



# SUMMARY OF 2004-2005 ILLINOIS DEER SEASONS



Forest Wildlife Information Series #05-02

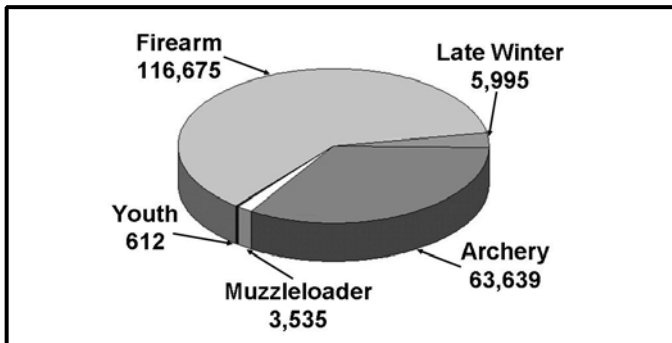
August 2005

## Introduction



Illinois deer hunters harvested 190,456 whitetails during 2004, surpassing the previous year's harvest of 168,762 by 11%. Harvest increased across all seasons. With significant changes occurring to what was previously known as the handgun season, including an increase in permit availability and the choice of several firearm types, the late winter season saw a 279% increase in harvest. Deer harvest within the youth season increased 60%, followed by a 14% increase in the muzzleloader harvest. The firearm and archery season harvest both increased 9% from the previous year. A breakdown of deer harvest by season is provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1. 2004 Illinois deer harvest by season



## Chronic Wasting Disease in Illinois

Prior to the 2004-2005 firearm deer season, 65 CWD-positive deer in northern Illinois had been identified by various surveillance methods. Primary areas of infection were northeast and southeast of Rockford along the Boone-Winnebago county line, with scattered cases occurring as far east as McHenry County, and as far south as northern DeKalb County.

During the firearm season, IDNR biologists collected 4,011 usable tissue samples from harvested deer in 32 counties for CWD testing. Thirteen CWD-positive individuals were found in four counties: Boone [4], DeKalb [1], McHenry [4], and Winnebago [4]. Additional positives were identified from testing of suspect (sick) animals (4); archery harvest (2); deer taken using urban Deer Population Control Permits (3); and deer taken by agency sharpshooters (9). In all, 31 deer were found to have CWD during the 2004-2005 seasons, and a total of 96 positive deer have been identified since the disease appeared in the state. The disease remains confined to the four counties listed above.

## Season Results

**Firearm:** The 7-day 2004 firearm deer season consisted of one 3-day segment (Friday - Sunday, Nov. 19 - 21) and a second 4-day segment (Thursday - Sunday, Dec. 2 - 5). Statewide corn harvest was more than 95% complete by the onset of firearm season.

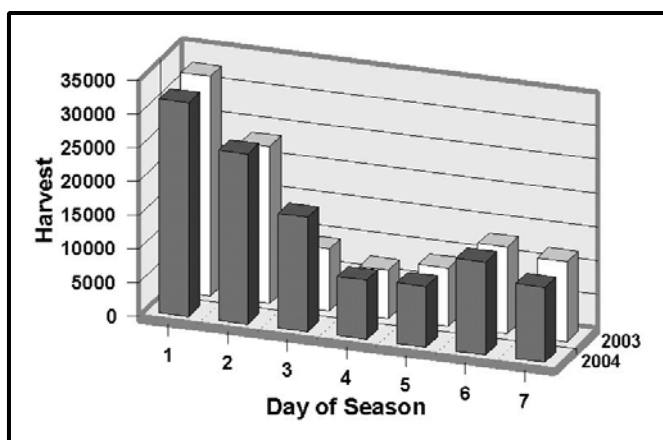
IDNR's Permit Office issued 304,488 county-specific firearm deer permits, resulting in 114,945 deer harvested in the 98 counties open to firearm deer hunting. An additional 4,161 permits (excluding standby permits issued at the sites) were issued for special hunt areas (public lands), with a harvest of 1,730 deer. In comparison, 104,271 deer were harvested using 284,876 county permits in 2003, and special hunt areas accounted for 1,602 deer with 3,854 permits. Hunters with muzzleloading-only permits took 1,782 deer during the second weekend of the 2004 regular firearm deer season. Table 1 presents the number of permits issued and resulting harvest on a statewide basis. Average permit success rates during 2004 increased slightly from 35% to 37%, with the success rate for a full-season either-sex permit remaining at 39%. Daily harvest rate was somewhat lower on the first day of the season than the previous year (Figure 2), but increased on the second day, and significantly increased on the third day of the season. Harvest during the final four days was similar to that of the previous year.

