

# Oregon's Deer Picture Viewed By FG Group

**Editor's Note:** The following news article and charts dealing with the 1957 Oregon deer seasons is a condensation from material presented in the June, 1958, Bulletin of the Oregon State Game Commission.

Results of the 1957 hunting season are available and offer a lot of food for thought. Let's take a close look at what Oregon big game hunters took home during the past year and consider the future in the light of experience gained during recent years.

Deer continue to be Oregon's most popular and productive game animal. The 1957 buck season extended from September 28 through October 18, followed by a three-day period when those still having tags could take a deer of either sex. Table 1 summarizes the results of the general season. The total kill of 114,515 deer is very close to the 119,741 taken in 1956. When we consider the weather problem on the opening date and the hunter's choice period being three rather than nine days in length, the comparison is very favorable. Yes, the 1957 season was most successful and represents the fifth consecutive year that the deer kill has exceeded 100,000.

Of the 266,665 hunters who purchased hunting licenses, 221,960 or 83 per cent, hunted deer. Individual hunter success averaged 52 per cent which is slightly above the 51 per cent over-all success experienced the past six years when similar seasons have been in effect.

Klamath County produced the most deer for hunters with a total of 11,946 animals. The 1957 season was the fourth consecutive year in which the Klamath County kill has led the state.

On the basis of deer taken per square mile of area, Benton County was the most productive. Approximately three deer were harvested per square mile during the 1957 season. Wheeler, Deschutes, Grant, Baker, and Klamath counties all ranked high last fall by producing more than two deer per square mile.

The individual had the best chance of success in Baker and Wallowa counties where 73 per cent of all hunters bagged a deer. While good numbers of deer are present in northeastern Oregon, the distance from centers of population and lighter hunting pressure are the main reasons for such high success.

Nearly 70 per cent of all deer taken were bucks. A higher ratio of bucks was harvested in 1957 than the preceding two years. Stormy weather during the season encouraged the early movement of deer which may account for the higher kill of bucks.

Mule deer made up 71 per cent of the general season kill compared to 66 per cent in 1956. Antlerless animals comprised 32 per cent of the mule deer bag and 23 per cent of the blacktail harvest.

Figure One illustrates the kill by date throughout the 24-day season. The opening weekend accounted for 17 per cent of the total compared to 20 per cent the previous year. Hunting pressure increased on the second and third weekends of the buck season but kill during the mid-week periods was low. Approximately 56 per cent of all deer were taken during the 21-day buck season. An additional 14 per cent of the total were bucks killed during the three-day hunter's choice period. Many hunters apparently delayed their trip until both sexes were legal as 44 per cent of all deer were

taken the last three days of the season.

Table Two compares the results of general deer seasons since 1948 when a separate deer tag first made records available. From 1948 through 1951, bucks only were legal. The average annual kill was 49,565 and the individual hunter had a 29 per cent chance of being successful. Since 1952, both sexes have been legal in specified areas of the state. The hunter's choice provision has been in effect at the end of the general season and applies only to those with unused tags. During the past six years hunters have averaged 110,121 deer annually. Individual hunter success has increased to 51 per cent.

Controlled deer seasons continue to be necessary on certain problem ranges. Eight such hunts were held in 1957. The 4,300 tag holders bagged 1,894 deer for an average success of 44 per cent. Table Three summarizes the results.

Considering all seasons, including archery, a grand total of 116,589 deer were bagged during 1957.

The thing most obvious is the high level of kill being maintained in recent years. Despite a much shorter hunter's choice period in 1957 and a large closure in central Oregon, the general season kill almost equaled that of the previous year. The average annual kill has more than doubled since both sexes became legal and the individual hunter has nearly twice as great a chance of being successful.

Have more liberal regulations affected total deer numbers? We are reminded that the objective of the hunter's choice season was to reduce wintering populations of deer in eastern Oregon and control agricultural damage problems west of the Cascades. In recent years most mule deer herds had reached the saturation point as far as winter range food supplies were concerned. Annual reproduction has been balanced by winter die-off and other losses. An important effect of excessive shrub use on winter ranges has been a reduction in the ability of such ranges to support deer. By harvesting some females it was planned to relieve the heavy pressure on the winter ranges and utilize the deer crop more efficiently.

The effect of recent hunting seasons has been less than expected. It is emphasized that mild weather the past several years has encouraged the maximum survival of deer. Winter losses have been light, thus minimizing the effects of hunting on total numbers. Mule deer decline but remain above the average for the past 10 years. Deer living on the most open ranges have supported the heaviest kill but these animals represent only a portion of each herd. Those deer which summer in dense cover and do not reach the open winter ranges by the end of hunting season are lightly hunted. Western thrive in dense cover despite hunting and crop damage remains a serious problem.

