

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) implemented a public outreach and input process during the first three months of 2013 in management Zone D in the Florida Panhandle west of Tallahassee. The goal of this process was to present the concept of Deer Management Units (DMUs) to stakeholders and to receive comments about deer management preferences for the two proposed DMUs located in Zone D (DMU D-1 is located south of Interstate 10, and DMU D-2 is located north of Interstate 10). Normandeau Associates, a natural resource consulting firm in Gainesville, assisted FWC by marketing, coordinating, and facilitating the meetings and coordinating collection of the comments.

As a result of this outreach process, FWC is considering rule proposals that would implement greater antler regulations and change the number and timing of the antlerless deer days (“doe days”) for Zone D. These proposals are part of a larger project aimed at managing deer at a finer geographic scale with greater stakeholder involvement using DMUs.

What is Deer Management?

- **Public Trust Doctrine:** Wildlife resources (e.g., deer) are public resources, held in trust by government for the benefit of present and future generations
- Deer Management Units (DMUs) are being considered as the model for modern deer management in Florida



At the state level, deer management is an application of the public trust doctrine. In order to apply this doctrine most effectively, we worked with the Deer Management Technical Assistance Group (DMTAG) comprised of stakeholders to develop a strategic plan for deer management to guide FWC staff efforts in managing deer from 2008 to 2018.

The plan's goals are three-fold, (1) ensure the existence of robust deer populations that meet the public's desire for recreational opportunities and protection of private property while ensuring the long-term welfare of the species, (2) ensure a high degree of public satisfaction with deer management in Florida, and (3) manage deer habitats consistent with ecosystem health, deer population goals, and customer satisfaction goals. At the core of the strategic plan, is the idea of managing deer at a more local level using Deer Management Units (DMUs), in consultation with stakeholders.

From the Strategic Plan: Population Goal

Ensure the existence of robust deer populations that meet the public's desires for recreational opportunities and protection of property while ensuring the long-term welfare of the species.

Objective 1 - Manage deer populations on a local level to increase the resolution of our ability to meet the needs and desires of the public.

Strategy– Develop a Deer Management Unit (DMU) Approach to Managing Deer Harvest

Rationale: Deer population productivity and reproductive timing vary considerably across the state. Setting population and harvest goals with greater regional resolution will allow target population levels and management strategies to most effectively reflect the needs and desires of local communities.

Strategy– Establish target deer population levels for each DMU in consultation with local publics (e.g., landowners, farmers, horticulturalists, deer hunters, other recreationists, etc.) that have an interest in deer management

You may find the strategic plan online at www.myfwc.com/deer. Strategic plan goals, objectives and strategies begin on Page 16 of the plan.

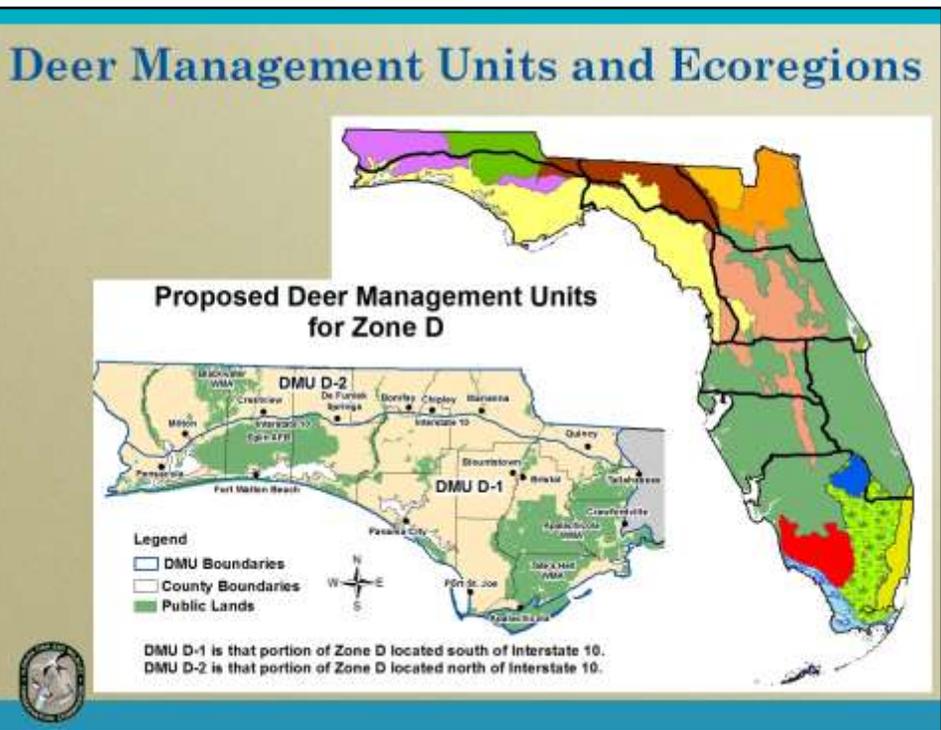
Deer Management in Florida

One size doesn't fit all!

- A localized approach to deer management is needed to meet deer management plan goals.
- At least 28 other states manage and monitor deer or other game populations at the Management Unit level.
- A “*Deer Management Unit approach to Managing Deer Harvest*” was identified by FWC staff and stakeholders (DMTAG) as the most important strategy in the Deer Management Plan.



