

WEST POINT 2021 DEER HARVEST SUMMARY

Take by Sex					
	2021 Season	2020 Season	2019 Season	2018 Season	2017 Season
Total Number - All Deer Taken	59	92	94	80	79
Total Number - Antlered Bucks	33	49	58	58	46
Total Number - Adult Does	24	32	28	15	31
Total Number – Sublegal Bucks	1	3	---	1	---
Total Number - Male Fawns	1	2	4	4	1
Total Number - Doe Fawns	---	6	4	2	1

Table 1. Take by Sex data for deer harvested from West Point in 2021 and years 2017 through 2020 for comparison.

Herd Health Indicators					
	2021 Season	2020 Season	2019 Season	2018 Season	2017 Season
Heaviest Antlered Buck Taken	151 lbs.	161 lbs.	168 lbs.	149 lbs.	143 lbs.
Lightest Antlered Buck Taken	74 lbs.*	73 lbs.*	99 lbs.*	75 lbs.	69 lbs.
Average Antlered Buck Taken	112 lbs.*	113 lbs.*	124 lbs.*	107 lbs.	103 lbs.
Heaviest Adult Doe Taken	117 lbs.	108 lbs.	115 lbs.	113 lbs.	125 lbs.
Lightest Adult Doe Taken	80 lbs.	67 lbs.	72 lbs.	76 lbs.	80 lbs.
Average Adult Doe Taken	93 lbs.	84 lbs.	92 lbs.	97 lbs.	101 lbs.
Heaviest Male Fawn Taken	52 lbs.	52 lbs.	69 lbs.	59 lbs.	59 lbs.
Heaviest Female Fawn Taken	N/A	57 lbs.	49 lbs.	62 lbs.	57 lbs.

Table 2. Herd health indicator data for deer harvested from West Point in 2021 and similar data from years 2017 through 2020 for comparison. * Since 2019, a three-to-one-side antler point restriction has partially restricted the harvest of younger antlered bucks. Note: For accuracy, only Regular Season dressed weights used.

Take by Age Class						
	2021		2020		2019	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Fawns	1	---	2	6	4	3
Yearlings	4	5	11	11	1	8
2 ½ years	5	3	12	7	12	3
3 ½ years	7	4	12	4	20	3
4 ½ years	1	3	4	---	8	1
5 ½ years+	3	2	3	2	2	---
No Age	---	---	---	---	---	---
Total	21	17	44	30	47	18

Table 3. Take by Age Class data for deer harvested from West Point in 2021 Regular “Firearms” season and from 2019 and 2020 for comparison. Deer taken in Early Bow, Late Bow/Muzzleloader seasons were not aged so data from those deer is unavailable.

Buck Take by Antler Points						
	2021		2020		2019	
Number of Points	Number of Deer	Percentage of Antlered Deer	Number of Deer	Percentage of Antlered Deer	Number of Deer	Percentage of Antlered Deer
1	1	3.0%	0	0%	0	0%
2	1	3.0%	7	14.3%	1	1.7%
3	1	3.0%	0	0%	1	1.7%
4	5	15.2%	4	8.2%	7	12.1%
5	1	3.0%	5	10.2%	1	1.7%
6	6	18.2%	5	10.2%	10	17.2%
7	5	15.2%	10	20.4%	12	20.7%
8	11	33.3%	15	30.6%	25	43.1%
9	2	6.1%	2	4.1%	1	1.7%
10	0	0%	1	2.0%	0	0%
Total	33		49		58	

Table 4. Buck Take by Antler Points for the 2021 Season and the 2019 and 2020 seasons for comparison. Data represents bucks from all seasons. Since 2019 a three-to-a-side antler point restriction has been in place.

