

Grapevine Lake 2023-2024 Deer Season

United States Corps of Engineers Grapevine Lake

Purpose

Deer Permits for United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Wildlife Management Area (WMA) on the west side of Grapevine Lake are issued through a fair application process to which each hunter has an equal chance to be drawn. The requirement to have a permit helps protect the wildlife from being over harvested and preserves it for future generations to come.

Hunter surveys are issued to all permit holders to get a better understanding of how the hunting season went as far as hunter satisfaction and harvest numbers. These surveys help shape the future of the Grapevine Lake hunting seasons. Hunters who fail to submit a survey by the established deadline are disqualified for the next season.

Deer Permit Background

In the 2023-2024 season, 250 hunters were issued permits to deer hunt in the WMA managed by the USACE on Grapevine Lake. At the end of deer season all the deer hunting permit holders are required to fill out and return a survey that helps guide the decisions we make for future hunting seasons. If a permit holder fails to return a survey at the end of the season, they become ineligible to be drawn for the following season. If a group application includes one ineligible hunter the entire application is ineligible and thrown out. This past season, there were 969 total applicants. 28 of these applications included ineligible hunters, hunters were disqualified due to offenses such as submitting multiple applications or failure to submit a survey if drawn in a past season. The total number of disqualified hunters was 37. This left a total of 932 eligible hunters, which made the probability to get drawn 27% for the 2023-2024 season.

The survey was 11 questions long and included a variety of questions ranging from the number of times going hunting to asking if the hunters had any suggestions for future hunting seasons.

Survey Data Results

Of the 250 permit holders, 109 returned surveys. 12% of these 109 permit holders did not hunt, which left us with 96 surveys from people who hunted. The success rate of these hunters was 17%. The rough estimate of doe to buck ratio based on these hunters' responses was 1.88 does per buck. There was a total of 23 deer killed, 16 bucks and 7 does, by 17 different hunters.

Question 1: How many times did you go hunting this season?

Question 1 includes responses from every permit holder who submitted a survey (109). The answer that was recorded the most was 10+ times with 36 responses. The response that was chosen the least amount was 0 times with 12 responses. (Figure 1)

Question 2: How many hours did you spend hunting on a typical day?

Question 2 only includes responses from the permit holders who hunted at least one day (96 hunters). This question shows us that 78.13% of the time, hunters hunt between 3 and 5 hours. The responses from three hours and going longer than that includes 97.92% of responses. It can also be assumed that most hunters who chose the 6+ hours response hunted all day. This leaves only 2.08% of hunters who hunt less than 3 hours on a typical day. (Figure 2)

Question 3: Which days of the week did you hunt the most?

Question 3 included responses from 96 hunters. It was answered by the hunters choosing one of the seven days of the week, a combination of weekends and weekdays, combination of weekend days, or a combination of weekdays. This question showed us that 78.13% of hunters hunted a combination of days. The combination of weekends and weekdays being the most selected option with a total of 33.46%. Saturday was chosen the most out of any singular day with 9.38% of hunters choosing to Saturday as the day which they hunted the most. The data of the surveys that were submitted, shows that weekends receive more hunting pressure. (Figure 3)

Question 4: What time of day did you go hunting the most?

Question 4 had 5 response options which included Mornings, Middle of the Day, Evenings, Mornings and Evenings, and All times of the Day. Mornings and Evenings was the option chosen the most by hunters being chosen by 41.67% of hunters (40), with another 27.08% (26) choosing the mornings response. 86.46% of hunters chose a response that included hunting the mornings, and 67.71% of hunters chose a response that included evenings. Only 5.21% of hunters chose middle of the day as their response, and only 22.92% of hunters chose a response that included the middle of the day. (Figure 4)

Question 5: How many other hunters do you typically see while hunting?

55.79% of hunters recorded seeing 0-1 other hunters while hunting. No hunters recorded typically seeing 7+ other hunters while hunting. The most common response was 0-1 other hunter, 53 of the 96 hunters who filled out the survey chose this response. The second most common response that was chosen by hunters was 2-3 other hunters seen, this response was recorded 38 times. 95.79% of hunters seen 3 or less hunters on a typical day. 4.20% (4) responses stated they saw 4-6 hunters. (Figure 5)

Question 6: How many deer did you harvest this season?

