Deer (only traditional mule deer units included: Buffalo, Calamus West, Frenchman, Keya Paha, Loup West, Pine Ridge, Plains, Platte, Republican, Sandhills and Upper Platte, n = 6,264)

Mule Deer	Nonresident	Resident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	Overall
1) Much too low	21.4%	25.5%	25.7%	23.4%	20.4%	23.9%
2) Low	24.0%	22.0%	25.0%	21.9%	24.4%	22.8%
3) About right	**43.8%**	**36.1%**	**39.9%**	**38.8%**	**40.1%**	**39.1%**
4) High	9.1%	11.9%	8.1%	11.7%	11.9%	10.8%
5) Much too high	1.6%	4.6%	1.4%	4.2%	3.2%	3.4%
Average Score	2.45	2.48	2.34	2.51	2.53	2.47

Mule Deer, by Deer Management Unit:

Mule Deer By Unit	1) Much too low	2) Low	3) About right	4) High	5) Much too high	Average Score
Blue Northwest	57.1%	15.5%	25.2%	2.1%	0.0%	1.72
Blue Southeast	62.0%	14.0%	19.3%	3.0%	1.7%	1.68
Buffalo	34.5%	25.2%	29.9%	7.6%	2.8%	2.19
Calamus East	33.5%	36.5%	26.9%	2.5%	0.5%	2.00
Calamus West	22.8%	29.5%	42.6%	4.9%	0.3%	2.30
Elkhorn	68.8%	10.5%	18.8%	1.6%	0.3%	1.54
Frenchman	10.8%	15.8%	47.4%	18.0%	7.9%	2.96
Keya Paha	38.7%	33.3%	24.2%	2.9%	0.8%	1.94
Loup East	51.4%	29.1%	16.6%	1.8%	1.1%	1.72
Loup West	23.8%	26.2%	34.5%	13.4%	2.1%	2.43
Missouri	53.9%	25.6%	17.7%	2.0%	0.8%	1.70
Pine Ridge	29.8%	30.7%	29.8%	7.3%	2.3%	2.22
Plains	13.5%	19.0%	50.5%	14.1%	3.1%	2.74
Platte	10.8%	20.1%	47.5%	16.2%	5.4%	2.85
Republican	66.0%	19.3%	13.1%	1.2%	0.4%	1.51
Sandhills	12.8%	26.0%	49.8%	10.7%	0.8%	2.60
Upper Platte	11.9%	13.6%	57.9%	12.5%	4.2%	2.83
Wahoo	54.9%	15.4%	25.4%	3.7%	0.6%	1.80

Whitetail Deer (Statewide, n = 13,466)

Whitetail Deer	Nonresident	Resident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	Overall
1) Much too low	7.4%	6.7%	6.4%	7.1%	7.0%	6.9%
2) Low	15.9%	17.0%	17.7%	16.2%	17.4%	16.7%
3) About right	**55.9%**	**48.8%**	**55.8%**	**48.7%**	**48.4%**	**50.7%**
4) High	17.8%	21.7%	17.1%	22.0%	22.0%	20.6%
5) Much too high	3.0%	5.9%	3.0%	6.1%	5.3%	5.1%
Average Score	2.93	3.03	2.93	3.04	3.01	3.01

Whitetail Deer, by DMU

Whitetail Deer By Unit	1) Much too low	2) Low	3) About right	4) High	5) Much too high	Average Score
Blue Northwest	6.9%	20.7%	56.1%	14.4%	1.9%	2.84
Blue Southeast	8.4%	22.1%	52.8%	14.8%	1.9%	2.80
Buffalo	2.4%	10.9%	48.5%	31.9%	6.2%	3.29
Calamus East	2.0%	9.4%	46.3%	34.4%	7.8%	3.36
Calamus West	3.5%	15.6%	53.3%	22.2%	5.5%	3.10
Elkhorn	8.0%	20.7%	53.8%	14.6%	2.9%	2.83
Frenchman	11.0%	20.0%	47.0%	16.1%	5.8%	2.85
Keya Paha	3.0%	4.9%	54.3%	30.6%	7.2%	3.34
Loup East	2.3%	6.0%	46.4%	31.0%	14.3%	3.49
Loup West	4.9%	9.4%	52.3%	27.7%	5.7%	3.20
Missouri	2.1%	11.2%	58.4%	24.3%	4.0%	3.17
Pine Ridge	10.0%	15.4%	50.3%	18.9%	5.4%	2.94
Plains	13.0%	20.9%	45.3%	15.2%	5.7%	2.80
Platte	7.2%	15.9%	45.0%	24.0%	7.9%	3.10
Republican	4.8%	16.1%	52.4%	22.0%	4.7%	3.06
Sandhills	7.1%	18.0%	50.5%	19.1%	5.4%	2.98
Upper Platte	12.5%	24.8%	40.1%	17.8%	4.7%	2.77
Wahoo	7.7%	21.4%	52.0%	16.2%	2.7%	2.95

