

Deer Management Unit (DMU) A-1 Public Outreach and Interaction Final Report

DMU A-1, Zone A, South Florida

10/31/2013

Prepared for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
by Normandeau Associates, Inc.



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

DEP	Department of Environmental Protection
DMTAG	Deer Management Technical Advisory Group
DMU	Deer Management Unit
FWC	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
TAG	Technical Assistance Group
WMA	Wildlife Management Area

Executive Summary

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) implemented a public outreach and input process from July to October 2013 in Zone A (DMU A-1) that focused on private and public lands in South Florida. The goal of this process was to present the concept of Deer Management Units (DMUs) to hunters, farmers, and the general public and to receive comments about deer management preferences for the DMU located in Zone A. Normandeau Associates, Inc. (Normandeau) assisted FWC by marketing, coordinating, and facilitating the meetings and coordinating collection of the comments.

The process resulted in the following goals and objectives:

Overarching Goal: To increase hunter satisfaction through deer management practices designed to achieve a balanced and sustainable deer population in DMU A-1.

Goal 1: Increase the overall deer population in DMU A-1.

Objectives

- Implement an antler restriction to protect the majority of 1.5-year-old bucks while allowing the harvest of bucks at least 2.5 years old.
- Implement an annual or seasonal buck bag limit to increase the buck population.
 - Recommend considering an annual two- or three-buck bag limit statewide.
- Decrease doe harvest to increase the deer population.

Goal 2: Preserve hunting heritage and traditions by increasing hunting opportunities and educational programs for youth and adults.

Objectives

- Develop a comprehensive plan to promote the most effective outreach programs and communication methods currently being used to reach potential youth hunters.
 - Consider alternative approaches such as electronic games, social media, etc.
- Partner with local organizations (e.g., 4-H, county extension offices, Boy Scouts of America, Future Farmers of America, school districts) to increase exposure of youth and adults to hunting.
- Improve hunter education about South Florida deer biology, hunting regulations, and habitat management.
- Expand opportunities for family and youth hunts on public lands.

Goal 3: Promote deer habitat management practices that are compatible with the needs of diverse native wildlife species and humans on private and public lands.

Objectives

- Increase habitat management activities on public and private lands.
 - Assess the quantity and quality of deer habitat in DMU A-1.
 - Increase prescribed burn acreages.
 - Increase acreage of exotic plant species control.
 - Evaluate alternative methods of land management on public lands (e.g., cattle leases).

- Increase interagency and stakeholder collaboration to protect and enhance deer habitat within DMU A-1.
 - Convene a working group responsible for DMU A-1-specific deer management concerns (e.g., monitoring, research, habitat management, harvest data) comprised of interagency personnel and various stakeholders.
- Increase access to public lands for the purpose of hunting and other suitable activities.
 - Increase the number of pedestrian access points.
 - Increase the number vehicular (including off-road vehicles [ORVs]) access points including roads and trails open to vehicular traffic.
 - Increase vehicular hunting opportunities.

Goal 4: Implement a statewide deer tagging and reporting system on private and public lands.

Objectives

- Use tagging and reporting data to develop an accurate annual harvest record to support a sustainable deer harvest.
- Increase accountability and compliance with harvest regulations by requiring hunters to tag deer.
- Promote equitable harvest opportunities for hunters through the use of a tag and reporting system.

These goals and objectives were formulated via consensus by the stakeholder TAG, the members of which were chosen based on an open and public application process. The TAG considered public comments and online and statewide survey results over the course of two in-person meetings and one web-based meeting. Public comment on deer management preferences for the proposed DMU in Zone A was collected during three public meetings (Dania Beach, Ft. Myers, and Clewiston) with about 70 attendees as well as two webinars with six participants. Public comment was also collected from an online survey (74 responses) hosted on the FWC website. An online presentation was available for viewing if someone was unable to attend the public meetings or webinars. In addition, a statewide survey was conducted during the latter part of 2012, which measured public opinions on the Florida deer population, deer management, and hunting preferences.

1 Introduction and Project Purpose

White-tailed deer management in Florida and throughout the U. S. is certainly an example of a “great American success story.” From near extinction in the 1930s deer populations and deer harvests have soared to record highs in Florida. 61% of Florida’s 226,000 hunters hunt deer (U.S. Department of the Interior, et al. 2001) making them the most popular game animal in the state. White-tailed deer are also one of a few species of wildlife whose over-abundance can seriously degrade its own habitat as well as the habitat of other wildlife, and inflict serious damage on agricultural crops and ornamental plantings. It should be recognized and celebrated, therefore, that deer harvest management will likely continue to be a necessary and desirable practice in Florida for many years to come.—from Strategic Plan for Deer Management in Florida 2008–2018

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) implemented a public outreach and input process from July to October 2013 in DMU A-1 that focused on private and public lands in South Florida—west and south of Lake Okeechobee. The goal of this process was to present the concept of Deer Management Units (DMUs) to hunters, farmers, and the general public and to receive comments about deer management preferences for the DMU located in Zone A, DMU A-1. Normandeau Associates, Inc. (Normandeau) assisted FWC by marketing, coordinating, and facilitating the meetings and coordinating collection of the comments.

Three public meetings, two webinars, two in-person stakeholder Technical Assistance Group (TAG) meetings, and one TAG conference call were held to collect input from stakeholders on deer management and other deer related suggestions for DMU A-1. While the focus was on DMU A-1, some possible action items identified by the TAG could be applied statewide. Two surveys were included as part of the outreach—an online survey developed by Normandeau available through the FWC DMU website for collecting public comment, and a statewide telephone survey conducted by Responsive Management in late 2012.

The purpose of these meetings and outreach was to collect input from stakeholders representing hunters, farmers, and the general public on deer management preferences for DMU A-1. Input was collected on the status of the deer population, bag limits, antlerless harvest, antler regulations, and negative deer interactions. Additionally, stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide input on local issues of concern including hunting access, wildlife management area issues, predators and deer, etc.

2 Project Background

There are currently 10 DMUs proposed for Florida as shown in Figure 2–1. The public input process discussed in this report focused on DMU A-1, which is shown in Figure 2–2

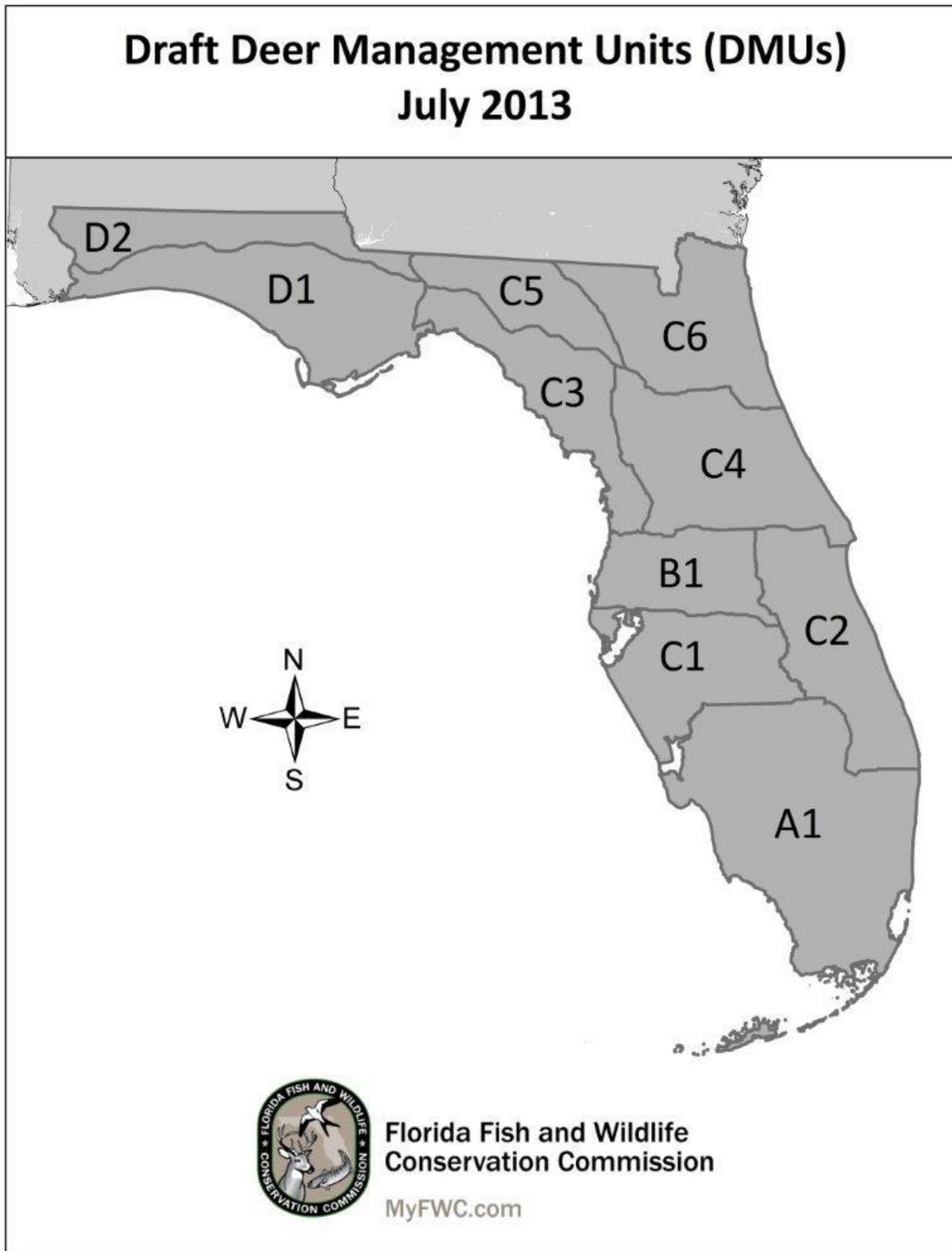


Figure 2–1. Proposed Deer Management Units (DMUs) for Florida.

