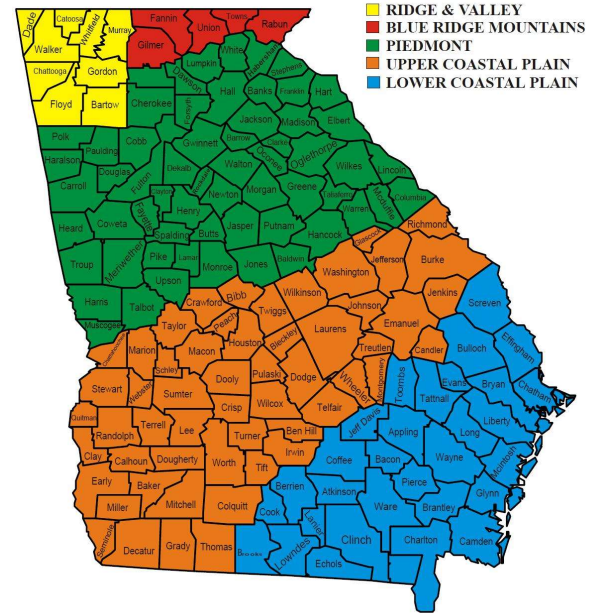


Deer Program Annual Highlights

FY 2020–2021

Overview

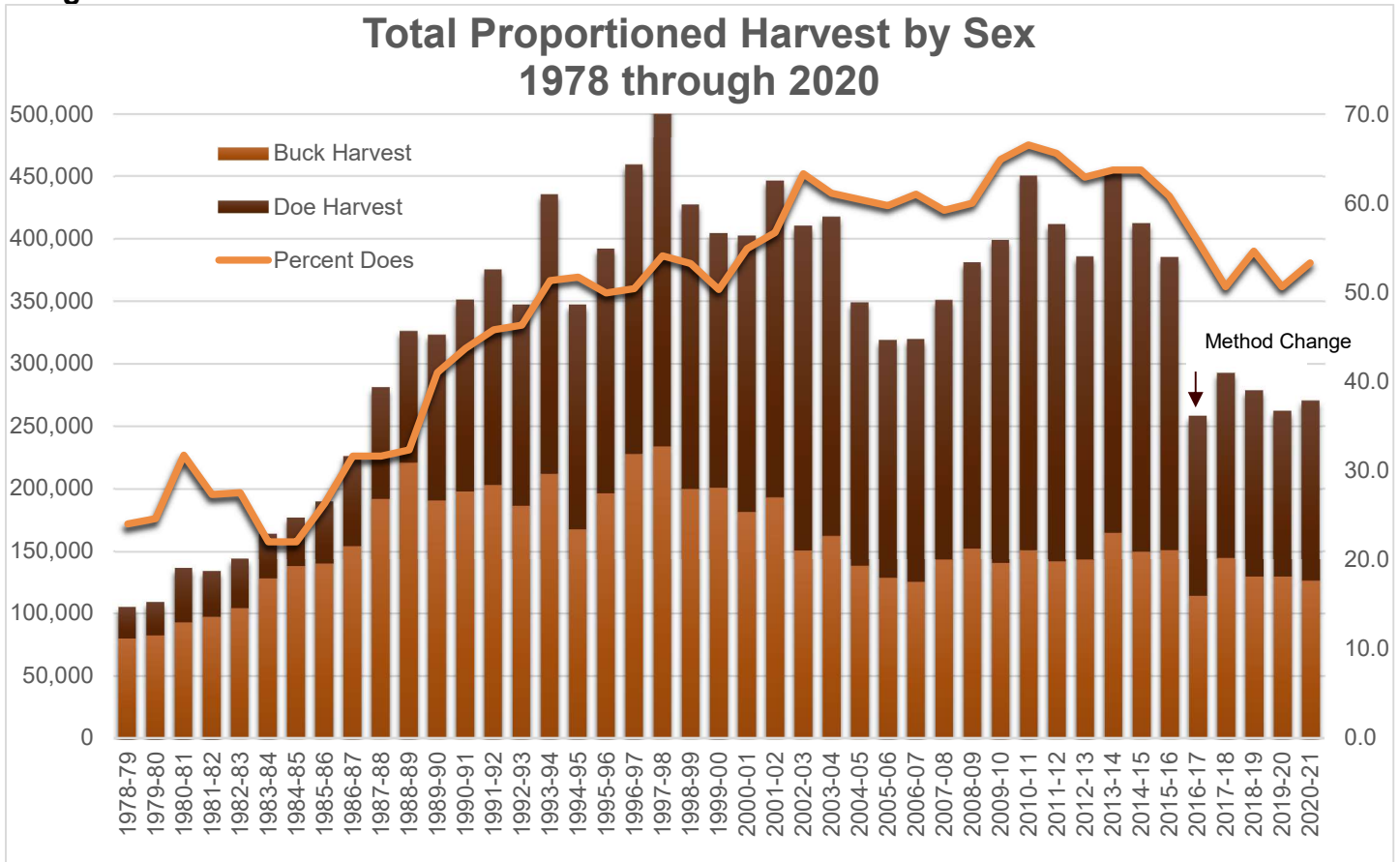
The 2020-21 deer season was excellent with 209,124 deer hunters taking 270,272 deer, slightly more than 2019-20. Of all deer hunters, 187,517 hunted with firearms (89.7%), 88,345 (42.3%) hunted with archery equipment, and 26,942 (12.9%) hunted with muzzleloaders. Harvest estimates are determined through the Game Check harvest reporting system and adjusted for reporting rates from an annual telephone survey of active deer hunters. Hunter satisfaction for the 2020-21 deer season was excellent with 91% of survey respondents rating their season as satisfactory, good, or excellent. Fawn recruitment rates increased from last year, but were still lower than the previous 5-year average. Georgia's new Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) is progressing well with 87 cooperators managing over 120,000 acres of land. Program participants receive detailed habitat and herd management plans, harvest data analysis, and assistance with camera surveys.