Firearm Season Dates

Q42. Nebraska's firearm deer season has historically occurred in mid-November during the week before Thanksgiving week. Would you prefer to see the season dates change? (n = 13,974)

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
No (Stay the same)	**67.6%**	**78.6%**	**55.4%**	**76.9%**	**72.8%**	**70.6%**
Yes (Move the season)	32.4%	21.4%	44.6%	23.1%	27.2%	29.4%

Q43. If yes, when would you prefer the firearm deer season to occur? (4,103 total responses)

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
Mid-October	4.8%	4.1%	5.7%	3.8%	6.0%	4.7%
Late October	7.9%	7.0%	4.5%	10.5%	7.9%	7.8%
Early November	**30.8%**	29.1%	9.1%	**48.7%**	23.3%	**30.5%**
Late November	26.5%	**29.6%**	33.0%	23.4%	16.0%	27.1%
Early December	23.2%	23.8%	**38.2%**	11.1%	**23.3%**	23.3%
Mid-December	4.3%	3.9%	6.0%	2.3%	8.4%	4.2%
Late December	2.5%	2.5%	3.6%	1.2%	5.1%	2.5%
Earlier Category	43.5%	40.2%	19.2%	62.9%	37.6%	42.9%
Later Category	56.5%	59.8%	80.8%	37.1%	62.4%	57.1%

Q44. Which if any of the following potential benefits describes your reason for preferring the season dates selected above? (Select all that apply.)
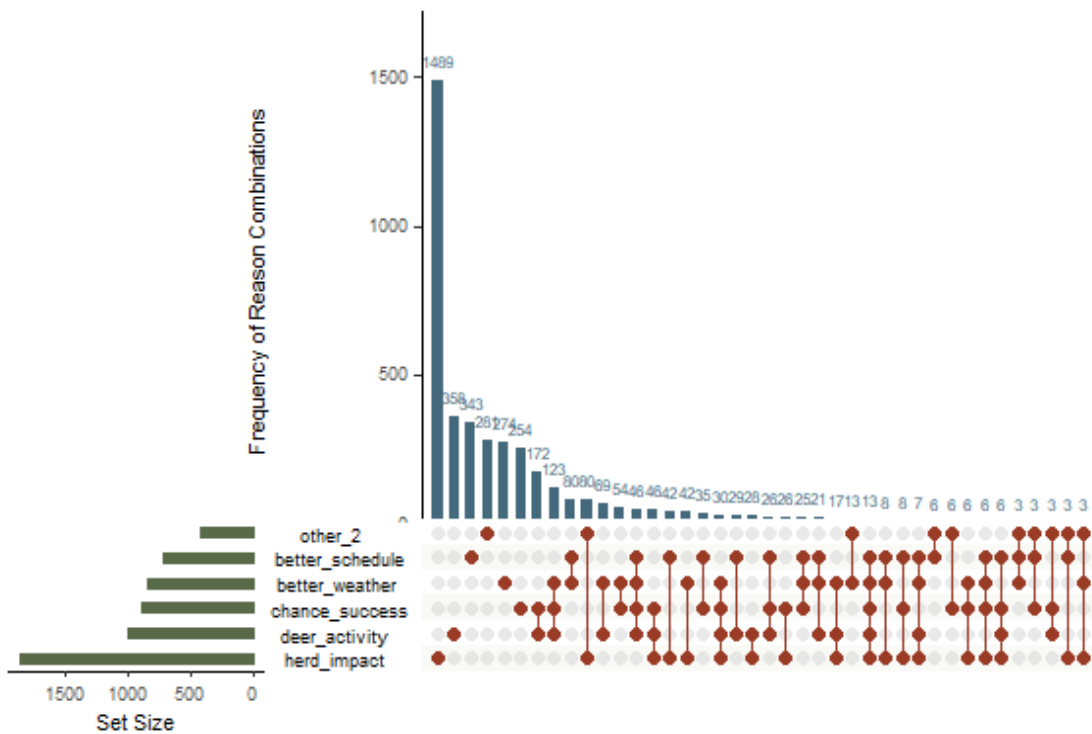
Figure Table 5.1. Overall frequency (and percent) of reasons for wanting to change the season dates.

Better for Schedule	Impact on Herd	Chance of Success	Better Weather	Deer Activity Level	Other
718	1868	898	847	1008	416
17.5%	45.5%	21.9%	20.7%	24.6%	10.1%

Q 46. Which impacts on the deer herd would you expect to see?

Response	Residency		Date Preference		Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Earlier	Later	
Decreased Buck Survival	3.0%	1.4%	10.8%	0.8%	2.7%
Decreased Doe Survival	1.7%	0.9%	4.0%	0.9%	1.5%
Increased Buck Survival	91.2%	93.9%	73.2%	96.1%	91.7%
Increased Doe Survival	4.1%	3.8%	12.0%	2.2%	4.1%

Q48. Do you currently time your deer hunting to coincide with the rut?

	Hunters	percent	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader
No	6220	44.4%	34.0%	45.6%	66.9%
Yes	7788	55.6%	66.0%	53.4%	33.1%

Q49. If the firearm deer season were moved outside of the rut, would you continue to hunt during the rut using other legal weapons and permits?

