

Hunter Recruitment and Retention in BC: A Progress Report

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International Wildlife Management Symposium

9 Dec. 2011

Outline

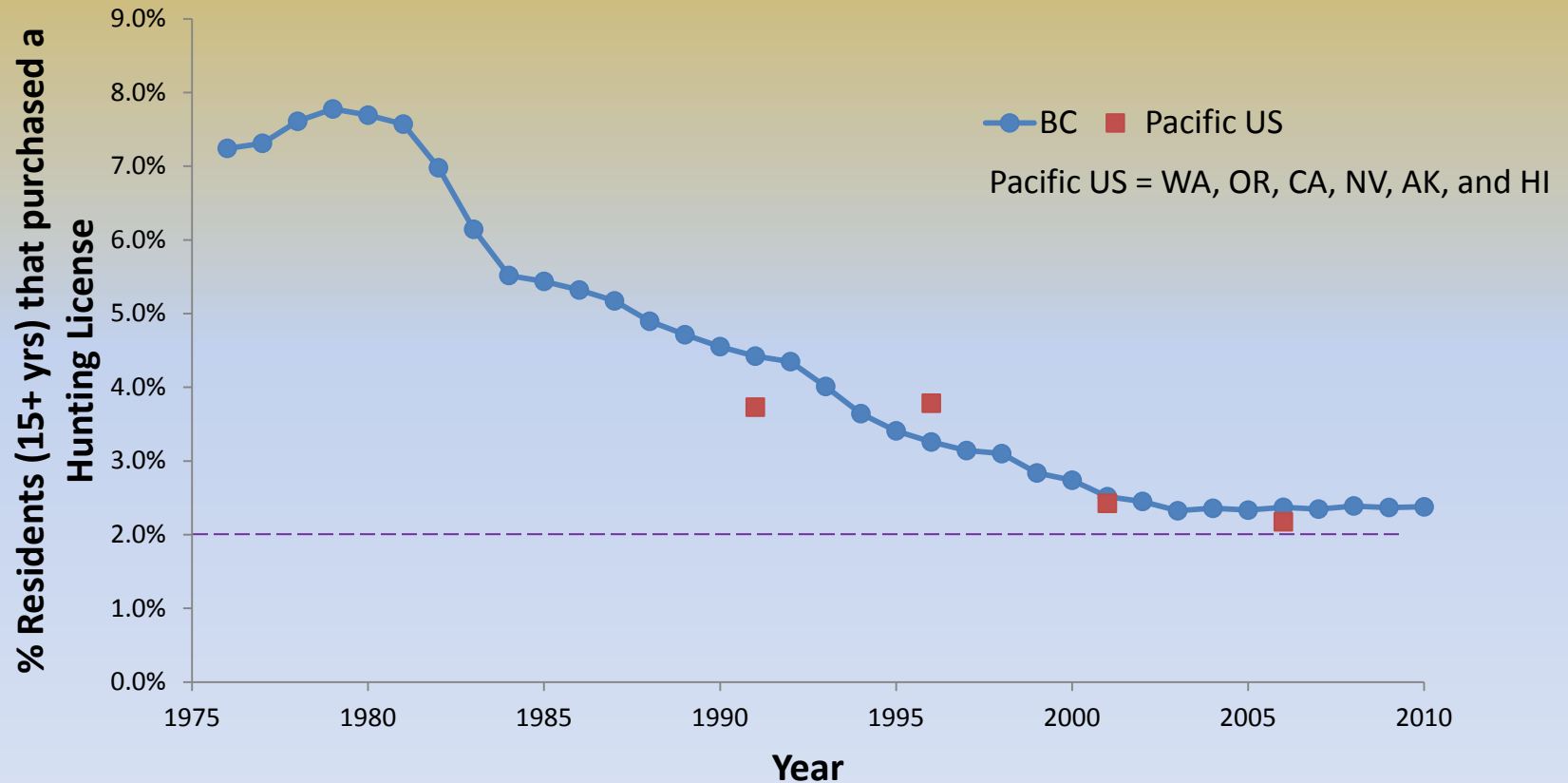
- Why is Hunter Recruitment and Retention Important?
- BC's Hunter Recruitment and Retention Strategy
- Barriers to Hunter Recruitment and Retention
- Performance Target for Hunter Participation
 - Basic Licence Sales
- Trends in Hunter Participation
 - Youth Hunters
 - Senior Hunters
 - New Hunters
 - Female Hunters
- A Review of 14 Recommendations from the HR&R Strategy - How Are We Doing?
- Summary and Recommendations

Why is Hunter R&R Important?

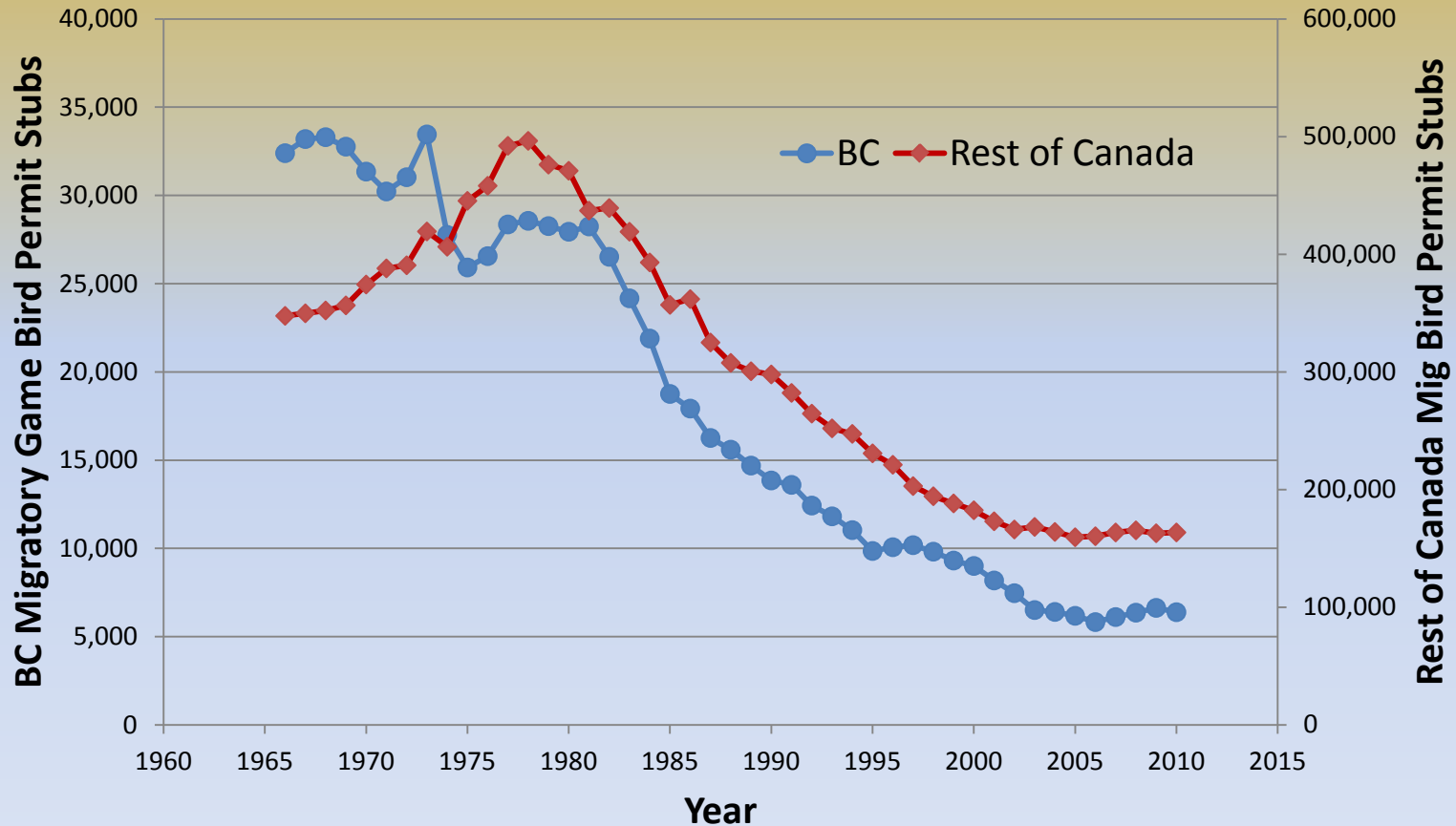
Hunter numbers are declining in BC, Canada and the US. We care because:

- Hunting is a way of life for many people – food, social, spiritual and life-style concerns
- An overwhelming majority of the public (~75%) support hunting and think opportunities for recreational hunting is important
- Hunters are essential to species protection and species management (NA Wildlife Conservation Model)
 - The hunting conservation model can be expected to weaken if hunting participation declines
- Hunting is an important component of rural economies, is sustainable, and a significant source of government revenue
 - Hunting contributes approximately \$350 million annually to the province and hunters generate about \$50 million of the province's GDP

Resident Hunting Participation in BC

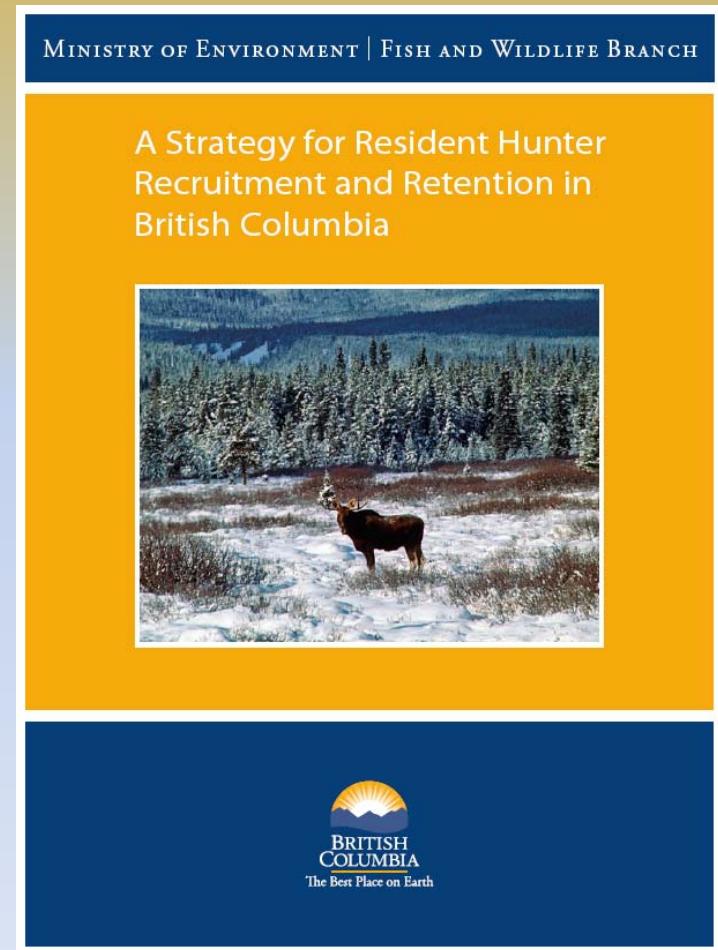


Migratory Game Bird Permit Stubs in Canada



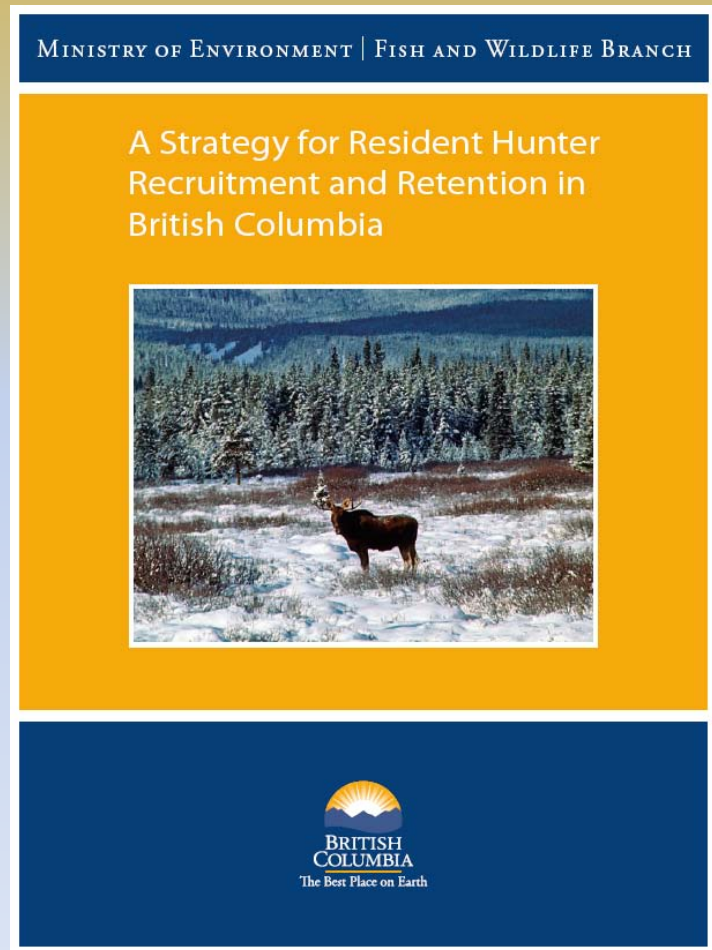
BC's Hunter Recruitment & Retention Strategy

- Released in 2007
- Identifies barriers/factors affecting recruitment and retention
- Contains 34 recommendations to promote hunter recruitment and retention
- Identified the “Big Six” – recommendations that are particularly important for promoting HR&R



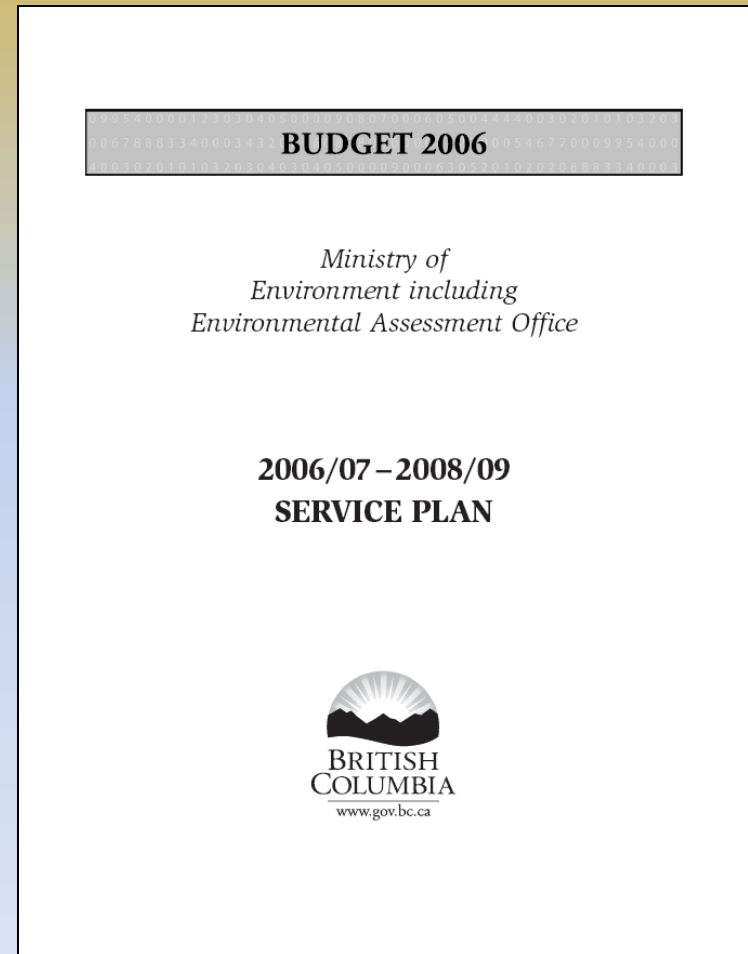
Barriers to Hunter Recruitment & Retention

