

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Maryland Wildlife Advisory Commission

**Will Meet at 10:30 AM
On Wed., October 20, 2021
Department of Natural Resources
Google Meet**

Meeting Agenda:

Approval for the October 20, 2021 Meeting Agenda

Approval for Minutes from August 18, 2021 Meeting

Regional Operations Program Update (Associate Director Harry Spiker)

Waterfowl Population Update (Josh Homyack)

Internal Bi-Annual Game Species Regulations Concepts (Associate Director Karina Stonesifer)

2022 WAC Annual Schedule and Draft Monthly Agenda (Commission)

Natural Resources Police Update (Sergeant Bradley Lowe or Lieutenant Charles Fawley)

Maryland Farm Bureau Update (Colby Ferguson)

Old Business:

- **Garrett County Farmers Bear Issues Recap (Commission)**

New Business:

Public Comment:

Adjourn

NOTE: Free Parking will be available on the Navy Stadium Parking Lot, which is the third entrance on right off of Taylor Avenue.

**The Proposed Schedule for the 2021 meetings
Of the Wildlife Advisory Commission is as follows:**

January 20th	Google Meet
February 17th	Google Meet
March 17th	Google Meet
April 21st	Google Meet
May 19th	Google Meet
June 16th	Google Meet
July 21st	No Meeting
August 18th	Google Meet
September 15th	Field Day
October 20th	Google Meet
November 17th	Google Meet
December 15th	No Meeting

***PLEASE NOTE THAT MEETING DATES ARE HELD
ON THE THIRD WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH***

Note: Unless notified otherwise all meetings will be held via Google Meet due to COVID.

NOTE: Free Parking will be available on the Navy Stadium Parking Lot, which is the third entrance on right off of Taylor Avenue.

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES – OCTOBER 20, 2021

Chairman Lou Compton called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m. This meeting was held via teleconference and videoconference. Chairman Compton asked for a roll call of individuals who were on the “call.” Unfortunately, because of the anonymity of Google Meet callers, it was impossible to determine the identity of every participant.

Approval for October 20, 2021, Meeting Agenda

- Motion to Approve the Agenda:
 1. Commissioner Schroyer moved to accept the Wildlife Advisory Commission October 20, 2021, Meeting Agenda.
 2. Commissioner Wagner seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Approval for Minutes from August 18, 2021, Meeting

- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Gulbrandsen moved to accept the August 18, 2021 meeting minutes as presented.
 2. Commissioner Keithley seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Regional Operations Program Update – Harry Spiker, Associate Director of Regional Operations, gave a presentation.

- Associate Director Spiker gave a presentation on the Regional Operations Program. [ATTACHMENT A]
- Q&A Section:
 1. Chairman Compton asked if staff have considered issuing the WMA reservations parking pass electronically due to the current postal service issues.
 - a. Staff are sending the parking passes via email when the customer opts in to receive emails from DNR.
 - b. The staff have been working hard to be more efficient, especially during the pandemic window. A great example is the virtual offshore blind site licensing system. However, only a small majority of hunters opt-in to share their information with us.
 - c. Chairman Compton ended by adding maybe this is something that could be put forward to the legislature to require in the future.
 2. Colby Ferguson (Farm Bureau) asked what the WMA food plot funding source is; and if WHS staff do habitat management on State Park and State Forest lands.
 - a. The food plots are primarily funded Pittman-Robertson (PR) with some seed donated by partner organizations (e.g. Wild Turkey Federation); and
 - b. Habitat management is done by WHS staff on lands controlled by State Park and State Forest. WHS staff do physical work and/or technical guidance to our peers in DNR land management.

Waterfowl Population Update – Waterfowl Project Leader Josh Homyack and Game Bird Section Leader Bill Harvey gave the presentation.

- Waterfowl Project Leader Josh Homyack presented the Waterfowl Population Update to the Commission. [ATTACHMENT B]
- Game Bird Section Bill Harvey reminded the Commission that the Atlantic Population (AP) Canada Geese breeding pair survey that is conducted on the Ungava was not performed due to COVID restrictions by USFWS and CWS. AP breeding is based on weather conditions. The Ungava Snow and Ice Conditions slide demonstrated better productivity for May 31, 2021.
- Staff is working with some partners to create wetlands restoration on four areas: Old Bohemia WMA,

Wye Island NRMA, Wellington WMA, and Browns Branch WMA. In addition, other wildlife species will benefit from this habitat management.

- Questions and Answers Section:
 1. Commissioner Wagner asked how many days would be eliminated from the Sea Duck Season under the USFWS-mandated proposed change.
 - a. The Special Sea Duck Season was 60 consecutive days. It had changed from 107 about six years ago to 60 days, and the bag limit was reduced during that same time period. With a reduction, the harvest increased in the past 5 to 6 years. The Special Sea Duck Season ran from the beginning of November to mid-January.
 - b. Currently, hunters get 60 days. The Sea Duck Season ran independently from the Regular Duck Season.
 - c. By eliminating the Special Sea Duck Season, hunters may hunt sea ducks during the Regular Duck Season.
 - d. There are two offshore waterfowl zones, which are Sea Duck Zone and the Offshore Waterfowl Hunting Zone. These zones overlap in many of the areas. Previously, a hunter could only take sea ducks in the Sea Duck Zone during the Special Sea Duck Season. With the new changes, hunters will not be able to take sea ducks during the two-week deer firearms season, during the split between the 2nd and 3rd regular duck season segments. The third season segment typically reopens a few days after the deer firearms season closes.
 - e. The sea duck season hunters will gain hunting in late January.
 - f. The elimination of the Special Sea Duck Season will simplify regulations for hunters and law enforcement but definitely remove some sea duck hunting opportunities, particularly during the deer firearms season.

Internal Bi-Annual Game Species Regulations Concepts – Associate Director Karina Stonesifer and staff gave a presentation.

- Associate Director Stonesifer updated the Commission on the hiring process for a Black Bear and Deer Project Leader (awaiting posting of the position and interviews to follow).
- Associate Director Stonesifer gave an overview of the regulation cycle.
- Upland Game Biologist Bob Long presented the Upland Game Birds concepts. [ATTACHMENT C]
- Questions and Answers Section:
 1. Commissioner Keithley asked about predator species impact on upland game birds.
 - a. There is information that supports that predators have an impact on upland game birds. In addition, avian predators impact quail.
 - b. The lack of habitat has made it easier for these birds to be taken by other predatory species. These birds spend a lot of time on the ground, including nesting.
 - Staff added the black bear damage discussion from the WAC's Field Day Meeting on September 15, 2021 with Garrett County farmers and local farm bureau representatives.
 - Game Mammal Section Leader Brian Eyler presented the White-Tailed Deer and Black Bear Concepts. [ATTACHMENT D]
 - Staff will advance multiple options to the internal and external stakeholders.
 - Questions and Answers Section:
 1. Commissioner Gulbrandsen asked whether staff have considered baiting conflicts with the black bear concepts.
 - a. Staff discussed baiting issues. Staff recognized that it might be an issue no matter what option is selected. As always, the hunter needs to consider the potential conflict and adjust their baiting plans accordingly.
 2. Commissioner Gulbrandsen asked if the staff decides to do the black bear additional dates later. Will, there be any staffing issues; especially, on the law enforcement side of things when you have deer firearms season and bear season concurrently.
 - a. Staff will have a discussion with NRP during the internal stakeholders meeting but do not anticipate any issues as the NRP are already patrolling on those dates.

3. Commissioner Boyles Griffin asked for clarification on the black bear season concepts.
 - a. The black bear concept is to add more days to the black bear hunt. However, the October black bear season will stay as-is.
 - b. The options are as follows: Option A is to add to the existing October black bear season; Option B is to add the dates before the October black bear season during the deer muzzleloader season; Option C is to add the dates during the deer firearms season in December.
4. WHS also received some input from a letter writer asking us to allow landowners to participate without a lottery permit (already an option via subpermittee system); prohibit a person who was selected in the lottery from being selected in the next year or two; eliminate the lottery for landowners.
- Deer Cooperator Permit (DCP) Concept Proposal presented by Game Mammal Project Leader Brian Eyler. **[ATTACHMENT D]**
 1. The DCP are the deer “sharpshooter permits”. These permits allow a person to kill deer at night, with rifles, using night-shooting (infra-red, night-light etc.) and “silencers” or suppressors.
 2. There are two DCPs: a regular DCP and an agricultural DCP. These are further regulated as “safety permits” and “non-safety permits”. If there is an airport involved where human safety is a component, the airport qualifies for a DCP all year around. If it is no human safety-related, including the agricultural DCP, these permits are viable from February 1 – March 31.
 3. Chairman Compton asked what the likelihood of this concept going through the legislative process is. Chairman Compton expressed his concerns about extending the DCP until July 31 because it includes the period of the does raising the fawns and shooting when crops are tall and leaves are out.
 - a. Staff does not have any incite on whether this will move through the legislative process if DNR does not consider this concept.
 - b. Commissioner Gulbrandsen suggested changing the ending period of the DCP to the middle of May instead of the end of July. Peak fawning is late May and early June.
 4. MFB Director of Government & Public Relations Colby Ferguson responded that MFB would move this concept through the legislative process if DNR does not move this concept forward. The problem is during the growing season. Since the DCP allows night shooting, it is essential to take the deer during the nighttime while the growing season is going on. It should not limit the time of the year for the farmers to take these deer.
 5. Chairman Compton requested a DCP presentation from WHS staff to help the Commission understand the DCP - before the Commission gets too deep into the concepts/proposals.
 - a. Associate Director Stonesifer agreed to add the DCP presentation to the November 17, 2021 WAC meeting agenda.
- Director Peditto presented the Maryland Outdoor Recreation Economic Commission - Ambassador Proposals to the WAC. **[ATTACHMENT D]**
 1. MORE stakeholders spent the last few years looking at opportunities to expand recreational access and programs across Maryland. The group included a broad review of outdoor recreation opportunities from a diverse membership perspective.
 2. One of the MORE Ambassadors requested the changes in slide 20. Two ideas would require law changes: extended shooting hours and reduced safety zone for archery hunters.
 3. Question and Answer Section – MORE Ambassador Proposals
 - a. Commissioner Gulbrandsen asked how much research or information do we have in terms of harvest rates and opportunities, particularly as it relates to the proposal to allow deer archery hunting at night.
 - There are no other states who allow archery deer hunting at night so it’s impossible to know what the impact would be on deer harvest or deer populations in general.
 - b. Are these local or statewide proposals?
 - These proposals presented by the MORE Ambassador are statewide.
 - c. Chairman Compton pointed out that extending legal shooting hours for deer archery season to

9 p.m. or 10 p.m. is a complex request with safety issues and the potential of questionable behavior going on at night. Chairman Compton cannot support that request. Chairman Compton expressed that he is willing to listen further to the antler restriction idea. Chairman Compton commented that a 50-yard safety zone for archery hunting in all counties is a no-brainer because it is being done in several counties already but it requires a law change so it is not for the WAC to authorize.

- d. Commissioner Keithley asked to clarify again where this request is coming from.
 - The request came from one Ambassador of the Maryland Outdoor Recreation Economic Commission.
 - e. Discussion ensued about one MORE Ambassador presenting these proposals to the WAC. Commissioner Wagner and Commissioner Schroyer were willing to accept the 50 yards statewide safety zone for archery hunters. Still, both expressed concerns on the other proposals, especially coming from one MORE Ambassador and not the entire MORE body.
- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Schroyer moved that the Commission return these proposals to the MORE for their review and recommendation from a majority of the MORE membership.
 2. Commissioner Wagner seconded.
 3. No Objection – Motion carried.
 4. Commissioner Gulbrandsen asked to communicate that the Commission supports uniformity with management of our game species. The members of the Commission agreed with Commissioner Gulbrandsen's comment on the subject.
 - Black Bear – WAC Item for Consideration from the September 15, 2021 meeting with Farmers and Garrett county Farm Bureau.
 1. Questions and Answers Section:
 - a. Commissioner Boyles Griffin asked if September through December is the typical time of year for bear crop damage.
 - It depends. Most of the damage to corn could occur before September. However, if there is corn standing during October, bears will go to the corn. The tricky part is that bears go to the middle of the fields where deer eat along the edges. Bears roll around in the middle of the fields.
 - Oats are the first thing that bears hit in August. However, oats are not a high dollar amount; therefore, staff members do not see the momentary damage to oats as does corn.

