

FACTSHEET

# WHITE-TAILED DEER

EST.  2015

WILD HARVEST INITIATIVE®



## SPECIES PROFILE

*ODOCOILEUS VIRGINIANUS*

- ▶ Estimated population of over 30 million in the US alone
- ▶ Smallest member of the North American Deer Family
- ▶ Diet generally consists of herbaceous vegetation during the summer months and conifers during winter
- ▶ Have a 4-chambered stomach to process food more efficiently
- ▶ Can bound through the woods at speeds of up to 36 mph (58 kmph)
- ▶ Have dichromatic vision, making it hard to distinguish certain colors
- ▶ Range extends as far south as Bolivia, South America

Extremely adaptable with high reproductive potential, white-tailed deer are found across North America and have been important to humankind for food, clothing, and tools for at least 10,000 years.

Prized for their hides in the 1800s, white-tailed deer populations were overharvested until no more than 500,000 remained. Thanks to conservation efforts largely led by recreational hunters, the number of white-tailed deer effectively rebounded and populations surged past 15 million in the 1970s.

Today, there are approximately 30 million white-tailed deer ranging across the US alone. Some US states and Canadian provinces now face the challenge of overabundance, leading to deer-vehicle collisions, agricultural damage and deer-to-human infections such as Lyme disease.

Well-regulated recreational hunting of white-tailed deer plays a significant role in managing this population. The sustainable harvest of this species helps keep the number of deer in line with the ecological carrying capacity of their environment, while the money invested in hunting activities supports conservation efforts to ensure their long-term survival.

Out of all of the big game species harvested annually in the United States and Canada, none is more popular among recreational hunters or more economically significant than the iconic white-tailed deer. At least 43 out of 50 jurisdictions in the US and 8 out of 13 provinces and territories in Canada harvest this species.

## WEIGHT OF WHITE-TAILED DEER HARVEST IN THE US AND CANADA

(2014/15-2015/16)

	Live Weight of Harvest	Consumable Weight of Harvest	Number of Meals (6oz serving)
CANADA	53,576,090 lbs	24,352,105 lbs	64,938,947
US	1,414,223,280 lbs	642,812,297 lbs	1,714,166,125

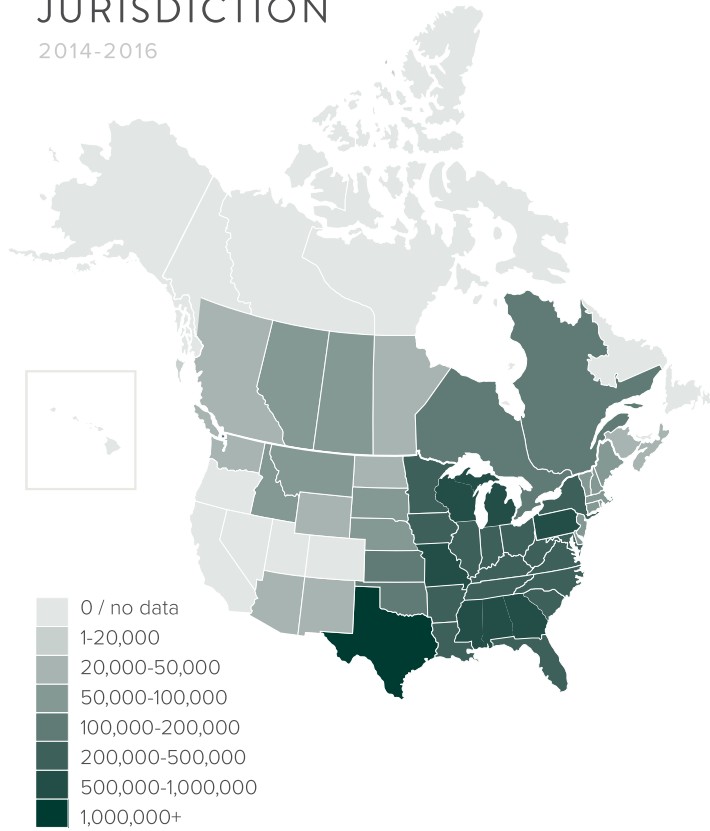
Please cite as: Mahoney, S.P. (2020). *The Wild Harvest Initiative®: White-tailed Deer* [Fact sheet]. Conservation Visions, St. John's, NL, Canada.

EST.  2001

CONSERVATION VISIONS®

## NUMBER OF WHITE-TAILED DEER HARVESTED BY JURISDICTION

2014-2016



*Note: Colorado is captured with those jurisdictions reporting zero harvests of white-tailed deer as this state does not disaggregate between deer species.*

Just over 12 million white-tailed deer were harvested in the US and Canada between 2014-2016 (an average of 6 million deer per hunting season)\*

Average live weight of one white-tailed deer:

- **Male:** 150 lbs
- **Female:** 99 lbs

Average dressed weight of one white-tailed deer:

- **Male:** 115 lbs
- **Female:** 76 lbs

Average consumable weight of one white-tailed deer:

- **Male:** 68 lbs (272 meals)
- **Female:** 45 lbs (180 meals)

\* Does not include harvests reported simply as "deer" by hunters in Colorado, since this may include other species, such as mule deer.



### DID YOU KNOW...

Wild harvested venison has less total and saturated fat than many common domestic meat choices such as beef or pork. In fact, a 3-ounce serving of venison contains 26 grams of protein and only 2 total grams of fat!

## ABOUT THE WILD HARVEST INITIATIVE®

The Wild Harvest Initiative® is the first serious effort to synthesize and evaluate the combined economic, conservation and social benefits of recreational wild animal harvests in America and Canada. The program's combined primary emphasis on food security and wildlife conservation is tailored to change conversations and provide new ways of communicating the relevance and benefits of recreational hunting and angling.