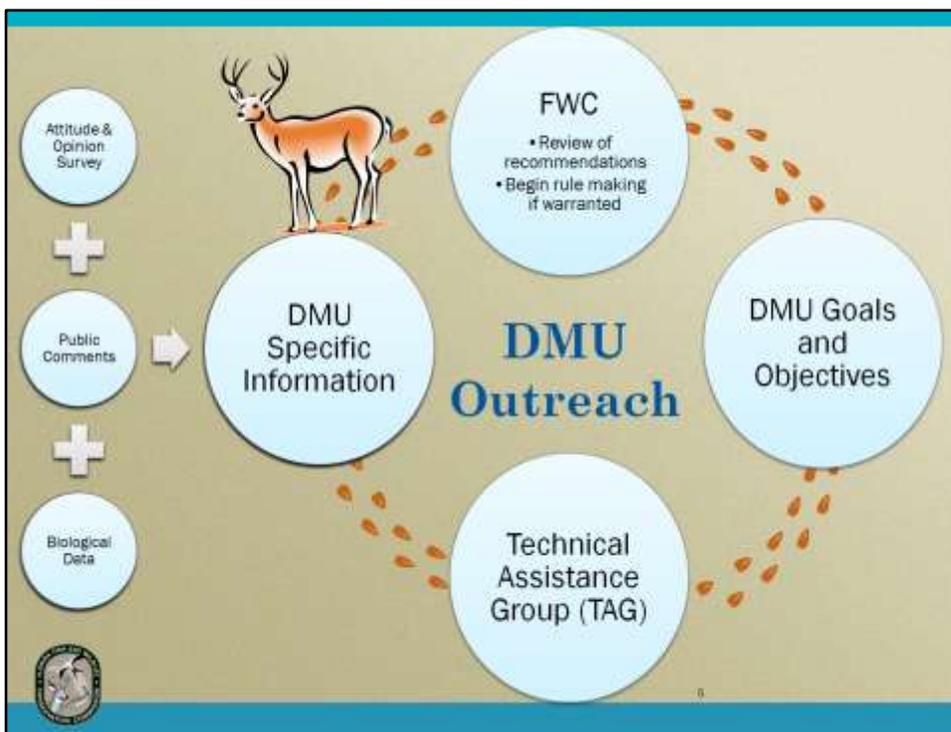
FWC staff would like to add flexibility into its management of deer by dividing the state into smaller Deer Management Units (DMUs). This adaptive approach to deer management is intended to improve hunting opportunities and help maintain a healthy and reasonably balanced deer herd. The rationale behind the proposed DMUs is that deer biology, habitat, and stakeholders differ depending on where you are in Florida. The productivity of deer in Florida is linked to habitat. For example, portions of Zone D have more productive soils, which equates to more productive deer habitat and deer populations and provides good potential for larger-antlered and larger-bodied deer. Agriculture is prevalent in Zone D, and deer densities are relatively high, particularly north of Interstate 10, increasing the potential for human/deer conflicts.



A Deer Management Unit (DMU) is a subdivision of a hunting zone with a unique combination of deer population characteristics, deer habitat, land-use patterns and deer stakeholder interests. Major roads or water features delineate DMU boundaries so hunters can locate boundaries easily in the field.

DMUs will be used as a basis for developing geographically specific deer population goals, antlerless harvest opportunities (antlerless deer days and/or permits), antler regulations, and data collection to monitor this type of management. This slide shows proposed DMUs and ecoregions (major habitat types in Florida). Ecoregions, deer breeding chronology, and input from stakeholders were used to develop the proposed DMU boundaries.

FWC staff began the DMU process in Zone D, which is located in Florida's Panhandle and stretches from Tallahassee west to Alabama. Zone D has two DMUs proposed, DMU D-1 is located south of Interstate 10, and DMU D-2 is located north of Interstate 10. This presentation addresses recommendations relating solely to these DMUs in Zone D. This effort will continue to other zones and DMUs in Florida over the next 2 years.



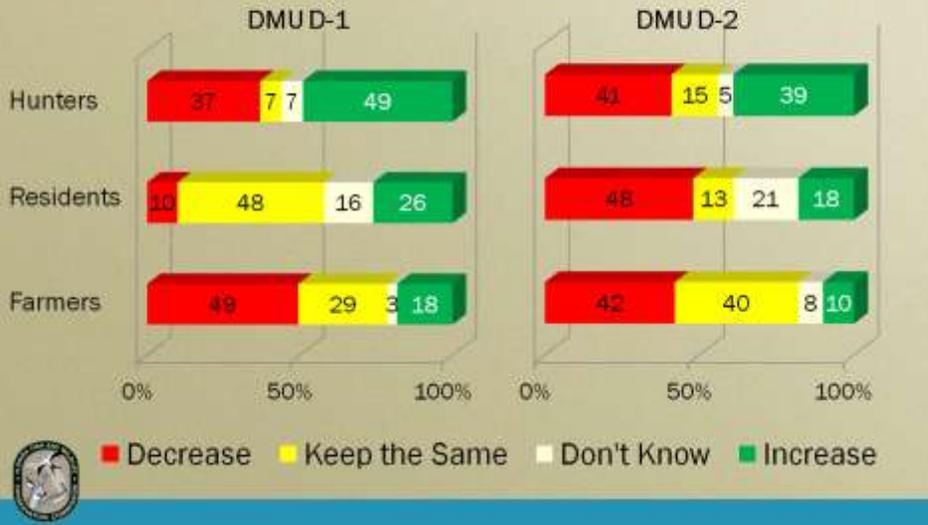
The DMU management model is more than just lines on a map. It is based on managing deer with stakeholder input on preferences within each DMU. Season timing would remain linked to zones, but harvest regulations and other management issues may vary at the DMU level.

