

*Non-Resident Hunter Effort & Game Harvest Estimates
for the 2004-2005 Mississippi Hunting Season*

Prepared for the

**DIVISION of WILDLIFE
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, FISHERIES & PARKS
P.O. BOX 451
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By

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INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of the Mississippi non-resident hunter survey is to establish annual statewide and district estimates of hunter effort and harvest for each game species. These estimates provide trend data which allows Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks (MDWFP) Wildlife Division staff to monitor changes in harvest and effort through time. The secondary purpose is to measure non-resident hunters' participation patterns, attitudes towards hunting and wildlife, and opinions towards agency programs and wildlife management tools. When interpreting this data, it is important to consider current wildlife management programs, habitat changes and availability, land use practices, species abundance, and the social and economic climate of the state.

Since 1994, a self-administered mail survey has been used to obtain total harvest, average daily kill, average seasonal harvest, and total man-days hunted for each game species by non-residents. The estimates obtained for each of these categories are precise because of the large sample size used, however, because mail surveys contain sampling, response, and nonresponse biases the accuracy of the estimates are always of concern to researchers (Filion 1980). Nevertheless, similar methodologies used to conduct the mail survey over time help to hold constant these biases and the estimates derived from the survey should provide adequate estimates for monitoring trends in hunter harvest and effort.

The primary objective of the mail survey for the 2004-05 hunting season was to obtain a reliable set of statewide non-resident effort and harvest estimates for each game species in Mississippi. The secondary objective was to provide district estimates. The third objective was to obtain demographic information from non-respondents. No effort was made to interpret the data presented here. The purpose of this publication is to compile existing information for future reference and to help guide future management decisions.

METHODS

The sampling frame for the survey consisted of holders of any non-resident hunting license (Types 133, 134, 140, and 141) purchased during the 2004-2005 license year. A random sample of 3,000 license holders was selected to participate in this study from the 32,569 non-resident licenses processed from July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005.

The survey process followed the Total Design Method (TDM) prescribed by Dillman (1978). This methodology pays particular attention to detail, persistence, and takes a personal approach to obtaining a response. This is accomplished, in part, by using personalized letters and envelopes processed with laser printers to simulate a first class mailing to differentiate it from “junk mail”. The TDM uses a series of four mail-outs to help increase response rate: 1) An introductory letter, questionnaire (APPENDIX A), and postage-paid business reply envelope (i.e., a complete packet) were sent; 2) Ten days after the second mailing a post card that was sent to all hunters in the survey. The purpose of the post card was to remind hunters about the survey and to thank those whom had already returned a completed questionnaire. A phone number was provided on the post card in case the recipient had not received or misplaced their questionnaire so they could request another be sent; 3) Twenty-one days after the postcard mailing, a second complete packet was sent to all hunters who had not yet responded, and 4) Twenty-eight days after the second complete packet was sent, a third complete mailing was sent to all hunters who had not yet responded. Actual correspondence can be found in APPENDIX B. All surveys were numbered using a bar coding system printed on clear adhesive labels. When surveys were returned to Mississippi State University, the bar codes were scanned into a computer file and assigned with a “returned” status; this prevented respondents from receiving another mailing.

Data entry involved entering data from the surveys into the computer using a Microsoft Access data entry screen that had been previously developed. First, non-numeric responses in the survey were numerically coded for preparation for data entry. After all responses were converted into a numeric framework, responses from the surveys were data entered. The responses to the

last question of the survey, which was open-ended, were typed into an MS Access file so comments could be queried by agency staff.

Effort and harvest estimates and their standard errors for each species were calculated for total kill, average seasonal kill per hunter, proportion of licensed hunters, total licensed hunters, proportion of hunters who were successful, total man-days spent hunting, average days field per hunter, and the average daily kill. These estimates were calculated both on a statewide and district basis. Calculations were based on statistical programs originally developed by Steffen (1981) for mainframe computing, modified as necessary for desktop computing using SAS software.

