REPORT ON THE MEETING HELD BY THE GREAT LAKES [illegible] COMMITTEE
RHINELANDER, WISCONSIN

February 23, 24, 25, 1954

Members and guests of the group arrived at the Penlon Hotel in Rhinelander late in the afternoon of February 23. The complete list of those who attended the get-together is attached to this report.

THE FIRST EVENING MEETING

February 23

Chairman Krefting called the meeting to order at 8:00 P.M. John M. Keener of the Wisconsin Conservation Department described the places to be visited on the field trip the next day and tentative transportation plans were organized. Also, Bert Dahlberg of the Wisconsin Conservation Department presented the following background information leading up to the forest habitat development work.

In Wisconsin starved deer were first found in the early 30's and in the winter of 1934-35 an artificial feeding program was begun. Aldo Leopold's words that artificial deer food is not a net addition to natural food and may become a net substraction held true in Wisconsin. Between 1935 and 1942, 191 tons of hay and 70 tons of concentrate were distributed in Wisconsin at a total cost of $10,854.77. In 1943 the legislature passed a law increasing the cost of licenses 50¢; the increased revenue to be used for acquisition of deer yards and provision of winter food for deer. Between 1943 and 1950 the program was accelerated and a total of 4,866.5 tons of hay and concentrate were distributed at a total cost of $357,738.24. With herd reduction and three consecutive mild winters, deer feeding has been considerably reduced in Wisconsin. The only feeding in Wisconsin so far this winter has been in the Flag Deer Yard in Bayfield County were operations were initiated on February 8.

Deer yard management work was initiated in 1950. In general browse improvement work has consisted of cutting of non-commercial tree species and shrubs which have grown beyond the reach of deer. The tops are immediately available to deer as food. In addition the opening which has been created permits growth of seedlings, root suckers and sprouts. Other management work consists of cultural jobs on state lands where trees having a high percentage of cull are cut. Salvable materials are sold which partially defrays the cost of the operation. The tops are available for food and the capacity of the area to grow foods within reach of deer is increased.

In 1951 the Forest Habitat Development projects were initiated for work on public forest land. Deer management work has consisted of thinnings in hardwoods adjacent to deer concentration areas, planning of small timber sales and coordination of deer yard management with forestry management. The latter appears to hold the most promise. Mr. Doll is completing deer yard cover type maps for the Chequamegon National Forest and formulating management plans for these yards. The plans are being integrated with Forest Service timber management plans. In the future, we plan to expand this work to state forest land and county forest land. With literally thousands of timber sales on public lands

in the north, it appears that our best opportunities are in coordinating these sales in regard to yearly time of sale, year of sale, amount of sale and species cut.

Other deer management work carried out by these projects consists of discing to stimulate growth of woody plants and trail seeding which maintains roads in a passible condition thus enabling hunter access.

GREAT LAKES DEER GROUP FIELD TRIP

Argonne Ranger District, Nicolet National Forest

Members of the group assembled at 8:00 A.M. on the morning of February 24. Under the leadership of John M. Keener and Joseph Stoeckeler a series of seven stops were made during the day to observe various phases in the deer habitat management program. The noon lunch was obtained at Scott Lake Camp on the Argonne Experimental Forest. A brief description of each area visited was made by John Keener as follows:

Stop #1. Cultural cutting area.

Here the cull and wolf trees had been removed from a "two-story" stand. Deer's benefits were in the form of much immediately available browse and an expectation of new sprout and seedling production in the openings created. Forestry benefits were from the removal of diseased and poorly formed trees. The method is cheap to apply where the percentage of poor trees is high.

Stop #2. Timber sale area.

A selective cutting operation about three years old where new growth of seedlings and sprouts is good. The amount of available deer browse has increased many times from what it was before logging took place.

Stop #3. Cultural cutting area.

A series of 25 acre plots marked for cutting by Lake States Forest Experiment Station personnel. Several methods of treatment and degrees of thinning were made. Growth studies to be recorded on the permanently marked plots.

Stop #4. Disking area.

Disking in a poorly stocked aspen and upland brush type was accomplished two years ago. Net coverage of area was 30%. Sprout and seedling response good in disked strips. Costs of this work ran $3.50 per acre. So far, best results have been obtained in these types rather than in completely open areas.

Stop #5. Timber sale area.

Mixed conifer and hardwood logging in a deer yard. Immediate utilization of tops heavy by deer. Cover removal is higher than desirable in a yarding area. State Land Commission Sale. The group remarked about poor utilization of wood products by logger.

Stop #6. Timber sale area.

Hardwood-hemlock logging job along edge of deer yard. Limited cedar and spruce logging in yard. A large volume of deer food in form of tops--too much to be utilized by number of deer in the yard. Good coordination of timber sales and wildlife needs would call for this sale to be spread over several years. Here again this is a state land commission sale where deer needs were not considered.