Maryland Farm Bureau Update – Presentation by Maryland Farm Bureau Director of Government & Public Relations Colby Ferguson.

- Mr. Ferguson mentioned that MFB is going through current policies.
 1. The expansion of the black bear depredation permit is one item.
 2. Wildlife management permits only allowed on private lands – law currently prohibits the University of Maryland from obtaining deer management permits. A bill to address that is needed.
 3. MFB supports the use of wildlife management permits on private and public lands.
 4. The use of food plots or sacrificial crops cost-share programs where farmlands are adjacent to public lands – more information is coming.
 5. Expansion of the seasons.
- Mr. Ferguson would like to discuss PR funding on WMAs and Program Open Space (POS) funding.
- Mr. Ferguson would like to discuss a non-hunting community payment for the use of WMAs --other states have it.
- MFB is applying for a “black-headed vulture” depredation permit on behalf of the Maryland farmers.
- Mr. Ferguson will expand on these topics at the November meeting.

2022 WAC Annual Schedule and Draft Monthly Agenda – Deferred to the November 17, 2021 meeting.

Natural Resources Police Update – Presentation was given by Sergeant Bradley Lowe

- Sergeant Lowe outlined the NRP activity for September. NRP statewide issued 827 citations and 1413 warnings. The breakdown follows: 115 wildlife violations, 800 boating, 295 public lands, and 594 fisheries. Traffic violations total was 449.
- The NRP Academy will start in mid-January.
- Lt. Fawley gave Zebras Update:
 1. Lt. Fawley informed the Commission that it is an ongoing investigation in regards to the illegal snare trap. It was not your typical snare trap; it was like a rope noose.
 2. The owner of the zebras is not a resident. The owner spends half his time in Maryland and half his time in Florida.
 3. Prince George’s Animal Control is the lead on the zebra investigation. Domestic animals are not under Natural Resources unless there is a Natural Resources law that governs them. Therefore, the release of the zebras is under Prince George’s Animal Control jurisdiction.
 4. USDA is the issuance agency for a permit for someone to have zebras under the exhibitor permit.
 5. Commissioner Boyles Griffin mentioned that Prince George’s Animal Control might issue permits for exotic animals. The facilities have to be inspected that house the animals to ensure that escape does not occur.

Old Business – No Report.

New Business –

- The Commission members need to review the 2022 WAC Annual Schedule and Draft Monthly Agenda - (Commission needs to decide to continue with virtual meetings or have hybrids meetings)
- Tree Stands Permitted on Wildlife Management Areas Discussion at November 17, 2021, by Commissioner Schroyer.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 1:27 p.m.

The next meeting will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, November 17, 2021, using Google Meet.

Attendance

Members:	L. Compton, S. Boyles Griffin, E. Gulbrandsen, S. Keithley, J. Michael, J. Schroyer, and C. Wagner
Absent:	T. Gregor
Guest:	C. Ferguson
Staff:	B. Eyler, C. Fawley, J. Homyack, T. Larney, B. Long, B. Lowe, J. McKnight, P. Peditto, T. Spencer, H. Spiker, and K. Stonesifer

Regional Operations Program

Wildlife and Heritage Service

WMA Mission

To conserve and enhance diverse wildlife populations and associated habitats while providing public enjoyment of the State's wildlife resources through hunting and other wildlife-dependent recreation.

Staff and Responsibilities

42 staff members working in 15 offices across the State.

- Land Management
- Wildlife Response
- Technical Support to Other Programs



Land Management

- 62 Wildlife Management Areas in total
- Cover more than 126,000 acres
- Located in 18 of 23 counties
- 70% East, 20% West
- 5% South, 5% Central



Land Management

- Plant trees and wildlife food plots
- Enhance habitat with burning
- Remove invasive species
- Mow fields and meadows
- Boundary marking
- Maintain roads, trails, parking lots
- Repair and install hunting blinds



Wildlife Response

- Injured Animals
- Nuisance Animals
- Provide Information and Assistance



Black Bear Response Team

24/7 emergency response for:

- Aggressive bears
- Bears in homes, tents, etc.
- Dead bears (e.g. road kills)
- Livestock or pet attacks
- human safety/injury



Support to Other Programs

- Game Program
- Natural Heritage Program
- I & E Program
- Hunter Education
- Maryland Forest Service
- Maryland Park Service



Regional Highlights: Eastern Region

Beneficial Use of Dredge Spoil: Deal Island



- Disposal of ~ 130,000 cu. yds. of dredge material
- Removed from Lower Wicomico River
- Placed to restore/improve marsh habitat along southern part of Deal Island
- Improve habitat for nesting birds (saltmarsh sparrow & black rails)

Image: Google Earth/USACE

Partners include US ACE, US NMFS, USFWS, Audubon Mid-Atlantic, NOAA, DNR-CCS, DNR-ECS, Wicomico County, and Somerset County

Regional Highlights: Eastern Region

Idylwild WMA Sandridge Woodlands Project

- 180+ Acres on WMA; 250+ Acre project in cooperation with CFL parcels
- Ongoing project (~ 10 years of management)
- Benefits include:
 - Thinning low value virginia pine
 - Restore sand ridge savannah habitat important for rare plant spp & upland wildlife
 - Increased food for wildlife (e.g. increased oak production)
 - Increased nesting & brood-rearing cover for turkey, quail, etc.
 - Increased diversity for songbirds, bats, and other nongame spp.



Regional Highlights: Western Region

Expanded Access

- Warrior Mt. WMA:
 - Improved & opened ½ mile of new road for vehicles & persons possessing Universal Disability Pass
 - New wheelchair accessible hunting structure
- Cunningham Swamp WMA:
 - 170 foot wheelchair accessible boardwalk leading to a 'blind' that overlooks a wetland area/beaver dam
 - Provides access through a bog/wet area that could not be traversed by wheelchair otherwise
 - Waterfowl and other hunting opportunities as well as wildlife viewing available for year-around use



Regional Highlights: Central Region

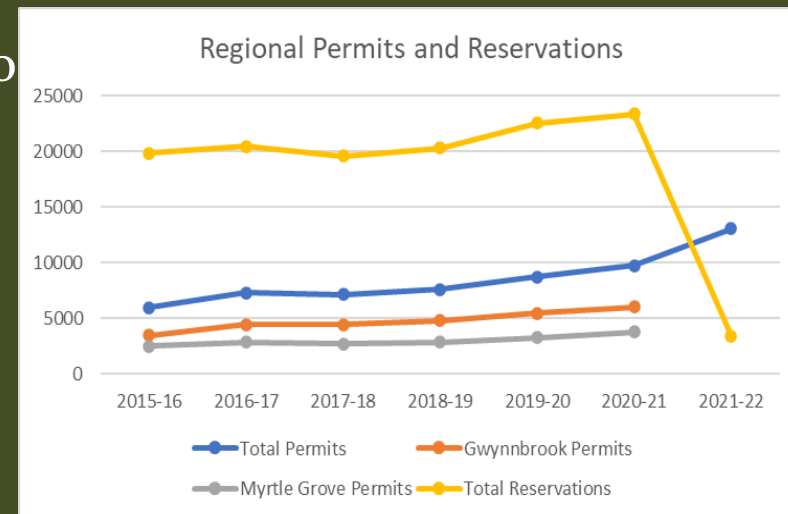
Increased bear activity in recent years:

- Sightings are more frequent with a longer duration Apr – Oct vs. May – July
- Common reports in Carroll, Baltimore, Harford, Howard & Montgomery counties



Free Public Hunting Permit

- CR & SR permits have been combined into one permit
- Permit available through COMPASS and valid immediately
- Parking pass mailed out next day



Regional Highlights: Southern Region

Exotic Occurrences:

- Wild hogs, Crocodylian spp. (alligator, etc.), Zebras
 - SR staff have worked with local animal control agencies and responded on a limited basis

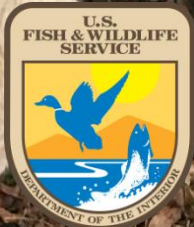
Cedar Point WMA:

- 8 acre shallow water impoundment to be created
- Partners include DU, Southern MD Resource Conservation & Development Board, Charles Co SCD
- Will be managed under Free Permit System

Questions?



2021 Migratory Game Bird Status Update

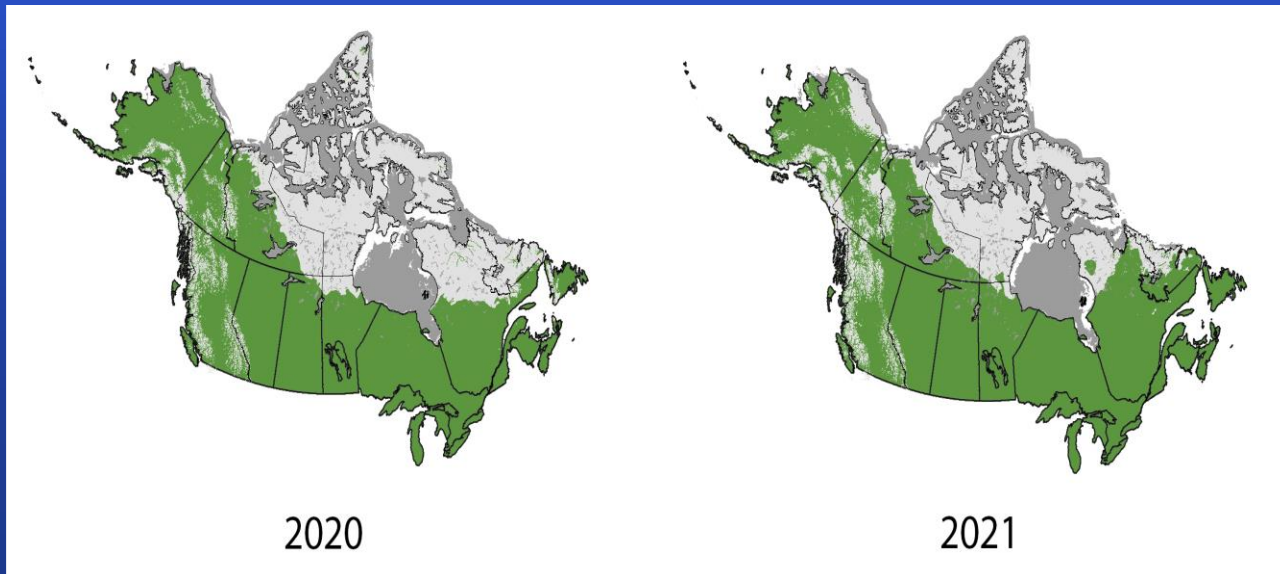


Season Selection Process

- **2021-2022 seasons were set in April, 2021.**
- **2022-2023 seasons**
 - **Atlantic Flyway Council, August 23 – 27, 2021.**
 - **FWS Regulations Committee, Sept 28 – 29, 2021.**
 - **Proposed federal frameworks, early 2022.**
 - **MGBAC early January WAC reviews late January.**
 - **Maryland public meeting and comment period (mid February).**
 - **WAC vote late March with final season selection due to FWS, April 2022.**

2021 Habitat Conditions

- Limited data available because of COVID. The Canadian border remained closed until late summer.
- Snow and ice cover maps from satellite photography show less extensive coverage in 2021 than 2020 which suggests average spring phenology.