Roughly 19% of the hunters found success in the 2023-2024 Grapevine Lake Deer Season. 15 hunters harvested one deer, 2 hunters harvested two deer, and 1 hunter harvested 4 deer. 78 hunters (81.25%) did not harvest a deer. This information also tells us that 23 deer were killed throughout the season, by 18 different hunters. (Figure 6)

Question 7: If you killed deer, what was/were the sex(es)?

Question 7 only contains answers from the hunters who found success during the season (18 hunters). There were 23 deer harvested during the season. 16 of these deer were bucks and 7 were does.

Question 8: How many bucks did you see while hunting?

The most common response to question 8 was 0 bucks seen, with 22 hunters (22.92%) reporting this. Just over 80% of hunters reported seeing at least 1 buck, this is up 10% from last year. 3 and 4 bucks seen were the second most common responses, with 3 (13) coming out to 13.54% and 4 (11) coming out to 11.46%. 0-4 bucks seen make up for nearly 73.97% of the hunters' responses. Another response that stands out is 9 hunters reported seeing 10+ bucks while hunting. (Figure 7)

Question 9: How many does did you see while hunting?

The most common response to question 9 was 10+ does seen, with 30 hunters (31.25%) reporting this. The second most common response was 5 does seen, with 10 hunters (10.42%) reporting this. 7 does seen had the least number of responses with 3 responses (3.13). (Figure 8)

Question 10: Please rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, your overall satisfaction with your hunting experience this season. 1 = horrible, 5 = spectacular.

The most common response to question 10 was 4 with 44 responses (45.83%). 5 was the next highest satisfaction level chosen, with 33 responses (34.38%). The Least common response was 1, the lowest satisfaction level. Hunters recorded this response 0 times. The top two satisfaction levels accounted for 80.21% of the hunters whereas the Lowest two satisfaction levels accounted for 6.25% of the hunters. (Figure 9).

Question 11: How can the Corps of Engineers improve your overall hunting experience at Grapevine Lake?

Only 44 of the 109 hunters left suggestions on their survey. With these suggestions being open-ended answers, they were categorized or summarized to fit them in alike categories so we could attempt to see if there were any trends of people thinking along the same lines as one another. Once this was done, it was clear there was 1 common answer that stood out more than the others. The most common general response was the hunters suggesting to improve/add places to access the hunting area more effectively. 15 of the responses were able to be fit in this category which is roughly 16.13% of those who left responses. A couple other of the more common suggestions turned out to be more enforcement or rules and regulations (5 votes) being allowed to carry personal firearms (4 votes). (Figure 10)

Key take-aways

44% of permit holders returned surveys (109). Ideally, we would like many more surveys come the end of each season. One factor that could have affected the survey returned percentage this year is hunters were not handed a survey when they picked up their permit, instead they were expected to find the survey online at the end of the season. Of these permit holders, the harvest success rate was roughly 17%.

Saturdays appeared to be the day when the Grapevine Lake WMA was visited the most, so if you are looking to stay away from other hunters you would either need to try to get to a more remote area of our WMA or try to hunt during the week if possible. Based on question 5, There does not appear to be too many hunters in the WMA, as most hunters typically saw 3 or less other hunters while hunting (Figure 5).

Question 8 showed the number of bucks seen by hunters and this showed more of a decreasing trend with the highest value being hunters seeing none to hardly any bucks and decreasing with the number of bucks seen (Figure 7). There were many deer seen by hunters through the deer season. Question 9 of the survey shows us a trend that most hunters (31.25%) saw 10+ does (Figure 8). With the answers to these two questions, we were able to get a rough estimate of the buck to doe Ratio which was 1:1.88. This is an extremely rough estimate due to the different factors that play into the numbers we received. According to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), the ideal buck to doe ratio is around 1:1.

Question 10 shows us that over 80.21% of the hunters were satisfied with their experience, and another 13.54% that were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, leaving 6.25% dissatisfied with their experience. This tells us that there isn't too much that needs to be changed at this time. Question 10 showed us that the most common suggestion to improve satisfaction is to add more and/or different access points or parking areas to the property. There are no current plans to add these areas due to a lack of resources including funding and proper location although there are possible opportunities for this in the future.

Upcoming Season

As of now the upcoming season is planned to be ran very similar to this pervious season. We plan to run the application process in July for a period of 1 month, the drawing will take place in August. The current plan is for the dispersal of permits will be that hunters who are drawn will now be emailed their permits instead of having to pick it up at our project office.