Table 1. Firearm deer harvest by permit type during 2004

Permit Type <sup>(1)</sup>	Permits Issued	Deer Harvested	Permit Success	% of Harvest
E-S/ Full	152,858	60,068	39%	51%
E-S/1st	493	146	30%	<1%
E-S/2nd	3,773	863	23%	<1%
A-O/Full	65,599	29,756	45%	26%
A-O/1st	626	136	22%	<1%
A-O/2nd	151	48	32%	<1%
E-S/Free L-T	42,282	11,069	26%	9%
A-O/Free L-T	42,282	11,199	26%	10%
E-S/Paid L-T	0	0	0%	0%
NRL/E-S	1,084	403	37%	<1%
NRL/A-O	758	260	34%	<1%
E-S/Muzzle <sup>(2)</sup>	15,796	1,235	N/A	1%
A-O/Muzzle <sup>(2)</sup>	3,879	547	N/A	<1%
Other <sup>(3)</sup>	N/A	945	N/A	<1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>329,581</b>	<b>116,675</b>	<b>37%<sup>(4)</sup></b>	<b>100%</b>

- (1) E-S = either-sex permits; A-O = antlerless-only permits; L-T = landowner-tenant permits; NRL = nonresident landowner permits.
- (2) Permits issued for the muzzleloading-only season that could be used during the second regular firearm season.
- (3) Represents deer tagged with site-specific standby permits or unidentified/incorrectly used permit types.
- (4) Total does not include muzzleloading or "Other" data.

Figure 2. Daily harvest during the 2004 firearm deer season.



The 2004 firearm season opened with significant rainfall in all areas of the state, with measurable amounts nearing one-half inch in the north, and well over one-half inch in the south. Temperatures for the first three days of the season were in the upper forties and fifties to near sixty degrees in the central and southern areas of the state. There was a significant drop in temperature in northern Illinois on the third day of the season, when low temperatures were near freezing. Temperatures for the 2<sup>nd</sup> firearm season ranged from lows in the upper twenties to highs in the fifties for the central and southern portions, with northern Illinois seeing temperatures from the teens to the thirties.

The statewide 2004 firearm harvest is summarized by age and sex in Table 2. Note: age or sex data were lacking for 10,487 deer. Concern for traffic safety was the primary reason information was not collected for these deer (i.e., when hunter traffic backed up on major roadways at check stations, checkers only tagged deer and collected hunter permits, but did not age deer). The sex composition of the 2004 firearm harvest was 41% females and 59% males.

Table 2. Sex and age composition of the 2004 firearm deer harvest\*

Age	Males	% of Males	Females	% of Females	% of Total
Fawn	15,162	24%	11,167	26%	25%
1 ½	19,443	31%	12,574	29%	30%
2 ½	18,209	29%	12,785	30%	29%
3 ½	8,382	13%	4,969	11%	13%
4 ½+	1,840	3%	1,657	4%	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>63,036</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>43,152</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* There were an additional 10,487 deer checked through the check stations with no age or sex recorded.