Adjustments to 2021 Regulatory Process

- **USFWS and partners were unable to conduct survey banding operations in Canada due to border closures.**
- **As a result, direct observations of most waterfowl populations and habitat conditions were not available to biologists.**
- **Most stateside surveys and banding activities were conducted normally. (AFBWS, banding, research, etc.).**
- **Regulatory decisions will be made based upon modeled population estimates using the most recent information available.**

2021 Breeding Ducks in the Eastern Survey Area (millions)



Species	2021	2020	% Change from 2020	% Change from LTA
Mallard	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Black Duck	0.54	0.50	similar	-31
Wood Duck*	1.02	0.94	+7	similar
Green-winged Teal	0.34	0.35	similar	similar
Ring-necked Duck	0.71	0.70	similar	similar
Common Goldeneye	0.59	0.58	similar	similar

* Wood Duck estimate from AFBWS and BBS

Multi-Stock Duck Harvest Recommendation

- **Approved by USFWS-SRC spring 2018 as the method by which general duck season will be determined in the Atlantic Flyway.**
- **Optimal choice for the 2022-23 Atlantic Flyway duck season is the liberal regulatory alternative (60/6).**

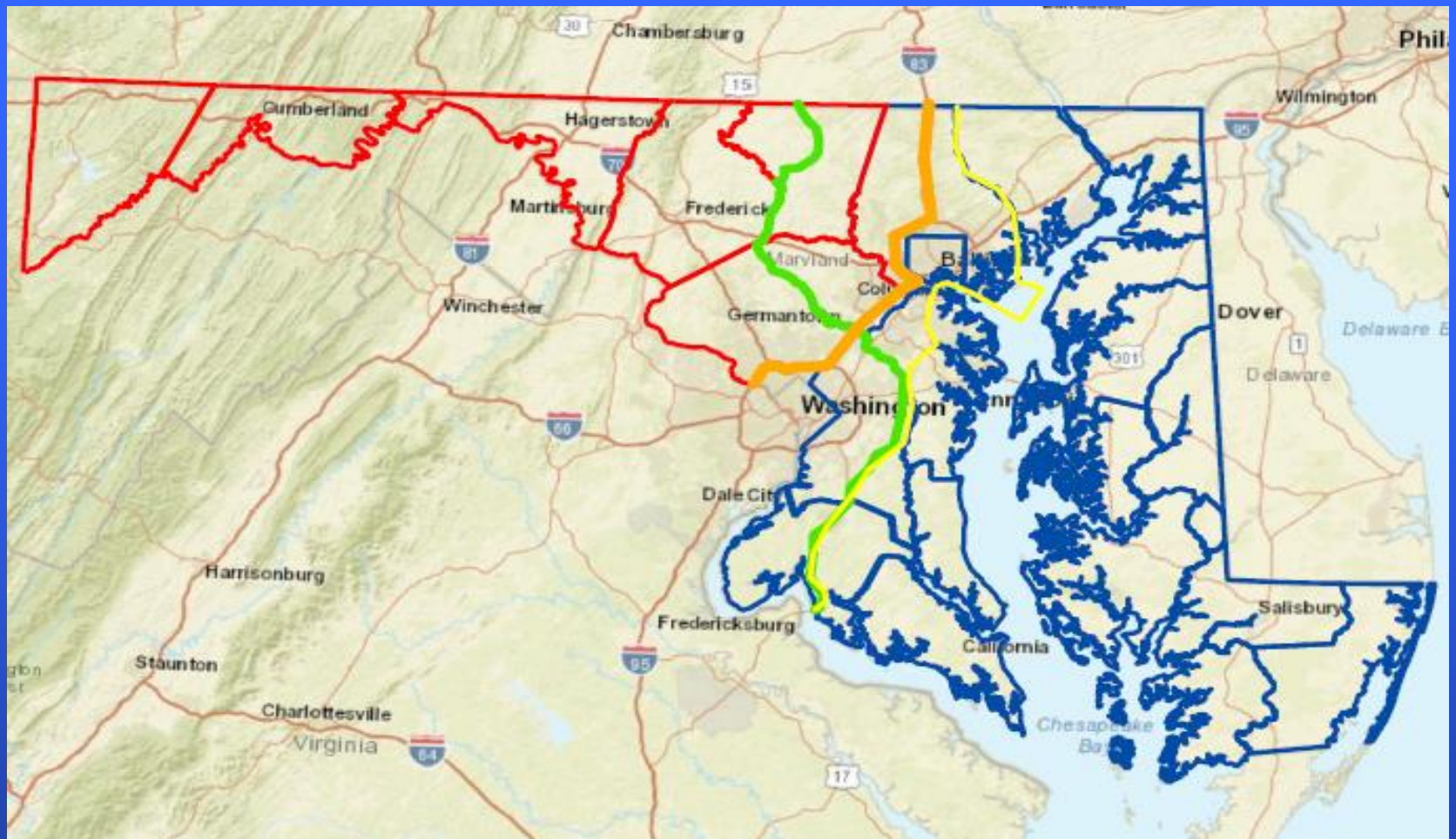


Scaup Season

- Restrictive “hybrid” season for 2022-23.
 - 40 days 1 bird/day and 20 consecutive days 2 birds/day.
 - States choose where to place 20 days of 2 birds/day but must be consecutive.
- 
- A photograph of a scaup duck in flight, captured against a clear blue sky. The duck is shown from a side profile, with its wings fully extended. The upper wing feathers are dark, while the underwing coverts are a lighter, mottled grey. The duck's body is primarily white with dark patches on its back and tail. Its head is dark with a prominent yellow eye. The background is a solid, light blue color.

Duck Zones and Segments

- Maryland has 2 duck zones (East and West) for 2021-22 hunting season.
- Past USFWS options did not allow for 2 zones and 3 season segments.
- USFWS allows zones and segment options to be changed every 5 years.
- This concept received positive review's during our last 2 public comment periods (2020, 2021).



Western Duck Zone

Eastern Duck Zone

Orange Line = Duck Zone Boundary

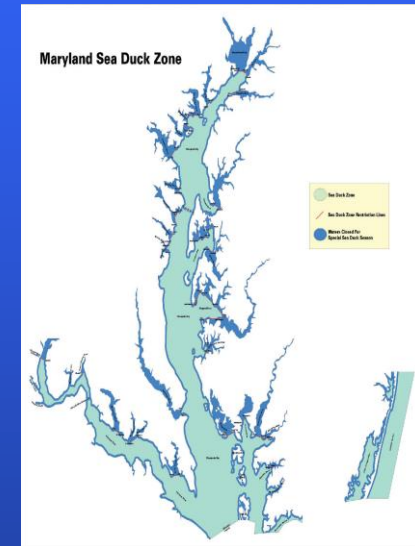
Green Line = Atlantic Pop/Resident Pop. Canada Goose Zone Boundary

Yellow Line = Special September Teal Season Zone Boundary

Special Sea Duck Season Eliminated

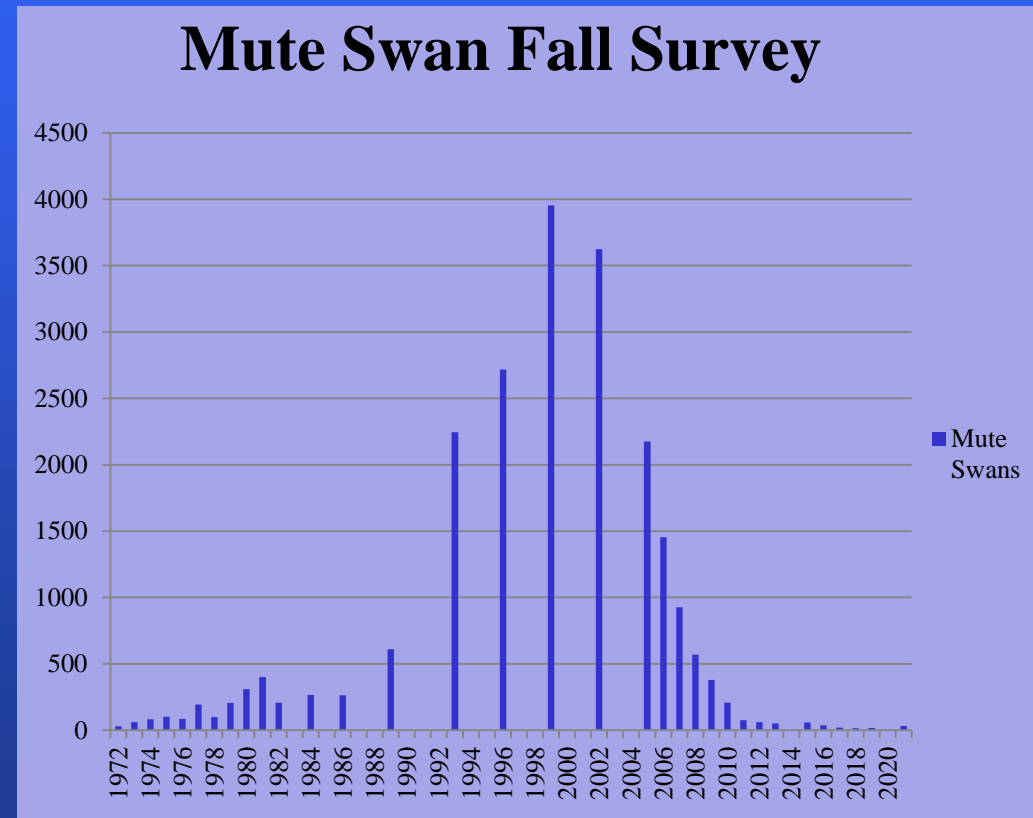
(effective for the 2022-23 season)

- A special season is no longer appropriate for sea ducks as these seasons can only be applied to species that are overabundant or lightly utilized.
- The Sea Duck Zone will remain unchanged to maintain hunting opportunity in the same geographic areas. This requires a change in the law [10-603(d)(3)] to maintain the ability to pursue cripples under power in the SDZ.
- The daily bag limit in the regular duck season will be reduced to 4 sea ducks per day with no more than 3 scoters, 3 long-tailed ducks, or 3 eiders.
- Hunters may pursue sea ducks during the 60 day regular duck season, however sea ducks will always count towards the regular daily bag limit regardless of where they are harvested.



Mute Swan Management

- Spring and Fall aerial surveys were conducted
- Continue to remove birds opportunistically:
 - 27 in 2021
 - 7 in 2020
 - 21 in 2019
 - 14 in 2018



A large flock of Canada geese is captured in flight against a clear, bright blue sky. The geese are scattered throughout the frame, with some in the foreground and others further back, creating a sense of depth and movement. Their wings are spread wide, and their characteristic black and white plumage is clearly visible. The overall scene conveys a sense of natural beauty and the migratory nature of these birds.

