



# ECONOMIC VALUE AND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM BLACK-TAILED AND MULE DEER HUNTING

## Fact Sheet #43

### OVERVIEW

Economics play an important and substantial role in wildlife conservation in North America. Many rural areas come alive during fall deer seasons with crowds suddenly present in grocery stores, restaurants, and gas stations; helping transfer dollars from urban centers to rural areas. Additionally, the personal and social benefits generated by hunting, known as economic value, improve the quality of life for those who hunt and others who appreciate healthy habitat and wildlife populations.

### ASSESSING ECONOMIC VALUE

Hunting expenditure data in the National Surveys of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, released every 5-6 years, allows economists to report the jobs, tax revenues and other economic contributions generated by deer hunters and viewers. These contributions add up fast, starting with deer hunters' annual spending in the U.S. exceeding \$23 billion. Although results are not available for each deer species, the economic contributions in a majority of western states can be attributed largely to hunting black-tailed deer and mule deer.

Economic value is a different concept and basically describes the intrinsic, non-monetary benefits associated with deer. Different types of economic values exist. User values are generated by deer hunting, but also include wildlife viewing. Economic value recognizes that nearly all items purchased have a value greater than their price tag. Consider a hunting trip, for example. The value of the hunting trip is greater than what the hunter is willing to pay for the hunt. If the value to the hunter equaled the cost, the hunter would be indifferent about the trip and may switch to an activity that provides greater net satisfaction. The surplus value received after all expenses are paid, plus the hunter's time and the protein benefits associated with harvested meat are considered, is known as net economic value.

There are other types of economic values. Non-use values cover concepts such as the mule deer's existence, which is acknowledged when people donate to conservation of mule deer and other species they may never experience in person. Other non-use values include the value associated with passing natural resources to future generations (bequest value), ecosystem values, which recognize we seldom have to pay out of pocket for the benefits of functioning natural systems, and more. Though none of these values have been quantified nationally, they are certainly relevant to the value of black-tailed and mule deer.

<b>Economic Contributions of Deer Hunting (all species)</b>	
<b>Retail Sales</b>	<b>\$23,373,000,000</b>
<b>Total Multiplier Effect</b>	<b>\$50,768,000,000</b>
<b>Jobs</b>	<b>325,300</b>
<b>Salaries &amp; Wages</b>	<b>\$14,922,000,000</b>
<b>GDP Contributions</b>	<b>\$27,459,000,000</b>
<b>State/Local Taxes</b>	<b>\$2,523,000,000</b>
<b>Federal Taxes</b>	<b>\$3,862,000,000</b>

## ECONOMIC ACTIVITY DIRECTLY CONTRIBUTES TO CONSERVATION

The value hunters hold for deer induce them to spend significant funds. Conservation agencies tap into this value chain to generate the funds necessary to manage and provide healthy herds, habitat, and quality hunting opportunities through three primary mechanisms:

1) Licenses and permits: Hunters must purchase licenses and permits to pursue deer and those revenues are important for funding conservation. Although the precise portion of licenses that can be attributed to each species of deer is not known, in 2018 hunters pursuing all types of deer generated \$420 million in license and permit revenue across states in black-tailed and mule deer range.

2) Excise Tax Revenues: Since the 1930s, in the United States a 10–11% federal excise tax has been charged on the sale of firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment by manufacturers and importers. Known as the Federal Aid in



Wildlife Restoration Program, this special excise tax is collected and then distributed by the USFWS to state wildlife agencies to deliver conservation and recreational opportunities on the ground. The revenues are significant, with over \$674 million collected and invested in wildlife restoration, hunting, and shooting access in the United States in 2018. With black-tailed and mule deer constituting a large proportion of hunting in the West, they are critical contributors to conservation excise taxes. Indeed, without quality hunting opportunities, including for deer, hunters would not purchase firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment, further affecting conservation capabilities and successes nationally.

3) Dues, Contributions, Grants, and other funding: The desire for improved and expanded hunting opportunities encourages many deer hunters and others to contribute financially to private conservation efforts. In 2016, hunters contributed \$182 million via dues and contributions to such organizations, with much of this attributable to black-tailed deer and mule deer hunters. Looking across many decades, sportsmen's conservation organizations have provided billions of dollars toward wildlife conservation. For example, the Mule Deer Foundation has implemented over \$150 million from funding raised for beneficial impacts to conservation between 1988 and 2022. The ability to hunt deer and other species is critical for maintaining current and future conservation revenues.

## SUMMARY

The economics associated with black-tailed and mule deer hunting and viewing are substantial. Altogether, considering the conservation funding mechanisms above, black-tailed and mule deer hunting generates nearly \$1 billion dollars annually for conservation, a true user-pays, everyone-benefits model. In addition to the thousands and millions of jobs, tax dollars and income, black-tailed and mule deer hunters and viewers contribute to local and national economies, and have helped contribute substantially to conservation, benefitting many species. Science-based management of deer will help ensure the benefits continue for many generations to come.

More information about mule deer can be found at: [muledeerworkinggroup.com](http://muledeerworkinggroup.com)