FWC would like to integrate more flexibility into its management of deer by dividing the existing management zones into smaller Deer Management Units (DMUs) and managing deer within these units based on stakeholder preferences. This adaptive approach to deer management is intended to improve hunting opportunities and help to maintain a healthy and reasonably balanced deer herd. The rationale behind the proposed DMUs is that Florida's deer population varies throughout the state. The productivity of deer in Florida is limited due to low quality habitat linked to poor quality soils, which in turn limits the population compared to neighboring states where soils are more fertile. Deer breeding chronology (commonly known as the rut) also varies widely statewide, making the management of deer challenging and likely to be less effective if a one-size-fits-all set of regulations is applied.

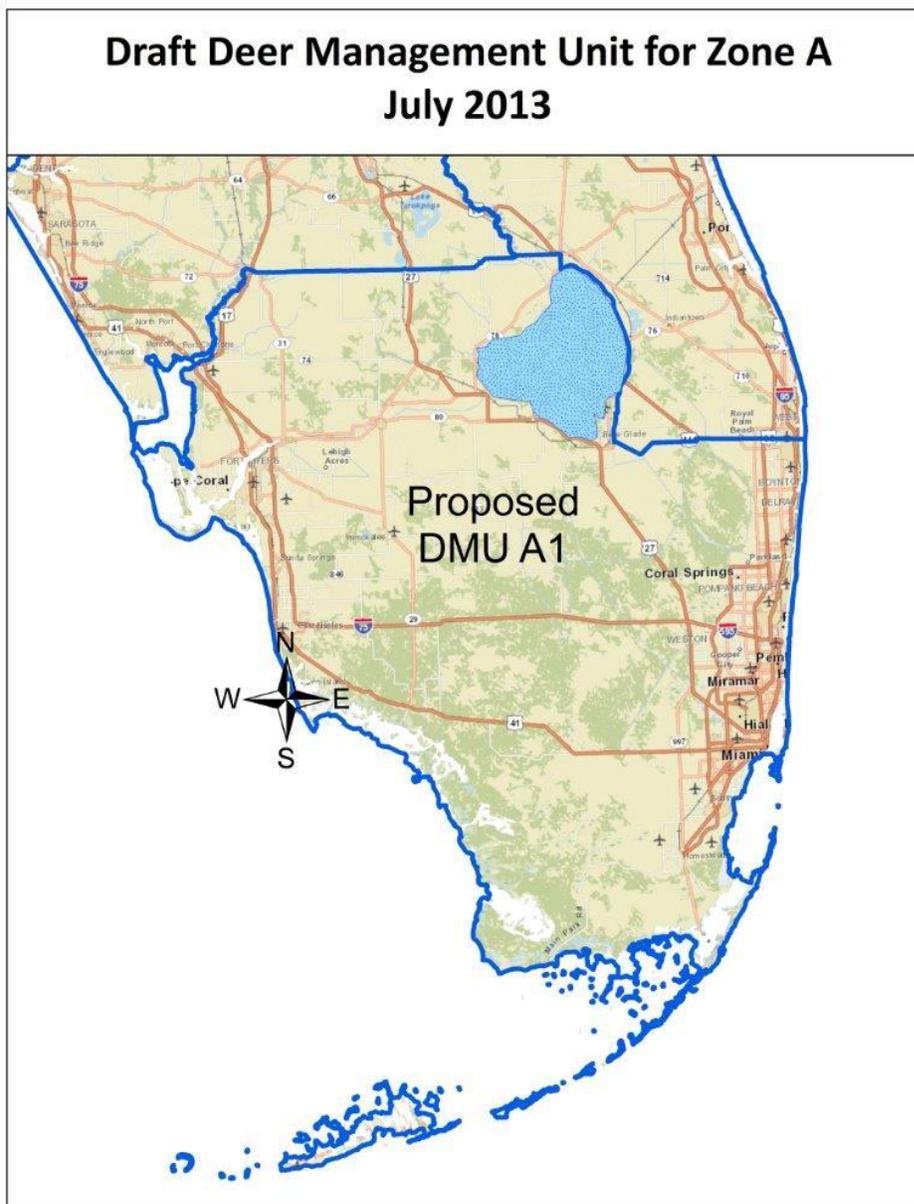


Figure 2–2. Proposed Deer Management Unit (DMU), DMU A-1

The timing of the rut varies quite dramatically within Florida. The peak of the rut in DMU A-1 ranges from June through September, and statewide it ranges from June through February. In general, deer in Florida are smaller than in other states, and there is also considerable difference in size within Florida with larger deer in the north and smaller deer in the south.

The Florida deer population has grown over the last half century resulting in an increased deer harvest over time (Figure 2-3). This increase is most likely due to a combination of harvest regulations, improved habitat and wildlife management practices, and effective law enforcement. Additionally the screw-worm, *Cochliomyia hominivorax* (*Coquerel*), which was considered responsible for limited deer herd growth in South Florida, was eradicated in 1958.

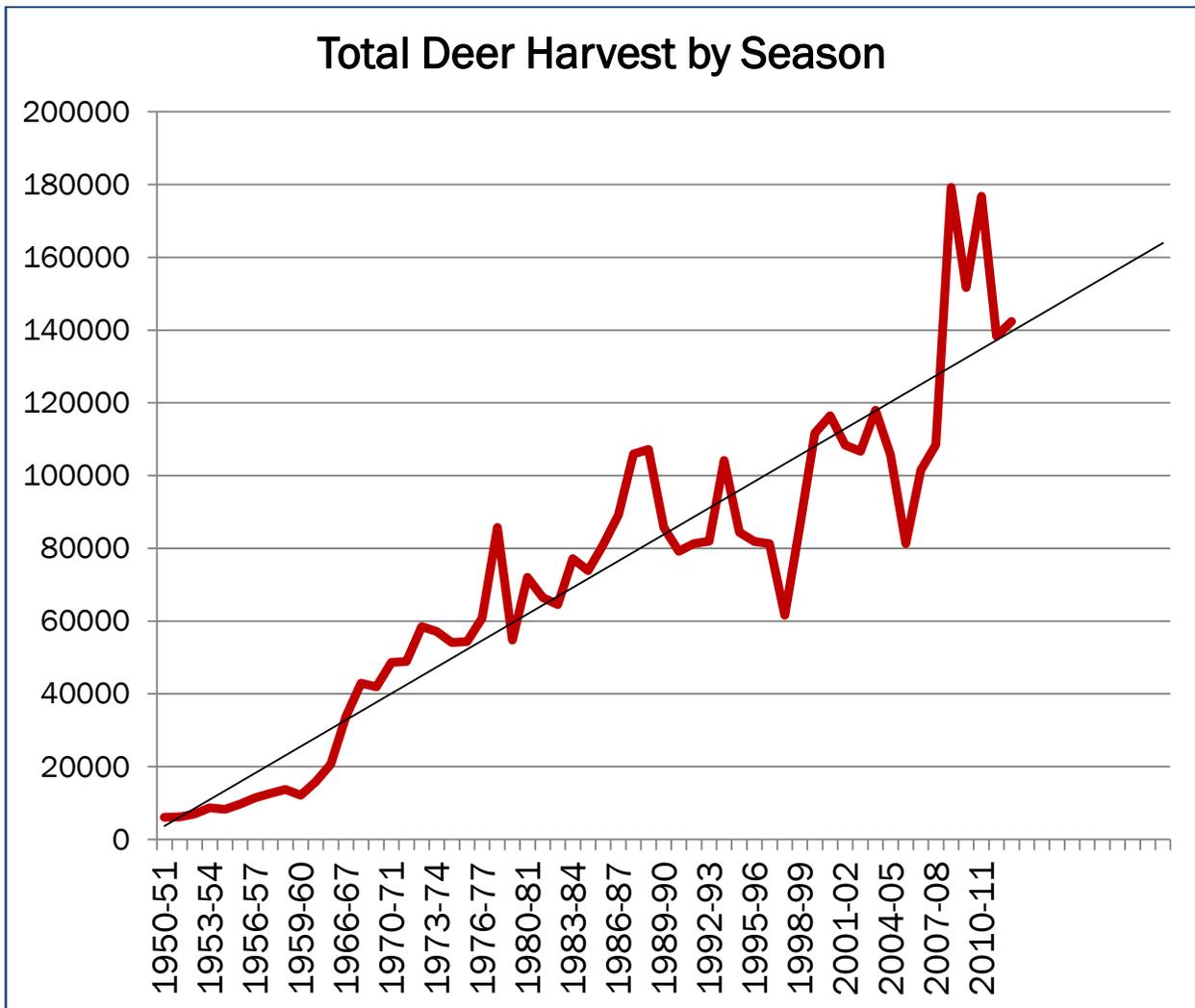


Figure 2-3. Estimated annual deer harvest in Florida since 1950.

3 Methods

The DMU outreach project used a multipronged approach to collect public input and then synthesize the information into suggested goals and objectives related to DMU A-1 deer management. The following section outlines the methods employed for project outreach.

3.1 Website

A web page was designed for the project and posted on the FWC website (www.myfwc.com/deer/dmu). The page has information on the program, links to a PowerPoint presentation, the online survey, and an opportunity to join an email list and receive future updates on deer management issues (Figure 3–1).

3.2 Statewide Opinion Survey

FWC contracted with Responsive Management, a professional survey company specializing in natural resource management issues, to conduct a statewide survey to determine the opinions of hunters, farmers, and residents about the deer population in Florida and the management of deer. In addition, the survey collected information from hunters to estimate deer harvest at the statewide, zone, DMU, and county levels for the 2011–2012 hunting season. Hunter effort (days hunted) was also estimated. The survey was conducted in November and December of 2012 via phone.

3.3 Online Survey

An online survey was developed using Survey Monkey software and made available on the FWC DMU website. The online survey was designed to collect feedback, ideas, and input from stakeholders. The survey can be found in Appendix 2.

3.4 Public Meetings

Three public meetings were held on 15, 16, and 17 July 2013 in Dania Beach, Clewiston, and Fort Myers, respectively. Considerable efforts were made to advertise the meeting dates and locations prior to the scheduled meetings.

3.5 Webinars

Two webinars were held on 23 July (10:30 am) and 25 July 2013 (1:00 pm). The purpose of the webinars was to allow additional opportunities for the public to learn about the proposed DMUs, ask questions, and provide comments. The webinars consisted of a PowerPoint presentation explaining the DMU process along with a method to submit questions and comments to the FWC. Six participants attended the webinars.

