



**Michigan Department of Natural Resources
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HUNTERS HELPING LANDOWNERS 2012 PROGRAM DATA

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ABSTRACT

Public Act 241 of 2012 created the Hunters Helping Landowners Program. Accordingly, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Wildlife Division, “the Division,” designed an online form which gives hunters the opportunity to voluntarily enroll and indicate two counties where they would like to hunt antlerless deer on private lands. Hunters without Internet access could also enroll by calling or visiting a DNR operations service center. Landowners were able to request from the Division a list of volunteer hunters, with associated contact information, for the county where they own land. In 2012, over 1,600 hunters voluntarily enrolled in the program. Lapeer County was selected the most by hunters with a combined first and second choice total of 185 volunteers. Washtenaw was the second most often selected county with a total of over 160 volunteers. All of the 20 most selected counties were located in Michigan’s Lower Peninsula and in Hunting and Trapping Zone 3. Twelve landowners requested a list of hunters.

BACKGROUND

Due to Public Act 241 of 2012, the Division created the Hunters Helping Landowners Program, “the program,” and began collecting information in August of 2012. By completing an online form, hunters voluntarily enrolled in the program and indicated two counties where they would like to hunt antlerless deer on private lands. Hunters without Internet access could enroll by calling or visiting a DNR operations service center. Landowners were able to participate in the program by requesting from the Division a list of volunteer hunters, with associated contact information, for the county where they own land. Reasons why landowners may have needed



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additional antlerless deer harvested on their property, included:

- Deer were regularly damaging crops on their property
- Deer were causing extensive damage to landscaping
- More hunters could benefit from harvest opportunity on their property

The Division began collecting information from volunteer hunters in August 2012, and there were 1,644 volunteers who participated in the program in 2012. Lapeer County was selected the most by hunters with a combined first and second choice total of 185 volunteers. Washtenaw was the second most often selected county with a total of 164 volunteers with Oakland County acquiring the third most choices at 140 (Figure 2). Oakland County was most selected as the first choice for volunteer hunters with 94, followed by Livingston County with 81 and Lapeer County with 80. All of the 20 most selected counties (Figure 3) were located in Michigan's Lower Peninsula and in Hunting and Trapping Zone 3. These counties accounted for 61 percent of the total county choices selected by volunteer hunters. This is also the most densely populated area of Michigan and has the least public land available for hunting. No one selected Schoolcraft or Gogebic counties, but it is notable that neither public nor private antlerless deer licenses were available in those two counties for the 2012 seasons.

A total of 12 landowners requested a volunteer hunter list for their county (Figure 4). Cheboygan and Grand Traverse counties received the most requests with two each. The other requests were for Houghton, Ingham, Lapeer, Leelanau, Mecosta, Midland, Newaygo, and St. Clair. Three requests came for counties in Hunting and Trapping zone 3; three for counties in Hunting and Trapping zone 2; and one for a county in Hunting and Trapping zone 1. The remaining three requests were for split counties that have land in zones 2 and 3.

PROGRAM RULES

Public Act 241 of 2012 required several provisions for the program specific to the Division, the landowners, and the volunteers.

The Division was instructed to:

- create a mechanism for hunters willing to harvest antlerless deer to submit their top two county choices and contact information;
- notify any participating landowners requesting a list that the Division has not verified that volunteers possess valid licenses;
- indicate on all forms and information about the program that participation in the program is voluntary;
- delete all information obtained during the previous year on January 1 of the following year; and
- make available on the DNR's website a list of all the deer hunting licenses and permits available in Michigan, the criteria for qualifying for each of these licenses or permits, and where to obtain these licenses or permits.

Volunteer hunters are:

- not allowed to register to harvest antlerless deer under the program in more than 2 counties; and
- are responsible for ensuring they are properly licensed to harvest antlerless deer.

Under the program, all landowners:

- May request a contact list for all the volunteer hunters who indicated that they would be willing to harvest antlerless deer in the owner's or lessee's county.

The program is repealed effective January 1, 2017.

CONCLUSION

The intention of Public Act 241 of 2012 was to allow for the creation and maintenance of a list by the Division for farmers and other landowners to use to contact additional hunters when deer are doing damage or to have an additional tool to aid in deer management on private property in Michigan. Although hunters volunteered for 81 of Michigan's 83 counties, only 12 landowners requested a volunteer hunter list. The proportion of volunteer hunters to landowners was 137 to 1. The participating landowners only represented 10 counties or 12% of the possible selections. Due to a lack of landowner participation, it is unlikely that a significant portion of volunteers were contacted.

