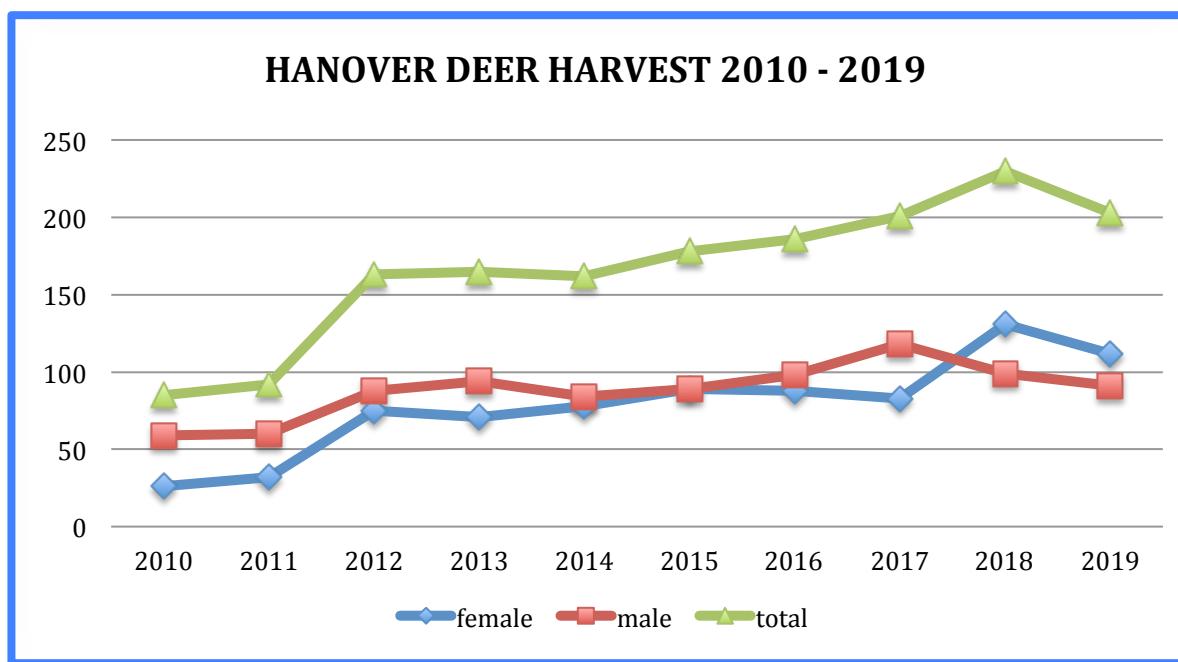


2019: Deer Harvest Highlights¹

The Hanover Deer Hunting Effort:

In 2017, the town of Hanover petitioned the NH Game Commission for help in reducing the deer herd and requested more doe permits for the town. In 2018, the rules² were changed so that municipalities could receive Special Permits with 2 doe tags; these are free and hunters can use bait. They must be used by qualified hunters who agree to hunt in a specific part of town. To obtain the Special Permits, the town had to make a case for reducing the deer population, create a map for special permit area(s) of at least 640 acres (not necessarily contiguous), obtain landowner permission for hunting their land, distribute the permits to hunters and report the permit data to the NHFG. The town has created a Deer Team to evaluate and modify the local permit program.

With the new rules in place, Hanover obtained 100 Special Permits that were distributed on a first-come, first-served basis in 2018. In 2019, the town obtained 125 permits that were distributed by lottery. With the Special Permits now in use, Hanover had 203 deer harvested in 2019, *down* from the 230 total deer harvested in 2018. The first time more doe than buck were taken in Hanover was in 2018, with 99 male and 131 female deer. In 2019, there were 91 male and 112 female deer harvested, a total of 203.



In 2019, of the 237 towns in NH that had successful hunters, only Hanover had a harvest exceeding 200 deer. Only 6 towns had a harvest with more female than male deer. Only 23 towns had a total harvest greater than 100 deer. All of Hanover's neighboring towns had a high deer harvest as well: Canaan (106), Enfield (110), Lebanon (164), Lyme (138).

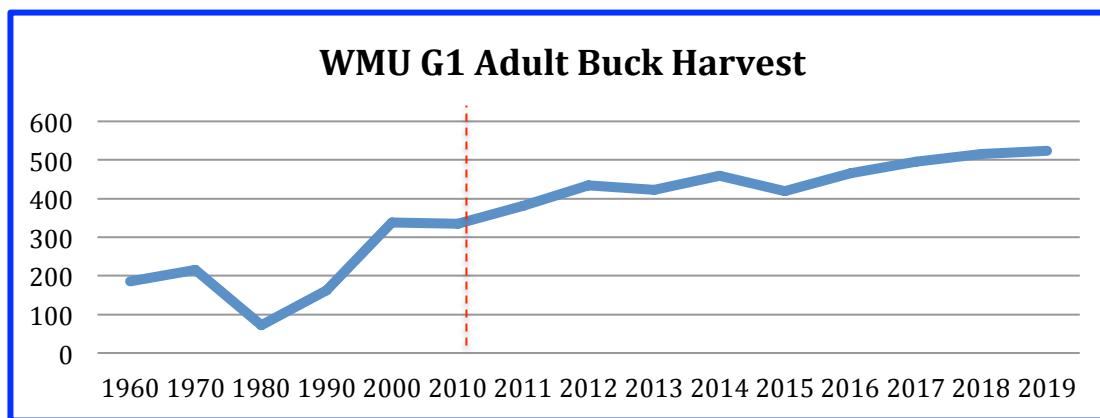
Have the Special Permits Helped?