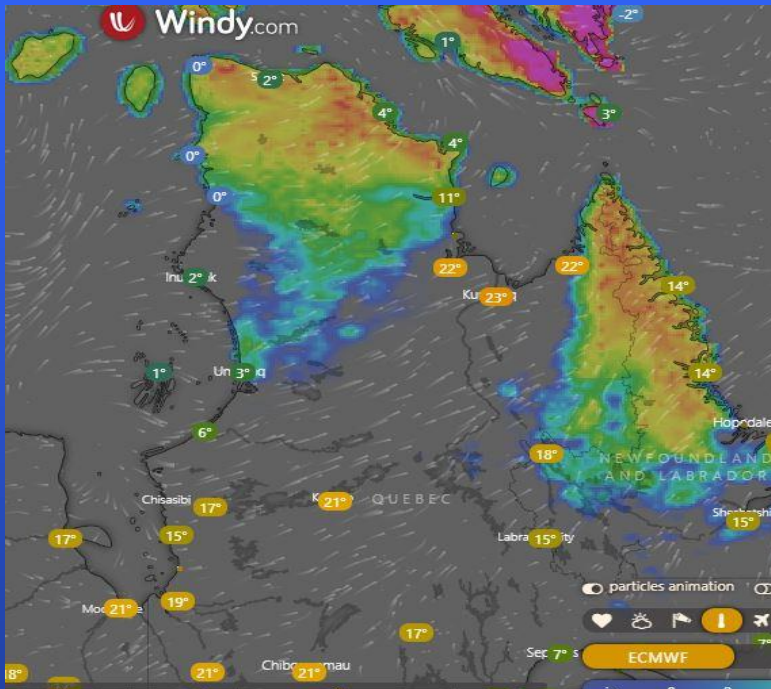
**Status of Atlantic
Population (AP) Canada
Geese**

2021 AP Monitoring

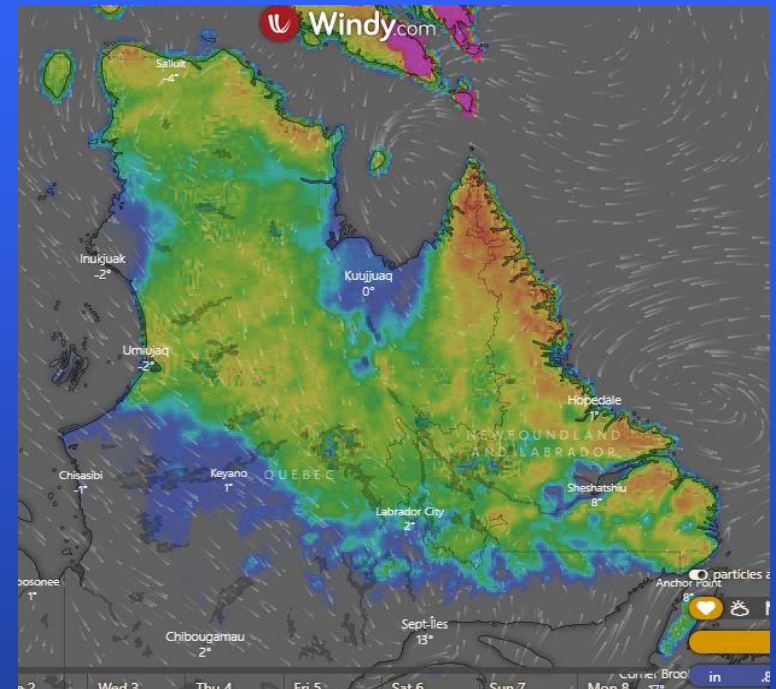
A yellow helicopter is parked on a grassy field. A person is standing next to it, holding a large object. The background is a clear sky.

- **Breeding Pair Survey (mid-June)**
 - Not conducted in 2020 or 2021 due to COVID.
- **Pre-season Banding**
 - Not conducted in 2020 or 2021 due to COVID.
- **A model, based on spring weather, predicts slightly above average production for 2021.**

Ungava Snow and Ice Conditions



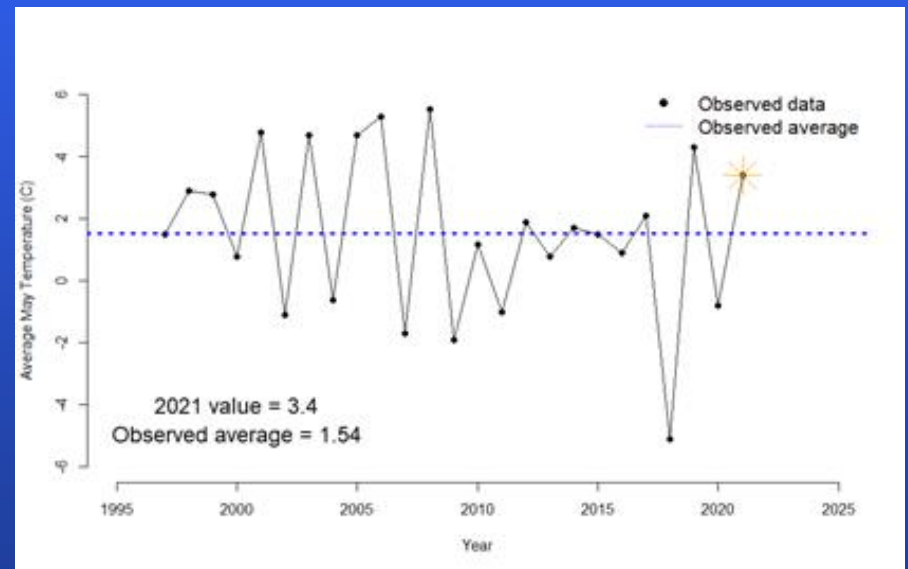
May 31, 2021



May 30, 2020

AP Harvest Strategy Revision

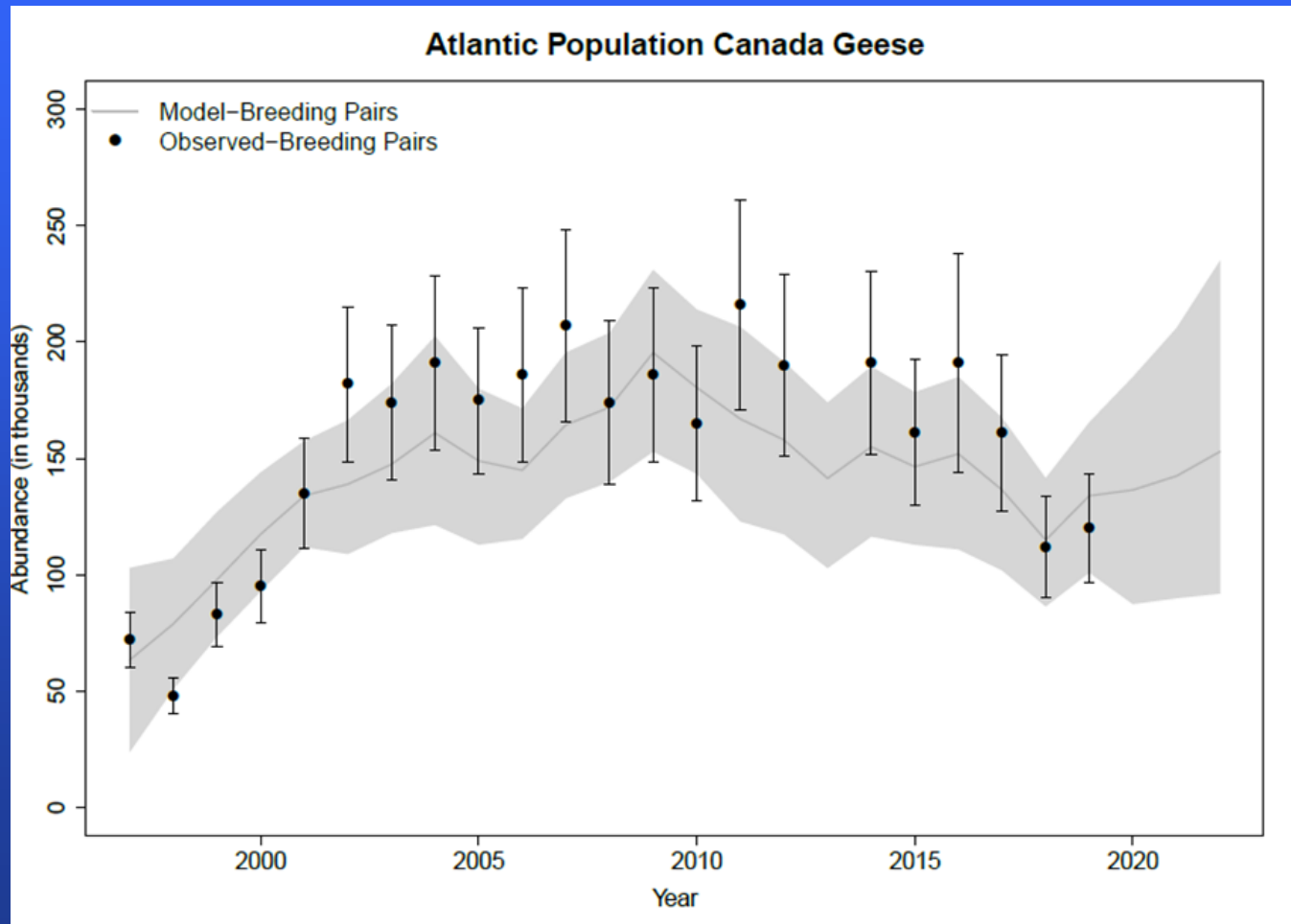
- Harvest packages in the current AP Harvest Strategy were last revised in 2013 when the moderate package was changed from 45 to 50 days.
- The long run of late springs and relatively poor production years since 2009 has changed our understanding of what “average” productivity means for this population.



New AP Harvest Strategy

- New strategy was approved by AF Council (8/21) and USFWS Service Regulations Committee (9/21).
- Uses an Integrated Population Model (IPM) that includes all available demographic data (survival rates, harvest rates, productivity, and population estimates).
- The out-year (next year's) prediction of the number of breeding pairs from the IPM is compared to population thresholds to determine next year's harvest package.
- This timing works well with the "new" USFWS schedule where seasons are set a year ahead and allows a much quicker response to population changes than the old strategy that used a 3-year average.
- The new strategy is generally more conservative to account for lower average productivity.

AP Integrated Population Model

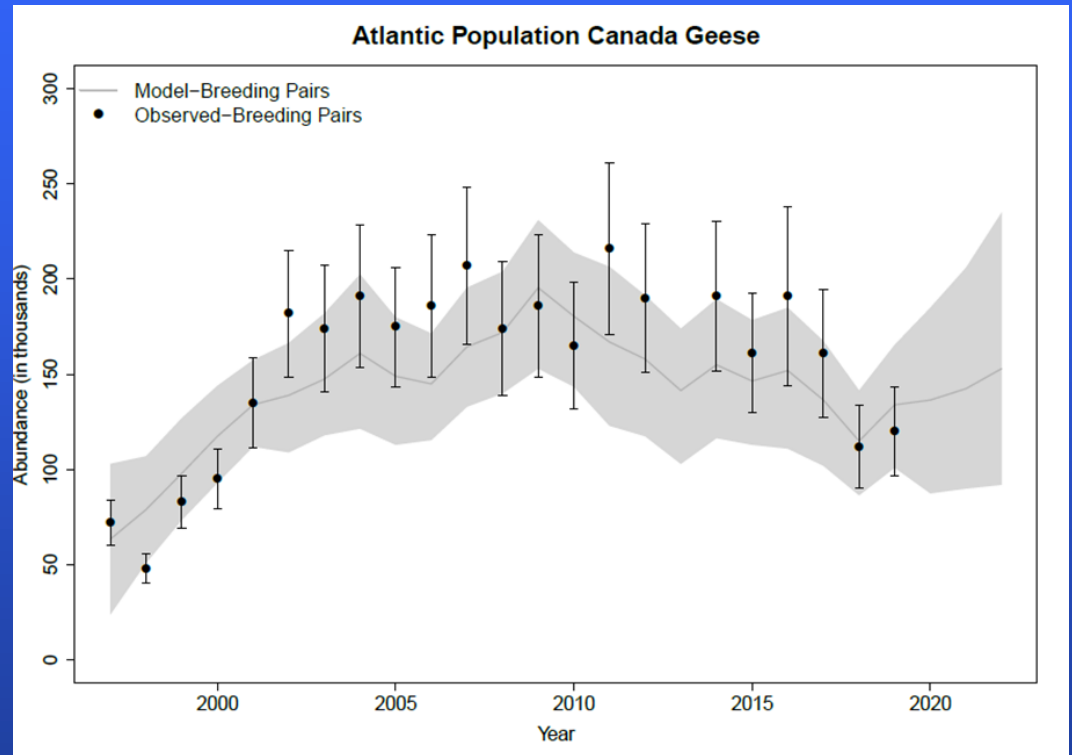


Metrics of New AP Harvest Strategy

Population Thresholds (Breeding Pairs)	Harvest Package	Target Adult Harvest Rate	Packages for Chesapeake Region AP Areas	Packages for Mid-Atlantic and New England Region AP Areas
> 160,000	Liberal	7%	45 days and 2 geese/day	45 days and 3 geese/day
$\leq 160,00$ and $> 125,000$	Moderate	5%	30 days and 2 geese/day	30 days and 3 geese/day
$\leq 125,000$ and $\geq 60,000$	Restrictive	3%	30 days and 1 goose/day	30 days and 1 goose/day
< 60,000	Closed	0%	Closed	Closed

2022-23 AP Goose Seasons

- The IPM predicts that the population should be growing. The predicted number of breeding pairs in 2022 is about 150,000.
- Following the strategy, a moderate season can be considered.
- However, with no banding or population surveys in 2020 or 2021, there is a large degree of uncertainty in the estimates for 2022.
- Based on this, the AF Council recommended and the USFWS approved, remaining in the restrictive (30 days and 1 goose/day) package for 2022-23.

