2024 - 2025 Deer Harvest Summary
Simms Creek Wildlife Management Association
Mills and Lampasas Counties

This report provides a deer harvest summary for the 2024 - 2025 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. 14 members provided deer harvest information on a total of 15,490 acres.

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-old with 7 or fewer points.

Harvest Trends

- The (maximum) recommended buck harvest for the 2024-25 hunting season was 1 buck per 90 acres. The actual harvest of antlered bucks (1 buck per 225 acres) was far below the recommended harvest rate.

- 69 antlered bucks were reported in the harvest. Of these, 24.6 % were spikes, 5.7 % had 3-7 points, and 69.5 % had 8+ points. Bulk of the buck harvest was among 8+ point bucks. (**Figure 1**).

- There has been an increasing antlerless deer harvest trend since 2001 (**Figure 2**). The recommended doe harvest rate for 2024-25 was 1 doe per 42 acres. The actual harvest rate was 1 antlerless deer per 83 acres, which represents a very small increase in doe harvest compared to the 2023-24 hunting season (88 acres/antlerless deer).

- The ratio of antlerless deer to adult bucks (2.7 to 1) in the harvest has increased from the previous two years of harvest but continues to fall short of the recommended harvest of 3 does for every buck.

Age and Antler Information

- Raw harvest data, including age and antler data and jawbones were provided by all of the properties that reported a harvested deer. Jawbone aging was conducted during the spring meeting.

- Ages were available for 195 of the 256 harvested deer that were reported.

Bucks

There were antler data and verified ages for 55 antlered bucks (**Table 1**). Of the 55 antlered bucks, 40.1 % (22 of 55) were management bucks or were considered mature/approaching maturity and therefore met the harvest criteria of the association. Conversely, 25.4 % (14 of 55) of the bucks should not have been harvested because they were immature and had good antler characteristics for their age. This represents a decrease in the "mistake rate" compared to the previous hunting season (38.4%).

- 16.4 % (9 of 55) of the known-age, antlered bucks were **1.5 years old**. All 9 were spike-antlered bucks or had at least one un-branched antler and were considered managements bucks under the current harvest strategy.

- 1.8 % (1 of 55) of the known-age bucks were **2.5 years old**. It was a spike-antler or had at least one un-branched antler and was considered eligible under the current harvest strategy.

- 29.1 % (16 of 55) of the known-age bucks were **3.5 years old**. Two bucks met the harvest strategy criteria. 14 had ≥ 8 antler points and should not have been harvested under the current harvest strategy.

- 29.1 % (16 of 55) of the known-age bucks were **4.5 years old**. All were considered mature or approaching maturity under the current harvest strategy. 11 % (6 of 55) 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 decreasing trends for average inside spread, average main beam length and average number of antler points among 4.5-year-old bucks harvest. However basal circumference has increased (**Figure 3**).

Does

- Ages were verified for 140 of the 187 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 38.5 % of the harvested does in 2024-25 were ≤ 2.5 years old and 61.5 % were ≥ 3.5 years old. (**Figure**)

Figure 1. Simms Creek WMA Buck Harvest

Max. rec. harvest 2024-25 = 1 buck /90 ac.; Actual = 1 buck / 225 ac.