RESULTS

A total of 3,000 questionnaires were mailed to nonresident hunters. There were a total of 1,482 useable questionnaires returned by hunters. Useable questionnaires included those who indicated they hunted at least one species one or more days during the 2004-05 season (n=1,416), and those who indicated they “DID NOT HUNT” on their returned survey (n=63). Since harvest estimates are extrapolated to all hunter license holders, those who indicated they did not hunt were included in the database as hunting zero days and harvesting zero animals for each species. Questionnaires were checked for the completeness of responses where it was found that 1 individual indicated their refusal to participate and 2 individuals were reported as being deceased. When non-deliverables (n=723) were excluded from consideration, an effective response rate of 65.1% was obtained. The number of non-deliverables were high this year; most likely because the study was hampered by Hurricane Katrina. The second mailing for the survey was postmarked the day Hurricane Katrina hit the Louisiana and Mississippi coast.

Statewide expansions were calculated based on the 32,569 non-resident hunting licenses sold and accounted for by June 30, 2005. There were 32,569 individuals licensed to hunt small game and 22,744 of these license holders also were eligible to pursue big game (deer and turkey) in Mississippi during the 2004-2005 hunting season.

The expanded statewide summaries of the non-resident total harvest, average daily kill, average seasonal harvest, percent of successful hunters, total man-days, average days hunted in the season, total number of hunters, and percent of total licenses that hunted are provided in Table 1 for all game species included in the survey. Table 2 provides the expanded statewide estimates of total harvest and the variability of these (standard error and 95 percent confidence limits) for all game species surveyed.

Tables 3-8 summarize non-resident small game hunting on a statewide and district basis. Waterfowl hunting is summarized in Tables 9-13. Tables 14-17 summarize fox (red and gray), bobcat and coyote hunting. Statewide and district summaries of deer (buck and doe data from archery, primitive weapon and gun seasons) and turkey hunting (spring and fall) are provided in Tables 18-26. Table 27 summarizes district and statewide estimates for feral hog. Tables 28-33 summarize non-resident demographic characteristics.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This compilation would not have been possible without the efforts and cooperation of many people. Many present and former MDWFP personnel from all divisions provided direct or indirect assistance. MDWFP personnel deserving special recognition are: Dene Smith for her administrative duties related to the survey, Ben Sessums and the print shop crew for producing survey instruments, Curtis Thornhill and his staff for providing license information, and Randy Spencer & Dave Godwin for serving as liaisons between MDWFP and Mississippi State University.

Thanks also go to Liz Kirk, Mallory Sullivan, Brittany Harris, Suraj Somaneth, and Rajesh Madireddy of the Human Dimensions & Conservation Law Enforcement Laboratory in the Forest & Wildlife Research Center at Mississippi State University for data processing and construction of data tables.

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TABLE 1. EXPANDED STATEWIDE COVERAGE OF THE 2004-05 MISSISSIPPI NONRESIDENT MAIL SURVEY OF GAME HARVEST BASED ON 32,569 SMALL GAME LICENSE HOLDERS AND 22,744 BIG GAME LICENSE HOLDERS.

SPECIES	TOTAL HARVEST	AVERAGE DAILY KILL	AVERAGE SEASONAL HARVEST	PERCENT SUCCESSFUL HUNTERS	TOTAL MAN-DAYS	AVERAGE SEASONAL DAYS HUNTING	TOTAL HUNTERS	PERCENT OF TOTAL LICENSEES (A)
DOVE	70,743	5.70	21.96	93.2	12,344	3.86	3,222	9.9
QUAIL	2,582	3.66	11.70	90.0	707	3.20	221	0.7
WOODCOCK	23	0.33	1.00	100.0	67	3.00	23	0.07
RABBIT	10,371	1.15	7.01	85.1	8,547	6.23	1,479	4.5
SQUIRREL	71,074	3.45	18.84	96.5	19,053	5.36	3,774	11.6
RACCOON	5,318	0.71	7.44	96.3	6,245	10.48	596	1.8
TOTAL DUCK	90,602	2.27	24.85	95.3	35,791	10.96	3,266	10.0
MALLARD	42,985	1.08	11.82	84.5				
WOOD DUCK	8,716	0.21	2.28	48.0				
OTHER DUCKS	38,902	0.98	10.75	72.3				
GEESE	2,847	0.33	3.62	93.1	7,039	11.00	640	2.0
RED FOX	23	0.00	0.50	50.0	265	12.0	45	0.1
GRAY FOX	0	0.00	0.00	0.0	265	12.0	23	0.07
BOBCAT	442	0.09	1.14	85.7	3,492	13.17	309	0.9
COYOTE	817	0.14	1.43	76.2	3,654	10.31	464	1.4
TOTAL DEER	26,718	0.08	1.48	67.2	265,103	15.23	18,096	79.6
BUCK	12,898	0.04	0.71	48.1				
DOE	13,821	0.04	0.76	45.3				
ARCHERY DEER	3,336	0.06	0.73	50.8	39,816	10.03	4,542	20.0
BUCK	763	0.02	0.17	15.2				
DOE	2,572	0.05	0.57	41.8				
PRIMITIVE DEER	3,992	0.10	0.75	58.5	32,526	6.91	5,341	23.5
BUCK	1,526	0.04	0.29	25.6				
DOE	2,466	0.06	0.46	40.2				
GUN DEER	19,391	0.09	1.20	64.5	185,610	12.08	16,198	71.2
BUCK	10,610	0.05	0.65	47.5				
DOE	8,782	0.04	0.54	37.7				
TOTAL TURKEY	2,573	0.09	0.63	40.9	23,752	6.17	4,116	18.1
SPRING 2005	2,466	0.09	0.62	40.4	22,511	6.02	3,992	17.6
FALL 2004	107	0.06	0.46	30.8	1,208	5.67	231	1.0
HOG	3,288	0.20	2.48	75.9	10,270	10.48	1,280	3.9