To begin the public outreach process, the FWC contracted with Responsive Management, Inc., to conduct a scientifically designed phone survey (commonly referred to as the “phone survey” in this report) of hunters, farmers and residents to assess opinions and attitudes of deer management issues in Florida. There were 4,872 completed surveys statewide, including approximately 200 hunters, 100 farmers, and 100 residents in each DMU.

Normandeau Associates facilitated public outreach via 3 public meetings (Tallahassee, Marianna and Pensacola), 2 online webinars, an online presentation and online survey. The online survey could be accessed by anyone through the internet and was intended to get input on preferences for deer management in Zone D’s 2 DMUs. There were 91 completed surveys online, mostly comprised of deer hunters.

Interested individuals could apply at the public meetings or online to be a part of a stakeholder Technical Assistance Group (TAG) to develop goals and objectives for Zone D’s 2 DMUs while considering all public input. The Zone D TAG had 23 members including hunters and farmers. No non-hunting, non-farming individuals applied to be on the TAG. TAG members came from both DMUs in Zone D and had experiences hunting on private and public lands. The TAG included still hunters, hunters who had experience using dogs to pursue deer, and farming representatives who were familiar with deer depredation issues. Normandeau Associates facilitated the TAG, which developed recommendations for managing the deer population size in the 2 DMUs located in Zone D over the next 5 years. The TAG also provided input on other topics, such as antler regulations and bag limits for bucks. FWC staff then reviewed the goals and objectives and developed rule proposals intended to accomplish some of the goals and objectives developed by the TAG. Some of the goals and objectives can and will be addressed by non-regulatory means.

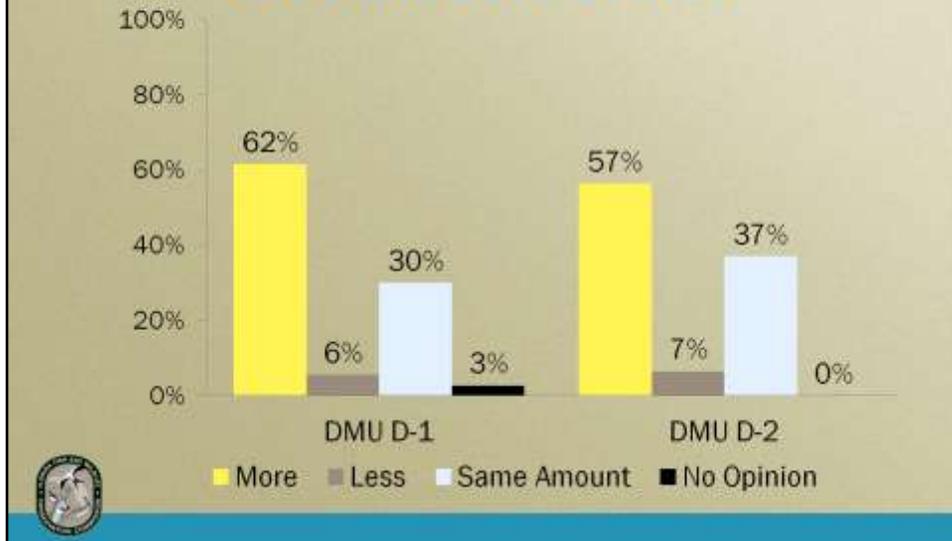
Phone Survey: How Would You Like the Deer Population Size Managed for the Next Five Years?