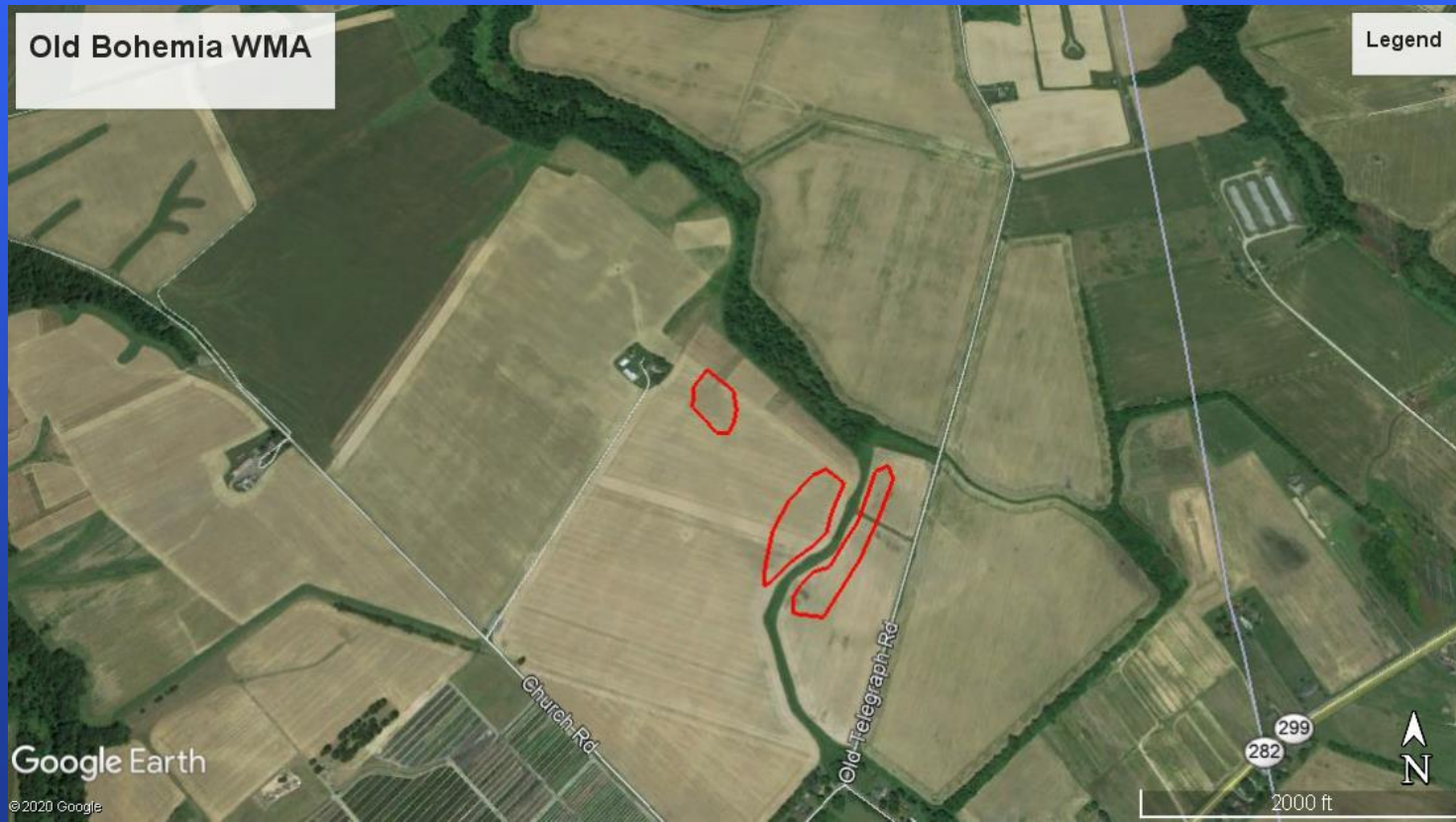


Ongoing Research Collaborations

- SE regional wood duck fecundity project
- Atlantic Flyway mallard telemetry project
- Atlantic Flyway black duck telemetry project
- MD/U. Delaware scaup telemetry project
- Canada goose telemetry study
- Woodcock telemetry project



Old Bohemia WMA, Cecil County



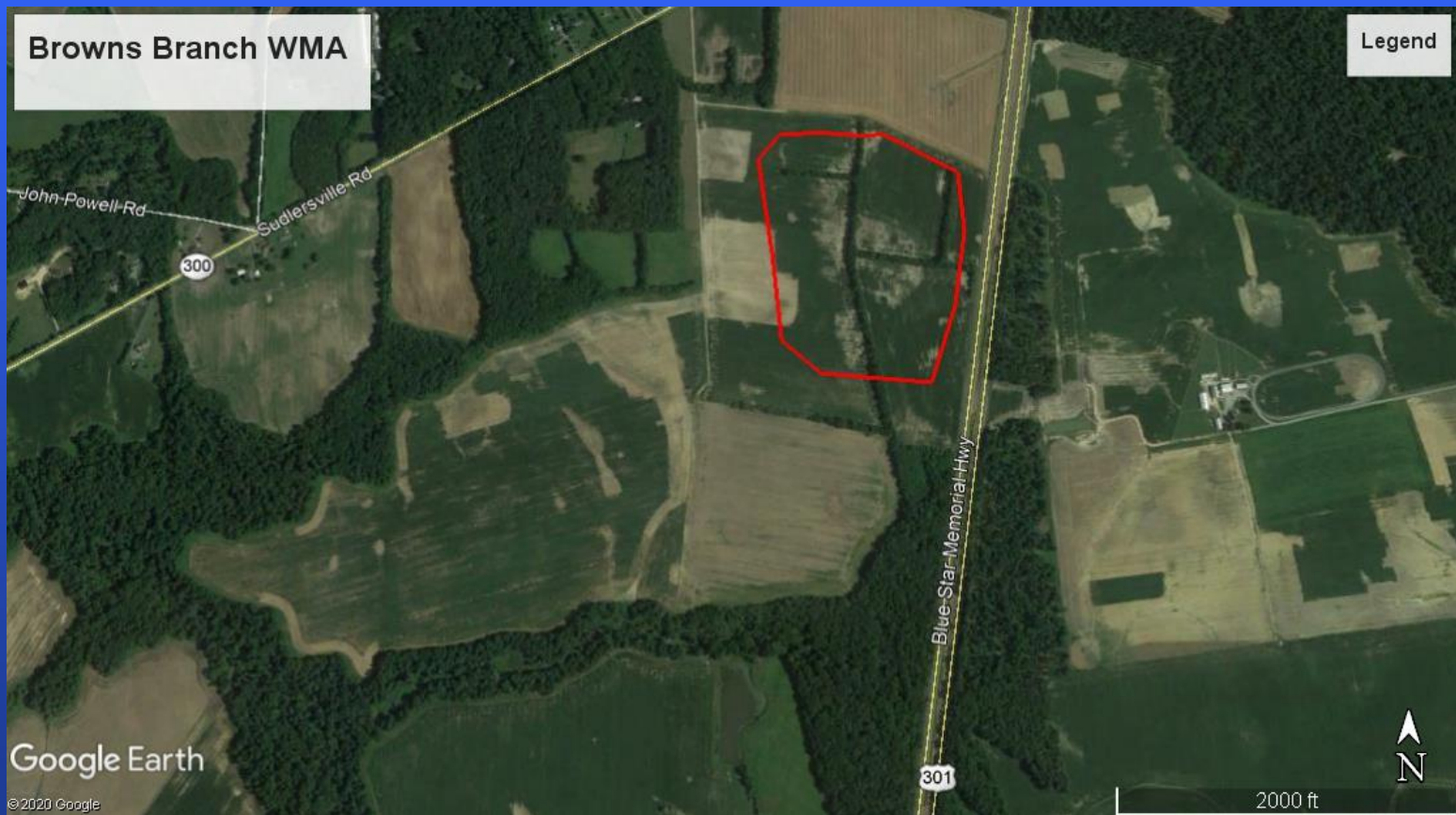
Wye Island NRMA, Queen Annes County



Wellington WMA, Somerset Co.



Browns Branch WMA, Queen Annes County



Questions?



Concept Proposals: 2022-23 and 2023-24 Hunting Seasons



Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Wildlife and Heritage Service

Regulation Cycle



- ✓ The Game Program meets and develops Management Concepts-
- September 2021.
- ✓ Presents Concepts to Wildlife Advisory Committee.
- October 20, 2021
- ✓ Presents Concepts to a meeting of Internal Stakeholders.
- December 13, 2021
- ✓ Presents Concepts to a meeting of External Stakeholders.
- January 11, 2022
- ✓ Concepts are refined further and developed into Proposals and are placed online for public comment.
- February 2022
- ✓ Comment period closes and Proposals are finalized and presented to the Wildlife Advisory Commission.
- March 16, 2022
- ✓ Final Proposals are forwarded to the Maryland Register for additional comment and regulations become final.

REVIEW INPUT AND ADD/DROP/MODIFY AT EVERY STEP

Bobwhite Quail

Concept Proposal: Shorten the season in the Eastern zone (private lands) by one month so that the season would end on January 15.