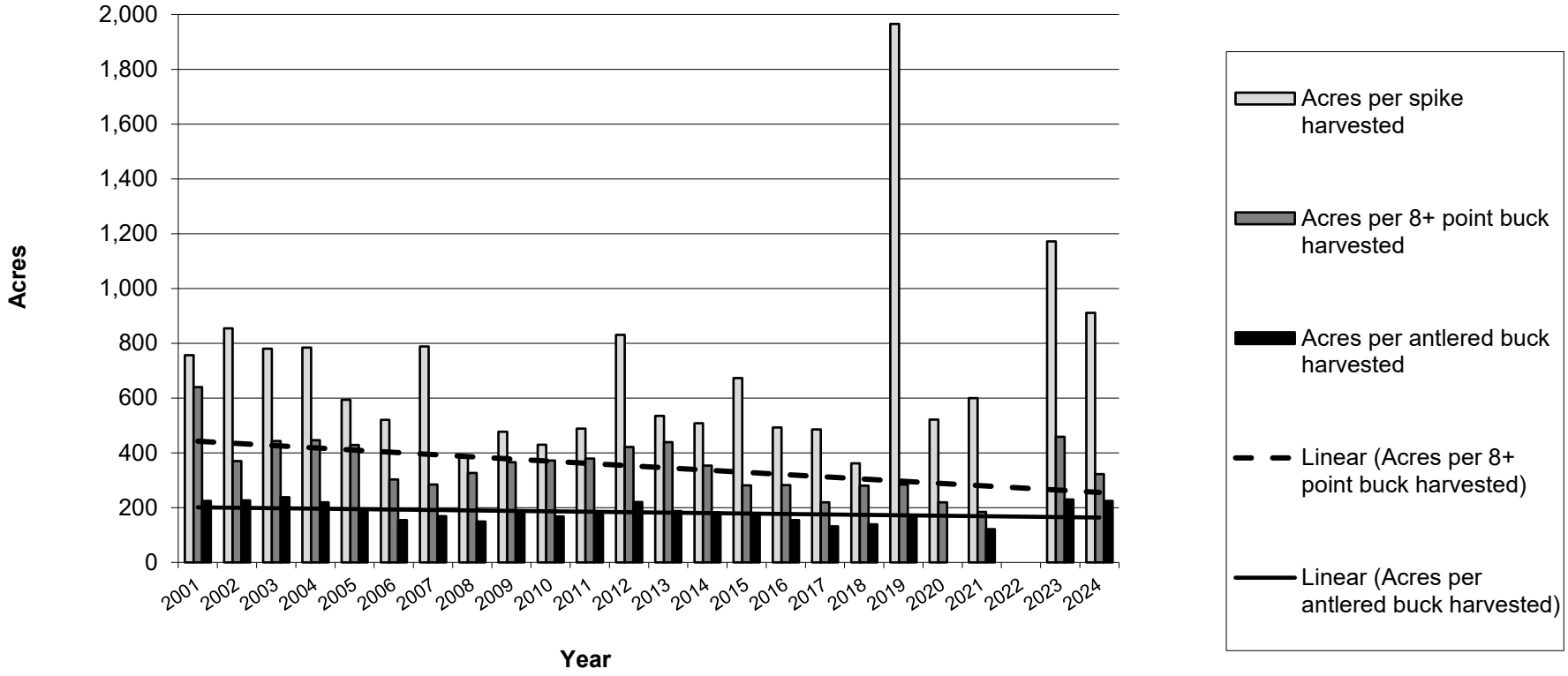


Figure 2. Simms Creek WMA 2024-25 Antlerless Harvest
(Rec. harvest = 1 antlerless / 40 ac. Actual = 1 / 82 ac.)

