



Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
Wildlife Division Report No. 3581  
January 2014

## HUNTERS HELPING LANDOWNERS 2013 PROGRAM DATA

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### ABSTRACT

*Public Act 241 of 2012 created the Hunters Helping Landowners Program. Accordingly, the Department of Natural Resources, “the Department,” 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 Department a list of volunteer hunters, with associated contact information, for the county where they own land. In 2013, over 1,800 hunters voluntarily enrolled in the program. Oakland County was selected the most by hunters with a combined first and second choice total of 186 volunteers. Lapeer was the second most often selected county with a total of over 180 volunteers. All of the 20 most selected counties were located in Michigan’s Lower Peninsula and in Hunting and Trapping Zone 3. Four landowners requested a list of hunters.*

### BACKGROUND

Due to Public Act 241 of 2012, the Department 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 Department a list of volunteer hunters, with associated contact information, for the county where they own land. Reasons why landowners



A contribution of Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration, Michigan Project W-127-R

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may have needed 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

As per statute, at the end of each year, all volunteer information must be deleted and the survey is reset. Because data cannot be carried over from one year to the next, the Department cannot compare the number of new volunteers to repeat volunteers.

For the year 2013, there were 1,844 hunters who volunteered for the program as compared to 1,644 volunteers in 2012. Oakland County was selected the most by hunters with a combined first and second choice total of 186 volunteers, with Lapeer County as the top choice in 2012 with 185. Lapeer County was the second most often selected county with a total of 183 volunteers in 2013, with Livingston County acquiring the third most choices at 176 (Figure 2). Oakland County was most selected as the first choice for volunteer hunters with 124 in 2013 (Figure 1) as compared to its first choice ranking with 94 in 2012. Kent County was next with 100 volunteers and then Genesee County with 88 in 2013 (Figure 1). All of the 20 most selected counties in 2013 (Figure 2) were located in Michigan's Lower Peninsula and in Hunting and Trapping Zone 3. These counties accounted for over 60 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 Chippewa or Luce counties, but it is notable that neither public nor private antlerless deer licenses were available in those two counties for the 2013 seasons.

A total of four landowners requested a volunteer hunter list for their county in 2013. In 2012, 12 landowners signed up to receive a county list. The 2013 requests were for Monroe, Baraga, Berrien, and Shiawassee counties. Three requests came for counties in Hunting and Trapping Zone 3 and one for a county in Hunting and Trapping Zone 1.

## **PROGRAM RULES**

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

The Department 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 Department 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.

## **SUMMARY**

The intention of Public Act 241 of 2012 was to allow for the creation and maintenance of a list by the Department 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 four landowners requested a volunteer hunter list in 2013 with only 12 landowners requesting a list in 2012. The proportion of volunteer hunters to landowners was 461 to 1 in 2013. The participating landowners only represented four counties or about 5% of the possible selections. Due to a lack of landowner participation, it is unlikely that a significant portion of volunteers were contacted.

