

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
Game Section

Report No. 2486
December 21, 1965

Rifle River Area Deer Season 1965
By Lewis C. Ruch

This year there was a 6 per cent increase in the legal buck kill over that of 1964. A total of 35 legal bucks were taken during the gun season; 74 per cent of these bucks were 1½ years old. Hunters holding antlerless permits took a total of 36 adult does, 17 doe fawns, and 13 buck fawns. This was a decrease from the previous year of 3 adult does, 1 doe fawn, and 7 buck fawns. The overall kill came to 101 deer, not including the unclaimed deer. This was roughly 13 per cent less than the total kill last year. The total hunting permits issued increased by 102; the total hours of hunting was slightly down. There were 38 per cent fewer deer reported seen this year by hunters. Hunters using the area came from 39 counties, 3 other states, and the Province of Ontario, Canada. The buck kill by age groups is as follows:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number</u>	
1½ minus years	18	51%
1½ plus years	8	23%
2½ years	6	17%
3½ years	<u>3</u>	9%
	35	

The oldest buck taken was 3½ years old. The heaviest buck was a 2½-year-old, 4-point, which weighed 143 pounds. The average weight of bucks increased by 1 pound this year. The average weight of fawns and adult does also increased slightly.

The weather was in general mild. There was a 2-inch snowfall opening morning which started about 4:30 a.m. and lasted until 8 a.m. The temperature was warm, and the following day there was no snow. We received .72 inches of rainfall on November 26, and another 1.24 inches of rain on the 27th, which tended to make the swamps impassable to hunters. There was considerable flooding of roads and lowlands over the entire area. On November 28, we had 1.2 inches of snowfall, which helped the hunters. On December 3 we received snow flurries which resulted in an inch or two of snow remaining on the ground from then on through the rest of the season. During the entire season, the lowest temperature reached was 18 degrees, and the highest temperature was 50 degrees on November 27.

On the first day of the season, a total of 666 permits were issued. It is possible that in the busy periods some hunters came in and out without reporting at the checking station. Over two-thirds of these permits were issued before 8 o'clock in the morning. This required the services of five Department personnel working steady from 5 o'clock in the morning.

In general, there was considerable discontent amongst the hunters because they were not seeing deer in large numbers. Several hunters, with whom I was in contact, hunted as much as five to six hours a day for an entire week without seeing a deer, although most of them reported seeing tracks. These were hunters who in the past have taken home deer from the Rifle River Area. There is no doubt that deer are down somewhat on the area. I don't believe that we have reached a danger point. There are considerable signs of the browse starting to get ahead of the deer, which is good. The deer were up slightly in weight this year. I would like to call attention to the fact that last year's kill was the third largest kill on record, and we cannot hope to make a record each year.

The prime need on this area at the present time is for immediate action in getting a commercial cutting program started. The longer we delay getting this cutting program initiated, the more deterioration we will have in aspen, which will result in poor quality timber products. If a cutting program is started, I can see no reason why we cannot continue harvesting deer at about the same rate they were harvested this year.

One last comment is perhaps in order in regard to the operation of the Rifle River checking station. The method of handling the campers in regard to checking in and checking out, especially the issuing of permits to campers to hunt, was not satisfactory during this hunting season. It is very evident that we will lose control of getting an accurate check on information if we continue to give the campers the freedom of entering and leaving the area that they have been given this year and last year. Each person entering the area during the hunting season should be issued a permit regardless of what his purpose is on the area, and he should return his permit before leaving the area even if he is going to return the same day.

In regard to the regulations written on the permit, certain changes should be instituted in order to provide the checking station with better control of the large number of people using the area during the hunting season. At one time the permit included a statement that no person should leave the area without surrendering his permit, and that ~~it~~ was illegal to leave the area by any means, such as walking or by boat, without first surrendering the permit at the checking station. We had several difficulties this season with hunters, especially the campers, leaving the area with their permits (this is permitted under the present regulations), and then driving the main roads to another part of the area and entering it by crossing the wire. They actually complied with everything the regulations required. They had permits; they were allowed to leave the area with the permits, and nowhere on the permit did it say that they could not re-enter the area by crossing the boundary.

If we are to continue getting useful information, I would recommend that we revise our hunting regulations on the area in order to permit better hunter control.

