

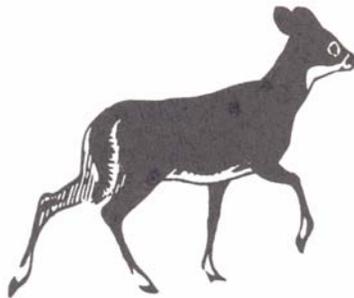


**Department of Game, Fish and Parks**

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Pierre, South Dakota 57501-3182



**Report to Survey Participants  
2009 Black Hills Deer Hunter Survey**



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April 2010

Dear Black Hills Deer Hunter,

This is a summary report of the 2009 Black Hills Deer Hunter Survey. We sincerely thank all of you who participated by completing and returning your questionnaire. About 40% of the 2009 Black Hills deer hunters were selected to participate in this year's survey. A total of 2,697 questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 86.9%. I am very pleased with such an excellent response as it demonstrates the importance and value of Black Hills deer hunting and the willingness of our hunters to take an active role in its management efforts. Each year we gain a better understanding of Black Hills deer hunters which will help us better manage the Black Hills deer herd.

This survey represents the 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of studying Black Hills deer hunters, and the 14<sup>th</sup> year following the change in the management of the Black Hills deer herd. A major objective of these surveys is to track satisfaction and other hunter-related parameters to evaluate the Black Hills deer season (i.e., provide an evaluation of each year's deer season from the hunters' perspective). A secondary purpose of these surveys is to gain an overall better understanding of Black Hills deer hunters and Black Hills deer hunting.

Sincerely,  
*Larry Gigliotti*

# 2009 Black Hills Deer Hunter Survey Report

Larry M. Gigliotti, Ph.D.

The most glaring results were the numbers of hunters dissatisfied with their 2009 Black Hills deer hunting experience. Satisfaction had risen to very high levels for the periods 2003 through 2005, but started to drop thereafter with a small dip in 2006 but sliding to a relatively low level by 2009 (Figures A and B). Overall, about 54% of the deer hunters were satisfied with their 2009 Black Hills deer hunting experiences and about 34% were dissatisfied. The relatively large drop in 2009 suggests that conditions important to most hunters have deteriorated to a level requiring management intervention. Because hunters are now perceiving a decline in factors important in contributing to a quality or enjoyable hunting experience they are especially dissatisfied because they have recent memories of better times.

The numbers of deer, bucks and quality bucks seen by Black Hills deer hunters have dropped in recent years (Table 1). Also, hunters' subjective evaluations of the deer season based on three parameters (number of deer seen, number of bucks seen and quality of bucks seen) have also decreased in recent years (Figure C). Antler size (measured by total number of points) has been measured over the past 14 years (Table 2).

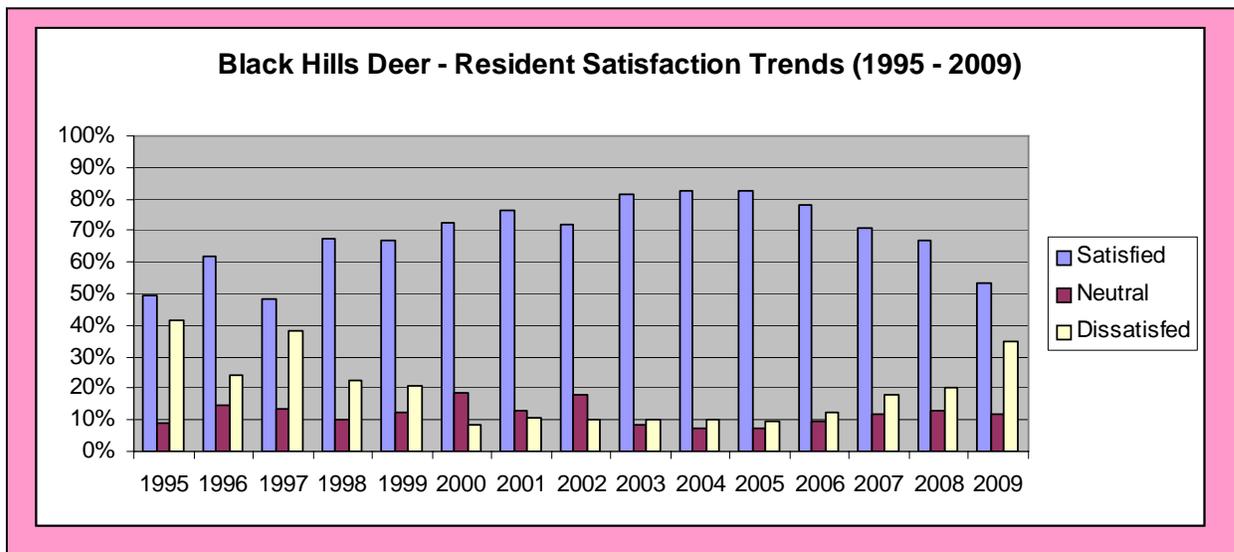


Figure A. Satisfaction trends for resident Black Hills deer hunters (1995 – 2009).