Lastly, not everyone who gets a permit is able to hunt. However, the returned survey is still valuable information to us. Remember, if a permit holder fails to submit a survey by the deadline, they will be ineligible for our future drawings.

Data Charts and Graphs

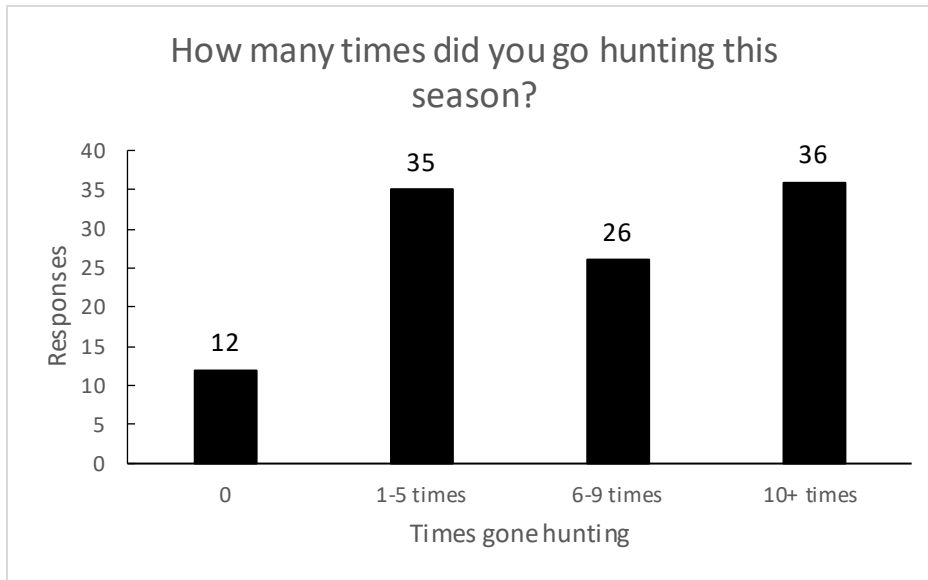


Figure 1: Data chart from Question 1 of the 2023-2024 deer hunter survey.



Figure 2: Data chart from Question 2 of the 2023-2024 deer hunter survey.

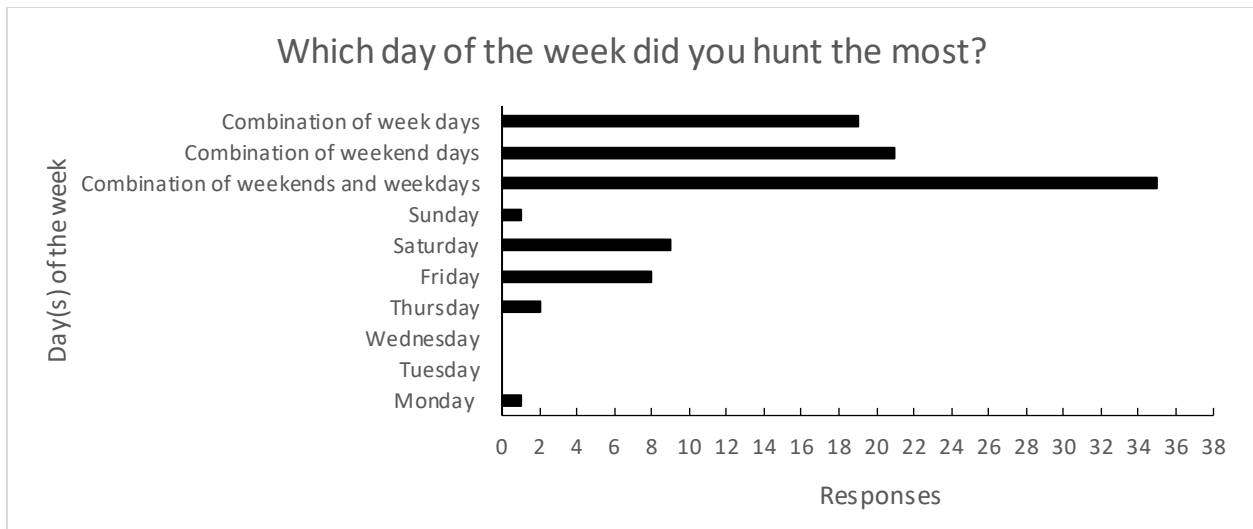


Figure 3: Pie chart from Question 3 of the 2023-2024 deer hunter survey.