2020-21 Deer Harvest Summary

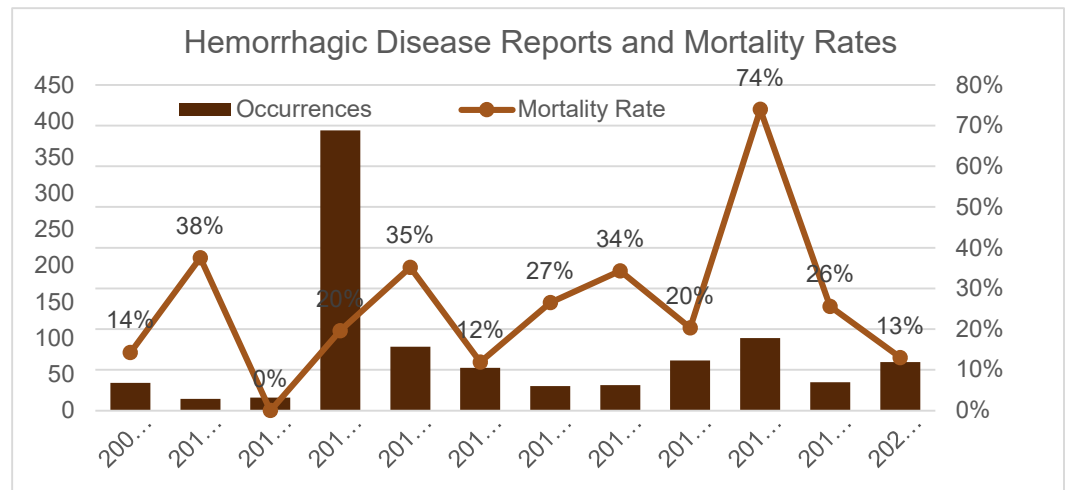
Physiographic Region		Archery	Muzzleloader	Firearm
Blue Ridge Mountain	Buck	427	67	2,454
	Doe	833	114	428
Ridge and Valley	Buck	1,167	149	9,784
	Doe	2,011	195	6,934
Piedmont	Buck	8,864	1,008	44,483
	Doe	14,604	1,514	41,955
Upper Coastal Plain	Buck	2,857	669	36,715
	Doe	6,152	1,041	46,636
Lower Coastal Plain	Buck	1,495	476	15,549
	Doe	2,765	457	18,318
Total		41,175	5,691	223,255
			Statewide Total	270,121

Long-term Harvest



Disease

Georgia is fortunate to have a strong herd immunity to hemorrhagic disease, so outbreaks capable of causing regional population declines are rare. 2020 had a typical number of occurrences and typical mortality rate.