Stop #7. Cultural cutting area.

Cull removal and hardwood thinning accomplished in two stages. First cut early in winter was cull and wolf tree removal with power saws. Thinning of saplings and pole hardwoods done in late winter. Residual stand of about 475 (10' x 10' spacing) "crop trees" left. Current utilization of tops is good. Expected sprout and seedling response for future browse should be good. Forestry values from this operation are high.

SECOND EVENING MEETING

Chairman Krefting called the meeting to order at 8:00 P.M. John Koener started the evening discussion by giving a recap of the field trip. He displayed a map of the areas visited and outlined the place each management practice plays in the integration of deer needs with normal Forest Service activities.

Dan Bulfer reported that each district on the Nicolet National Forest is made up of 200 compartments. Each compartment contains about a thousand acres and usually each one is cut at ten year intervals. Also the cuttings are budgeted three years in advance.

Bert Dahlberg explained that deer habitat work in northeast Wisconsin was quite different from the northwest area primarily because of the difference in winter yarding. In the northeast area more work is done in the periphery of the deeryards and is based on commercial timber sales. In this connection Arthur Doll stated that a strip 10 chains wide around the boundary of each yard was of greatest value for deer browse. Timber values are considered secondary in this zone.

I. H. Bartlett reported that in Michigan the game lands and forest lands are now grouped together. Also all plans for logging or tree planting are routed across the game manager's desk before any field operations are started.

The evening's discussion terminated at 11:00 P.M.

MORNING MEETING, February 25

Chairman Krefting called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M. and announced that the morning's meeting would be divided into three parts: a report on the 1953 deer hunting season by representatives from the Lake States and the Province of Ontario; the appointment of a new secretary and chairman of the Great Lakes Deer Group; and a discussion as to the time, place, and agenda for the 1955 field get-together of the deer group.

Vernon Gunvalson and Milton Stenlund, reporting for Minnesota, stated there was a nine day deer season for any deer (November 14-22) restricted primarily to the northern half of the state but also including a small area in the southeast portion of the state.

Hunting conditions were unusual with warm and dry weather preceding the season and continuing until the 19th when temperatures dropped sharply--starting with rain and sleet in some areas and turning to wet and heavy snow. The amount of snowfall varied considerably with three inches reported in the northeast and with eight inches or more reported in the central-northern portion of the state. This snowfall prevented many hunters from reaching desired hunting points and it is believed that hunting pressure was lower than usual during the latter portion of the season.

Three highway stop checking stations were set up to obtain age class and sex composition data. Locations were chosen to obtain regional differences in data.

Approximately 2,300 deer were examined resulting in the following: An adult male to female ratio of 150 to 100; a fawn male to female ratio of 110 to 100; and a fawn percentage of 30.6 percent.

To date, through the 8th week of hunter report card returns, 34,959 cards have been received with 18,877 of the hunters successful or a success of 54 percent. We also have information through the 10th week but the necessary computations have not been made. It is doubtful that many returns will be received from this point on.

A rough breakdown has also been made of hunter report card returns on a regional basis for comparison with highway stop check data. Highway stop check data from Sandstone (northeast region) showed an adult male to female ratio of 169 to 100; hunter reports indicated 167 to 100. A higher male ratio, however, was reported for fawns by hunter reports and correspondingly their fawn percentage was lower. At Aitkin, the adult male to female ratio was 136 to 100 with hunter reports showing 140 to 100. This is the central-northern region. Again, hunters reported a greater male excess in their fawn reports. At Little Falls (east and northwest portion of the state), the highway check showed an adult male to female ratio of 140 to 100 as compared to a hunter report of 137 to 100 but once more hunters reported a greater male excess in their fawn reports.

The figures listed above are not final but they do show a remarkable similarity between actual highway checks and hunter reports for the sex ratios of adult deer (hunting take). The excess of male fawns reported by hunter reports over actual checks may indicate that a number of hunters consider male fawns with "buttons" to be adults.

Hunting season checks were also made in specific areas such as the Tamarac and Mud Lake National Wildlife Refuges, Itasca State Park, and in area adjacent to Fort Ripley Military Reservation. Some camp checks of deer hunters were also made in the Ely area, the Bemidji-Remer area, and in the Red Lake Game Refuge country.

It is estimated that between 150,000 and 175,000 hunters bought licenses and that seasonal success may be 5 to 10 percent higher than it was in 1952. For the moment, it appears to be somewhere in the neighborhood of 40 percent.