The following tables provide a statistical record:

- I Deer Hunting Record by Years
- II Age of Deer Killed
- III Daily Record of Hunting Season
- IV County of Residence of Hunters
- V Data on each Deer Taken
- VI Deer Archery Record
- VII Deer Killed and Left Unclaimed
- VIII Number of Permittees by Hours Hunted
- IX Special Hunting Permit Data
- X Hunting Pressure and Deer Killed

LCR:dg

TABLE I
DEER HUNTING RECORD BY YEARS
RIFLE RIVER AREA
1965

Year	KILL				Adult Bucks with sub-legal antlers Taken with Permit	Total Hunting Permits Issued	Total Hours Hunted	Other Deer Seen	Hours Hunted per Deer Killed	AVERAGE WEIGHT OF DEER KILLED							
	Bucks		Does							Bucks		Does		Sub-legal	Illegal Kill		
	Adults	Fawns	Adults	Fawns						Adults	Fawns	Adults	Fawns				
1945	54					1,923	9,346	4,363	173	128							16
1946	51					2,159	10,262	4,947	201	121							9
1947	48					1,921	8,806	5,489	184	115							8
1948	32					1,784	7,915	3,861	247	112							8
1949	36					1,535	6,985	4,405	194	107							8
1950	40					1,519	7,098	4,893	177	109							8
1951	22					1,226	5,020	3,426	228	105							12
1952	28	6	30	10	2	1,527	6,127	2,801	81	110(2)	56(1)	105	55				2
1953	66	23	35	17		4,445	21,879	9,797	155	109.5	51.4	90.6	47.6				38
1954	37	9	19	8		2,708	12,539	4,753	171.7	111.1	49.6	86.5	51.8				9
1955	27	(3)				2,001	8,955	3,512	331.6	107							10
1956	38	4	13	7		2,350	10,371	5,008	167	101.4	50.2	89.3	41.7				10
1957	26	5	6	1		1,845	8,403	3,388	221	105.5	54.4	94.8	68				13
1958	38	4	8	8		2,265	10,354	5,157	178.5	110.5	53.5	92.8	48.1				11(4)
1959	36	9	35	9	1	2,209	10,658	4,022	118.4	105.5	51.3(5)	90.5	48				14
1960	20	4	13	5	1	1,868	8,032	1,701	186.8	109	54.4	99.2	56.2				5
1961	34	(3)				2,080	9,389	3,466	276	108							12
1962	38	17	30	6	1	2,541	12,742	3,824	138.5	103.9	55	90.5	51.5	87			4
1963	38	15	44	22	2	2,760	13,612	3,419	112.5	105.3(6)	56.8	87.3	54	81			13
1964	33	20	39	18	7	2,727	12,183	2,770	104.1	102.7(7)	58.8	90	52.2	82.5			6
1965	35	13	36	17		2,829	12,110	1,716	119.9	103.7	59	90.7	54.2				4
21-year Average	37	10.8	25.7	10.7		2,201	10,133	4,129	157.6	109.9	54.7	91.3	51.7	*	*	*	

- (1) Weight of 2 bucks with less than 3-inch spikes not included in average. They averaged 83 pounds.
- (2) Two adult bucks with less than 3-inch spikes killed December 1 included in this total.
- (3) There was no special antlerless season in 1955 or 1961.
- (4) Two other deer reported, but not located by Department personnel.
- (5) One buck with 1-inch antlers taken on special permit not included in this weight because it was a 1½-year-old.
- (6) Two bucks with less than 3-inch antlers not included in weight average. They averaged 81.5 pounds each.
- (7) Bucks with sub-legal antlers not included in this weight.

*12-year average.

TABLE III
DAILY RECORD OF HUNTING SEASON
RIFLE RIVER AREA 1965

Date	Hunter days	Total hours hunted	Deer Killed						Total wgt. deer taken pounds	Campers hunting	Temperature		Weather Comments	
			Bucks	Does	Fawns	Unclaimed	Total	Bucks			Other deer	Max.		Min.
Nov. 20	666	3,142.5	20	15	12		47	43	546	101	37	22	2" snow; 1" left at night	
21	622	3,196.5	7	9	9	1	26	35	504	80	40	32	Clear, no wind, no snow	
22	385	1,603	3	3			6	3	96	54	45	35	Cloudy all day	
23	175	678	4	2	1		7	6	107	30	45	36	.09" snow. Drizzle in AM, sunny in PM	
24	128	525		1	1		2	3	28	10	43	27	Trace rain, overcast	
25	143	547		1	2		3		49	4			360 at 6 PM, overcast all day	
26	155	515			2	1	3	1	45	6	42	28	Rain starting 10AM continued all day. .72" rain	
27	174	566.5	1	2		1	4	6	70	2	50	24	1.24" rain, light snow flurries high wind	
28	154	591.5		1	2		4	3	92	3	27	18	.05" melted snow, 1.3" snow fell	
29	17	47									32	22	1.0" on ground 5PM	
30	13	63.5		1			1		10		32	24	Snow flurries, .5" snow, .01" melted snow	
Dec. 1	15	54.5											Some snow in patches on ground	
2	13	46.5							4		44	24		
3	11	33							2		38	22		
4	84	268						1	1	1	42	21	Trace snow flurries	
5	74	232		1	1		2	2	38	1	38	26	.01" snow, trace snow on ground	
Total	2,829	12,109.5	35	36	30	4	105	103	1,613	292				1.9" snow on ground overcast