3.6 Technical Assistance Group (TAG)

A Technical Assistance Group (TAG) was assembled to consider all public comments and input collected from public meetings, webinars, and surveys, and then develop goals and objectives for DMU A-1. TAG participation in the process included two in-person meetings, one webinar, and review of documents between meetings. TAG member selection was based on subject

knowledge, group represented, willingness to represent other stakeholders, willingness to have open discussion about the issues, and availability for meetings.

3.7 Outreach

Extensive outreach was conducted to garner the participation and input needed for the project. Outreach efforts were designed to increase participation at the public meetings and webinars, to inform the public of the DMU stakeholder participation process, to provide information on proposed DMU, to solicit TAG membership applications, and to promote the availability of the online public survey. Outreach and methods included the following:

- Emails to the FWC deer management distribution list (approximately 47,000 email addresses primarily comprised of hunters)
- Postings on FWC's Facebook and Twitter sites
- Press releases (Appendix 1) to multiple news outlets in South Florida
- Outreach to IFAS extension agents and their contacts in South Florida
- Direct mail to all FWC Hunting & Fishing License Vendors in the FWC database (flyer in Appendix 1)
- Direct calls to land managers, state agencies, and wildlife managers

The screenshot shows the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Ask FWC, About, Contact, News, Calendar, Get Involved, Home, and a search box. The logo for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is on the left. Below the navigation bar, there are links for Fishing, Boating, Hunting, Licenses & Permits, Wildlife Viewing, Wildlife & Habitats, Research, Education, and Conservation. A 'Sign up for updates' button is also present.

The main content area is titled 'Deer Management Units (DMUs)'. On the left is a sidebar with various links: Regulations, WMA Brochures, Limited Entry/Quota Hunts, Season Dates & Bag Limits, Safety & Education, Persons with Disabilities, Outfitters & Guides, By Species (Alligator, Deer, DMUs, Dove Hotline, Quail, Small Game, Turkey, Waterfowl/Duck, Wild Hog), Outta' the Woods, Youth Opportunities, Misc. Hunting Links, Opened/Closed Areas, and WMA Harvest Reports.

The main content area features a survey titled 'Would you like a say in how White-tailed Deer populations are managed in Florida?'. Below the title are links for Zone A, Zone B, Zone C, and Zone D. The survey is titled 'Deer Management Attitude and Opinion Survey'. The text describes a statewide randomized telephone survey conducted by Responsive Management, aimed at gathering public attitudes and opinions on deer management. It notes that the results are reported by DMU in the final report. A note states that Zone A is now proposed to be a single DMU. A link 'back to top of page' is provided.

A map titled 'Zone A' shows a 'Proposed Change to Zones A and C June 2013'. The map highlights 'DMU A-1' and 'Public Lands' in green. A legend indicates that green areas represent Public Lands. A compass rose shows North, South, East, and West. Below the map, text explains that Zone A is proposed to be one DMU, the northern boundary is being changed to match breeding chronology, and cross-hatched areas are to be moved to Zone C.

Below the map is a section titled 'Comment on the proposed Zone A/C line change'. It includes a sub-section 'Public Input Process for Deer Management Units in Zone A: South Florida', stating that FWC is providing stakeholders with an opportunity to share their opinions on deer management. It lists specific areas of interest for feedback: Deer population management, Antlerless deer take opportunities, Antler regulations, Bag limits, and Other local deer issues.

Figure 3–1. Project web page on the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) website.

4 Results

4.1 Statewide Opinion Survey Results

Responsive Management conducted phone surveys during November and December of 2012 and collected a total of 4,872 completed responses. Of this total, 2,519 were completed by hunters, 1,183 by farmers, and 1,170 by residents (non-hunting, non-farming members of the public). Some key findings from the survey are presented below:

- There was general satisfaction with deer management among all three groups—hunters 65% (25% dissatisfied), farmers 56% (14% dissatisfied), and residents 42% (8% dissatisfied).
- Among hunter motivations, time spent outdoors and with family and friends ranked highest. Seeing deer was also ranked as a higher motivation than harvesting deer.
- There was opposition to bag limits being imposed for the number of bucks that can be harvested—78% oppose a one-buck bag limit and 54% oppose a two-buck bag limit. As higher bag limits were suggested, the level of opposition and support began to even out.
- The vast majority of hunters practice still hunting with firearms (over 90%), while close to two-thirds hunt with archery equipment and muzzleloaders. Only about one-fifth of hunters use crossbows or dogs.
- Farmers and residents are generally supportive of hunting as an effective population control tool for deer.

Most hunters in DMU A-1 are still hunters, and most hunt on public land. Participation in hunting in DMU A-1 based on hunting methods and the ownership of lands being hunted is shown in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1. Hunting Participation in DMU A-1 (South Florida)*

		DMU A-1
Hunting Method	Still Hunting	94%
	Dog Hunting	11%
Land Type	Private	34%
	Public	52%
	Both	15%

*Numbers do not add to 100% as hunters could select more than one option.

Table 4-2 shows the estimated deer harvest for all DMUs statewide. Note that when the survey was conducted, South Florida was divided into two DMUs (numbered 1 and 2). The data in Table 4-2 indicate that DMUs 1 and 2 have some of the lower amounts of overall harvest per

hunter in the state. For DMUs 1 and 2 combined (now DMU A-1), bucks per hunter averaged 0.41, does per hunter averaged 0.21, and total harvest per hunter averaged .62. Statewide the estimate was 0.72 bucks per hunter, 0.43 does per hunter, and an overall success rate of 1.16 deer per hunter.

Table 4–2. Estimated number of deer harvested per hunter: 2012–2013 Responsive Management Statewide Deer Harvest Survey.

Number of Deer Harvested Per Hunter: 2012-2013			
DMU	Total Buck Per Hunter	Total Doe Per Hunter	Total Harvest Per Hunter
Hunted in DMU 1	0.48	0.26	0.74
Hunted in DMU 2	0.34	0.15	0.49
Hunted in DMU 3	0.49	0.28	0.77
Hunted in DMU 4	0.59	0.34	0.93
Hunted in DMU 5	0.44	0.20	0.64
Hunted in DMU 6	0.70	0.28	0.99
Hunted in DMU 7	0.61	0.27	0.88
Hunted in DMU 8	0.75	0.50	1.25
Hunted in DMU 9	0.71	0.50	1.21
Hunted in DMU 10	0.67	0.51	1.18
Hunted in DMU 11	0.77	0.57	1.34
Not sure which DMU hunted in	0.18	0.11	0.29
Statewide	0.72	0.43	1.16

Table 4–3 shows the estimated number of bucks harvested per hunter statewide. The estimate column indicates that over 47,000 bucks were likely harvested during the 2012–2013 hunting season. Most hunters did not harvest any bucks. Of those that did harvest a buck, most only harvested one.

Table 4–3. Number of bucks harvested statewide by hunters: 2012–2013 Responsive Management Statewide Deer Harvest Survey.

Number of Bucks Harvested Statewide by Hunters: 2012-2013			
Number of Bucks Harvested	Estimated Number of Deer Hunters		
	Estimate	Lower Bound (95% CI)	Upper Bound (95% CI)
Did not harvest any bucks	75,013	73,117	76,908
1 buck	25,945	24,359	27,531
2 bucks	12,560	11,383	13,737
3 bucks	5,124	4,348	5,901
4 bucks	2,210	1,693	2,726
5 bucks	867	542	1,192
6 bucks	475	234	716
7 bucks	246	72	420
8 bucks	237	67	408
9 bucks	137	7	266
10 or more bucks	137	7	267
Statewide	122,949	121,023	124,876

Table 4–4 shows the estimated number of bucks harvested in DMU A-1 by hunters during the 2012–2013 hunting season. The data indicate that the vast majority of hunters either did not harvest a buck or harvested just one or two. The total number of bucks harvested in DMU A-1 was estimated at approximately 17,388.

Table 4–4. Number of bucks harvested in Deer Management Unit (DMU) A-1 by hunters: 2012–2013 Responsive Management Statewide Deer Management Survey.

Number of Bucks Harvested	Estimated Number of Deer Hunters		
	Estimate	Lower Bound (95% CI)	Upper Bound (95% CI)
Did not harvest any bucks	12,562	11,639	13,486
1 buck	3,230	2,427	4,034
2 bucks	1,245	712	1,778
3 bucks	261	39	505
4 bucks	69	0	196
5 bucks	21	0	92
6 bucks	0	0	0
7 bucks	0	0	0
8 bucks	0	0	0
9 bucks	0	0	0
10 or more bucks	0	0	0
Statewide	17,388	15,405	19,371

Results of the statewide survey show that 63% of hunters are somewhat or very satisfied with deer management overall in the state of Florida; and 27% are somewhat or very dissatisfied. Satisfaction outweighs dissatisfaction, but close to 25% of hunters reported dissatisfaction. The primary reasons given for satisfaction included plenty of deer, good chances of getting deer, and the opinion that FWC is generally doing a good job with deer management. The primary reasons given for dissatisfaction included that there are not enough deer, buck to doe ratio was not good, and dislike some aspect of the regulations.

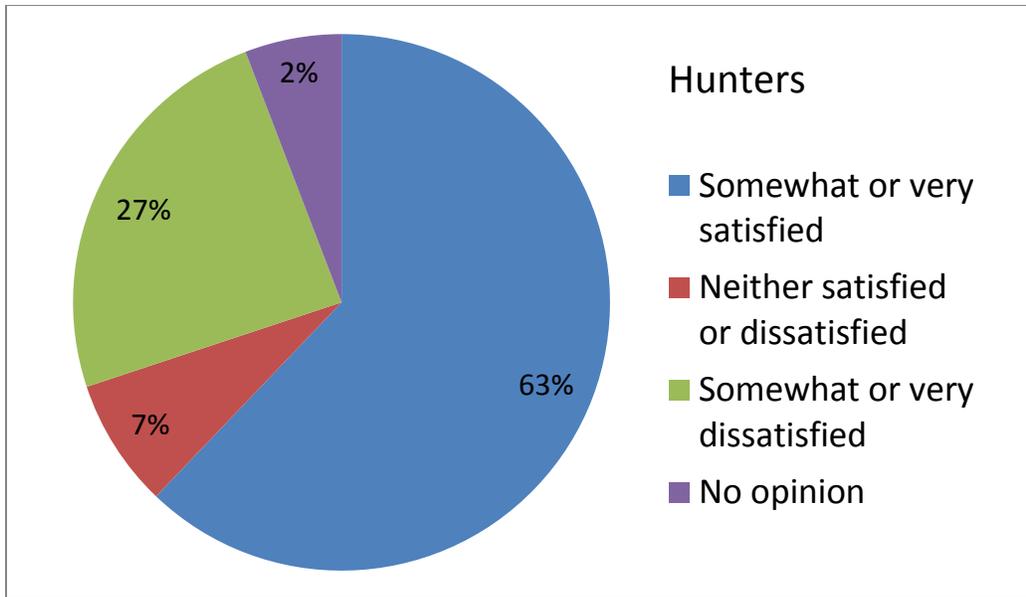


Figure 4–1. Level of satisfaction with the deer population in DMU A-1 among hunters.