IDNR biologists annually monitor the age structure of the antlered buck harvest. This serves as an index of the mortality rate, most of which is accounted for by hunter harvest. Limiting buck mortality at acceptable levels, while controlling population levels through adequate doe harvest, ensures that mature bucks are plentiful in the population, and doe:buck ratios are low. The proportion of yearling bucks in the antlered harvest during the 2004 firearm season was 41%, equal to the previous year. Age composition of the antlered buck harvest is reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Age structure of antlered bucks taken during the 2004 firearm season for which age data are available

Age	Total	Percent of total*
1 ½	19,443	41% (41%)
2 ½	18,209	38% (37%)
3 ½	8,382	17% (18%)
4 ½+	1,840	4% (4%)
	<b>47,874</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Figures in parentheses represent 2003 percentages.

**Muzzleloading:** The 2004 muzzleloader season was held December 10 - 12. Muzzleloader permit allocation increased from the previous year, with 15,796 either-sex and 3,879 antlerless-only permits issued. In addition, the muzzleloader harvest of 3,535 represents nearly a 14% increase over 2003 totals, following a 135% increase in that year (Table 4). Hunters with muzzleloading-only permits accounted for 74% of the harvest, with the remaining 26% taken primarily by landowners with unfilled property-only firearm permits ("free" landowner permits).

Table 4. Harvest by permit type during the 2004 muzzleloading deer season

Permit type <sup>(1)</sup>	Male	Female	Total Harvest	Percent of Harvest
E-S/Muzzle	1051	949	2009	57%
A-O/Muzzle	105	510	617	17%
E-S/Free L-T	223	147	374	11%
A-O/Free L-T	91	338	430	12%
NRL/A-O	1	22	23	<1%
NRL/E-S	9	28	37	1%
Other <sup>(3)</sup>	17	28	45	1%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1497</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>3535</b>	<b>100%</b>

(1) E-S = either-sex permits; A-O = antlerless-only permits, L-T = landowner-tenant permits; NRL = nonresident landowner.

(2) Totals for male and female do not include 16 deer for which sex was not identified.

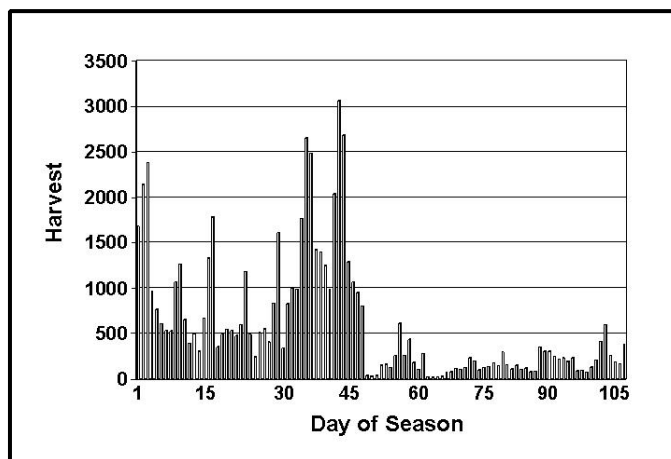
(3) Includes site-specific standby permits and improperly-used permit types

**Archery:** In counties closed to firearm deer hunting, the 2004-2005 archery season consisted of 105 days from October 1, 2003 through January 13, 2005, while in counties open to firearm deer hunting the season consisted of 98 days. Resident hunters could purchase unlimited numbers of over-the-counter combination permits (each consisting of one either-sex and one antlerless-only tag), but harvest was limited to a maximum of two antlered deer during all seasons (including archery, firearm, and muzzleloader.) Archery harvest increased significantly, from 57,802 in 2003 to 63,639 in 2004 (+9%). The ratio of bucks to does in the harvest was 53:47%. Archery harvest results by county are included in Table 6.

The rate of harvest during the statewide archery season peaked in early to mid-November during the rut. The weekend of November 13 -14 ranked highest in harvest, with over 3,000 deer killed on that Saturday. Harvest on opening day of the season (October 1) ranked tenth with almost 1,700 deer taken.

Daily archery harvest for the 2004-2005 season is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Daily archery harvest during 2004-2005



**Late Winter Season:** What was previously the handgun season was liberalized to allow the use of not only handguns, but also muzzleloaders and shotguns. Permit allocation increased dramatically from the previous year because of the opening of several new counties. While the handgun season previously had been held in only 26 counties, 43 counties were opened to hunting during this year's season. As a result, 17,898 antlerless-only permits were issued for the 2004-2005 season (Jan 14-16) compared to 10,632 permits for 2003-2004. Hunter success averaged 26%, with a total of 5,995 deer harvested (Table 5).

