

2024 Pronghorn Production Surveys

PERFORMANCE REPORT STATEWIDE WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND SURVEYS

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The 2024 aerial pronghorn production surveys have been completed. These surveys are conducted in each of the three pronghorn hunting units with a target date range of July 15-31, but pushing into the first half of August as needed. These surveys are intended to evaluate sex and age ratios of the population and are not intended to be population estimates. With smaller average herd size and habitat conditions typically less favorable for observing pronghorn, pronghorn visibility is lower during production surveys than during the winter counts, which have traditionally been used to determine population size.

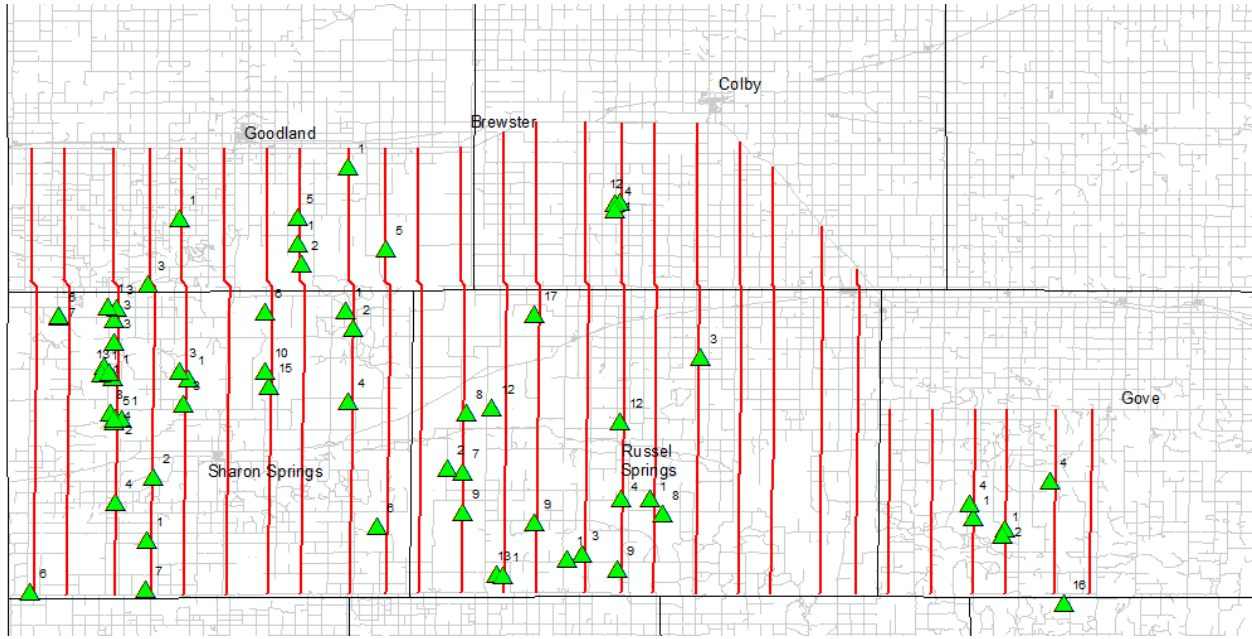
Total numbers of pronghorn observed in each pronghorn hunting unit and their respective buck:doe:fawn ratios are presented in **Table 1**. Survey routes and location of pronghorn observations for hunting units 2, 17 and 18 are provided in **Figures 1-3**, respectively. Trends in buck:doe and doe:fawn ratios since 2001 can be found in **Figures 4 and 5**.

Total buck ratio increased from 42:100 does in 2023 to 56:100 does this year, but the buck ratio observed in Unit 2 responsible for this increase is drastically higher compared to recent results and should be viewed cautiously. Random chance involved in making observations presumably sometimes results in variability in ratios observed that are probably not totally reflective of the population. Variability is usually reduced with a sample size of 300 which was achieved in Unit 2 this year, but in this case, we'll need another year of data before making any changes in permit allocations based on these results.

Total fawn ratios declined slightly from last year but remained well above the 5-year average. Precipitation and cover conditions were generally favorable throughout the range, particularly in Unit 18, which has been plagued by poor production apparently resulting in a major population decline. This unit saw good production rates for the second year in a row, though the total number of pronghorn observed was still very low. Fawn ratios don't greatly influence hunter satisfaction with the current year's hunt since hunters rarely harvest fawns, but they do serve as a predictor of future opportunity.