According to the Responsive Management 2012 survey, 45% of farmers in DMU A-1 perceive that the deer population is about the right size, while 31% of residents felt the population is about the right size. Forty six percent of residents and 34% of farmers felt the deer population size was too low. These results are summarized in Figure 4–2.

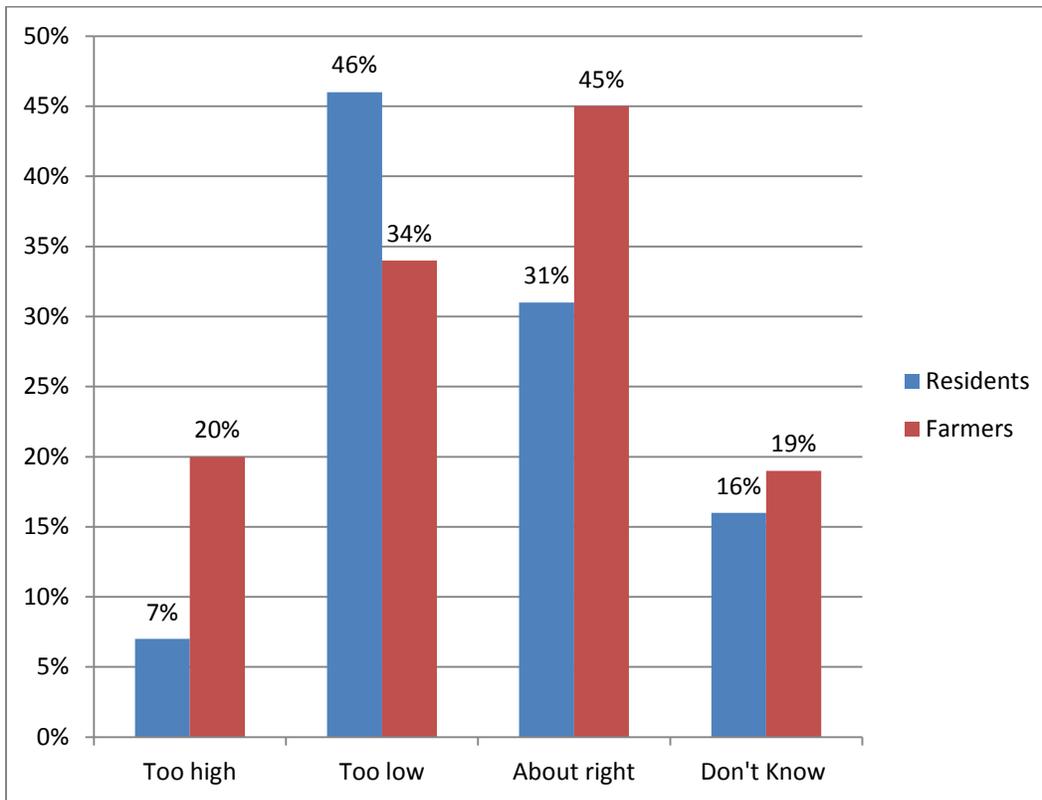


Figure 4–2. Opinions on the deer population where participants live or farm.

In DMU A-1, opinions differ among hunters, farmers, and residents on whether FWC should work to increase the deer population, keep it the same, or decrease it (Figure 4–3). The majority of hunters in DMU A-1 want to see the deer population increased, while about a third of the hunters would like to see the herd stay the same size, and very few hunters want to see the deer population decreased. The majority of farmers in DMU A-1 want to see the deer population stay the same, about a quarter would like to see the population increase, and very few farmers would like to see the herd size decrease. Very few residents in DMU A-1 want to see the herd decreased, while about half the residents want to see the herd stay the same size, and a third of the residents would like to see the herd increased.

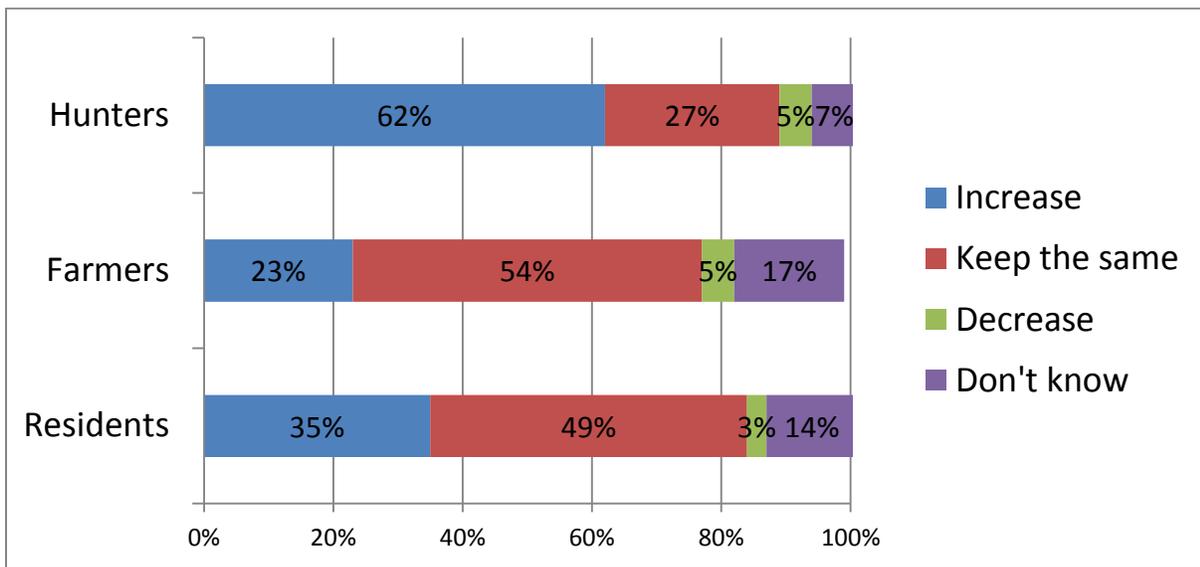


Figure 4–3. Opinions of hunters, residents, and farmers on how they would like to see the deer population trend in next five years.

Hunters were asked about bag limits for bucks. Figure 4–4 shows that support was highest for a two buck limit- 51%.

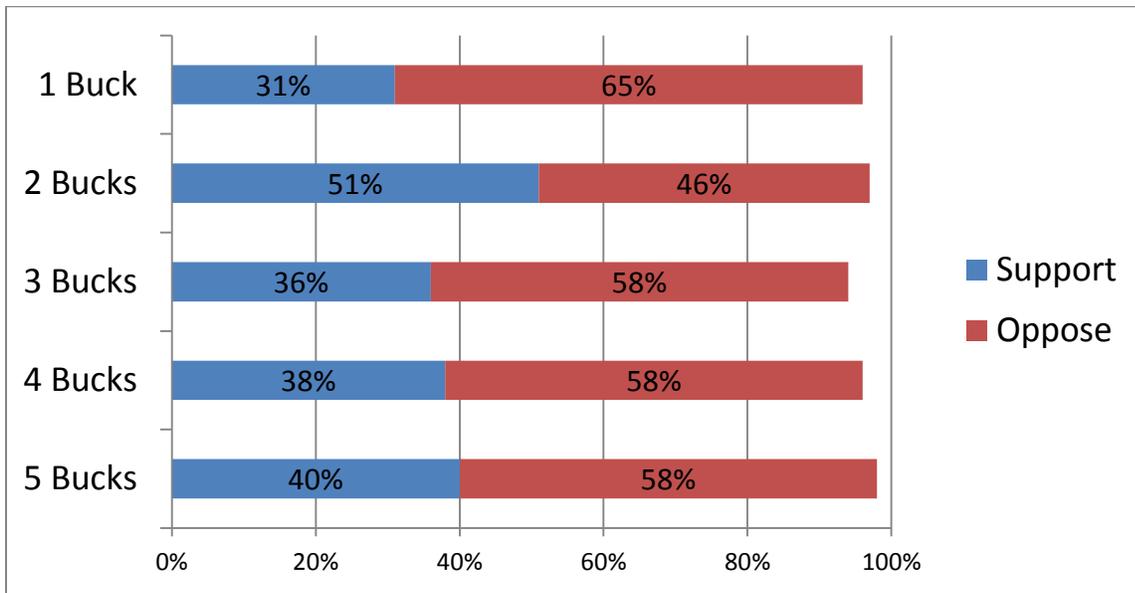


Figure 4–4. Support and opposition among hunters for buck bag limits.

Hunters were also asked if they would support antler point regulations designed to increase the number of large bodied, large antlered bucks. In DMU A-1, 70% of hunters supported this idea, while 20% opposed the idea. To follow up on this question, hunters were asked if they would prefer mandatory regulations or voluntary actions. There was significantly more support for voluntary actions as shown in Figure 4–5.