Overall, the NH deer harvest in 2019 was lower than in 2018, so it is not surprising that Hanover's harvest was lower than the 'record' harvest year of 2018. With 25 extra Special Permits issued in 2019, for the special permit area Hanover had a 20% jump in harvest with 64 deer harvested (55 females and 9 male fawns), as compared with 53 in 2018 for the Special Permit area. Further, hunters with Special Permits harvested 55 female deer, which comprise 49% of the 112 total female deer harvested in Hanover in 2019. So, yes, the special permits have helped change harvest trend in town: increased doe harvest, and more doe than bucks.

Buck Harvest Data for WMU G1:

The Wildlife Management Unit (WMU) G1 covers Hanover and parts of nearby towns. From records dating back to 1960, again WMU G1 had its highest number of adult buck with 524 harvested in 2019, compared with 515 in 2018 and 495 in 2017. Since 2010, the number of adult buck taken in WMU G1 has risen by 56%. [Note that the horizontal scale changes at 2010].

If we include the number of antlerless male deer, this increases the total of male deer harvested in 2019 to 553, down from 566 total male deer in 2018.



The female deer harvest in WMU G1 was 305 in 2019, down significantly from the high in 422 in 2018. Statewide, the total NH deer harvest in 2019 was 12,306 down 14% as compared with the 2018 record of 14,113. For WMU G1 the total deer harvest increased from 791 in 2016 to 817 in 2017, to 968 in 2018 and then dropped to 858 in 2019.

Overall doe and buck harvest in WMU G1:

Since 1994, the number of doe harvested in NH has remained nearly constant, within a range of 3000-4000, and the number of buck harvested seems to be trending upwards from 6000 to 8000.

Since 2012, NHFG has permitted archery hunters to take 'any deer' (either sex). Archery hunters now take more doe than buck. Other hunting methods are constrained by a limited number of doe days; firearm and muzzleloader hunters take more buck than doe.

The NH Fish and Game Big Game Management Plan for 2015-2025 states an objective of 340 buck (antlered) deer for WMU G1, but the 2019 level is 523 as compared with 505 buck killed in 2018. Thus the NHFG department would like to see the buck harvest decrease by 35%, as this would indicate a decline in the population. Our WMU's total deer harvest has increased in recent years; while the increase could indicate higher hunter participation and effort, the steady increase in buck kill suggests that the population is still growing. We don't know what hunter trend is in hunting licenses issued.

Antler Beam Diameter (ABD):

Antler Beam Diameter (ABD), a common measure for deer herd health³, has decreased significantly over the past ten years. For WMU G1 in 2019, the average diameter was 14.8mm (sample of only 4) as compared to 2018 with 16.3mm (sample of only 3 deer); the small sample size may not be representative. The statewide average for 2019 was 16.9 mm. The report states that ABD numbers in the range 17-19 mm "indicate that deer are in good to excellent health that can easily be sustained on the available habitat"; it also states that "Average ABDs below 16 mm on a consistent basis indicate deer densities may be nearing the carrying capacity of the WMU". Statewide, the overall ABD was 18.1mm for the past 5 years, but for WMU G1, the 5-year average was 15.9mm in 2019; in 2018 it was 16.3mm. In 2017, Dan Bergeron, Deer Project Leader at NHFG, prepared a chart of ABD for our WMU G1, removing Hanover from the average, which altered the ABD significantly. So one might safely conclude that in Hanover deer are less fit than in towns around us, likely due to overpopulation.

Kill Per Square Mile (K/SM)

Another measure, Kill / Square Mile, is an indicator of hunting pressure; it can also be influenced by hunter access, as well as hunter density, hunter effort, habitat type or topography, so it is best to look at this measure for a particular town over time to determine trends. In 2019, Hanover had a K/SM of 4.14; as compared with 4.69 in 2018, 4.1 in 2017, and 3.39 in 2016. It appears that the town has an increase in hunting pressure, and the extra doe tags do make a difference. The town with the highest K/SM in 2019 was Rye, with 6.56 K/SM in WMU M. Out of the 237 NH towns with successful hunters in 2019, 16 towns had a K/SM greater than 4. Thirteen towns were in WMU L and M in southern NH, where many extra doe permits are issued; one was in Bath in WMU D2W, and the other two were Hanover and Lebanon, both in WMU G1.

¹ Source: 2018 New Hampshire Wildlife Harvest Summary. NH Fish and Game (NHFG) Department

² Special Permit Rules for NH: [Fis. 301.034 Special Deer Permits – Deer Management Assistance Program \(DMAp\)](#).

³ At deer harvest check stations, State biologists sample the diameter of antler base for spike-horned bucks (~ 1.5 years old).