Buck Take – Points By Age										
	1 pts	2 pts	3 pts	4 pts	5 pts	6 pts	7 pts	8 pts	9 pts	10 pts
Yearling	1	---	1	2	---	---	---	---	---	---
2 ½	---	---	---	1	1	2	1	---	---	---
3 ½	---	---	---	---	---	1	---	6	---	---
4 ½	---	---	---	---	---	---	1	---	---	---
5 ½	---	---	---	---	---	1	---	2	---	---
Total	1	---	1	3	1	4	2	8	---	---

Table 5. Points by Age Class data for deer harvested from West Point in 2021 Regular “Firearms” season. Deer taken in early bow and late bow/muzzleloader seasons were not processed. Data from those deer is unavailable.

Harvest By Season					
	2021 Season	2020 Season	2019 Season	2018 Season	2017 Season
Total Harvest	59	92	94	80	79
Early Bow Season	17	12	20	18	25
Regular (“Firearms”) Season	38	74	65	59	50
Muzzleloader Season	4	6	9	3	4

Table 6. Harvest by Season data for deer harvested from West Point in 2021 and similar data from years 2017 through 2020 for comparison.

Deer By Area 2021

	<u>A1</u>	<u>A2</u>	<u>A3</u> <u>Bow</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>BUC</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>CS</u>	<u>CS2</u> <u>Bow</u>	<u>D1</u>	<u>D2</u>	<u>D3</u>	
ADULT MALES	1	---	---	---	---	1	1	---	2	1	1	
MALE FAWNS	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
ADULT DOES	---	---	---	1	---	1	---	---	1	---	1	
DOE FAWNS	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
TOTAL DEER	1	---	---	1	---	2	1	---	3	1	2	
	<u>E1</u>	<u>E2</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>G1</u>	<u>G2</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>J1</u> <u>Bow</u>	<u>J2</u> Bow	<u>J3</u> <u>Bow</u>	<u>J4</u> <u>Bow</u>	<u>J5</u> <u>Bow</u>
ADULT MALES	2	1	---	---	1	2	1	1	1	---	---	1
MALE FAWNS	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
ADULT DOES	1	2	---	---	---	---	1	---	---	---	1	2
DOE FAWNS	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
TOTAL DEER	3	3	---	---	1	2	2	1	1	---	1	3
	<u>K</u> <u>Bow</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>Q</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>R</u> <u>Disabled</u>	<u>RP</u> <u>Bow</u>	<u>S</u>	
ADULT MALES	---	2	1	---	1	4	1	---	---	1	1	
MALE FAWNS	---	---	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
ADULT DOES	1	---	1	1	---	2	---	2	---	---	---	
DOE FAWNS	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	
TOTAL DEER	1	2	3	1	1	6	1	2	---	1	1	
	<u>T1</u>	<u>T2</u>	<u>U1</u>	<u>U2</u>	<u>V/W</u> <u>Bow</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>Y</u>	<u>Z1</u>	<u>Z2</u>	<u>Z4</u>	<u>Z5</u>	<u>Z6</u>
ADULT MALES	---	---	---	---	3	1	---	---	1	1	---	---
MALE FAWNS	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
ADULT DOES	1	---	---	2	---	---	1	---	2	---	1	---
DOE FAWNS	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
TOTAL DEER	1	---	---	2	3	1	1	---	3	1	1	---

Table 7. Deer by Area for 2021 Hunting Season. Data from all 2021 seasons is included. Any sublegal bucks taken are included in adult male data set. Areas in green are APR (Antler Point Restricted) Areas. Areas in purple are non-APR areas.

APR Area Vs Non-APR Area Use						
	2021		2020		2019	
	Check-Ins	%	Check-Ins	%	Check-ins	%
APR Areas	1169	74.9%	1212	73.5%	721	74.1%
Non-APR Areas	391	25.1%	437	26.5%	252	25.9%

Table 8. Antler Point Restricted (APR) Areas and non-APR Regular Season Check-Ins for 2021 and 2019 and 2020 for comparison. Areas in green are APR Areas. Areas in purple are non-APR areas.