Also Krefting, Minnesota, reported on two federal refuges where deer hunting is allowed in Minnesota--Tamarac and Mud Lake. The Mud Lake area was open to hunting for the fourth time and 194 deer were taken by approximately 700 hunters during the three-day season. Of special significance was the increase in the fawn per doe ratio. In 1952 it was 144 fawns per 100 females and in 1953 it was increased to 179 fawns per 100 females.

The Tamarac Refuge was open to hunting for the third year in a row and 333 deer were killed by an estimated 2,000 hunters. Thirty-one percent of the kill was fawns and the fawn per doe ratio was 77 fawns per 100 does. Male fawn weights increased 5 pounds (74 to 79) while female fawns increased a like amount (71 to 76). A paper was presented at the recent Midwest Wildlife Conference on the results of the controlled hunts and the information will be published in The Journal of Wildlife Management.

B. L. Dahlberg, reporting for Wisconsin, stated an average of plus 40 percent more deer were seen in 1953 than in 1952 by hunters. Average success based on the hunters checked along transects was 10.5 percent which is almost identical to last year's figures. The difference between 1952 and 1953 lies in a decrease in hunting pressure and effort per day of hunting which was 15 percent for opening day and 7.4 percent less hours respectively and an any-deer season in nine western counties. Hunting conditions were better on the first four days of the season compared to last year and poorer on the last three. Yearling deer composed 38 percent of the total legal kill compared to 21 percent last year indicating a strong increase in the number of does that produced this segment of the population and a high survival of the fawns born in 1952. In general only about one-sixth of yearling bucks have antlers with a fork longer than one inch. The estimated kill for the state based on hunting pressure and success ratios along the transects is 18,243. This estimate is not the official annual department kill figure but is used tentatively until the questionnaire results are obtained. In past years the estimate based on the field checks and questionnaire poll was similar from the standpoint of management needs.

I. H. Bartlett, reported for Michigan, and pointed out his state is the last of the Great Lakes Deer Group to join the "any deer" fraternity having been restricted to a buck law since 1921. Heavy starvation for years has indicated the desirability of taking some additional deer. In 1952 the Legislature gave the Michigan Conservation Commission the authority to manage the herd in the Lower Peninsula. As a result the regular buck season (November 15-30, inc.) was held statewide but in the 14,000 square miles of the Lower Peninsula north of Highway M-20 (Muskegon-Bay City), during the last 3 days of the regular season November 28, 29, 30, (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) deer hunters could take a buck, doe, or fawn. The regular buck kill in the Upper Peninsula was light with approximately 19,000 being taken. In the northern part of the Lower Peninsula 31,000 bucks were taken in the first 13 days of the season, in the 3-day special season 110,000 bucks, does, and fawns were killed (6% bucks, 50% does, 23% buck fawns, 21% doe fawns). Roughly 1,000 bucks were taken in the

southern agricultural areas, bringing the total 1952 kill to over 162,000. Many persons screamed in protest at the so-called "slaughter" but signs indicated a good breeding population left.

There was no spring starvation, possibly 25% of the food normally taken was left unbrowsed at the close of the yarding season resulting in a start at food recovery, and the following fawn crop (1953) seemed better than usual.

During 1953 conservation officers saw 75% as many deer as observed the previous year. Because of heavy hunting on the southern edge of the deer territory the buck law was deemed sufficient to control the herd north as far as Highway M-55 (Manistee-Tawas) in 1953. North of Highway M-55 a surplus would be left after a regular buck season. A 1-day special season was established on the 8,000 square miles north of M-55 in the Lower Peninsula, Tuesday, December 1, 1953, to remove this surplus. In spite of a kill in 1952 of 25,000 buck fawns which theoretically would have been legal bucks in 1953, the regular buck kill in the northern part of the Lower Peninsula dropped only from 31,000 in 1952 to 27,000 in 1953. This drop was much less than anticipated. The kill during the 1-day special season was approximately 18,000. With a kill of 23,000 bucks in the Upper Peninsula and 1,500 in the southern farming areas the total kill for 1953 is about 70,000. A good breeding herd is left at the present time and with a normal winter will just about squeeze through in many of the old heavily browsed areas. The number of hunters jumped from 390,000 in 1951 to 465,000 in 1952 and dropped to 415,000 in 1953. Legislative authority for herd management was given for 3 years only, 1952, 1953, and 1954. It is hoped that after the 1954 season the Legislature will give the Department continued authority to manage the herd not only in the Lower Peninsula but in the Upper also.