(1) Does not include weights of unclaimed deer

TABLE IV
DEER SEASON 1965
RIFLE RIVER AREA
County of Residence of Hunters

County	November										December					Total	
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4		5
Alpena							1										1
Arenac	1					3	2										6
Bay	28	28	17	12	5	19	13	11	31	2	3				6	4	179
Branch	1						2										3
Calhoun	2	2				1											5
Clinton	3																3
Eaton						2	1										3
Genesee	111	107	73	27	23	15	20	20	19	1	1	3			16	4	440
Gratiot	9	8	6	1	2								1				27
Hillsdale							1	1	1								3
Huron	7	13	3		1					4							28
Ingham	14	8	3	1	4	6	9	3	5							3	56
Ionia	1																1
Iosco	1	1	4														6
Isabella	1																1
Jackson	2	5	6														13
Kalamazoo						2	3		2	2							9
Kent			1					1									2
Lapeer	2	2	7	3	1			4									19
Lenawee	20	23	13	1			4	4	5						4		74
Livingston	5	5	1	1	1						2	2				3	20
Macomb	70	52	34	16	18	13	16	21	13	1	1		2	1	14	15	287
Mecosta	1																1
Midland	1	2	2				1		1						2		9
Monroe	3	6	5	4	1		4		1								24
Montcalm	3	2	1				1	1	1								9
Muskegon								2									2
Oakland	60	63	29	15	10	12	12	15	15		1			2	14		248
Ogemaw	11	13	4	5	10	9	3	9	7	2	3	4	4	1	8	7	100
Oscoda														1			1
Presque Isle		1															1
Roscommon		1	1														2
Saginaw	50	50	40	12	13	26	11	13	12	1			2		4	20	254
Sanilac	8	4	2			1	2										17
Shiawassee	29	26	15	8	6	2	2	1	4								93
St. Clair	13	11	6	7	1	1	5	7	5								56
Tuscola	22	17	10	3		4	4	6	2						3		71
Washtenaw	14	16	13	9	9	2	2	4	1						3	3	76
Wayne	163	146	83	42	18	22	31	49	28	4	2	6	4	5	10	15	628
TOTAL (Res.)	656	612	379	167	123	140	150	172	153	17	13	15	13	10	84	74	2,778
Illinois	2	2		2	2	2	2										12
Indiana							1	1	1								3
Ohio	8	8	5	5	2		2	1						1			32
Ontario			1	1	1	1											4
GRAND TOTAL	666	622	385	175	128	143	155	174	154	17	13	15	13	11	84	74	2,829

TABLE V
DATA ON EACH DEER TAKEN
RIFLE RIVER - 1965

Date	Deer No.	Age	Sex	ANTLERS				Weight (Hog dressed)	Length Hind Foot MM	Remarks	
				Beam Dia. MM		No. of Points	Avg. Length Spikes (in)				
				L	R		L				R
November 20	1	1½-	M	16	17	2	4	4	95½	496	
20	2	½+	F						53	410	
20	3	4½	F						110	445	
20	4	1½+	M		13	1	Broke	5½	94	407	
20	5	1½-	M	14	14	2	4½	5	103	491	
20	6	½+	M						39	392	Defective ears
20	7	1½-	F						80	465	
20	8	1½-	M	20	23	6			100	468	
20	9	4½	F						91	461	
20	10	½+	F						62	403	
20	11	1½-	M	15	16	2	4½	4½	90	510	
20	12	2½	F						95	407	
20	13	½+	F						62	433	
20	14	5½	F						79	472	
20	15	1½+	M	10	11	2			91	474	
20	16	1½-	M	17	18	2			106	494	
20	17	3½	F						92	464	
20	18	7½	F						92	473	
20	19	½+	F						62	414	
20	20	½+	M	Button					50	394	
20	21	3½	M	23	24	6			129	499	
20	22	4½	F						86	462	
20	23	3½	F						82	454	
20	24	1½+	M	13	14	2	3	2-3/4	87	482	
20	25	1½-	M	19	19	2	5½	6½	90	480	
20	26	2½	F						99	457	
20	27	1½+	F						87	433	
20	28	3½	F						103	479	w/heart, lung and liver
20	29	½-	M						60	435	
20	30	½+	M						65	452	
20	31	2½	F						90	467	
20	32	1½-	M	15		2	4	2½ broken	95	487	Broken right antler
20	33	1½-	M	18	19	6			113	507	
20	34	2½	M	21	22	6			105	497	
20	35	1½+	M	19	18	2	6-3/4	6	106	482	Another point broken off
20	36	½-	F						46	381	
20	37	½+	F						55	387	
20	38	1½+	M	13	12	2	4	3½	105	484	
20	39	1½+	F						79	453	
20	40	½-	M						50	392	

