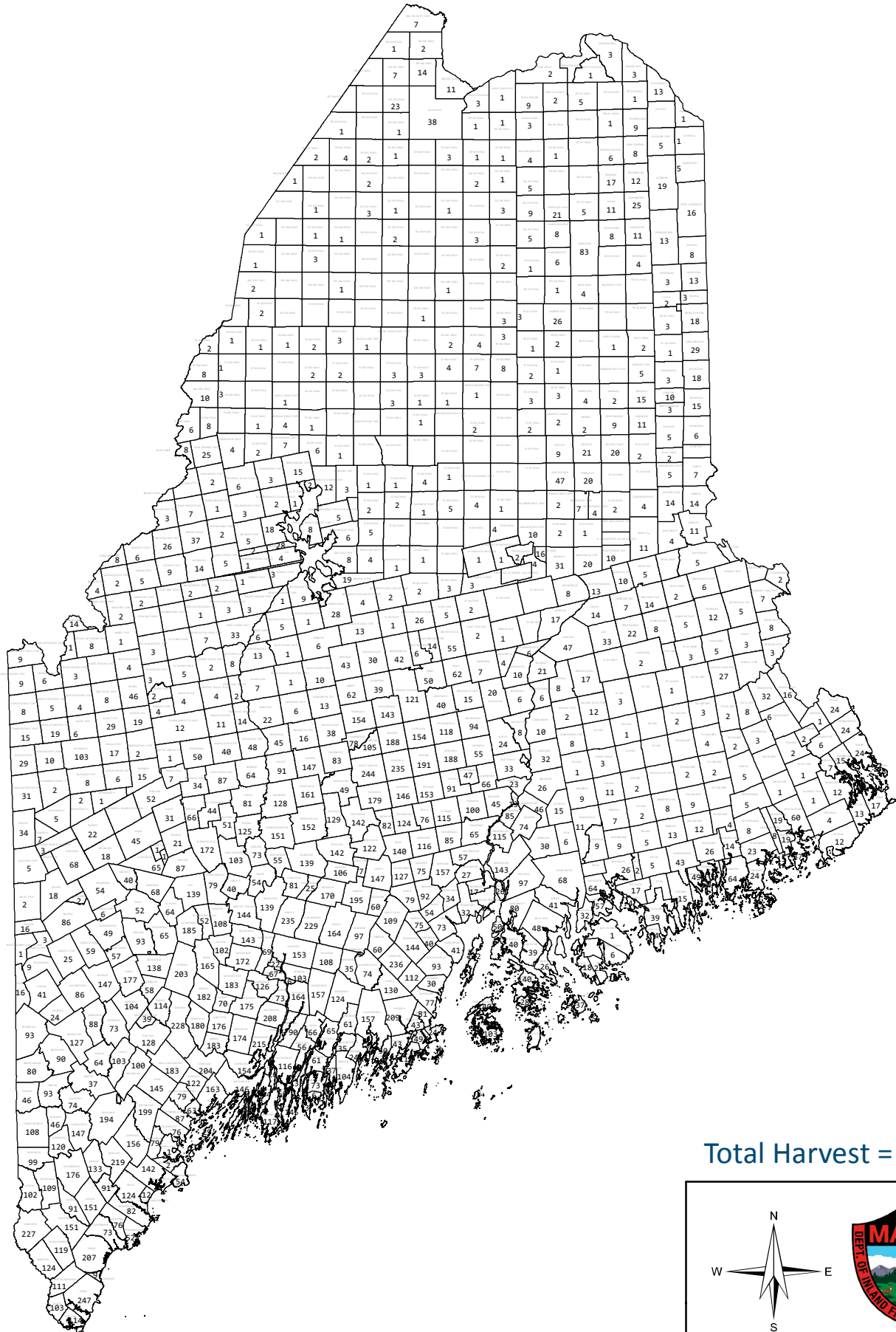
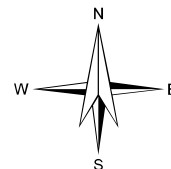