Table 1. Results of summer 2024 aerial pronghorn production survey for each pronghorn hunting unit.

Unit	Number Observed			Ratio			Ratio – 5 year average		
	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Bucks	Does	Fawns	Bucks	Does	Fawns
2	111	141	60	79	100	43	45	100	39
17	22	81	39	27	100	48	37	100	41
18	6	28	20	21	100	71	23	100	25
Total	135	319	162	56	100	48	40	100	36





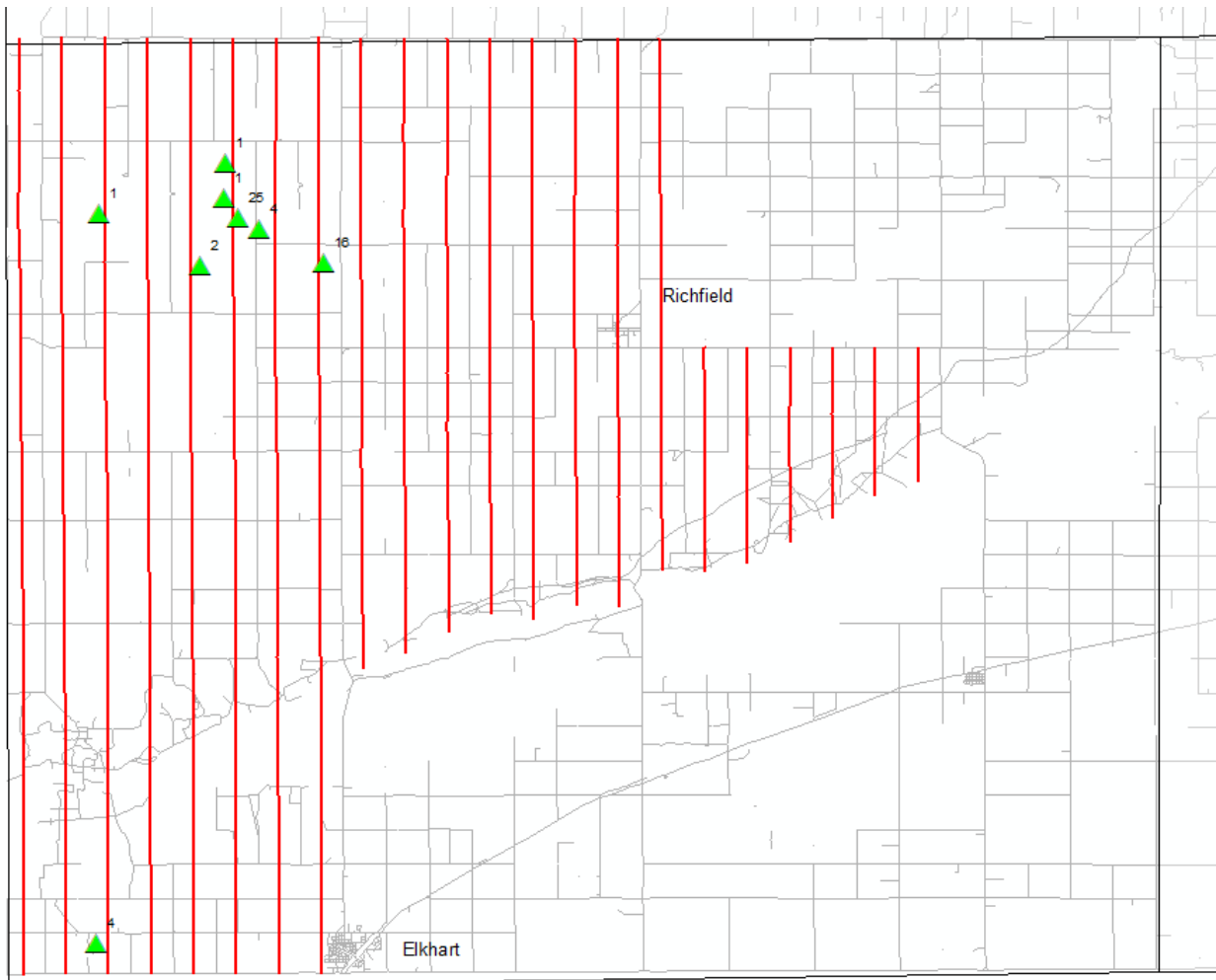
-  Location and number of pronghorn observed
-  2024 Summer Route

Figure 1. Unit 2 – Survey area and pronghorn observations (Sherman, Wallace, Thomas and Logan Counties).