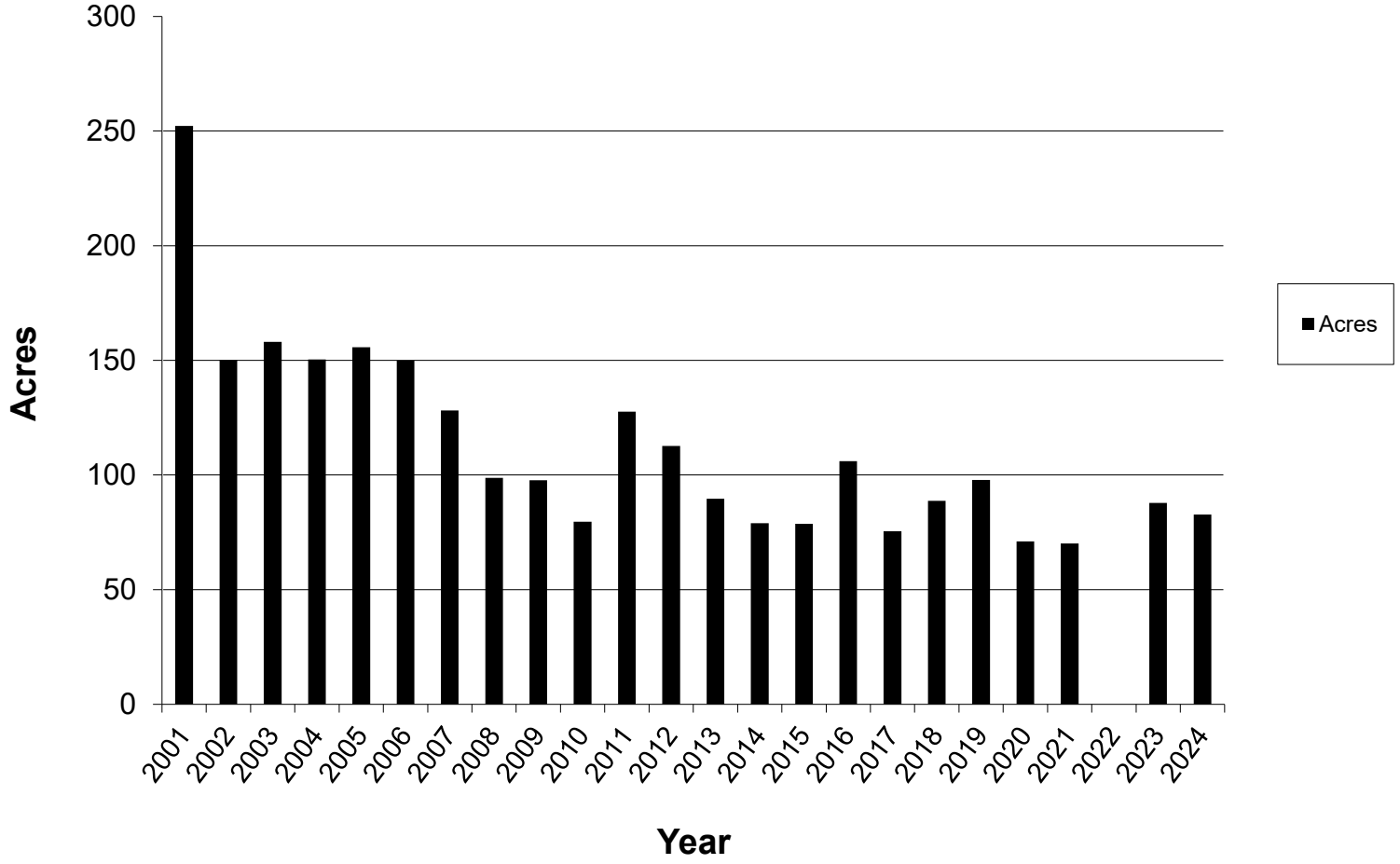
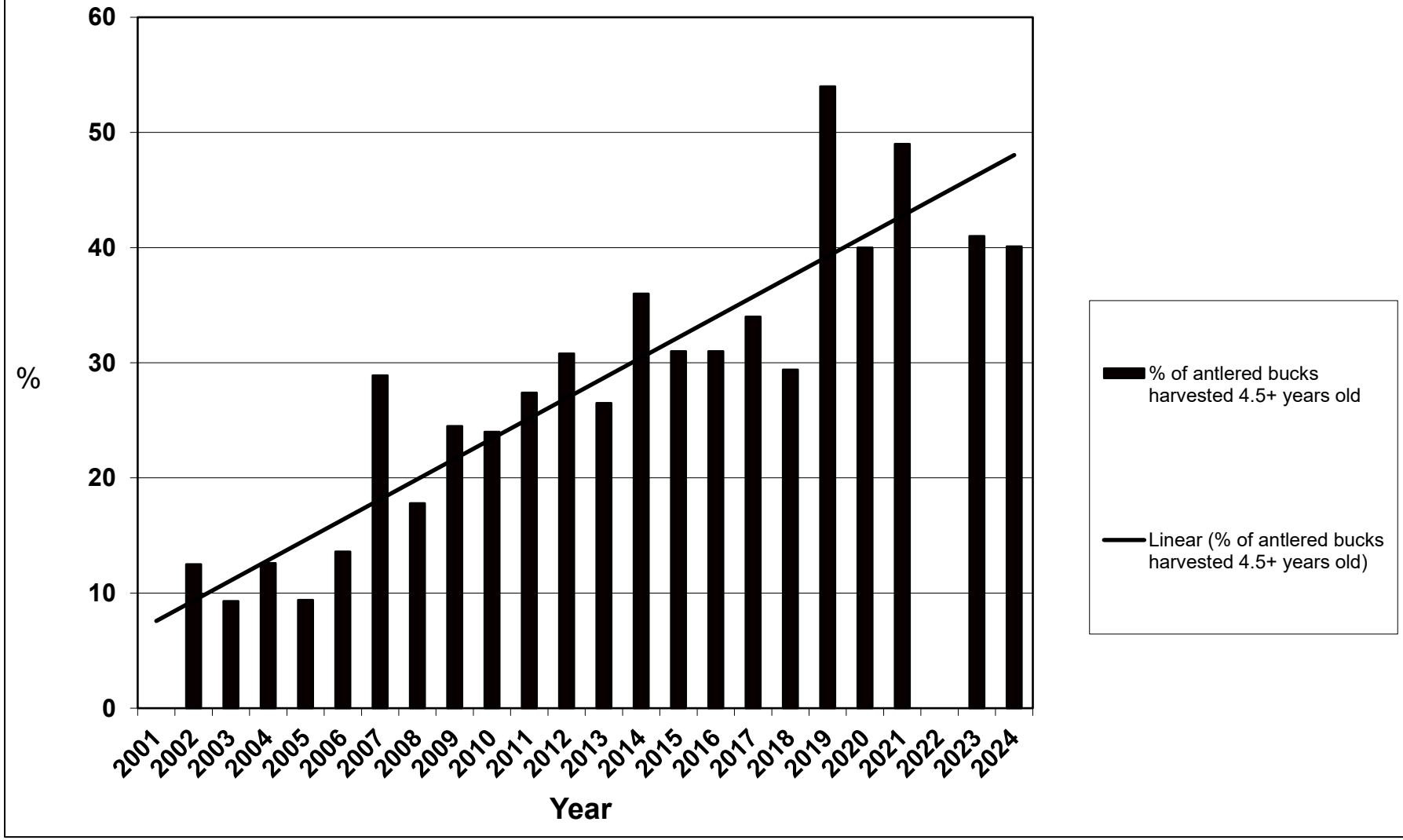


