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**Outline**

- Traditional Deer Management
- Introduction to Quality Deer Management (QDM)
- QDM in Tennessee
- Antler restrictions
- Limitations of antler restrictions
- Using body characteristics to age bucks
- Managing buck harvest with cameras

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**Traditional Harvest Management**

- Traditional deer management
  - Harvest bucks, protect does
  - Increases the population

Deer densities have reached social carrying capacity in many places.  
Doe harvest can control population growth.

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## What is QDM?

Management philosophy  
Goal: Balanced, healthy herd within social and biological carrying capacity

- Improve sex ratio
- Improve age structure
- Improve hunting experience

Hunters, landowners, and managers all involved



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## What is QDM?

Liberal doe harvest

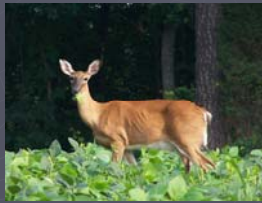
- Improves sex ratio
- Reduces pressure on habitat

Limit buck harvest to mature deer

- Improves age structure
- Improves sex ratio

Improve habitat

- Natural browse
- Food Plots



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## What is QDM?

QDM is not trophy management!

No "cull bucks", only young or mature bucks

Larger antlers are not the goal, but often a side effect



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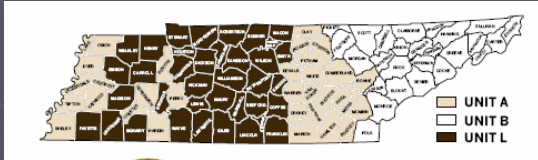
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## ODM in Tennessee

- In 1998, TN buck limit from 11 to 2, later raised back to 3, but no state antler regs
- Quota permits for does, then Unit L established – 3 does / day
- Certain WMAs establish antler restrictions 2003 (point counts with spread restrictions)




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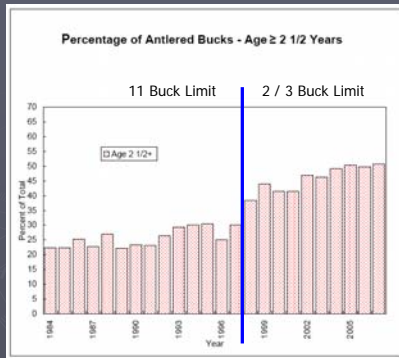
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## Mature Buck Harvests, Statewide



From 2007 Big Game Harvest Report, TWRA

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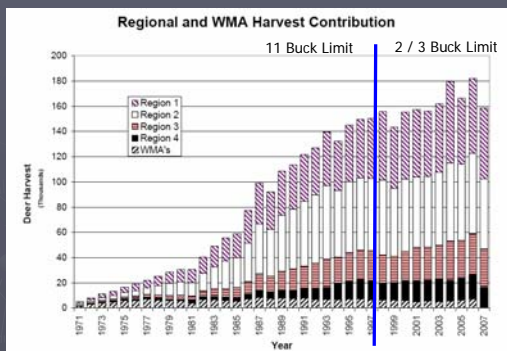
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## Statewide Deer Harvest



From 2007 Big Game Harvest Report, TWRA

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## Limiting the Buck Harvest

### Harvest Restrictions

- Lower buck limit (2 – 3 vs. 11)
- Antler restrictions
  - Point counts (minimum 8 points)
  - Points and spread ( 4 on a side and outside ears)
  - Boone and Crockett gross score
  - Other antler characteristics

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## Antler Restrictions

Antler size depends on

- Age
- Genetics
- Nutrition

Antler size by age class is highly variable, but increases (generally) with age

Some antler characteristics correlate better with age

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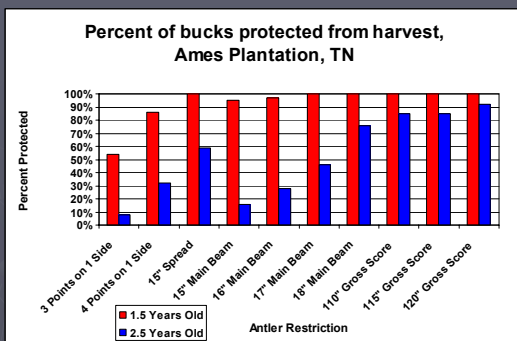
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## Antler Restrictions




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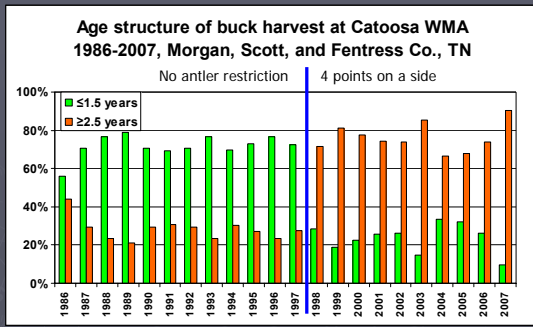
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## Effect of Antler Restrictions




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## Limitations

- Often not restrictive enough (Mississippi)
- "Top end" younger deer may be harvested
- Odd or broken antlers result in "illegal" mature deer
- Buck Fever!! and ground shrinkage

The solution? Use body characteristics as well as antlers.

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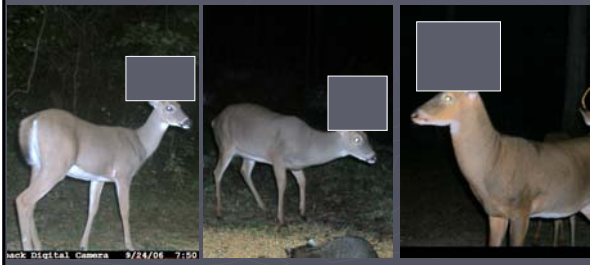
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## Aging by body characteristics

- Neck thickness and jaw line
- Back and belly
- Muscle tone




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## Trail Cameras

Preseason camera scouting and census

- ID bucks by antlers
- Relative age by body
- Age mature bucks **before** the hunt, not through the scope
- Estimate doe numbers and set harvest goals



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## Conclusions

Antler restrictions protect young bucks.  
Antler size is regional, manage likewise.  
Use body cues to help determine age.  
Liberal doe tags allow hunters to choose QDM.  
Trigger control is the key!

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## Online Resources

Quality Deer Management – Guidelines for Implementation

[www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/pbfiles/pb1643.pdf](http://www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/pbfiles/pb1643.pdf)

Quality Deer Management Assoc.

[www.qdma.org](http://www.qdma.org)

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

[www.tnwildlife.org](http://www.tnwildlife.org)

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Questions?



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