



2016-17 Deer Harvest Summary
Vista Mountain (South) Wildlife Management Association
Coryell County

Ten members provided deer harvest information on a total of 8,393 acres for the 2016-17 hunting season. This represents a decline in the number of landowners (n=13) and acres (8,743) that contributed to the report in 2015-16. Examining the most recent membership roster (2015) there are approximately 13,900 acres south of Hwy. 84 that are participating in the Vista Mountain Wildlife Management Association (WMA).

Three consecutive deer population estimates that were below the long-term average lead to a lower harvest recommendation for 2016-17. As expected, the harvest data provided for this report reflected a lower harvest rate, albeit lower than recommended. Total deer harvest was approximately one-half of the harvest observed in 2015-16.

Harvest Trends

- The recommended (maximum allowable) buck harvest for the 2016-17 hunting season was 1 buck per 125 acres. The actual harvest of antlered bucks (1 buck per 262 acres) was more conservative than the allowable harvest rate and less than last year (1 buck per 213 acres).
- 32 antlered bucks were reported in the harvest, as compared to last year's harvest of 53 antlered bucks. Of these, 28% were spikes, 3% had 3-7 points, and 69% had 8+ points.
- There is a declining trend in total buck harvest and a fairly steady harvest trend for the proportion of 8+ point bucks in the harvest from 2003 to 2016 (**Figure 1**).
- There is a decreasing antlerless deer harvest trend since 2003 (**Figure 2**), mainly due to the decline in harvest last season. The recommended doe harvest rate for 2016-17 was 1 doe per 77 acres. The actual harvest rate (227 acres/antlerless deer) fell short of the harvest rate objective and is the lowest antlerless harvest rate on record for the past 15 years of the association.
- The ratio of antlerless deer to adult bucks (1.2 to 1) in the harvest fell short of the recommended harvest ratio of 1.6 does per buck.

Vista Mountain WMA Buck harvest objectives:

- 1) Selectively harvest bucks that are approaching or have reached maturity, at least 4 ½ years old
- 2) Remove bucks that display inferior antler characteristics compared to other bucks in their same age class. This has included a culling strategy that removes spikes and 3 ½ year-olds with 7 or fewer points.

Age and Antler Information

- Harvest data, including age and antler data were provided by 7 of the 10 properties that reported a deer harvest.

- Verified ages were available for 42 of the 69 harvested deer that were reported. This represents 61% of the total reported harvest, which is much lower than last year's 95% verification rate.

Bucks

There were antler data and verified ages for 18 of the 32 harvested, antlered bucks (**Table 1**). Of the 18 bucks, 61% (11 of 18) were considered to be cull bucks or were mature/approaching maturity, and therefore met the harvest criteria of the association. Approximately 39% (7 of 18) should not have been harvested. As a comparison, last year's "mistake rate" was 24%.

- 17% of the known-age, antlered bucks were **1.5 years old**. All (n = 3) were spike-antlered or had at least one un-branched antler and were considered culls under the current culling strategy.
- 22% of the known-age bucks were **2.5 years old**. Two had at least one unbranched antler. Two had 8 antler points, so did not meet the harvest strategy.
- 28% of the known-age bucks were **3.5 years old**. All (n = 5) had 8+ antler points and did not meet the harvest strategy.
- 33% of the known-age bucks were **4.5+ years old**. All (n = 6) were considered mature or approaching maturity under the current harvest strategy. There is an increasing trend of 4.5+ year-olds in the harvest over the past 14 years (**Figure 3**).

Does

- Ages were verified for 24 of the 37 harvested does.
- Approximately 46% of the harvested does were ≤ 2.5 years old, while 54% were ≥ 3.5 years old. This may indicate a slight under-harvest of does during the 2016-17 season, but could also be influenced by selective doe harvest and lower than normal recruitment for the past 3 years.

