

Midwest Deer and Wild Turkey Study Group Meeting
Bethel Horizons, WI
August 24-27, 2003

The plenary session featured presentations on the history of Wisconsin's turkey restoration program and deer management program. These were followed by an overview of the Wisconsin CWD management program, a description of the 2002 surveillance efforts and results, the initial epidemiological analysis of the Wisconsin outbreak, an assessment of the 2002 control disease efforts, an overview of the Illinois situation, a genetic analysis of the prion protein in Wisconsin deer, hunter's response to CWD in Illinois and Wisconsin, and the operational challenges of CWD management. Additional presentations in the deer concurrent session addressed the use of sterilization for urban deer control and the influence of landscape characteristics on deer abundance in Missouri state parks. Presentations in the turkey concurrent session included reports on population dynamics research in Wisconsin, all day turkey hunting, human dimensions of turkey hunting, crop depredation, harvest registration and data collection, and youth turkey hunts. A field trip was conducted through the Wisconsin CWD disease eradication zone with presentations about ongoing field research, landowner outreach programs, and CWD sample collection and processing.

State Reports

Illinois: 2002 harvest ~ 160,000 highest ever. Taking a more aggressive approach to harvest with change in administration. There is high demand from non-residents for permits and land access, esp. in west-central Illinois. Lease prices are increasing. Yearling buck percent in 2001 statewide firearm harvest was 47%.

CWD: CWD confirmed on November 1, 2002 based on testing of a suspect animal. Approximately 4,000 deer tested during firearm season, 6 tested positive. Two clusters of infection were identified. Additional samples were collected in February and March from 185 deer, 5 positive. Two additional suspect animals were collected and tested positive. A total of 14 positives have been identified as of April 2003. Prevalence in the Boone-Winnebago area for adult deer is estimated to be 6.0% \pm 4.0.

Indiana: 2002 harvest: 104,428. Yearling buck percent was 53%. Changed bag limit for antlered deer to 1 in all seasons in response to demands from trophy hunters. Reduced antlered harvest in archery season by 38%, increased harvest in firearm season by 10%, net result was a 2% reduction in antlered harvest. Seeing increased demand for high-fence hunting. CWD: a total of 1,176 usable samples were tested, 0 positives.

Kansas: 2002 harvest 82,912 down from peak of ~111,000 in 2000. Had aggressive antlerless harvests past 4-5 years, herd has stabilized or declined slightly. Hunter pressures to reduce/eliminate antlerless harvest. High demand for non-resident permits. 50% of non-resident permits are issued to landowners who can resale them. Bring \$800/permit on e-Bay. Residents are losing places to hunt to guides and outfitters. Outfitters control 5-6% of state. CWD: ~2,300 deer tested to date, 0 positives. Plan to test ~2,300 in 2003.

Michigan: 2002 harvest ~476,000. Conflicts between DNR and Ag over high fences. Baiting restricted to 2 gallons spread over 10'x10' area, banned in 7 county TB area. Recreational feeding banned in 7 county TB area and volume regulated elsewhere. Supplemental feeding (to help deer survive severe winters) was banned statewide in 2003, opposed by MUCC. Has 9 QDM antler point restriction test areas. TB prevalence has stabilized and area is not expanding but prevalence has not declined, 18,069 deer tested for TB in 2002, 51 positive. Using PDAs for deer aging, performance slowed by cold weather. Developing a Deer Management Information System for field access to historic data. Developing habitat models and cultural carrying capacity estimates for population goals. CWD: ~4,300 deer and 117 elk tested in 2002, 0 positives. Plan to test 3,700 deer in 2003.

Minnesota: 2002 harvest ~222,000. Population continuing to increase after 5 mild winters during the past 6 years, need to increase antlerless deer harvest. Available permits exceed demand. Shifted from lottery for all permits to system of 3 classes of units: 1) lottery units (apply for 1 either-sex permits), 2) managed units (purchase 1 either-sex permit and 1 deer management permit), and 3) intensive units (purchase 1 either-sex permit and up to 4 intensive harvest permits). Expanding youth hunting opportunities. Continuing test of POS system for harvest registration. Expect to be operational statewide in 2004. Reviewing DMU boundaries based on land management planning landscapes prior to public round table meetings to determine deer population goals. Estimated prehunt population ~1.1 million. CWD: ~4,500 deer and 117 elk tested in 2002, 0 positives. Plan to test 13,000 deer in 2003. Have adopted carcass import restrictions.

Missouri: 2002 harvest ~279,500. Attempting to increase antlerless harvests to reduce populations in urban and agricultural areas. Statewide population stable, above goal in northern agricultural region, at or below goal in southern Missouri. Hunter population aging, interest in killing deer declining. Increased demand for older bucks. Want to shift harvest from bucks to does. Will expend antlerless harvest opportunity in 2003 (more permits, more days). Plan to begin experimental regulations in trial areas of 6-7 DMUs in 2004. Considering earn-a-buck or antler point restrictions. Will do extensive deer aging and hunter and landowner attitude surveys. Extended seasons seem to only shift antlerless harvest not increase it. First year of telecheck experiment failed when system crashed in first day. Hoping for better results this year. Estimated prehunt population ~1 million. CWD: ~6,000 deer tested in 2002, 0 positives. Plan to test 6,000 deer in 2003.

Nebraska: 2002 harvest ~53,600. Concern that deer population has exceeded hunter demand, permits going unsold. CWD: ~4,400 deer tested in 2002, 24 new positives for a total of 27 since testing began. Third area identified. Little demand for deer permits in CWD areas, no progress in reducing populations. Plan to test 5-6,000 deer in 2003.

North Dakota: 2002 harvest ~81,900. Lots of deer, offering more seasons to make more permits available. Statewide 76% hunter success. CWD: Tested 400 deer in 2002, 0 positives. Plan to test 1,200 in 2003.

Ohio: 2002 harvest ~204,600, a new record due to record permit sales, expanded antlerless opportunities, unrestricted Sunday hunting, and ideal hunting conditions during the season. Yearling buck percent was 60%. Reported deer-vehicle accidents 30,300. Record of 1,389 crop damage complaints. EHD outbreak in 2002 with 39 carcasses found among a 2-mile stretch of stream. Estimate 500-1,000 deer died in 1 township. 74% decline in local harvest. PZP research continues. Conducting a fawn mortality study. CWD: Tested 650 deer in 2002, 0 positives. Plan to test >450 in 2003.

Ontario: Bait is legal but most don't, hound are legal. Considerable winter feeding. Deer damage has been a problem near Ottawa, landowner kill permits were too restrictive and system is being liberalized. CWD: Tested 200 deer in 2002, 0 positives.

South Dakota: 2002 harvest ~62,600. Lots of deer, trying to develop ways to expand antlerless harvest. Added 11 days to end of season, increased antlerless kill by 16%. CWD: since 1997 3,859 wild deer and elk have been tested, 15 positives detected. Will provide hunter service testing with local vet collecting the samples.