Table V (Continued) - Data on Each Deer Taken

Sheet 2

Date	Deer No.	Age	Sex	ANTLERS			Weight (hog dressed)	Length Hind Foot MM	Remarks		
				Beam Dia. MM.		No. of Points				Avg. Length Spikes (in)	
				L	R					L	R
November 20	41	1½+	F				82	443			
20	42	1½-	M	10	12	2	3½	3½	103	490	
20	43	1½-	M	18	17	2	6-3/4	6	94	486	
20	44	½-	M						69	-	Both hind legs broken; no measurement
20	45	1½-	M	15	12	2	7	5½	100	484	
20	46	3½	M	25	25	6			135	458	
20	47	1½-	M	19	18	2	6	6	95	477	
November 21	48	3½	F						95	485	
21	49	4½	F						98	480	
21	50	½+	F						59	420	
21	51	½+	F						56	409	
21	52	4½	F						89	437	
21	53	½-	F						42	392	
21	54	1½-	F						79	444	
21	55	3½	M	27	27	8			137	500	
21	56	2½	M	24	24	5			103	448	
21	57	1½-	M	16	15	3		5-3/4	91	460	
21	58	4½	F						79	442	
21	59	3½	F						90	485	
21	60	1½-	F						87	464	
21	61	2½	M	20	20	5			130	480	
21	62	½+	M						59	420	
21	63	½-	M						57	431	
21	64	3½	F						87	470	
21	65	½-	M						63	432	
21	66	½-	F						52	433	
21	67	1½-	M	19	18	4			105	485	
21	68	1½-	M	18	19	2	8½	8	97	495	
21	69	½+	F						46	405	
21	70	½-	F						51	422	
21	71	2½	F						90	471	
21	72	1½-	M	11	11	2	4½	4-3/4	103	486	
November 22	73	1½-	M	18	18	2	5	4	89	494	
22	74	2½	F						90	453	
22	75	1½+	M	14	15	4			89	465	
22	76	2½	F						103	480	
22	77	2½	F						84	458	
22	78	2½	M	21	22	4			143	594	
November 23	79	½+	M						64	452	
23	80	1½-	F						71	454	
23	81	2½	M	21	21	6			106	486	
23	82	4½	F						97	482	

Table V (Continued) - Data on Each Deer Taken

Sheet 3

Date	Deer No.	Age	Sex	ANTLERS					Weight (Hog dressed)	Length Hind Foot MM	Remarks
				Beam Dia. MM		No. of Points	Avg. Length Spikes (in)				
				L	R		L	R			
November 23	83	1½+	M	11	12	2	3½	2½	93	495	
23	84	2½	M	20	18	3			113	509	
23	85	1½+	M	De- formed	19	2	4	7½	101	471	
November 24	86	½+	M						57	401	
24	87	3½	F						92	467	
November 25	88	3½	F						99	468	
25	89	½+	F						45	399	Stubby ears
25	90	½+	F						71	445	
November 26	91	½+	M						69	429	
26	92	½-	M						65	433	
November 27	93	1½-	M	20	19	4			94	490	
27	94	3½	F						81	444	
27	95	3½	F						104	407	
November 28	96	½+	F						53	426	
28	97	½+	F						54	410	
28	98	1½-	F						105	466	
November 29	None										
November 30	99	4½	F						95	470	
December 1	None										
2	None										
3	None										
4	None										
5	100	½+	F						52	410	
5	101	2½	F						99	455	

TABLE VI
DEER HUNTING RECORD
ARCHERY SEASON
RIFLE RIVER AREA 1965

Date	Number of Bow Hunters	Number Hours Hunted	Deer Killed
Oct. 1	42	205	
2	111	472.5	* 1
3	91	333.5	
4	28	161	
5	23	105.5	
6	15	94	
7	9	39	
8	10	30	
9	34	101	
10	18	56	
11	7	25.5	
12	5	20	
13	8	18.5	
14	8	20	
15	8	32	
16	28	90.5	
17	32	115	
18	6	27	
19	8	34.5	
20	3	9	
21	3	5	
22			
23	11	23	
24	8	14.5	
25	3	13	
26	3	14.5	
27	2	9	
28	1	1.5	
29	4	10.5	
30	13	37.5	
31	8	42.5	
Nov. 1	5	18	
2	4	22	
3	1	1.5	
4	1	3.5	
5	4	15	
TOTAL	565	2,220.5	1

* Buck - 3½ years old, weight, 154 pounds; 7 points, right antler 4 points, left antler 3 points. Beam diameter, right antler 225 mm, left antler 215 mm.

