

Abstract:

Management of wildlife populations has changed in the last century, coinciding with decreasing hunter populations and interest. Supply and demand suggest that reducing available harvest permits should increase the perceived value of permits, leading to an increase in hunter interest and motivation. We used annual harvest data and hunter surveys to study the effects of decreasing the supply of permits over two decades in Wisconsin. The number of permits issued was important in the top models for annual bobcat harvest and hunter participation. The decrease in the supply of permits was strongly correlated with increases in the number of applications for permits ($R^2 = .82$) and hunter participation ($R^2 = .93$), whereas increased hunter interest (applications and participation) was correlated with hunter success (percent of filled permits; R^2 applications = .90, R^2 participation = .93). This increasing trend in hunter populations and interest runs counter to general decreasing trends across North America and highlights the critical role of permit supply in wildlife management.

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10871209.2019.1614241>