

The 1949 Deer Season at Rifle
River Area

As has been done the past few years, a check was made of the hunting pressure and deer kill at the Rifle River Area near Lupton in Ogemaw County.

Although the 1535 deer hunters this year was fewer than the 1784 who hunted on the Area a year ago, their 36 legal deer exceeded the 1948 kill by 4 animals. These figures indicate an 8.3% decrease in hunting pressure and an increase of 12.5% in the kill.

The weather and hunting conditions in Ogemaw County were fair to good all season. Opening day's 224 hunters had some snow and cool weather in which to bag their 17 bucks. As the season advanced more snow fell and the thermometer seldom rose above freezing. Around the middle of the season considerable snow fell and the temperature remained around 15 - 20°F for several days. On November 26 it fell to zero. This season's snow and consistently cold weather provided better general hunting conditions than we have had for the past three seasons.

This season's known illegal kill on the Area was 8 deer. There were 3 buck fawns and 5 does.

In general the most complaints voiced by the hunters was to the effect that there are too many does and fawns, and too few bucks, on Rifle River Area; what bucks there are are very small. There was some comment from local residents that the Area should be closed to deer hunting for a few years, to serve as a refuge where a few bucks would have a chance to grow larger.

Since the Rifle River Area is not fenced against the travel of deer on and off the area, and because surrounding lands are not hunted as heavily as is the Area itself, closing the area to hunting doesn't seem advisable at this time. Although there is not an abundance of deer food present, there may be enough to maintain the present herd if a severe winter doesn't set in. A severe shortage could be expected if a heavy concentration resulted from declaring the refuge closed. It is more apt to be a question of taking out some antlerless deer in the near future, rather than closing Rifle River to hunting all deer.

It is noticeable that there is a consistent decrease in the average size of the deer taken, from 1945 each year through 1949. This year's average weight of 106.8 pounds is the lowest. (See Table IV) This might appear as the result of nearly a complete harvest of legal deer.

The following eight tables consist of various summaries for 1949 and comparisons of certain data from year to year.

TABLE I

HUNTING PRESSURE SUMMARIES

Year	Hunter Days	Hours Hunted	Average Hours Per Hunter Days	Bucks Killed	Bucks Seen	Other Deer Seen	Hunting Hours Per Buck Killed	Hunting Hours Per Buck Seen	Hunting Hours Per Other Deer Seen
1948	1784	7915	4.4	32	169	3861	247.34	46.83	2.05
1949	1535	6985	4.6	36	228	4405	194.03	30.63	1.58
Difference	-149	-930	+0.2	+4	+59	+544	+53.31	+16.20	+0.82
Percentage Difference	8.4	11.7	4.5	12.5	34.9	14.0	21.6	34.6	40.0

TABLE II

OPENING DAY HUNTING PRESSURE AND LEGAL KILL

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number Hunters</u>	<u>Number Hours Hunted</u>	<u>Bucks Taken</u>
1945	167	1032	19
1946	305	2139	23
1947	374	2105	19
1948	236	1622	20
1949	224	1376	17

TABLE III

Five-Year Comparison of Hunting
Pressure and Deer Kill

Year	Total Number Hunter-Days	Total Number of Hours Hunted	Average Number Hours Hunted	Total Number Bucks Killed
1945	1923	9346	4.8	54
1946	2159	10262	4.7	51
1947	1921	8806	4.6	48
1948	1784	7915	4.4	32
1949	1535	6985	4.5	36

TABLE IV

Deer Summaries

	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949
Dressed weight of Bucks Killed	6,912	6,132	5,498	3,583	3,844
Average Weight of Bucks Killed	128.0	120.7	114.5	112.0	106.8
Bucks Seen Per Hour	.039	.027	.027	.021	.032
Bucks Seen Per Hunter Day	.19	.13	.12	.09	.14
Other Deer Seen Per Hour	.47	.48	.62	.49	.63
Other Deer Seen Per Hunter-Day	2.3	2.3	2.9	2.2	2.9
Ratio of Bucks to Other Deer Seen	1:12	1:19	1:23	1:23	1:19