(A) DEER AND TURKEY PERCENTAGES BASED ON BIG GAME LICENSE HOLDERS; ALL OTHERS BASED ON SMALL GAME LICENSE HOLDERS.

TABLE 2. EXPANDED STATEWIDE ESTIMATES OF TOTAL HARVEST (AND VARIABILITY OF THE ESTIMATES) FOR NONRESIDENTS FOR ALL GAME SPECIES IN MISSISSIPPI DURING THE 2004-05 HUNTING SEASON.

SPECIES	TOTAL HARVEST	STANDARD ERROR		95% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL	
		SE	AS % OF TOTAL (A)	LOWER LIMIT	UPPER LIMIT
DOVE	70,743	8,302	11.7	54,140	87,346
QUAIL	2,582	1,065	41.2	452	4,712
WOODCOCK	23	23	100.0	-23	67
RABBIT	10,371	3,432	33.1	3,508	17,235
SQUIRREL	71,074	12,073	17.0	46,930	95,218
RACCOON	5,318	1,720	32.3	1,880	8,757
TOTAL DUCKS	90,602	9,920	10.9	70,762	110,441
MALLARD	42,985	4,857	11.3	33,272	52,697
WOOD DUCK	8,716	1,262	14.5	6,193	11,240
OTHER DUCKS	38,902	5,179	13.3	28,545	49,260
GEESE	2,846	764	26.8	1,320	4,374
RED FOX	23	23	100.0	-23	67
GRAY FOX	0	0		0	0
BOBCAT	442	121	27.4	201	683
COYOTE	817	203	45.9	412	1,222
TOTAL DEER	26,718	961	3.6	24,797	28,639
BUCK	12,898	546	4.2	11,807	13,989
DOE	13,821	642	4.6	12,537	15,104
ARCHERY DEER	3,336	347	10.4	2,643	4,028
BUCK	763	125	16.4	513	1,013
DOE	2,572	309	12.0	1,955	3,190
PRIMITIVE DEER	3,992	313	7.8	3,368	4,617
BUCK	1,526	176	11.5	1,174	1,878
DOE	2,466	226	9.2	2,015	2,918
GUN DEER	19,391	755	3.9	17,882	20,900
BUCK	10,610	482	4.5	9,647	11,572
DOE	8,782	463	5.3	7,857	9,708
TOTAL TURKEY	2,573	283	11.0	2,009	3,137
SPRING 2003	2,466	278	11.3	1,912	3,021
FALL 2002	107	57	53.3	-6	219
HOG	3,288	830	25.2	1,629	4,947

(A) %=100(SE/TOTAL HARVEST)

Table 28. Percent of respondents by their age category (Q2)

