

Hunting Activities of Forestry Undergraduates in Mississippi¹

by

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Abstract

The number of hunters and their activity days in the U.S. have been declining in recent years relative to U.S. population growth. In Mississippi, the trend has been similar. An annual survey has been initiated on a sub-population of hunters; namely, undergraduate students enrolled in the Mississippi State University Department of Forestry's Forest Recreation Management course. The objectives of the study were to determine how many students participated in hunting, measure hunting activities among those that do hunt, and compare this subset to national and state trends. Specific issues explored were the number of days spent hunting, location of the hunt, and species preference of hunts. In general, there was no discernible trend in the number of hunting days for the period of 1995-1998. Over the four year period, 89% of the students (N=323) responded to the survey. Of those who responded, 83% hunt (N=267) and 17% do not hunt (N=56). The mean number of days hunting ranged from 48.7 in 1995 (N=82) to 26.5 in 1997 (N=62). One noteworthy observation was that the number of days in 1997 was significantly lower than both 1995 and 1998 (46.4; N=54). Over the four-year period, there were 3.2 hunting activity days on private lands for every activity day spent on public sites. White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) was the preferred species followed by eastern wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*). On public lands, the highest number of activity days was on National Wildlife Refuges (9.9%). On private lands, where fees are charged, the highest number of activity days was on leasing arrangements (16.7%). On private lands, without fees, the highest number of activity days was on nonindustrial private lands (49.2%).

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