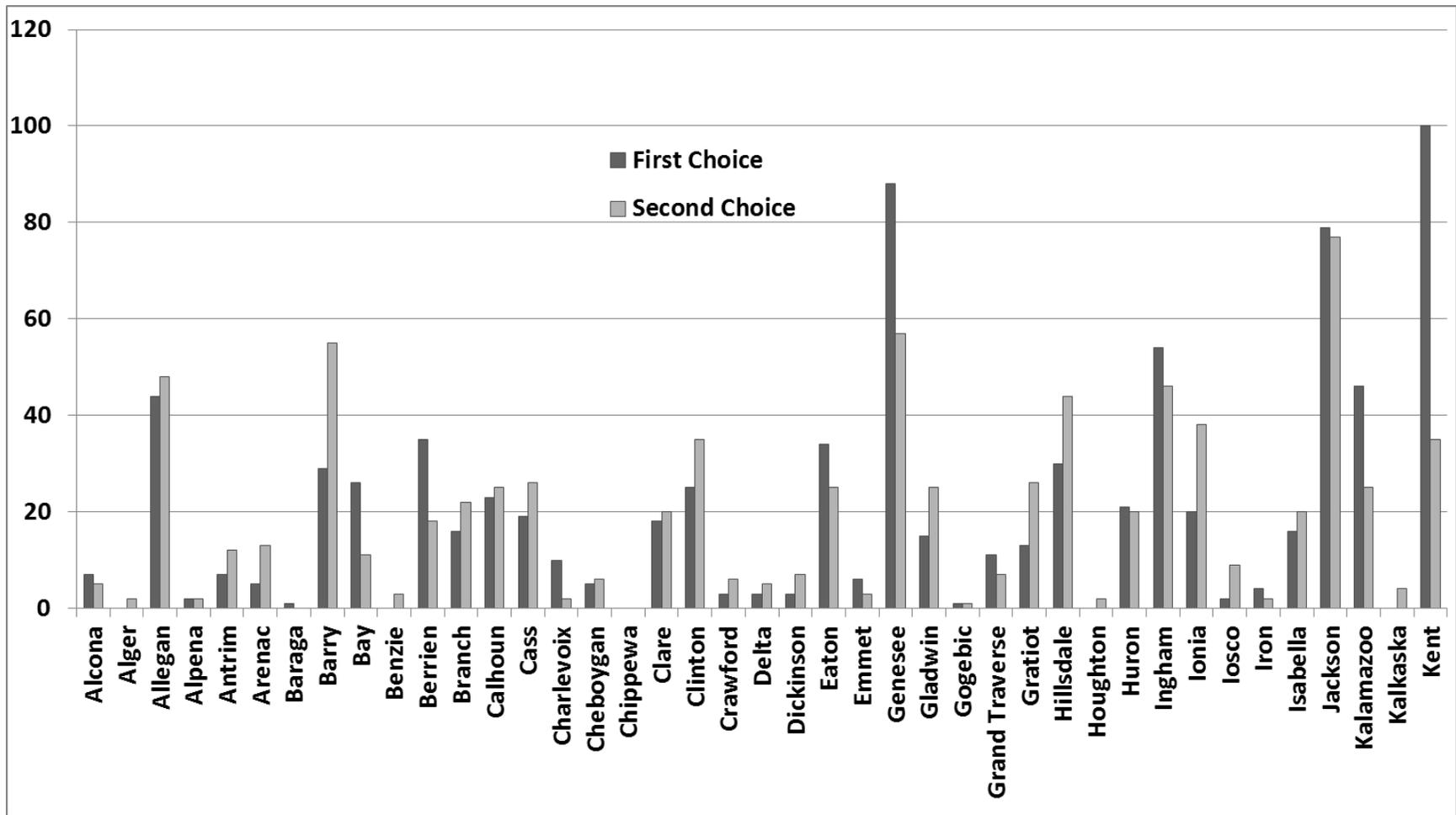


Figure 1. Volunteer hunter county choices in the year 2013.