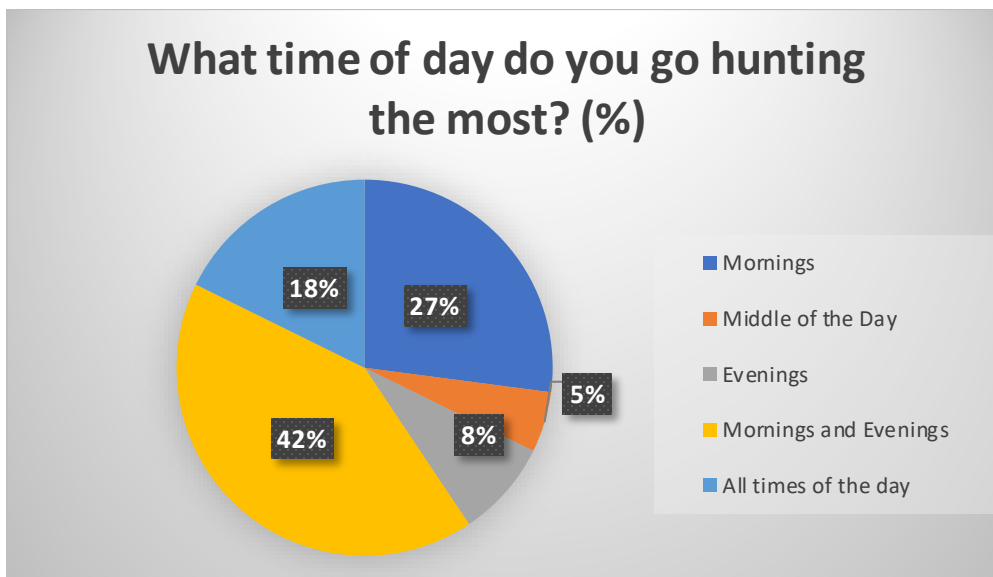


Figure 4: Data chart from Question 4 of the 2023-2024 deer hunter survey.

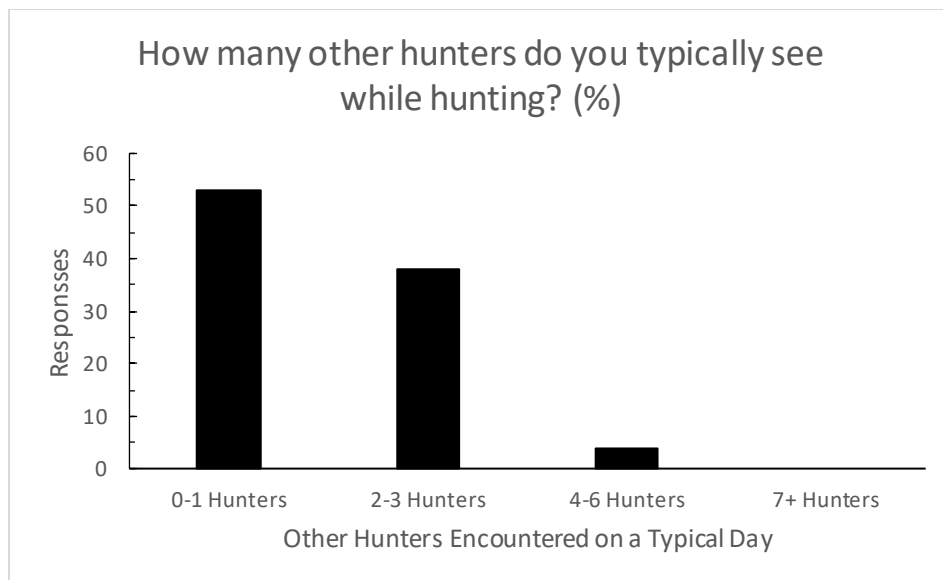


Figure 5: Data chart from Question 5 of the 2023-2024 deer hunter survey.

