

# **Natural Resources Commission Meeting**

Policy Committee on  
Wildlife and Fisheries

December 14, 2017

# Proposed Orders

- For Information – NRC
  - Common Merganser Control Permits and Regulations (WCO # 1 of 2018)
- For Action – NRC
  - Order to Re-designate Bay City State Recreation Area to Bay City State Park; Tobico Marsh Boundaries (WCO # 7 of 2017)
- For Action – Director
  - Order to Re-designate Bay City State Recreation Area to Bay City State Park (LUOD # 3 of 2017)
  - PA 288 of 2016; Forest Road Inventory in the Northern Lower Peninsula (LUOD # 5 of 2017)

# **NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries**

- Fisheries Division Update
- Wildlife Division Update
  - Michigan's CWD Status
  - 2018 Calendar of Issues Review
  - Common Merganser Control Permits and Regulations
  - Preliminary Firearm Deer Seasons Results
  - Recent Developments of CWD and POC Operations

# **Department of Natural Resources**

Fisheries Division

Chief's Update

Jim Dexter

December 14, 2017

# Black Lake Sturgeon Season

- February 3 – 7
- 14 fish allocation
  - 7 Tribal
  - 7 State
- State sets harvest limit at 6



# Inland Trout Management Plan

- Final draft in development
- MT review next week
- Great public input
- NRC presentation in April



# Arctic Grayling

- Partnership meeting in late October
- Significant progress on Manistee River Tributaries
  - Consumers Energy grant
- Meetings with Michigan foundations
- Alaska vs. Montana for broodstock



# Other planning efforts:

- Strategic Plan, 2018-2022
  - Final Draft / Executive Review
  - Roll-out in February
- Lake Michigan Fish Management Plan
  - Final Draft
  - January NRC

