



MASSWILDLIFE

Massachusetts Deer Management Westford Sportsmen's Club

Martin Feehan – Deer & Moose Project Leader

My Background





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Using Data to Monitor and Manage Populations

Deer Data Collected

- **Harvest data**
 - Sex ratios
 - Age structure
 - Health (antler beam diameter → reproductive capacity)
- **Hunter Survey**
 - Effort
 - Success rates
 - Sighting rates
- **Non-harvest mortality**
- **Pellet count surveys**
- **Browse surveys**



Biological Data Collected

- First week of shotgun season biologists collect
 - Sex, weight, age, antler beam diameter
- Many deer harvested during short period
- Consistency with previous years' data



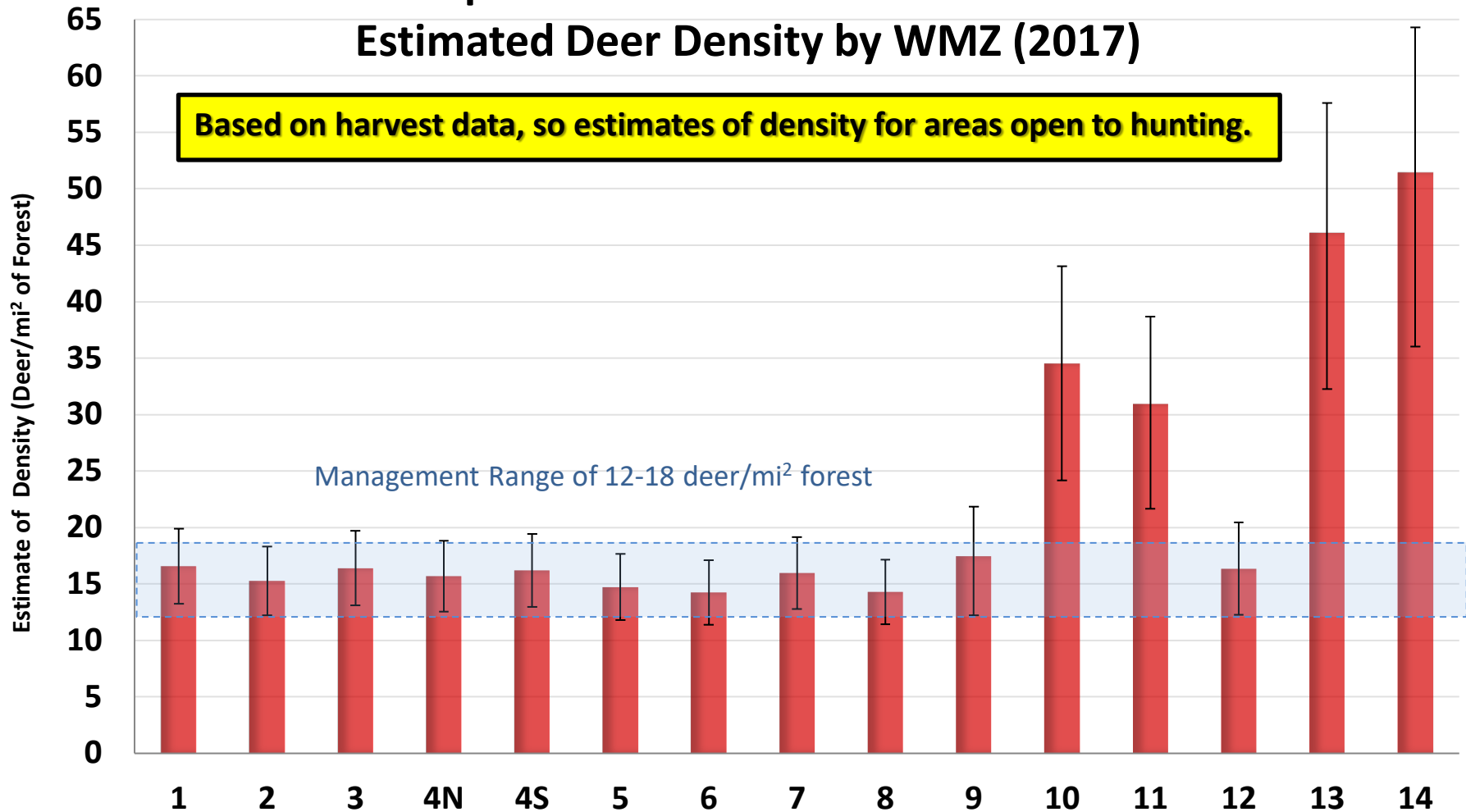
Deer Harvest Data

- Downing Population Reconstruction Model
 - Uses harvest data for estimates of density
 - Harvest data are a *sample* of the population
 - It is an average and only relevant for *hunted* areas