TABLE V

DAILY RECORD OF HUNTING PRESSURE
AND HUNTER OBSERVATIONS

November Date	Hunter Days	Hours Hunted	Average Hours per Hunter	Bucks Killed	Bucks Seen	Other Deer Seen	Bear Killed	Bobcats Killed	Fox Killed	Total Weight of Deer	Average Weights of Bucks Taken
Tues. -15	224	1376	6.1	17	85	934	0	0	1-9lbs.	1871	110 lbs.
Wed. -16	214	1042	4.9	4	21	551	0	0	0	439	109 "
Thurs.-17	157	746	4.8	3	19	398	0	0	0	292	97 "
Fri. -18	137	629	4.6	3	16	380	0	(1 seen)	0	268	89 "
Sat. -19	190	793	4.2	1	24	269	0	0	0	77	77 "
Sun. -20	153	548.5	3.6	3	7	233	0	0	0	304	101 "
Mon. -21	37	120.5	3.3	1	3	127	0	0	0	135	135 "
Tues. -22	24	61	2.6	0	1	63	0	0	0	-	-
Weds.-23	21	79.5	3.8	0	13	140	0	0	0	-	-
Thurs.-24	72	323	4.5	1	8	268	0	0	0	121	121 "
Fri. -25	89	403	4.5	1	14	344	0	0	(1 seen)	111	111 "
Sat. -26	85	355	4.2	1	8	276	0	0	0	110	110 "
Sun. -27	70	266.5	3.8	0	2	268	0	0	0	-	-
Mon. -28	19	74	3.9	0	5	43	0	0	0	-	-
Tue. -29	22	108	4.6	1	2	51	0	0	0	116	116 "
Wed. -30	21	60	3.0	0	0	60	0	0	0	-	-
TOTAL	1535	6985	4.55	36	228	4405	0	0	1	3844	106.81lbs

TABLE VI

Age of Bucks Killed

Age in years	1945		1946		1947		1948		1949	
	No.	%								
1½	28	57	29	56	30	63	19	59	33	91
2½	10	21	12	24	14	29	12	38	2	6
3½ & 4½	9	18	8	16	4	8	1	3	1	3
5½ and over	2	4	2	4	0	-	0	-	0	-
TOTALS	49*	100	51	100	48	100	32	100	36	100

* No measurements available for 5 of the bucks killed.

TABLE VII

Size of Racks of Bucks Killed

Year	2 Pt.	3 Pt.	4 Pt.	5 Pt.	6 Pt.	7 Pt.	8 Pt.	9 Pt.	10 Pt.	11 Pt.	12 Pt.	13 Pt.	14 Pt.	15 Pt.	16 Pt.	Totals
1945	17	5	4	2	6	1	13	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50*
1946	14	4	5	4	6	2	14	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	52
1947	17	5	6	5	5	3	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	47**
1948	8	1	10	1	4	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32
1949	12	7	5	2	7	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36
Average for 5 Years	13.6	4.4	6.0	2.8	5.6	1.4	8.6	.4	.4	0	0	0	.4	0	0	

* No information for 4 of the bucks killed. ** Both antlers shot off from one buck.

TABLE VIII

County of Residence of Hunters

County	Number of Hunters	County	Number of Hunters
arenac	2	Kent	2
Bay	61	Lapeer	17
Branch	4	Leelanau	6
Calhoun	50	Livingston	19
Eaton	5	Macomb	72
Genesee	297	Monroe	26
Grand Traverse	4	Oakland	106
Gratiot	8	Ogemaw	227
Hillsdale	24	Ottawa	3
Huron	22	Saginaw	124
Ingham	68	St. Claire	7
Iosco	19	Sanilac	26
Isabella	2	Shiawassee	35
Jackson	19	Tuscola	31
Kalamazoo	3	Washtenaw	11

(Continued)

TABLE VIII
(Continued)

County	Number of Hunters
Wayne	226
State	
Ohio	10
Nebraska	2

WVD:bc
12-6-49