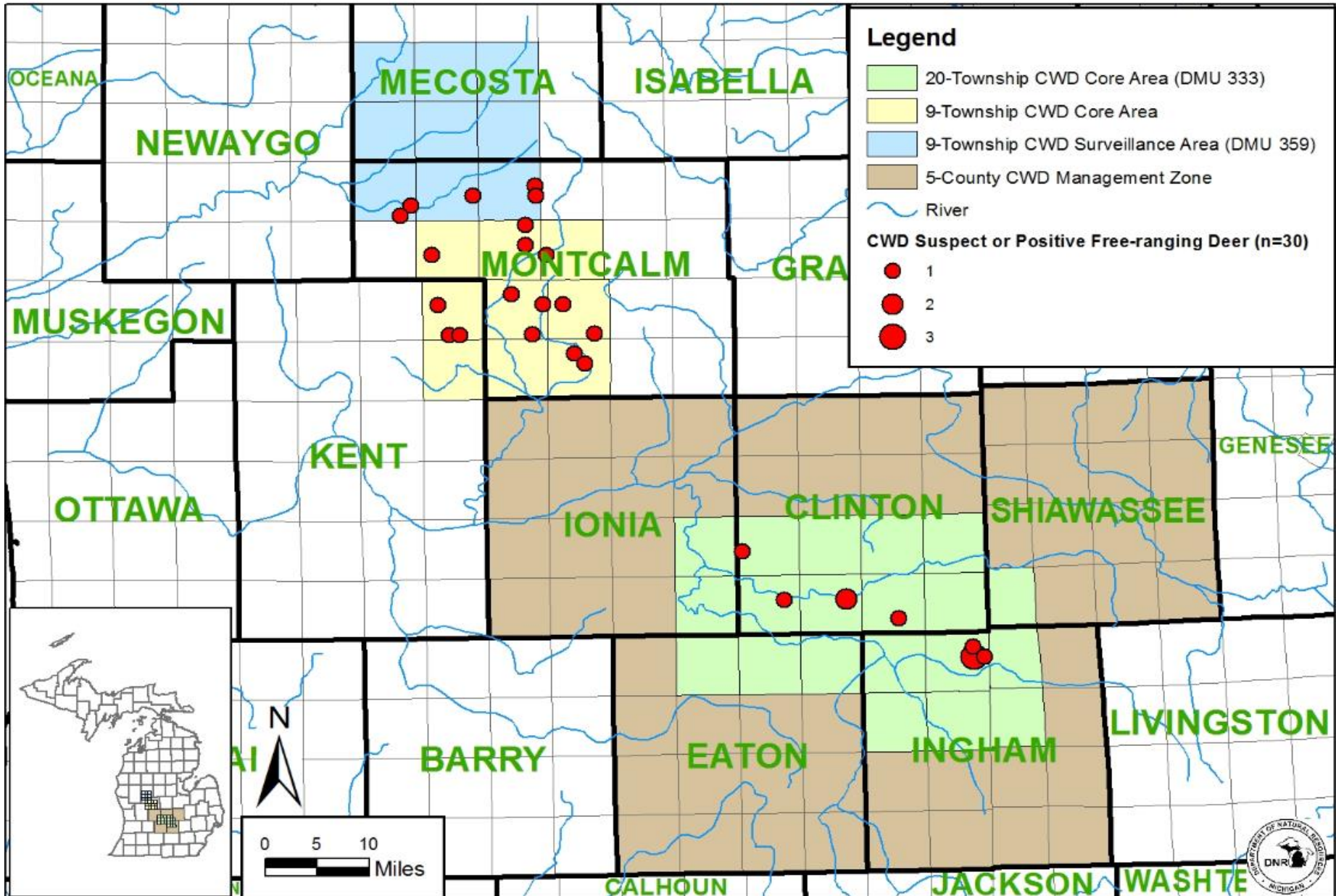


**Questions?**

# **Wildlife Chief Update**

**Russ Mason**

# Wildlife Chief Update



# Wildlife Chief Update

- West Nile Virus
- Plans to translocate sharp-tail grouse to the Western Upper Peninsula in Spring 2018
- New Northern Lower Peninsula Disease Biologist
- New Assistant Chief for Forest Resources Division

# 2018 Calendar of Issues

- Regulatory recommendation calendar for 2018
- Provides topics/discussions for each meeting
- Promotes regulatory efficiencies and communications
- Posted online
- Current issues may be added to calendar
- Questions or comments?

**Thank You**

# **Common Merganser Control Permits and Regulations**

Barbara Avers

Waterfowl & Wetland Specialist

# Background

- Relationship between common mergansers and parasite involved in swimmer's itch (SI)
- Reducing common mergansers on a lake has been shown to reduce the number of snails infected with SI parasite
- Lower snail infection rates may result in less SI



# Background

- Several northern Michigan lakes have expressed interest in managing common mergansers
  - Trap and relocate common mergansers and their broods
  - Destroy nests and eggs
  - Harass common mergansers with limited lethal take

# Background

- USFWS and DNR permitted a 3-year research study (2014-2016) on Higgins Lake to assess a comprehensive SI control program
- 2017 pilot control program on 5 lakes
  - Higgins, Crystal, Glen, Leelanau, and Lime
  - Trapping and relocation of 400 common mergansers
  - Resulting decrease in snail infection rates
- Other lakes expressing interest in control programs
- Legislative appropriation for a SI control program (General Fund)

# Common Merganser Control Policy

- Need for long-term policy
- No longer research, now control and management
- Stakeholder engagement process
  - 5-lake core team
  - February 2017 meeting to identify roles, responsibilities, interests, views of success
    - “Swimmer’s itch is a concern for many communities. There is an interest to develop a science-based, multi-faceted, and effective swimmer’s itch program that addresses stakeholder interests”.
  - July 2017 meeting to provide guidance and input to policy development



# Policy

- Meet the interests of multiple stakeholders
- Conserve common merganser populations
- Proposal for issuance of permits for relocation, egg and nest destruction, and harassment with limited lethal take to landowners, lake associations, municipalities, public agencies, and nuisance animal control firms and agencies
- Program in place before Spring 2018

# Eligibility Requirements

- Developed with stakeholder group
- Presence of the swimmer's itch parasite and evidence that Common Mergansers are the host associated with the parasite's life cycle on the lake:
  - Common Merganser broods on the lake; and
  - Evidence of increasing SI cases or severity; and
  - Snail infection rate  $> 0.5\%$ , OR
  - qPCR assessment  $> 50$  cercariae/25 L of water.
- As methods and technologies are developed and improved, policy will be updated to provide improved eligibility options and thresholds.