Age Category	Frequency	Percent
18-20	12	0.9
21-25	52	3.7
26-30	68	4.9
31-35	120	8.6
36-40	163	11.6
41-45	191	13.6
46-50	218	15.6
51-55	190	13.6
56-60	177	12.6
61-65	99	7.1
66-70	61	4.4
>71	49	3.5
TOTAL	1,400	100.0

n missing = 0

Mean age of hunter = 47.7

Table 29. Percent of respondents by their gender category (Q3)

Gender Category	Frequency	Percent
MALE	1,351	97.0
FEMALE	41	3.0
TOTAL	1,392	100.0

n missing = 8

Table 30. Percent of respondents by their approximate annual household income category before taxes (Q4)

Income Category	Frequency	Percent
Under 10,000	23	1.8
10,000-19,000	43	3.3
20,000-29,000	49	3.8
30,000-39,000	98	7.6
40,000-49,000	120	9.3
50,000-59,000	126	9.8
60,000-69,000	114	8.9
70,000-79,000	116	9.0
80,000-89,000	77	6.0
90,000-99,000	80	6.2
100,000 and above	442	34.3
TOTAL	1,288	100.0

n missing = 112

Table 31. Percent of respondents by their highest completed level of education (Q5)

Education Category	Frequency	Percent
Elementary	20	1.5
High School	480	34.8
College	677	49.1
Graduate School	201	14.6
TOTAL	1,378	100.0

n missing = 22

Table 32. Percent of respondents by their Spanish/Hispanic origin (Q6)

Response	Frequency	Percent
No, not Spanish/Hispanic	1,214	98.9
Yes, Mexican, American, Chicano	1	0.1
Yes, other Spanish/Hispanic group	13	1.0
TOTAL	1,228	100.0

n missing = 172

Table 32a. Respondents' specifications [See Table 32] of their Other Spanish/Hispanic origin.

Response	Frequency	Percent
PUERTO RICAN	2	16.8
HONDURAS	1	8.3
SPANISH FRENCH INDIAN	2	16.7
WHITE/ NATIVE AMERICAN	1	8.3
SPAIN	2	16.7
NATIVE AMERICAN	1	8.3
ITALIAN	1	8.3
PORTUGUESE	1	8.3
ASIAN	1	8.3
TOTAL	12	100.0

n missing = 1

Table 33. Percent of respondents by their race (Q7)

Race Category	Frequency	Percent
WHITE OR ANGLO	1,350	97.6
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	23	1.7
NATIVE AMERICAN OR ALASKAN NATIVE	3	0.2
ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER	2	0.1
OTHER	5	0.4
TOTAL	1,383	100.0

n missing = 17

33a. If other race [See Table 33], respondents' specification of their race

Response	Frequency	Percent
BLACK/ NATIVE AMERICAN	1	20.0
¼ CHEROKEE INDIAN ¾ WHITE	1	20.0
½ HISPANIC ½ ANGLO	3	60.0
TOTAL	5	100.0

n missing = 0

Appendix A

Questionnaire: 2005 Survey of Mississippi Non-resident Hunters

*2005 Survey of Mississippi
Non-Resident Hunters*



Conducted for the
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks
by the
Human Dimensions & Conservation Law Enforcement Laboratory
Forest & Wildlife Research Center
Mississippi State University

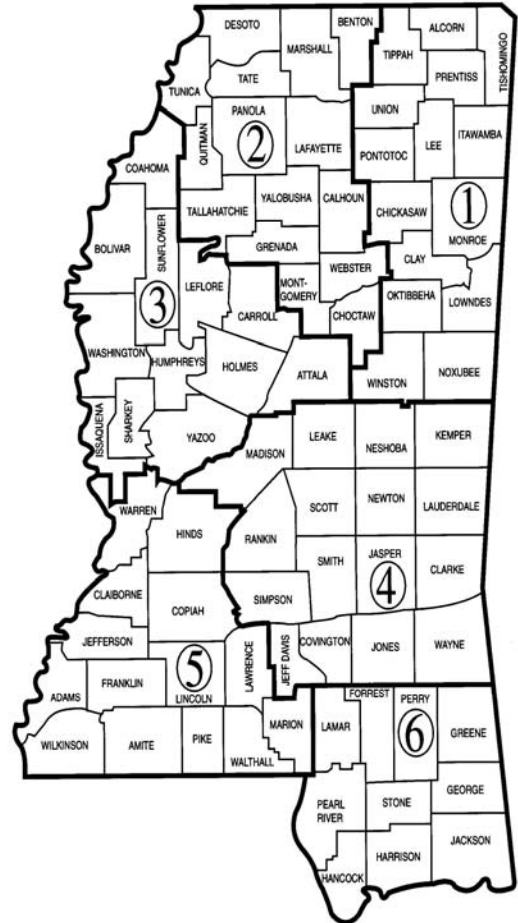
1. Please fill in the blocks below for each game, furbearer, or predatory species you hunted during the 2004-2005 hunting season (even if you were unsuccessful). If you hunted more than one species on a particular day, count a day for each .. species you hunted. Report only game, furbearer, or predatory species taken by you in Mississippi.

