



2020-21 Deer Harvest Summary Simms Creek Wildlife Management Association Mills and Lampasas Counties

This report provides a deer harvest summary for the 2020-21 hunting season and discusses overall trends since the inception of the association in 2001. Trends and averages in this report are derived from association member-collected deer age and antler data. Fifteen members provided deer harvest information on a total of 12,520 acres. WMA members and leadership were adaptive and dedicated to reporting thorough harvest data during these continued challenging times during the pandemic.

Harvest Trends

- The (maximum) recommended buck harvest for the 2020-21 hunting season was 1 buck per 71 acres. The actual harvest of antlered bucks (1 buck per 129 acres) was far below the recommended harvest rate.
- 97 antlered bucks were reported in the harvest. Of these, 24.7% were spikes, 16.5% had 3-7 points, and 58.8% had 8+ points. Bulk of the buck harvest was among 8+ point bucks, with a significant increase in spikes harvested. (**Figure 1**).
- There is an increasing antlerless deer harvest trend since 2001 (**Figure 2**). The recommended doe harvest rate for 2019-20 was 1 doe per 23 acres. The actual harvest rate was 1 antlerless deer per 71 acres, which represents an increase in doe harvest compared to the 2019-20 hunting season (98 acres/antlerless deer).
- The ratio of antlerless deer to adult bucks (1.81 to 1) in the harvest was consistent with the previous two years of harvest and continues to fall short of the recommended harvest of 3 does for every buck.

Simms Creek WMA Buck harvest objectives:

- 1) Selectively harvest bucks that are approaching or have reached maturity, at least 4 ½ years old
- 2) Remove bucks that display inferior antler characteristics compared to other bucks in the same age class. This has included a management strategy that allows the removal of spikes and 3 ½ year-olds with 7 or fewer points.

Age and Antler Information

- Raw harvest data, including age and antler data and jawbones were provided by 14 of the 15 properties that reported a harvested deer. In other words, I received harvest summaries from 15 properties, but only received jawbone ages from 14 properties. Jawbone aging was business as usual, conducted during the spring meeting.
- Ages were available for 275 of the 293 harvested deer that were reported.

Bucks

There were antler data and verified ages for 97 antlered bucks (**Table 1**). Of the 97 antlered bucks, 58.7% (57 of 97) were management bucks or were considered mature/approaching maturity, and therefore met the harvest criteria of the association. Conversely, 41% (40 of 97) of the bucks should not have been harvested because they were immature and had good antler characteristics for their age. This represents an increase in the “mistake rate” compared to the previous hunting season (34%).

- 19.6% (19 of 97) of the known-age, antlered bucks were **1.5 years old**. Thirteen out of nineteen were spike-antlered bucks or had at least one un-branched antler and were considered management bucks under the current harvest strategy.
- 14.4% (14 of 97) of the known-age bucks were **2.5 years old**. One was spike-antlered or had at least one un-branched antler and was considered eligible under the current harvest strategy. The remaining should not have been harvested.
- 18.6% (19 of 97) of the known-age bucks were **3.5 years old**. One buck met the harvest strategy criteria. 18 had ≥ 8 antler points and should not have been harvested under the current harvest strategy.
- 17.5% (17 of 97) of the known-age bucks were **4.5 years old**. All were considered mature or approaching maturity under the current harvest strategy. 22.7% (22 of 97) of the known-aged bucks were **5.5-7.5-years old**. Peak antler development usually occurs at 6.5 years of age.

There are minor increasing trends for basal circumference, average main beam length, and average number of antler points among 4.5-year-old bucks harvested, however average inside spread showed a slight decrease in the harvest (**Figure 3**).

Does

- Ages were verified for 178 of the 184 harvested does.
- An increasing age of the doe population, as measured through harvest data, could be indicative of an under-harvest. Conversely, a decreasing age could be indicative of a heavier harvest, to the point of over-harvest if the population is too heavily weighted with younger-aged (≤ 2.5 years) does.
- Approximately 53.4% of the harvested does in 2020-21 were ≤ 2.5 years old and 46.6 were ≥ 3.5 years old which is indicative of a slightly younger doe population as seen in the harvest.

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Figure 1. Simms Creek WMA Buck Harvest

Max. rec. harvest 2020 = 1 buck / 71 ac.; Actual = 1 buck / 129 ac.