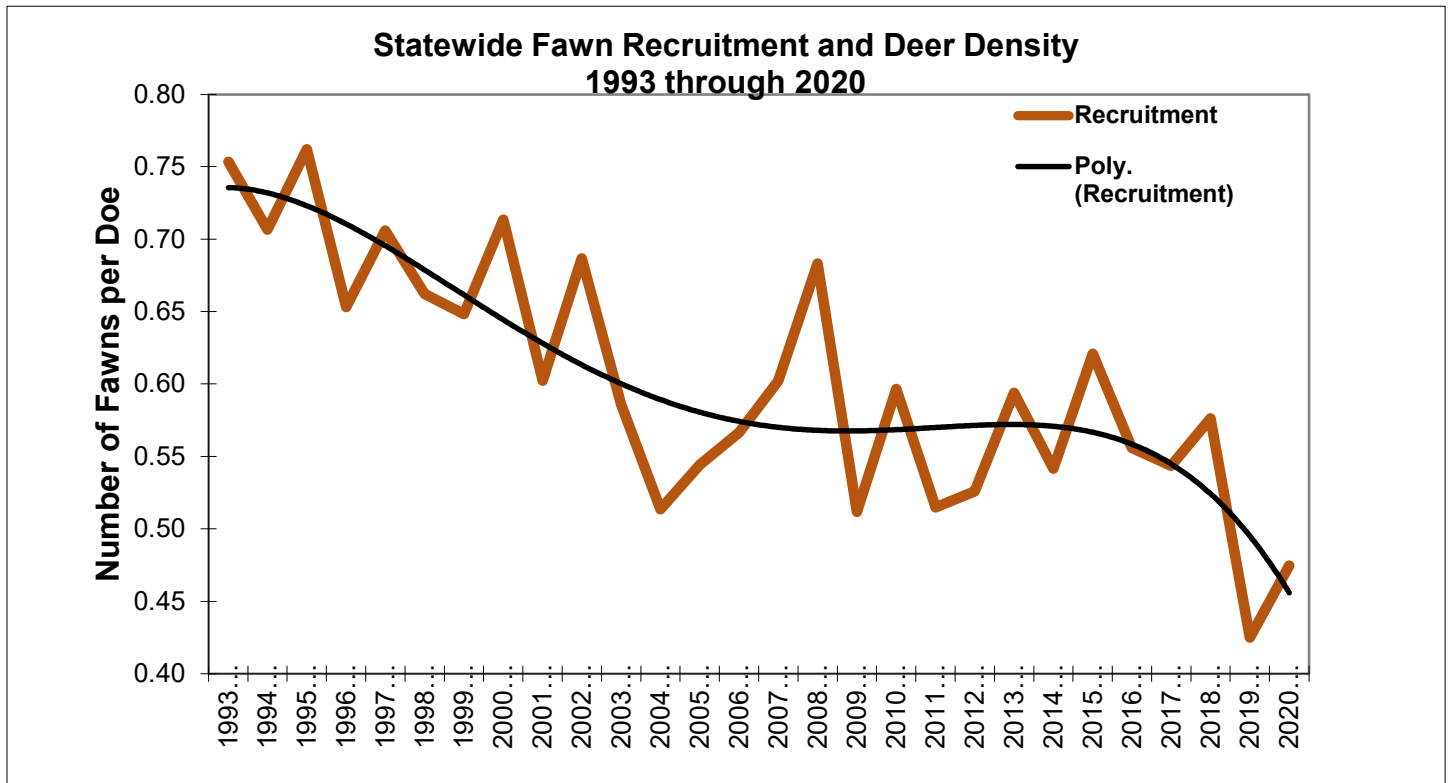


Chronic Wasting Disease has not been found in

Georgia to date, however recent discoveries in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee have increased our level of concern. We are continually monitoring the population and adapt our disease surveillance strategy whenever new scientific information becomes available. WRD staff collected 1,357 samples in 2020-21.