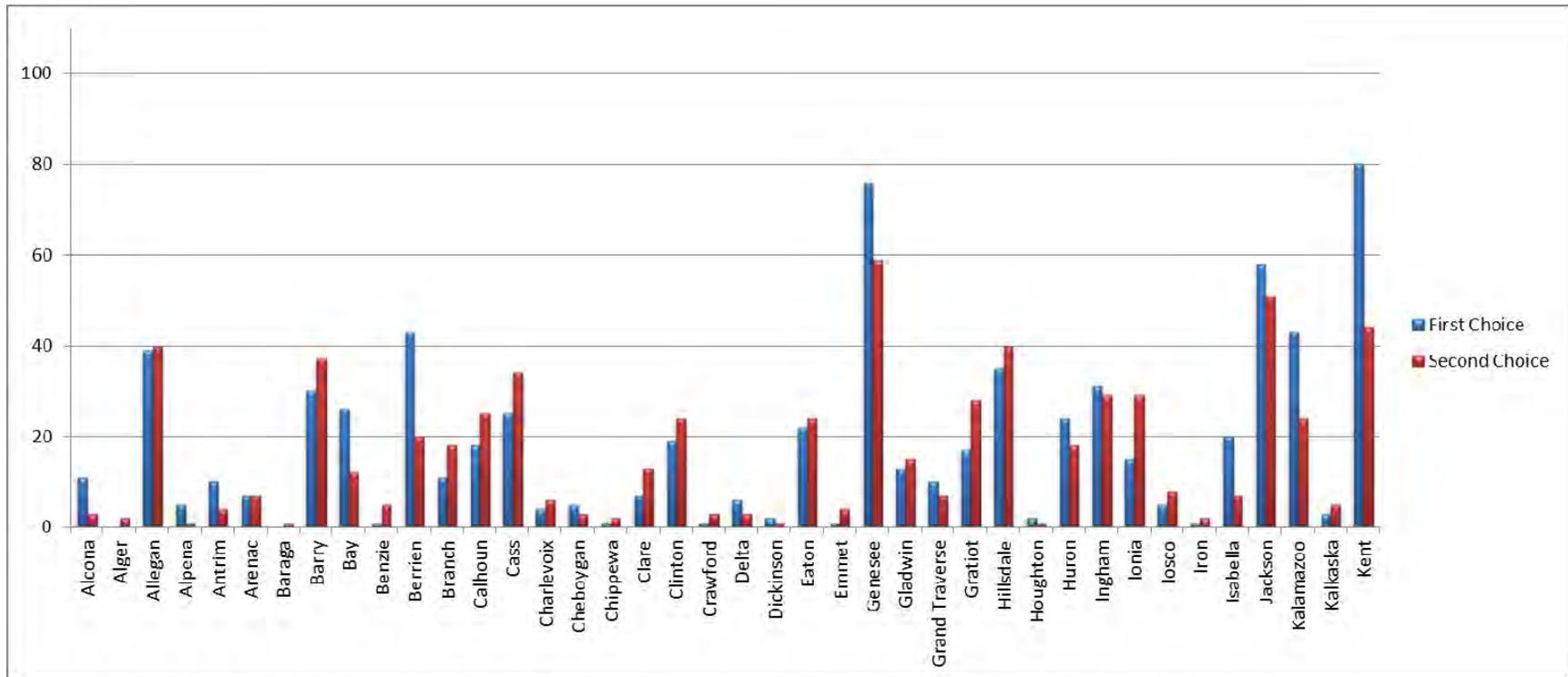


Figure 1. Volunteer hunter county choices per 40 of Michigan counties in the year 2012.