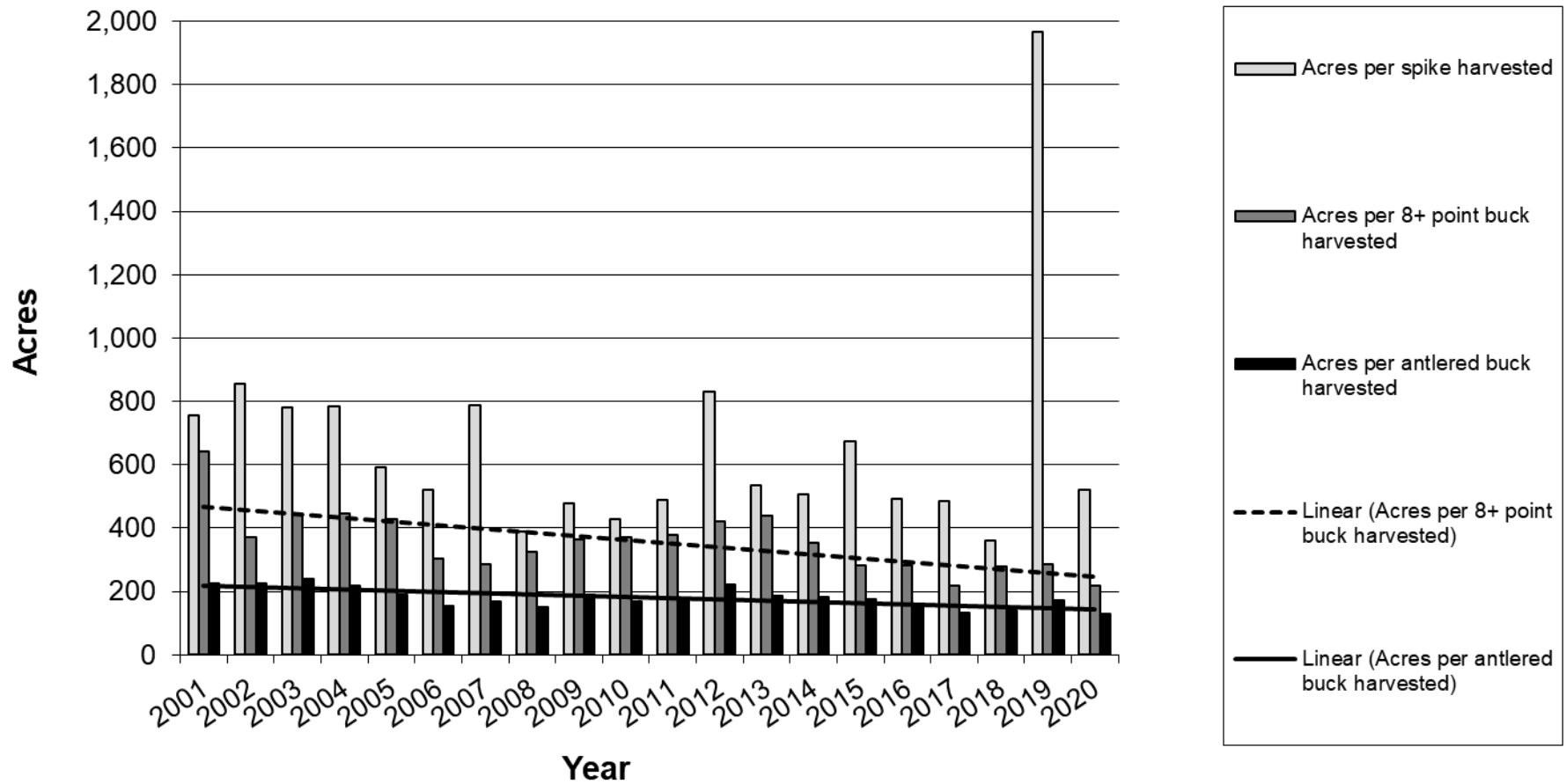
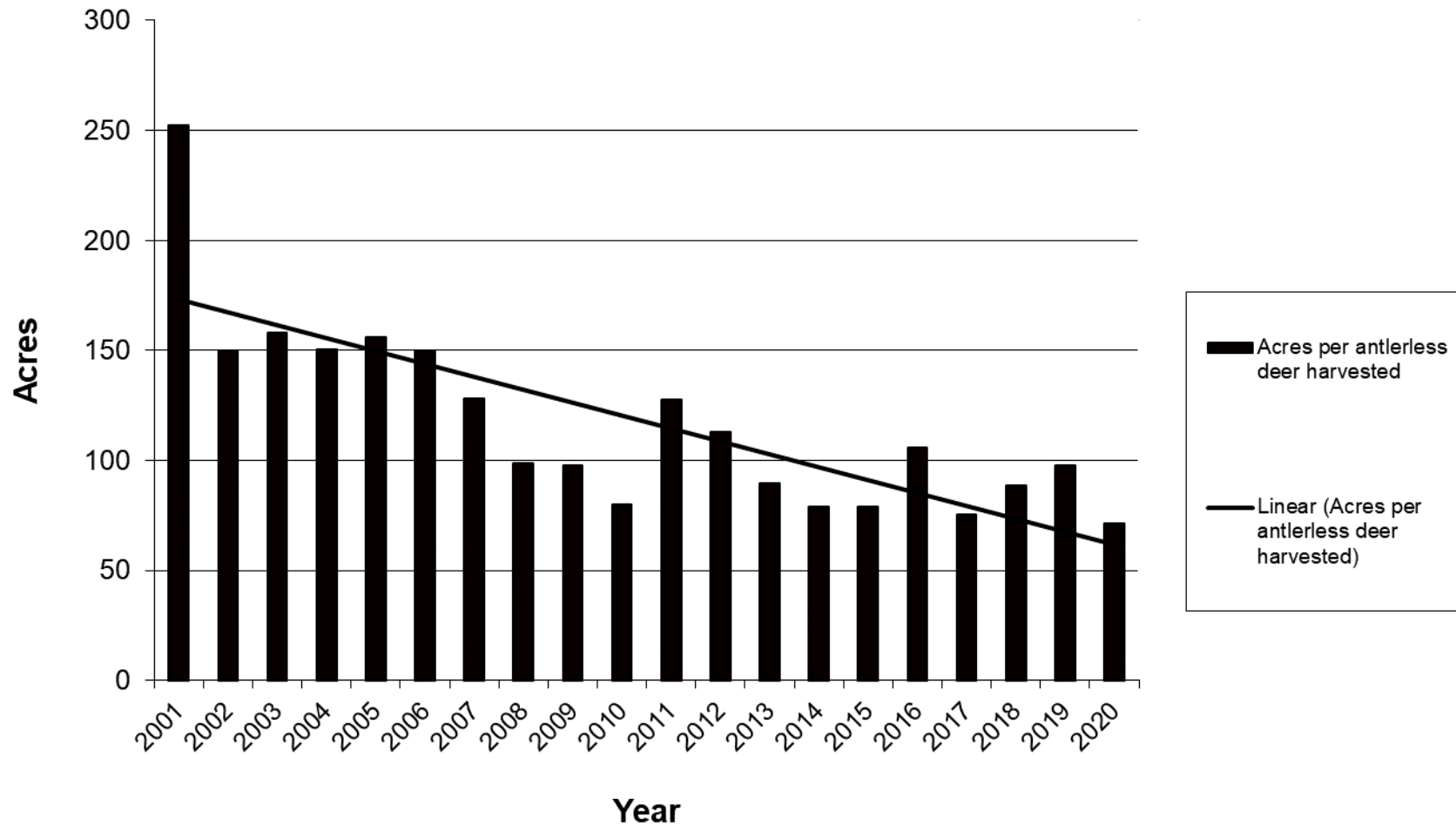


