QDMA's Whitetail Report 2013

An annual report on the status of white-tailed deer, the foundation of the hunting industry in North America.

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QDMA Mission:
QDMA is dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage.

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Introduction

White-tailed deer are the most important game species in North America. More hunters pursue whitetails than any other species, and whitetail hunters contribute more financially than any other type of hunter. Collectively speaking, whitetails are the foundation of the entire hunting industry.

But how are whitetails doing in your state, province or region? How did your last hunting season compare to previous years or to your neighbor's? Read Part 1 to learn about state/provincial deer harvests during the past three seasons, including the buck harvest by age class and other insights. Find which states/provinces are shooting the most bucks and does, and see what type of aging techniques each state/province uses.

In Part 2, learn about recent trends and the most pressing issues facing whitetails including a compiled list of the top threats to deer management. See how many whitetails are being killed on damage/depredation tags, by deer-vehicle accidents and by disease. Read about hunter success, and see that the number of hunters increased for the first time since 1975! Learn how unprecedented warm weather and high corn prices led to the most acres of corn being planted in 75 years!

In a subsection of Part 2, QDMA explains its stance on captive deer breeding and explores trends and statistics related to the captive cervid industry.

Part 3 is an informative reference section that includes information on producing quality habitat on a budget, forming QDM Cooperatives, and much more.

Part 4 provides an overview of QDMA's REACH program and includes information on our Youth and Land Certification Programs. It also includes valuable directories for QDMA Branches and state/provincial deer project leaders.

Prior *Whitetail Reports* have been quoted, cited, and used as research and reference material by numerous publications, communicators, and deer managers. Due to the response, QDMA enjoys producing this annual report, and we hope you find it helpful and informative.

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Information & Assistance

Members of the media who have questions about the *Whitetail Report*, need additional information, or need sources for stories on whitetail biology or management, can contact QDMA's Education & Outreach staff at any time using the information below, or contact the National Office at (800) 209-3337.

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About the Deer Harvest Data in This Report

The 2012-13 deer season is closed or nearing so for states/provinces across the whitetail's range, and biologists will be crunching data in the coming months to assess the outcome of this past season. For the 2013 Whitetail Report, QDMA compared harvest data from the three most recent seasons available 2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12. We acquired harvest data from all 37 states in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast (see map) that comprise the majority of whitetail habitat in the U.S. We also acquired data from six of eight Canadian provinces. The following data are from each state and/or provincial wildlife agency. Agencies use different techniques to collect this data, and some collect more data than others. Analyses among agencies may not always compare "apples to apples," but each state/province provided their best possible data. Also, analyses across years should provide valid comparisons for individual agencies. An important note about the "per square mile" figures presented in the following pages is that some states reported total area for these statistics while others reported deer habitat (and some differ on what was included in deer habitat). Therefore, we calculated per square mile estimates using each state/province's total area including water bodies, urban areas, etc. This will allow future estimates to be very comparable across years for a given state/province, but not always across states/provinces.

Antlered Buck Harvest

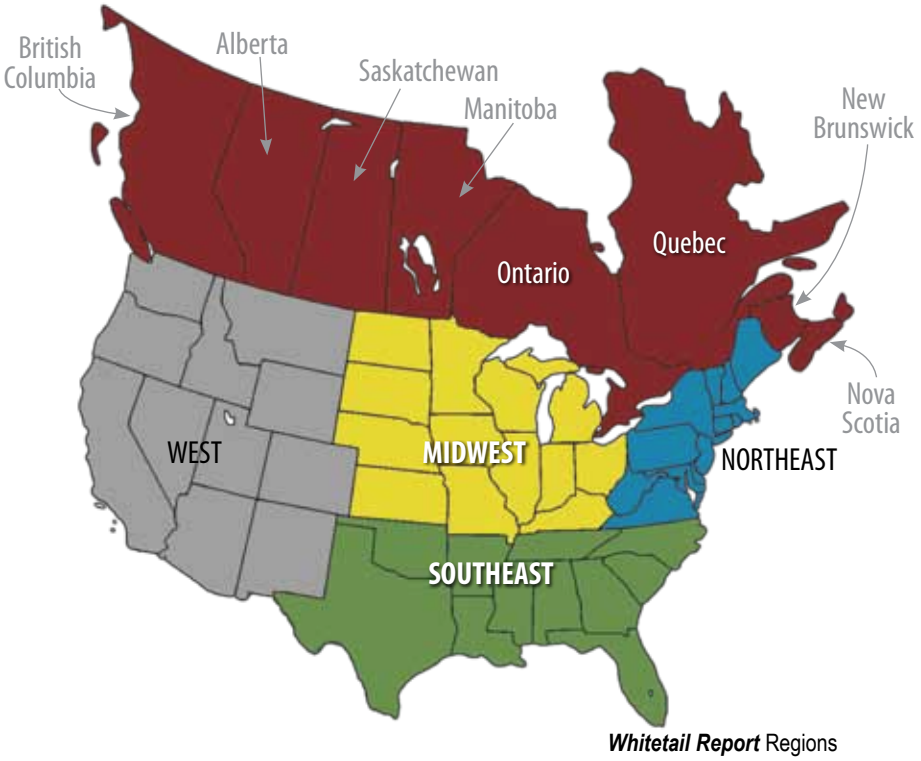
With respect to antlered buck harvest (those 1½ years or older), the 2011-12 season was nearly identical to the 2010-11 season for many hunters in the U.S. and Canada. Twenty of 37 states (54 percent) in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast shot more antlered bucks in 2011. Three of five (60 percent) provinces also shot more antlered bucks in 2011. In total, the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast regions tagged over 2.8 million bucks, and another 118,471 bucks were taken in Canada. Texas continued its tradition of harvesting the most with 309,207 antlered bucks. Michigan was next with 212,791, and Wisconsin was third with 150,839 antlered bucks.