R. C. Passmore, reporting for Ontario, stated the Province has about 150,000 square miles of deer range. The area open in 1953 was considerably larger than normal and deer biologists have hopes of continuing this short season on an annual basis and enlarging the area to include all but the more densely settled townships. Weather, during the season on the main deer range, was poor (dry and warm) during the first week and good (snow on the ground) during the second week. Despite the poor hunting weather of the first week, hunter success was on the whole, slightly better than normal--attributable, we believe, to increases in the deer herd permitted by the favorable winter weather of the past few years. Due partly to the additional areas open our total sale of deer licenses increased from 71,000 to a larger figure which will probably fall between 110,000 and 125,000. About 12 to 15 percent of the 1953 hunters are non-residents. Open season dates varied from as early as October 1 in the northern part of the Province to as late as November 25 in the Fort Frances area. In the most important deer range there was a 12-day any deer season (use of dogs permitted), Nov. 2-14. Also in the agricultural portion of the Province there was a 4-day any deer season (Nov. 4-7).

Mr. Passmore passed out a sheet of tabular information entitled, "Analyses of Ages of Deer and Hunter Success, By Districts."

The next item on the agenda pertained to the 1955 get-together of the Great Lakes Deer Group. The members attending decided it would be held at Sioux Ste. Marie, Ontario. Tentative dates are February 23 to 25. There will be a panel discussion on vital deer topics and a field trip. The field trip will be to a large deer yard near Batchawana Bay, about 60 miles from Sioux Ste. Marie.

The last matter of business to be discussed was the election or appointment of the office of secretary, and chairman. The group expressed great satisfaction with the past service of Secretary deVos and accepted his wishes to have someone else appointed to serve as secretary with great reluctance. However, they also felt that someone else from Ontario should serve as secretary and Dick Passmore was appointed by a unanimous vote. The matter of deciding on a new chairman was also put before the group for action. The group refused to make any changes in this office.

Chairman Krefting adjourned the meeting at 11:00 A.M. After adjournment, John Keener, Boris Popov, Alex Cringan, and Laurits Krefting visited the Rhinelander newspaper office and gave out a newsrelease on the highlights of the 1954 get-together.

March 15, 1954

ATTENDANCE LIST -- GREAT LAKES DEER GROUP

Rhinelander, Wisconsin

1954 Meeting

1.	Cyril Kabat	Madison, Wisconsin	Wisconsin Conservation Dept.
2.	H. C. Jordahl	Woodruff, Wisconsin	Wisconsin Conservation Dept.
3.	R. C. Passmore	Maple, Ontario, Canada	Ontario Dept. of Lands & Forests
4.	D. R. Thompson	Madison, Wisconsin	Wisconsin Conservation Dept.
5.	L. W. Krefting	St. Paul, Minnesota	U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service
6.	F. D. Irving	Antigo, Wisconsin	Wisconsin Conservation Dept.
7.	H. F. Olson	Milwaukee, Wisconsin	U. S. Forest Service
8.	B. J. Bradle	Crandon, Wisconsin	Wisconsin Conservation Dept.
9.	D. L. Corbin	Woodruff, Wisconsin	Wisconsin Conservation Dept.
10.	B. H. Popov	Woodruff, Wisconsin	Wisconsin Conservation Dept.
11.	C. E. Germain	Woodruff, Wisconsin	Wisconsin Conservation Dept.
12.	R. A. MacMullan	The Heights, Michigan	Michigan Dept. of Conservation
13.	I. H. Bartlett	Lansing, Michigan	Michigan Dept. of Conservation
14.	V. E. Gunvalson	Bemidji, Minnesota	Minnesota Dept. of Conservation
15.	D. F. Switzenberg	Shingleton, Michigan	Michigan Dept. of Conservation
16.	H. A. Svenson	Milwaukee, Wisconsin	U. S. Forest Service
17.	M. H. Stenlund	Ely, Minnesota	Minnesota Dept. of Conservation
18.	A. D. Doll	Park Falls, Wisconsin	Wisconsin Conservation Dept.
19.	B. L. Dahlberg	Spooner, Wisconsin	Wisconsin Conservation Dept.
20.	A. P. Boyce	The Heights, Michigan	Michigan Dept. of Conservation
21.	J. P. Duvendeck	The Heights, Michigan	Michigan Dept. of Conservation
22.	A. T. Cringan	Sioux Lookout, Ontario, Canada	Ontario Dept. of Lands & Forests
23.	R. C. Van Etten	Shingleton, Michigan	Michigan Dept. of Conservation
24.	J. M. Keener	Rhinelander, Wisconsin	Wisconsin Conservation Dept.

25.	R. E. Hovind	Woodruff, Wisconsin	Wisconsin Conservation Dept.
26.	J. H. Stoeckeler	Rhinelander, Wisconsin	U. S. Forest Service
27.	D. E. Bulfer	Rhinelander, Wisconsin	U. S. Forest Service
28.	R. C. Iverson	Rhinelander, Wisconsin	U. S. Forest Service