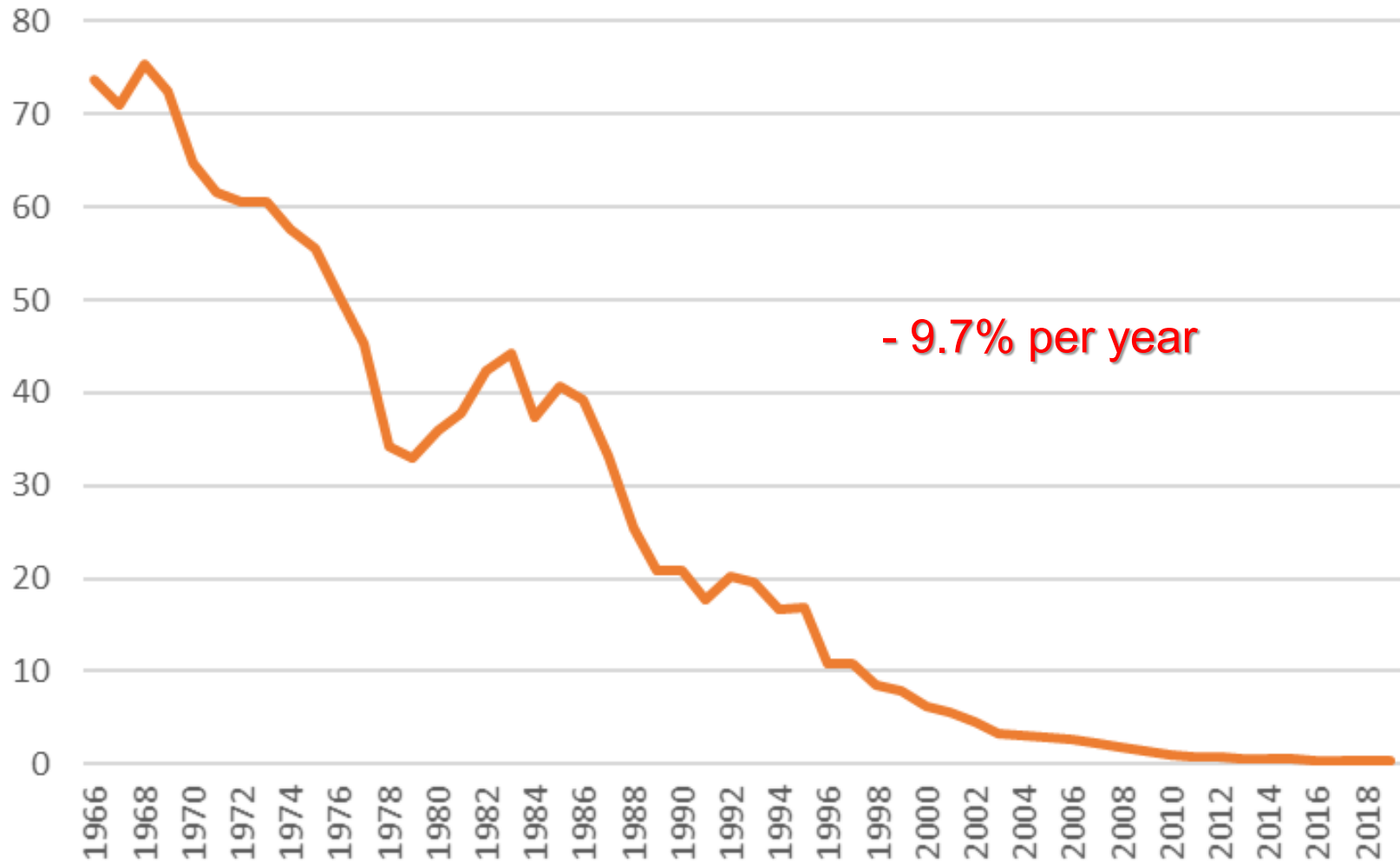
RATIONALE:

- Quail populations have declined more than any other bird in MD
- Hunting is not thought to be a primary factor, but excessive harvest may limit populations.
- This change will:
 1. Minimize the possibility that hunting is impacting declining populations, and
 2. Simplify regulations by merging regions (Eastern and Western zones will end on same day)



Bobwhite Quail

Breeding Bird Survey - MD Bobwhite Index



Bobwhite Quail

Concept Proposal: Close season on public hunting lands east of the Susquehanna River until populations improve.

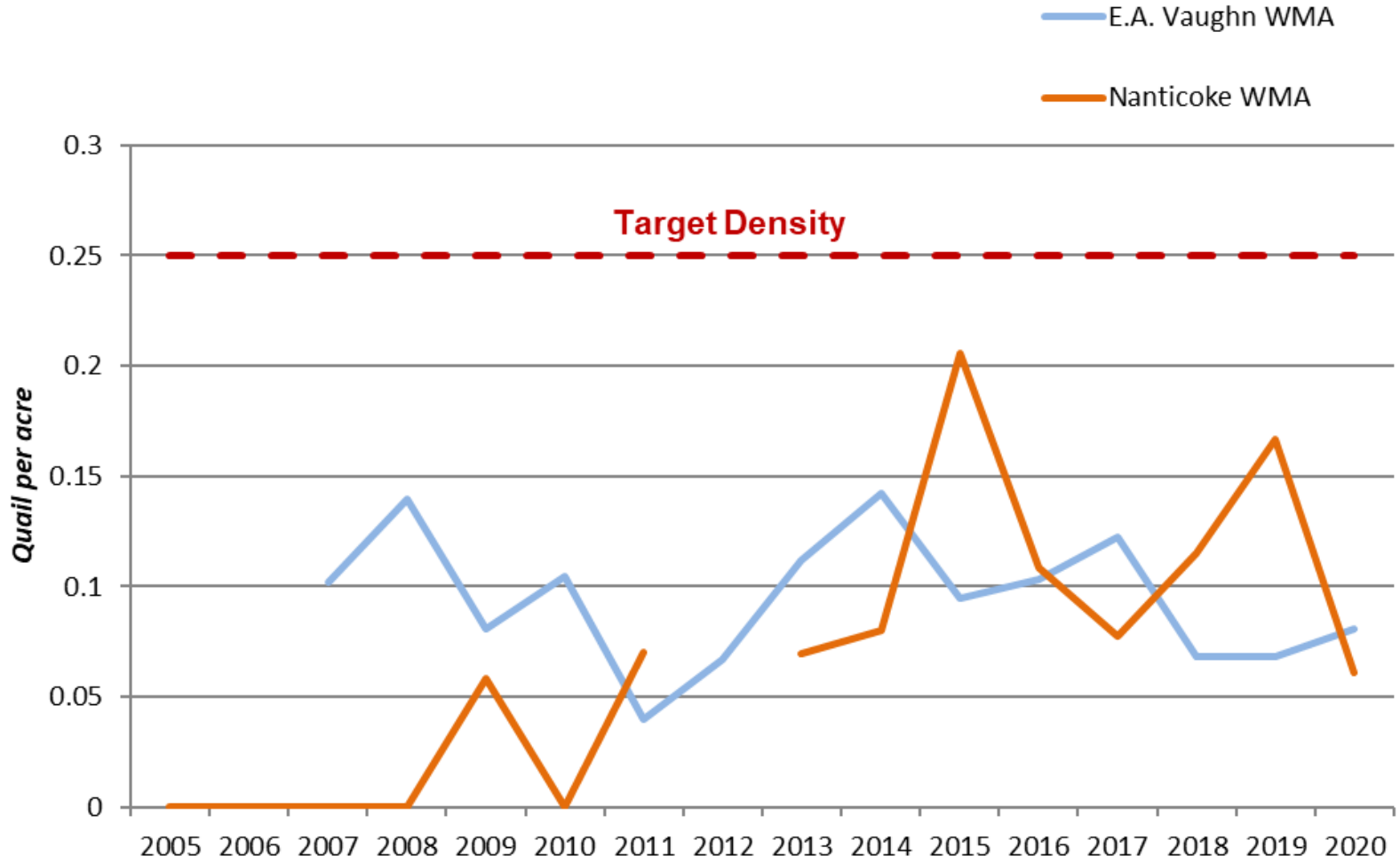
RATIONALE:

- Intensive habitat management is being conducted on some WMAs with varying levels of success.
- But even on these well-managed areas, populations are below target levels.
- These changes will conserve quail on public lands where restoration efforts are being conducted.
- If populations recover, these areas can be used as a source to translocate to other properties.
- Limited hunting consistent with population status would be retained as an option.



Bobwhite Quail

Estimated Quail Density



Ruffed Grouse

Concept Proposal: Shorten the season by one month so that the season would end December 31.

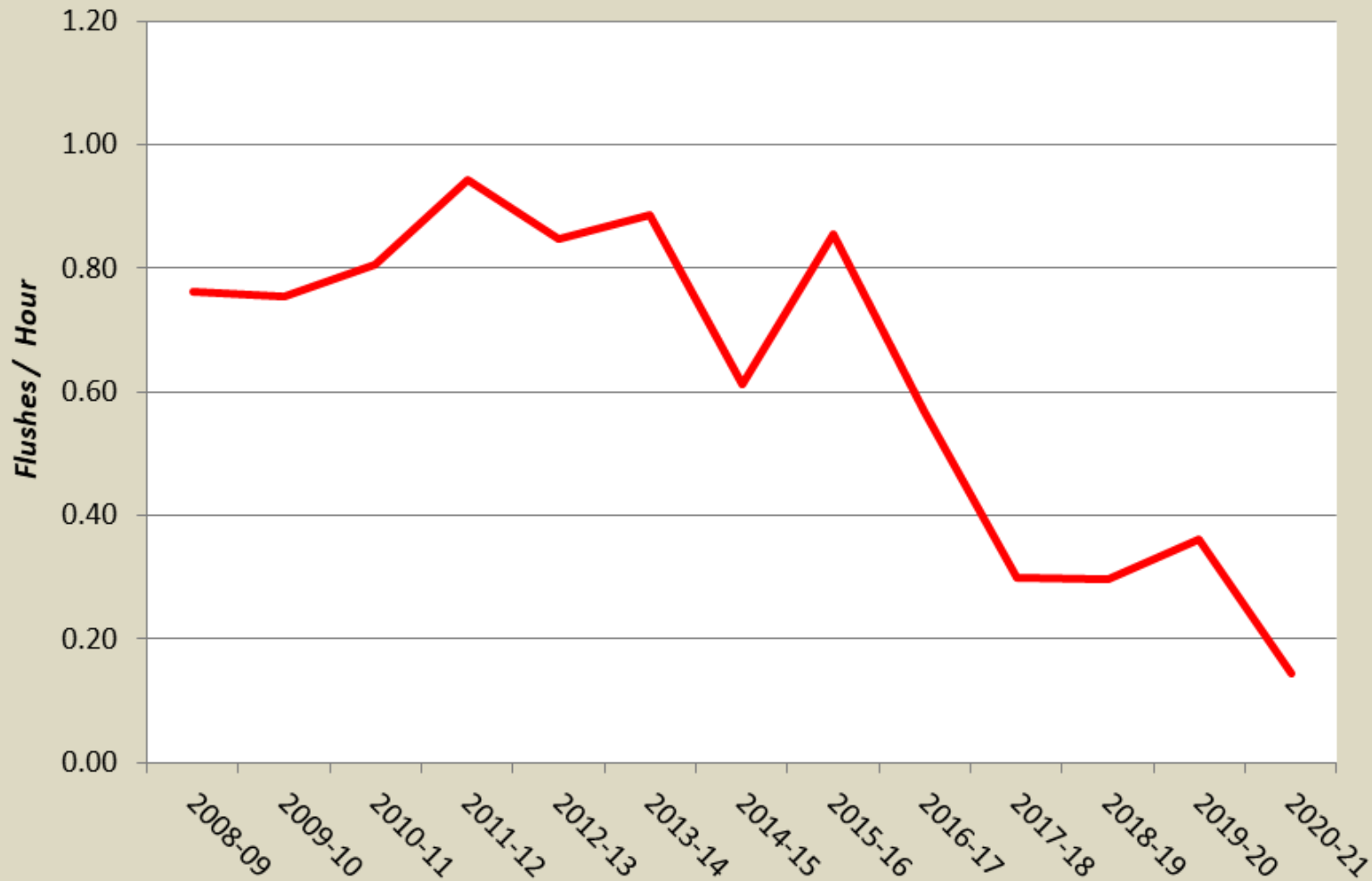
RATIONALE:

- Grouse populations have declined significantly, primarily due to loss of young forest habitat and West Nile Virus.
- Hunting is not thought to be a primary factor, but late season hunting may be detrimental to breeding populations.
- This change would minimize the possibility that hunting is negatively impacting declining populations.



Ruffed Grouse

Ruffed Grouse Cooperator Survey - Flushes per Hour Hunted



Upland Game Bird



Questions

Concept Proposal: Add an additional day to the established antlerless white-tailed deer firearm season in Region A on private and public lands.

We are proposing two options for consideration. The actual day for this expansion will be finalized after WAC, stakeholder, and public input is received. The options being considered are:

- The second Saturday of the two-week season on private and public lands; or
- The last Thursday of the two-week season on private land and the last Friday of the two-week season on public land.