Figure 2. Simms Creek WMA 2020 Antlerless Harvest

(Rec. harvest = 1 antlerless / 23 ac. Actual = 1 / 71 ac.)



Simms Creek WMA - 2020-21 Hunting Season
Table 1. Annual Summary - Age, Weight, Antler, Sex Data

Age	Males Killed	% of Kill	Number Spikes Killed	Weight		Points		Inside Spread		Beam Circumference		Beam Length		Females Killed	% of Kill	Weight		Total Harvest	% of Total Harvest
				N	Ave	N	Ave	N	Ave*	N	Ave*	N	Ave*			N	Ave		
0.5	7	7.2%	0	7	58	2	3.0	2	8.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	22	12.4%	21	41	29	10.5%
1.5	19	19.6%	11	18	70	15	2.4	7	7.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	34	19.1%	32	62	53	19.3%
2.5	14	14.4%	2	12	120	14	7.2	10	16.3	1	3.5	1	19.1	39	21.9%	38	67	53	19.3%
3.5	18	18.6%	0	16	117	16	8.5	12	15.3	3	3.6	3	18.3	34	19.1%	29	68	52	18.9%
4.5	17	17.5%	0	16	114	16	8.9	13	15.2	5	3.7	4	18.5	23	12.9%	19	75	40	14.5%
5.5	19	19.6%	1	18	126	18	8.3	16	15.8	4	3.6	4	18.5	15	8.4%	14	70	34	12.4%
6.5	2	2.1%	0	1	134	2	7.5	1	13.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	4.5%	7	76	10	3.6%
7.5	1	1.0%	0	1	118	1	11.0	1	17.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	1.7%	3	76	4	1.5%
8.5+	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0.0%
COMB	97	100.0%	14	82	109	82	7.2	60	14.6	13	3.6	12	18.5	178	100.0%	142	68	275	100.0%