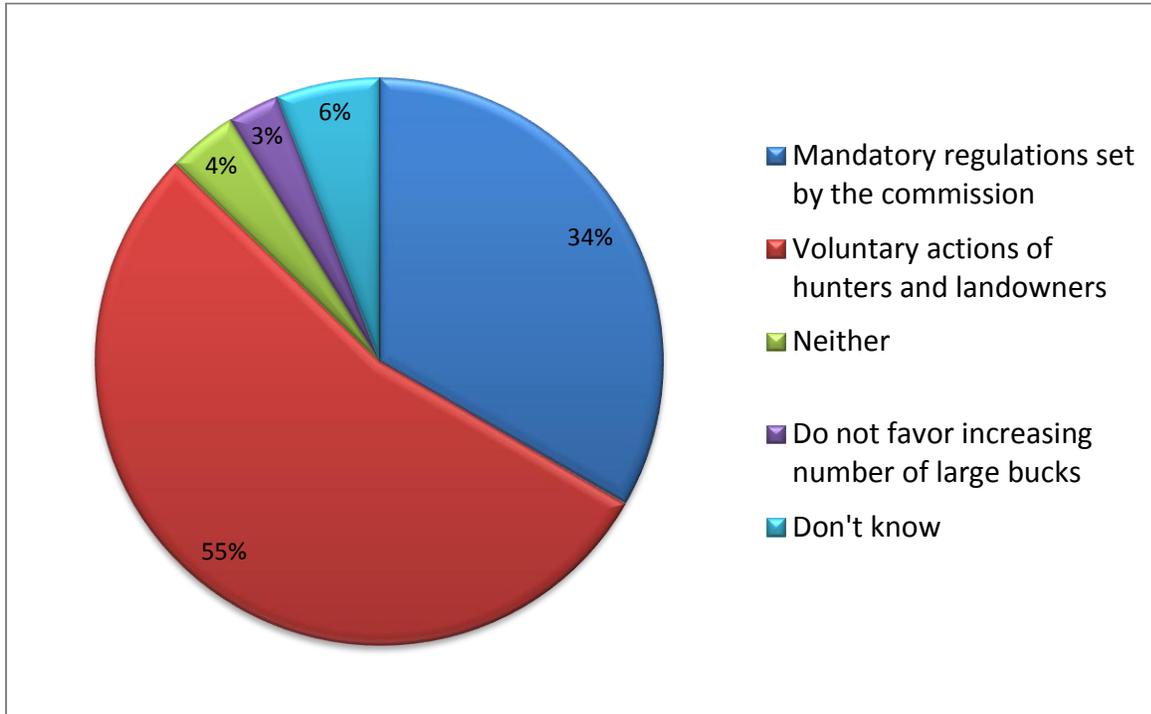


Figure 4–5. Hunter preference for mandatory regulations (such as antler point regulations) versus voluntary actions to increase the numbers of large bodied, large antlered bucks.

The deer depredation permit program was introduced in the late 1970s as a tool for farmers to help minimize crop losses caused by deer depredation. As the deer population increased, farmers experienced crop depredation (losses from deer eating crops) and needed a system to prevent large financial losses. A depredation permit allows hunters to take (kill) deer that are on croplands. In 2006, FWC issued more than 325 permits to farmers for deer depredation on 154,178 acres. Deer depredation is not a major issue of concern in DMU A-1, only 5.8% of farmers in DMU A-1 reported incurring damage from deer on crops in the past five years.

The 2012 statewide survey elicited information about deer and vehicle collisions among residents and farmers in DMU A-1. On a scale of 0 to 10, farmers indicated a concern of 4.03, and residents indicated a concern of 4.41. The same respondents indicated the number of deer and vehicle collisions they had experienced: 4% of the farmers reported a collision with a deer within the last five years, and 1% of the residents reported a collision within the last five years.

According to accident statistics received from the Florida Highway Patrol, collisions with animals (no separate entry for deer) represent a minor cause of vehicle accidents. Statewide data for 2010, indicate there were three fatalities (0.1% of total fatalities), 272 injuries (0.11% of total

injuries), and 289 instances of accidents that only involved property damage (0.25% of total accidents). There may be many more accidents involving animals on the highways that go unreported. Motorists choose to report these types of accidents primarily to law enforcement and insurance companies based on calls for assistance and claims for property damage. Where neither is needed, the accident is likely to go unreported.

According to information posted online by State Farm Insurance, out of 50 states, Florida ranked 47th and 48th in 2010–2011 and 2011–2012, respectively for the likelihood of vehicle collisions with deer. This likely reflects the fact that Florida’s deer population is lower than in most other states. State Farm also projected the level of risk for 2011–2012 at 14,082 deer-related collisions in Florida, with the individual risk of any particular motorist hitting a deer being close to 1 in 1,000.

4.2 Online Survey Results

Normandeau designed an online survey to collect public input and located it on the DMU website. References to the availability of the survey were made in all printed materials and during all meetings and webinars. Seventy-four people participated in the survey over the six-week period that the survey was open. The majority of participants (92%) were hunters. Only 5.5% were farmers; and 42.5% identified themselves as Florida residents. This number is most likely misleading since many respondents only gave one answer to the question (e.g., identified themselves as hunters), and some gave more than one answer (e.g., identified themselves as hunters and residents). Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could indicate more than one affiliation (Figure 4–6).

		Response Percent	Response Count
Hunter		91.8%	67
Farmer		5.5%	4
Florida resident		42.5%	31
Other		1.4%	1

Figure 4–6. Percentage of hunters, farmers, and residents who answered the online survey.

Respondents were asked about how they felt about the deer population in DMU A-1. Twenty-nine percent felt it was just right; 65.3% felt it was too low; and 1.4% felt it was too high (Figure 4–7).

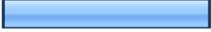
		Response Percent	Response Count
Too high		1.4%	1
Too low		65.3%	47
About right		29.2%	21
No Opinion		4.2%	3

Figure 4–7. Online survey results about the deer population in DMU A-1.

When asked how they would like to see the deer population to be in the next five years, the majority (84.7%) indicated they would like to see more deer. Only 12.5% wanted to see the same amount of deer (Figure 4–8).

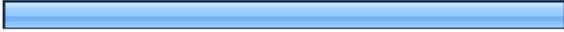
		Response Percent	Response Count
Larger		84.7%	61
Smaller		0.0%	0
Same size as now		12.5%	9
No Opinion		2.8%	2

Figure 4–8. Participant responses when asked how they would like to see the deer population in DMU A-1 in the next five years.

When asked if they would support additional antlerless deer harvest days during the general gun or muzzleloading gun seasons, 42.9% of survey participants in DMU A-1 would support additional antlerless opportunities during general gun season. There was less support (34.3%) for antlerless deer harvest days during the muzzleloading gun season; and 31.4% would not support additional antlerless deer days (Figure 4–9).

		Response Percent	Response Count
Muzzleloading gun season		34.3%	24
General gun season		42.9%	30
I do not support additional antlerless deer days		31.4%	22
No opinion		10.0%	7

Figure 4–9. Participant support of additional antlerless deer harvest days during general gun or muzzleloading gun seasons.

When asked about support for buck bag limits, over 58% of respondents say that they would support bag limits of two or three deer; and only 5.6% would not support any bag limits (Figure 4–10).

		Response Percent	Response Count
I would not support any bag limits		5.6%	4
No opinion		5.6%	4
1 deer		9.9%	7
2 deer		40.8%	29
3 deer		18.3%	13
4 deer		4.2%	3
5 deer		1.4%	1
Special bag limit for Zone A only		5.6%	4
Other bag limit, please specify.		8.5%	6

Figure 4–10. Participant support of buck bag limits.

Mandatory antler regulations received wide support from respondents. Over 72% in DMU A-1 supported antler regulations to increase the number of bucks in the population including larger-bodied and larger-antlered deer (Figure 4–11).

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I support antler regulations		72.2%	52
No, I do not support antler regulations		25.0%	18
No Opinion		2.8%	2

Figure 4–11. Participant support of mandatory antler regulations that would increase the number of bucks in the deer population.

4.3 Public Meeting Results

The public meetings went well; however, the attendance was lower than hoped, with just over 70 people attending the three meetings. Participants engaged in active dialogue about deer management. The majority of attendees were hunters, and there were some farmers and representatives of the farming community present at the meetings. Most of the farm community representatives were also hunters.

The largest meeting was in Dania Beach with just over 45 people. Each meeting began with introductions followed by a presentation from FWC Deer Management Program Coordinator Cory Morea about the strategic plan for deer management in Florida and the purpose of the proposed DMUs in helping the FWC to better manage deer at a more local level based on public preferences within acceptable biological sideboards. Following this presentation, Christine Denny of Normandeau summarized the findings from Responsive Management's statewide phone survey of hunters, farmers, and residents and then facilitated the collection of public comments. The agenda for the public meetings can be viewed in Appendix 1.

Each public meeting was organized to ensure maximum input from attendees through the use of rotational breakout groups (a methodology also known as World Café). Tables representing key topics (e.g., antler restrictions, bag limits, antlerless deer harvest, negative deer interactions, and local issues) were placed around the room. An FWC staff member was stationed at each table to record stakeholder comments on note cards. Cards were collected from each public meeting for compilation and analysis by Normandeau staff.

All attendees had the opportunity to join at least four separate breakout group tables and provide comments. After the breakout group portion of the meeting, all attendees had the opportunity to provide comments and ask questions at a microphone. All attendees also had the opportunity to fill out a TAG application. Since attendance in Clewiston and Ft. Myers was low, the breakout group method was not used and participants discussed the topics as one group.

The rotational breakout group methodology used generated many comments. A summary of these comments are presented below in Table 4–5, which is organized based on the different topic areas that attendees were discussing in the different breakout groups. Comments were grouped based on similarity, and the number of comments received expressing that same idea is presented in the last column.