Table 5. Late Winter harvest results by county - January 2005

County	Late Winter Permits Issued	Total Harvest <sup>(1)</sup>	Hunter Success <sup>(2)</sup>	Antlerless Males <sup>(3)</sup>	Female
Adams	737	244	24%	40	176
Brown	442	193	31%	30	123
Bureau	421	116	24%	34	82
Calhoun	360	174	37%	60	113
Carroll	203	44	18%	6	38
Cass	113	21	13%	8	13
Clark	367	117	26%	20	95
Clay	318	112	23%	32	80
Crawford	278	105	29%	29	76
Fayette	744	265	28%	66	199
Franklin	167	61	27%	20	41
Fulton	817	198	19%	42	155
Greene	446	186	29%	34	151
Hamilton	136	100	52%	8	91
Hancock	415	163	30%	21	142
Jasper	514	204	35%	49	154
Jefferson	711	240	27%	55	180
Jersey	218	70	15%	11	59
JoDaviess	934	199	18%	43	155
Knox	291	82	25%	23	59
Lasalle	227	51	18%	14	37
Lawrence	148	71	36%	11	59
McDonough	212	79	29%	19	60
Macoupin	607	145	17%	15	129
Madison	282	46	13%	19	27
McLean	273	67	22%	22	45
Marion	328	150	27%	21	129
Montgomery	190	55	14%	12	43

(Table 5, Continued)

County	Late Winter Permits Issued	Total Harvest <sup>(1)</sup>	Hunter Success <sup>(2)</sup>	Antlerless Males <sup>(3)</sup>	Female
Morgan	320	114	29%	29	83
Ogle	474	94	19%	28	66
Peoria	353	101	25%	18	79
Perry	603	203	28%	31	170
Pike	1,096	559	43%	67	484
Randolph	718	212	22%	39	167
Richland	255	107	36%	33	74
Schuyler	557	189	28%	48	138
St. Clair	448	95	18%	14	80
Scott	150	50	28%	13	36
Washington	274	92	22%	20	72
Wayne	562	283	39%	55	226
White	259	134	40%	16	118
Whiteside	281	44	13%	11	33
Williamson	649	130	18%	24	104
Other <sup>(4)</sup>	N/A	30	N/A	9	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,898</b>	<b>5,995</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>1,225</b>	<b>4,674</b>

- (1) Includes deer harvested on unused free landowner permits from the firearm season.
- (2) Calculated using only Late Winter Permits; does not include harvest when landowner permits were used.
- (3) Totals for male and female do not include 96 for which sex was not identified.
- (4) Includes deer harvested on special hunt areas, and those illegally harvested in counties not open to hunting during the Late Winter season.

Recent Harvest Trends

Recent trends in Illinois whitetail harvest have shown a steady increase over the past few years, culminating with the record harvests for the 2004 season (Fig. 4). While deer populations and harvests were relatively stable during the years following the 1995 season, herd growth has occurred since that time. Biologists are making a concerted effort to increase harvests through a variety of seasons to bring herds to more acceptable levels in those parts of the state which have been most impacted.