Figure 3. The percentage of 4.5+ year-old bucks in the antlered buck harvest, Simms Creek WMA



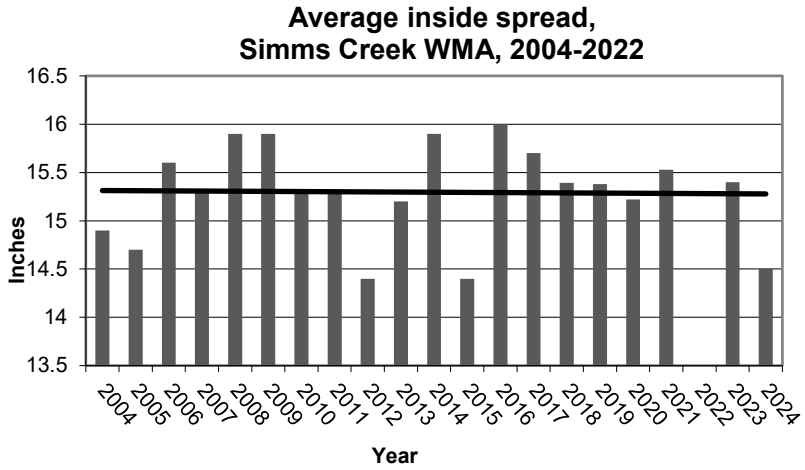
Simms Creek WMA 2024-25 Hunting Season
Table 1. Age, Weight, Antler, and Sex data