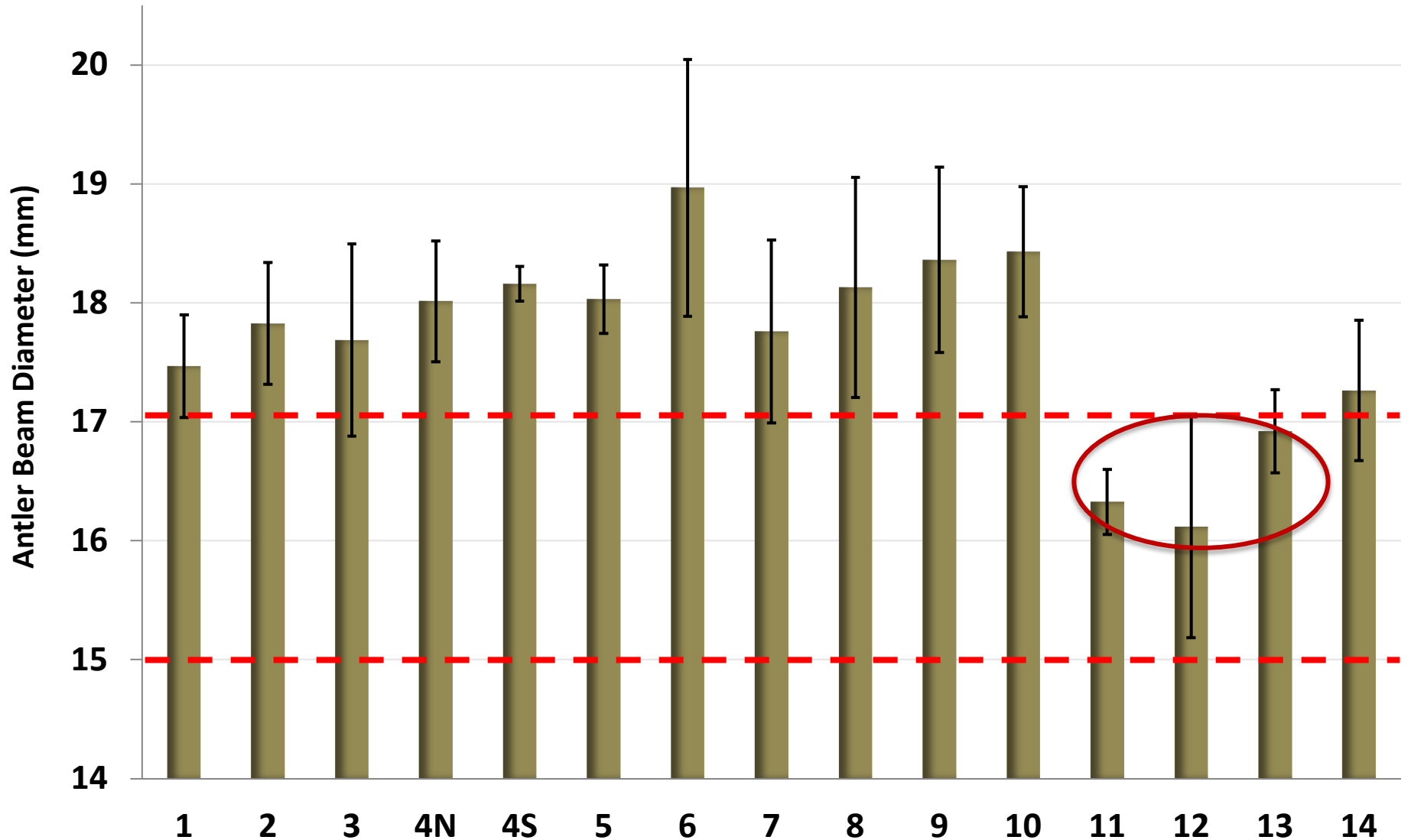
Population Model

Population Reconstruction Model Estimated Deer Density by WMZ (2017)

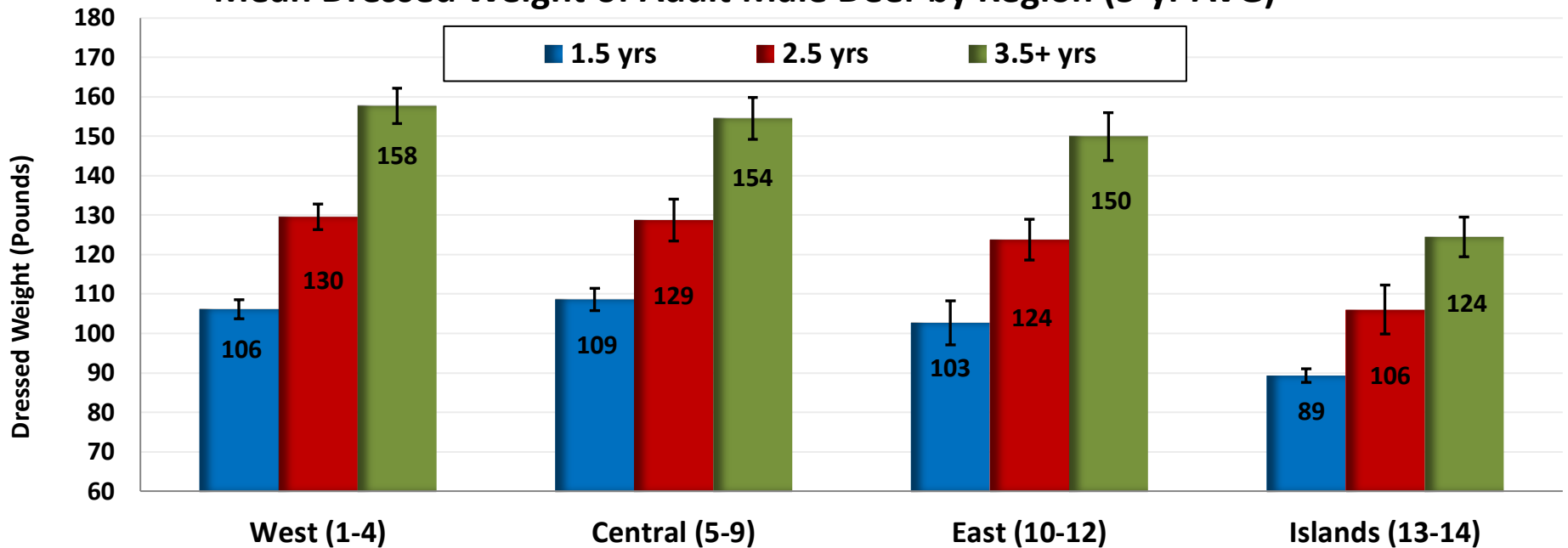
Based on harvest data, so estimates of density for areas open to hunting.