In the Midwest, hunters shot 1,022,089 antlered bucks, nearly identical to the number in 2010. Missouri hunters shot 9 percent more bucks in 2011, and Kentucky hunters shot 11 percent more. On the flip side, Iowa and Ohio hunters shot 5 percent fewer bucks than in 2010, and North Dakota shot 27 percent fewer. North Dakota was hit hard with hemorrhagic disease during summer 2011 and that had a major impact on the season's deer harvest. North Dakota Game and Fish even recalled some hunting licenses in the western part of the state prior to the season to protect the hard-hit deer herd. Numerically, Michigan shot the most bucks (212,791), while Wisconsin (2.3) and Michigan (2.2) reported the most bucks per square mile. These are incredible buck harvest rates and are nearly double the Midwest average of 1.2 bucks per square mile. The Midwest ranged from harvesting 0.3 bucks per square mile in North Dakota to 2.3 per square mile in Wisconsin.

In the Northeast, hunters shot 510,587 antlered bucks. This was 7 percent higher than in 2010, as nine of 13 states shot more bucks in 2011. Vermont and Rhode Island hunters shot 13 and 25 percent fewer bucks in 2011 respectively, while Connecticut and West Virginia hunters shot 18 and 34 percent more, respectively. Numerically, Pennsylvania shot the most bucks (127,540), followed by New York (110,002) and Virginia (98,874). The Northeast averaged shooting 1.7 bucks per square mile and ranged from 0.4 bucks in Maine to 3.4 per square mile in Maryland.

Of the 37 states we received data from for the past two seasons, 54 percent of them shot more antlered bucks in 2011 than in 2010.

In the Southeast, hunters shot 1,289,181 antlered bucks. This was 8 percent fewer than in 2010. Seven of 11 states shot fewer bucks in 2011 than 2010, and their decreases ranged from -1 percent in North Carolina to -14 percent



Whitetail Report Regions

in Florida and Georgia. Conversely, four states shot more and their increases ranged from +1 percent in Alabama to +7 percent in Tennessee. Numerically, Texas shot the most bucks (309,207) with Georgia (133,520), Alabama (130,500), Mississippi (127,416), and South Carolina (108,907) also surpassing the 100,000 mark. The Southeast averaged shooting 2.0 bucks per square mile and ranged from 0.9 bucks in Oklahoma to a North American high of 3.6 per square mile in South Carolina. Unfortunately, South Carolina does not collect age structure data on the deer harvest so it couldn't estimate the percentage of the harvest that were yearlings.

In Canada, hunters shot 118,471 antlered bucks in 2011. Ontario shot the most (35,350), followed by Quebec (28,124) and Saskatchewan (25,700). From 2010 to 2011, Nova Scotia shot 8 percent fewer bucks while Saskatchewan shot 4 percent more. Nova Scotia shot the most bucks per square mile (0.3), and this was three times the Canadian average. While the bucks killed per square mile in Canada is much lower than each U.S. region, it is important to remember that provinces are at the northern limit of whitetail range, portions of the provinces are north of whitetail range, and they experience severe winters and short growing seasons. Maine and North Dakota both border Canada and have similar per square mile buck harvest rates.

Top-5 States
2011 Antlered Buck Harvest

Texas	309,207
Michigan	212,791
Wisconsin	150,839
Georgia	133,520
Alabama	130,500

Top-5 States
2011 Buck Harvest/Square Mile

South Carolina	3.6
Maryland	3.4
West Virginia	3.2
Pennsylvania	2.8
Mississippi	2.7