Species Sought	Total harvested in Mississippi in 2004-05 season	Days hunted species in Mississippi in 2004-05 season	District Hunted Most
Dove			
Quail			
Woodcock			
Rabbit			
Squirrel			
Raccoon			

**DETERMINE DISTRICT (1-6)
HUNTED
MOST FROM THE MAP BELOW**

	Bucks	Does			
Deer (Archery)					
Deer (Primitive Weapon)					
Deer (Gun)					
Turkey (Fall 2004)					
Turkey (Spring 2005)					

	Mallard	Wood	Other		
Ducks					
Geese					
Red fox					
Gray fox					
Bobcat					
Coyote					
Feral Hog					



The following questions will help us to know more about hunters. The information you provide will remain strictly confidential and you will not be identified with your answers.

2. What is your age?

_____ YEARS

3. Are you?

- 1 MALE
- 2 FEMALE

4. What is your approximate annual household income before taxes?

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Under \$10,000 | 7 \$60,000 - \$69,999 |
| 2 \$10,000 - \$19,999 | 8 \$70,000 - \$79,999 |
| 3 \$20,000 - \$29,999 | 9 \$80,000 - \$89,999 |
| 4 \$30,000 - \$39,999 | 10 \$90,000 - \$99,999 |
| 5 \$40,000 - \$49,999 | 11 \$100,000 and ABOVE |
| 6 \$50,000 - \$59,999 | |

5. What is your highest completed level of education? *(Please circle only one number)*

- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>7</u> | <u>8</u> | <u>9</u> | <u>10</u> | <u>11</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>14</u> | <u>15</u> | <u>16</u> | <u>17</u> | <u>18</u> | <u>19</u> | <u>20</u> | <u>21</u> | <u>22+</u> |
| elementary | | | | high school | | | | college | | | | graduate school | | | | | | | | | |

6. Are you of Spanish/Hispanic origin?

- 1 NO, NOT SPANISH/HISPANIC
- 2 YES, MEXICAN, MEXICAN AMERICAN, CHICANO
- 3 YES, OTHER SPANISH/HISPANIC GROUP *(Please specify:*
_____)

7. What is your race?

- 1 WHITE OR ANGLO
- 2 BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN
- 3 NATIVE AMERICAN OR ALASKAN NATIVE
- 4 ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER
- 5 OTHER *(Please specify:_____)*

8. Was this survey completed by the person to whom it was addressed?

- 1 YES
- 2 NO

Is there anything else you would like to share with us about hunting or wildlife management in Mississippi?

Your contribution of time to this study is greatly appreciated. Please return your completed questionnaire in the postage paid business reply envelope as soon as possible. Thank You.

Mississippi State University
Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Mississippi State, MS 39762-9690
5/05

Appendix B

Survey correspondence with hunters for the 2005 Survey of Mississippi Non-resident Hunters

10000



Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Box 9690
Mississippi State, MS 39762-9690

July 25, 2005

John Doe
123 Buck Drive
Fawn, MS 30759

Dear John:

In conjunction with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks (MDWFP) we are conducting the annual harvest survey of licensed hunters in Mississippi. We conduct this study each year to determine the demographic characteristics of hunters and the amount of game they harvested in Mississippi during the previous hunting season. The information you provide helps managers evaluate how wildlife populations and hunter harvest are affected by various management programs and regulations.

The enclosed survey is designed to tell us about your game harvest in the 2004-2005 Mississippi hunting season (September 1, 2004 – May 1, 2005). Although the survey is completely voluntary, we hope that you will take the 5-10 minutes necessary to provide your input and be a part of the wildlife management process. If you bought a license but did not hunt last year, please write "DID NOT HUNT" on the front cover and send it back to us. That will prevent you from receiving follow-up letters from us, and help us to complete the study.