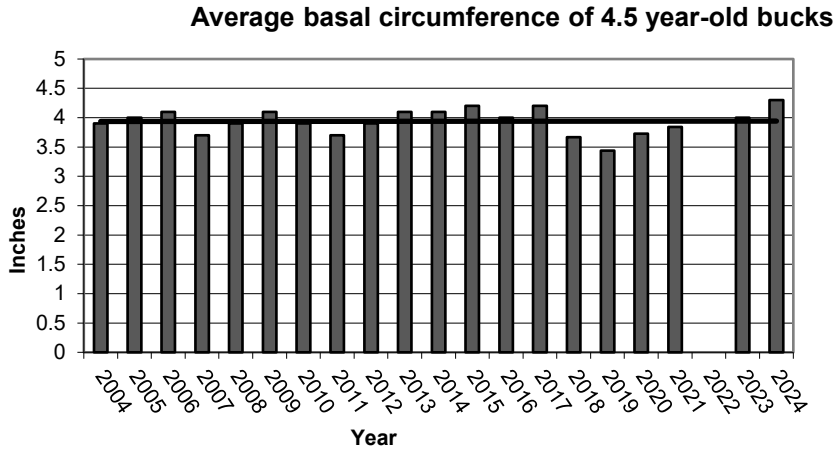
Age	Males Killed	% of Kill	Number Spikes Killed	Weight		Points		Inside Spread		Beam Circumference		Beam Length		Females Killed	% of Kill	Weight		Total Harvest	% of Total Harvest
				N	Ave	N	Ave	N	Ave*	N	Ave*	N	Ave*			N	Ave		
0.5	7	12.7%	0	6	37	2	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	5.7%	8	42	15	7.7%
1.5	9	16.4%	9	9	70	9	2.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	24	17.1%	23	65	33	16.9%
2.5	1	1.8%	1	1	62	1	2.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	22	15.7%	20	72	23	11.8%
3.5	16	29.1%	2	15	106	16	7.9	11	14.8	7	3.6	7	15.3	40	28.6%	39	67	56	28.7%
4.5	16	29.1%	1	16	120	16	8.2	12	14.5	10	4.3	10	14.8	19	13.6%	18	66	35	17.9%
5.5	3	5.5%	0	2	112	3	8.7	2	15.8	2	4.0	2	17.8	18	12.9%	17	72	21	10.8%
6.5	3	5.5%	0	3	103	3	7.7	1	13.8	1	3.8	1	16.5	8	5.7%	8	65	11	5.6%
7.5	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.7%	1	57	1	0.5%
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	55	100.1%	13	46	103	48	6.8	26	14.7	20	4.0	20	15.3	140	100.0%	126	67	195	99.9%

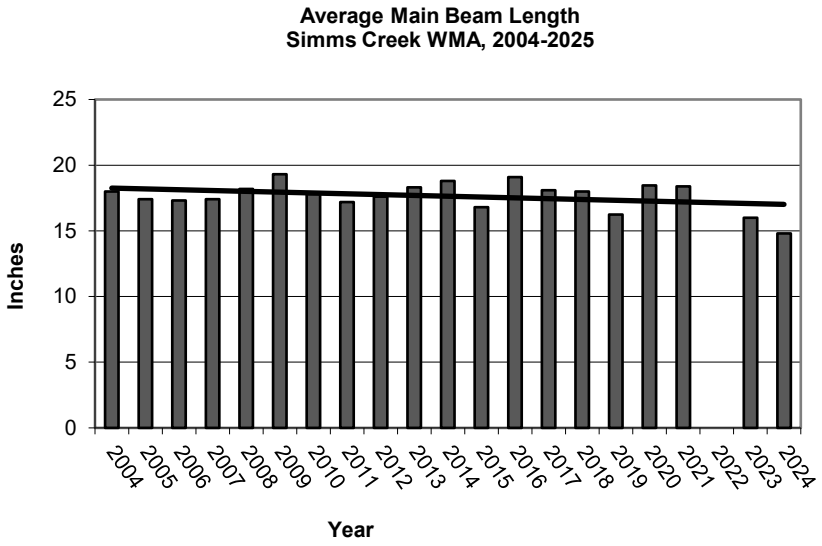
* Inches

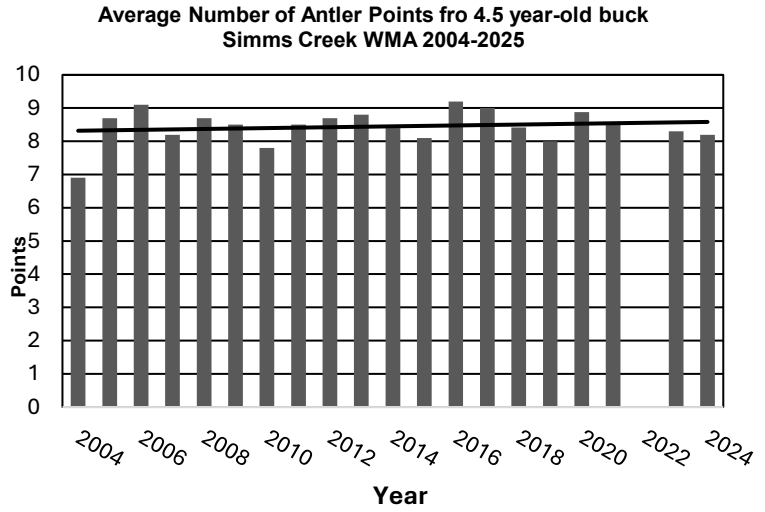
Comments: Fawns were not used in calculating Combined averages.
Verified age data were available from 55 of the 64 males reported harvested.
Verified age data were available from 140 of the 149 females reported harvested.
Deer of unknown age were not included in the calculations.