1. Demographics
2. Increased Recreational Opportunities
3. Costs
4. Time Obligations
5. Federal Firearms Laws and Hunter Education Requirements
6. Hunting Regulations and Licensing Options
7. Opportunity and Enjoyment
8. Lack of Mentors and Advice on How to Hunt
9. Hunting Has Not Been Promoted

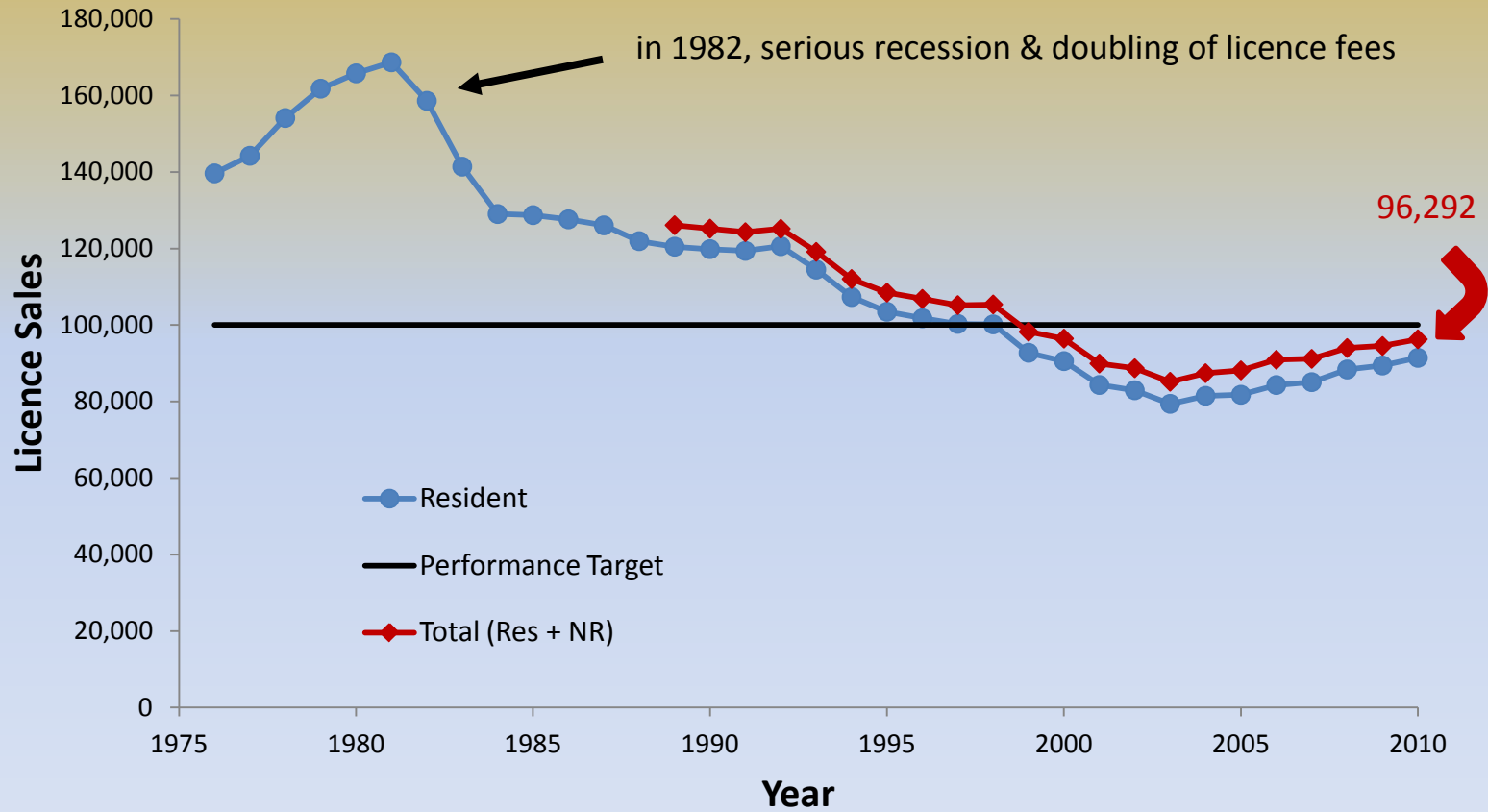


What is our Performance Target?

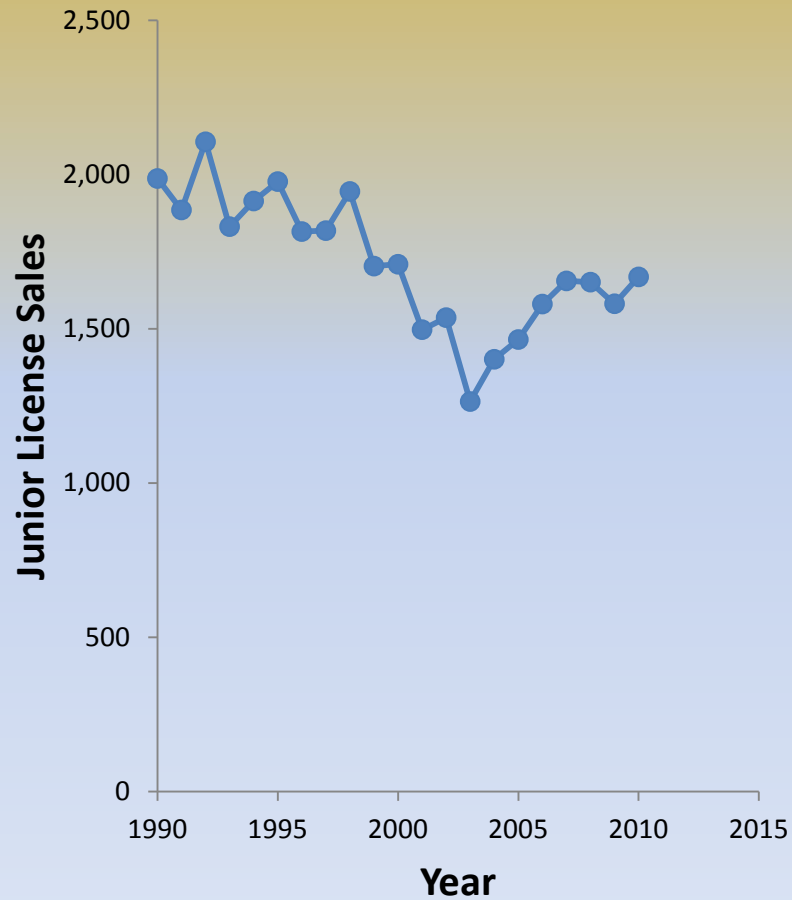
- The 2006/07 – 2008/09 Service Plan for the Ministry of Environment set a performance measure of increasing the number of basic hunting licences sold annually to 100,000 by 2014/15