Hunter Days & Catch Per Unit Effort (CPU) Per Season			
	2021 Season*	2020 Season	2019 Season
	Opening Weekend	Opening Weekend	Opening Weekend
Total Deer	12	19	17
Hunter Days	180 (190)	207	176
CPU	6.7% (6.3%)	9.2%	9.6%
	Regular Season	Regular Season	Regular Season
Total Deer	38	74	65
Total Hunters*	220	262	229
Hunter Days	905 (983)	1170	842
CPU	4.2 % (3.9%)	6.3%	7.7%

Table 9. Hunter Days, Total Deer Harvest, Hunter Days, Total and Catch per Unit (CPU, percent deer per hunter day) effort for both Opening Weekend and the entire Regular “Firearms” Season at West Point in 2021 and 2019 and 2020 for comparison. In 2021, iSportsman system upgrades enabled improved tracking of Guest Hunter Days. Paranthesized data includes Guest Hunter days. *Guests are not included in total Hunter numbers.

2021 Regular Season							
	Antlered Bucks	Button Bucks	Adult Does	Doe Fawns	Sub Bucks	No Age Doe	Total Deer
ACTIVE	3	---	9	---	---	---	12
CIVILIAN	6	---	4	---	---	---	10
DEPENDENT	1	---	1	---	---	---	2
CADET	1	---	1	---	---	---	2
GUEST	2	---	1	---	---	---	3
RETIRED	4	1	0	---	---	---	5
PUBLIC	3	---	1	---	---	---	4
TOTAL	20	1	17	---	---	---	38

Table 10. Breakdown of what segments of the hunting population took deer at West Point during the 2021 Regular “Firearms” Hunting Season.

2021 Early Bow Season					
	Antlered Bucks	Button Bucks	No Age Doe	Sub Bucks	Total Deer
ACTIVE	6	---	5	1	12
CIVILIAN	2	---	---	---	2
DEPENDENT	1	---	---	---	1
CADET	---	---	---	---	---
GUEST	---	---	1	---	1
RETIRED	1	---	---	---	1
TOTAL	11	---	6	---	17

Table 11. Breakdown of what segments of the population took deer at West Point during the 2021 Early Bow Deer Season. No deer were aged during Early Bow Deer Season.

2021 Late Bow & Muzzleloader Season			
	Antlered Bucks	No Age Doe	Total Deer
ACTIVE	---	---	---
CIVILIAN	1	1	2
DEPENDENT	---	---	---
CADET	---	---	---
GUEST	---	---	---
RETIRED	2	---	2
TOTAL	3	1	4

Table 12. Breakdown of what segments of the population took deer at West Point during the 2021 Late Bow and Muzzleloader Deer Season. No deer were aged during Late Bow and Muzzleloader Deer Season. In 2021, New York State extended the Late Bow & Muzzleloader season an additional seven days.

2021 All Deer Seasons							
	Antlered Bucks	Button Bucks	Adult Does	Doe Fawns	Sub Bucks	No Age Doe	Total Deer
ACTIVE	9	---	9	---	---	5	23
CIVILIAN	9	---	4	---	1	1	15
DEPENDENT	2	---	1	---	---	---	3
CADET	1	---	1	---	---	---	2
GUEST	2	---	1	---	---	1	4
RETIRED	7	1	---	---	---	---	8
PUBLIC	3	---	1	---	---	---	4
TOTAL	33	1	17	---	1	7	59

Table 13. Breakdown of what segments of the population took deer at West Point during all combined deer seasons in 2021. No deer were aged during the Early Bow or Late Bow and Muzzleloader Seasons.