*Inches

Comments: Fawns were not used in calculating combined averages.

Verified age data were available from 97 of the 110 antlered bucks reported in the total harvest

Verified age data were available from 178 of the 184 females reported in the total harvest

Deer of unknown age were not used in the calculations.

Figure 3. Antler measurement trends for 4.5 year-old buck

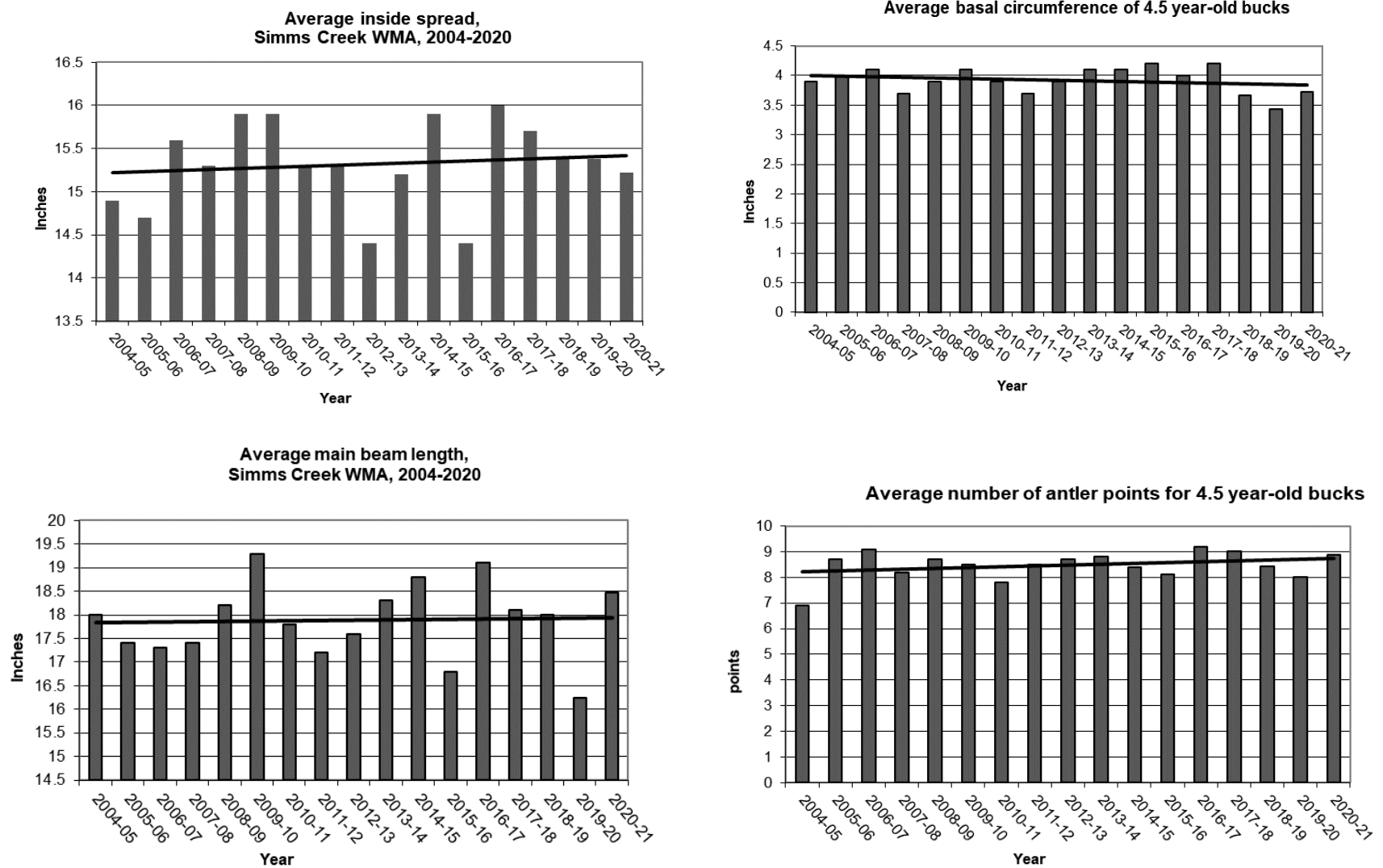


Figure 4. Average field-dressed weights, Simms Creek WMA 2020-2021

Sex and age class	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2018-19	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	AVG
1.5 year-old bucks	68	69	67	71	69	67	68	68	73	72	73	72	70	75	73	67	70	70
4.5 year-old bucks	104	94	106	113	111	114	112	110	112	116	116	114	116	118	109	110	114	112
1.5 year-old females	63	60	58	69	64	63	59	61	67	66	66	59	64	63	63	52	62	62

