



## **DCR-DWSP Deer Harvest Summary: 2022**

The Department of Conservation, Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP) manages 140,000-acres across the Quabbin, Ware River, Wachusett and Sudbury Watersheds. Forest health and tree regeneration are important land management goals for the Division because the forest acts as a biological filter for water quality. In response to high deer densities and deer impact on forest regeneration, DWSP opened watershed lands to deer hunting to restore and maintain balance in the forested ecosystem. These deer hunts are all regulated according to the Department of Fish and Game, Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's (MassWildlife) and DWSP's rules and regulations. Changes to the deer hunts may be applied annually based on an adaptive deer management approach. A couple new changes were applied to hunts in 2022: (1) Sudbury Watershed lands required a 5-year hunting access permit (instead of one-year) and were open to all game species per MassWildlife and DWSP rules. (2) The Prescott Peninsula Zone at Quabbin was open for a 2-day controlled hunt to permitted hunters for the first time since 2017.

The following DWSP hunting zones were open in 2022:

- Quabbin: Hardwick, New Salem, and Pelham Zones (2-week shotgun season deer hunts),
- Quabbin: Prescott Zone (2-day controlled deer hunt),
- Ware River watershed lands (all seasons)
- Wachusett Reservoir Zone (deer seasons only),
- Wachusett watershed lands (outside of the Reservoir Zone; all seasons),
- Sudbury Watershed (all seasons)

View the [DWSP huntable watershed lands](#).

Harvest data were analyzed from the MassWildlife harvest database (MassFishHunt) and the DWSP online database in Smartsheet. All hunters are legally required to submit their harvest information to MassWildlife in-person at a check station or online, and DWSP also requires reporting. DWSP biologists review the data and based on information available they compile a list of confirmed and possible (unconfirmed) harvests on watershed lands. Due to the nature of the analyses performed, the 2022 DWSP harvest totals must be displayed as a range of deer harvested in each hunting zone (exception: Prescott Zone where an in-person check station was present). The harvest analysis provided the following summary (confirmed # – total possible #) for 2022:

- Hardwick: 13-23 deer
- New Salem: 15-19 deer
- Pelham: 7-14 deer
- Prescott: 47 deer
- Ware River: no data
- Wachusett Reservoir Zone: 18-28 deer
- Wachusett Watershed Lands (5-year permit): 16-110 deer
- Sudbury: 14-33 deer

In total, there were 120 confirmed harvests across all DWSP lands, and a possible total of 274. Please note that 10 harvests were counted as possible in both the Wachusett Reservoir Zone and in the Wachusett watershed lands. Because Ware River does not currently require access permits, no harvest data could be verified. **The 2022 results by DWSP hunting area are further broken down in the table on the next page.**

	Hardwick (Quab)	New Salem (Quab)	Pelham (Quab)	Prescott (Quab)	Wach Res Zone	Wach Watershed	Sudbury	Totals
WMZ	6	6	6	6	9	5, 8, 9	9, 10	-
Deer season	Shotgun (Nov 28 - Dec 10)	Shotgun (Nov 28 - Dec 10)	Shotgun (Nov 28 - Dec 10)	Two Day (Dec 7-8)	All (Oct 17 - Dec 31)	All (Oct 17 - Dec 31)	All (Oct 3 - Dec 31)*	-
DWSP permit type	1 year access	1 year access	1 year access	Two-day access	Lottery	5-year access	5-year access	-
Hunters applied (#)	618*	618*	618*	565	285*	3,303 (639 new)*	3,303 (639 new)^	4,771
Hunters selected (#)	618	618	618	391	285	3,303*	3,303^	4,597 (96.4%)
Eligible hunters (returning or attended orientation)	618/618 (100%)	618/618 (100%)	618/618 (100%)	337	252/285 (88.4%)	3303/3303 (100%)*	3303/3303 (100%)^	4510/4543 (99.3%)
Total deer taken (confirmed # - total possible)	13-23 deer	15-19 deer	7-14 deer	47 deer	18-28 deer	16-110 deer^	14-33 deer	130-264 deer
Success rate (deer taken / # hunters)	Unk	Unk	Unk	13.9%	7.1 – 11.1%	Unk	Unk	-
Size of hunt area	5,637 acres (8.8 sq. mi)	6,871 acres (10.7 sq. mi)	8,487 acres (13.3 sq. mi)	12,020 acres (18.8 sq. mi)	2,840 acres (4.4 sq. mi)	4,500 acres (7.0 sq. mi)	2,050 acres (3.2 sq. mi)	30,385 (47.4 sq. mi)
Deer taken / square mile	1.5 – 2.6 deer/sq. mi	1.4 – 1.8 deer/sq. mi	0.5 – 1.1 deer/sq. mi	2.5 deer / sq. mi	4.1 – 6.4 deer/sq. mi	2.3 – 15.7 deer/sq. mi	4.7 – 10.3 deer/sq. mi	2.4 – 5.7 deer/sq. mi)
Pellet survey results (most recent year surveyed)	13.5 - 35.6 deer/sq. mi (2022)	12.4 - 32.7 deer/sq.mi (2022)	15.0 – 39.6 deer/sq.mi (2023)	8.4 – 22.4 deer/sq. mi (2020)	9.9 -26.1 deer/sq. mi (2023)	9.2 - 24.1 deer/sq. mi (2021)	20.2 – 53.2 deer/sq. mi (2023)	-
Notes	*# applicants for all Quab shotgun zones.	*# applicants for all Quab shotgun zones.	*# applicants for all Quab shotgun zones.		*All hunters were accepted into the program provided any new hunters attended an orientation. ^Includes 10 deer possibly harvested outside of Res Zone	*Due to a switch in DWSP application methods, the number may include some repeat applicants. ^Very hard to estimate deer harvest. Includes 10 deer possibly harvested in Res Zone	*Zone 10 start date was Oct 3. Zone 9 was Oct 17. ^Sudbury hunters were required to have 5-yr access permit (same permit as Wachusett watershed)	