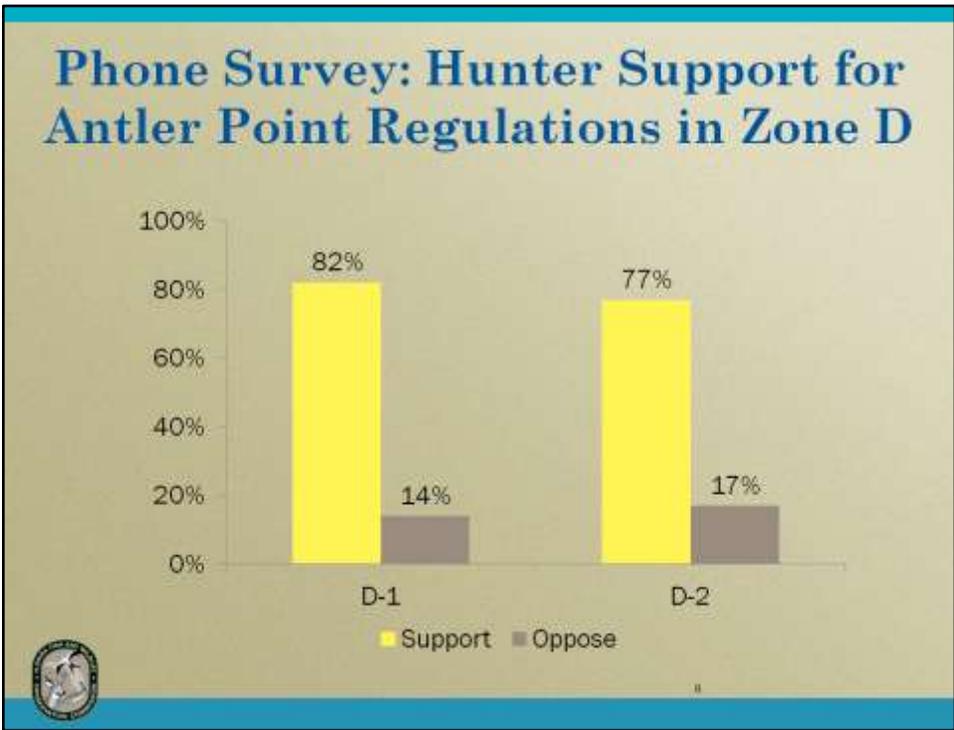
According to the phone survey, hunters in DMU D-1 (n=214) were more likely to want the size of the deer population to increase; residents were more likely to want to keep the deer population at the same level and farmers were more likely to want the deer population to decrease over the next five years.

According to the phone survey, hunters in DMU D-2 (n = 206) were split in support of decreasing or increasing the deer population; residents were more likely to want to decrease the deer population and farmers were slightly more likely to want the deer population to decrease over the next five years.

Online Survey: How Would You Like the Deer Population Size Managed for the Next Five Years?



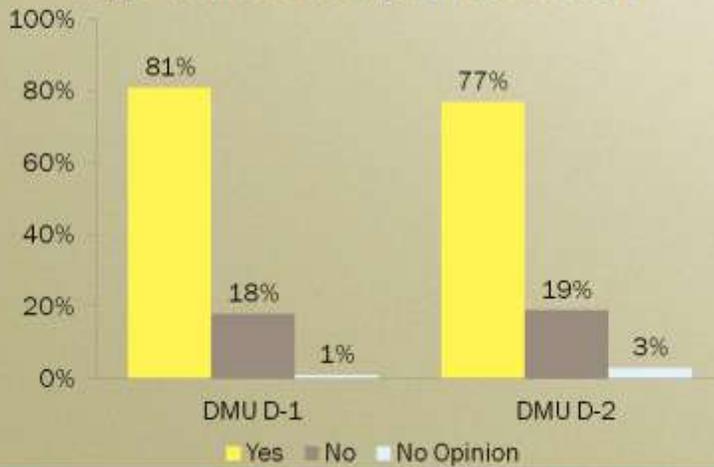
According to the online survey (n=91), most respondents (most identified themselves as hunters during the survey) wanted the deer population to be managed for more deer (increase the deer population) in both DMUs located in Zone D over the next 5 years.



During the phone survey, hunters were asked if they supported or opposed antler point regulations designed to increase the number of larger-bodied and larger-antlered bucks available for harvest. The majority of Zone D hunters (79%) support antler-point regulations designed to increase the number of larger bodied and larger-antlered bucks available for harvest in the area they hunt most frequently; however, 16% oppose. There was 82% support among hunters surveyed for antler point regulations in DMU D-1 (14% oppose) and 77% support in DMU D-2 (17% oppose).

Online Survey: Antler Point Regulations

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?



Results of the online survey (n=91) also indicate that a majority of respondents (primarily hunters) support antler point regulations designed to increase the number of bucks in the deer population, including larger-bodied and larger-antlered bucks. There was 81% support among respondents for antler point regulations in DMU D-1 (17% oppose) and 77% support in DMU D-2 (19% oppose).

Outreach Summary

- Residents (non-hunting, non-farming) generally view deer positively.
- Majority of farmers in general would like to see population either slightly or substantially decreased.
- Hunters in general want to:
 - Increase the deer population
 - Improve the buck to doe ratio
 - Increase the number of bucks
 - Increase the size or age-structure of bucks
- A Technical Assistance Group comprised of stakeholders developed goals and objectives for Zone D.



In summary, residents (non-hunting, non-farming phone survey respondents) generally view deer positively and have few negative interactions with deer (such as deer-vehicle collisions, property damage or damage to landscaping). Farmers in general would like to see the deer population either slightly or substantially decreased. Hunters in general want to: increase the deer population, improve the buck to doe ratio, increase the number of bucks in the population and increase the size or age-structure of bucks. A Technical Assistance Group made up of stakeholders developed goals and objectives for Zone D that were the basis for the proposed changes.