This summary report was completed by:

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**Figure 1. Vista Mtn WMA (South)
Buck Harvest 2003-2016**
Max. rec. harvest 2016-17 = 125 ac./buck
Actual 2016-17 = 262 ac./buck

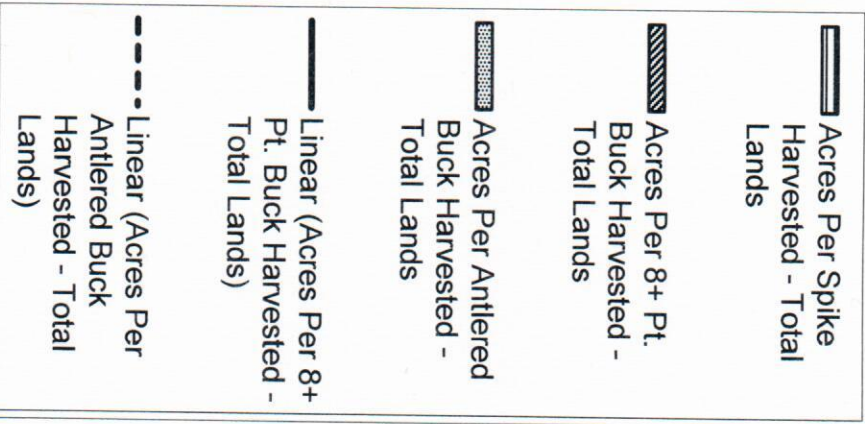
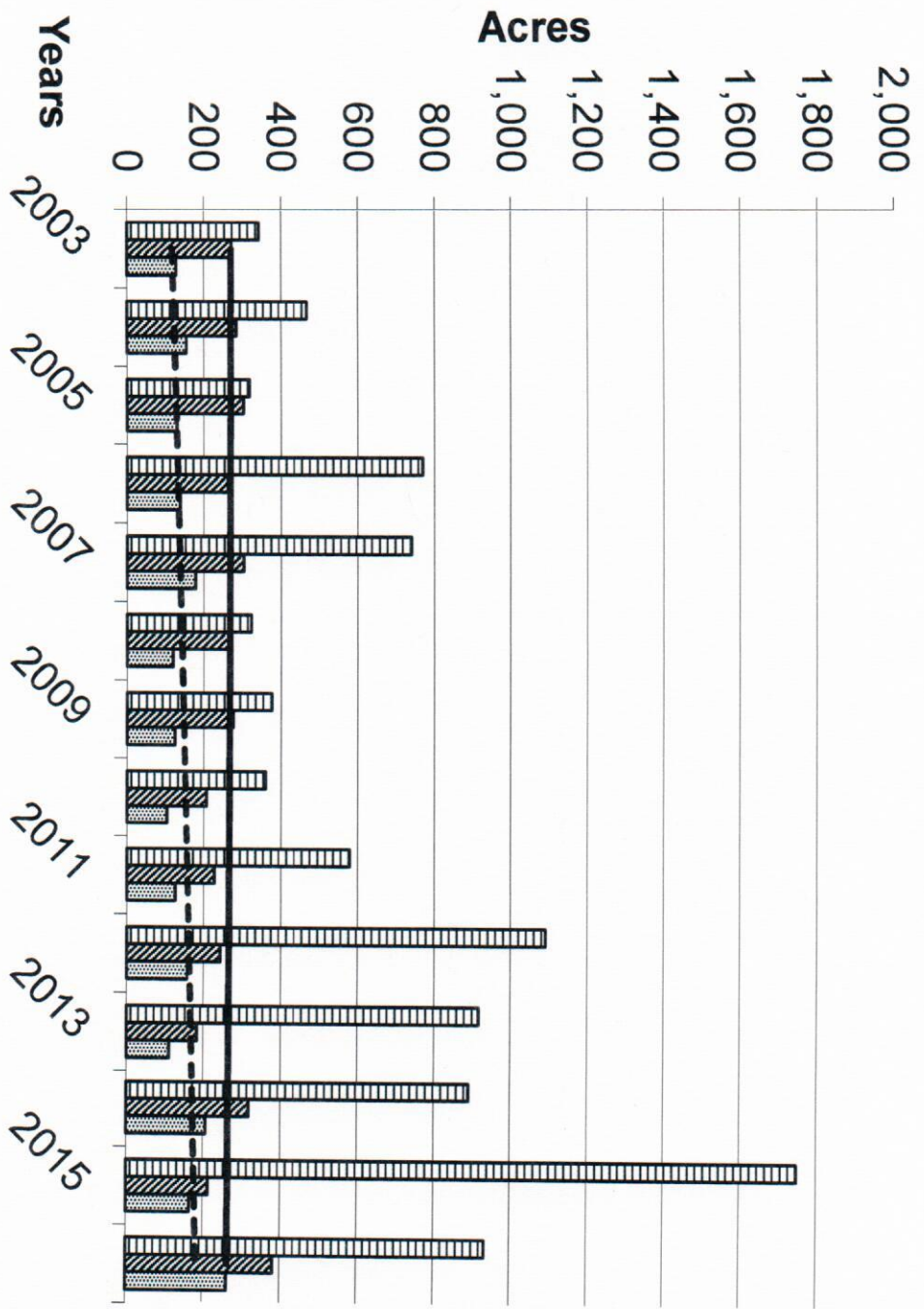
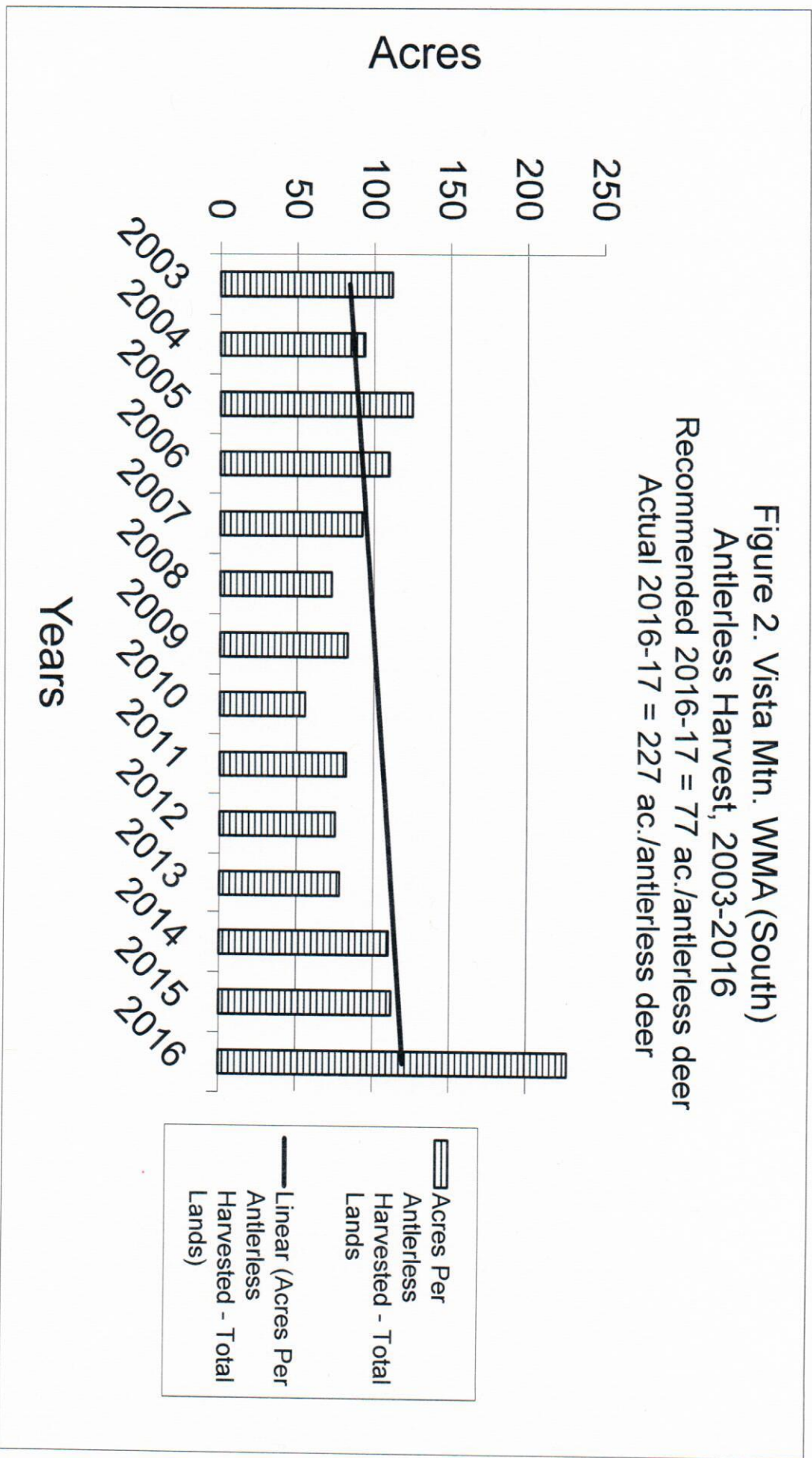