# Considerations

- Mergansers have many values including hunting and viewing, and removal may impact these activities at a local level
- Michigan common merganser population has increased as indicated by the Michigan Breeding Bird Survey
- No negative impact to common merganser population expected

# Considerations

- Lake associations have cited economic impacts from SI
  - Tourism and local economies
  - Waterfront properties are also made less desirable by SI

# Proposed WCO Changes

- Allow issuance of permits for common merganser control
  - Trapping and relocation, egg and nest destruction, harassment with limited lethal take
  - Sites (lakes)
  - Nuisance animal control firms and agencies



# Proposed Permit Fees

- Site permit
  - \$100 for single family residence
  - \$200 for all others
- Contractor permit
  - \$200 for egg and nest destruction
  - \$200 for harassment and limited lethal take
  - \$300 for capture and relocation
  - \$500 to conduct all control activities
- Fees are expected to partially offset administrative costs
- Similar to Canada goose fees

**Thank You**



# Preliminary 2017 Firearm Deer Season Results

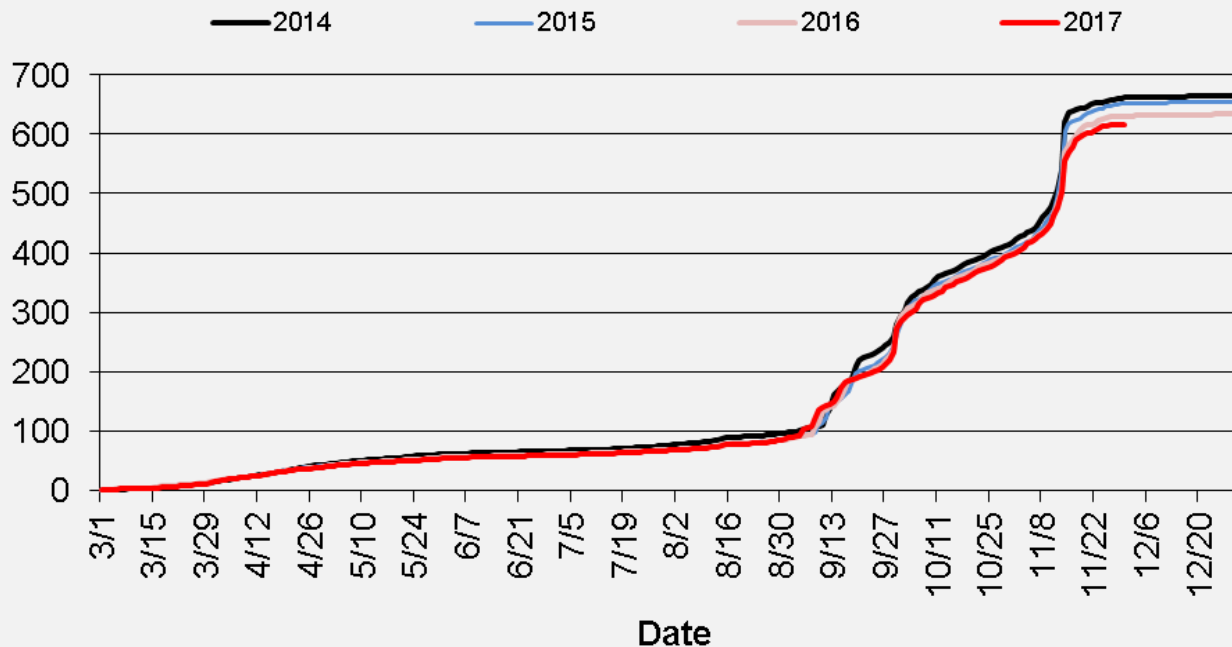


Chad Stewart and Sarah Mayhew  
Wildlife Division  
December 14, 2017

# Evaluation of 2017 Season

- License sales (As of 11/30/2017)
  - Unique deer license buyers down 2.1%
  - Number of deer licenses sold down 0.7%