TAG Goals and Objectives

- **Goal:** Maintain or slightly increase the overall deer population in DMUs D-1 and D-2 of Zone D.
 - **Objective:** Implement antler and antlerless harvest restrictions designed to achieve a healthy balance of age structure and sex ratio.
- **Goal:** Increase hunter satisfaction through improved chances of seeing more bucks and harvesting larger bucks.
 - **Objective:** Implement an antler restriction that protects the majority of 1.5-year-old bucks while allowing harvest of bucks at least 2.5 years old.
- **Goal:** Maintain or increase the doe population while allowing equity (distributing the harvest) among hunters to harvest antlerless deer.
 - **Objective:** Increase flexibility in days for access to antlerless deer hunting without negatively impacting the doe population.



Here are the goals developed by the Zone D Technical Assistance Group (TAG) that are being addressed with the proposed rules. TAG members thought it was important that antlerless deer days be spread out time-wise over the season to increase the number of hunters able to hunt during one or more days.

While these goals and objectives are being addressed by the proposed harvest regulation changes for Zone D, other goals and objectives will be considered as part of the FWC's nonregulatory efforts to manage deer at the DMU level. The full report from the TAG is available at MyFWC.com/deer.

Background on Antlerless Deer Management

- Managing the deer population size within a DMU is the primary purpose for DMUs.
- The deer habitat in DMU D-1 is generally considered less productive than that of DMU D-2, impacting reproduction, growth, survival and the number of deer able to be supported by the land (biological carrying capacity).
- Due to Florida's lower deer densities and reproductive potential, care must be taken to avoid harvest of too many does.



The harvest of female deer (does) is used to adjust deer population size. If the deer population is greater than what the habitat can support, available food resources are less than optimal. Harvesting does can help keep a deer population from exceeding available resources or reduce a population if it already exceeds this threshold. When the deer population size does not exceed available resources, little or no doe harvest is needed. Deer populations in Florida are considered to be below biological carrying capacity. However, in some areas, deer populations may be close to exceeding levels the public will tolerate; this is commonly referred to as the social carrying capacity. Harvest of does is the primary method for controlling deer densities. Harvesting does can be used to alter buck to doe ratios (the number of does per buck) and to adjust the deer population size to be in balance with the habitat or public preferences. Harvesting too many does can reduce the population below desired levels, which will reduce future harvest potential and likely decrease hunter satisfaction.

Doe harvest is managed using antlerless deer harvest opportunities. Because public hunting areas often receive a high level of hunting and harvest pressure compared to private lands, antlerless deer regulations on public lands are more conservative to maintain desired deer populations and hunter satisfaction. Wherever possible, the FWC does allow limited take of antlerless deer to provide hunter opportunities for harvest. An antlerless deer is any deer (except spotted fawns) without antlers or with antlers less than 5 inches in length. Antlerless deer take opportunities are important to hunters, particularly for youth (hunter recruitment), and can increase hunter satisfaction.

Current Harvest Regulations - Zone D

- 128-day season. Includes archery, crossbow, muzzleloading gun and general gun seasons
 - Dogs can be used to pursue deer only during general gun season
- Daily bag limits:
 - Muzzleloading gun, general gun and a portion of crossbow season: Antlered deer only, 2 per day (5" minimum antler)
 - Archery/crossbow season - any deer (except spotted fawns), 2 per day
- 7 days of antlerless deer season during general gun
- WMA's more restrictive
 - Shorter seasons
 - Quotas on some
 - Bag limits on many
 - Some allow use of dogs (restricted as to where and when)



Current deer hunting season dates for Zone D (based on the 2013-2014 hunting season):

Archery/Crossbow Season (any deer except spotted fawn may be taken) October 26 – November 27

General Gun Season (antlered deer only) November 28 – December 1

Crossbow Season (antlered deer only) December 2 – 6

Muzzleloading Gun Season (antlered deer only) December 7 – 13

General Gun Season (antlered deer only) December 14 – February 23

Muzzleloading Gun Season (antlered deer only) February 24 – March 2.

The general gun antlerless deer season is currently December 26 – January 1.

Antlerless deer may be taken during the archery/crossbow season, during the general gun season's antlerless deer days, by antlerless deer permit, private land deer management permit and with deer depredation permits. More conservative on public lands.

Draft Rule Proposal: Antlerless Deer Season

- **DMU D-1 proposal:** 2 weekends (4 days) of general gun season - the first weekend of season (Saturday and Sunday after Thanksgiving) and the first weekend after Christmas.
- **DMU D-2 proposal:** 4 weekends (8 days) - the first and third weekends of general gun season, the first weekend after Christmas, and the first weekend of muzzleloading gun season.



Antlerless deer season is the segment of the season when hunters may take any deer other than spotted fawns, and are not limited to deer with at least a 5-inch antler.

The antlerless deer season for Zone D is currently 7 days from December 26 through January 1. The proposed changes to the antlerless deer season for DMU D-1 (south of Interstate 10) would include 4 days spread out over 2 popular holiday weekends (weekend after Thanksgiving and the weekend after Christmas). The proposed changes to the antlerless deer season for DMU D-2 (north of Interstate 10) would increase the season from 7 to 8 days and would spread the days over 4 weekends, including 2 popular holiday weekends (weekend after Thanksgiving and the weekend after Christmas) in addition to the first weekend of muzzleloading gun season and the third weekend of general gun season.