Figure 2. Vista Mtn. WMA (South)
 Antlerless Harvest, 2003-2016
 Recommended 2016-17 = 77 ac./antlerless deer
 Actual 2016-17 = 227 ac./antlerless deer



Vista Mountain-South WMA - 2016-17 Season
Coryell County

Table 1. Annual Summary - Age, Weight, Antler, Sex Data

Age	Males Killed	% of Kill	Number Spikes Killed	Weight		Points		Inside Spread		Beam Circumference		Beam Length		Females Killed	% of Kill	Weight		Total Harvest	% of Total Harvest
				N	Ave	N	Ave	N	Ave*	N	Ave*	N	Ave*			N	Ave		
0.5	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	8.3%	0	0	2	4.8%
1.5	3	16.7%	3	2	73	3	2.0	1	4.0	1	2.0	1	5.0	7	29.2%	1	65	10	23.8%
2.5	4	22.2%	1	0	0	4	5.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	8.3%	0	0	6	14.3%
3.5	5	27.8%	0	1	101	5	8.6	1	15.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	25.0%	2	95	11	26.2%
4.5	4	22.2%	0	1	108	4	9.0	1	16.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	8.3%	2	74	6	14.3%
5.5	2	11.1%	0	0	0	2	9.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	8.3%	0	0	4	9.5%
6.5	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	12.5%	0	0	3	7.1%
7.5	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0.0%
8.5+	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0.0%
COMB	18	100.0%	4	4	89	18	7.1	3	11.8	1	2.0	1	5.0	24	99.9%	5	80	42	100.0%

* Inches

Comments: Fawns were not used in calculating Combined averages.

Verified age data were available from 18 of the 32 antlered males reported.

Verified age data were available from 24 of the 37 females reported.

Deer of unknown age were not included in the calculations.