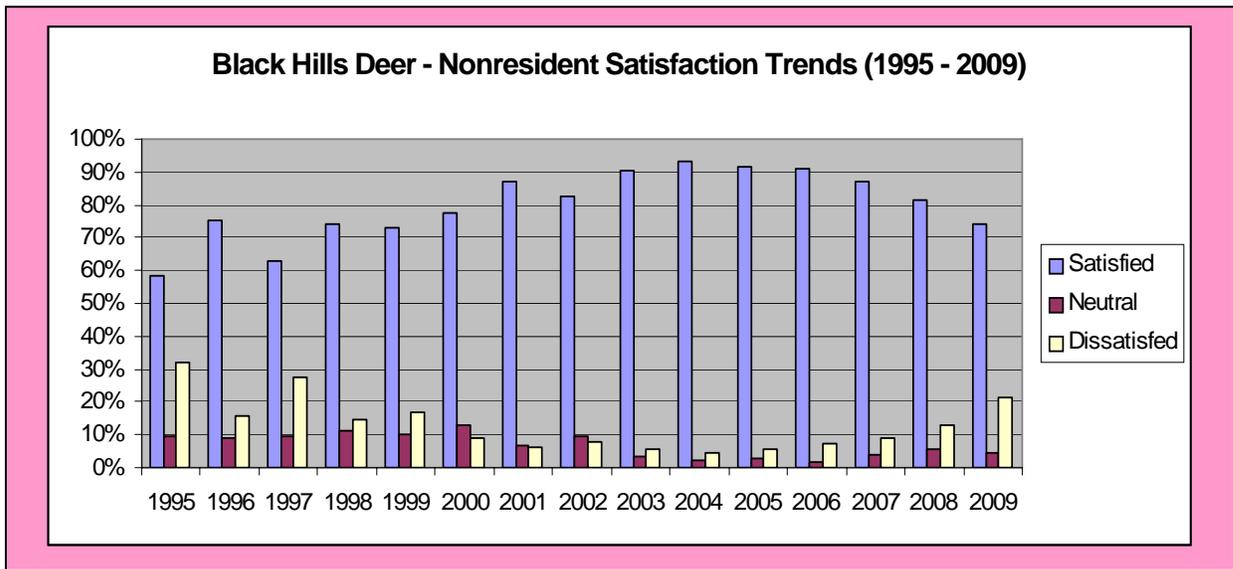


Figure B. Satisfaction trends for nonresident Black Hills deer hunters (1995 – 2009).

Table 1. About how many deer, bucks and quality bucks did you see during your total Black Hills deer hunt?

Hunter Reported Mean Total:	Year											
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Deer Seen	42.4	43.5	77.5	54.6	69.3	80.0	77.4	82.1	74.9	72.4	58.3	40.7
Bucks Seen	3.6	4.6	7.6	7.2	7.9	10.0	10.9	11.0	10.8	11.7	8.8	7.6
Quality Bucks Seen	1.1	1.4	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.9	3.1	2.6	2.8	2.6	2.1	1.8

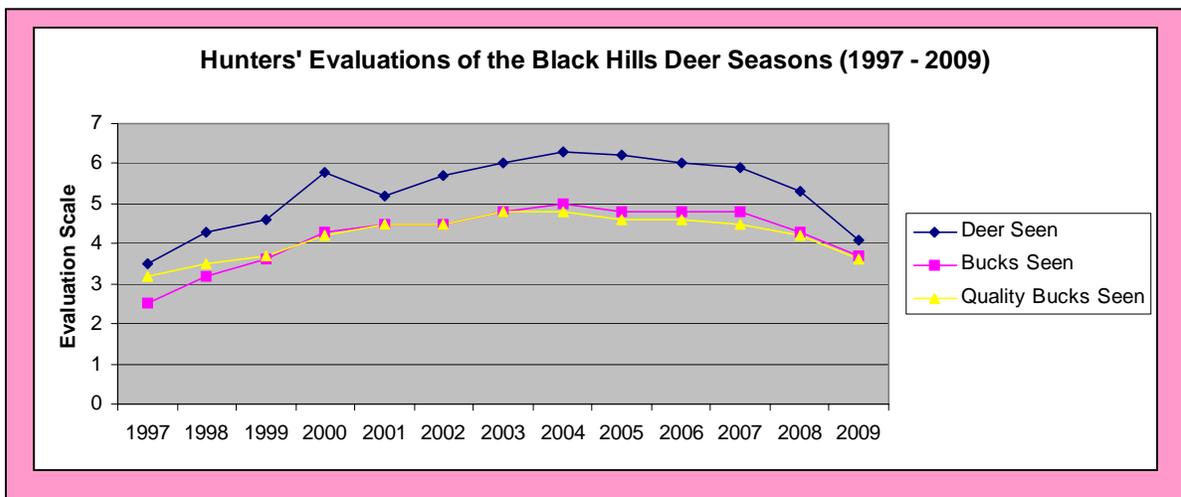


Figure C. Hunter evaluations of the Black Hills deer hunting seasons (1997 – 2009).