The purpose of the proposals is to spread the antlerless deer days out so more hunters may be able to hunt on 1 or more days while avoiding an increase in the overall doe harvest. Any changes would be monitored to determine the impact on doe harvest within each DMU.

Harvest Management for Bucks

- **Current approach** - Male deer (bucks) are managed for maximum sustained yield which allows the harvest of 1.5 year old and older bucks while protecting or allowing a conservative harvest of female deer to ensure young bucks are available each year.
- **Alternative approach** - Young bucks (1.5 year old and younger) are protected from harvest allowing more bucks to persist into older age classes resulting in more balanced deer herds. Depending on the deer population size and future population size goals, does may or may not be allowed to be harvested.
- Antler Point Regulations (APRs) can be used for manipulating population size, age structure and buck to doe ratios.



In Florida, hunters may currently harvest up to 2, 5-inch antlered deer a day with no season bag limit. The goal for antler regulations proposed for Zone D in Florida and already in place in other states is to protect the majority of 1.5 year old bucks while allowing the harvest of the majority of 2.5 year old and older bucks.

Current approach for managing bucks (male deer) – Statewide regulations allow bucks to be managed for maximum sustained yield which allows the harvest of 1.5 year old and older bucks while protecting or only allowing a conservative harvest of female deer to ensure young bucks are available each year for hunters to harvest.

An alternative approach is to protect young bucks (1.5 year old and younger) from harvest allowing more bucks to persist into older age classes and resulting in more balanced deer herds. Depending on the deer population size and future population size goals, does may or may not be allowed to be harvested with this approach. Preventing the harvest of most 1.5 year old and younger bucks can result in an increase in the deer population as the buck population grows, but the primary driving force behind deer population growth relate to how many does are allowed to be harvested. This alternative approach is not trophy deer management which usually entails protecting bucks from harvest until they reach their maximum antler potential around 4.5 to 6.5 years of age.

Antler Point Regulations (APRs) can be used for manipulating population size, age structure and buck to doe ratios. Florida has typically allowed a liberal buck harvest while allowing limited doe harvest. This has allowed the statewide deer population to increase over time, but often results in unbalanced sex ratios and few older bucks in the population. Many private land parcels manage for older age bucks, and a number of WMAs also have APRs in order to increase the buck population.

Draft Rule Proposal: Antler Point Regulations (APRs)

- **DMU D-1:** 2 points on one side (each point one or more inches in length). Also known as a forked antler rule.
- **DMU D-2:** 3 points on one side (each point one or more inches in length).
- **Youth exemption:** Hunters under 16 years of age would be exempt from the APRs in both DMUs.
- **Wildlife Management Areas:** The proposal would apply to all WMAs within each DMU. (Some WMAs currently have more restrictive APRs in place, which would remain.)
 - Youth exemption to APRs would apply for WMAs, except Juniper Creek WMA, which is a youth-hunt-only area.



During public opinion surveys, public meetings, and Technical Assistance Group (TAG) meetings, hunters communicated that they wanted to see more bucks and have a better chance to harvest larger bucks. Hunters also wanted to improve the buck to doe ratio by increasing the number of bucks in the deer population. While there are a number of ways to achieve this result, support was greatest for antler point regulations (APRs). To encourage youth participation in hunting, hunters under 16 years of age would be exempt from any APRs unless otherwise indicated by a WMA specific rule.

Why is the proposed APR different north of I-10 (DMU D-2) versus the one south of I-10 (DMU D-1)?

Antler characteristics are influenced by habitat quality. Due to differences in soil productivity and the amount of land in row crop agriculture, the habitat quality tends to be greater north of I-10 (DMU D-2) than south of I-10 (DMU D-1). Harvest data from each DMU indicates that the APRs that would most effectively protect buck yearlings (1.5 year old bucks) from harvest while allowing the harvest of most 2.5 year old and older bucks is a 3 points on a side APR north of I-10 (DMU D-2) and a 2 points on a side APR or “forked antler” south of I-10 (DMU D-1).

Will this change the definition of an antlerless deer?

No. Antlerless deer would remain any deer (except spotted fawns) that do not have antlers or have antlers less than 5 inches in length.

Draft Rule Proposal: Antler Point Regulations (APRs)

- **Purpose:** increase buck population, improve buck to doe ratio, increase chances of seeing and harvesting larger-bodied and larger-antlered deer.
- Percent of each age class that would be protected from harvest by the proposed APRs (based on data collected from WMA check stations within each DMU):

DMU	Proposed APR	Age Class			
		1.5	2.5	3.5	4.5+
D-1	2 on a side	83%	24%	9%	7%
D-2	3 on a side	89%	32%	10%	8%



For an APR to be effective across the landscape and to reduce potential conflicts, the proposed DMU specific APRs would apply on all land within each DMU regardless of whether it is privately or publicly owned. If a property is split by a DMU boundary, the property would have 2 different APRs respective to the DMU. If an FWC-managed area currently has a more restrictive APR in place it would remain unchanged (e.g., Pine Log WMA located in DMU D-1 south of Interstate 10 currently has a 3 on a side APR and it would remain unchanged if the proposed DMU APRs are approved).