TABLE VII
DEER KILLED AND LEFT UNCLAIMED
GUN SEASON
RIFLE RIVER AREA 1965

<u>Date</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Deer Located</u>
November 21	1	Buck fawn
27	2	Doe fawn
26	3	Buck fawn
28	4	Adult doe
*	5	Adult doe

*Killed during the first week of archery season -- appeared to have been shot with a .22 rifle.

NOTE: In addition to the four deer located by station personnel, there was one deer reported down south of Scaup Lake, and another one reported near the south end of Lost Lake. Neither deer was actually located in the field, and they do not appear in the above table.

TABLE VIII
 NUMBER OF PERMITTEES BY HOURS HUNTED*
 RIFLE RIVER AREA

1965

Date	HOURS HUNTED																No Hours Reported	Total Permits Issued				
	½	1	1½	2	2½	3	3½	4	4½	5	5½	6	6½	7	7½	8			8½	9	9½	10
Nov. 20	6	9	34	40	36	34	38	32	29	50	21	25	19	23	18	35	25	102		87	3	666
21	4	17	31	44	30	65	24	77	13	42	13	32	12	35	15	51	8	95	3	11		622
22		17	6	54	12	60	17	90	32	13	5	16	5	10	9	12	4	23				385
23	2	14	8	33	12	21	8	18	9	4	1	17	4	6	2	3		13				175
24		8	12	14	20	2	10	12	10	8	2	1	5	4	3	6	2	7	2			128
25		6	11	14	21	41	8	6		3	4	4	7	2	2	2			5	7		143
26	4	5	19	22	7	12	23	21	4	30	3	1	2	2								155
27	1	12	26	24	23	26	12	6	6	10	3	7	5	8		2	3					174
28		12	5	2	25	24	16	22	15	4	3	6	3	4	3	2	6	2				154
29		4	3		1	2	2	4	2	1												17
30				3		1		1	1	3					2	2						13
Dec. 1			3		6			2	2	2						2						15
2			3		2	3		2				1			2							13
3	1		2	3		1		1	2						1							11
4	3	3	9	9	10	18	14	5		3	2	1	2	3				2				84
5		3	1	9	12	16	6	12	3	3	2		4					3				74
TOTAL	21	113	170	271	217	326	176	309	128	176	59	110	69	97	57	117	48	247	10	105	3	2,829

*This table is designed to show a breakdown of the hours hunted by each permittee; e.g., on November 23, 33 hunters hunted 2 hours each; 17 hunters hunted 6 hours each.

TABLE IX

SPECIAL HUNTING PERMIT DATA

Date	Total No. of Hunters Using Area	No. of (1) Hunters with Area 26 Permits	No. of Hunters with Area 26 Permits that took Bucks	No. of Hunters with Area 26 Permits that took Antlerless Deer	Per cent of Area 26 Permit Holders that Successfully took Antlerless Deer
Nov. 20	666	181	3	27	14.9
21	622	157		18	11.5
22	385	106	1	3	2.8
23	175	48	1	3	6.3
24	128	34		2	5.9
25	143	48		3	6.3
26	155	49		2	4.1
27	174	43		2	4.6
28	154	42		3	7.1
29	17	3			
30	13	5		1	20.0
Dec. 1	15	2			
2	13	26			
3	11	3			
4	84	32			
5	74	24		2	8.3
TOTAL	2,829	803	5	66	8.2

(1) These figures do not represent the number of individual hunters. Many hunters returned on several different days and were tallied as a permit holder on each day.

TABLE X
 INFORMATION ON
 HUNTING PRESSURE AND DEER KILLED

<u>Period Involved</u>	<u>Total Permits Issued</u>	<u>Hunting Hours Pressure</u>	<u>Deer Taken</u>	<u>Buck Kill Only</u>
First day only	23.5%	25.9%	46.5%	57.1%
First two days	45.5%	52.3%	71.3%	77.1%
First three days	55.2%	65.6%	77.2%	85.7%
Last six days	7.4%	5.8%	3.0%	0