

Preliminary reports reveal that 40,301 deer were harvested during the Nov. 10-18 firearm season, according to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

That is a decline of 27 percent from the 2011 record firearm season harvest of 55,400.

In addition to large numbers of deer lost to epizootic hemorrhagic disease, deer populations, permit sales and hunting success were impacted by a record drought and the elimination of Earn-A-Buck rules in some management units, where a doe had to be checked in before or at the same time as a buck.

The harvest total includes any type of hunting permit that was legal during the nine-day season.

Northeast Nebraska had the largest decline in harvest, while the southwest had the least decline. Harvest by region, compared to 2011, was as follows:

Northeast—8,040 deer (down 43 percent), Panhandle/Northwest—5,505 deer (down 15 percent), Southeast—10,870 deer (down 34 percent), Southwest—15,886 deer (down 14 percent).

Area deer hunting numbers also dropped this year.

Deer checked in at Laker's in Enders during firearm season dropped from 574 to 536, or a decline of six percent.