Many hunters already use voluntary antler regulations greater than the 5-inch state rule to manage for more bucks. However, lots of hunters hunt on small private land tracts, and cannot successfully use voluntary antler regulations because the home range size of bucks includes multiple private property parcels owned by different individuals that may have different harvest philosophies. “Tragedy of commons” also comes into play in that hunters on small acreage tracts may not pass on a young buck because they are concerned that it will be harvested by another hunter on adjoining land who is willing to harvest young bucks. This scenario is also commonly mentioned by hunters hunting on public lands concerned that if they pass up a young buck voluntarily the next hunter may not. Mandatory APRs would increase the buck population and age structure for these scenarios where voluntary actions by hunters would likely not work. The proposed antler point regulations are not designed to achieve trophy deer management, which entails delaying harvest until bucks are 4.5 years old or older.

What impact will the APR have on the number of antlered deer harvested?

We expect the antlered deer harvest in Zone D to decrease initially and then rebound close to current levels after 3-4 years. It is difficult to estimate what the percent decline may be in the first year because many individual hunters, hunt clubs, private landowners and some WMAs already have some form of an antler restriction in place. Antlered deer harvest is currently monitored for each DMU so we will be able to determine the impact of any changes on harvest.

What impact will the APR have on the size of antlered deer harvested?

Based on historical harvest data collected by FWC staff from deer harvested within Zone D, the average antlered deer harvested after implementing these APRs could be about 15 pounds heavier with an average gross antler score based on the Boone and Crockett scoring system of approximately 28 inches greater.

What proportion of each age class will be protected by the proposed APR?

The table shows the estimated percent of bucks by age class that would be protected from harvest under the proposed APR for each DMU. These estimates are based on harvest data collected from check stations throughout each DMU.

Public Feedback on Proposed Rules

- **APRs:** Support is high among online survey respondents in both DMU D-1 (77% support, 18% oppose) and D-2 (67% support, 27% oppose).
 - Hunters who use dogs to pursue deer in Blackwater WMA have expressed opposition to the proposed APR (3 points on one side). However, an online survey indicates support among respondents who say they hunt Blackwater WMA regularly (55% support 38% oppose).
 - Some hunters are concerned that APRs will reduce their buck harvest.
- **Antlerless deer days:** Support is high among online respondents for DMU D-2 (70% support, 22% oppose); less support in DMU D-1 (48% support, 41% oppose).



As of October 12, 2013, an online survey hosted on FWC's website indicates a high level of support among respondents (mostly hunters) for the APRs in both DMU D-1 (77% support, 18% oppose; N=1,043) and D-2 (67% support, 27% oppose; N=1,019), (public and private land hunters combined).

As of October 12, 2013, the online survey indicates a high level of support among respondents for the antlerless deer day proposal for DMU D-2 (70% support, 22% oppose; N=663) while there is less support in DMU D-1 (48% support, 41% oppose; N=576).

Hunters who use dogs to pursue deer in Blackwater WMA have expressed opposition to a 3 points on a side APR. However, an online survey indicates support among respondents who say they hunt Blackwater WMA regularly (55% support 38% oppose; N=292).

Staff Recommendation

- Approve draft rule proposals for advertising and final public hearing at the April 2014 Commission meeting.
- Provide direction or guidance for staff as we continue working with the public.

Go to
MyFWC.com/Deer
for updates.



The process of developing DMU proposals for Zone D has gone very well, with good coordination between staff and stakeholders. Public participation has been positive and has helped to strengthen the proposals. There seems to be widespread public support for this project, and hunters are requesting other improvements to deer management in Florida, consistent with FWC's strategic plan.

Staff would like to continue to work with stakeholders and bring back final rules for Commission consideration at the April 2014 Commission meeting in Tallahassee. If adopted, the proposed rules would apply to the 2014-2015 season.

FWC staff will work with Normandeau Associates on the public outreach for Zone B and C during the first half of 2014 (Zone A was recently completed). During the summer of 2014, FWC staff would begin the rule development process for DMUs in Zones A, B and C for the 2015-2016 season.

Please continue to monitor MyFWC.com/Deer for updates.

Backup Material

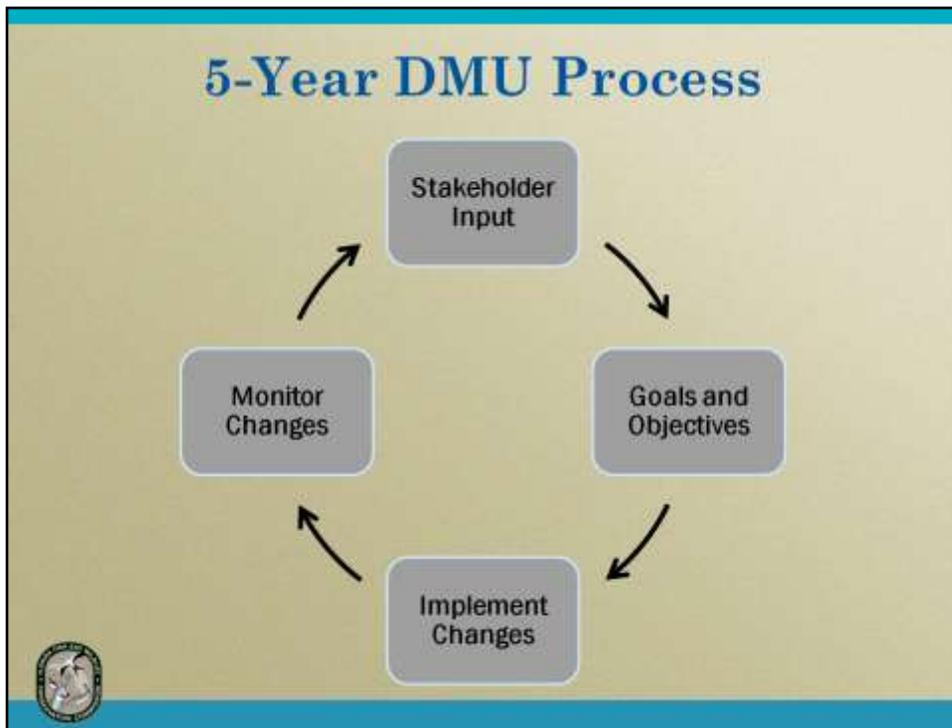
The following slides are considered backup material and are not anticipated to be part of the actual presentation to the Commission.