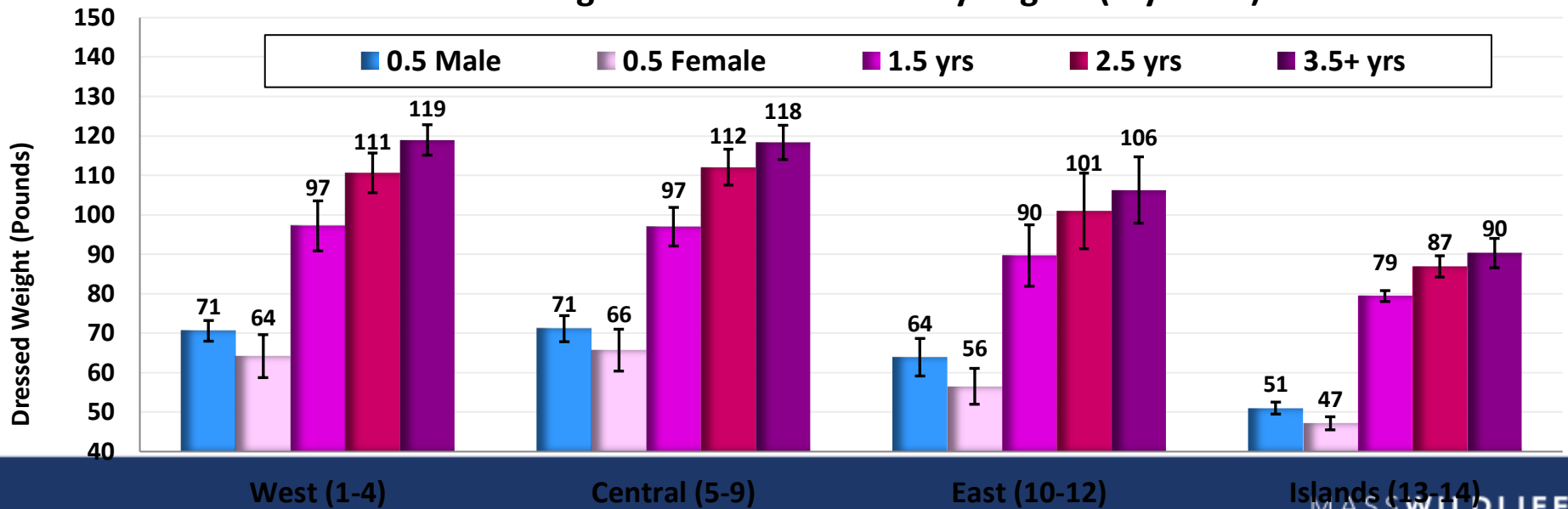
3-Year Average Yearling Male Antler Beam Diameter



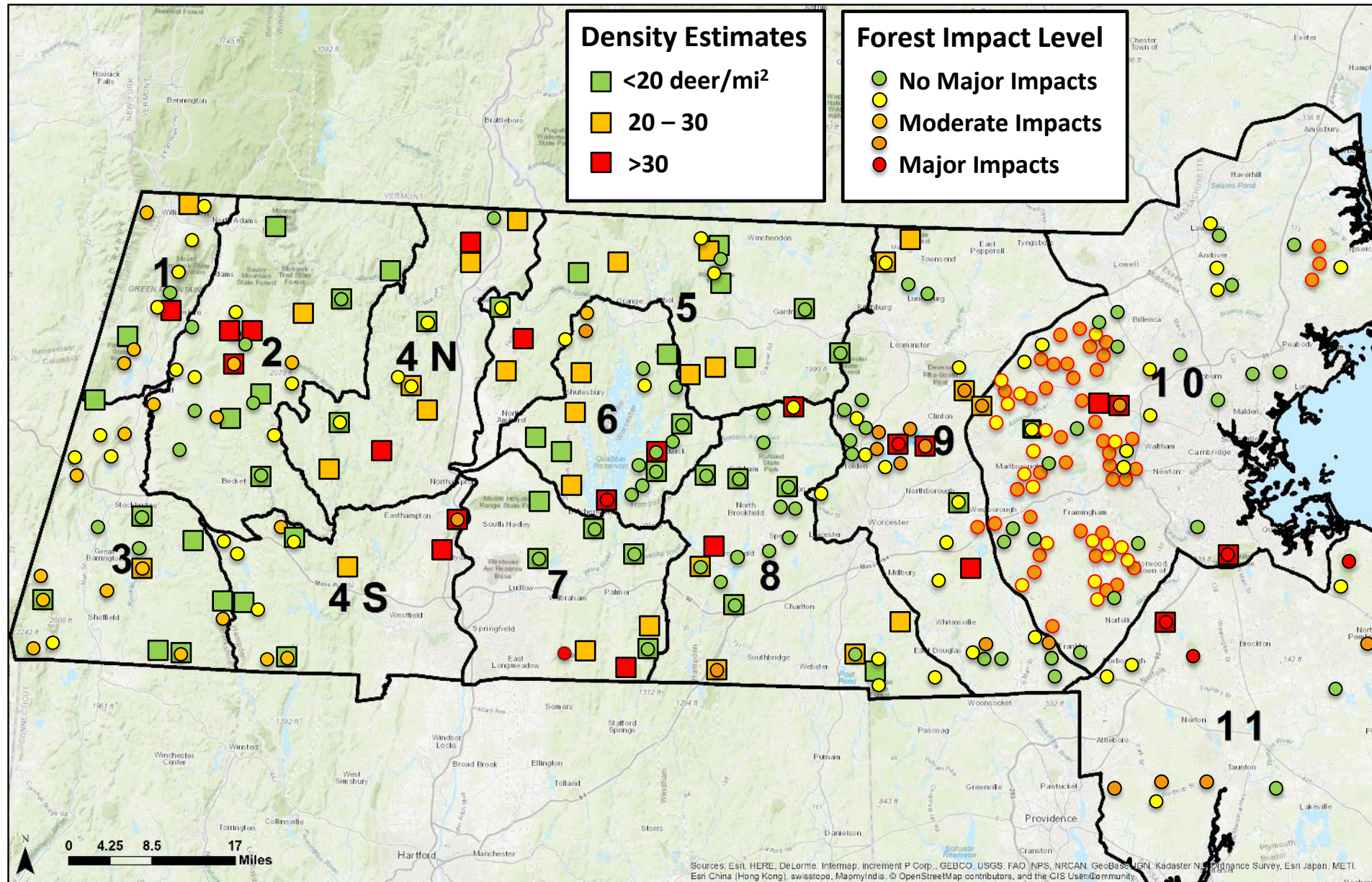
Mean Dressed Weight of Adult Male Deer by Region (5-yr AVG)