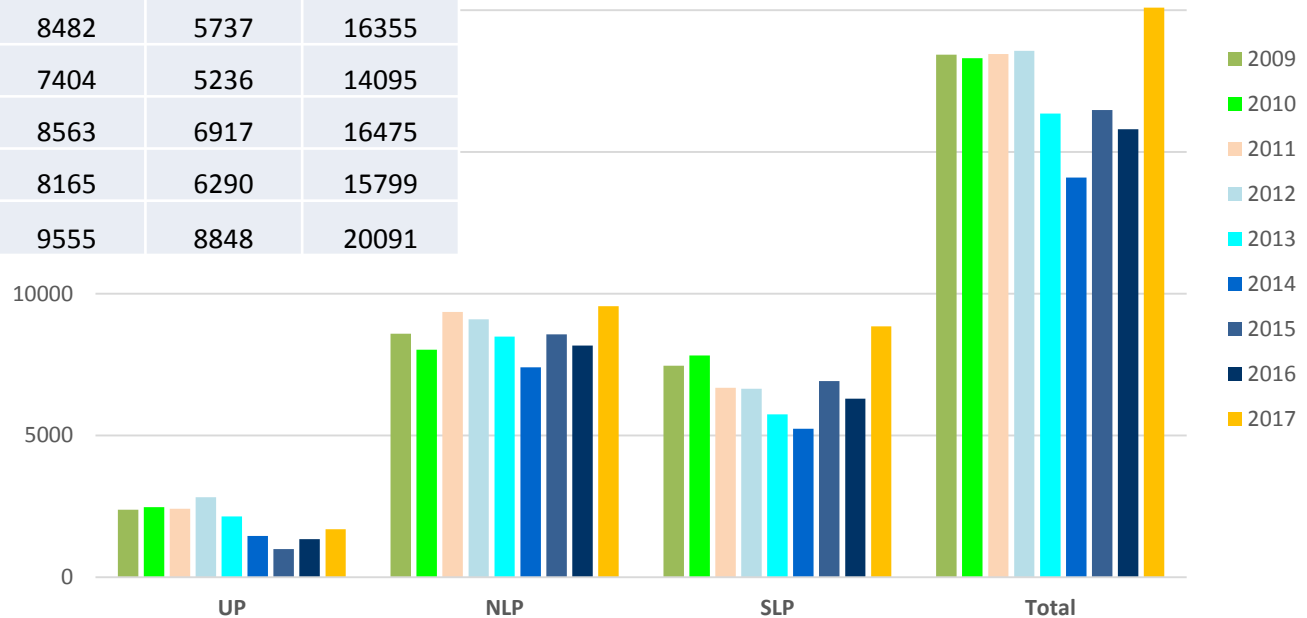
People obtaining deer kill tags  
(thousands)



# All Check Station Data: Regular Firearms Season

Check Station Data as of December 4, 2017

|      | UP   | NLP  | SLP  | Total |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 2009 | 2382 | 8584 | 7459 | 18425 |
| 2010 | 2467 | 8021 | 7813 | 18301 |
| 2011 | 2415 | 9351 | 6681 | 18447 |
| 2012 | 2821 | 9098 | 6642 | 18561 |
| 2013 | 2136 | 8482 | 5737 | 16355 |
| 2014 | 1455 | 7404 | 5236 | 14095 |
| 2015 | 995  | 8563 | 6917 | 16475 |
| 2016 | 1344 | 8165 | 6290 | 15799 |
| 2017 | 1688 | 9555 | 8848 | 20091 |