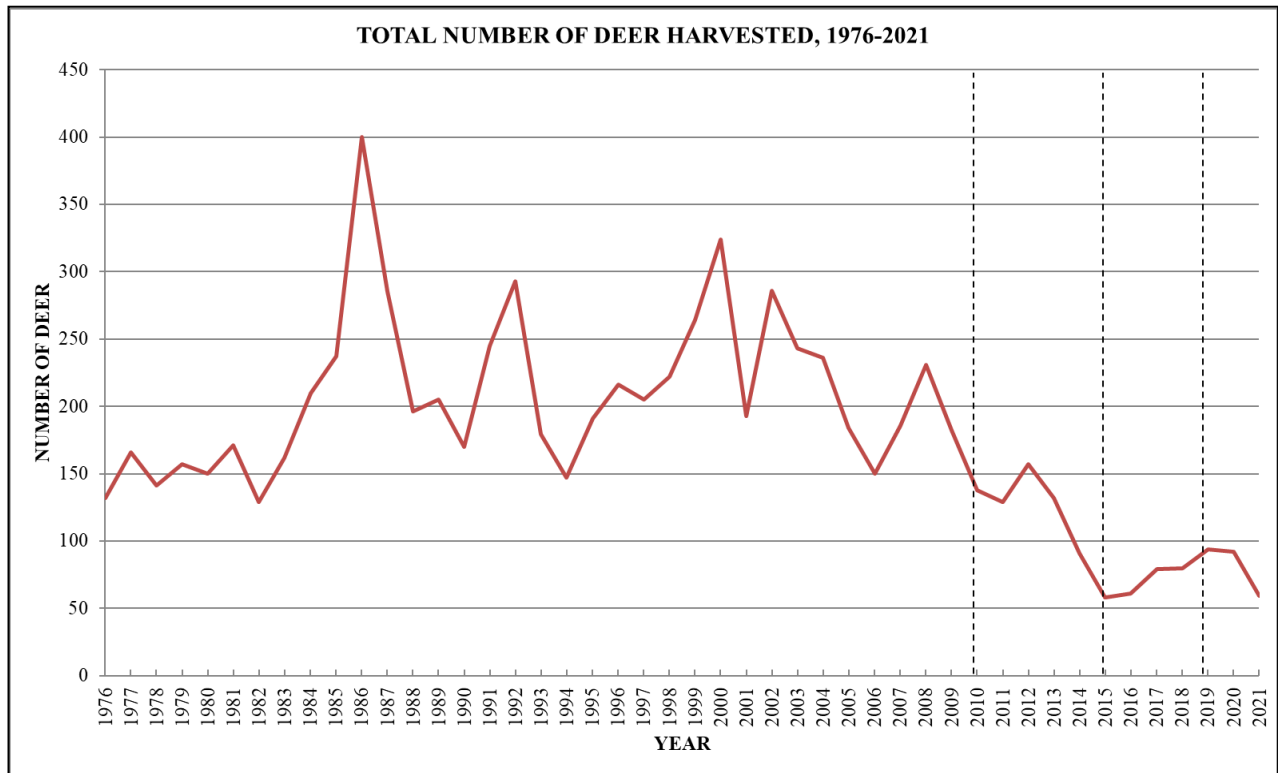


Figure 1. Line graph showing the total number of deer harvested at West Point from 1976 to 2021. Data included represents total deer from all seasons. Doe harvest was restricted by regulations, 2010-2016 including significantly restricted in 2015 and 2016. In 2019, a three-to-a-side antler point restriction was implemented.