Mean Dressed Weight of Antlerless Deer by Region (5-yr AVG)

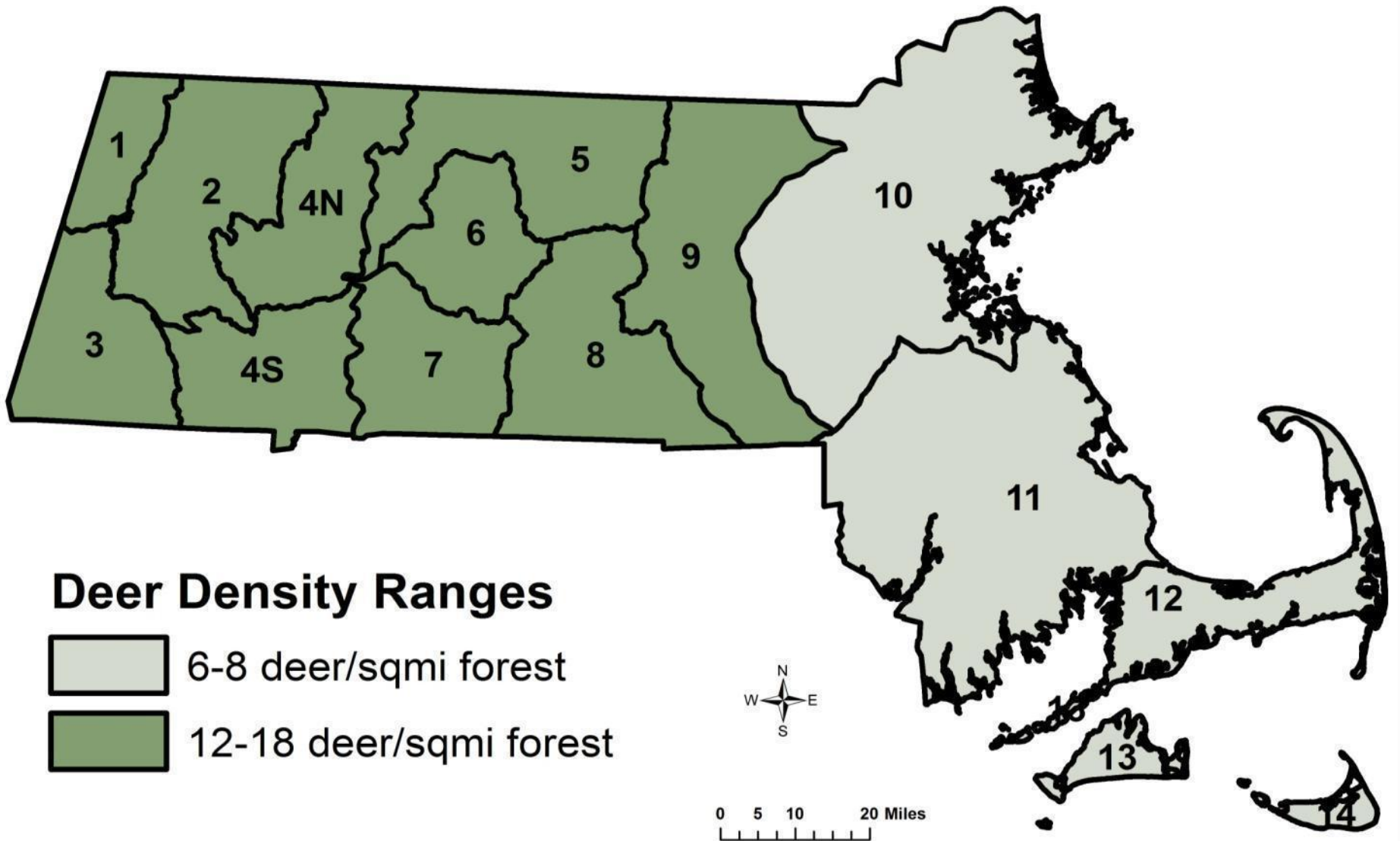


Forest Impacts and Pellet Count Density Estimates



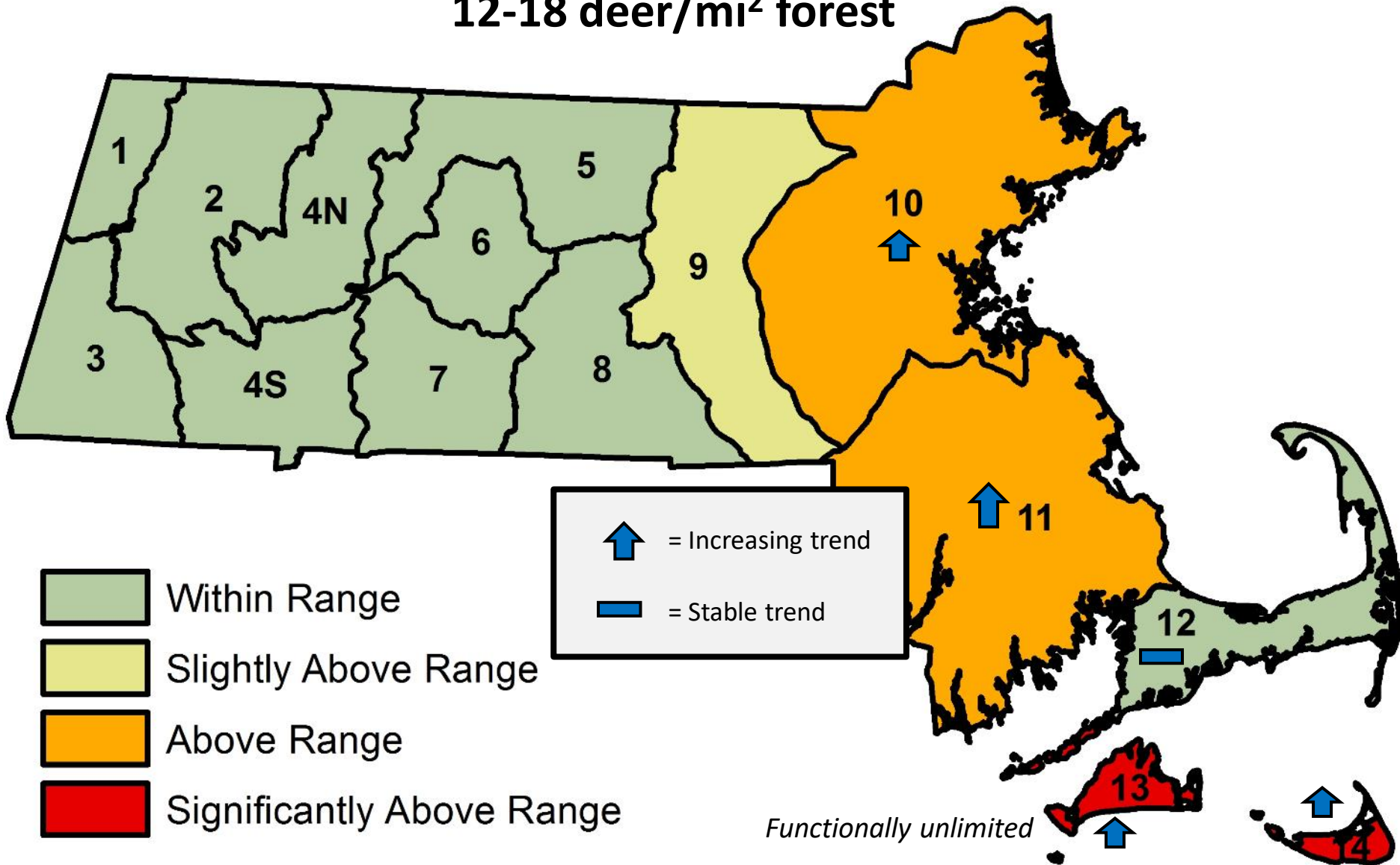
Additional Data