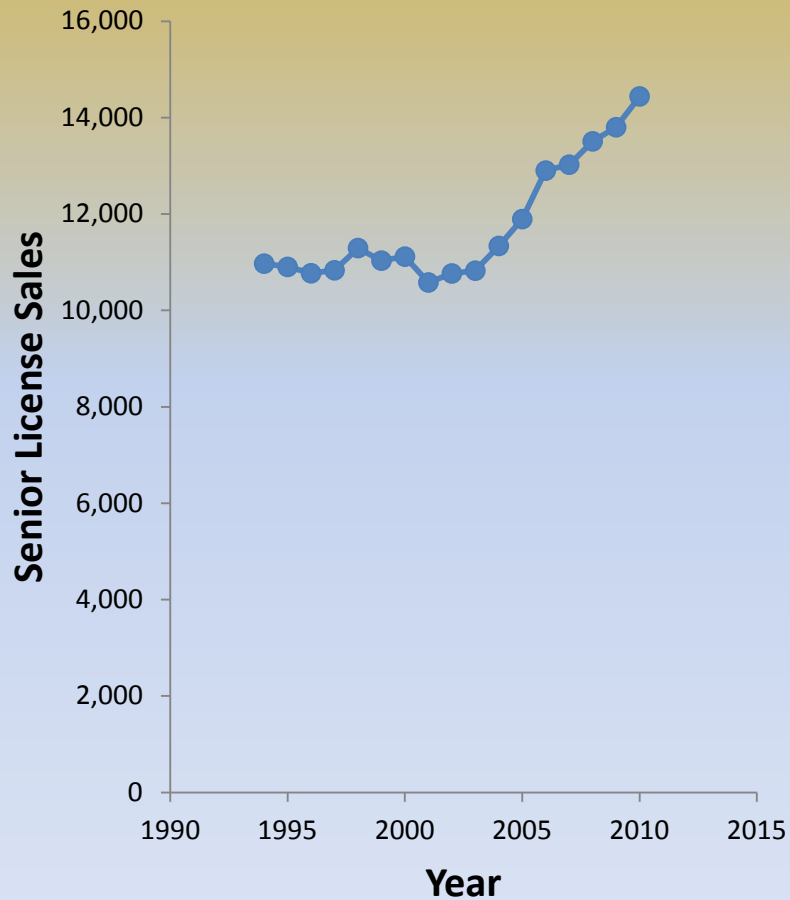
Basic Hunter Licence Sales



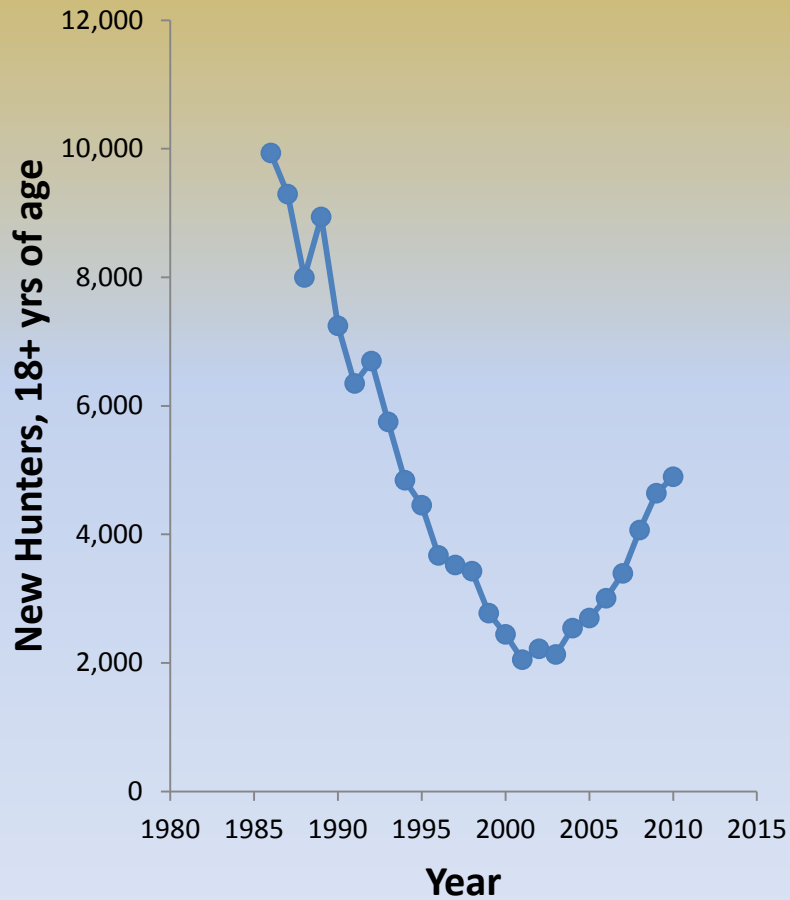
Trends in Youth Hunters



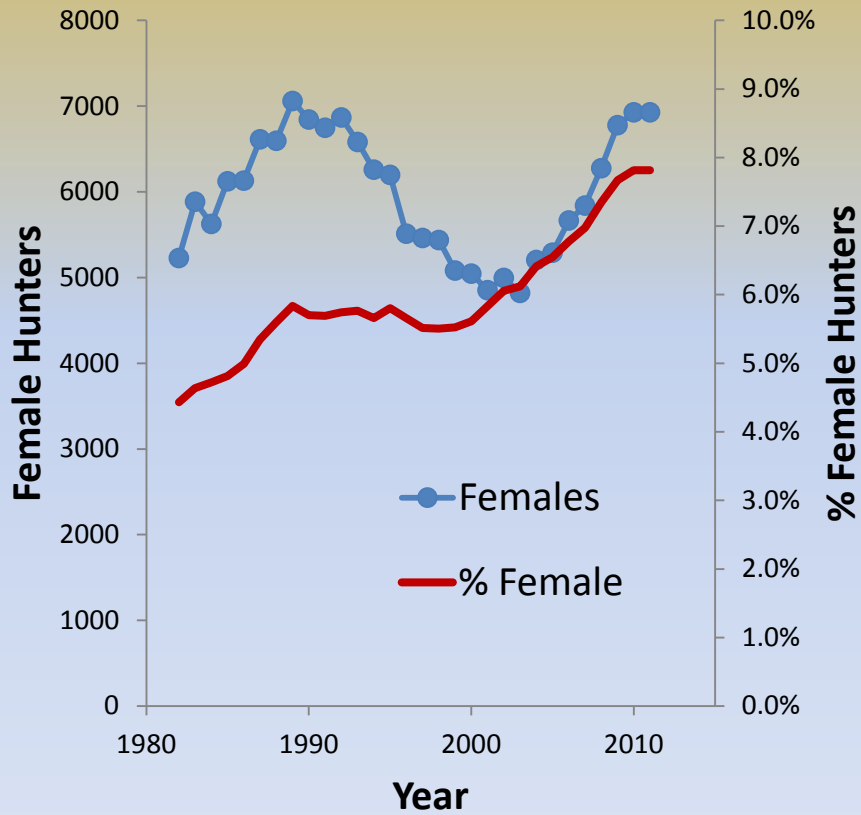
Trends in Senior Hunters



Trends in New Hunters



Trends in Female Hunters

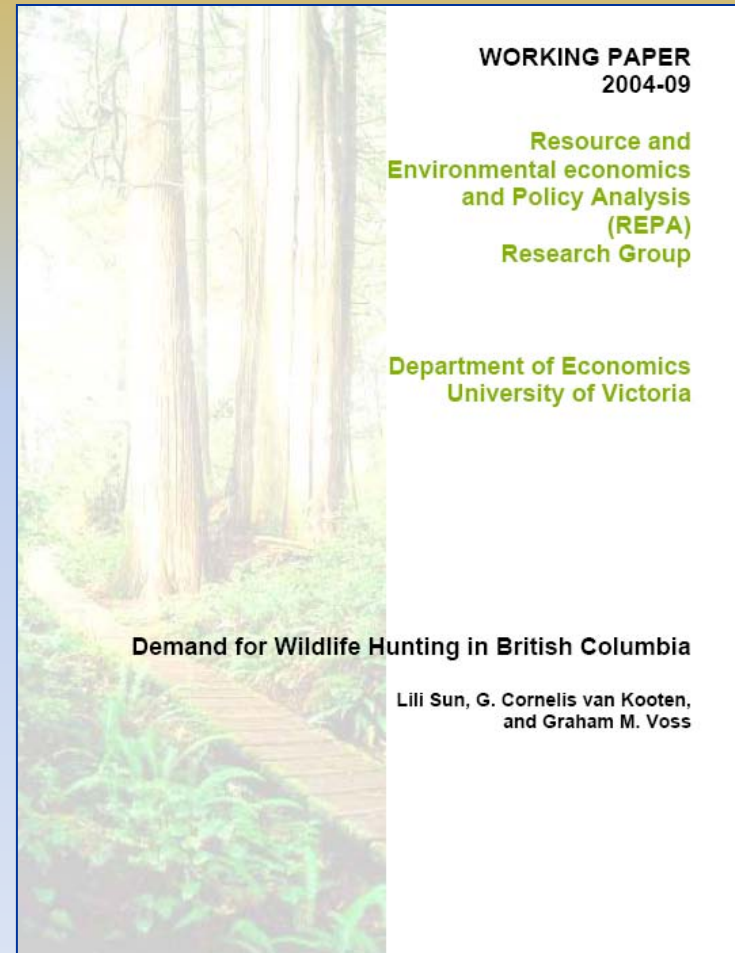


What about Lapsed Hunters?