Adult Males - Antler Points by Age Class

1.5 year old - 3 spikes

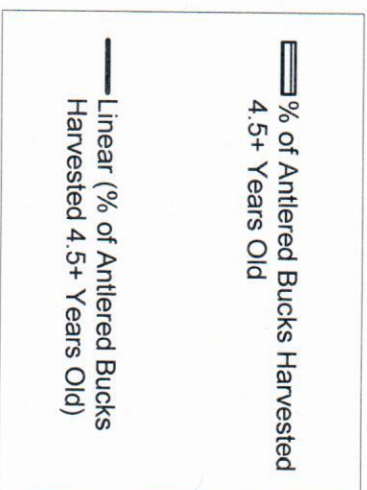
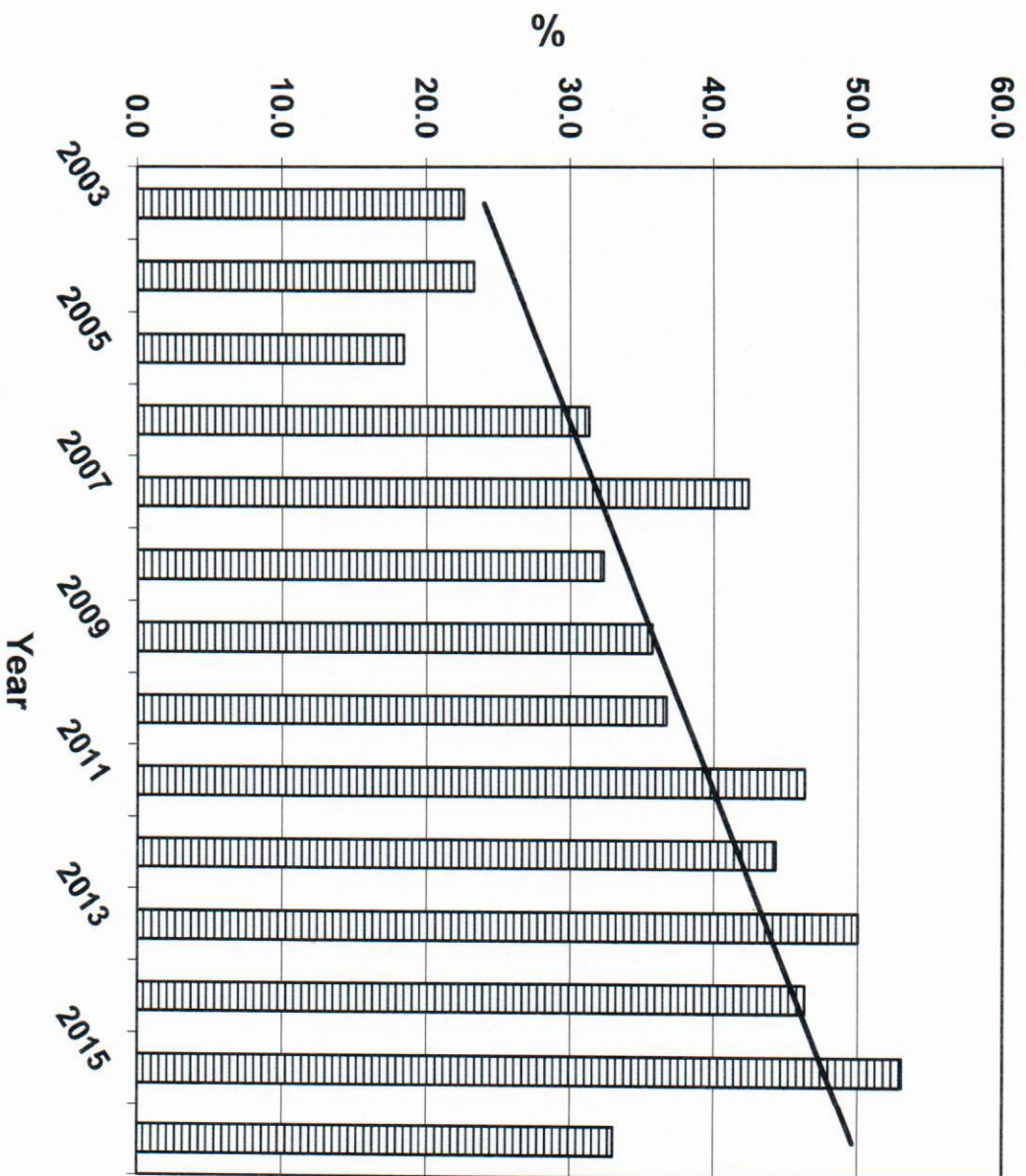
2.5 years old - 1 spike, 1 unbranched antler buck, 2 with 8 points

3.5 years old - 5 with 8-10 points.

4.5 years old - 2 with 8 points and 2 with 10 points

5.5 years old - 1 with 8 points and 1 with 11 points

Figure 3. Vista Mtn. WMA (South) 2003-2016
The proportion of 4.5+ year-old bucks in the antlered buck harvest



Feral hog harvest, Vista Mountain WMA - South, 2006-2016

