

Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department 2026 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 2026 management program was reviewed by the Ramsey County Parks Commission members.

Aerial Deer Survey and Population Estimates

An aerial survey was completed in early 2026 in select areas. Minimal snowpack did not allow for a complete survey across the county. A 12-inch snowpack is ideal for being able to see the deer well. In areas that were surveyed, 296 deer were counted in March 2026, with good visibility. The last survey within these areas was conducted in 2023 under poor visibility conditions, which resulted in a total of 69 deer surveyed. (See Attachment 1 for the 2026 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 9 county properties in the fall of 2026. Ramsey County Parks, in coordination with Ramsey County Property Management, has expanded the Battle Creek Park hunt to include Boy's Totem Town for the fourth year. (See Attachment 2 – 2026 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 51 - 74 deer. A total of 63 deer were harvested during the 2025 season. Attachment 3 includes the 2025 hunt summary and harvest statistics.

Sharp Shooting Program

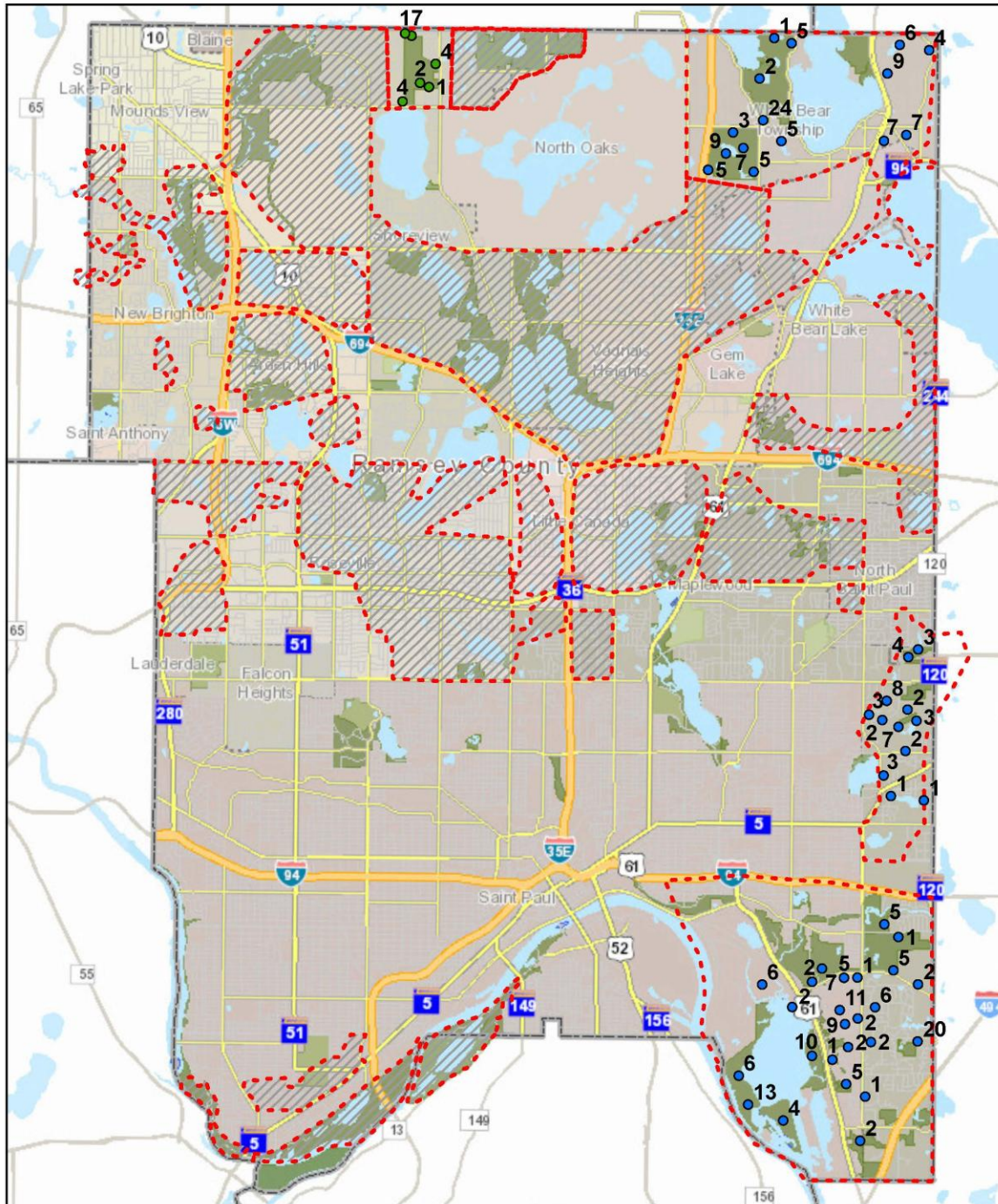
Firearm sharpshooting can be used to quickly reduce numbers to a safe level in areas where the deer herd has far exceeded the population goal. The Ramsey County Parks & Recreation department first used sharpshooting in 2005 as a deer reduction option in conjunction within the cities of Maplewood and 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. Annually, since 2017, 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	Location	City	2005	2014	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Highwood area	Highwood Ave area	St. Paul / Maplewood	200			64	33	22	14	50	20	30	29	28
Northern section of Maplewood	Larpenteur / Century area	Maplewood		120	75									
Annual total		Annual totals	200	120	75	64	33	22	14	50	20	30	29	28
		Permitted take / Goal	200	120	75	100	75	75	50	50	50	50	50	50

In 2025, 28 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 2026/2027 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.

Attachment 1
2026 Aerial Deer Survey Map

Ramsey County Deer Survey 2026



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|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| ● 28 Drone Surveyed Deer | ▨ Areas Not Surveyed in 2026 |
| ● 268 Aerial Surveyed Deer | ▨ Survey Areas 2026 |

0 0.75 1.5 3 Miles

Attachment 2

Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department Ramsey County Cooperative Deer Management Archery Program (Fall 2026)*

Site	max # of hunters	expected harvest
(Fri-Sun)		
Otter Lake	9	4 - 8
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
Tamarack Nature Center	8	4 - 6
Vadnais	20	10-12
Rice Creek North Trail	7	4 - 6

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

Attachment 3

Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department 2025 Special Archery Deer Hunt Summary

Archery Hunts

Ramsey County Parks and Recreation department's 26th 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.

A total of 63 deer were harvested in 2025, compared to 57 in 2024. The 2025 deer harvest included: 21 adult doe, 6 fawn doe, 28 adult bucks, and 8 fawn bucks (see attached table). The antlerless harvest rate was 56% in 2025, which was the same in 2024. The overall success rate for the special archery hunts was 70% in Ramsey County; state average for archery is 25%.

Minnesota Bowhunters Resource Base (MBRB) provided 90 archers, not including hunt coordinators. No safety problems were reported during any of the hunts. The second season of the Turtle Creek hunt was cancelled in 2025 due to inclement weather. 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.

2025 HARVEST STATS

<i>Ramsey County Sites</i>	Adult Doe	Fawn Doe	Adult Buck	Fawn Buck	Site Total
Battle Creek	6	0	6	2	14
Vadnais Lake	2	2	8	3	15
Rice Creek	1	0	2	0	3
Poplar Lake	4	0	3	0	7
Fish Creek	4	0	3	0	7
Pig's Eye	4	4	6	3	17
Turtle Creek	0	0	0	0	0

<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>63</u>
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