Management Ranges by Wildlife Management Zone



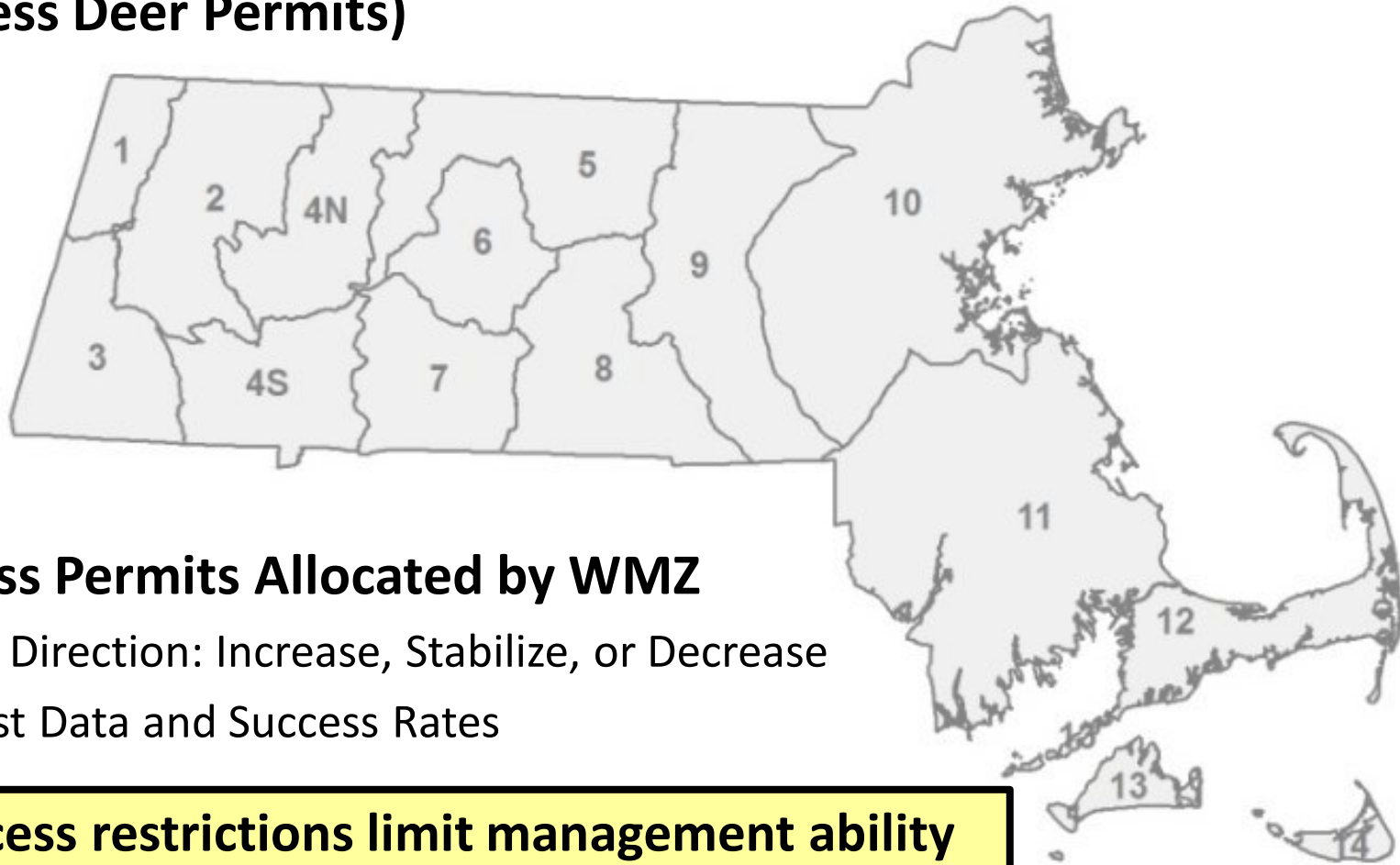
Deer Density to Management Range

12-18 deer/mi² forest



Antlerless Deer Permits

- Manage Population through Regulated **Female** Harvest (Antlerless Deer Permits)