Figure 4. Antler measurement trends for 4.5 year-old buck









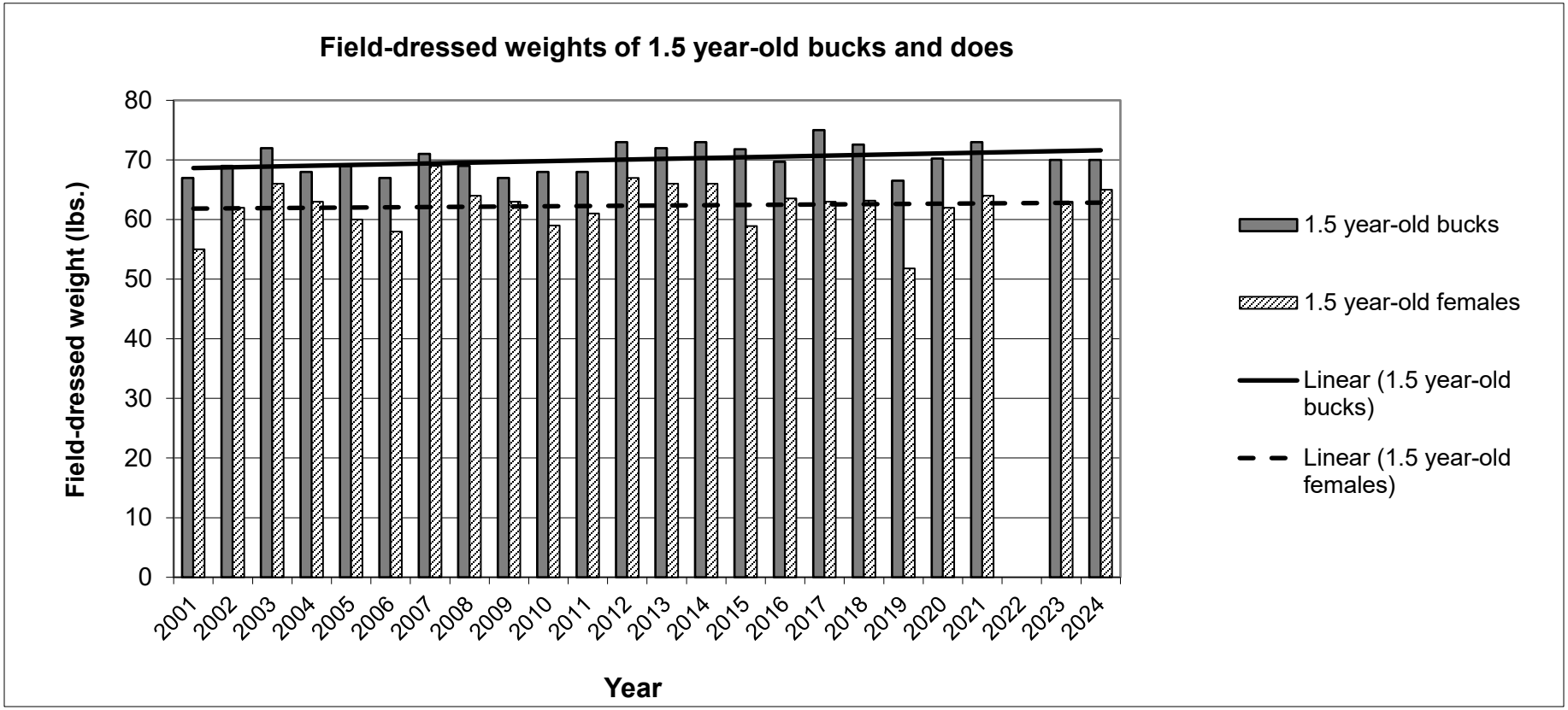

Field-dressed weights of 1.5 year-old bucks and does
Field-dressed weight (lbs.)
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
Year
1.5 year-old bucks
1.5 year-old females
Linear (1.5 year-old bucks)
Linear (1.5 year-old females)

Figure 6. Simms Creek Harvested Deer Age Structure