Maine Deer Harvest by Town (2018)



Total Harvest = 32,451



Map prepared by:
Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
February 19, 2019

2018 Maine Deer Harvest

Deer hunters in Maine harvested 32,451 deer in 2018, the highest total since 2002 and a 19% increase from the 2017 harvest. This year's buck harvest of 18,241 was a very slight decrease from 2017, when 18,280 adult bucks were taken. Most deer were harvested during the general firearms season, which totaled 25 hunting days including Opening Saturday (Residents' Day), October 27th. Overall, Maine offered 79 days on which deer could be hunted spread out over 5 seasons: expanded archery, October archery, general firearms, and two muzzleloader seasons.

Statewide temperatures were around average for September and the beginning of our deer hunting seasons here in Maine, and October-December temperatures were- in most places- 3-5 degrees below average. Conditions were unusual during the regular firearms season for deer with heavy rains early in the season, most notably on Saturdays, and accumulating snow nearly statewide by the end of the 3rd week of the regular firearms season. Because Saturdays during the regular firearms season tend to produce a lot of deer, these poor weather weekends meant harvest totals through the first half of this season were down 10% from 2017. Maine experienced accumulating snows statewide around Nov. 10th and between Nov. 14-17th. These ideal hunting conditions were likely a large part of the reason we saw harvest figures rebound and overtake 2017 figures during the second half of the firearms season.

Despite the poor weather conditions in the first half of the regular firearms season and ideal conditions during the last week, results of deer hunter effort surveys administered to 2018 Maine deer hunters suggest that the patterns we typically see in which days hunters spent the most time hunting did not change in 2018. As seen in previous years, between 10-12% of the total hours spent hunting during the regular firearms season occurred on Residents' Day, ~6-8% on each of the following three Saturdays, and around 3% all other days of the season other than a slight increase over the Thanksgiving holiday. Active hunters spent ~36 hours on average hunting deer during the firearms season and an average of 4.3 hours afield on days spent hunting.

A total of 27,245 deer were harvested during the general firearms season. Additionally, 2,168 deer were harvested during the combined archery seasons, 1,030 on Youth Day, and 2,003 during the combined muzzleloader seasons. Five deer were harvested with incomplete records, including big game season. Approximately 93% of harvested deer were taken by resident hunters. A total of 84,745 Any-deer (ADP) permits were issued for the 2018 season with the aim of achieving an adult doe harvest of approximately 8,759. The actual total doe harvest was 9,659, which was 10.3% higher than our doe harvest objective for 2018. In addition, 2,427 buck fawns and 2,124 doe fawns were harvested. One deer was harvested with no sex recorded.

This marks the first time in over a decade where hunters have exceeded doe harvest objectives after averaging doe harvests of ~21% below objective over that period. Increased doe harvests were primarily seen in southern Maine Wildlife Management Districts where high numbers of ADP were issued in an attempt to lower doe:buck ratios. Maine's deer management system is adaptive, and adjustments are made to ADP allocations to account for over or under-harvest of does during the previous hunting season. The distribution of doe harvest through the regular firearm season was unusual in 2018. Over the last 5 years, Maine hunters have very consistently taken ~60% of the regular firearms season does during the first half of the firearms season and 40% during the second half of the season. This year, we saw a 45/55 split. This seems to suggest that the poor, rainy conditions during the first half of the season

resulted in more hunters making it to the second half of the season without harvesting a deer, and thus more willing to tag a doe.

All hunters carrying a current Maine hunting license that allowed deer hunting could harvest a buck with an antler at least 3 inches in length. Antlerless deer could only be harvested by hunters who possessed an ADP, apart from youth hunters on Youth Day, expanded archery hunters, and archery hunters in WMDs where ADP were issued. As in previous years, Sundays were closed to hunting, and the opening Saturday of the Regular Firearms season was reserved for Maine residents only.