



Where Do the Numbers Come From?

By Corey Jager, Responsive Management Specialist

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation actively manages several species of wildlife including deer, upland birds and furbearers. Hunting seasons are open for many of these species, and harvested animals are reported to the Wildlife Department through the online E-Check system or sometimes at check stations.

Harvest reporting allows the Wildlife Department to monitor species populations. However, there are many game species for which hunters are not required to report harvest information, including quail, dove, rabbits and squirrels.

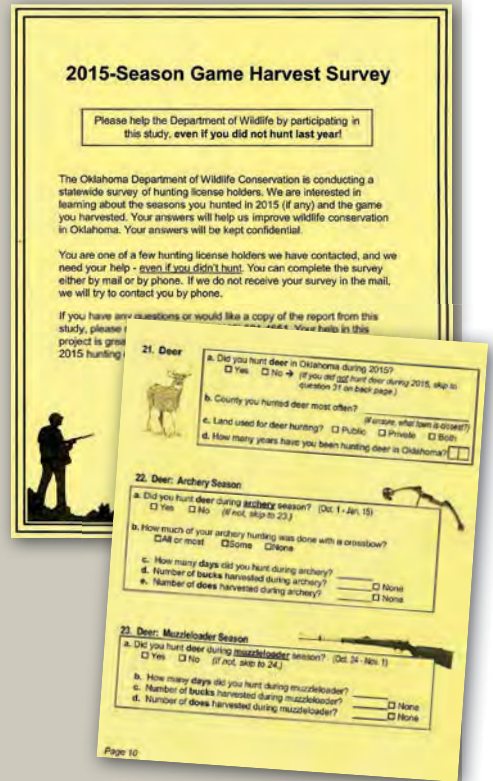
For the past three decades, the Wildlife Department has relied on an annual survey of hunters to estimate statewide harvest of game species that do not have mandatory harvest reporting requirements. This survey is called the Game Harvest Survey.

Each winter, the Wildlife Department contacts about 2,000 randomly selected hunting license holders. The selection of hunters is stratified statewide

by county and by license category (annual, lifetime and senior citizen hunting or combination license holders). The random selection of hunters allows us to hear from a small group of hunters that are representative of all hunters in Oklahoma, without us having to contact every single hunter. Participants are asked about their hunting activities in the previous year and their opinions on issues facing the Wildlife Department.

Game Harvest Survey data allow us to estimate harvest, hunting pressure and success. These data provide a way for us to monitor upland game population trends, and to help set season lengths and bag limits for future hunting seasons. Hunter opinion data is used to inform Department management decisions and strategic planning.

The Wildlife Department conducts many other surveys to learn about hunting and fishing participation, experiences and opinions about wildlife management. Knowledge gained from these surveys help us integrate information about resource users



(such as hunters and anglers) and others with biological information about Oklahoma's wildlife to make the most effective and efficient wildlife management decisions. 🌿