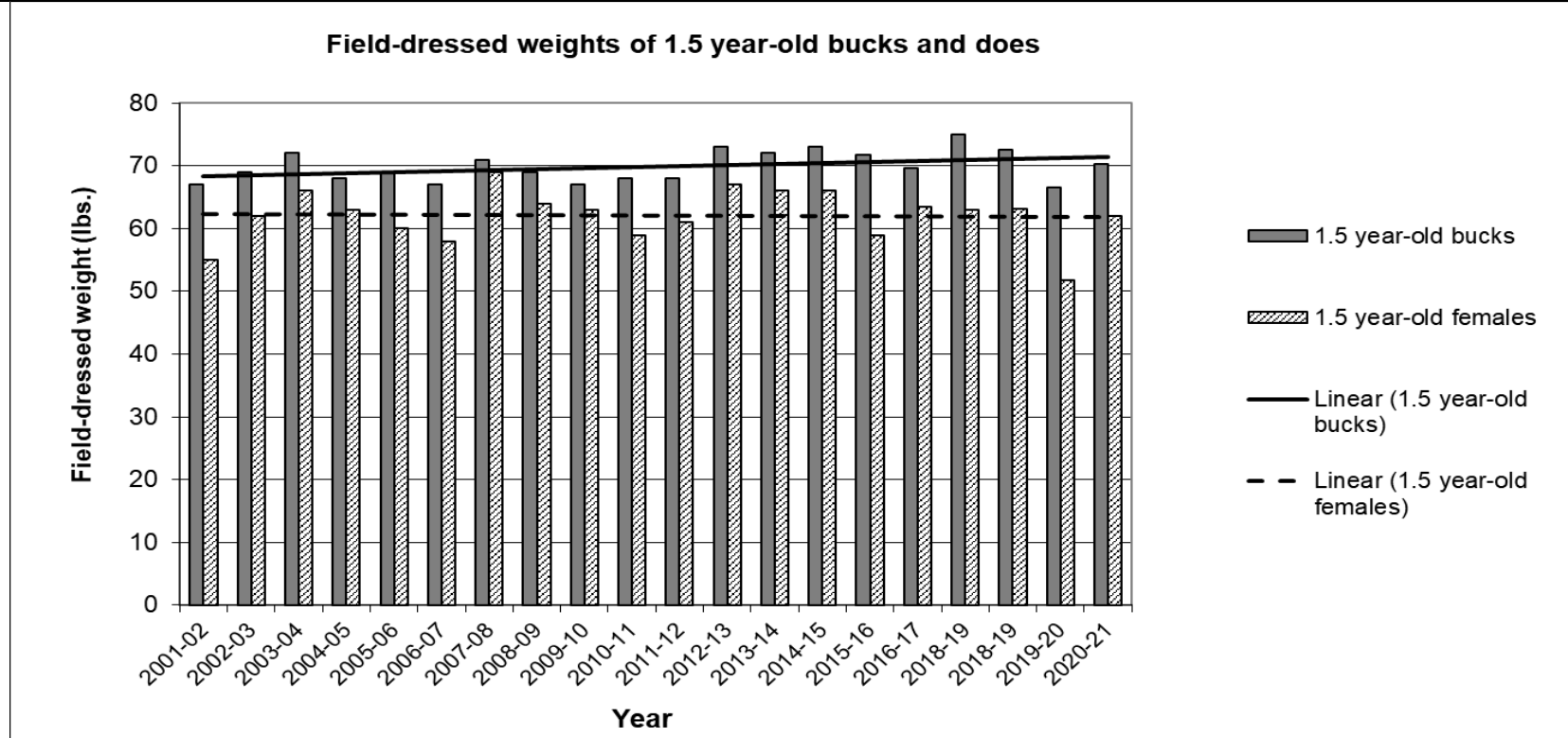


Figure 5. Feral Hog Harvest Trends, Simms Creek WMA 2001-2020