# CSC Check Station Data: Regular Firearms Season

## All Deer Checked

|      | UP   | NLP  | SLP  | Total |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 2009 | 1345 | 2048 | 1417 | 4810  |
| 2010 | 1479 | 1845 | 1335 | 4659  |
| 2011 | 1577 | 2115 | 1248 | 4940  |
| 2012 | 1915 | 2044 | 1226 | 5185  |
| 2013 | 1461 | 1808 | 1093 | 4362  |
| 2014 | 921  | 1581 | 913  | 3415  |
| 2015 | 713  | 1708 | 850  | 3271  |
| 2016 | 955  | 1578 | 761  | 3294  |
| 2017 | 1223 | 1410 | 677  | 3310  |

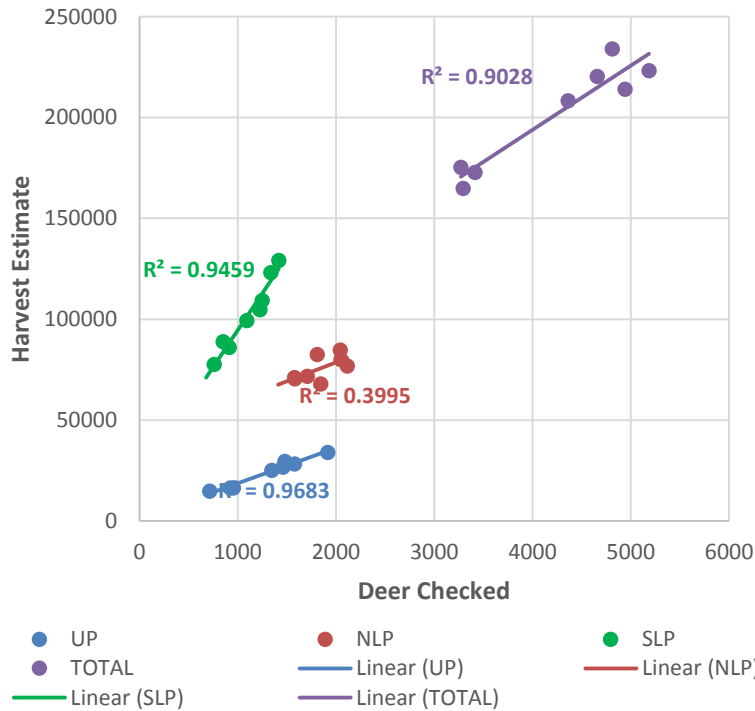
## All Antlered Deer Checked

|      | UP   | NLP  | SLP | Total |
|------|------|------|-----|-------|
| 2009 | 1088 | 1372 | 743 | 3203  |
| 2010 | 1204 | 1202 | 719 | 3125  |
| 2011 | 1191 | 1393 | 701 | 3285  |
| 2012 | 1505 | 1299 | 686 | 3490  |
| 2013 | 1124 | 993  | 635 | 2752  |
| 2014 | 630  | 833  | 522 | 1985  |
| 2015 | 610  | 1098 | 521 | 2229  |
| 2016 | 790  | 1064 | 463 | 2317  |
| 2017 | 1003 | 859  | 455 | 2317  |