Summary – New Approach

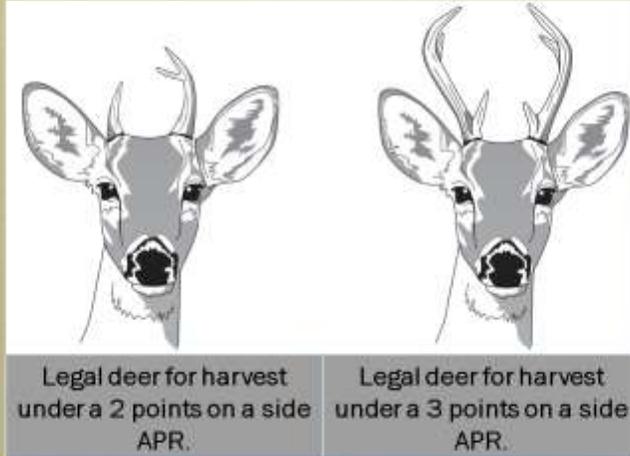
- Managing deer at the DMU level using public input on population goals is a new way of doing business.
- Many hunters have asked FWC to manage deer differently in recent years and the DMU model allows greater stakeholder involvement in setting harvest regulations.
- This new approach directly addresses locally specific public/hunter desires, while assuring sustainable harvests and populations for the future.
- Differing hunter preferences and deer population issues have been around for many years, but previous statewide approaches intended to address these topics have not been accepted.





The plan is to gather stakeholder preferences for deer management within each DMU and then develop goals and objectives for each DMU. Changes implemented to accomplish the goals and objectives developed from stakeholder preferences would be monitored to measure success. After 5-years, the stakeholder input process would be repeated to determine opinions on the previous 5-years and gather preferences for the next 5-years. This cycle would be repeated approximately every 5-years.

Examples of Harvestable Deer Under the Proposed APRs



Here are examples of different legal to take antlered deer under the proposed APRs.

Proposed Deer Management Units



Zone D Goals

1. Maintain or increase hunter acceptance and support of white tailed deer management regulations in Zone D.
2. Maintain or slightly increase the overall deer population in DMUs 10 and 11 of Zone D.
3. Increase hunter satisfaction through improved chances of seeing more bucks and harvesting larger bucks.
4. Maintain or increase the doe population while allowing equity among hunters to harvest antlerless deer.
5. Manage deer depredation to ensure that both farmers' and hunters' needs are considered.
6. Maintain broad support of the deer hunting heritage.



Here are the goals developed by the Zone D Technical Assistance Group (TAG) comprised of stakeholders interested in deer management. Proposed harvest regulation changes for Zone D by Deer Management Unit (DMU) are intended to accomplish the goals 2-4. An objective for goal 3 is “Implement an antler restriction that protects the majority of 1.5-year-old bucks while allowing harvest of bucks at least 2.5 years old.”

Other goals and objectives will also be considered as part of the Commission's efforts to manage deer at the DMU level using guidance provided during the outreach process.



A number of states, including Florida (on WMAs), use APRs to accomplish certain buck harvest goals. Georgia allows the harvest of 2 antlered deer annually and one must have at least 4 points on a side (note: all antlered deer harvested must have 4 points on a side in 7 counties or a 15 inch outside spread in 2 counties); Alabama has a season bag limit of 3 deer, one of which must be at least 4 points on one side; Mississippi has a season bag limit of 3 antlered deer and they must have a minimum of a 10-inch inside spread or main-beam length of 13 inches or more; and Arkansas has a season bag limit of 2 antlered deer with a minimum of 3 points on one side.

Phone survey participants

		DMUD-1	DMUD-2
Hunting Method	Still Hunting	93%	99%
	Dog Hunting	23%	10%
Land Type	Private	55%	66%
	Public	27%	18%
	Both	18%	17%
No. 1 Motivation For Hunting		To be outdoors	To be outdoors



Note: Approximately 200 hunters, 100 farmers, and 100 residents in each DMU were surveyed

Survey participants could select more than one option so totals do not add to 100%.

Topics Discussed at Public Meetings