Estimated Buck Harvest
Antlered Bucks 1½ Years and Older

State/Province	2009	2010	2011	% Change '10 to '11	Bucks PSM**
Illinois	69,697	69,139	70,513	2	1.2
Indiana	52,981	53,007	50,717	-4	1.4
Iowa	49,612	48,749	46,212	-5	0.8
Kansas	39,629	43,047	45,025	5	0.5
Kentucky	55,290	59,170	65,932	11	1.6
Michigan	215,120	212,341	212,791	0	2.2
Minnesota	94,367	88,000	85,500	-3	1.0
Missouri	107,150	104,607	114,031	9	1.6
Nebraska	34,768	37,967	37,160	-2	0.5
North Dakota	29,707	30,900	22,688	-27	0.3
Ohio	93,905	86,017	81,721	-5	1.8
South Dakota	40,333	36,377	38,960	7	0.5
Wisconsin	134,696	148,378	150,839	2	2.3
Midwest Total	**1,017,255**	**1,017,699**	**1,022,089**	**0**	**1.2**
Connecticut	5,534	5,299	6,256	18	1.1
Delaware	3,461	3,993	3,948	-1	2.0
Maine	11,141	12,230	13,056	7	0.4
Maryland	32,646	32,062	33,104	3	3.4
Massachusetts	5,444	5,703	6,190	9	0.6
New Hampshire	5,940	6,015	6,548	9	0.7
New Jersey	19,181	19,925	18,575	-7	2.1
New York	102,057	106,960	110,002	3	2.0
Pennsylvania	108,330	122,930	127,540	4	2.8
Rhode Island	1,089	1,394	1,039	-25	0.9
Vermont	8,039	8,430	7,374	-13	0.8
Virginia	108,623	95,831	98,874	3	2.5
West Virginia	80,036	58,416	78,081	34	3.2
Northeast Total	**491,521**	**479,188**	**510,587**	**7**	**1.7**
Alabama	115,200	129,000	130,500	1	2.5
Arkansas	88,710	82,973	85,284	3	1.6
Florida	*	102,862	88,912	-14	1.7
Georgia	140,142	155,255	133,520	-14	2.3
Louisiana	81,015	84,425	73,425	-13	1.8
Mississippi	122,705	142,671	127,416	-11	2.7
North Carolina	81,283	80,430	80,014	-1	1.6
Oklahoma	65,755	63,314	66,320	5	0.9
South Carolina	120,356	116,755	108,907	-7	3.6
Tennessee	83,536	79,859	85,676	7	2.0
Texas	300,575	357,378	309,207	-13	1.2
Southeast Total	**1,199,277**	**1,394,922**	**1,289,181**	**-8**	**2.0**
U.S. Total	**2,708,053**	**2,891,809**	**2,821,857**	**-2**	**1.7**
Alberta	*	*	19,840	*	0.1
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	16,769	*	*	*
New Brunswick	3,845	3,914	3,972	1	0.1
Nova Scotia	7,199	5,938	5,485	-8	0.3
Ontario	*	35,000	35,350	1	0.1
Quebec	24,133	29,726	28,124	-5	0.0
Saskatchewan	*	24,800	25,700	4	0.1
Canada Total	**35,177**	**116,147**	**118,471**	**2**	**0.1**

*data not available/provided **PSM: Per Square Mile in 2011

Age Structure of the Buck Harvest

The QDMA also acquired the age structure of the buck harvest data for most states and provinces. Twenty-seven states reported the percentage of their antlered buck harvest that was 1½ years old, and 23 states reported the percentage that was also 2½ and 3½ years or older. In Canada only New Brunswick and Nova Scotia reported age structure data, so this analysis will be limited to the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast U.S. In 2011, the average percentage of the antlered buck harvest that was 1½ years old was 39 percent, which is similar to the lowest national percentage ever reported in 2010. The line graph below shows how the yearling percentage of the antlered buck harvest in the U.S. has changed during the past 22 years.

In 2011, the average percentage of the antlered buck harvest that was 1½ years old was 39 percent, which is similar the lowest national percentage ever reported (38 percent) in 2010!

In 2011, Arkansas averaged the fewest yearlings (10 percent of antlered buck harvest) and New Jersey reported the most (62 percent of antlered buck harvest). Other notables include Mississippi (13 percent), Louisiana (18 percent from DMAP areas) and Texas (21 percent). Texas shot over 300,000 bucks and only 1 in 5 was 1½ years old.

Alabama (27 to 23 percent) and Georgia (47 to 44 percent) had the biggest declines in percentage of yearlings from 2010 to 2011. Rhode Island (22 to 31 percent), Missouri (17 to 25 percent in APR counties) and Wisconsin (47 to 54 percent) reported the largest increases in yearling buck harvest percentage from 2010 to 2011. Nebraska's drop to only 23 percent yearlings in the buck harvest makes them the lowest in the Midwest. Rhode Island increased the percentage of yearlings in 2011 but still retains the lowest percentage of yearlings in the Northeast at less than 1 in 3 bucks. Arkansas led the Southeast and the nation with only 1 in 10 bucks being 1½-years-old. Finally, New York reduced the percentage of yearlings in the buck harvest for the third year in a row, and Nebraska reduced it for an astounding sixth year in a row! These are the longest streaks in the U.S., and kudos to the Empire and Cornhusker states. The Southeast also reduced its region-wide average for the second straight year to 25 percent. Three of four bucks shot in the Southeast are 2½ years or older.

The average percentage of the antlered buck harvest that was 2½ years old was similar in 2010 (30 percent) and 2011 (29 percent). In 2011, this statistic ranged from 17 percent in Mississippi to 38 percent in Indiana and 43 percent in Nebraska.

Twenty-three of 27 states (85 percent) that we received age structure data from were able to also provide the percentage of bucks 3½ years and older in the harvest; kudos to these states for their data collection efforts. The average percentage of the antlered buck harvest that was 3.5 years and older was 33 percent in 2011, similar to the 32 percent in 2010. This is higher than the percentage of 2.5 year olds and not much lower than the percentage of yearlings. This is a testament to how far we've come as hunters and managers in the past decade. This statistic ranged from 8 percent in New Jersey to 67 percent in Arkansas and 70 percent in Mississippi. Mississippi also reported that 40 percent of their buck harvest was 4½ years or older! Other notables included Oklahoma (51 percent), Texas (60 percent) and Louisiana (64 percent in DMAP areas). Twelve of 20 states (60 percent) with comparable data for 2010 and 2011 shot an equal or higher percentage of 3½ years and older bucks in 2011. Regionally, the Northeast (23 percent) and Midwest (24 percent) had similar percentages while the Southeast averaged more than twice the percentage (51 percent) of bucks in these older age classes. Amazingly, over half of the 1.2 million bucks shot in the Southeast in 2011 were 3½ years or older.