Table 4–5. Summarized Comments from Public Meetings for Deer Management Unit A-1

Location	Topic	Comment	Number Making Comment
Clewiston	Antler Regulations	Limit harvest on 8-point bucks	1
Clewiston	Antler Regulations	Allow harvest of spikes	1
Clewiston	Antler Regulations	Too many spikes are shot	1
Dania and Clewiston	Antler Regulations	3 points on side, increase age and size, antler restrictions	7
Ft Myers	Antler Harvest	Concerns with season	2

Location	Topic	Comment	Number Making Comment
Ft Myers	Antler Harvest	Less does	1
Ft Myers	Antler Harvest	Keep season the same	1
Ft Myers	Antler Harvest	Big Cypress—No antlerless deer harvest.	3
Ft Myers	Antler Regulations	5 points on a side	1
Ft Myers	Antler Regulations	Increase buck population	1
Ft Myers	Antler Regulations	Don't shoot first year deer	1
Ft Myers, Dania	Antler Regulations	Forked antler regulations	2
Ft Myers, Dania, Clewiston	Antler Regulations	Simplify management regulations	3
Dania, Clewiston	Antler Regulations	DMU coverage issues	2
Dania	Antler Regulations	Need antlerless season	2
Dania	Antlerless Harvest	Need more data	4
Dania, Ft Myers	Antlerless Harvest	Moratorium on doe harvest	3
Dania	Antlerless Harvest	Change doe season	1
Dania	Antlerless Harvest	Doesn't make sense to harvest does on Dinner Island	1
Dania	Antlerless Harvest	Issues with antlerless permit applications	1
Dania	Antlerless Harvest	Many does on Dinner Island during no hunting	1
Dania	Antlerless Harvest	Why issues doe harvest in south region/zone versus central zone?	1
Dania	Antlerless Harvest	Concerned that deer are being conserved for panther population	1
Dania	Bag Limits	Bag limits, 1 per year	2
Dania	Bag Limits	No bag limits	2
Dania	Antlerless Harvest	Quota for doe harvest	2
Ft Meyers	Bag Limits	More bucks needed—bag limit okay	6
Dania	Bag Limits	Questions/comments about bag limits—monitoring and enforcement	5
Dania, Clewiston	Deer Population	Mandatory harvest reporting	6
Dania	Bag Limits	Statewide limit of 4 per year	2
Dania	Bag Limits	Not essential to hunt during rut in South Florida	1
Ft Meyers	Deer Population	Taking too many does will affect next year's fawn crop	1
Ft Meyers	Deer Population	Concerns about decrease in general gun hunt days	1

Location	Topic	Comment	Number Making Comment
Ft Meyers, Dania	Deer Population	Population is low	6
Ft Meyers	Deer Population	Fire ant control needed	1
Ft Meyers	Deer Population	Population just right	1
Ft Meyers	Issues	Chronic Wasting Disease—ban importation	1
Dania, Ft Meyers	Issues	Issues/questions with different regulations for private and public land	5
Ft Meyers	Issues	Crop depredation	1
Ft Meyers, Dania	Local Issues	Big Cypress access, season length, earlier start, later finish	4
Ft Meyers, Dania	Local Issues	Okay with season as it	4
Ft Meyers	Local Issues	Bobcat predation	2
Dania	Local Issues	Poor hunter ethics	1
Dania	Local Issues	Would like smaller minimum acreage in private landowner category, i.e., 2,000 acres	1
Dania	Local Issues	Zone change—concerns that it will affect turkey hunting	1
Dania	Antler Regulations	Big Cypress 6 or 8 point or better	1
Dania	Local Issues	Season needs to start earlier	2
Dania	Local Issues	Season needs to start later	1
Dania	Local Issues	Concerned that Water Management District (Area 3) increase in water levels conflicts with deer habitat	1
Dania	Local Issues	Youth hunting needs to open prior to official season (10 to 15 year olds only)	1
Dania	Local Issues	Better habitat management being realistic about expectations— quality management versus open opportunity	1

Some conclusions can be made based on the public meeting comments collected regarding DMU A-1.

- There is a desire to see the overall deer population increase.
- There is some support for a buck bag limit.
- Habitat issues are important.
- There is support for antler point regulations to increase the number of bucks.
- There are concerns about the doe population being low and antlerless deer season allowing too much harvest of does.
- There were issues and questions about the different regulations for private and public land.

4.4 Technical Assistant Group (TAG) Results

There were 22 TAG membership applications, and 14 people were chosen to serve, representing hunters and hunting outreach and education program managers. The list of TAG members is presented in

Table 4–6. Selection was based on subject knowledge, group represented, willingness to represent other stakeholders, willingness to have open discussion about the issues, and availability for meetings. Two members were selected from the statewide Deer Management Technical Assistance Group (DMTAG) to provide input and act as a liaison between the DMU TAG and the DMTAG. Most applications came from attendees at the three public meetings, and some were received online from the FWC website. The two in-person TAG meetings were held on Thursday, 29 August 2013 and Thursday, 12 September 2013 at the John Boy Auditorium in Clewiston and at the Clewiston Youth Center, respectively. A third webinar-based meeting was held on 26 September 2013.

The purpose of the first TAG meeting was to consider and discuss public comments received at the three public meetings as well as the findings from the two surveys, and to assist in formulating deer population and other deer management/hunting heritage goals for managing the DMU. The TAG members were enthusiastic and discussion was respectful and productive. The meeting included the following:

- Presentation and review of public comments and public survey results
- Discussion of deer management topics that should be considered
- Development of draft goals for DMU A-1

The meeting resulted in a list of draft goals, which were sent to TAG members for review prior to the second TAG meeting.

The second TAG meeting was designed to finalize goals and draft objectives for managing DMU A-1. The meeting included the following:

- Discussion and refining of draft goals from the first meeting
- Discussion and drafting of objectives to achieve goals

Meetings were conducted in a participatory format, with TAG members working in small groups to discuss and consider goals and objectives for deer management in DMU A-1. Group discussion was used to come to consensus on all recommendations.

Table 4–6. Members of the Technical Assistance Group (TAG)

Name	Affiliation	County (Residence and Hunting)
Tony Wallace	Hunter	Palm Beach, Collier, Martin, Osceola, Lake, Pasco

Name	Affiliation	County (Residence and Hunting)
John Aspiolea	Hunter	Charlotte
Bob Kirstein	Hunter	Hendry
Wayne C. Zahn	Hunter, ranch manager	Glades, Highlands
Tyler W. Mosteller	Hunter, ranch manager	Glades, Highlands
Ryan Frierson	Hunter	Palm Beach (but also other WMAs in the south region)
Lyle McCandless	Hunter, Statewide Deer Management Technical Assistance Group (DMTAG) member representative	Not reported
Clyde Lavender	Rancher	Not reported
Melissa Hennig	Hunting program manager	Collier
Marco Espinar	Hunter, hunting program manager	Collier, Glades
Fred Dyess	Hunter	Hendry
Jesse C. Lee	Hunter	Hendry
Dale Albritton	Hunter	Polk, Hendry
Patrick McDonald	Hunter	Miami-Dade

5 Summary of First Deer Management Unit (DMU) Technical Assistance Group (TAG) Meeting

Meeting Date: August 29, 2013

Location: Beasley Room at the John Boy Auditorium, 1200 South WC Owens Ave., Clewiston, Florida 33440

In attendance:

TAG Members: Ryan Frierson, Fred Dyess, Tony Wallace, Lyle McCandless, Marco Espinar, Melissa Hennig, Jesse Lee, John Aspiolea, Clyde Lavender, Tyler Mosteller, Wayne Zahn, Dale Albritton, Patrick McDonald

FWC Staff: Cory Morea, Jeff Ardelean, Wesley Seitz, Dave Onorato, Daniel Mitchell, Brandon Schad

Facilitation: Christine Denny, Normandeau Associates, Inc.

Topics Identified in Initial Discussion

The TAG was given a presentation on the results of the online and statewide survey and they reviewed all public comments from the public meetings, online survey, and written public comment forms. The TAG was then asked to talk about the big picture topics they felt were important to consider when developing deer management goals and objectives. The following is a list of the topics the TAG discussed.

- Shortage of and need for enforcement.
- Tag and reporting system.
- Increase penalties for poaching.
- Regulations public vs. private very different.
- Land management e.g.: lack of burning, exotic treatment by agencies could be more.
- Balancing opportunity for antlerless harvest while keeping the population up.
- Predation - how to increase deer population with increased predators.
- Water levels.
- Roles of different agencies.
- Poachers and hunters going over bag limit unethical hunters - increase penalties.
- APR to protect younger age class bucks and increase overall buck population. Difference between public and private?
- Statewide buck bag limit?
- Overall deer population level increase, decrease, or stay the same?
- Funding for habitat restoration and management.
- Education for hunters, youth re: deer management alternatives, hunting regulations, purpose for, etc. general deer management.
- Increase opportunities for youth hunts on public lands and better promotion of existing hunts.
- Access, ORVs - carrying capacity in big cypress.
- Research - Increase understanding relationship exotics to deer population.

Important Topics Identified by Technical Assistance Group (TAG) Break-out Groups

After the TAG completed discussion of big picture topics, they broke into three groups and were asked to develop a more specific list of topics that could be turned into goals. The following are the resulting topics by group:

Raise population	Group A
Bag limit: 3–4 deer; 1-bow, 1-crossbow, 1-muzzloading, 1-general	Group A
Fork horn for general public 5" or better on youth hunts	Group A
Deer management information needed in hunter education class	Group A
Tagging system statewide	Group A
Increase overall deer population in DMU A-1	Group B
Increase youth participation in hunting (youth hunts; education)	Group B
Develop a statewide tagging/reporting system	Group B
Increase hunter satisfaction	Group B
Increase deer population	Group C
Education about deer management	Group C
Interagency/coordination private owners	Group C
Improve access and navigation	Group C

Technical Assistance Group (TAG) Draft Goals for DMU A-1

TAG members selected goals they wanted to develop and worked together in small groups to write goals for each of the topics. Goals were discussed as a group and updated via consensus methods. The following are the resulting goals:

- Goal 1: Increase overall deer population. Recommend overarching goal of increasing hunter satisfaction.
- Goal 2: To have two-antlered-bucks-per-season bag limit to ensure a sustainable population for future seasons.
- Goal 3: Develop an advertising campaign to educate the public on the benefits of new and existing rules, regulations, and penalties for hunting in Florida.
- Goal 4: Increase sustained youth participation in hunting and outdoor activities including liberalizing hunting rules.
 - Youth hunts prior to opening regular season
 - Antlerless deer allowed
- Goal 5: Convene a working group responsible for deer management concerns specific to DMU A-1 (e.g., monitoring, research, habitat management, harvest data) comprised of interagency personnel and various stakeholders.
- Goal 6: Implement a system to get an accurate account of the deer harvest statewide.
- Goal 7: Improve habitat on public lands. Leasing state lands for cattle, conducting burns, and improving vehicle access.
- Goal 8: Implement harvest regulations to protect 1.5-year age class bucks.