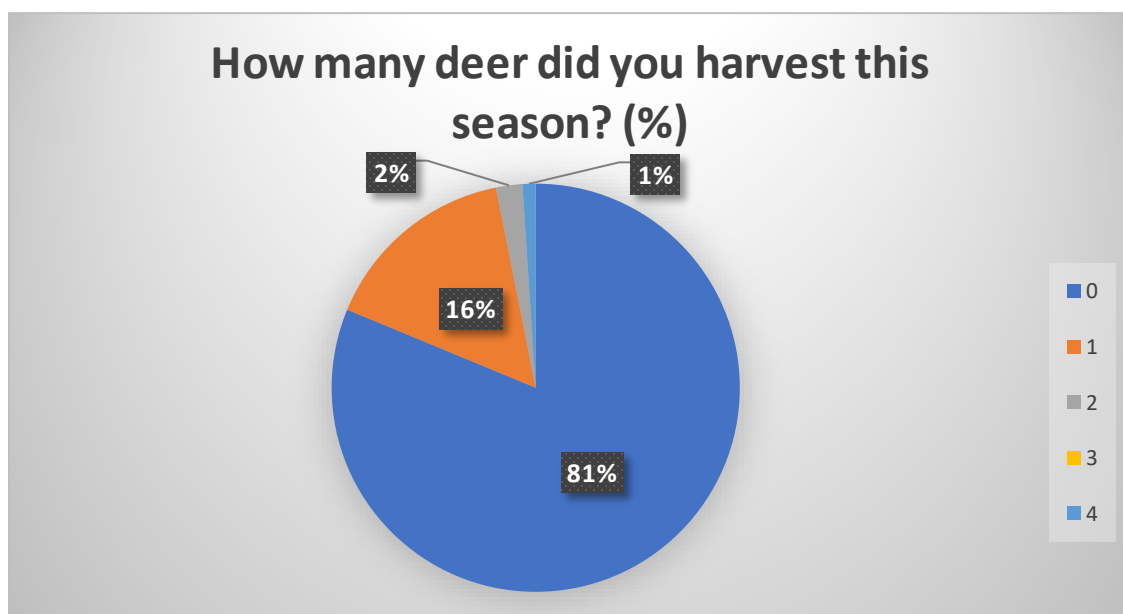


Figure 6: Pie chart from Question 6 of the 2023-2024 deer hunter survey.

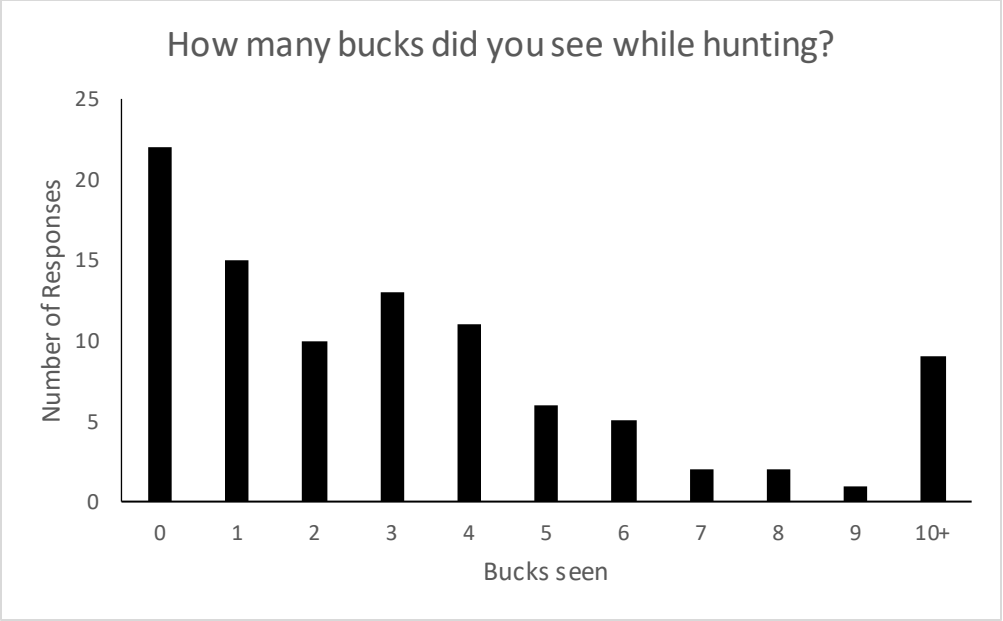


Figure 7: Data chart from Question 8 of the 2023-2024 deer hunter survey.



Figure 8: Data chart from Question 9 of the 2023-2024 deer hunter survey.