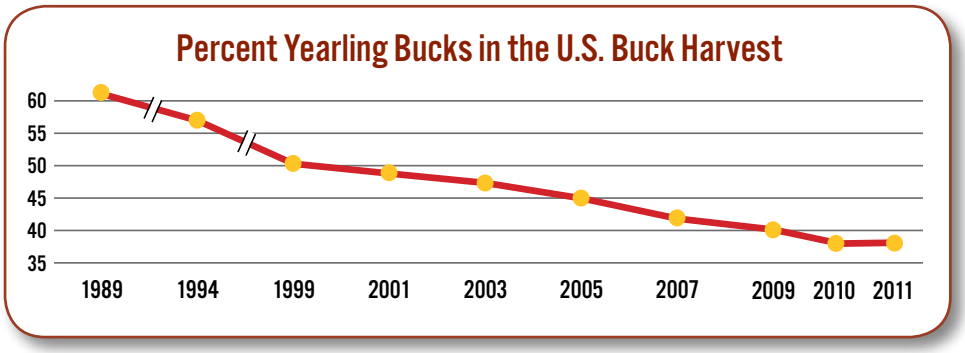
Top-6 States With Lowest Yearling-Buck Harvest Rates

State	2011 Percentage
Arkansas	10
Mississippi	13
Louisiana *	18
Texas	21
Alabama *^	23
Nebraska	23

Top-5 States With Highest Harvest of 3½-year-old and Older Bucks

State	2011 Percentage
Mississippi	70
Arkansas	67
Louisiana *	64
Texas	60
Oklahoma	51

* DMAP areas ^ Check stations



Buck Harvest by Age Class

	1½ Years Old			2½ Years Old			3½ Years Old		
State/Province	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
Illinois	39	39	41	*	*	*	*	*	*
Indiana	36	40	39	40	38	38	24	22	23
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	*	9	*	*	35	*	*	56	*
Kentucky	40	33	*	38	41	*	22	26	*
Michigan	52	57	59	28	25	24	20	18	17
Minnesota	41	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Missouri	19(51)**	17(45)**	25(48)**	44(31)**	50(35)**	37(25)**	37(19)**	33(20)**	38(27)**
Nebraska	31	25	23	*	*	43	*	*	34
North Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ohio	49	47	47	32	31	31	19	22	22
South Dakota	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wisconsin	54	47	54	26	30	30	20	23	16
Midwest Average	**43**	**38**	**43**	**34**	**34**	**33**	**23**	**28**	**24**
Connecticut	*	40	44	*	*	*	*	*	*
Delaware	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Maine	44	48	54	25	25	25	31	27	21
Maryland	57	53	57	*	*	*	*	*	*
Massachusetts	49	40	44	28	31	29	23	29	27
New Hampshire	45	46	49	27	26	22	28	28	29
New Jersey	60	59	62	31	32	30	9	9	8
New York	59	55	54	27	28	28	14	17	18
Pennsylvania	49	48	50	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rhode Island	27	22	31	38	37	37	36	41	32
Vermont	50	*	40	30	*	35	20	*	25
Virginia	48	49***	48***	34	31***	31***	18	20***	21***
West Virginia	27	*	38	52	*	33	21	*	29
Northeast Average	**49**	**49**	**48**	**30**	**29**	**30**	**22**	**22**	**23**
Alabama	25	27***	23***	35	30***	30***	40	43***	47***
Arkansas	10	10	10	26	22	23	64	68	67
Florida	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Georgia	37	47	44	29	33	30	34	20	26
Louisiana	16***	17***	18***	19***	19***	18***	65***	65***	64***
Mississippi	14***	13	13	20***	17	17	66***	70	70
North Carolina	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Oklahoma	*	23	25	*	26	24	*	51	51
South Carolina	65	*	*	20	*	*	15	*	*
Tennessee	38	42	43	42	38	36	20	20	21
Texas	*	22	21	*	19	19	*	59	60
Southeast Average	**32**	**27**	**25**	**29**	**27**	**25**	**40**	**47**	**51**
U.S. Average	**41**	**38**	**39**	**31**	**30**	**29**	**32**	**32**	**33**
Alberta	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	39	54	60	23	15	14	38	31	26
Nova Scotia	26	*	51	22	*	20	52	*	29
Ontario	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Quebec	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Canada Average	**33**	**54**	**56**	**23**	**15**	**17**	**45**	**31**	**28**

* data not provided/available
** data from antler-point-restriction counties (non-antler-point-restriction counties)
*** data from check stations and/or DMAP areas

Aging Harvested Deer

Ever wonder how deer managers estimate age of harvested deer? Ever wonder how correct their estimates may be? There are two primary techniques used to assign a specific age class and they both involve a deer's teeth. The tooth replacement and wear (TRW) technique uses tooth eruption and wear patterns of a deer's molars and premolars while the cementum annuli (CA) technique uses layers of cementum laid in the root of a deer's incisors. Both have advantages and disadvantages.

