

# DMU 452

## Northern Multi-County Deer Management Unit

### Area Description

The Core TB Zone Deer Management Unit is in the Northern Lower Peninsula Region (NLP) and covers portions of Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, and Oscoda Counties. It is approximately 570 square miles of which about 7% of the total acreage is public land. The remainder of land is in private ownership. Topography varies from rolling hills to areas that are relatively flat. Soil types range from sandy types that are well drained to poorly drained muck. The landscape consists primarily of large private hunt clubs managed for deer hunting with interspersed agricultural lands and blocks of public land, especially in the eastern part of the unit. The large hunt clubs are dominated by forest land and provide excellent habitat for deer. Some forested habitat has been negatively impacted by high deer numbers and historic use for cattle pasture. The agricultural lands are used for pasture and row crops.

### Management Guidance

One goal guides the deer management in this DMU: bovine tuberculosis (bTB) eradication. Tuberculosis surveillance in deer continues to be an important activity in this unit, which is the core bovine tuberculosis (bTB) area where 78% of the bTB positive deer in Michigan have been found (Figure 1). Because there has been little change in bTB prevalence in deer in recent years (Figure 2), it will be important to maintain a management program that keeps deer numbers low to minimize bTB transmission with the ultimate goal of eradication. Enforcement of the ban on baiting and feeding should continue, as high deer concentrations caused by these activities increase bTB transmission. Sustained antlerless harvest should occur to keep deer populations from expanding. Deer populations and densities that can occur in this DMU increase bTB transmission and antlerless harvest reduces the risk of transmission by lowering deer populations and densities. Other tools aimed at increasing deer harvest include an early and late antlerless deer season as well as liberal use of Disease Control Permits, Deer Damage Permits and Deer Management Assistance Permits in the DMU.

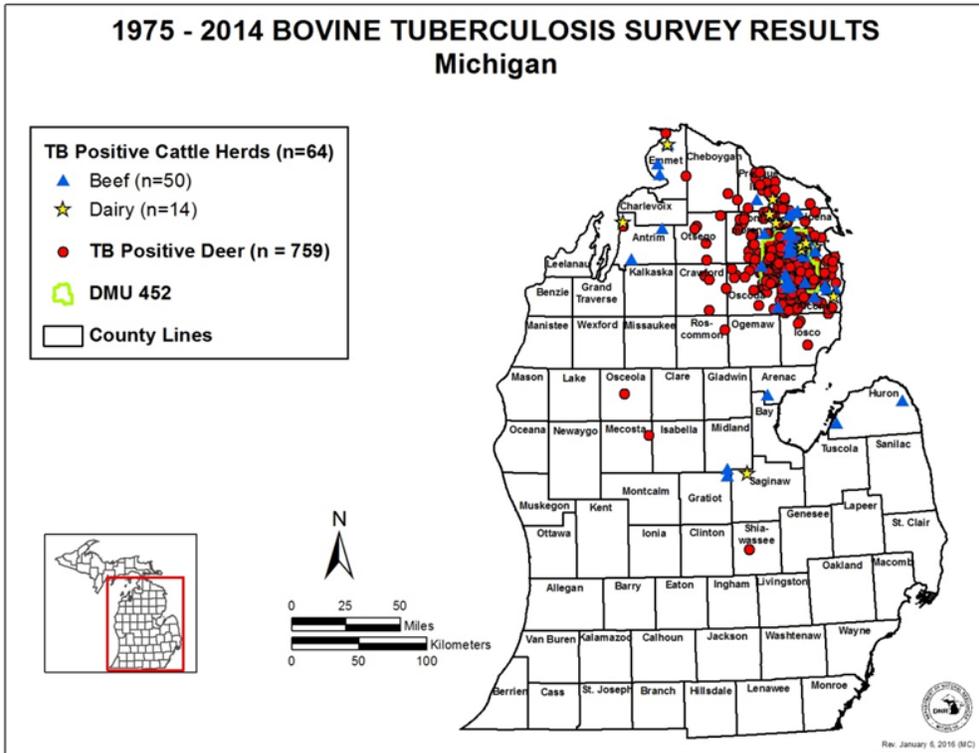


Figure 1. Bovine Tuberculosis survey results in Michigan.