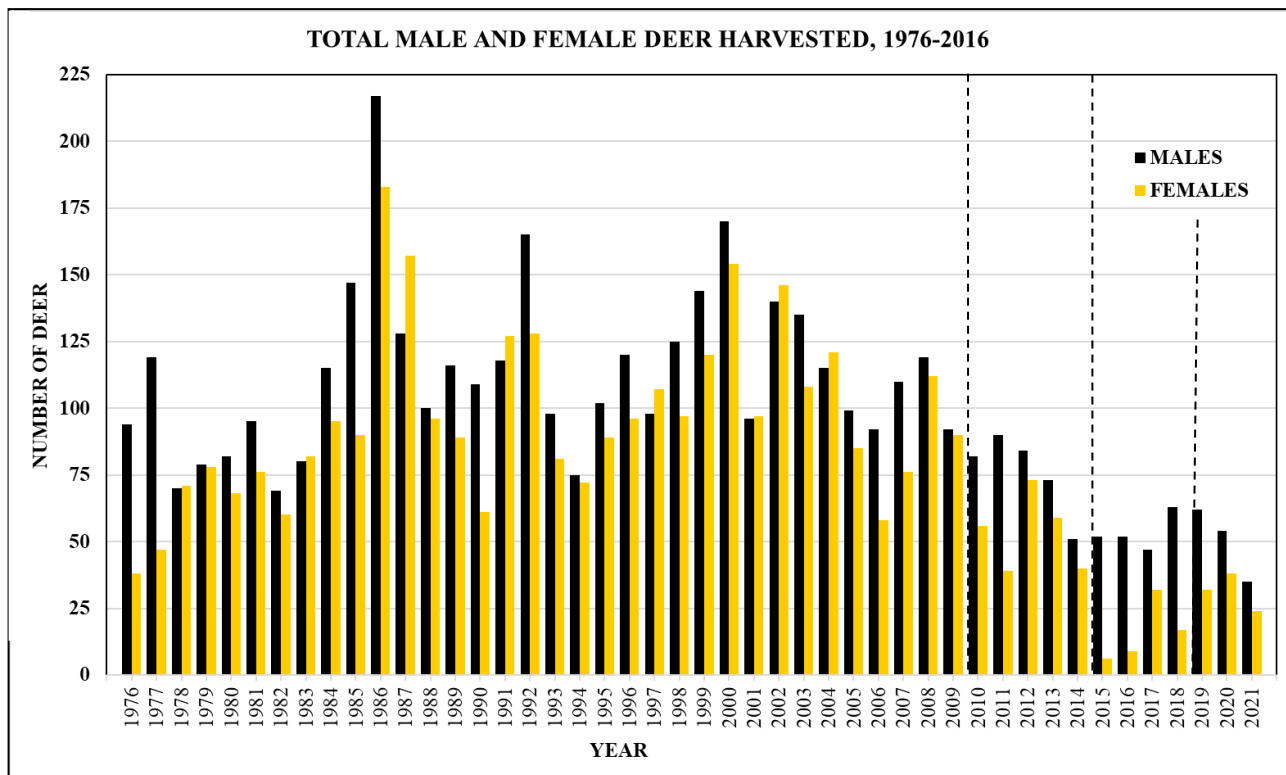


Figure 2. Bar Graph showing total numbers of male and female deer harvested at West Point from 1976 to 2021. Data included is from all seasons. Doe harvest was restricted by regulations, 2010-2016 including significantly restricted in 2015 and 2016. In 2019, a three-to-a-side antler point restriction was implemented.

POST 2021 DEER SEASON NOTICE

Throughout the 2021 Deer Season and since its completion, West Point hunters and others have taken notice of the decrease in the number of harvested deer at West Point in 2021 compared to the previous few years. The Natural Resources Branch wishes to address this decrease and its implication on the health of the deer herd, discuss some of the most likely causes for this decrease and our response to these issues. Along the way we want to remind the sportsman community of some important hunting and wildlife safety rules and best practices moving forward. Finally we want to give hunters a tentative idea advance idea of what deer hunting at West Point will look like in 2022.

In 2021, fifty-nine (59) total deer were reported harvested at West Point – a decrease of about 35% from the ninety-two (92) deer harvested in 2020 and ninety-four (94) deer harvested in 2019. The majority of this reduction occurred during the 2021 Regular Firearms Season (hereafter gun season) when only thirty-eight (38) deer were harvested, compared to the seventy-four (74) deer and sixty-five (65) deer harvested in 2020 and 2019 respectively. There are several possible explanations for this decrease including most notably the 2020 EHD outbreak. Other likely contributing factors include the 2021 Opening Day Lottery cancellation and large scale area closure and access limitation due to simultaneous timber harvest and bridge repairs, and finally extended effects of the 2019 APR regulation. Natural Resources believes it is a combination of all of these factors that produced the harvest decrease seen this year.

