



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Results of 2012 Hunting Survey

PATTY RITCHIE March 8, 2012

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Here are the highlights from my 2012 Hunter's Survey. I created the survey in the wake of a new DEC report that showed a continued decline in the number of deer harvested by hunters in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties, and asked your suggestions to improve the hunting experience.

I appreciate your feedback and the information that you provided, which I will be sure to share with my fellow Senators as issues arise relating to outdoor recreation and hunting.

Slightly fewer than half of the 210 respondents reported a "successful" hunting season in 2011, which may help explain the reduced numbers of deer harvested in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties (Oswego saw continued increases in deer harvested.)

Most respondents said they prefer to hunt with a rifle or shotgun. There were a few who reported muzzleloaders and bows as their preferred tools.

Half of respondents said they hunt alone, while 31 percent said they belong to a hunting club, and the rest hunt with family and friends.

And half of the hunters in my survey say they use land that they personally own as their hunting grounds. I asked a question about the new crossbow law, and whether it should be extended beyond the Dec. 31 expiration date. Three-quarters of respondents said they would support an extension of the law.

I asked for your comments and suggestions about ways to improve the hunting experience. A surprising number of you urged a reduction or even elimination of doe permits, with several commenting that this move alone would help boost the number and quality of bucks that were available to harvest.

More than a few raised problems with coyotes. I especially liked the idea of a youth hunting weekend. I will continue to review your comments and suggestions with an eye toward possible legislation in the future.