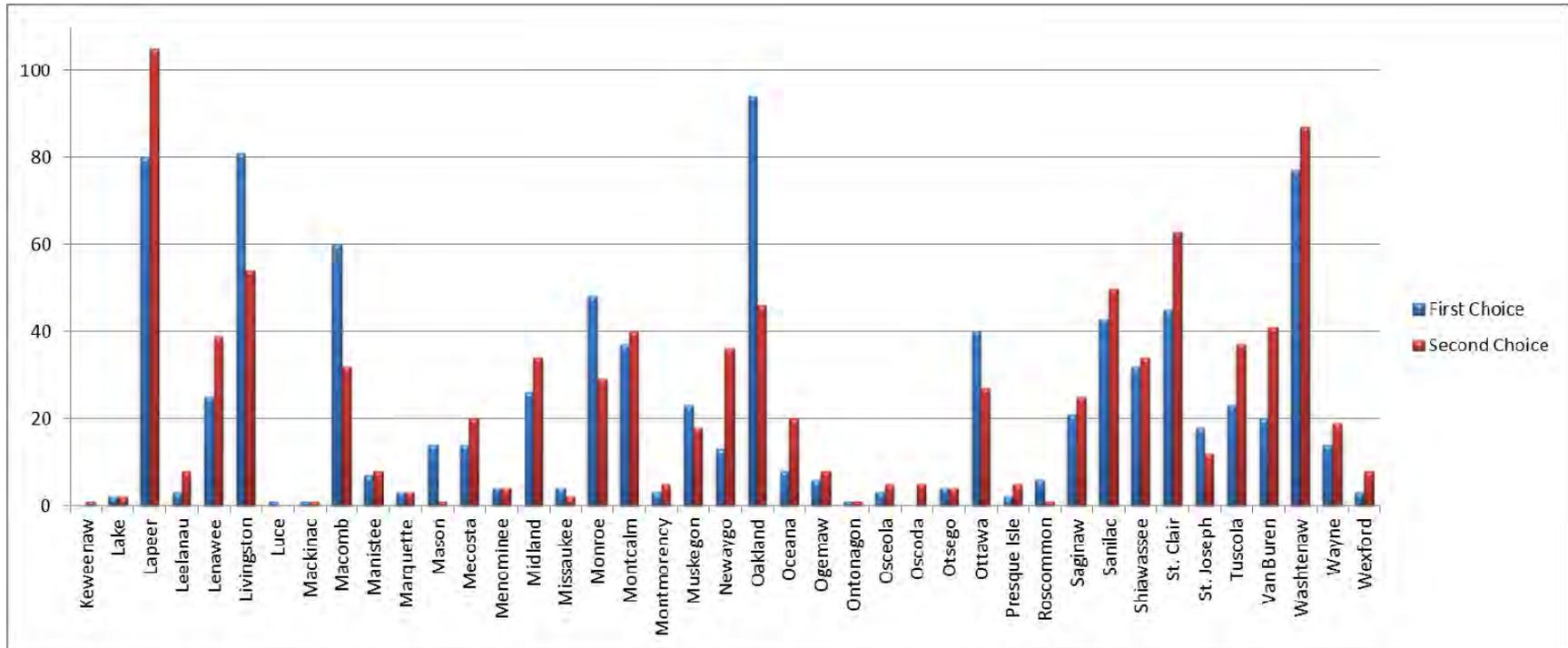


Figure 2. Volunteer hunter county choices per 41 of Michigan counties in the year 2012.