▲ Location and number of pronghorn observed

— 2024 Summer Route

Figure 3. Unit 18 – Survey route and pronghorn observations (Morton County).

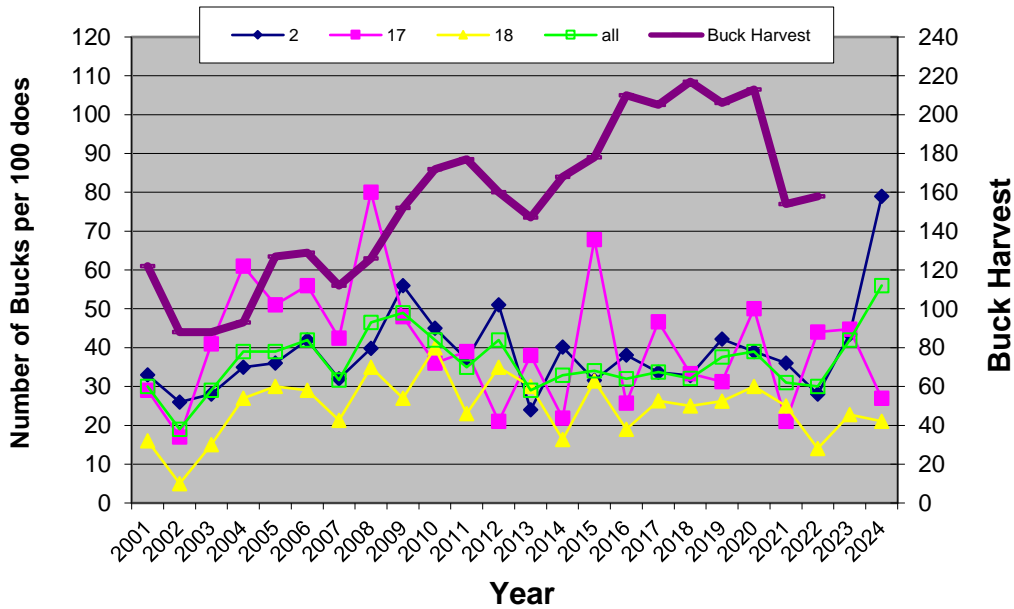


Figure 4. Number of pronghorn bucks per 100 does for each unit since 2001, and total annual buck harvest.

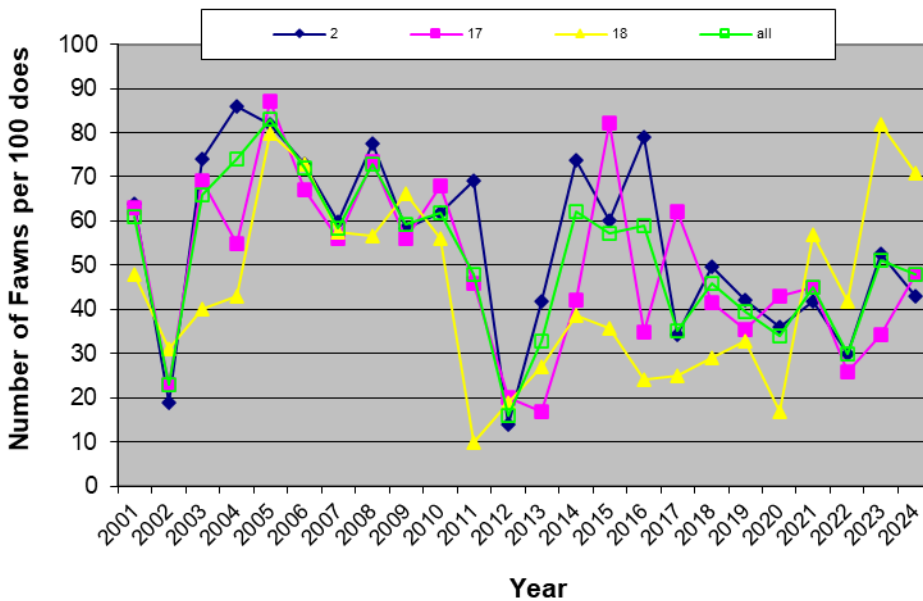


Figure 5. Number of pronghorn fawns per 100 does for each unit since 2001.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

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