The CA aging technique is based on the annual addition of cementum, a specialized calcified substance deposited on the roots of teeth in many mammals. Layers of cementum produce "rings" similar to those in trees; a darkly stained ring, or "annulus," is formed during winter stress, whereas lightly stained rings are formed during spring and summer. Because winters are milder in the southern U.S., the dark winter annuli often are less distinct, which can affect accuracy.

Previous research has revealed that the accuracy of the CA technique far exceeds that of the TRW technique after age 3½. However, through age 2½, TRW is more accurate than CA. Be sure to download our free guide to the TRW technique at QDMA.com. Both techniques are roughly equal in accuracy at age 3½.

The high degree of accuracy obtained from the TRW technique in young deer can be attributed to the tooth replacement portion of the technique. From birth until about 20 months of age, whitetails gain new teeth and replace temporary or "milk" teeth with permanent ones in an established order. This allows trained observers to assign deer to three age groups – fawns, 1½, and 2½-plus – with great accuracy.

The reasons why CA is more accurate than TRW after age 3½ also are clear. First, there are relatively few people trained in this technique, thus reducing potential observer bias. Second, tooth wear in deer, like humans, is highly variable, and this variation increases with age. Finally, the CA technique is not influenced by habitat quality as can occur with the TRW technique.

Despite the advantages of CA, especially with older deer, there are a few drawbacks. Unlike the TRW technique which can be done at the hunting camp, the CA technique requires samples to be submitted to a lab, with results often taking several weeks or months. Additionally, with sufficient numbers of samples, the costs can add up.

The vast majority of states and provinces use TRW (see chart), but determining which aging technique is right for you depends on many factors. In most situations, the TRW technique, if applied correctly and consistently, is adequate for most management situations. This is because most deer harvested are typically 3½ years of age or younger, ages in which the accuracy of the TRW technique is satisfactory. However, if you are in a program where bucks commonly reach 4½ to 7½ years of age, the CA technique is a better choice than TRW.

Aging Techniques By State/Province Wildlife Agencies

Midwest	
Illinois	TRW, beam circumference &/or face length
Indiana	TRW
Iowa	*
Kansas	*
Kentucky	*
Michigan	TRW
Minnesota	*
Missouri	CA
Nebraska	Both TRW and CA
North Dakota	*
Ohio	TRW
South Dakota	*
Wisconsin	TRW
Northeast	
Connecticut	TRW
Delaware	TRW
Maine	Both TRW and CA
Maryland	TRW
Massachusetts	TRW
New Hampshire	TRW
New Jersey	Both TRW and CA
New York	TRW
Pennsylvania	TRW
Rhode Island	TRW
Vermont	CA
Virginia	TRW
West Virginia	TRW
Southeast	
Alabama	TRW
Arkansas	TRW
Florida	TRW
Georgia	TRW
Louisiana	TRW
Mississippi	TRW
North Carolina	TRW
Oklahoma	TRW
South Carolina	TRW
Tennessee	TRW
Texas	TRW
Canada	
Alberta	*
British Columbia	*
Manitoba	*
New Brunswick	Both TRW and CA
Nova Scotia	TRW
Ontario	*
Quebec	TRW
Saskatchewan	*

* data not available

QDMA's Recommendations

QDMA recommends all deer managers collect age structure data from harvested deer. Age structure data is vital for assessing a program's success and determining when adjustments are necessary. Harvest data (e.g., weight, lactation status, antler parameters) is much more meaningful when assigned to an age class, and management decisions are much more defendable.

Aging Tips

For TRW, be sure the same trained individuals age your jawbones year after year to reduce observer bias, have an odd number of "agers" in case a tie needs to be broken, and compile all jawbones from one year and analyze them all at once post-season (instead of periodically through the fall).

For CA, use caution when extracting the incisor teeth and refrain from scraping any attached flesh from the root, as this can damage the sample.

Antlerless Harvest

Antlerless harvests vary widely among states/provinces and years due to differences in deer density, productivity, a state/province's goals (reducing, stabilizing, or increasing the deer population), weather and other factors. However, we can learn much about an agency's management program by comparing the antlerless and antlered buck harvest. Continuing with the analysis of states in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast, hunters from these regions harvested 3,408,668 antlerless deer in 2011. This was 3 percent below the 2010 antlerless harvest but slightly above the 2009 harvest. Overall, Georgia topped the list with 277,961 antlerless deer; Texas followed with 265,601, Pennsylvania was third with 208,660, Alabama was fourth with 206,500, and Michigan was fifth with 203,930 antlerless deer. These five states alone shot nearly 1.2 million antlerless deer, and that equaled 34 percent of the entire U.S. antlerless harvest! Interestingly, three of the top four antlerless harvests were all in the Southeast; the region that has recently expressed the most concern regarding additive impacts by coyote predation.

Maryland harvested the most antlerless deer per square mile (6.3), followed by Delaware (4.9), Georgia (4.8), and Pennsylvania (4.5). These are astounding harvest rates, and these states are shooting more antlerless deer per square mile than some areas have for a standing crop of bucks, does and fawns combined! Regionally, the Southeast (2.3) and Northeast (2.4) averaged shooting more antlerless deer per square mile than the Midwest (1.6). This is at least the third year in a row where the Midwest shot fewer antlerless deer per square mile than the Northeast or Southeast.