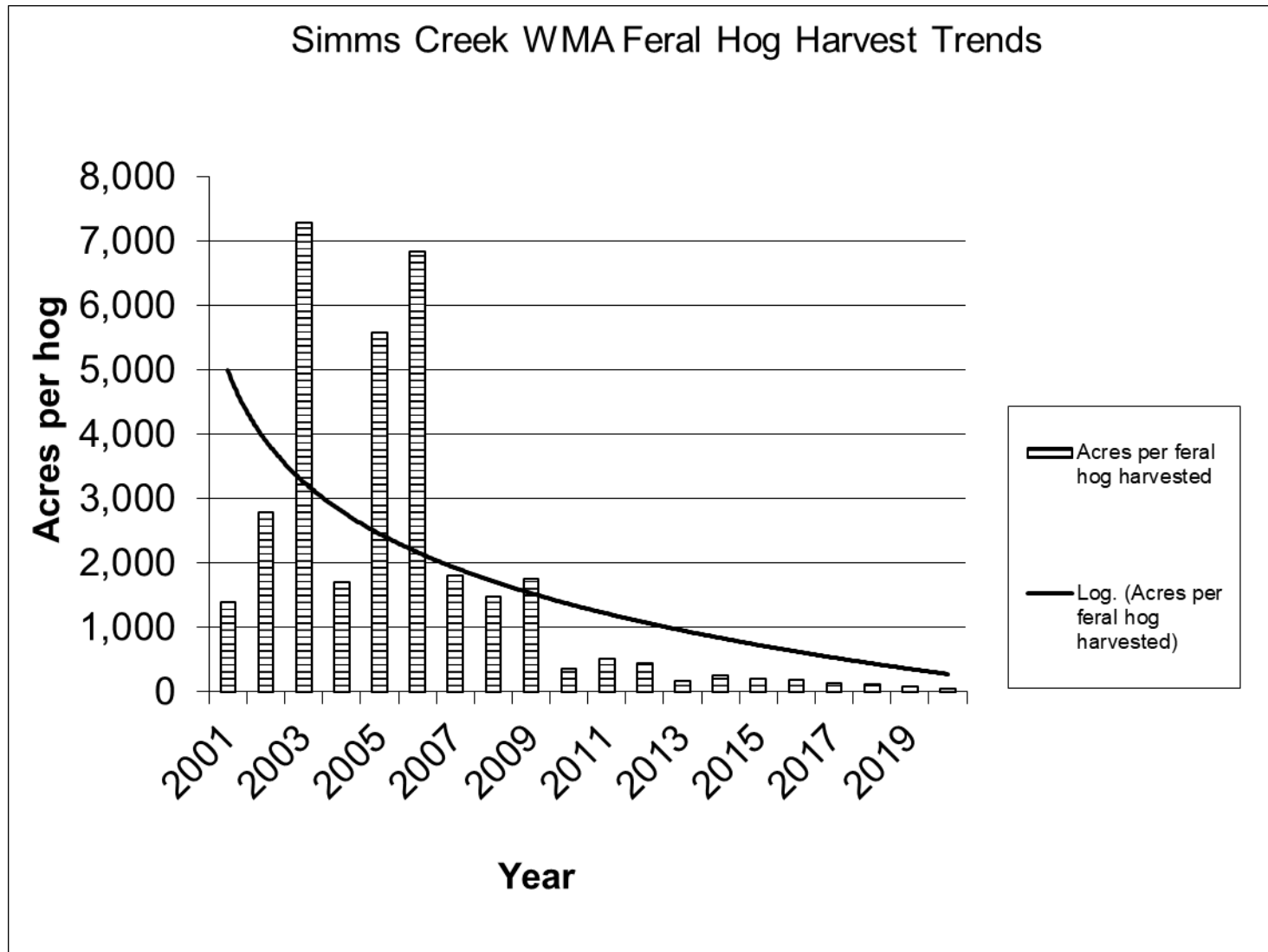


Figure 5. Age structure within 2020-2021 Simms Creek WMA Harvest