	Hunters	percent	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader
No	2343	30.4%	5.2%	44.6%	18.4%
Yes	5367	69.6%	94.8%	55.4%	81.6%

Sources of Hunting and Regulation Information

Q50. Which of the following information sources do you use to learn about deer hunting? (Select all that apply.)

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
Online Hunting Forum	24.8%	33.4%	38.5%	22.8%	21.1%	27.2%
Hunting Podcasts	12.3%	19.9%	25.6%	10.0%	9.8%	14.4%
Deer Hunting TV Shows	39.1%	39.5%	49.2%	35.4%	34.5%	39.2%
Family/Friends	**80.2%**	**76.4%**	**74.8%**	**81.3%**	**75.7%**	**79.1%**
Hunting Mentor	16.3%	18.2%	17.7%	16.9%	12.1%	16.8%
Government Agency	17.4%	16.1%	19.5%	15.8%	18.9%	17.0%
Hunt/Conservation Org	15.7%	19.9%	24.0%	14.1%	13.1%	16.8%
University Research	5.1%	7.5%	9.9%	4.1%	4.0%	5.7%

Q51. Which of the following is your preferred medium for learning about deer hunting? (Select one only.)

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
Audio (e.g., radio or podcasts)	3.0%	4.1%	5.5%	2.4%	2.7%	3.3%
Email	6.1%	7.0%	4.4%	7.1%	7.0%	6.4%
Hard-copy printed material (e.g., magazines)	21.7%	20.0%	18.2%	22.2%	25.3%	21.2%
Internet (e.g., web sites)	**39.7%**	**43.9%**	**43.8%**	**40.0%**	**35.4%**	**40.8%**
Online social media	8.0%	6.3%	8.2%	7.4%	5.8%	7.6%
Television	21.5%	18.7%	19.9%	20.9%	23.9%	20.7%

Q52. What is your primary source for regulatory information related to deer hunting in Nebraska?

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
Print copy of the Big Game Guide	26.1%	18.6%	24.1%	23.8%	**27.7%**	24.1%
My permit	10.9%	6.4%	6.3%	11.3%	7.2%	9.7%
Regulations printed with my permit	13.4%	15.2%	10.4%	15.6%	11.7%	13.9%
Game & Parks Commission website	**30.1%**	**27.3%**	**30.6%**	**29.0%**	27.1%	**29.3%**
Online version of the Big Game Guide	18.8%	31.2%	27.9%	19.4%	25.5%	22.1%
Other	0.7%	1.3%	0.7%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%

Q54. Do you read all the information provided with and on your permit? (n = 13,890)

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
No	11.6%	8.6%	10.2%	11.2%	8.6%	10.8%
Yes	88.4%	91.4%	89.8%	88.8%	91.4%	89.2%

Demographics questions

Q55. Which of the following best describes where you currently reside? (n = 14,026)

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
Rural farm or ranch	25.0%	22.6%	23.3%	24.9%	24.0%	24.4%
Rural town or village	38.6%	36.7%	39.3%	36.9%	45.6%	38.1%
Urban city center or downtown	4.2%	3.4%	4.2%	3.9%	3.0%	4.0%
Urban city suburbs or neighborhoods	32.2%	37.3%	33.2%	34.3%	27.5%	33.6%

Q56. Which of the following best describes where you were primarily raised? (n = 14,028)

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
Rural farm or ranch	34.3%	29.6%	30.6%	34.2%	31.3%	33.0%
Rural town or village	40.0%	39.1%	41.8%	38.4%	44.8%	39.8%
Urban city center or downtown	3.4%	2.9%	2.9%	3.5%	2.2%	3.3%
Urban city suburbs or neighborhoods	22.3%	28.4%	24.7%	23.9%	21.7%	24.0%

Comparison of where respondents were raised (across) and where they currently live (down). Percentage is of the whole.

Current vs. Raised		Raised			
		Rural farm or ranch	Rural town or village	Urban city center or downtown	Urban city suburbs or neighborhoods
Currently live	Rural farm or ranch	16.3% (2290)	5.2% (729)	0.3% (46)	2.5% (350)
	Rural town or village	9.3% (1297)	23.8% (3329)	0.7% (94)	4.4% (614)
	Urban city center or downtown	0.8% (111)	1.4% (191)	1.3% (176)	0.5% (77)
	Urban city suburbs or neighborhoods	6.6% (929)	9.4% (1323)	1.0% (140)	16.5% (2316)

Q57. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Response	Residency		Weapon Preference			Overall
	Resident	Nonresident	Archery	Firearm	Muzzleloader	
Rural farm or ranch	34.3%	29.6%	30.6%	34.2%	31.3%	33.0%
Rural town or village	40.0%	39.1%	41.8%	38.4%	44.8%	39.8%
Urban city center or downtown	3.4%	2.9%	2.9%	3.5%	2.2%	3.3%
Urban city suburbs or neighborhoods	22.3%	28.4%	24.7%	23.9%	21.7%	24.0%