- Lapsed hunters are those who are still hunters, but for various reasons have not recently participated in hunting.
- *“there are approximately 150,000 to 200,000 additional hunter number holders that are potentially interested in hunting (can legally hunt in BC). Imaginative approaches to providing hunting opportunities may lure some of them back to activity...”*

John Thornton, 2007

BC Hunter Recruitment and Retention Strategy

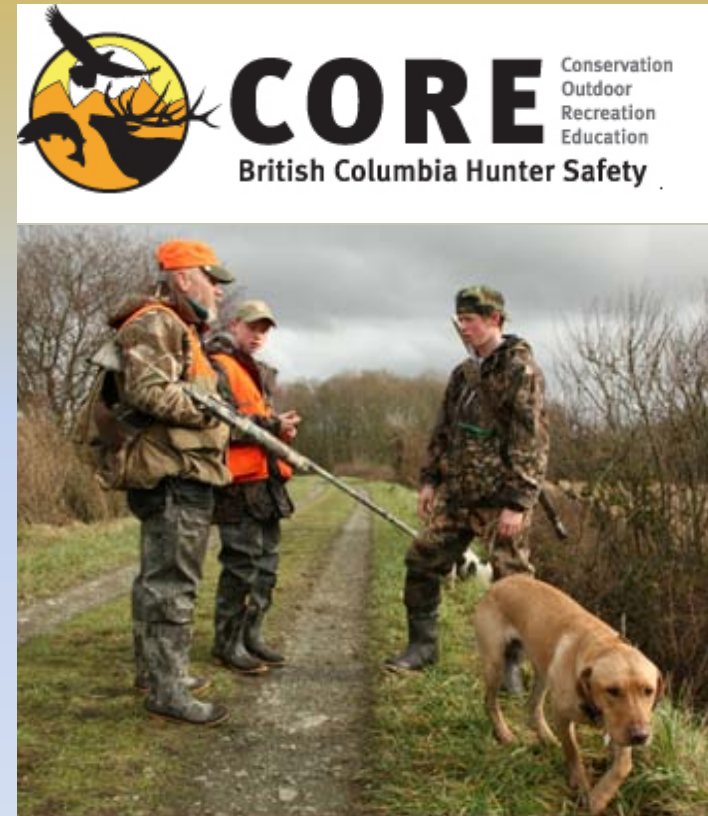


THE BIG SIX Recommendation #1:

Completion of C.O.R.E. should qualify hunters for a federal Possession and Acquisition Licence without having to pay for and attend a second course.



- Ministry staff will continue to consult with the BCWF CORE program coordinator and federal firearms program staff to determine if this is feasible.
- Completion of the Canadian Firearms Safety Course continues to be accepted in lieu of the CORE practical firearms exam (as of 1999)



THE BIG SIX Recommendation #5:

Extend the time range of the junior hunting licence from 10 years of age to less than 19 years of age. Allow juniors to have their own bag limit.



- The Legislature approved amendments to the *Wildlife Act* on November 24, 2011 to increase the age range for a junior licence from 10-13 years of age to 10-17 years of age.
- The age at which a youth can hunt unaccompanied was changed from 19 to 18 in 2008.
- The change represents more affordable hunting opportunities for families with teenagers, as the fee for the junior licence will remain at \$7 but will apply to a broader range of youth.
- All of the current rules regarding requirements for the child to be accompanied will be continued.
- The Act also anticipates that there may be additional requirements for the accompanying hunter, for instance, a limit to the number of youth a person can accompany at one time or a requirement of previous hunting experience.
- Youth over age 10 that complete CORE continue to be able to get their own hunting licence and bag limits.

THE BIG SIX Recommendation #7:

Develop a new “test-drive” licence for new hunters 19 years of age or older. This could be time-limited to 1 season, CORE not required, but supervised.



- The Legislature also approved amendments to the *Wildlife Act* to implement a new, one year, once in a lifetime, Initiation Hunting Licence for BC residents 18 years of age and older.
- The Initiation licence holder will be exempt from the requirement to take CORE, but will be required to be accompanied and closely supervised by an adult mentor hunter.
- The fee for the initiation licence has not yet been approved but is anticipated to fall somewhere between the basic hunting licence fee of \$32 and the \$7 junior licence fee.
- Wildlife taken by the initiation licence holder will be included in the bag limit of the accompanying hunter.

THE BIG SIX Recommendation #8:

Develop and implement an electronic licensing system as soon as possible.



Progress to Date:

- Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Management Branch has completed a business case supporting an E-licensing business model for hunting licences.
- A Request for Proposal (RFP) has been prepared and is ready to issue.
- The e-licensing proposal is before the MFLNRO executive who will consider the proposal as part of a set of ministry initiatives competing for budget dollars.





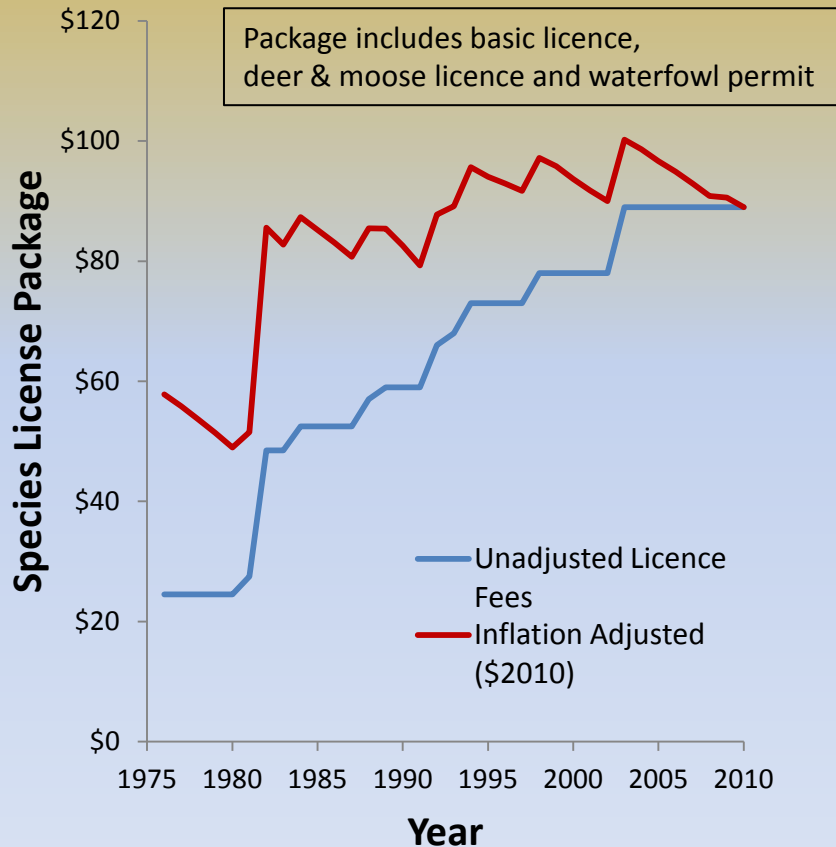
THE BIG SIX Recommendation #9:

Conduct a marketing survey to determine the new types of hunting licences that would be of interest to hunters.

Progress to date:

- FWHMB has applied for funding to hire resources to conduct a marketing survey to determine the new types of hunting licences that would be of interest to hunters.
- As part of a broader marketing strategy FWHMB will also be reviewing and upgrading its main website. The new website will have an enhanced look and feel with an emphasis on marketing and engagement with hunters and potential hunters.
- Work on the new website will include developing marketing partnerships with our stakeholders. FWHMB will be making contact soon to discuss exposure online and hunting literature such as the synopsis.

Recommendation #10: Reduce the cost of a basic hunting licence and consider other possible fee cost reductions.