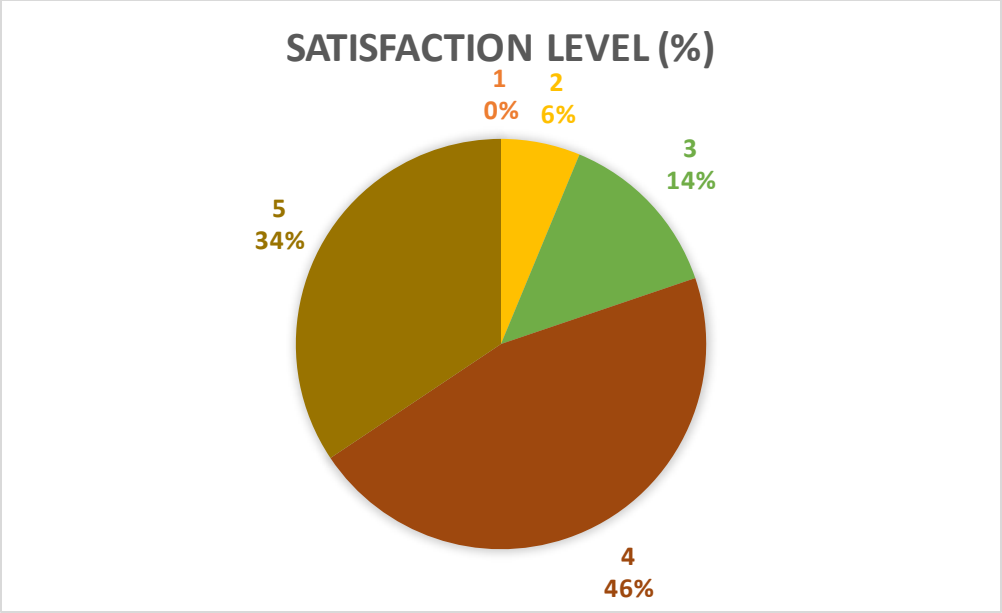


Figure 9: Pie chart from Question 10 of the 2023-2024 deer hunter survey. Satisfaction Levels with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

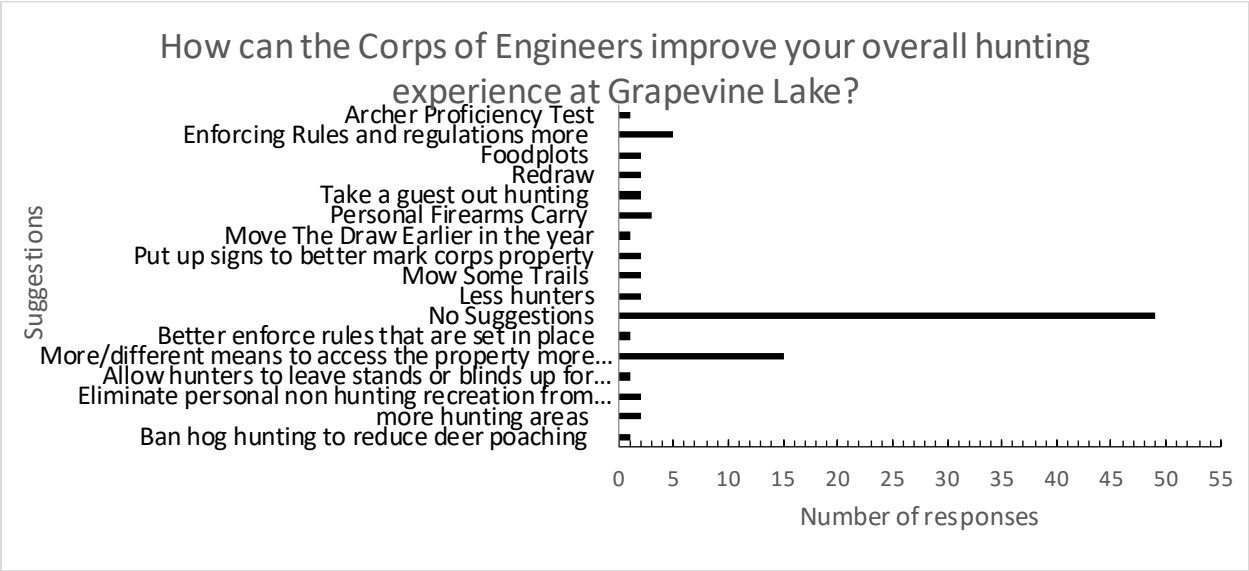


Figure 10: Data chart from Question 8 of the 2023-2024 deer hunter survey