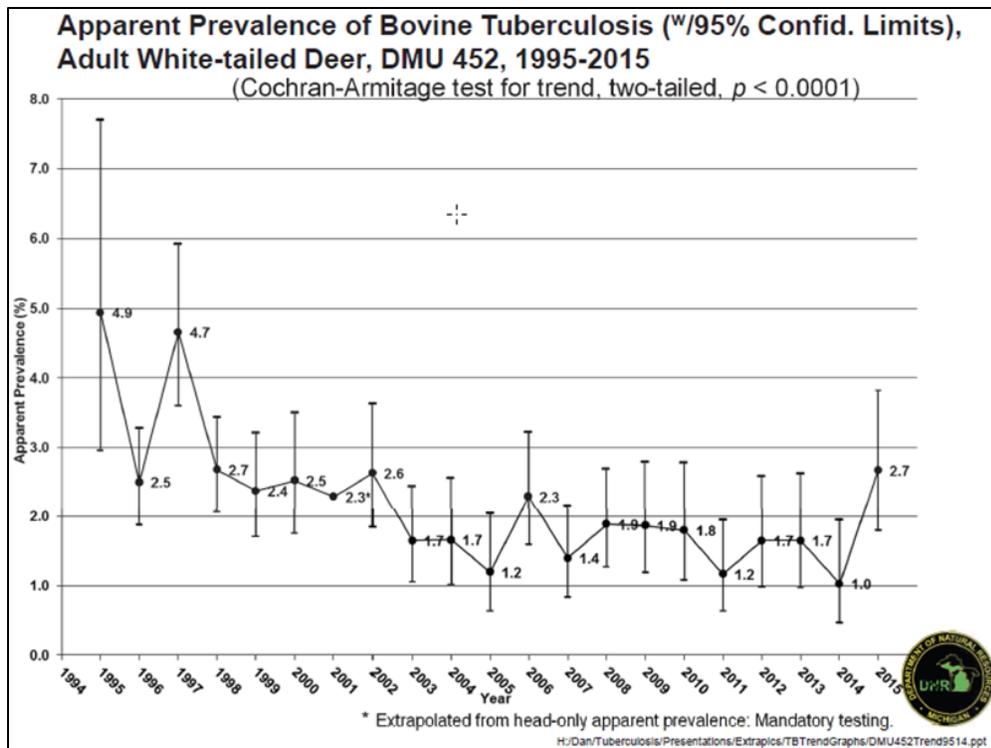


Figure 2. Bovine Tuberculosis prevalence in deer within DMU 452

## Population Assessment Factors

### Deer Harvest Analysis

Recreational antlerless deer harvest has exceeded or met antlered deer (buck) harvest since 2010 although in recent years, antlerless harvest has dropped below buck harvest (Figure 3). Regardless of the recent decline, the harvest trend shows a general willingness among hunters to take antlerless deer. Liberalized antlerless regulations since 2010 (e.g., antlerless deer are legal to take on any kill tag in the DMU) seem to have less of an impact in this DMU than surrounding Units. Regardless, this regulation should continue as an additional tool encouraging hunters to take antlerless deer. As discussed above, increased antlerless harvest reduces deer populations and densities, thereby reducing the potential for bTB transmission.