Also regionally, **the Midwest** shot 2 percent more antlerless deer in 2011 (1,300,733) than in 2010 (1,281,421). Numerically, North Dakota (29,823) shot the fewest antlerless deer and Michigan (203,930) shot the most. Other notables included Kansas increased its antlerless harvest 16 percent from 2010, and Minnesota increased it 36 percent. Ohio shot the most per square mile (3.1), followed by Wisconsin (3.0). North Dakota harvested the fewest per square mile (0.4), followed by Nebraska (0.5).

Twelve of 13 (92 percent) Midwest states shot more antlerless deer than antlered bucks. Only Kentucky shot more antlered bucks than antlerless deer. The Midwest averaged shooting 1.3 antlerless deer per antlered buck, and this ranged from 0.8 in Kentucky to 1.7 in Ohio.

The Northeast shot 658,540 antlerless deer in 2011, 5 percent more than in 2010.

Top-5 States
2011 Antlerless Harvest

Georgia	277,961
Texas	265,601
Pennsylvania	208,660
Alabama	206,500
Michigan	203,930

Top-5 States
2011 Antlerless Harvest Per Square Mile

Maryland	6.3
Delaware	4.9
Georgia	4.8
Pennsylvania	4.5
Alabama	4.0

Top-5 States
2011 Antlerless Harvest Per Antlered Buck Harvested

Georgia	3.5
Delaware	2.4
Maryland	1.9
New Jersey	1.7
Ohio	1.7

Numerically, Rhode Island (1,379) took the fewest while Pennsylvania (208,660) took the most antlerless deer. Rhode Island (+25 percent) and West Virginia (+38 percent) had the largest increases, while New Jersey (-11 percent) and Vermont (-33 percent) had the largest declines from 2010 to 2011. Maryland shot the most antlerless deer per square mile (6.3), followed by Delaware (4.9) and Pennsylvania (4.5). Northern New England averaged the fewest at 0.2 in Maine, and 0.5 antlerless deer per square mile in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont; a testament to the differences in deer management programs in states with severe winters.

Out of the 13 Midwest states, only Kentucky shot more antlered bucks than antlerless deer.

Eight of 13 (62 percent) Northeastern states shot more antlerless deer than antlered bucks. However, four of five states that shot more bucks are in New England. For the third year in a row, West Virginia was the only Northeastern state not in the extreme northeast portion of this region that harvested fewer antlerless deer than antlered bucks. The Northeast averaged shooting 1.2 antlerless deer per antlered buck and this ranged from 0.5 in Maine to 2.4 antlerless deer per antlered buck in Delaware.

The Southeast shot 1,449,395 antlerless deer in 2011. Numerically, Oklahoma (46,543) took the fewest while Georgia (277,961) took the most antlerless deer. South Carolina had the largest percentage (+11 percent) increase from 2010 while Florida had the largest decline (-38 percent). Eight of 11 southeastern states shot fewer antlerless deer in 2011 than 2010. Only Oklahoma (+1 percent), Arkansas (+4 percent) and South Carolina (+11 percent) shot more antlerless deer in 2011. Georgia shot the most antlerless deer per square mile (4.8), followed by Alabama (4.0) and South Carolina (3.9). Oklahoma (0.7) and Florida (0.9) averaged the fewest antlerless deer harvested per square mile.

Seven of 11 (64 percent) Southeastern states shot more antlerless deer than antlered bucks in 2011. The Southeast averaged shooting 1.2 antlerless deer per antlered buck and this ranged from 0.5 in Florida to 3.5 antlerless deer per antlered buck in Georgia.

Canada shot 83,104 antlerless deer in 2011. For the five provinces that provided data in 2010 and 2011, this was 3 percent more antlerless deer. Numerically, New Brunswick (717) took the fewest while Ontario (30,775) took the most antlerless deer. Four of 5 provinces shot fewer antlerless deer in 2011 while Ontario (+3 per-

