

Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department 2023 Ramsey County Cooperative Deer Management Plan

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, in December of 1999, approved a deer population management plan. Since the approval of the plan, the Ramsey County Parks & Recreation department has implemented an annual deer management program, which includes population evaluations and management. Locations for deer management are set from aerial deer survey, hunter statistic and human-deer interaction data. Management tools can then be chosen to maintain or reduce deer numbers in these areas.

With guidelines provided from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources wildlife management department, the Ramsey County deer population goal is set at 15-20 deer per square mile of deer habitat. Management tools are implemented in areas that exceed this population goal or where the social carrying capacity (deer population level at which people can tolerate or accept the problems associated with a deer herd) is elevated. Deer herd populations that exceed the carrying or social capacity of the land can be detrimental to the overall health of the herd and impact the public through increased auto/deer collisions and the spread of deer ticks that may carry Lyme disease. The 2023 management program was reviewed by the Ramsey County Parks Commission members.

Aerial Deer Survey and Population Estimates

An aerial survey was completed in 2023 and a total of 175 deer were counted in mid-February and early March, which was a decrease since the last survey completed in 2021, when a total of 447 deer were observed. The deer count was lower in 2023 partially due to survey areas being reduced because of decreasing snow cover, which also made for poor visibility in areas that were surveyed. A 12-inch snowpack is ideal to be able to see the deer well. There was a good snowpack in early February, but by the time the helicopter was available for us to survey, during mid-February, the snowpack was melting and survey visibility was so poor in certain locations that a re-survey was prompted in early March, following another large snowstorm. However, by the time we were able to coordinate another flight, the snow from this most recent storm started to again melt away rapidly and the conditions were fair to poor in certain areas. Survey conditions and locations are taken into consideration when making management decisions. An aerial survey was not completed in 2022 because of poor weather and lack of snowpack needed to properly see the deer on the ground. (See Attachment 1 for the 2023 aerial survey map)

Annual Archery Program

Annual archery hunts are held at select Ramsey County operated park locations, in conjunction with neighboring municipalities to maintain or reduce the deer population. Several other agencies and municipalities are conducting or planning deer management programs within their jurisdiction, in addition to the management programs on county property. These include the Arden Hills Army Training Site, H.B. Fuller and the cities of Little Canada, Maplewood, North Oaks, Shoreview, Saint Paul and Roseville. The cities of Gem Lake, Vadnais Heights and White Bear Township still allow archery hunting on private property under certain city criteria.

The Ramsey County Parks & Recreation department, in cooperation with the associated municipalities, is proposing to conduct special archery hunts on 7 county properties in the fall of 2023. This year Ramsey County Parks, in coordination with Ramsey County Property Management, is expanding the Battle Creek Park hunt to include Boy's Totem Town. (See Attachment 2 – 2023 hunt information)

The program will be conducted using special archery hunts during the regular State of Minnesota archery season. Participants will be selected through the Metro Bowhunters Resource Base (MBRB), a non-profit organization who coordinates volunteer archers from the public. Hunts will be restricted to dates established by the Ramsey County Parks & Recreation department. Archers will be allowed to keep the deer shot during the regular season. These hunts are expected to remove approximately 30 - 50 deer. A total of 61 deer were harvested during the 2022 season. Attachment 3 includes the 2022 hunt summary and harvest statistics. Given the decrease in estimated deer population in select areas, several hunts will have a reduced number of hunters this season and hunts will not occur at Bald Eagle-Otter Lakes Regional Park.

