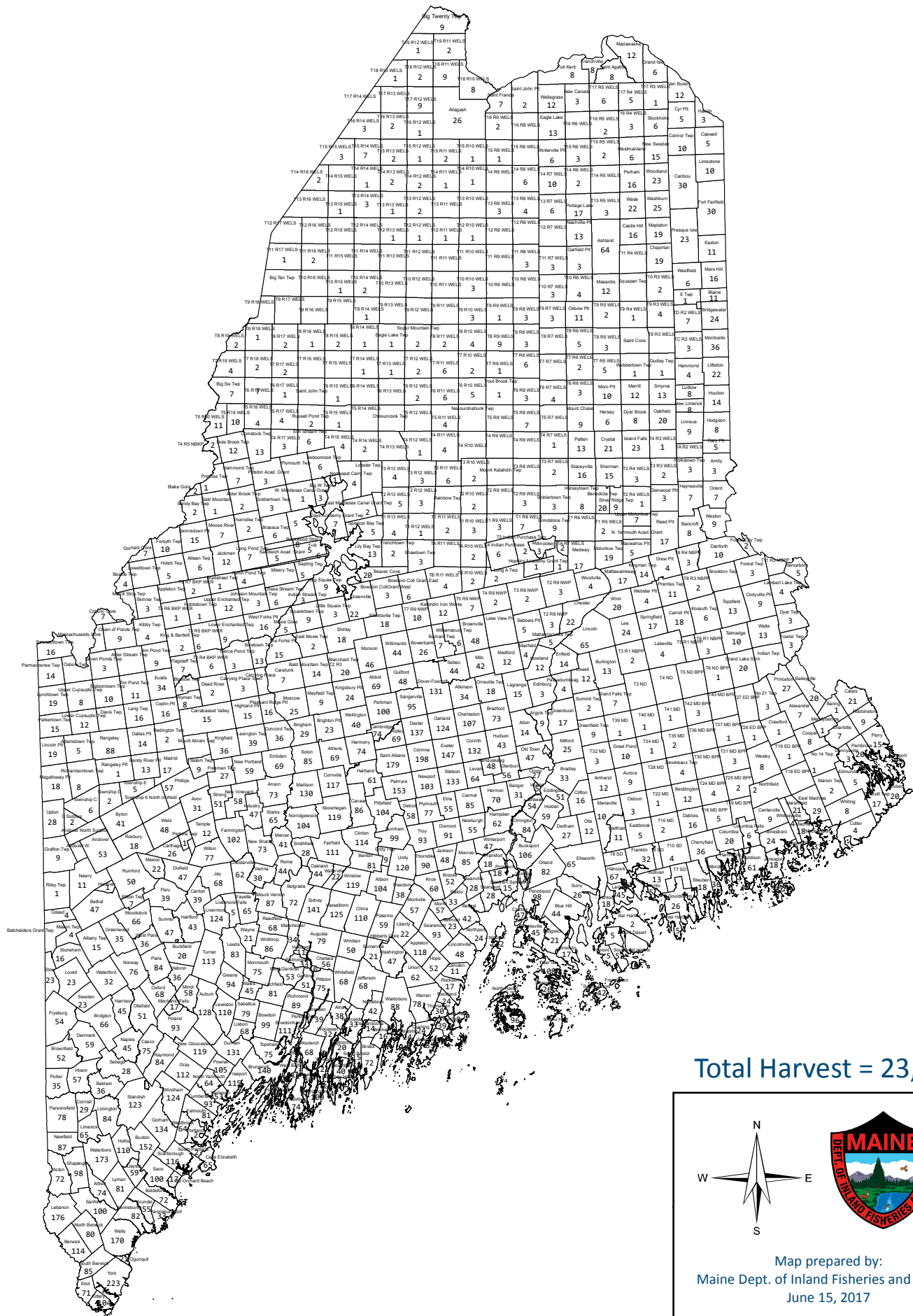


Maine Deer Harvest by Town (2016)



2016 Maine Deer Harvest

In 2016, Maine hunters harvested 23,512 deer, representing an increase of 16% from the 2015 deer harvest. Given mild winter weather conditions in 2015-16, IFW biologists predicted a harvest of around 24,400 deer, which was within 4% of the actual harvest. Breaking down the 2016 harvest, 20,040 deer were tagged during the General Firearms season. This was a 21% increase in deer harvest by firearm hunters in 2015. A total of 1,267 deer were harvested during the Expanded Archery season. This equates to a 13% decrease in the Expanded Archery harvest from 2015, 469 deer were tagged during the Regular Archery season. Maine's youth harvested 659 deer, which was 25% below the 2015 harvest on Youth Day. Last, but not least, Maine's Muzzleloader seasons hunters tagged 933 deer, an increase of 25%.

This year's buck harvest of 16,986 animals represents an increase of 14% from last year and was within 3% of the projected buck harvest. Southern Maine is well known for being a highly productive region for the state, in terms of its deer population. As such, it goes in hand that the top 5 buck producing Wildlife Management Districts (WMDs) are also located in the Southern tier of the state. The WMDs with the highest buck harvest were, in order from greatest buck harvest to least, per square mile of land, are 29, 24, 22, 21, and 20. Despite this, northern Maine's adult bucks are, on the average, slightly larger expressing an average weight of 180 lbs. In comparison, their more densely populated cousins in the southern half of the state average approximately 156 lbs.

One of the driving forces of Maine's deer population is winter weather. The 2015-16 winter proved to be mild in nature, in fact it turned out to be one of the mildest in the last 60+ years which often results in an increase in the deer population. To offset potential population increases due to increased juvenile survival, MDIFW increased Any-deer permit (ADP) allocations by approximately 60% (45,755) from the 2015 allocation of 28,770. The overall goal of the 2016 ADP allocation was to produce a doe harvest of 5,297 adult does. Overall, Maine hunters harvested 6,382 antlerless deer (i.e., adult does and fawns), of which 4,261 were adult does.

Maine offers five different structured hunting seasons providing the state's hunters over 80 days in which to pursue white-tailed deer. In 2016, Maine's regular seasons occurred as follows: 1) The Regular Archery season from Sept 29th to Oct 28th, 2), General Firearms season from Oct 29th to Nov 26th, 3) Muzzleloader Season 1 from Nov 28th to Dec 3rd, and 4) Muzzleloader Season 2 from Dec 5th to Dec 10th. While increasing opportunity, the Expanded Archery season is primarily used to control deer populations in areas where deer are chronically overabundant and negatively impact themselves and people. The Expanded Archery season generally runs from early September to mid-December.

All hunters carrying a legal Maine hunting license, that allows deer hunting, could harvest a buck provided that it met the 3" minimum required antler length. Antlerless deer (i.e., does, fawns, and bucks with antlers less than 3" in length) could only be harvested by hunters who possessed an Any-deer permit, with the exception of youth hunters on Youth Day. Maine's youth are provided the opportunity, on Youth Day, to harvest antlerless deer in any WMD that receives an allocation of ADPs. Not changing from past years, Sunday remained closed to hunting, and the opening Saturday of the Regular Firearms season was reserved for Maine residents only.