Region A Firearm Season

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						27 Antlered
				Thanksgiving		
28 Antlered	29 Antlered	30 Antlered	1 Antlered	2 Antlered	3 Antlered	4 Antlered
5 Antlered	6 Antlered	7 Antlered	8 Antlered	9 Antlered	10 Antlerless Private Lands Only	11 Antlerless Private & Public Lands

Option A

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				Thanksgiving		27 Antlered
28 Antlered	29 Antlered	30 Antlered	1 Antlered	2 Antlered	3 Antlered	4 Antlerless Private & Public Lands
5 Antlered	6 Antlered	7 Antlered	8 Antlered	9 Antlered	10 Antlerless Private Lands Only	11 Antlerless Private & Public Lands

Option B

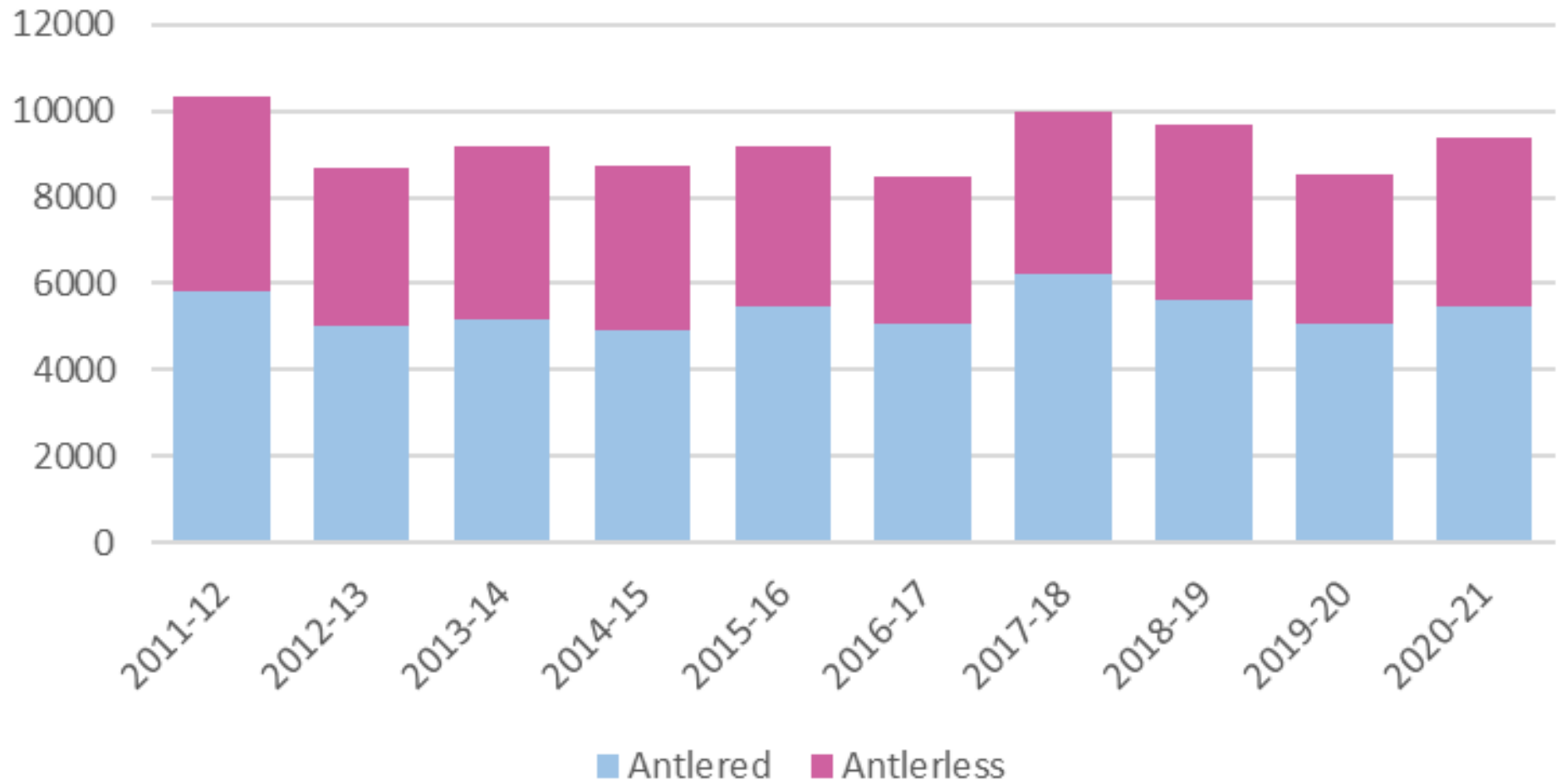
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						27 Antlered
				Thanksgiving		
28 Antlered	29 Antlered	30 Antlered	1 Antlered	2 Antlered	3 Antlered	4 Antlered
5 Antlered	6 Antlered	7 Antlered	8 Antlered	9 Antlerless Private Lands Only	10 Antlerless Private & Public Lands	11 Antlerless Private & Public Lands

Adding an additional antlerless day in Region A

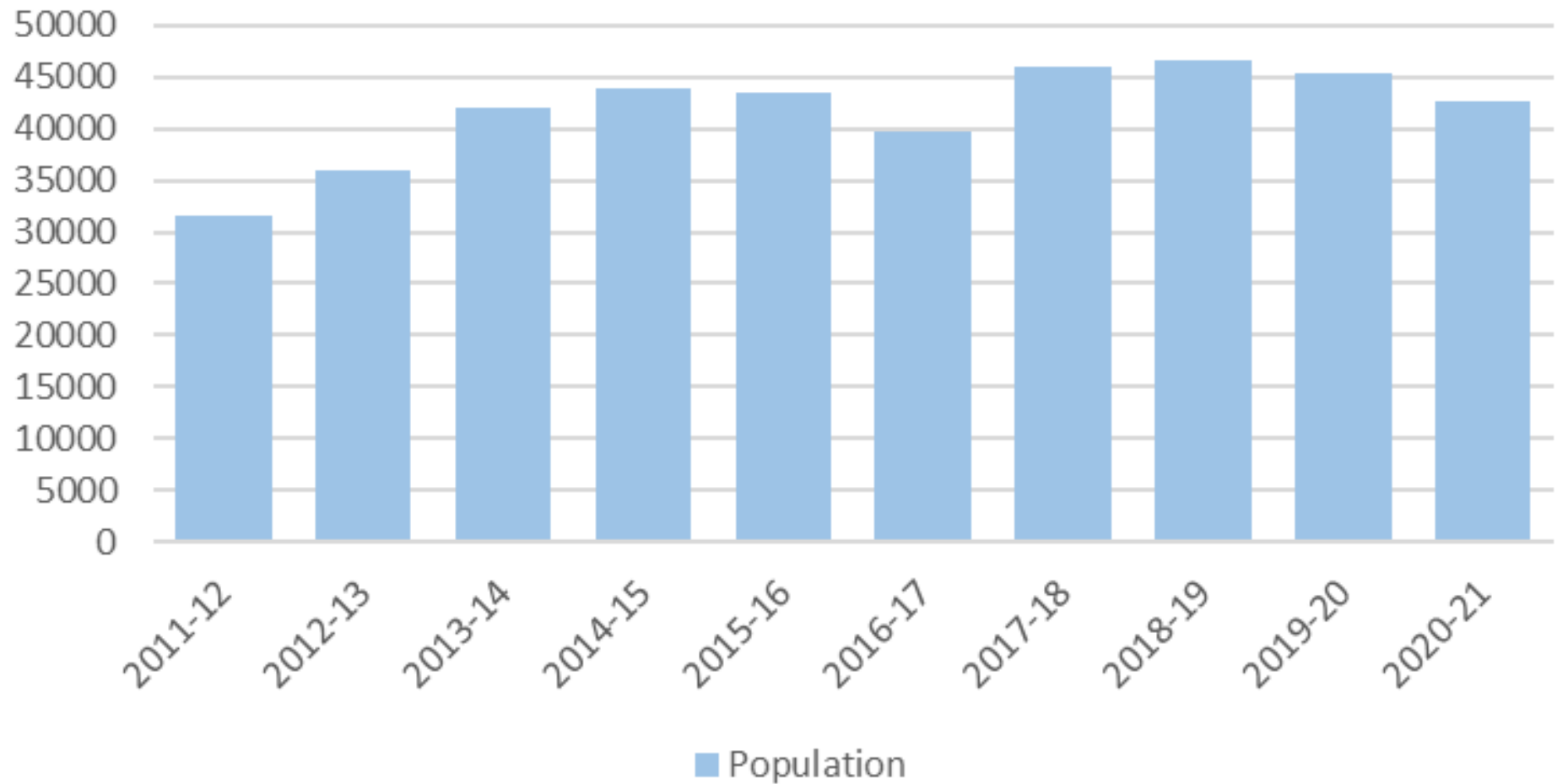
RATIONALE:

- Hunters commonly request additional antlerless hunting opportunities in Region A.
- Deer damage to agricultural crops continues to be a concern for local farmers.
- The Region A deer population remains healthy and can sustain the added opportunity.
- Adding a day reduces the likelihood a weather event will prevent hunters from pursuing antlerless deer during the firearm season.
- Note: The bag limit will not change.

