

**23<sup>rd</sup> Midwest Deer-Turkey Group**  
**Blue Springs Scout Reserve, Acton, Ontario.**  
**August 15-18, 1999**

Plenary presentations were given on the ecology of Ontario and attempts to reintroduce elk to Ontario. A few elk still exist from reintroduction efforts prior to the 1950s. Six areas were identified as potential reintroduction sites. Reintroductions began in 1998 when 47 animals were moved from Alberta. Nine died in the holding enclosure prior to release and 2 more died post release. Twenty-six animals from the 1998 release are still alive with functioning transmitters. In 1999, 69 animals were moved including 20 calves. Calves suffered high mortality. Thirty-nine elk, but only 2 calves, are still alive.

Game farming was the topic of considerable discussion. Ontario doesn't want to release elk in areas with known game farms and is developing a protocol for management of escapes. One Ontario farm had TB and was depopulated. Ontario allows game farms for production of meat or velvet but does not allow game ranches (trophy hunts under wire). Michigan has over 500 enclosures for deer and elk. One facility enclosed 2,500 acres including a significant deer yard. Michigan is developing a white paper on high fences. There was considerable discussion on whether the study group should formulate a position statement on game farms but the conclusion was that it should be left up to individual states.

Various states are experimenting or planning to experiment with using point-of-sale systems for registering deer. Ohio tried it for turkeys and it was a nightmare.

**Ontario** has developed a deer management decision support system and a workbook and source book for managers to aid them in using the decision support system. Copies can be obtained for cost of duplication. Ontario maintains a network of snow sampling stations, record depth and crust. Uses data from snow network to determine if there is need for emergency feeding.

**South Dakota:** Two mild winters have allowed herds to build and the legislature is upset about increases in depredation. The legislature added a \$5 surcharge to big game licenses with 50% for increased access and 50% for damage payments.

**Ohio:** Because of abuses of out-of-season shooting permits, Ohio has switched to in-season permits. Ohio developed a good field guide for determining which species are causing agricultural damage. Ohio had aggressive harvests in 1996 and 1997 but the 1998 harvest was reduced 23% by more conservative regulations. They are planning a conservative harvest for 1999.

**Indiana:** Harvest was down 15% and hunters are upset, claiming there are no deer left. They are reducing antlerless quotas. Indiana is confronting serious anti-hunting protests in the urban areas south of Lake Michigan.

**Missouri:** Reported an EHD outbreak in 1998, previous outbreak was in 1988. Expect may have had 20% mortality. Only 4-6% of deer showed antibodies for EHD, suspect most infected deer died. Missouri is in the third year of an urban deer study with about 100 deer collared/year. Mortality is higher for males than females and higher for yearlings than adults. Deer-vehicle accidents are the primary cause of death. Implemented a trap and move program to a wildlife area. Suffered 20% mortality due to capture myopathy.

**Michigan:** Legislature gave DNR authority to regulate feeding. Banned feeding in TB area regulated it elsewhere. Differentiated between recreational feeding (2 gallons/day within 100 yards of a residence) and supplemental feeding to maintain the population (limited to Upper Peninsula, permit required, ¼ mile from highway, 1 mile from livestock or agricultural crops, pelleted rations). The Commission approved a no spike rule for 3 DMUs and a 3-point/side rule for 1 DMU over department opposition.

**Illinois:** Lease hunting is increasing in West Central Illinois. Outfitters are leasing 1,000s of acres from landowners and selling leases to hunters. Some EHD reported.

**Iowa:** EHD reported from 35 counties in southern part of state. The deer herd has been reduced and they may be near goal. Some 2,500 hunters participate in a prebow season youth deer hunt. Controlled bow hunts have been successful in reducing deer populations in some urban areas. Iowa City has contracted with commercial sharpshooters.

**Kansas:** Deer herd continues to grow. Legislature is concerned about deer-vehicle accidents but archers claim herd is going down but observations on archery survey are up. Expanding their January hunt from 2 days to 10 days.