1. EPIZOOTIC HEMMORHAGIC DISEASE – In 2020, deer across the Hudson Valley, West Point included, were afflicted by Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD). EHD is a deadly viral disease spread by midges. It is not infectious to people, but in deer it causes a high fever, swelling, wasting, shock and – within days - death in non-endemic areas. In 2020, EHD claimed over two dozen deer on West Point. In 2021, no EHD-suspicious deer were reported here but EHD reappeared elsewhere in Orange and Ulster counties. The NYSDEC reported 20-35% decreases in the 2021 deer take in nearby wildlife management units (WMUs) where EHD occurred in 2020. In our own WMU (3P), alone, reduced harvests were also reported at Black Rock Forest and other nearby areas. The 2021 deer harvest reduction, therefore, is not a West Point specific issue, but rather a regional one that EHD likely plays a role in.

OUR RESPONSE: Natural Resources has monitored and managed the West Point deer herd for years and worked closely with partners both on the reservation and off (e.g. NYSDEC, NYNHP, PIPC, etc.) The NYSDEC has stressed the resiliency of local deer populations and does not anticipate EHD to have a significant negative long-term impact on deer. However, in the short-term, the NYSDEC may well take steps to reduce hunting pressure to assist population recovery in specific areas (i.e. WMUs) it deems necessary. Natural Resources will continue to work with the NYSDEC and other partners as well as continue to monitor the herd for EHD. In this effort, we ask West Point hunters and others for their continued assistance this coming year by keeping a look-out for EHD-suspicious deer and to report any such deer and non-roadkill dead deer, especially those found in and near water, to Natural Resources.

REMINDER: Please be reminded that deer and other wildlife should never be fed or baited. Feeding and baiting is against state and local regulations, causes nuisance wildlife issues and facilitates the spread of disease. Help prevent these issues by not feeding wildlife and by reporting any such incidents to the West Game Wardens (CLEOs) or Natural Resources.

2. OPENING DAY LOTTERY CANCELLATION – In 2021, West Point cancelled the Opening Day Lottery and in-person check in/out requirement. Instead check in/out was via the online iSportsman system. While the lottery was discontinued because of hunter indifference and an aim to simplify check in/out procedures, the cancellation prevented hunters from being unable to effectively plan and coordinate their first day of gun season as in previous years. Furthermore, it appears that many hunters failed to check out of areas they left earlier in the day and the spots they held up were effectively (even if unintentionally) blocked to other hunters on Opening Day, when deer are least alert and most susceptible to harvest. Opening Day is typically the highest harvest day of the year. In 2021, only five (5) deer were harvested Opening Day when a harvest of closer to ten (10) to fifteen (15) deer is more common.

RESPONSE: In 2022, Natural Resources will look to bring back the Opening Day lottery and in-person check in/out procedure for Opening Day. This process will once again allow hunters to reserve an area early on the Opening Day of gun season and early check-in the day before so that they will be able to immediately proceed to their reserved area the morning of Opening Day. Furthermore, this procedure will shut down the iSportsman online system for Opening Day and require all check in/out to occur in-person through Hunt Control. This requirement will benefit hunters by once again enabling hunters to more effectively plan and coordinate their first gun season hunt as they have in previous years. It will also reduce accidental area blocking on one of the most critical hunting days of the year and help to keep hunting areas available to hunters able and interested in using them on that day.

REMINDER: Please be reminded that hunters that must be in hunting areas they check in to within one hour of check in and remain in those areas. Additionally, hunters must check out of areas they have exited within one hour of exiting them. This promotes fair opportunity to other hunters and lets program managers know that hunters have safely left hunting areas.

3. TIMBER HARVEST, BRIDGE REPAIRS CLOSED OR LIMITED AREA ACCESS - Several areas of the reservation were closed for extended periods of time in 2021 due to necessary activities. On the western tier of the installation, a timber harvest took place during the gun season in Areas I, L, N, and Q closing one or more of some of our biggest hunting areas on many days and on some days, closing all of them. This harvest also closed large parts of Range Road 20 and 22 and made some areas accessible via a single route. At the same time, two bridges were also being repaired on the installation – one over Highland Brook in Area Z1 and one over Brooks Hollow Brook in Area T1. These repairs closed both areas on several days but in the latter case, the work on the bridge in Area T1 restricted access to the entire southern tier of West Point to more or less one road, Weyants Pond Road.