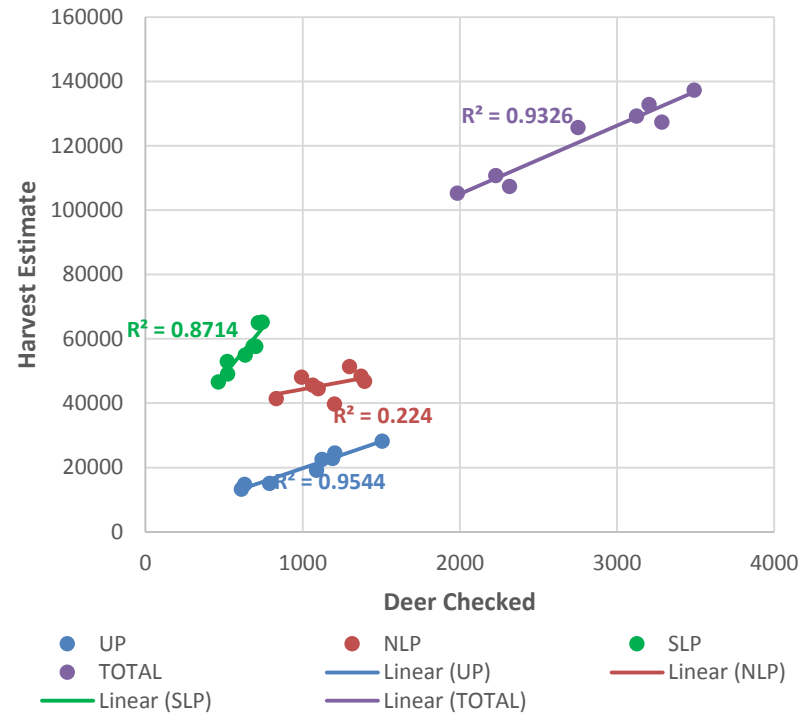
Check Station Data as of December 4, 2017

# CSC Check Station Data: Regular Firearms Season

## All Deer Checked



## All Antlered Deer Checked



Check Station Data as of December 4, 2017

# Evaluation of 2017 Season

- Firearm deer check data:

Deer checked as of 12/4 (compared to 2015)

UP: +28.1%

NLP: -10.6%

SLP: -11.0%

Statewide: +0.5%

Bucks checked as of 12/4 (compared to 2015)