Figure 4. Recent trends in Illinois deer harvest

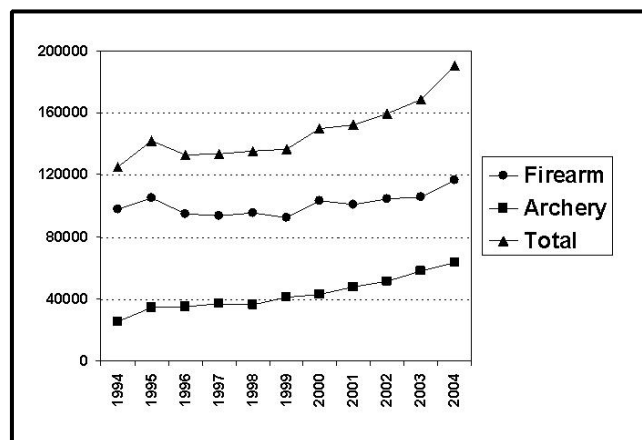


Table 6. Firearm and archery harvest by county, 2004-2005 season

<u>County</u>	<u>Firearm Permits</u>	<u>Firearm Harvest</u>	<u>Archery Harvest</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Firearm Permits</u>	<u>Firearm Harvest</u>	<u>Archery Harvest</u>
Adams	8080	3078	1258	Macoupin	6696	2484	1101
Alexander	1529	459	172	Madison	3724	1217	1085
Bond	3085	1124	448	Marion	5301	2146	1224
Boone	1193	271	224	Marshall	1954	749	367
Brown	4420	1776	926	Mason	1739	725	567
Bureau	3825	1665	811	Massac	1976	675	347
Calhoun	4353	1845	1237	McDonough	2855	1214	488
Carroll	3239	1184	507	McHenry	2757	570	623
Cass	2436	976	693	McLean	2299	812	605
Champaign	700	254	357	Menard	1643	670	423
Christian	1942	649	399	Mercer	2645	923	279
Clark	3292	1383	620	Monroe	3281	1229	352
Clay	3660	1504	600	Montgomery	4023	1500	732
Clinton	2920	1081	486	Morgan	3176	1339	726
Coles	1938	740	569	Moultrie	519	212	241
Cook	0	0	179	Ogle	3761	1341	770
Crawford	3030	1291	798	Peoria	4199	1626	1259
Cumberland	2335	851	308	Perry	4513	1677	741
DeKalb	1275	326	292	Piatt	433	165	242
DeWitt	887	378	381	Pike	9729	4256	3769
Douglas	654	225	171	Pope	6630	2153	859
DuPage	0	0	76	Pulaski	1935	753	267
Edgar	1739	770	423	Putnam	1270	558	275
Edwards	1578	656	261	Randolph	6347	2407	910
Effingham	3349	1148	451	Richland	2449	1052	462
Fayette	6219	2248	789	Rock Island	2510	902	569
Ford	424	66	63	Saline	2778	1005	461
Franklin	3628	1317	862	Sangamon	2607	987	809
Fulton	7480	2821	1602	Schuyler	4996	1940	749
Gallatin	1883	674	300	Scott	1725	827	307
Greene	4400	2104	933	Shelby	3803	1344	771
Grundy	1521	451	439	St.Clair	3525	1160	788
Hamilton	3590	1472	572	Stark	756	320	189
Hancock	5162	2313	726	Stephenson	3074	969	442
Hardin	2923	954	401	Tazewell	2520	865	712
Henderson	1985	794	264	Union	5474	1968	699
Henry	2353	886	502	Vermilion	2502	853	1055
Iroquois	1940	644	456	Wabash	943	404	248
Jackson	7349	2561	721	Warren	1736	734	283
Jasper	3236	1337	647	Washington	4042	1517	544
Jefferson	5848	2516	1520	Wayne	4625	1974	870
Jersey	3395	1290	726	White	2542	1164	561
JoDaviess	6825	2528	679	Whiteside	2488	884	509
Johnson	5596	1867	537	Will	1341	346	984
Kane	416	81	478	Williamson	5458	1696	891
Kankakee	978	233	289	Winnebago	2291	622	489
Kendall	501	130	197	Woodford	<u>2488</u>	<u>1048</u>	<u>618</u>
Knox	4024	1700	844				
Lake	0	0	572	<b>Totals<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>304,488</b>	<b>114,945</b>	<b>63,639</b>
LaSalle	3562	1302	1383				
Lawrence	1972	854	552				
Lee	2386	853	599				
Livingston	1527	531	327				
Logan	1126	495	269				
Macon	702	307	481				

<sup>1</sup> Firearm totals do not include permits issued for, or deer harvested on, special hunt areas.