- **Antlerless Permits Allocated by WMZ**
 - Target Direction: Increase, Stabilize, or Decrease
 - Harvest Data and Success Rates

Hunter access restrictions limit management ability



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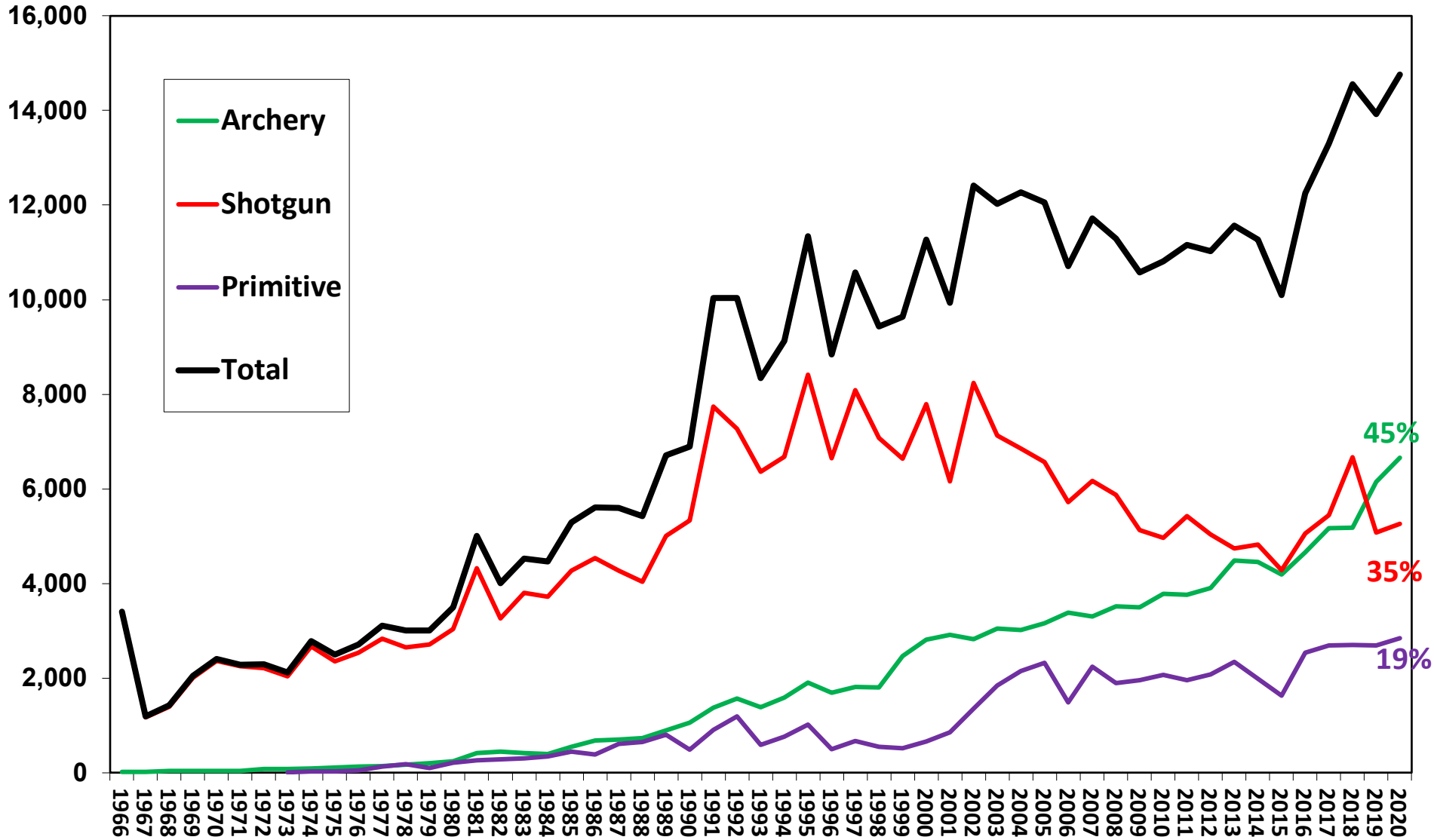
2020 Deer Harvest Summary