RESPONSE: Timber harvests take place every three to five years on average at West Point, optimally during a fairly small late-autumn, early-winter time window that often coincides with the deer hunting season. Environmental regulations prohibit cutting before mid-to-late autumn and the need for safe and responsible access and work can necessitate cutting before mid-to-late winter snowfalls. As of the posting of this notice, the 2021 timber harvest has been completed and with its conclusion, a new harvest is not expected for a few years. Likewise the bridge repairs, which as matters of safety, take precedence, will also both be completed shortly and unlikely to be needed again any time soon. In 2022 hunters of all kinds can expect area access and availability to return to normal with added benefit of acres of improved deer habitat (more open space, deer browse and wider shooting lanes) and two renovated bridges.

4. ANTLER POINT RESTRICTION – In 2019, West Point implemented an antler point restriction (APR) across ~70% of the reservation requiring buck harvests have at least three one inch points on at least one antler. The APR protects younger bucks and lets them age into older bucks so they may grow. This protection may prove especially beneficial during EHD. It remains to be seen, though, if this conservation benefit is offset by a resulting shift in doe hunting pressure. Nevertheless, the APR has proven popular. Fifty-eight (58) percent of respondents in our 2021 survey expressed satisfaction with the APR program as implemented. One effect of APRs is an eventual long-term reduction in total buck harvest. Reductions of 20% in the total buck take have been observed in other New York APR zones. APRs protect younger, more common, faster-to-replace bucks at the expense of the older, less common, slower-to-replace bucks.

OUR RESPONSE: When West Point decided to implement the APR in 2019, it did so with the understanding that the APR program would initially last five years before reassessment. With the conclusion of the 2021 season, the APR has now been in place for three years and Natural Resources aims to keep the APR as is for at least the next two years. The APR's limitation on bucks available to hunters, however, combined with New York State's limitation of does vis-à-vis strict control of the number of antlerless deer tags issued in our WMU, complicates potential deer management options on West Point. A reservation-wide moratorium on the doe take has been used in past to foster herd regeneration but this was before the APR had been implemented. A similar large-scale doe restriction across West Point coinciding with our current APR buck restrictions would severely limit hunters' options to harvest any deer at West Point.

WHAT CAN WEST POINT DEER HUNTERS EXPECT IN 2022?

- **TWO DEER PER HUNTER PER YEAR RESTRICTION** – In light of the reduced overall harvest and its implications for the current reduced state of the West Point deer herd, West Point will tentatively restrict total deer take in 2022 to no more than two deer per hunter per year with no more than one deer per sex (i.e. one buck and one doe)per year.
- **CONTINUED EHD MONITORING, POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS** – Natural Resources will continue to monitor the deer herd over the course of 2022 for signs of EHD and discuss 3P doe tag numbers with the NYSDEC. If EHD returns to our area next year, it may prove prudent to implement additional restrictions.
- **RETURN OF THE OPENING DAY LOTTERY & IN-PERSON CHECK IN/OUT** – In 2022, Natural Resources will look to restart the Opening Day lottery and in-person check in/out procedures solely for the first day of the gun season to allow for hunters better access and opportunity on a critical day of the hunting season.
- **RESTORATION OF NORMAL HUNTING AREA AVAILABILITY & ACCESS** – With the completion of the 2021 timber harvest and bridge repairs, normal hunting area access and availability for some of our largest hunting areas, adjacent range roads and other nearby hunting areas will be restored in 2022.

Any individuals with any questions or comments, should email Christopher Killough, Natural Resources Specialist, at Christopher.w.killough3.civ@army.mil

- West Point Natural Resources