Estimated Antlerless Deer Harvest

State/Province	2009	2010	2011	% Change '10 to '11	Antlerless PSM**	Antlerless Per Antlered
Illinois	119,937	113,131	110,938	-2	1.9	1.6
Indiana	79,771	80,997	78,301	-3	2.2	1.5
Iowa	86,892	78,345	75,195	-4	1.3	1.6
Kansas	47,418	42,806	49,788	16	0.6	1.1
Kentucky	58,295	51,206	53,731	5	1.3	0.8
Michigan	220,916	205,509	203,930	-1	2.1	1.0
Minnesota	99,819	78,500	107,000	36	1.2	1.3
Missouri	189,647	170,592	174,563	2	2.5	1.5
Nebraska	29,711	39,198	39,283	0	0.5	1.1
North Dakota	45,119	38,400	29,823	-22	0.4	1.3
Ohio	167,355	153,458	138,027	-10	3.1	1.7
South Dakota	47,017	44,068	46,200	5	0.6	1.2
Wisconsin	192,557	185,211	193,954	5	3.0	1.3
Midwest Total	**1,384,454**	**1,281,421**	**1,300,733**	**2**	**1.6**	**1.3**
Connecticut	6,240	6,813	6,641	-3	1.2	1.1
Delaware	8,939	10,190	9,611	-6	4.9	2.4
Maine	6,951	5,204	6,100	17	0.2	0.5
Maryland	65,635	63,821	62,268	-2	6.3	1.9
Massachusetts	4,884	5,090	4,943	-3	0.5	0.8
New Hampshire	4,444	3,744	4,561	22	0.5	0.7
New Jersey	33,603	35,479	31,533	-11	3.6	1.7
New York	120,741	123,140	118,357	-4	2.2	1.1
Pennsylvania	200,590	193,310	208,660	8	4.5	1.6
Rhode Island	1,035	1,104	1,379	25	1.1	1.3
Vermont	7,148	7,051	4,758	-33	0.5	0.6
Virginia	150,401	126,243	134,114	6	3.4	1.4
West Virginia	74,376	47,637	65,615	38	2.7	0.8
Northeast Total	**684,987**	**628,826**	**658,540**	**5**	**2.4**	**1.2**
Alabama	173,800	208,000	206,500	-1	4.0	1.6
Arkansas	98,332	103,192	107,464	4	2.0	1.3
Florida	*	75,683	47,276	-38	0.9	0.5
Georgia	258,536	308,747	277,961	-10	4.8	3.5
Louisiana	66,285	69,075	60,075	-13	1.5	0.8
Mississippi	148,185	179,616	144,859	-19	3.1	1.1
North Carolina	87,990	94,727	93,539	-1	1.9	1.2
Oklahoma	50,420	46,000	46,543	1	0.7	0.7
South Carolina	111,338	105,894	117,551	11	3.9	1.1
Tennessee	78,243	82,950	82,026	-1	1.9	1.0
Texas	258,782	330,698	265,601	-20	1.0	0.9
Southeast Total	**1,331,911**	**1,604,582**	**1,449,395**	**-10**	**2.3**	**1.2**
U.S. Total	**3,401,352**	**3,514,829**	**3,408,668**	**-3**	**2.1**	**1.3**
Alberta	*	*	19,290	*	0.1	1.0
British Columbia	*	*	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	9,030	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	1,199	1,179	717	-39	0.0	0.2
Nova Scotia	3,081	4,034	3,575	-11	0.2	0.7
Ontario	*	30,000	30,775	3	0.1	0.9
Quebec	26,605	22,744	21,147	-7	0.0	0.8
Saskatchewan	*	13,600	7,600	-44	0.0	0.3
Canada Total	**30,885**	**80,587**	**83,104**	**3**	**0.1**	**0.6**

* data not available/provided **Per Square Mile in 2011

cent) shot more. Nova Scotia shot the most antlerless deer per square mile (0.2), while New Brunswick, Quebec and Saskatchewan all shot <0.1 per square mile. All provinces shot more antlered bucks than antlerless deer, and the numbers ranged from 0.2 antlerless deer per antlered buck in New Brunswick to nearly 1 in Alberta. In general, provincial harvest statistics are similar to those in New England and upper Great Plains states.

Reduced antlerless harvests are necessary in areas where deer herds have been balanced with the habitat and/or when other mortality factors (such as predation or disease) are increasing. However, very few states should be harvesting more antlered bucks than antlerless deer on a regular basis. In 2011, 27 of 37 states (73 percent) shot more antlerless deer than antlered bucks; up from 61 percent of states in 2010.

For the third year in a row, the Midwest shot fewer antlerless deer per square mile than the Northeast or Southeast.

Top Threats to Deer Management

Numerous issues impact deer management programs and hunting opportunities. Some are regional such as severe winter weather in the northern U.S. and Canada, or intense heat in the southern U.S., while others are locale-specific such as discharge ordinances around urban and/or suburban areas. We surveyed all 37 states in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast and all Canadian provinces to determine the top threats impacting their wildlife agency's ability to manage deer in 2012. Thirty-three of 37 states provided 91 threats and five of eight provinces provided 13 threats. Items receiving two or more votes are included on the chart to the right. Some agencies requested anonymity so all responses are reported by region only.

In the U.S., hunter/land access received the most votes as one of the top threats, and this held true for each region. Landscape/habitat change was next, and political influences on management programs finished third. Landscape/habitat change was important in all regions while political influences on management programs were most identified in the Midwest. Budgets/limited resources were important in the Southeast but barely acknowledged in the Midwest or Northeast.

In Canada, the top threat was different. Budgets/limited resources received the most votes, followed by lack of harvest and population data and landscape/habitat changes.

Surprisingly, given the recent surge of research projects and popular press articles on predation rates – especially in the Southeast – only one province and no state reported predation as a top threat to managing deer.

QDMA's Recommendations

QDMA recommends state and provincial wildlife agencies work closely with sportsmen and women, legislators, and other stakeholders to develop strong working relationships, provide transparency in management programs, and enhance agency credibility. Agencies that best engage the public typically have the highest approval ratings and most support and cooperation from constituents.