As far as the hunter is concerned, more effort and skill has become necessary since the first year or two of the hunter's choice season. Deer have an amazing ability to take care of themselves and the doe has become a good game animal. Fewer deer have the habit of standing along roads during the hunting season. Curiosity has been replaced by the sense of self-preservation. This is most desirable from the standpoint of both the deer and the hunter. Deer have indicated an ability

(Continued on Page 5-C)

**Table 1 1957 GENERAL DEER SEASON**

County	Number of Hunters	Kill			Per Cent of Hunters Successful	County Area in Square Miles	Deer Harvested Per Square Mile
		Bucks	Antlerless	Total			
Baker	8,893	4,569	1,947	6,516	73.3	3,084	2.1
Benton	4,014	1,079	774	1,853	46.2	647	2.9
Clackamas	3,851	598	333	931	24.2	1,890	0.5
Clatsop	3,031	674	—	674	22.2	820	0.8
Columbia	2,516	349	339	688	27.3	646	1.1
Coos	5,324	1,736	470	2,206	41.4	1,611	1.4
Crook	6,862	2,740	153	2,893	42.2	2,980	1.0
Curry	1,555	703	200	903	58.1	1,622	0.6
Deschutes	17,887	5,153	2,880	8,033	44.9	3,041	2.6
Douglas	9,210	3,997	817	4,814	52.3	5,062	1.0
Gilliam	994	443	226	669	67.3	1,211	0.6
Grant	16,962	7,684	3,579	11,263	66.4	4,532	2.5
Harney	9,790	4,681	1,475	6,156	62.9	10,132	0.6
Hood River	1,947	321	108	429	22.0	529	0.8
Jackson	7,052	2,573	281	2,854	40.5	2,817	1.0
Jefferson	2,964	1,180	189	1,369	46.2	1,794	0.8
Josephine	2,335	694	135	829	35.5	1,625	0.5
Klamath	19,309	8,037	3,909	11,946	61.9	5,973	2.0
Lake	16,842	6,690	4,264	10,954	65.0	8,270	1.3
Lane	14,606	3,497	2,125	5,622	38.5	4,494	1.2
Lincoln	2,634	843	398	1,241	47.1	1,006	1.2
Linn	5,860	1,338	747	2,085	35.6	2,294	0.9
Malheur	5,964	2,938	981	3,919	65.7	9,870	0.4
Marion	3,181	509	316	825	25.9	1,173	0.7
Morrow	3,515	1,322	884	2,206	62.8	2,059	1.1
Multnomah	294	55	18	73	24.8	424	0.2
Polk	3,421	965	317	1,282	37.5	739	1.7
Sherman	1,008	363	202	565	56.1	830	0.7
Tillamook	4,275	1,039	—	1,039	24.3	1,115	0.9
Umatilla	7,245	2,327	1,138	3,465	47.8	3,231	1.1
Union	6,344	2,547	1,199	3,746	59.0	2,032	1.8
Wallowa	5,863	3,187	1,074	4,261	72.7	3,178	1.3
Wasco	4,894	1,409	906	2,315	47.3	2,387	1.0
Washington	1,670	246	115	361	21.6	716	0.5
Wheeler	7,738	3,179	1,642	4,821	62.3	1,707	2.8
Yamhill	2,110	446	263	709	33.6	709	1.0
<b>TOTALS &amp; AVERAGES</b>	<b>221,960</b>	<b>80,111</b>	<b>34,404</b>	<b>114,515</b>	<b>51.6</b>	<b>96,350</b>	<b>1.2</b>

**Table 2 SUMMARY OF GENERAL DEER SEASONS**

Year	Tags Issued	Kill				Total	Per Cent of Hunters Successful
		Mule Deer		Black-tailed Deer			
		Bucks	Antlerless	Bucks	Antlerless		
1948	166,618	23,141	—	16,644	—	39,785	23.9
1949	163,628	36,865	—	20,395	—	57,260	35.0
1950	173,429	26,471	—	17,580	—	44,051	25.4
1951	171,252	37,850	—	19,312	—	57,162	33.4
1952	188,250	32,366	20,426	19,657	5,210	77,659	41.3
1953	204,808	39,916	24,652	27,623	13,045	105,236	51.4
1954	215,047	54,357	22,384	27,702	8,043	112,486	52.3
1955	230,585	51,933	35,570	30,203	13,385	131,091	56.9
1956	233,842	47,155	32,309	26,937	13,340	119,741	51.2
1957	221,960	54,829	26,044	25,282	8,360	114,515	51.6

**Formers! Ranchers! Stockmen!**  
**SEE JUCK**  
 for  
**Your Truck!**  
 Juckeland Truck  
 Sales and Service  
 Your International Dealer  
 11th & Klamath Ph. 2-2581

**CUSTOM CUTTING of Your**  
**BEEF OR PORK**  
 Our Low Meat Prices Will Make It Worth Your While To Investigate NOW!  
**BIG Y MARKET**  
 Ph. TU 4-4620 4710 So. 6th

**Juniper**  
**Bale Twine**  
**Bighorn**  
**Bale Wire**  
**Quality Products**  
**Satisfaction Guaranteed**

**ALBERS** **STANDARD** **FEED STORE** **QUALITY**  
 2710 SO. 6TH TU.4-8300