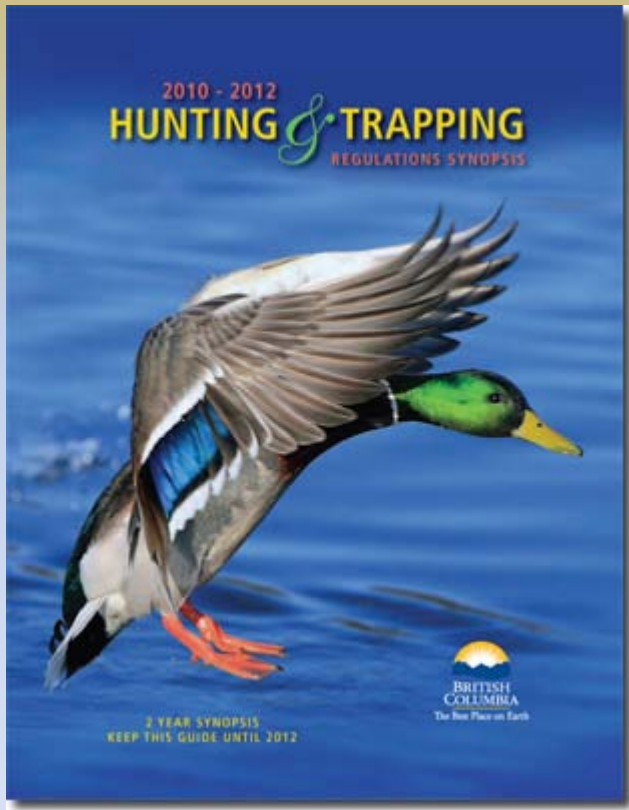


BC Hunting Licence Prices

1. Hunting demand is price-inelastic.
2. Hunting licence fees in BC have not kept pace with inflation (ave. annual growth in fees = 1.3% in real terms)
3. In general, licence fees comprise only a small proportion of total hunting licence expenditures.

Recommendation 12:

As much as possible, simplify and standardize hunting seasons and regulations throughout the province.



Key Ministry drivers or "tests" for regulatory change:

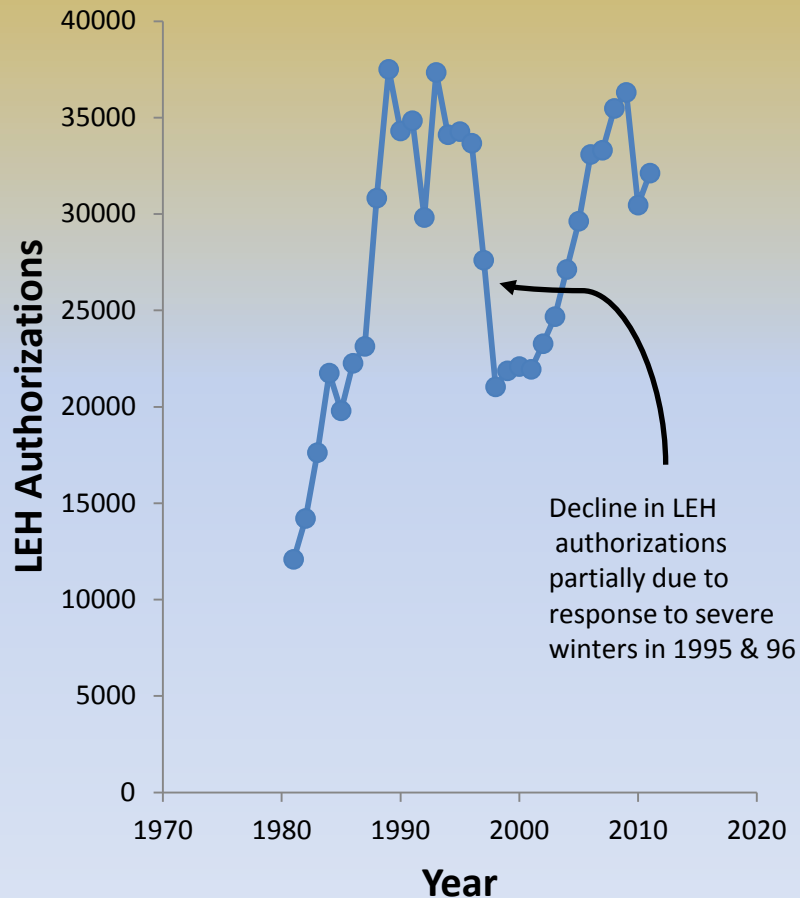
- regulation simplification;
- harmonization of regulations within and between regions;
- increasing hunting opportunity
- program delivery within existing resources

Subject to:

- conservation is not compromised

Recommendation 15:

Form a Limited Entry Review Committee to review Limited Entry hunts on a regular basis and determine whether or not keeping them as Limited Entry Hunts is justified.



1. *Individual LEH*

- Each hunter applies separately

2. *Group LEH*

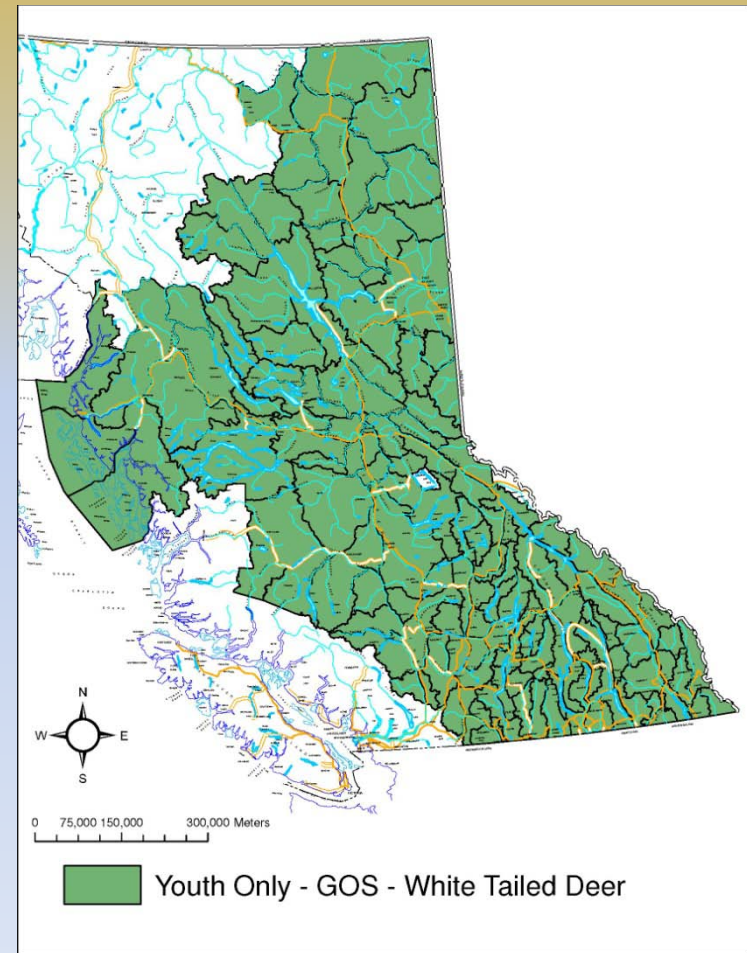
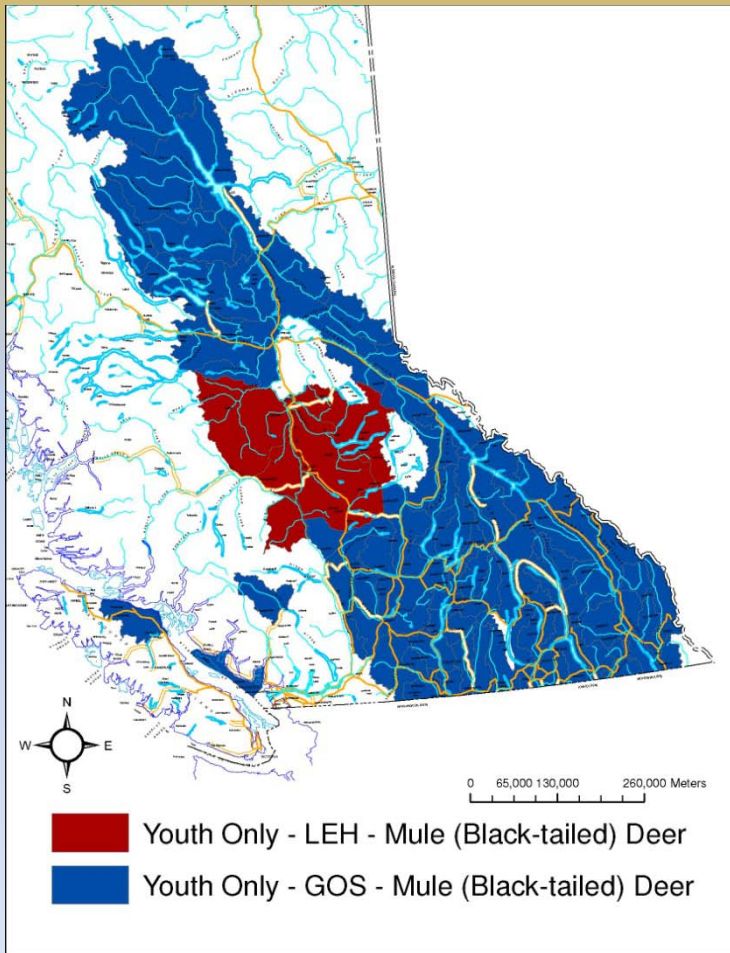
- Available to hunters who wish to apply with a group of hunting partners
- Every person in group is allotted a permit
- Not available for Bison, Elk (R1 &2) or moose