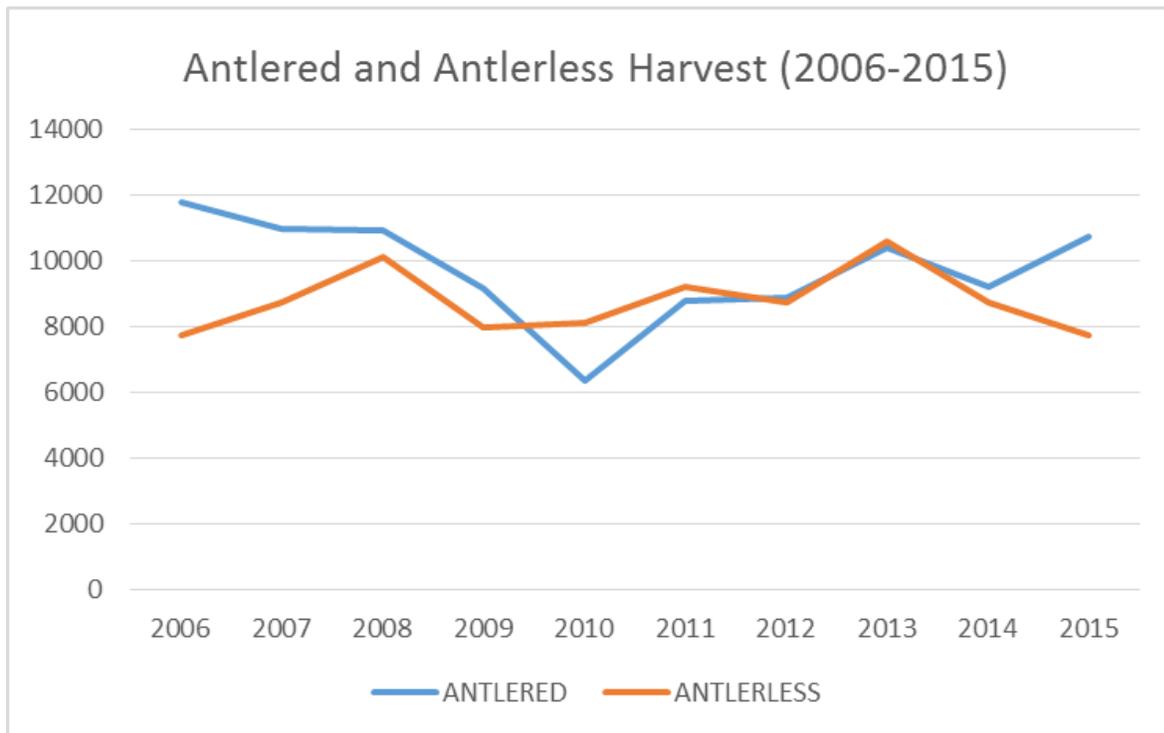


Figure 3. Recreational antlerless and antlered deer harvest in DMU 452.

### Disease Control Permits

In 2008 the DNR increased the number of Disease Control Permits (DCPs) available to farmers and landowners near bTB infected farms in an effort to reduce deer and cattle interactions. Over the following years, participation in the program has varied. Regardless of availability, the number of deer taken on DCPs has remained at a low level compared with the number of tags available to fill, and has little to no lasting impact on the size of the overall herd. The success in this program is that cattle farmers are provided with a tool to address deer coming in with cattle or cattle feed sources, thereby reducing their risk of contracting bTB. This program should continue to be available to farmers that desire to protect their cattle in this manner.

## Deer Management Recommendations

In the ongoing effort to control bTB in deer, and given that DMU 452 is a multi-county DMU created to address bTB in the NLP, it is recommended that public and private land antlerless availability remain liberal in this DMU. Encouraging the harvest of deer in this unit remains very important for bTB management. This means offering effectively unlimited antlerless licenses, maintaining a feeding and baiting ban, and offering DCPs to those willing to use them. A late and early antlerless season on private land should also be maintained to provide additional opportunity to harvest antlerless deer.