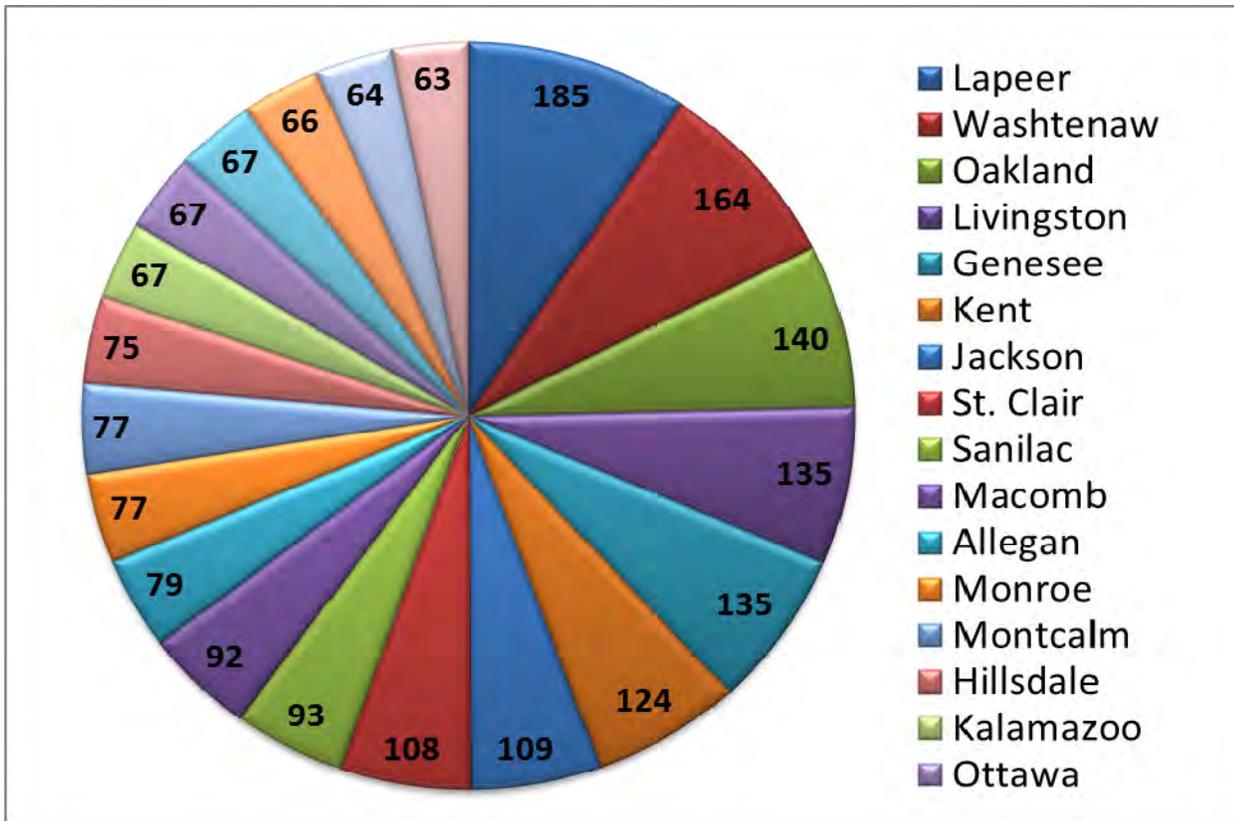


Figure 3. The top 20 Michigan counties chosen by volunteer hunters in 2012.

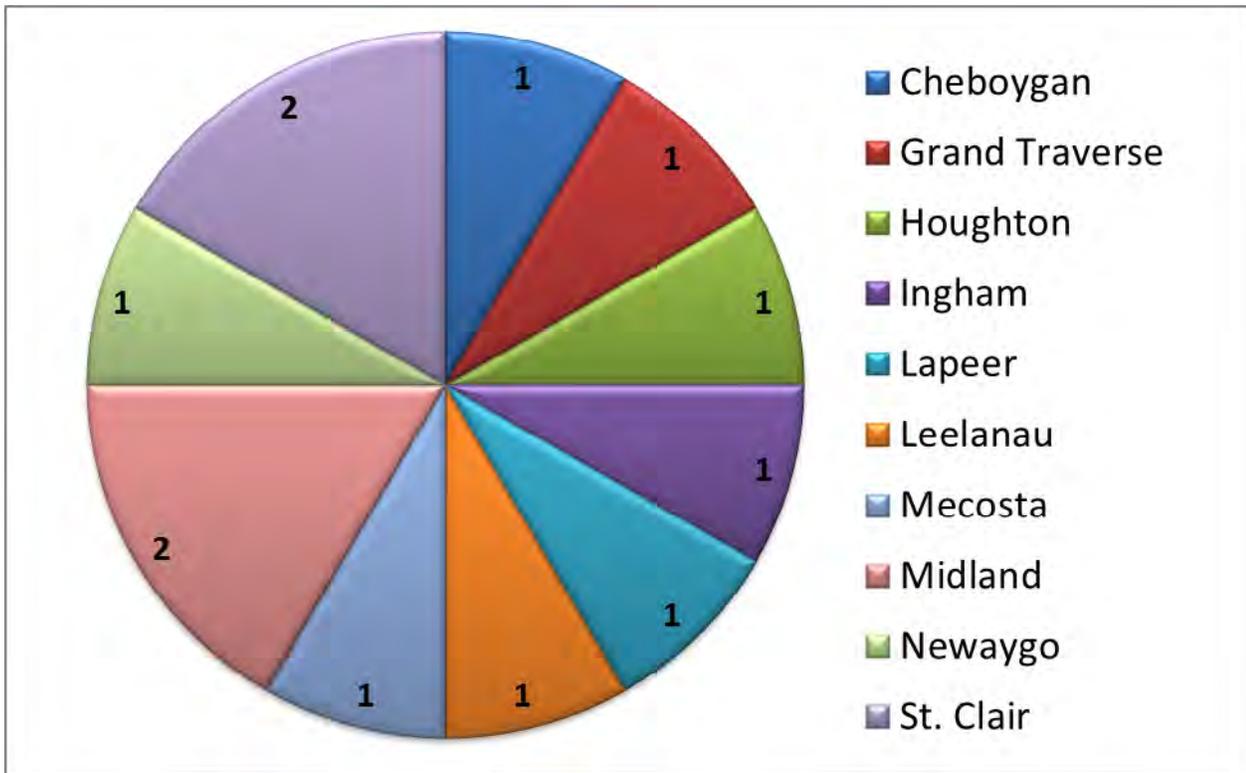


Figure 4. Volunteer hunter list requests by landowners per Michigan county in 2012.