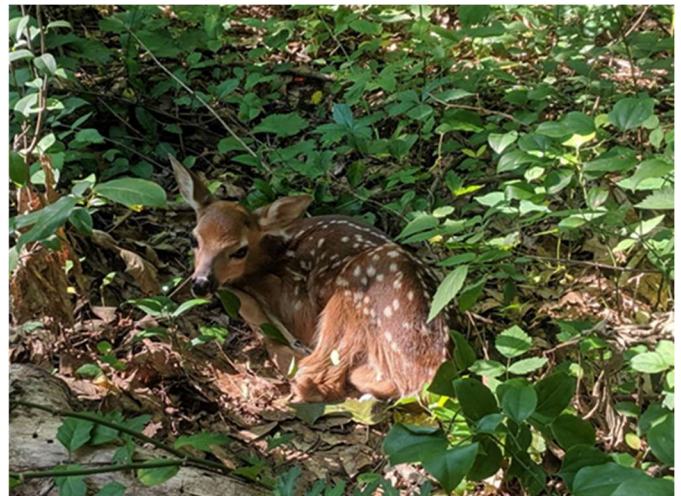
Fawn Recruitment

Fawn recruitment is the ratio of fawns per adult doe that survive to deer season, which is one of the most important measures of productivity of the deer population. Fawn recruitment has been relatively stable over the last decade with the exception of the last 2 years. We will continue to closely monitor fawn recruitment and other metrics for assessing herd reproduction.



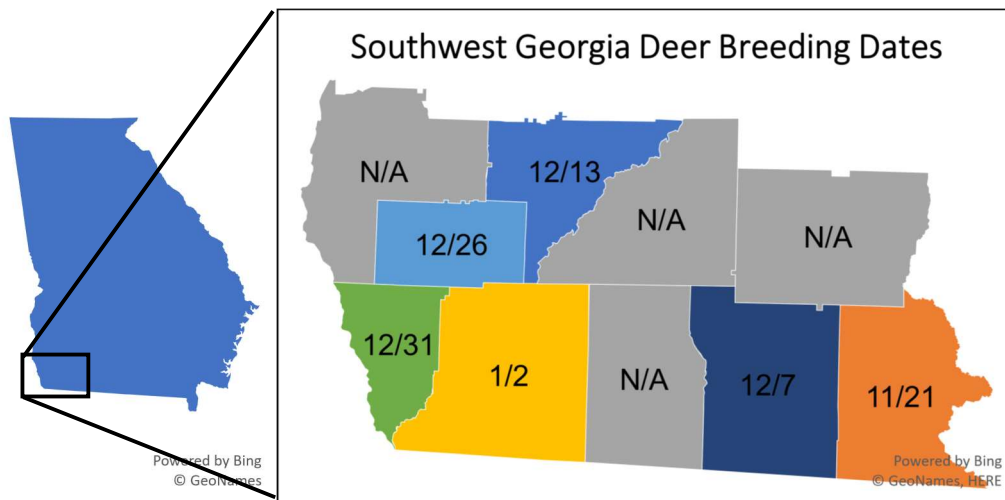
Research

As a result of significant declines in the deer population on the Chattahoochee National Forest and associated WMAs, a fawn mortality study was launched in 2017. Over the course of the project 70 fawns were captured, radio-collared, and monitored for mortality. Fawn survival probability was determined to be 16.8% (very low) and predation by coyotes and bears was the leading cause of death. The next phase of this study may include some experimental deer stocking and predator reduction.



Research

Deep southwest Georgia is locally known for having one of the latest peak rut periods in the state, however the sample size of conception dates is inadequate to pinpoint peak times. WRD biologist began working with private landowners in February of 2020 to collect fetal conception dates in a 10-county area in the southwestern corner of the state. To date landowner cooperators have collected 150 deer on the project. The preliminary results shown below may change as sample size increases.



Average peak breeding dates for white-tailed deer by county in Southwest Georgia, 2019-2021. Data for counties with a sample size <5 are not included.

Deer Management Assistance Program

Georgia's DMAP is administered by 3 experienced wildlife biologists under guidance of the State Deer Biologist. Since the launch of the program in November of 2019, DMAP biologists have provided technical guidance to 200 customers with a total impacted land area of 231,000 acres. Of those, 87 customers have enrolled their private property or hunting club in DMAP with a total 123,211 acres in the program. There are 4 different levels of the program to accommodate a wide range of acreages. Georgia's DMAP was designed to provide assistance to everyone regardless of property size.

A recent law change granted more antlerless deer harvest flexibility to DMAP biologists as they develop harvest prescriptions for cooperators.

