

**25<sup>rd</sup> Midwest Deer-Turkey Group**  
**Dixon Springs Agricultural Experiment Station, Dixon Springs, Illinois.**  
**August 19-22, 2001**

Plenary presentations were given on the history of the Midwest Deer-Turkey Group, an overview of Illinois, the role of disease in deer and turkey management, and the role of constituency organizations. A mechanical scarecrow (inflatable dummy with strobe light and siren) and the Q-net were demonstrated. The Q-net was powered by 4 bungee-cords and remotely released. The intent was for trapping nuisance wild turkeys in urban areas where rocket-nets could not be used.

The pros and cons of QDM were discussed. Pros included potential for increased doe harvest, increased number of older bucks, hunters more educated and involved in management, and landowners placing a greater value on wildlife. Cons included increased privatization of wildlife; the big buck craze and diminished value of smaller bucks, does, and fawns; potential for reduced doe harvest; dissemination of inaccurate information on local deer biology, habitat suitability, etc. It was suggested that Midwestern agencies take a more active role in educating the participants in QDM by getting involved with QDMA activities and developing educational materials targeted at landowners, hunters, and the nonhunting public.

Urban deer management in northeastern Illinois was described. Four counties are open to archery hunting but not gun hunting. Deer population control permits are issued to 10-13 communities/year for 15-30 sites. Sharpshooting is the primary control mechanism. The number of communities participating has declined recently as some have reduced deer populations to goal levels, others have suffered manpower limitations, and others have yielded to political protests. IDNR provides extension services with assistance in vegetation and deer population monitoring and public education. IDNR also regulates control activities and conducts proficiency testing of shooters. Control costs vary among communities from ~\$100-500/deer. Up to 50,000 pounds of venison have been donated per year. The number of deer-vehicle accidents in the region has declined from the peak in 1992.

The status of immunocontraception research was discussed. Proposed research in Indiana is now in the courts over permit restrictions required by the IDNR due to concerns for human safety if treated deer are consumed. Indiana originally proposed a policy of not allowing experimental drugs for free-ranging wildlife. This was ultimately overruled and a permit for contraception research was granted but conditions were attached requiring treated deer to be penned for a minimum of 30 days post treatment. On Fire Island, the rate of growth of the deer population changed from an 11% increase per year to a 23% decrease per year apparently due to a combination of continued low birth rate and an increase in mortality rates. In Mumfort Cove, Connecticut, residents voted 2:1 to implement a deer hunt in the community rather than use immunocontraception. The controlled hunt removed 23 of 25 does and fawns in 6 days of hunting. I updated the group on the River Hills proposals and the policy regarding contraception research developed by the WDNR's Ad Hoc Wildlife Contraception Committee.

Chronic Wasting Disease has been found in several captive elk herds in Nebraska since 1997. In 2000, CWD was detected in a hunter harvested wild mule deer in southwestern Nebraska, near the infected areas of Colorado and Wyoming. Collections were made in a 900 sq. mile area to test for CWD and other diseases and parasites and to reduce the local herd to minimize the rate of spread. One CWD positive mule deer was found among the 89 mule deer and 15 white-tailed deer collected this spring. A total of 869 deer heads have been examined for CWD since 1997. A major collection of hunter-harvested heads is planned for 2001.

Beall Woods Nature Preserve, Illinois. Deer population reduction program began in 1999 with removal of 87 antlerless deer and 35 antlerless deer removed in 2000. The percentage of species of spring forbs grazed declined from 56% to 40%; plant height has increased substantially, as has the percentage of trillium that flowered.

A modeling study of the effect of different antler point restrictions in Illinois indicated that 60% of yearlings would be vulnerable under a 3-point rule and 27% would be vulnerable with a 4-point rule. Antler point restrictions would result in a substantial decrease in total buck harvest.

In Illinois, hunters cannot hunt within 300 yards of an occupied dwelling without permission of the owner. On average 31% of land area was within 300 yards of occupied dwellings. Rural development has the potential to negatively affect harvest efficiency.

### **State Reports**

**Illinois:** 2000 harvest: 149,698 deer. 10% increase from 1999 and 5% greater than previous record harvest in 1995. Sales of nonresident archery permits were increasing 25-30% per year. In one county, half of the archery harvest was by nonresidents. Outfitters were leasing land so it is not available for residents. IDNR increased nonresident fees from \$100 to \$200 for either-sex permits in addition to hunting license. Archery permits were capped at last year's level, issued on a first-come-first-serve basis via telephone (Bass Pro Shop). Callers experienced 45-60 minute holds once their call was answered. Everyone was unhappy.

**Indiana.** 2000 harvest: 44,621 antlered, 54,105 antlerless. Believe population is down 15-20% from peak in mid 1990s. Hunters claim there are no deer. Archers are pushing for QDM. Currently allow 2 bucks per hunter (1 w/ bow, 1 w/ gun). May consider reducing to 1 buck/hunter/year. Nonresident license is \$120. No quota on nonresident harvest.