Goal Topics Resulting from Group Discussion

The TAG turned the groups' lists of topics into a condensed list of goal topics. The purpose of this list was to provide baseline concept from which a goal would be created.

	Corresponding Goal Number
Hunter satisfaction increase deer population	1
Create bag limit to improve populations and to create sustainable population	2
Increase hunter acceptance and understanding of regulations through education	3
Connect youth to environment and increase recruitment hunting and environmental safety	4
Improve interagency and stakeholder coordination and collaboration	5
Create system to monitor harvest of deer statewide	6
Improve habitat on public and private lands	7
Implement regulations/actions to protect 1.5-year age class	8

6 Summary of Second Deer Management Unit (DMU) Technical Assistance Group (TAG) Meeting

Meeting Date: September 12, 2013

Location: Clewiston Youth Center, 110 W. Osceola Ave., Clewiston, FL 33440

In attendance:

TAG Members: Ryan Frierson, Fred Dyess, Tony Wallace, Lyle McCandless, Marco Espinar, Melissa Hennig, Jesse Lee, John Aspiolea, Clyde Lavender, Tyler Mosteller, Wayne Zahn, Patrick McDonald

FWC Staff: Cory Morea, Jeff Ardelean, Wesley Seitz, Dave Onorato, Daniel Mitchell, Brandon Schad, Darrell Land

Facilitation: Christine Denny, Normandeau Associates, Inc.

The meeting began with discussion of the goals produced during the first TAG meeting (agenda in Appendix 3). Goals were refined and accepted via consensus by the TAG through facilitated group discussion. Following finalizing goals, the TAG broke into small groups and drafted Objectives for each goal. Groups presented their objectives to the whole TAG, and they were refined and accepted via discussion and TAG consensus.

Final Draft Goals and Objectives

Overarching Goal: To increase hunter satisfaction through deer management objectives intended to create a balanced and sustainable deer population in DMU A-1.

Goal 1: Increase the overall deer population in DMU A-1.

Objectives

- Implement a tagging and reporting system to get an ongoing, accurate account of the annual deer harvest statewide.
- Implement an antler restriction to protect the majority of 1.5-year-old bucks, while allowing the harvest of bucks at least 2.5 years old.
- Implement an annual or seasonal buck bag limit to increase the buck population.
 - Recommend considering an annual two- or three-buck bag limit.
- Decrease doe harvest to increase fawn production.

Goal 2: Preservation of hunting heritage and traditions through increasing hunting opportunities and educational programs for both youth and adults.

Objectives

- Develop a comprehensive plan to include the most effective outreach programs and communications methods currently being used to reach potential youth hunters.
 - Explore opportunities for partnering with school districts to provide hunter safety and education courses.
- Partner with local organizations (e.g., 4H, Extension, Scouts, FFA) to increase potential youth and adult hunter exposure.
 - Mentor programs
- Improve education of hunters regarding deer biology, hunting regulations, and habitat management in South Florida.

- Create simple brochure about deer reproduction/ hunting regulations, etc.
- Explore expanding opportunities for family/youth hunts on public lands.

Goal 3 Manage habitat on private and public lands to support a higher deer density in DMU A-1.

Objectives

- Improve habitat on public and private lands by increasing habitat management activities to levels above what is currently being done.
 - Increase burn acreages
 - Increase acreage of exotic plant species control
 - Evaluate the potential to use other methods of land management on public lands (e.g., cattle leases)
- Increase interagency and stakeholder collaboration
 - Assess the amount and quality of deer habitat in DMU A-1
 - Convene a working group responsible for DMU A-1-specific deer management concerns (e.g., monitoring, research, habitat management, harvest data) comprised of interagency personnel and various stakeholders.
- Improve access to public lands.
 - Increase pedestrian access points
 - Increase vehicular (including off-road vehicles [ORVs]) access points including roads and trails open to vehicular traffic
 - Increase vehicular hunting opportunities

Goal 4: Implement a statewide deer tagging and reporting system on private and public lands.

Objectives

- Use tagging data to develop an accurate annual harvest record to ensure a continual sustainable deer harvest.
- Increase accountability and compliance with harvest regulations by requiring hunters to tag deer.
- Promote equitable harvest opportunities for hunters through the use of a tag and reporting system.

7 Summary of Technical Assistance Group (TAG) Conference Call

A conference call was held on 26 September 2013 with FWC staff, Normandeau staff, and TAG members. The group discussed the goals and objectives and came to consensus on the following final suggested deer management goals and objectives for FWC to consider:

Overarching Goal: To increase hunter satisfaction through deer management practices designed to achieve a balanced and sustainable deer population in DMU A-1.

Goal 1: Increase the overall deer population in DMU A-1.

Objectives

- Implement an antler restriction to protect the majority of 1.5-year-old bucks while allowing the harvest of bucks at least 2.5 years old.
- Implement an annual or seasonal buck bag limit to increase the buck population.
 - Recommend considering an annual two- or three-buck bag limit statewide.
- Decrease doe harvest to increase the deer population.

Goal 2: Preserve hunting heritage and traditions by increasing hunting opportunities and educational programs for youth and adults.

Objectives

- Develop a comprehensive plan to promote the most effective outreach programs and communication methods currently being used to reach potential youth hunters.
 - Consider alternative approaches such as electronic games, social media, etc.
- Partner with local organizations (4-H, county extension offices, Boy Scouts of America, Future Farmers of America, school districts, etc.) to increase exposure of youth and adults to hunting.
- Improve hunter education about South Florida deer biology, hunting regulations, and habitat management.
- Expand opportunities for family and youth hunts on public lands.

Goal 3: Promote deer habitat management practices that are compatible with the needs of diverse native wildlife species and humans on private and public lands.

Objectives

- Increase habitat management activities on public and private lands.
 - Assess the quantity and quality of deer habitat in DMU A-1.
 - Increase prescribed burn acreages.
 - Increase acreage of exotic plant species control.
 - Evaluate alternative methods of land management on public lands (e.g., cattle leases).
- Increase interagency and stakeholder collaboration to protect and enhance deer habitat within DMU A-1.
 - Convene a working group responsible for DMU A-1-specific deer management concerns (e.g., monitoring, research, habitat management, harvest data) comprised of interagency personnel and various stakeholders.

- Increase access to public lands for the purpose of hunting and other suitable activities.
 - Increase the number of pedestrian access points.
 - Increase the number vehicular (including off-road vehicles [ORVs]) access points including roads and trails open to vehicular traffic.
 - Increase vehicular hunting opportunities.

Goal 4: Implement a statewide deer tagging and reporting system on private and public lands.

Objectives

- Use tagging and reporting data to develop an accurate annual harvest record to support a sustainable deer harvest.
- Increase accountability and compliance with harvest regulations by requiring hunters to tag deer.
- Promote equitable harvest opportunities for hunters through the use of a tag and reporting system.

8 Conclusions

The process for providing outreach and generating stakeholder input about deer management preferences for DMU A-1 was successful. It built on the Zone D, (Florida Panhandle) pilot program for gathering public input for deer management at the DMU level. Comments were received from over 70 people who attended public meetings. In addition, Normandeau received 74 responses to the online survey; there were 4,872 responses to the statewide phone survey conducted by Responsive Management; and 6 people attended the project webinars. Despite similar marketing efforts to the Zone D outreach effort, public meetings and webinars attracted fewer participants than in the panhandle. It is unclear why the public meetings and webinars attracted less participation, although those that did attend participated in discussion and provided good input into the process.

There were fewer TAG applications than in Zone D as well, with 22 people applying to be on the TAG. Fourteen were invited and participated. We received some feedback that holding the TAG meetings during the day posed a challenge for people to attend, which may have contributed to the lower number of applications. The TAG was composed of an enthusiastic group who willingly volunteered two full days of their time and engaged in lively discussion about deer management.

FWC staff were available at all public and TAG meetings to assist with note taking and to provide subject matter expertise as needed. The availability of the FWC staff was very important to the success of the meetings.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Agenda for Public Meetings
 Flier for Public Meetings
 Draft Press Release

- Appendix 2 Online Survey

- Appendix 3 Agendas for Technical Assistance Group (TAG) Meetings

Appendix 1: Agenda for Public Meetings, Flier, Press Release

Deer Management in South Florida Public Meetings Agenda

Presented by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

July 15, 6:30 pm: International Game Fish Assn., Dania Beach.

July 16, 6:30 pm: John Boy Auditorium, Clewiston.

July 17, 6:30 pm: Edison State College, Building U, Room 102, Fort Myers.

- 6:30 pm Welcome and introductions
- 6:40 pm PowerPoint presentations on proposed Deer Management Units and results from the recent Deer Management Survey
- 7:00 pm Public comments
- 8:15 pm Summary comments from FWC
- 8:30 pm Adjourn



Meetings are coordinated by Normandeau Associates of Gainesville, Florida





Find more information at www.myfwc.com/deer/dmu

Public Input Needed for Deer Management

MEETING TIMES AND LOCATIONS

- July 15, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
International Game Fish Assn.
300 Gulf Stream Way.
Dania Beach FL 33004
- July 16, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
John Boy Auditorium
1200 S. WC Owens Ave.
Clewiston, FL 33440
- July 17, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Edison State College,
Bldg U, Rm 102
8099 College Parkway
Fort Myers FL 33919

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Cory Morea
FWC Deer Program Coordinator
850-617-9487



The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is hosting a series of public meetings to help shape the future of deer management in South Florida.

Meetings will include:

- Information on proposed Deer Management Units (DMUs)
- Results of a recent 4,500 person survey
- Public comment opportunities
- FWC staff to answer questions

Additional opportunities are available to provide input. Go to www.myfwc.com/deer/dmu for details.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

- Hunters
- Farmers
- Landowners
- Public with an interest in deer management

Meetings are coordinated by Normandeau Associates of Gainesville, FL



Press Release

For immediate release: July 3, 2013
Contact: Carli Segelson 561-882-5703

Photos available on FWC Flickr site: Go to <http://flic.kr/s/aHsjxNrfTT>.

