



ARCHER SURVEY 2014 REPORT



During the past 23 years, Illinois bowhunters have helped the Department of Natural Resources by reporting types and numbers of animals observed while hunting. This information is used to detect major changes in wildlife populations over time based on a “sighting index” (number of sightings per 1,000 hours of field time).

During 2014, 1,002 volunteers reported 50,492 hours of wildlife observations. Changes in sighting indices from 2013 to 2014 were nominal for all species tracked by archers. Long-term (1992-2014) increases in sighting indices occurred for bobcat, coyote, white-tailed deer, squirrel, and wild turkey (Table 1). Long-term decreases occurred for red fox and gray fox.

Table1. Trends in statewide Archery Deer Hunter Survey sighting index in Illinois, 1992-2014, using hunter-location method of analysis.

Year	Species							
	Bobcat	Coyote	Deer	Gray fox	Raccoon	Red fox	Squirrel	Turkey
1992 (1,239) ^a	0.53	27.09	655.29	2.50	30.14	9.25	972.66	93.41
1993 (2,877)	0.65	29.68	611.17	1.90	49.35	8.06	1017.30	123.85
1994 (1,814)	0.40	28.44	586.54	1.68	46.74	5.67	1089.03	146.25
1995 (2,278)	0.81	30.57	696.88	1.61	52.53	6.64	995.29	138.17
1996 (1,458)	0.80	27.50	662.87	1.18	45.73	4.68	938.52	144.45
1997 (1,411)	1.34	26.48	661.98	0.64	47.16	5.45	981.15	139.24
1998 (2,052)	1.10	30.82	736.18	0.80	49.18	6.02	928.99	201.51
1999 (1,931)	1.37	32.26	729.16	1.39	63.02	3.51	988.98	241.48
2000 (1,854)	1.10	30.56	853.55	0.68	65.90	4.11	1087.00	272.55
2001 (1,366)	1.57	32.35	918.72	0.76	66.64	4.42	1266.34	311.16
2002 (1,780)	2.00	34.47	995.25	0.60	55.07	3.74	1081.09	348.07
2003 (1,569)	2.10	29.75	1033.49	0.81	65.72	3.53	1177.41	308.02
2004 (1,216)	1.31	35.93	1143.40	0.57	64.12	3.53	1219.52	344.96
2005 (1,544)	3.69	32.01	1145.71	0.62	53.14	3.62	1045.07	280.14
2006 (791)	3.07	35.46	1104.14	0.47	70.32	3.86	1255.03	342.55
2007 (1,075)	2.89	47.58	1104.24	0.82	60.69	3.96	1076.21	332.91
2008 (649)	3.36	32.09	930.51	0.33	60.43	2.70	1007.79	267.49
2009 (1,067)	2.80	27.41	815.75	0.36	52.25	4.05	1098.01	287.15
2010 (700)	3.84	40.95	915.54	1.04	91.86	3.20	1223.82	279.73
2011 (936)	4.11	32.54	856.17	1.26	- ^b	3.80	1225.71	273.90
2012 (896)	5.89	43.60	940.70	0.71	- ^b	4.12	1173.81	279.12
2013 (886)	5.88	31.23	764.46	0.36	- ^b	2.29	1135.46	225.29
2014 (1,002)	5.59	34.58	802.58	0.13	- ^b	3.86	1223.33	253.62

^a Number of observers in parentheses following year.

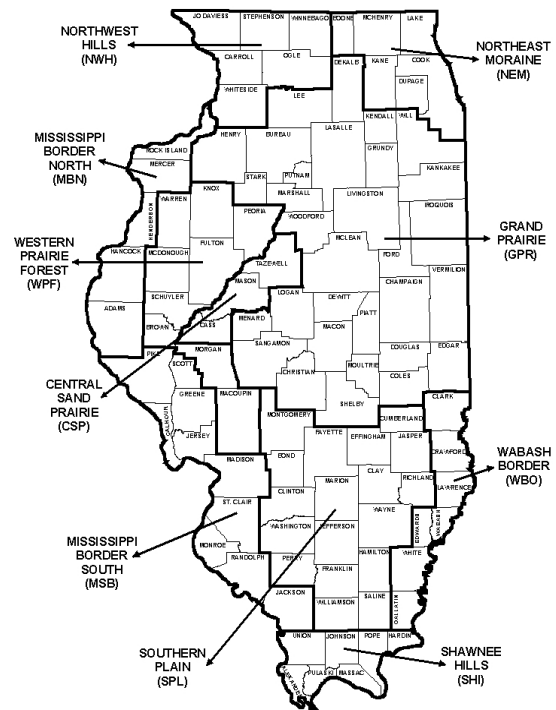
^b Raccoon dropped from survey in 2011.

Archers harvested 56,143 deer during the 2014-15 season, down slightly from 2013-14 (57,364). The top 5 counties were Pike (2,178), Fulton (1,558), Jefferson (1,375), Adams (1,215) and JoDaviess (1,130). Archery accounted for 38% of deer harvested by all methods during 2014-15. Combined harvest was 145,720 deer.

Figure 1. Locations and names of Illinois wildlife management units.

Table 2. Numbers of hunter locations and deer seen per 1,000 hours for the 2014 Archery Deer Hunter Survey using hunter-location method of analysis.

Sample area	Number of hunter locations	Deer seen per 1,000 hours
Central sand prairie	48	601
Grand prairie	418	704
Mississippi border (N)	46	856
Mississippi border (S)	185	830
Northeast moraine	48	475
Northwest hills	101	716
Shawnee hills	55	900
Southern plain	304	843
Wabash border	47	1168
Western prairie forest	174	757
Statewide	1,426	803



Hunters’ wildlife observations are influenced by habitat characteristics. For example, hunters in heavily forested areas of the Shawnee Hills might not detect deer as easily as hunters in agricultural areas of the Grand Prairie. Other factors that affect sighting indices include weather, timing of the crop harvest, food supplies and the number of hunters participating in the survey.

Differences in sighting rates among wildlife management units (Table 2) must be interpreted cautiously, especially for a particular year or a particular area. Variations in weather, food supplies and other factors tend to cancel each other out over time, providing a reliable indicator of long-term population trends. This is the best and most important use of data from the survey.

We thank all bowhunters who participated in 2014 and ask that they consider continuing their participation in 2015. If you haven’t had an opportunity to help collect data for the Archer Survey, we ask that you strongly consider doing so. Information provided by the Archer Survey becomes more reliable as the number of observers increases. Thanks again, and good hunting!

For more information about past deer seasons and harvest levels, visit:
<http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/deer/Pages/AnnualDeerHarvestReports.aspx>