Statewide Harvest by Season

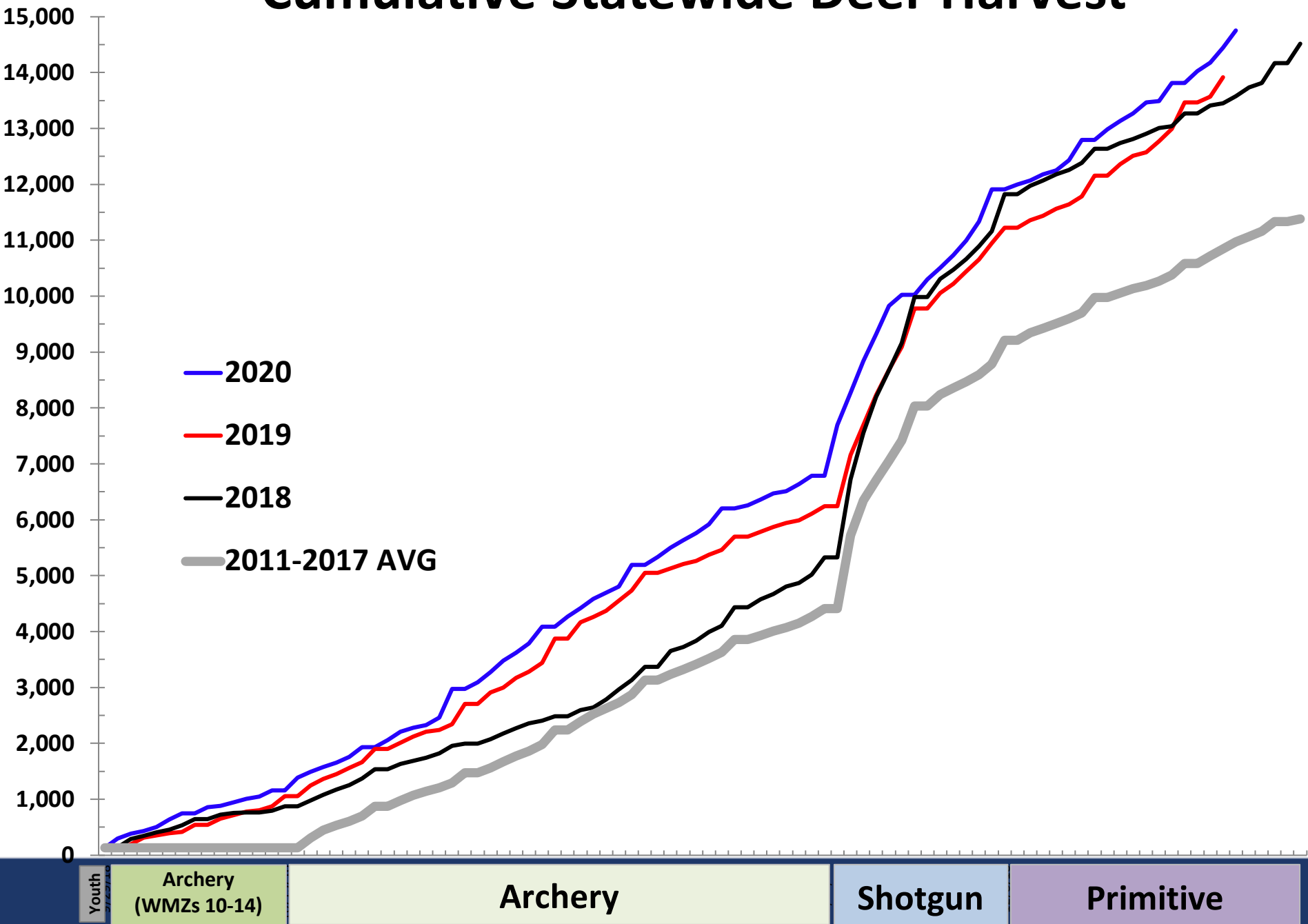
	AVG		
	2017-2019	2020	
Archery	5,502	6,655	New Record
Shotgun	5,575	5,138	Below AVG
Primitive	2,691	2,842	New Record
Youth/Para	118	131	
Total	13,887	14,757	New Record

ADP allocations in 2020 were the same as 2019, but a record number of licenses were sold.

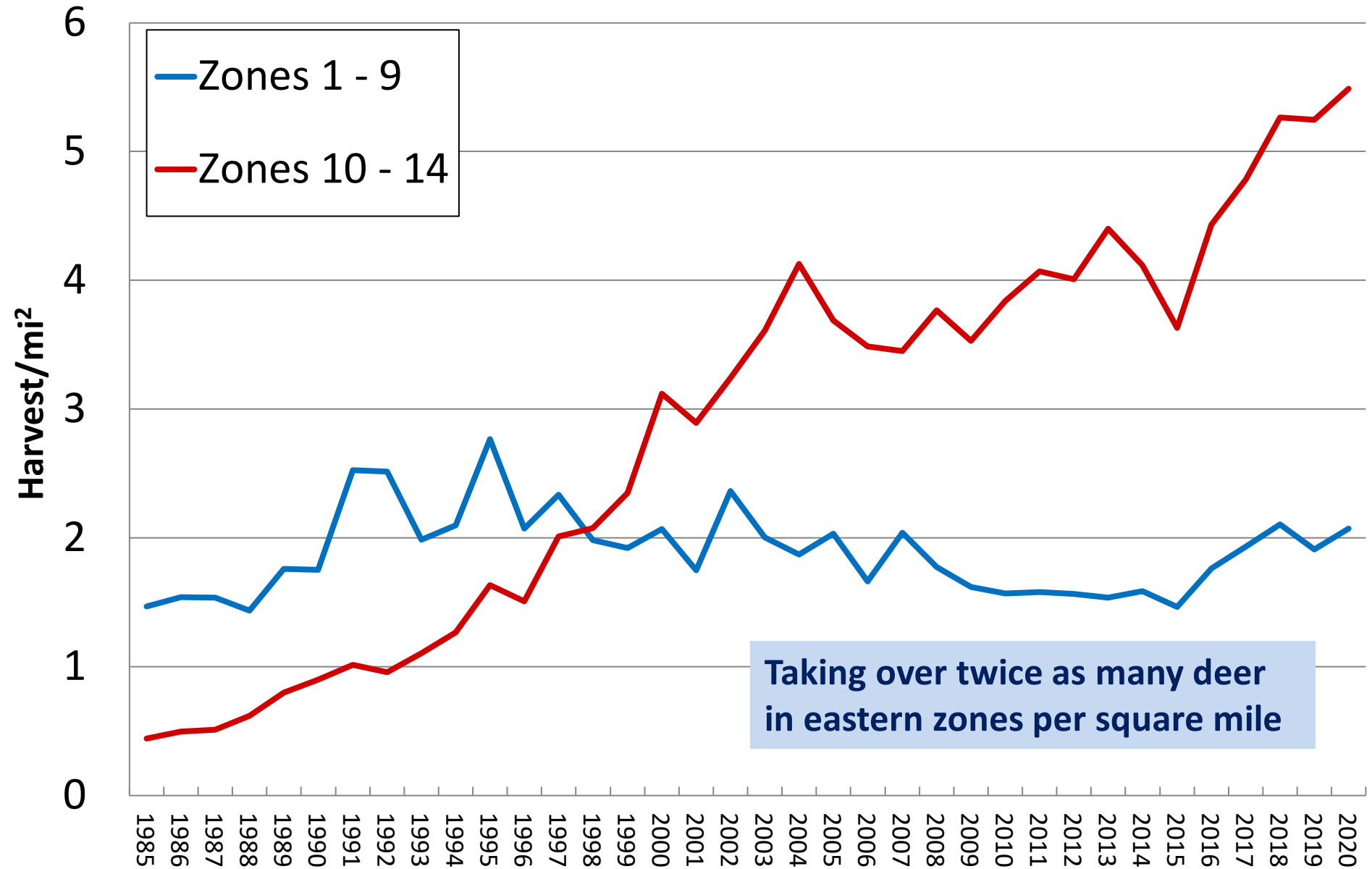
Total Statewide Deer Harvest



Cumulative Statewide Deer Harvest



Average Deer Harvest per Square Mile (East vs. West)