You are one of a small number of license holders selected to participate in this study. It is important that YOU and no one else complete the questionnaire. Your responses are important to us whether you hunt often, just occasionally, or last year was your first time hunting in Mississippi. All responses will be strictly confidential, and you will not be identified with your answers. Your answers will be grouped with other respondents in a non-identifiable manner. The survey has an identification number for mailing purposes only. This is so we can remove your name from the mailing list once we receive it.

After you complete the questionnaire, please return it to Mississippi State University in the postage-paid, business reply envelope as soon as possible. If you should have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me at Mississippi State University at (662) 325-4153. For additional information regarding human participation in research, please feel free to contact the MSU Regulatory Compliance Office at (662) 325-3994.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. We hope that your 2005-06 hunting season is a safe and successful one.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin M. Hunt".

Dr. Kevin M. Hunt
Assistant Professor & Director
Human Dimensions & Conservation Law Enforcement Laboratory

10000



Mississippi State
UNIVERSITY

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Box 9690
Mississippi State, MS 39762-9690

August 19, 2005

Johnny M. Hunter
1234 Duck Drive
Starkville, MS 39759

Dear Johnny:

About three weeks ago, we sent you a survey of Mississippi hunters. As of today, we have not yet received your completed questionnaire. If you have recently returned your survey, please accept our thanks. The success and accuracy of our study depends on you and the others who have not yet responded. You and the others who have yet responded may represent a completely different portion of the hunting public than those who have sent in their questionnaires and have different hunting patterns and harvest rates. We ask for your help in making sure our results are representative of all hunters in Mississippi.

In case you misplaced your survey, we've enclosed another. The survey is designed to tell us about your general hunting activity and game harvest during the 2003-2004 hunting season. Results help MDWFP wildlife biologists better understand how harvest regulations affect wildlife populations so they can make improvements that benefit both hunters and wildlife. Although the survey is completely voluntary, we hope that you will take the 5-10 minutes necessary to provide your input and be a part of the wildlife management process. If you did not hunt during the 2003-2004 hunting season please write **DID NOT HUNT** on the front of the questionnaire and mail it back to us so we can take your name off the mailing list.

All responses will be strictly confidential, and you will not be identified with your answers. Your answers will be grouped with other respondents in a non-identifiable manner. The survey has an identification number for mailing purposes only. This is so we can remove your name from the mailing list once it is received. After you complete the questionnaire, please return it to Mississippi State University in the postage-paid, business reply envelope as soon as possible. If you should have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me at Mississippi State University at (662) 325-4153. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and good luck during the upcoming hunting season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin M. Hunt".

Dr. Kevin M. Hunt
Assistant Professor & Director
Human Dimensions & Conservation Law Enforcement Laboratory

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Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Box 9690
Mississippi State, MS 39762-9690

November 7, 2005

Johnny M. Hunter
1234 Duck Drive
Starkville, MS 39759

Dear Johnny:

About a month ago, I sent you a survey of Mississippi hunters. As of today, I have not yet received your completed questionnaire. With the tragic disasters of Hurricane Katrina & Rita, I know there are other issues far more significant that you may be facing at this time. For that reason, I am empathetic to your situation and hope that you will respond only if you can. Please forgive me if this survey mailing has offended you, but the business of the State and University must go on despite the obstacles we all must face.

In case you misplaced your survey, I've enclosed another. The survey is designed to tell us about your general hunting activity and game harvest during the 2004-2005 hunting season. Although the survey is completely voluntary, I hope that you will take the 5-10 minutes necessary to provide your input and be a part of the wildlife management process. If you did not hunt during the 2004-2005 hunting season please write **DID NOT HUNT** on the front of the questionnaire and mail it back to me so I can take your name off the mailing list.

After you complete the questionnaire, please return it to Mississippi State University in the postage-paid, business reply envelope as soon as possible. If you should have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me at Mississippi State University at (662) 325-4153. Thank you in advance for your cooperation during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin M. Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "H" at the end.

Dr. Kevin M. Hunt
Assistant Professor & Director
Human Dimensions & Conservation Law Enforcement Laboratory