FWC seeks public input on south Florida deer management

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) will host a series of public meetings in July to help shape the future of deer management in Zone A of south Florida. “We are working on an exciting project to establish deer management units (DMUs) throughout Florida,” said Cory Morea, the FWC’s Deer Management Program coordinator. “We are moving to a new model of deer management in the state in which hunters and other stakeholders will have a greater impact on deer management decisions.”

DMUs will, where needed, divide the state into smaller geographic areas where deer population characteristics are similar. Right now, the state is divided into four management zones that are used to set hunting season dates based on deer breeding chronology.

One DMU is proposed for Zone A, which would include all or portions of Broward, Charlotte, Collier, Miami-Dade, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Martin, Monroe, Okeechobee and Palm Beach counties. The new DMUs are intended to allow the FWC more flexibility with deer management based upon the deer population, habitat conditions and public preference within each of the units.

“We surveyed hunters, farmers and other members of the public to determine attitudes and opinions regarding deer management, and we will be sharing the results of that survey at the public meetings. We will present information on the DMU model and will be gathering public input on deer management preferences,” said Morea. “We are also proposing a change for the northern boundary of Zone A so that it better matches the breeding chronology of the deer.”

For people who cannot attend any of the meetings, there will be other opportunities to learn about this project and provide input.

“We have information on our website and we will be accepting comments online,” said Morea, adding that public input will determine what changes may be made in managing deer based on public preference.

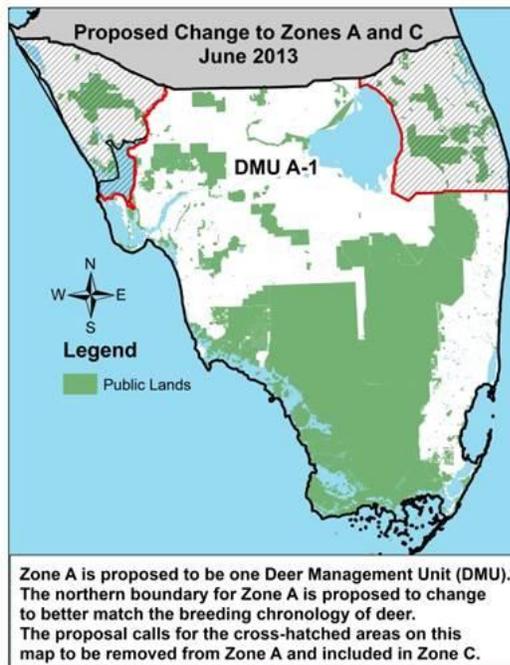
“Of course, we wouldn’t do anything to risk the sustainability of this valuable public resource, but deer densities and other deer management preferences, such as antler regulations, can be adjusted to accommodate public preferences using the DMU model.”

A technical assistance group (TAG), composed of members of the public, will be established to review all available public comments and make recommendations to the FWC on the DMU

within Zone A. The public meetings and the TAG will be facilitated by a third-party vendor, Normandeau Associates, which will submit a summary report to the FWC.

TAG members will be chosen based upon their expertise, their representation of an important interest group, and their willingness to dedicate some time to better deer management in Zone A. Anyone interested will be able to apply for TAG membership at the public meetings or on the FWC's website.

[More information](#) about the meetings, the proposed DMUs and the Technical Assistance Group and meeting information is available online at MyFWC.com/Deer. Click on "Deer Management Units."



Meeting Times and Locations:

- July 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the International Game Fish Association, 300 Gulf Stream Way, Dania Beach, FL 33004.
- July 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the John Boy Auditorium, 1200 South WC Owens Ave., Clewiston, FL 33440.
- July 17, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Edison State College, Building U, Room 102; 8099 College Parkway, Fort Myers, FL 33919.

If you cannot make the public meetings, you can attend a webinar that will provide information about the new DMU plans for south Florida. One webinar is July 23 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., and the other is July 25 from 1 to 2 p.m. Additional details will be posted online soon. For more information, contact Cory Morea at 850-617-9487.

Appendix 2: On-Line Survey

FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Zone A Deer Management

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is providing interested stakeholders with an opportunity to share their opinions on deer management within the the proposed Deer Management Unit (DMU) in Zone A of South Florida. Stakeholder input is important in developing DMU management goals and objectives and your input is needed. Specifically, FWC is looking for feedback on:

- § Deer population management
- § Antlerless deer take opportunities
- § Antler regulations
- § Bag limits
- § Negative interactions with deer
- § Other local deer issues

This survey is designed to collect feedback from the public on deer management in Zone A of the South Florida which is proposed to be managed as one DMU.

A map of the DMU can be found at www.myfwc.com/deer/dmu.

Your opinion is important. Thank you for taking the time to provide your input.

If you have questions, please contact Cory Morea, FWC Deer Management Program Coordinator, at (850) 617-9487.

Name

Email

Phone

Which of these best describes you:

- Hunter
- Farmer
- Florida resident
- Other

What county do you live in?

FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Zone A Deer Management

If the county you hunt in or farm in is different from where you live, please list it here.

The following questions ask about your opinion about deer populations and management in Zone A - South Florida. A map of the DMU can be found at www.myfwc.com/deer/dmu.

Do you think the deer population in Zone A is too high, too low or about the right amount? Please select "No Opinion" if you are not familiar with the deer population in this area.

- Too high
- Too low
- About right
- No Opinion

Antlerless deer harvest, particularly the harvest of female deer, can provide additional harvest opportunities and may be used to reduce the deer population. Would you support more antlerless deer days during:

- Muzzleloading gun season
- General gun season
- I do not support additional antlerless deer days
- No opinion

Please provide any comments you have.

Would you support mandatory antler regulations in order to increase the number of bucks in the deer population, including larger bodied and larger antlered deer? Please select "No Opinion" if you do not have a preference.

- Yes, I support antler regulations
- No, I do not support antler regulations
- No Opinion

Please add any comments you have.

FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Zone A Deer Management

If the county you hunt in or farm in is different from where you live, please list it here.

The following questions ask about your opinion about deer populations and management in Zone A - South Florida. A map of the DMU can be found at www.myfwc.com/deer/dmu.

Do you think the deer population in Zone A is too high, too low or about the right amount? Please select "No Opinion" if you are not familiar with the deer population in this area.

- Too high
- Too low
- About right
- No Opinion

Antlerless deer harvest, particularly the harvest of female deer, can provide additional harvest opportunities and may be used to reduce the deer population. Would you support more antlerless deer days during:

- Muzzleloading gun season
- General gun season
- I do not support additional antlerless deer days
- No opinion

Please provide any comments you have.

Would you support mandatory antler regulations in order to increase the number of bucks in the deer population, including larger bodied and larger antlered deer? Please select "No Opinion" if you do not have a preference.

- Yes, I support antler regulations
- No, I do not support antler regulations
- No Opinion

Please add any comments you have.

FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Zone A Deer Management

Another way to increase the number of bucks in the deer population would be to reduce the buck bag limit. Would you support an annual statewide buck (antlered deer) bag limit of:

- I would not support any bag limits
- No opinion
- 1 deer
- 2 deer
- 3 deer
- 4 deer
- 5 deer
- Special bag limit for Zone A only
- Other bag limit, please specify.

Please provide any comments you have about buck bag limits.

Please indicate any negative interactions you have experienced with deer over the past 5 years in Zone A (South Florida).

	Damage to commercial farm crops	Damage to personal garden or landscaping	Car collision with a deer	None
South Florida	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please list any other negative interactions and any comments you have.

FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Zone A Deer Management

In general, how big would you like the deer population to be in Zone A (South Florida) in the next 5 years?

- Larger
- Smaller
- Same size as now
- No Opinion

Please provide any comments you have.

Are there any specific recommendations you have for the FWC to manage deer populations in Zone A (South Florida) in the next 5 years?

If you have any other comments you would like to make regarding deer and deer management in Zone A (South Florida) please provide them here.

Appendix 3: Agendas for Technical Assistance Group Meetings

Deer Management in South Florida Technical Assistance Group Agenda: 1st Meeting

August 29th 2013

John Boy Auditorium in Clewiston- 1200 South WC Owens Ave., Clewiston, FL 33440

Presented by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



- 10:00 Welcome and introductions
- 10:15 Introduction to Zone A Technical Assistance Group (TAG) – Purposes and outcomes, procedures and ground-rules, overview of agenda
- 10:25 Introduction to the summary report format that will result from the work of the TAG
- 10:35 Brief review of public survey results
- 10:45 Review of public meeting results and comments
- 11:15 Discussion of survey results, public meeting results, and online comments
 - Develop key questions and conclusions that need to be addressed by the TAG in order to develop goals and objectives for deer management in DMU 1.
- 12:00 Lunch (Provided)- possibly working lunch if needed
- 1:45 Open discussion to develop goals for DMU 1
 - Topics:
 1. Overall size of deer population
 2. Antlerless harvest
 3. Buck harvest
 - Buck bag limits
 - Antler restrictions
 4. Depredation of crops, car accidents, landscape damage
- 2:30 Break
- 2:45 Continue Open Discussion
- 3:20 Closing remarks
- 3:30 Adjourn

Homework: Participants will receive a compiled list of the draft goals to read and reflect upon prior to the next meeting on September 12th where the focus will be on developing objectives to achieve each goal. TAG members are encouraged to continue their discussions with each other prior to the 2nd meeting.

Deer Management in South Florida

Technical Assistance Group Agenda: 2nd Meeting

September 12, 2013

Clewiston Youth Center 110 W. Osceola Ave., Clewiston, FL 33440
Presented by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



10:00 Welcome and re-introductions

10:10 Summary of the first meeting

10:20 Purposes and desired outcomes for meeting 2, procedures and ground-rules, overview of agenda

10:30 Further develop and clarify goals Zone A
Group discussion with clarification as needed by FWC staff

11:15 Develop objectives
Breakout Groups work on objectives to accomplish goals

12:00 Lunch

12:45 Open discussion of the objectives

2:15 Break

2:30 Continue objectives discussion

3:20 Closing remarks

3:30 Adjourn

Homework: You will receive a compiled list of the goals and objectives/strategies to read and reflect upon prior to a conference call for final discussion.