Taking over twice as many deer in eastern zones per square mile

2021-2022 Deer Season

- Youth Day : Oct 2
- Archery
 - Zones 1-9 : Oct. 4 – Nov. 27
 - Zones 10-14 : Oct. 18 – Nov. 27
- Shotgun *We will be operating biological deer check*
 - Nov. 29 – Dec. 11
- Primitive
 - Dec. 13 – Dec. 31

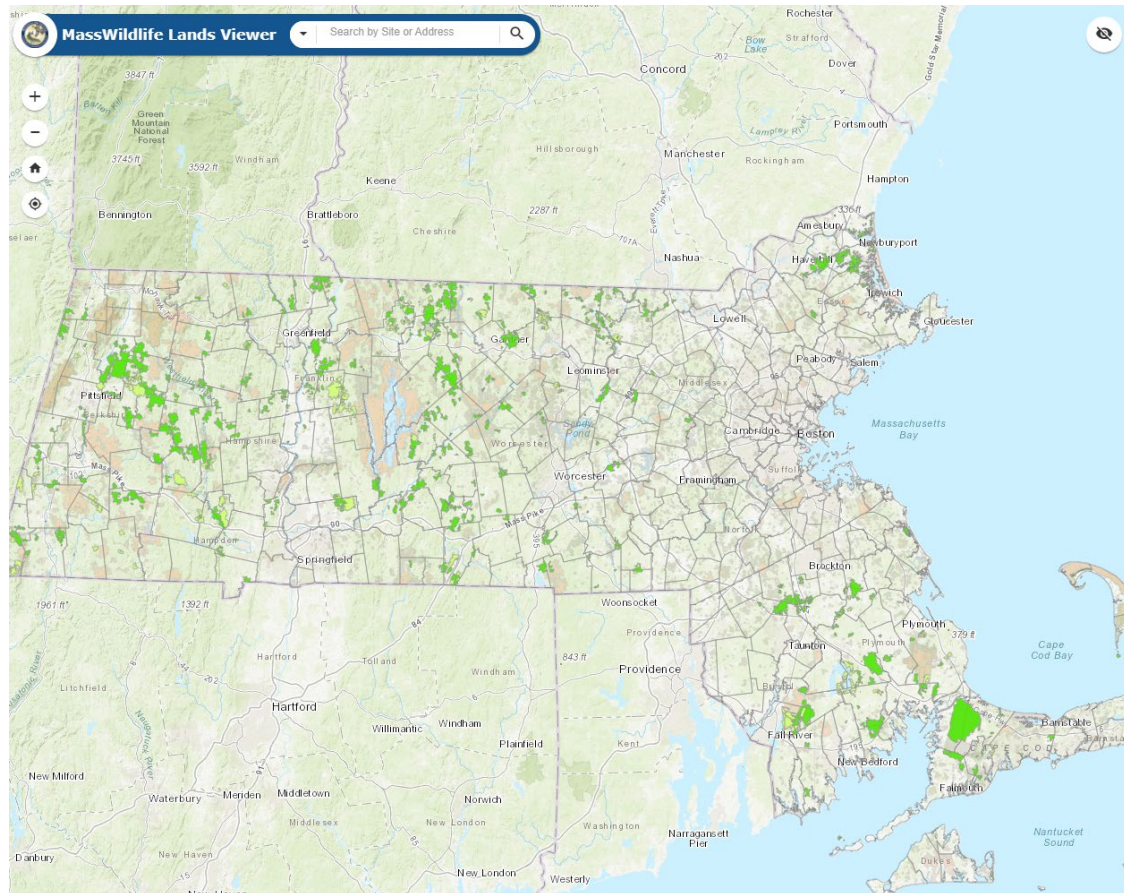
ADP Allocations – Same for 2021

2021 Antlerless Deer Permit allocations and odds of winning by Wildlife Management Zone

Zone	Allocation	Odds	Surplus
1	600	53%	0
2	300	20%	0
3	1,600	88%	0
4N	600	31%	0
4S	500	37%	0
5	1,500	47%	0
6	300	45%	0
7	2,400	89%	0
8	2,600	73%	0
9	5,500	100%	1,410
10	12,000	100%	9,092
11	13,000	100%	7,770
12	1,000	84%	0
13	2,700	100%	2,526
14	2,700	100%	2,619

Where to Hunt

- Check out MassWildlife Lands Viewer
- Talk to landowners, particularly ag or garden groomed properties



2021 Issues

- MassFishHunt – New License System will Debut Dec. 1st
- 2021 EHD Outbreak in NY State
 - Confirmed in 7 counties & Suspected in 9 counties
 - No Cases in Massachusetts
 - Does Not Impact Humans or Most Animals
 - If you see a deer that looks like it has a fever, swollen mouth, neck, or tongue, hemorrhaging, or dead bodies near water contact your local DFW District office.

Questions – Pre-Submitted

- What plants do deer like to eat and what are their favorite?
- Why is it that moose are dying from ticks, and deer in the same areas don't seem to be affected?
- Does F&G have plans to figure out how to expand hunting opportunities where the deer populations are highest, i.e., eastern MA?
- Why is the season scheduled when it is with the rut only during archery?
- Is Chronic Wasting Disease becoming a concern in MA?
- I keep seeing bucks sparring on my trail cams in late August, that seems too early, is this a sign that hunting season should be starting earlier?
- Are Moose coming into the area?
- What is the typical range of deer in our area? I've seen a buck on my trail cam at the club show up across town crossing the road in front of me. A very unique antler profile made this an exact match. That is several miles. Is that normal?



QUESTIONS or Comments?

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