3. *Shared LEH*

- For moose only
 - Group of 1 or 2: 1 moose
 - Group of 3 or 4: 2 moose

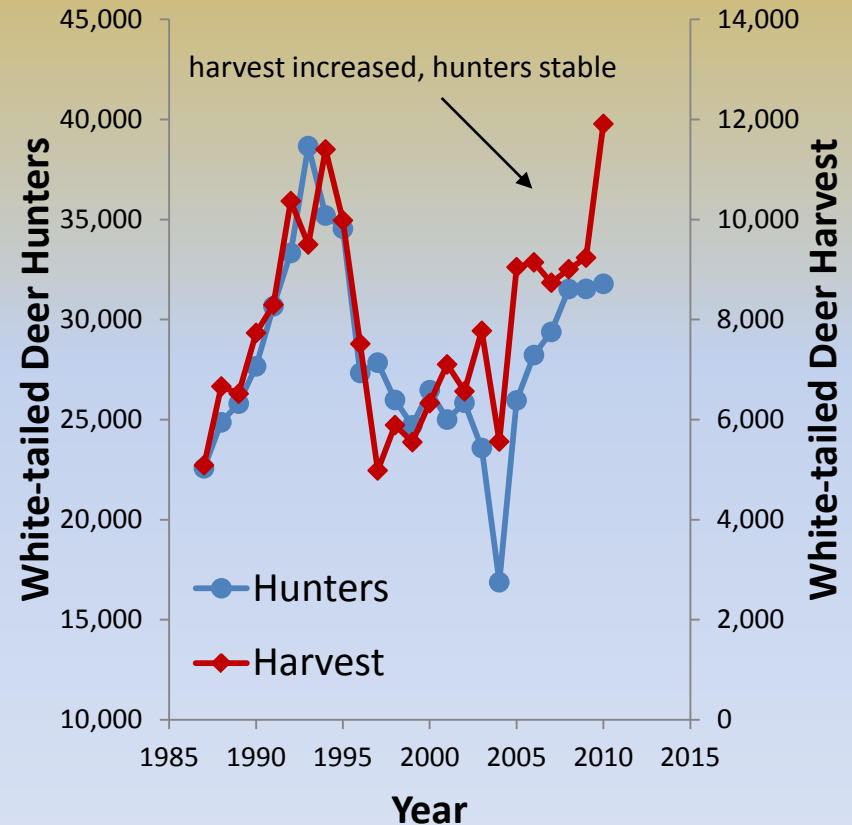
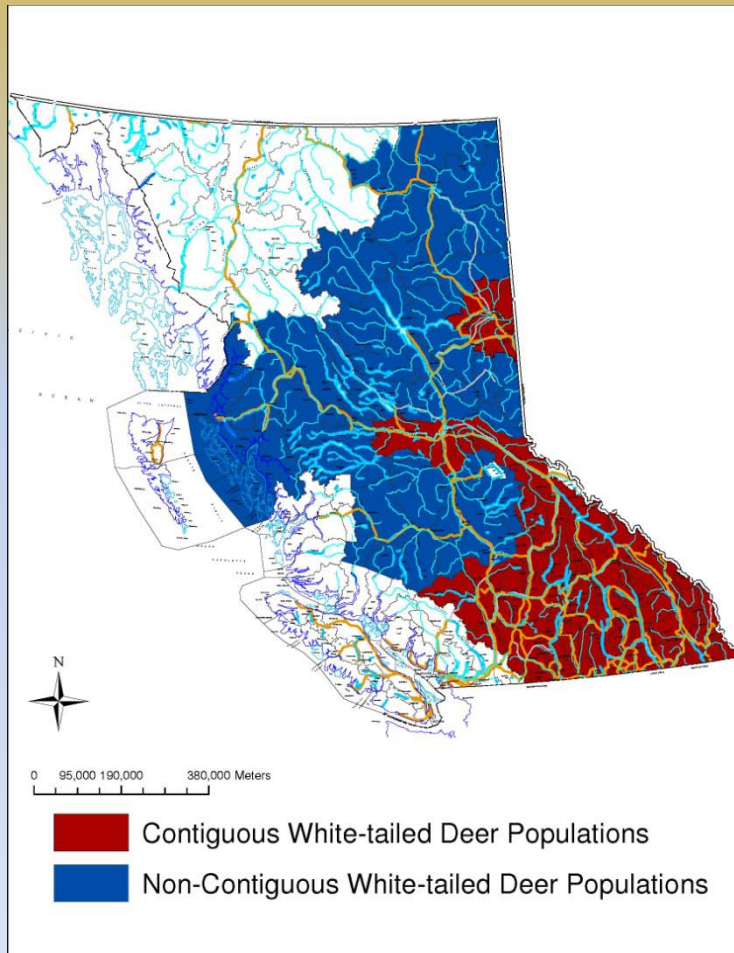
THE BIG SIX Recommendation #19:

Wherever possible, provide GOS for mule deer and white-tailed deer does for hunters under the age of 19 and hunters participating in their first season.



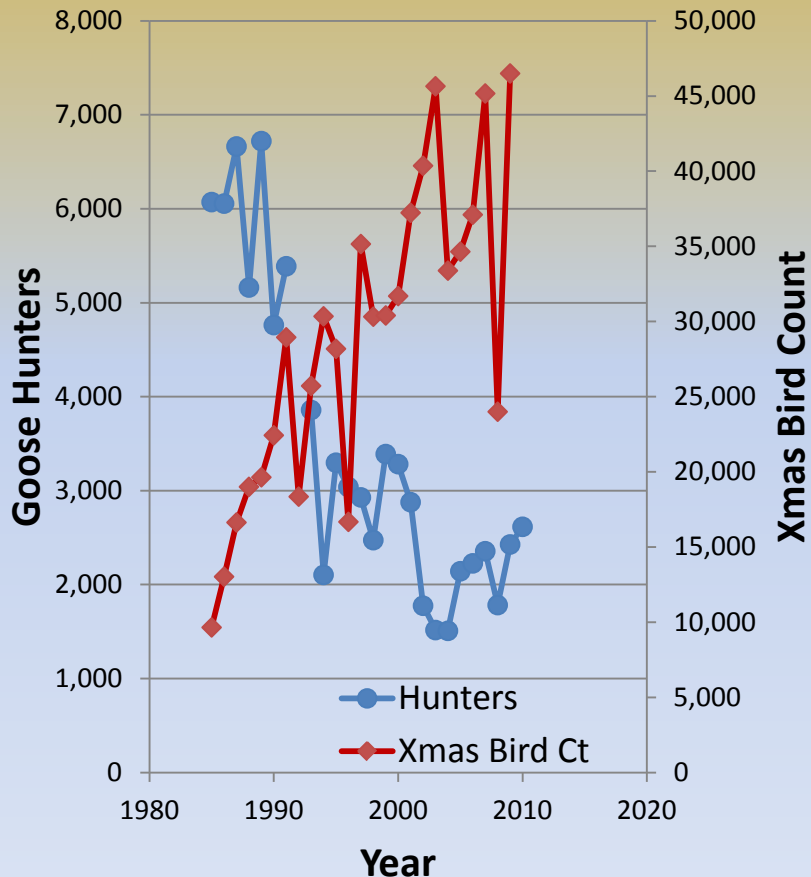
Recommendation 20:

In general, the Fish and Wildlife Branch should pursue a quantity over quality direction in its management of deer, moose and elk.