**Iowa.** 2000 Harvest: 76,341 bucks, 50,786 does. Estimate population is 20% over goal. Nonresident deer license just increased to \$220 for either-sex, \$150 for antlerless only. Limit of 6,000 permits for nonresidents. Using archery hunts for urban deer control, working well.

**Kansas.** No harvest estimates available. The variety of permits has confused hunters to the point that information from report cards cannot be interpreted. Have been sampling hunter-harvested deer for CWD in border area near Colorado. To date, all negative. Nonresident fees: \$65.00 for license, \$205 for either-sex permit, \$10.50 for each additional antlerless-only game tag. Limit of 10% of resident firearms permits for nonresidents.

**Michigan.** 2000 harvest: 285,911 antlered, 255,790 antlerless. Total harvest down somewhat from peak in 1998. Harvest estimates based on questionnaire mailed to 50,000 hunters, 74% response. Continue to use pellet-group survey in UP and TB region. Baiting and feeding is banned in TB counties. TB counties have early and late firearm seasons. Commission wanted hunters to be required to put buck tag on button bucks. Compromised with allowing hunters to tag buck fawns with buck tag if they feel guilty about shooting a buck fawn. Have established goals and objectives for each DMU, most DMUs are now on county lines. May consider earn-a-buck for club country where TB is present. Nonresident fees: \$129 for deer license, \$79 for bonus antlerless license.

**Minnesota.** 2000 Harvest 211,777 total deer (firearms: 102,961 antlered, 88,492 antlerless; archery: 15,776 deer; muzzleloader 4,548 deer). Population in northeastern corner of state recovering from severe winters in 1995-96 and 1996-97. Prehunt 2000 population ~ 960,000. Winter 2000-01 was moderate to moderately severe, some over-winter mortality was observed and production is expected to decline. Electronic licensing became operational in 2000 (experiencing some data management problems with vendor) and electronic registration of deer will be piloted in selected areas in 2001. Revising population goals for DMUs with public roundtables. Nonresident fees: increased from \$110 to \$126, no additional restrictions. Funding graduate project at Southern Illinois University to review deer population models used in Minnesota and elsewhere. Conducting research on cause-specific mortality in selected areas in farmland region. Minnesota is developing a statewide hunter survey to assess attitudes, preferences, and perceptions of deer management; determine hunter satisfaction with current seasons; and desire for change to accommodate hunters wanting more older-aged bucks.

**Missouri.** 2000 harvest: 107,541 antlered, 136,698 antlerless (buck fawns 23% of antlerless harvest). Estimated prehunt 2000 population was 998,000. Overall population is stable but above goal in north and below goal in south. Complaints of hot and cold spots continue. Working to develop local approaches to local problems, perhaps involving landowner cooperatives to develop management objectives and consensus on strategies to resolve local population issues. Monitors population trends with archery observation survey, conservation agent questionnaire, and population modeling. Trap and transport is no longer an option for urban deer control due to concerns for humane treatment of animals and inefficiency of technique. Conducting research on survival of rehabbed orphan fawns. All of the 23 radioed fawns released onto a national wildlife refuge died within 6 months (most died in first 2 weeks due to coyote and bobcat predation). Participating in a long-term multi-state survey of hemorrhagic disease incidence. Investigating the use of fecal glucocorticoid metabolites as a noninvasive

measure of deer stress. Nonresidents: director requested state develop reciprocal costs for nonresident licenses. This would be a logistical nightmare. Will increase fee in 2002 to \$140. There was much discussion that the trend toward higher and higher nonresident fees was counter-productive. Several states commented that most nonresidents were family and friends of residents.

**Nebraska.** 2000 harvest ~10,000 mule deer and ~50,000 white-tailed deer. Using private internet vendor for permit issuance. Permits are printed on home computer. Expecting trouble with counterfeit and duplicate permits. Nonresident hunters increasing 4-500/year. 52% of white-tailed bucks harvested are yearlings. Accidental shooting of mule deer does has been a problem in units open for white-tailed antlerless hunting.

**North Dakota.** 2000 harvest ~63,000 deer (~30,000 antlered, ~33,000 antlerless). Two mild winters have allowed substantial increase in deer populations. Nonresident license fee \$155 + \$10 habitat stamp. Limit of 1% of permits for nonresidents. Some EHD in southwestern portion of ND. State has repurchased licenses from some hunters in affected region.

**Ontario.** 2000 harvest ~ 45,000 deer (~1:1 antlered/antlerless) with 60,000 hunters. Nonresident license fee \$155 + \$35 export fee if successful. Success rates are similar for residents and nonresidents. Hunter numbers declining, looking for ways to recruit additional hunters.

The meeting concluded with a presentation and field demonstration of Horton cross-bows. The winner of the shootoff was a recently retired deer researcher from Rhineland.