UP: +27.0%

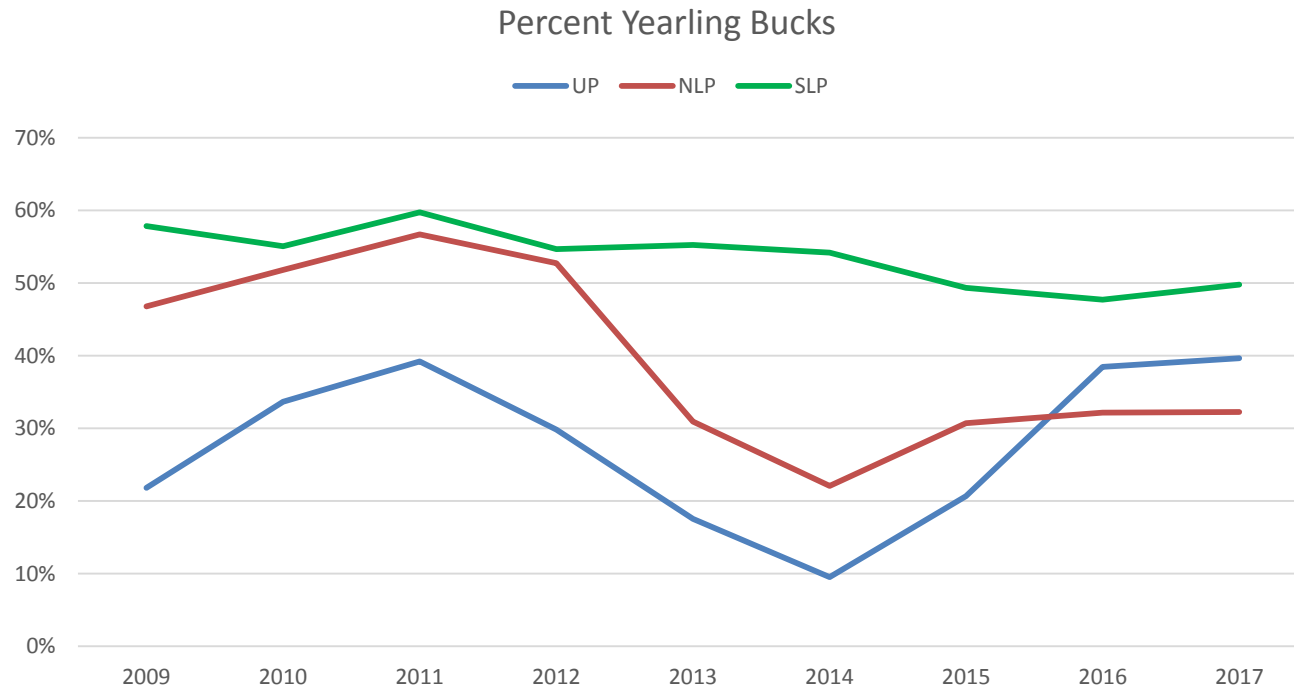
NLP: -19.3%

SLP: -1.7%

Statewide: 0%

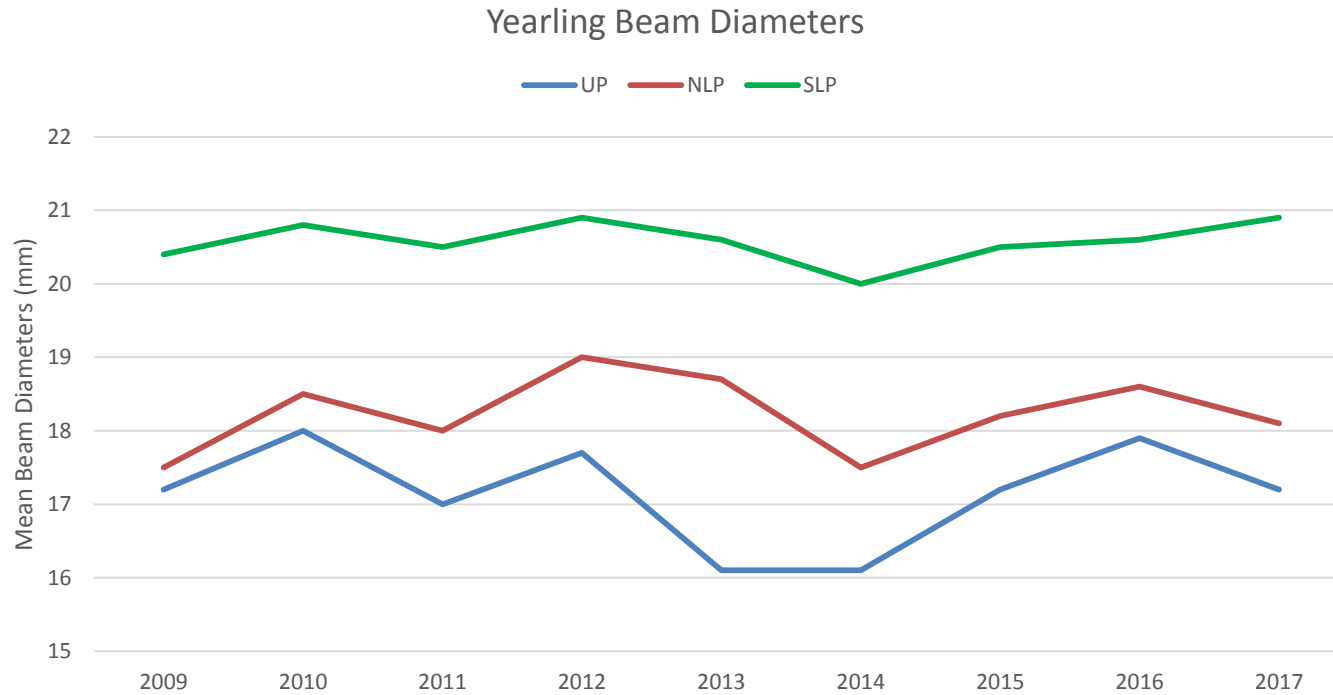


# Yearling Bucks Harvested



Deer checked as of 12/4

# 2017 Firearm Deer Check Data



Deer checked as of 12/4

# Final Firearm Season Estimates

- Mail survey sample of licensed hunters
- All licensed hunters may report online
  - Questionnaire will be at [www.michigan.gov/deer](http://www.michigan.gov/deer)
    - Take Harvest Survey
  - Submit after all 2017 hunting



**Thank You**

[www.michigan.gov/deer](http://www.michigan.gov/deer)