Recommendation 22:

Promote goose hunting, especially in areas where goose populations are causing problems.



Waterfowl Heritage Days

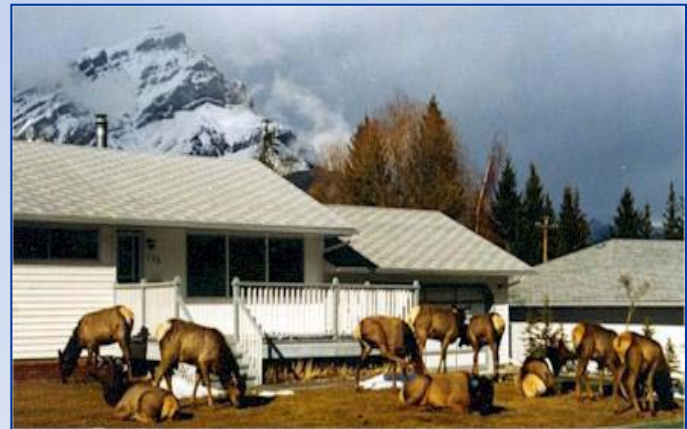
- Exclusive 2 days for youth only to hunt (≥ 10 & < 18 yrs accompanied by adult).
- Bag limit: 8/day (16 total for WHD)
- Young hunters:
 - do not have to purchase migratory game bird permit
 - do not have to purchase provincial licence or junior hunting licence
 - do not have to complete CORE
- WHD have been established in all regions of the province

Recommendation 23:

Look at hunting as a solution to problem wildlife and wildlife related agricultural problems.

PAZWP

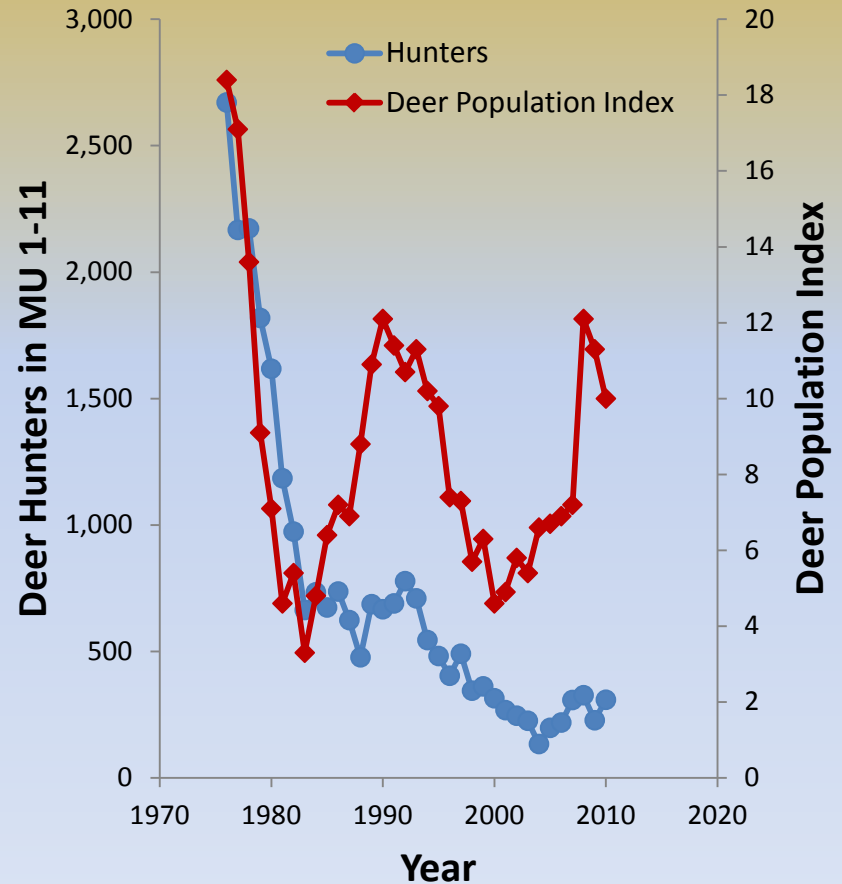
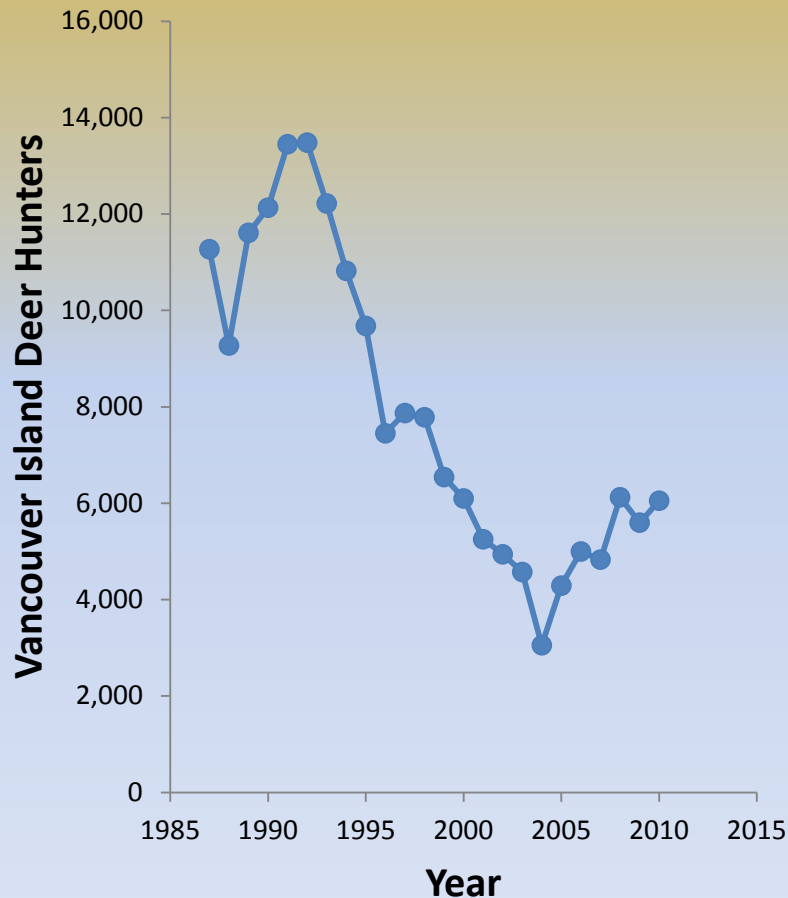
- Provincial Agriculture Zone Wildlife Program:
 - Agricultural zones throughout BC that are subject to special objectives and hold special opportunities for hunters.
 - Increases hunting opportunities by liberalizing hunting regulations, e.g.
 - Antlerless elk open seasons in Kootenays (4-3 Zone X)
 - Antlerless elk, mule and white-tail deer open seasons in Peace (7-20 Zone A)
 - Promotes stable and healthy hunter-landowner relationships



Courtesy of C. Cassady St. Clair

Recommendation 25:

Make the recovery of Vancouver Island black-tailed deer populations and the associated hunting opportunities a top Fish and Wildlife Branch priority.



Recommendation 29:

BC Fish and Wildlife Staff should constantly bring up the subject of mentoring programs with the BCWF and member clubs.



Summary and Recommendations

- Declining participation in hunting is a concern in BC and internationally
- Recent license sales in BC show an increase in hunting
- On track to achieve our PM of 100,000
- BC has a comprehensive Hunter Recruitment and Retention Strategy
- About ½ of the recommendations in the Strategy have been acted on
- E-licensing and marketing hold considerable promise to further increase HR&R
- Many of the gains in HR&R would not have been possible without the support of the hunting community



It Takes a Hunter to Make a Hunter...

1 deer + 2 hours + 3 generations = un4gettable hunt



Questions?