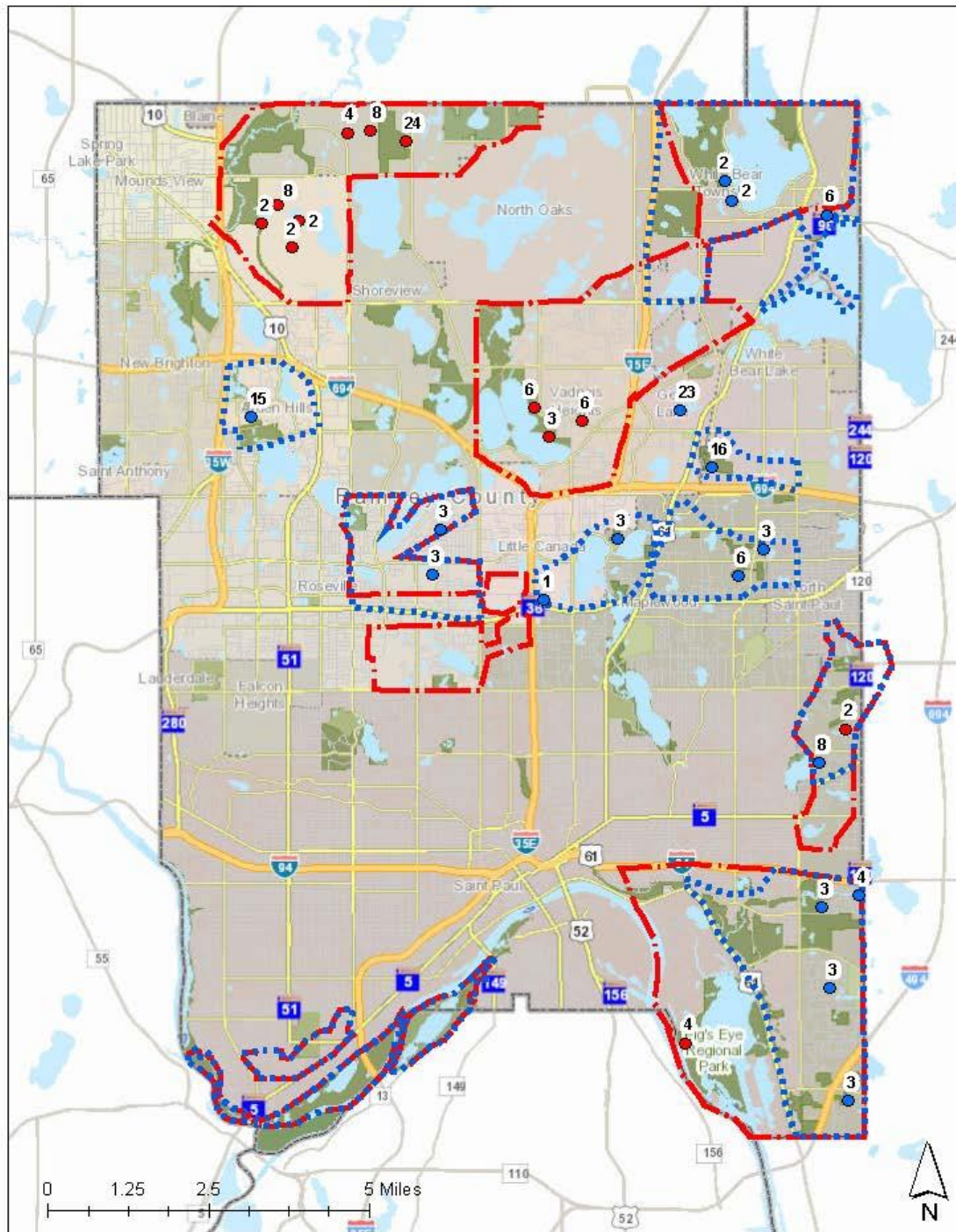
Sharp Shooting Program

Firearm sharpshooting can be used to quickly reduce numbers to a safe level in areas where the deer herd has far exceeded the population goal. The Ramsey County Parks & Recreation department first used sharpshooting in 2005 as a deer reduction option in conjunction within the cities of Maplewood and St. Paul. In 2014, 2015, and 2016 the Ramsey County Parks & Recreation department aided the City of Maplewood with coordinating sharpshooting on city and county land in northern sections of Maplewood. In 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 the City of Maplewood, City of Saint Paul and Ramsey County Parks & Recreation department coordinated with the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Wildlife Services for the removal of deer through sharp shooting within southeastern Ramsey County. The total deer removed through sharp shooting and general locations is listed in the table below:

Location	City	2005	2014	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Highwood Ave area	St. Paul / Maplewood	200			64	33	22	14	50	20
Larpenteur / Century area	Maplewood		120	75						
	Annual totals	200	120	75	64	33	22	14	50	20
	Permitted take / Goal	200	120	75	100	75	75	50	50	50

In 2022, 20 deer were removed, successfully reducing the deer population within the Highwood Ave area. The Ramsey County Parks & Recreation department, in cooperation with the affected municipalities, is proposing to allow sharpshooting on county land for the winter of 2023/2024 in select areas where the number of deer exceed the social or carrying capacity of the land, which is usually elevated at 3 to 10 times the population goal of 15-20 deer per square mile of deer habitat. At this time there are no areas that fit these criteria.

Attachment 1
2022 Aerial Deer Survey Map



- Deer counted mid Feb., 71 deer total
- Deer counted early March, 104 deer total
- Survey Area early March
- Survey Area Mid Feb

Ramsey County Deer Survey 2023

Conditions were poor during the mid-February survey, which prompted the re-survey of certain areas in early March. The early March conditions were fair to poor in certain areas. Survey conditions should be taken into consideration when making management decisions.

Attachment 2

Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department Ramsey County Cooperative Deer Management Archery Program (Fall 2023)*

Site	max # of hunters	expected harvest
(Fri-Sun)		
Poplar Lake	8	4-8
Pig's Eye	18	8-10
Fish Creek	12	6-8
Turtle Creek	10	4-6
(Mon-Wed)		
Battle Creek & Boys Totem Town	15	7-10
Vadnais	20	10-12
Rice Creek North Trail	7	4 - 6

*Non-Ramsey Sites***

St. Paul

(Mon-Wed)

Highland	4	2-4
Crosby	10	2-5

* All sites will have two 3-day hunts during October, November or December.
They will be Fri-Sun or Mon-Wed.

** These hunts are held on city owned property and approved by their city councils. Ramsey County Parks assists in the hunter management and coordination.

Attachment 3

**Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department
2022 Special Archery Deer Hunt Summary**

Archery Hunts

Ramsey County Parks and Recreation department’s 23rd annual special permit archery hunt, in conjunction with St. Paul, Maplewood, Little Canada, Vadnais Heights, Shoreview, and White Bear Township, was a safe and successful season. There were multiple 3-day hunts in October, November, and December within 7 Ramsey County sites. Ramsey County assisted with the hunt coordination on four non-Ramsey County sites, which included the Priory Park in Maplewood, Crosby Park and Highland Park in St. Paul, land north of Little Pig’s Eye Lake owned by the MN DNR and City of St. Paul.

A total of 61 deer were harvested in 2022, compared to 50 in 2021. The 2022 deer harvest included: 27 adult doe, 4 fawn doe, 25 adult bucks, and 5 fawn bucks (see attached table). The antlerless harvest rate was 61% in 2022, which is a 1% increase from 2021. The overall success rate for the special archery hunts was 51% in Ramsey County; state average for archery is 25%.

Minnesota Bowhunters Resource Base (MBRB) provided 118 archers, not including hunt coordinators. No safety problems were reported during any of the hunts. Some park users continued to use the park trails during the hunts, even with “park closed” signage. This is an annual occurrence and archers have adapted to the potential of having park patrons in the hunt areas.

2022 HARVEST STATS

<i>Ramsey County Sites</i>	Adult Doe	Fawn Doe	Adult Buck	Fawn Buck	Site Total
Battle Creek	4	2	4	0	10
Vadnais Lake	2	1	5	2	10
Rice Creek	2	0	1	1	4
Poplar Lake	4	0	2	0	6
Fish Creek	6	0	6	0	12
Pig’s Eye	3	0	4	1	8
Turtle Creek	1	0	1	1	3

TOTALS 22 3 23 5 53

Non-Ramsey County Park Hunts

Crosby & Highland	3	0	0	0	3
MN DNR	1	1	0	0	2
Priory	2	0	2	0	4

TOTALS 6 1 2 0 9

TOTAL 62