# Deer Management Unit 452



## Legend

Deer Management Units Polys Edit	Open Water	Hay/Pasture
Highway	Developed	Cultivated Crops
Cities	Forested	Wetlands
	Herbaceous	

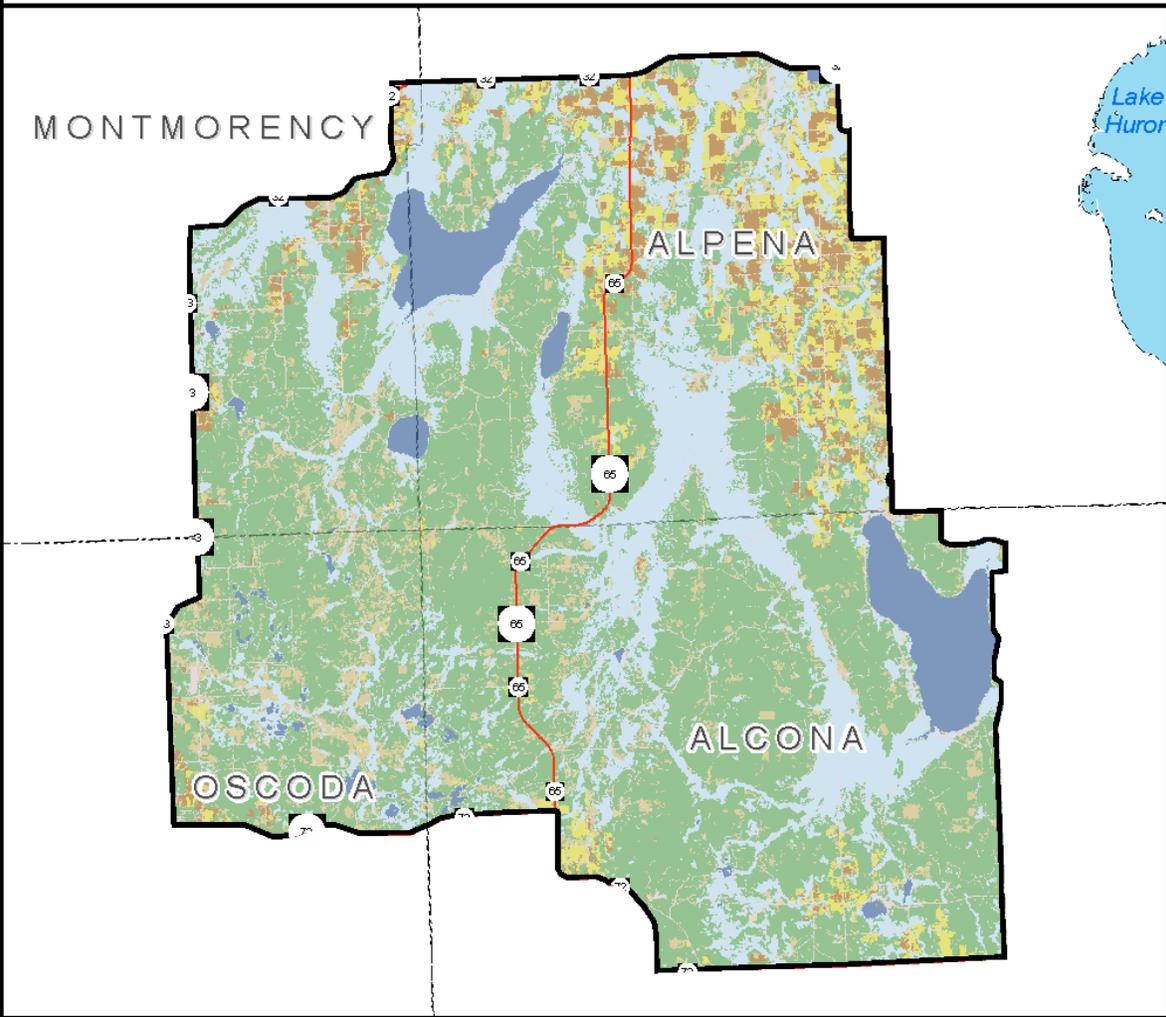


Figure 4 DMU 452 Cover Type