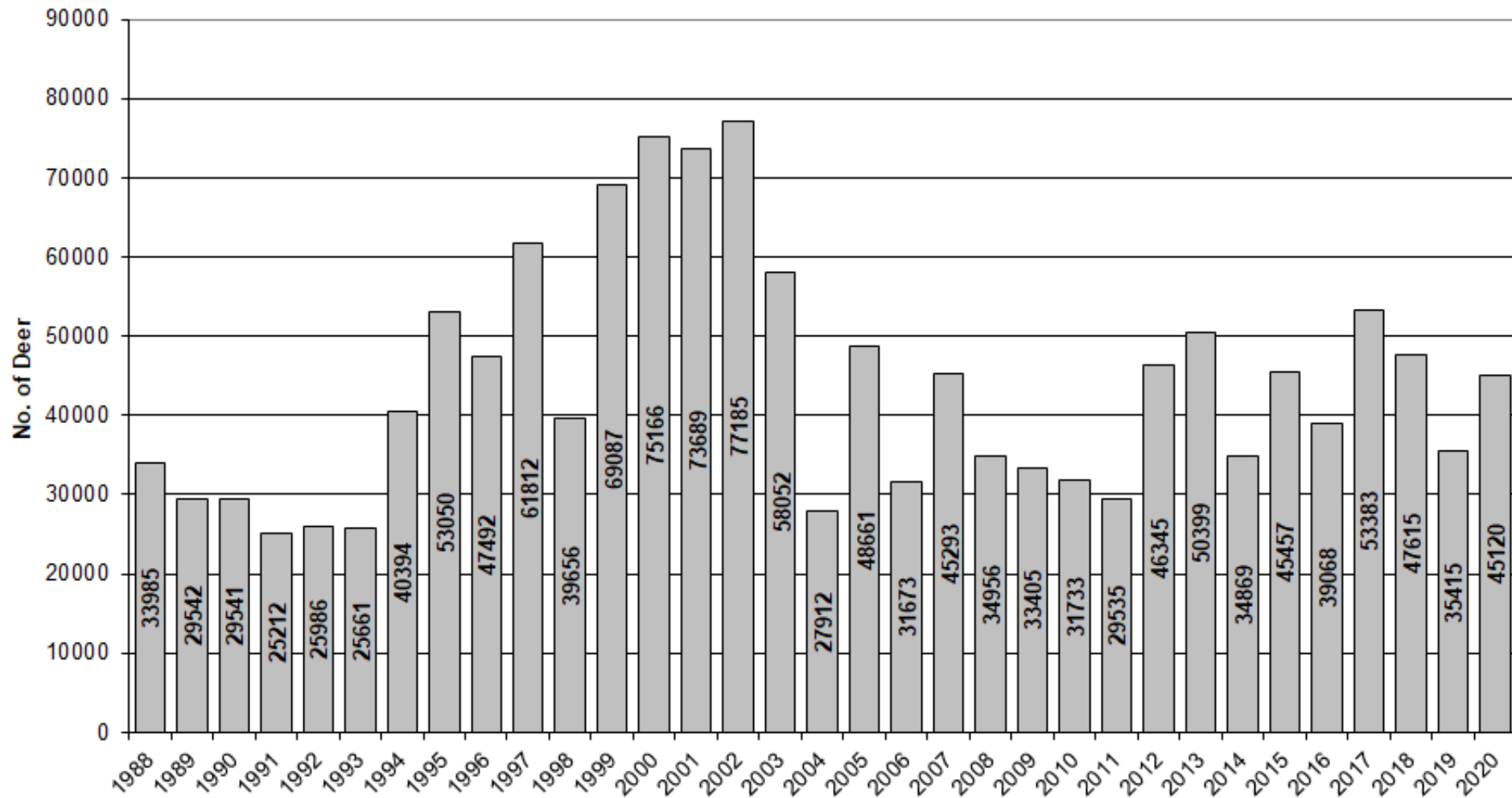
Region A Deer Harvest



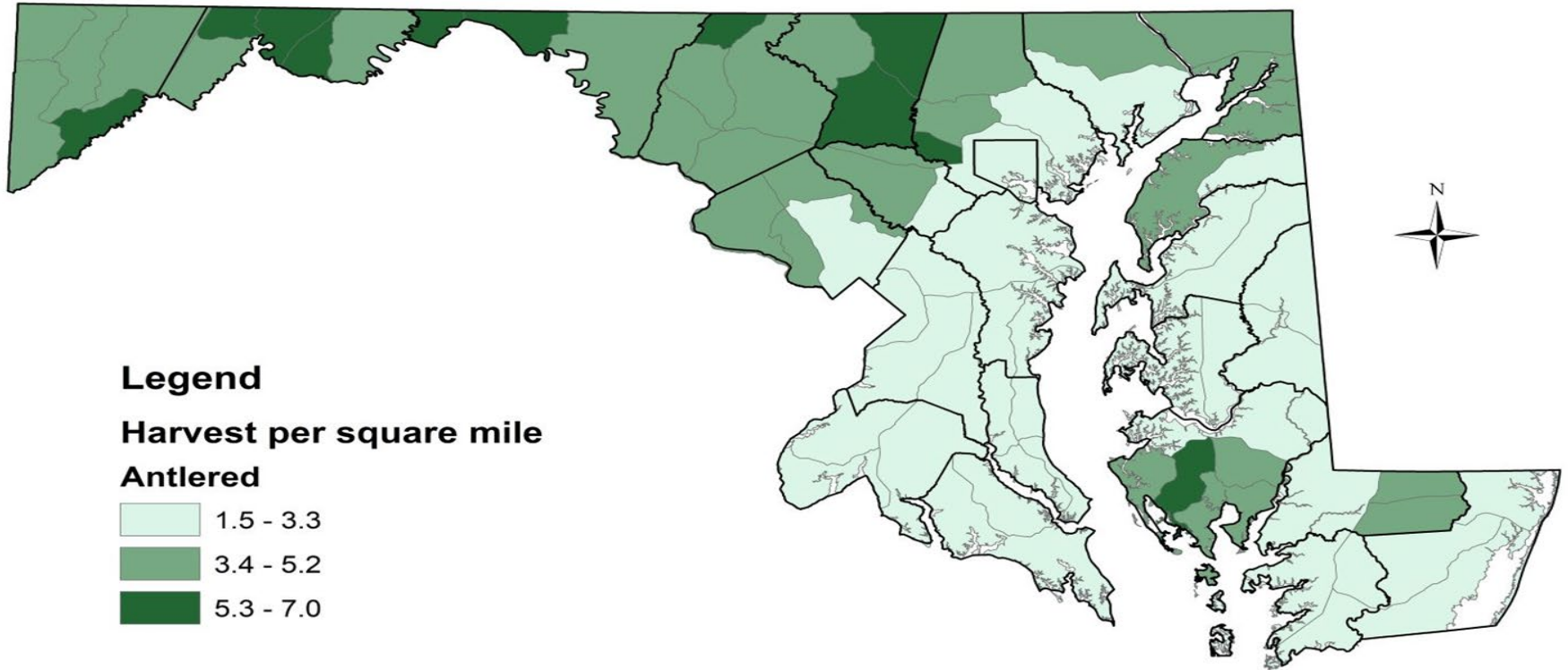
Region A Estimated Deer Population Size



Garrett & Allegany County White-tailed Deer Population Estimate, 1988 - 2020



2020-2021 Antlered Deer Harvest Per Square Mile of Deer Habitat



0 10 20 40 60 80 Miles



Concept Proposal: Increase black bear hunting opportunity by extending the existing season.

The days being considered for this expansion will be finalized after WAC, stakeholder, and public input is received. The options being considered are:

- The Saturday and Sunday prior to the current Monday opener in October; or
- The Saturday at the end of the current Monday-Friday October season; or
- The 2nd week of the two-week firearm season (Monday-Saturday).

October 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 Bear	26 Bear	27 Bear	28 Bear	29 Bear	30
31						

Option A

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 Either Sex Muzzleloader	22 Either Sex Muzzleloader	23 Either Sex Muzzleloader Bear
24 Bear	25 Bear	26 Bear	27 Bear	28 Bear	29 Bear	30
31						

Option B

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 Bear	26 Bear	27 Bear	28 Bear	29 Bear	30 Fall Turkey Bear
31						

Option C

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						27
				Thanksgiving		
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	Bear	Bear	Bear	Bear	Bear	Bear

Adding additional days to the black bear season

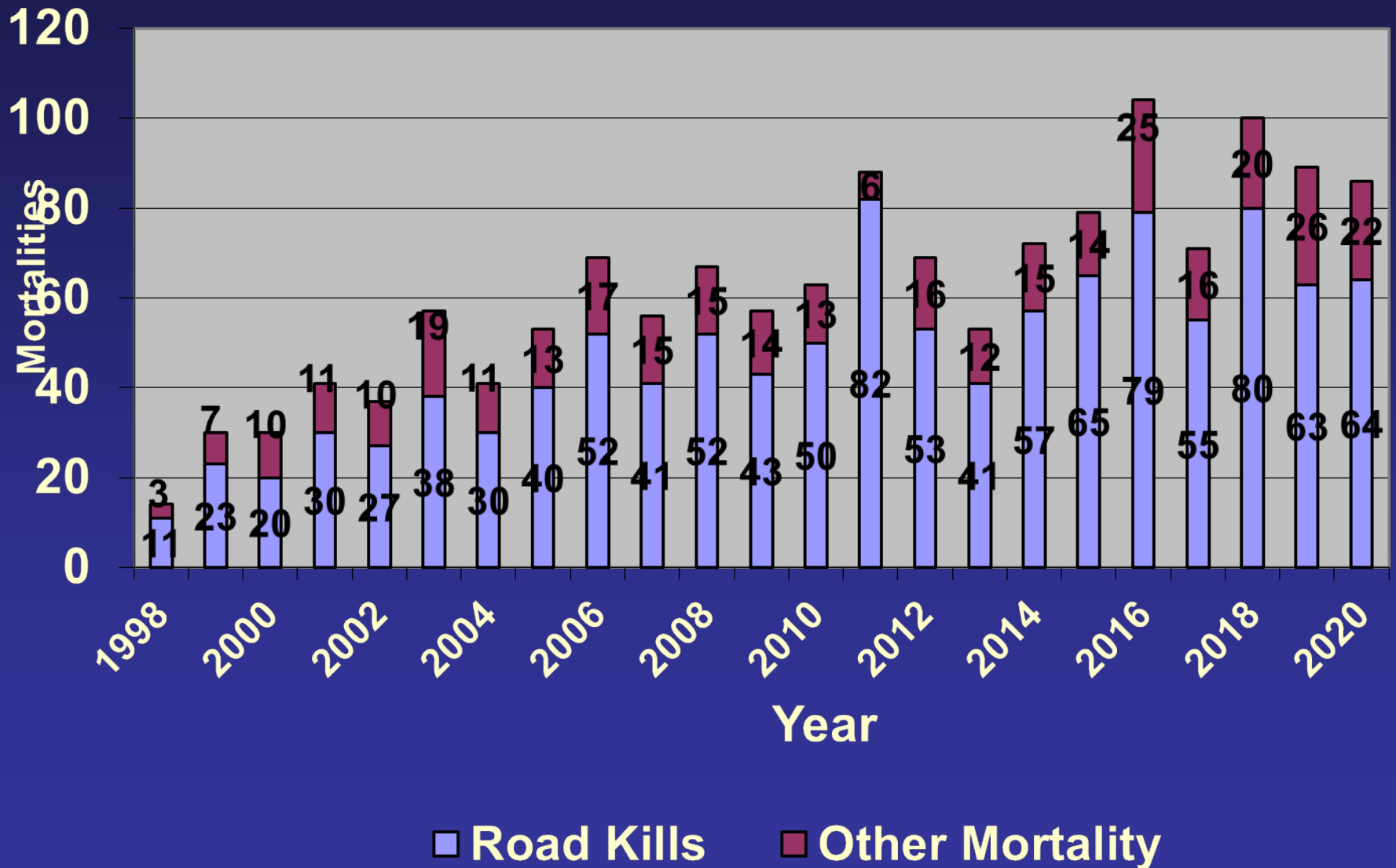
RATIONALE:

- Hunters request weekend days to hunt black bears, and week days-only limit many hunters to when they can hunt.
- Bear damage to agricultural crops continues to be a concern for local farmers.
- The bear population remains healthy and can sustain the added opportunity (November season would be largely boars).
- Adding days reduces the likelihood a weather event will prevent hunters from pursuing bears during the season.
- Note: The bag limit and who may hunt will not change with the added opportunity.

Hunt By The Numbers (2014 – 2020)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
No. Permits	450	500	750	750	800	800	950
No. Applicants	3,631	4,300	5,547	5,453	5,491	5,204	5,716
Bear Harvest	69	95	167	131	135	145	117
GA CO Harvest	57	80	126	104	93	95	83
AL CO Harvest	12	15	30	23	31	31	23
WA CO Harvest	N/A	N/A	8	2	9	11	8
FR CO Harvest	N/A	N/A	3	2	2	8	3
Hunter Success	6.5%	8.1%	9.8%	7.8%	6.5%	7.8%	4.4%

Nonseasonal Black Bear Mortality (1998-2020)



Whitetail & Sika Deer

Concept Proposal: Extend the time period to use a Deer Cooperator Permit (non-safety permit) from February 1 – March 31 to February 1 – July 31.

RATIONALE:

- Individuals/areas using DCPs continue to deal with elevated deer numbers and resulting damage.
- Deer damage to agricultural crops continues to be a significant concern for farmers.
- Limiting DCPs to February-March does not allow farmers to target deer actively destroying crops during the growing season.
- DCP holders sometimes do not have enough time in February-March to address all areas they need to remove deer from.

Whitetail & Sika Deer



MD Outdoor Recreation Economic Commission (MORE) Ambassador Proposals:

- **Extend legal shooting hours for deer archery season to 9pm or 10pm (law change).**
- **Institute an 8-point antler restriction on trophy bucks.**
- **Institute a 50-yard safety zone for archery hunting in all counties (law change).**

WAC Item for Consideration: Add a third bear management option for farmers experiencing bear damage so that they could receive an Agricultural Bear Crop Damage Permit to use when they are experiencing damage (often outside of the bear hunting season).

RATIONALE:

- Currently farmers experiencing agricultural damage due to black bears may choose to either receive compensation under the Black Bear Compensation Program or receive an Agricultural Bear Hunting Permit which is valid during the established bear hunting season.
- A third option would make available a permit which would be valid for two weeks from the time they report the damage.
- Permits would be offered from September through December.
- Farmers would only be eligible for one of the three options in a given year.
- Farmers would keep and use any bears harvested.

Questions