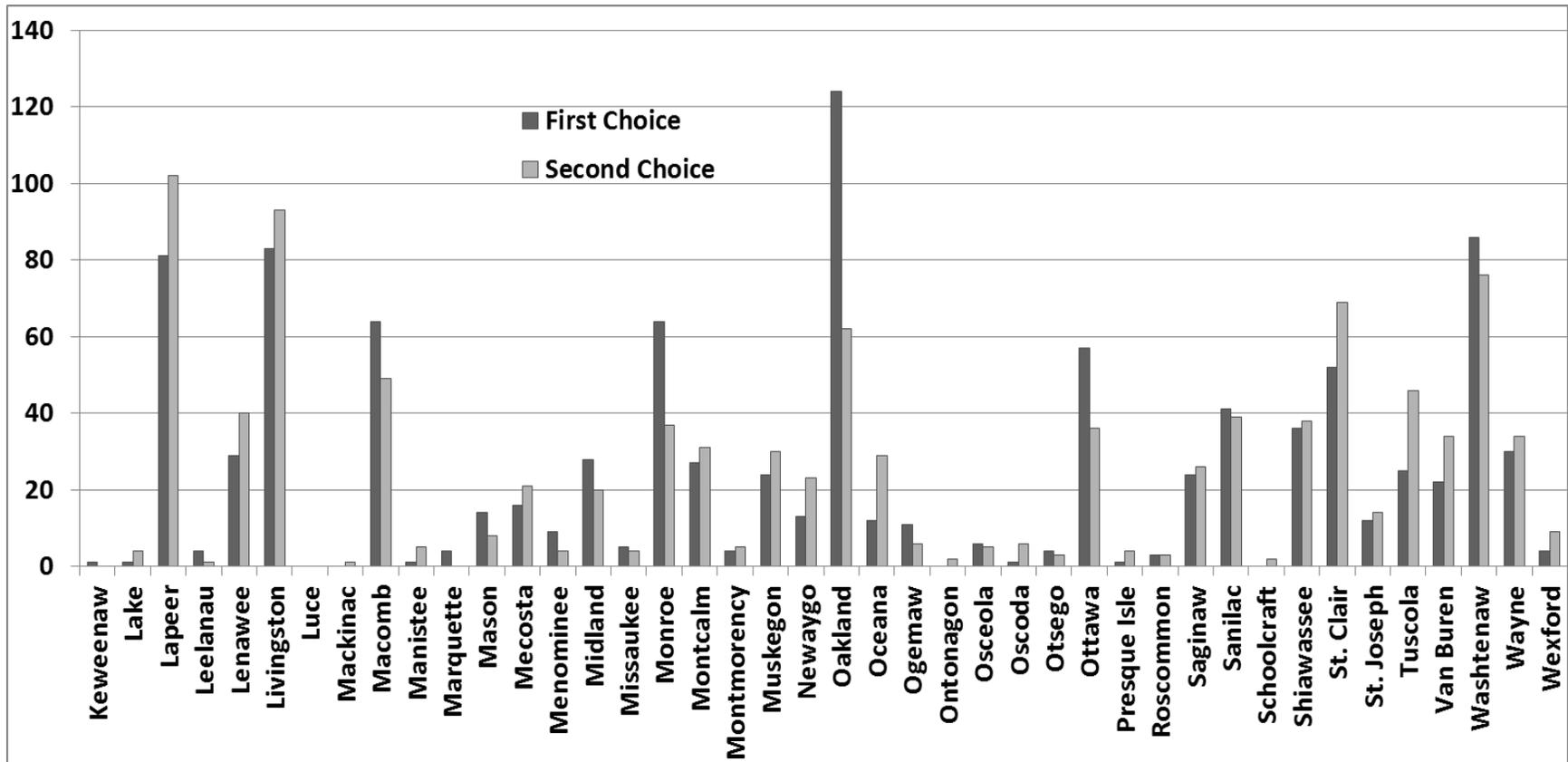


Figure 1 (Continued). Volunteer hunter county choices in the year 2013.

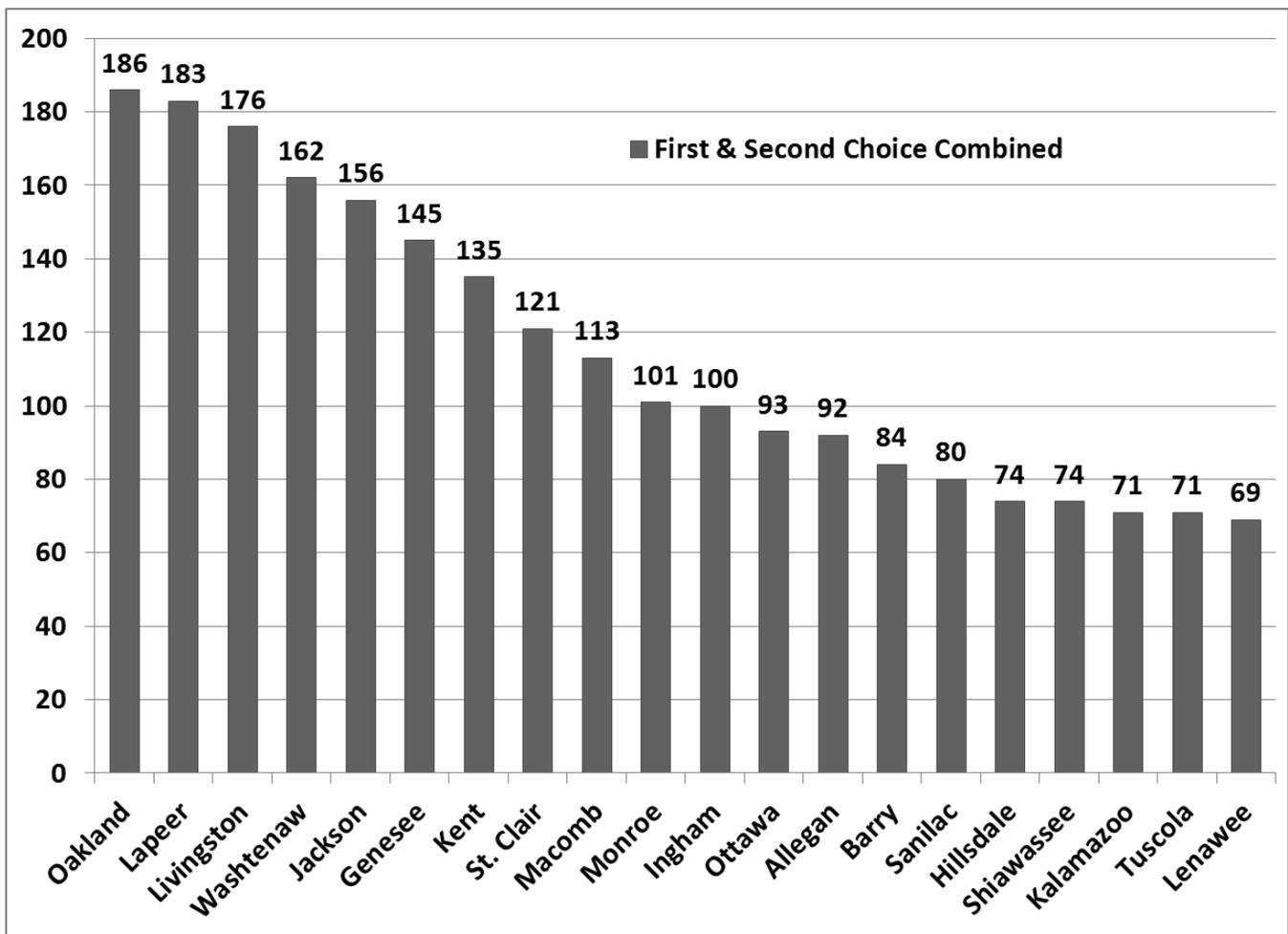


Figure 2. The top 20 Michigan counties chosen by volunteer hunters in 2013.