Top Threats to Deer Management as Reported by Wildlife Agencies

		# of States/Provinces Reporting Threat			
Threat	**U.S. Total**	**Midwest**	**Northeast**	**Southeast**	**Canada**
Hunter/land access	20	8	8	4	1
Landscape/habitat change	9	3	2	4	2
Political influences	7	4	2	1	0
Loss of hunters	6	1	2	3	1
Disease	6	3	2	1	1
Budgets/limited resources	5	0	1	4	3
Captive cervids	3	1	0	2	0
Lack of regulatory authority	2	0	0	2	0
Anti-hunting sentiment	2	0	2	0	0
Gun discharge restrictions	2	0	2	0	0
Lack of detailed data	0	0	0	0	2

Whitetails Killed on Damage/Depredation Tags

It is a hunter's worst nightmare – you learn the buck you have been watching all summer was shot by a local farmer, orchardist or gardener using a crop depredation tag. There's no doubt this happens, but according to wildlife agency records it occurs far less than the stories suggest. To determine the number of whitetails killed on damage or depredation tags we surveyed all states in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast and all Canadian provinces. Twenty-five (of 37) states and four (of eight) provinces provided data.

In the U.S., those 25 states reported approximately 66,000 whitetails were taken on these special tags in 2011. Virginia topped the list in the Northeast and the U.S. with 11,268 deer. Maryland was next with 8,840. In Virginia, 96 percent of the total was antlerless deer and 99 percent were antlerless in Maryland. Ohio topped the list in the Midwest with 5,741 deer and Michigan followed with 5,385 deer. Neither state separated antlered and antlerless deer. In the Southeast, Georgia reported the most with 5,072 followed by North Carolina with 3,015. North Carolina recorded males and females (vs. antlered and antlerless) so their number of bucks is inflated by including buck fawns. In Canada three of four reporting provinces shot zero deer on these tags; only New Brunswick killed deer for damage/depredation and all were antlerless.

Most states and all provinces also separated their total number into antlered and antlerless deer. Of the 44,194 U.S. deer that could be assigned to a group, 41,371 (94 percent) were antlerless. Of the reported totals, only 2,823 (6 percent) were antlered bucks. If a buck you were watching fell to one of these tags it doesn't make you feel better, but it is encouraging that antlered bucks make up a small percentage of the reported total. In fact, we lose more bucks to motor vehicles annually (see pages 14-15) than to damage/depredation tags.

In 2011 the same states that provided data on this mortality source harvested over 4.2 million deer in the hunting season. The number reported on damage/depredation tags was only 1.5 percent of the deer season harvest, and it was less than 5 percent of the hunting harvest in 21 of 25 states.

QDMA's Recommendations

Depredation/damage tags are necessary to protect many farmers' livelihoods and they are necessary from a public relations standpoint for many state and provincial agencies. However, state wildlife agencies also owe it to their hunter constituents to enforce permit requirements, ensure accurate reporting of harvests, and to issue the majority of permits only for antlerless deer to be used outside of peak fawning season.

Whitetails Killed on Damage Tags, 2011

State/Province	#Antlered Bucks	# Antlerless Deer	Total Killed on Damage Tags	% of 2011 Hunting Harvest
Midwest				
Illinois	84	1,140	1,224	<1
Indiana	307	2,051	2,358	2
Iowa	64	2,384	2,448	2
Kansas	*	*	*	
Kentucky	*	*	*	
Michigan	*	*	5,385	1
Minnesota	*	*	*	
Missouri	*	*	*	
Nebraska	*	*	1,000	1
North Dakota	*	*	*	
Ohio	*	*	5,741	3
South Dakota	0	425	425	<1
Wisconsin	194	2,760	2,954	<1
Northeast				
Connecticut	370	434	804	6
Delaware	0	499	499	4
Maine	*	*	<1,000	5
Maryland	110	8,730	8,840	9
Massachusetts	20	30	50	<1
New Hampshire	*	*	54	<1
New Jersey	375	1,018	1,393	3
New York	*	*	5,007	2
Pennsylvania	0	3,590	3,590	1
Rhode Island	*	*	*	
Vermont	0	0	0	0
Virginia	406	10,862	11,268	5
West Virginia	223	3,065	3,288	2
Southeast				
Alabama	*	*	*	
Arkansas	*	*	*	
Florida	*	*	*	
Georgia	*	*	5,072	1
Louisiana	*	*	*	
Mississippi	*	*	*	
North Carolina	388 **	2,627	3,015	2
Oklahoma	27	480	507	<1
South Carolina	50	800	850	<2
Tennessee	*	*	*	
Texas	205	476	681	<1
U.S. Total	**2,823**	**41,371**	**~66,000**	
Canada				
Alberta	0	0	0	
British Columbia	*	*	*	
Manitoba	0	0	0	
New Brunswick	0	11	11	
Nova Scotia	*	*	*	
Ontario	*	*	*	
Quebec	0	0	0	
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	

* data not available

** includes buck fawns

Record Number of Deer-Vehicle Accidents in 2012

Many areas within the whitetail's range have abundant deer herds. As amazing as whitetails are, they can unfortunately cause damage to forests, agricultural crops, landscaping, and especially to vehicles. State Farm Insurance provides estimates on the total number of annual claims involving accidents with deer, elk and moose. The vast majority of these involve whitetails, and the highest number of accidents in the last decade was reported in 2012.

We compared the number of accidents in the most recent year of data (July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012) to that of five and nine years prior, to the most recent deer season harvest, and to the number of road miles for each state. State Farm only provided data for three provinces so our analysis is limited to the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast U.S. The following State Farm data is a conservative estimate as it is based on comprehensive and collision claims only, and does not include claims involving policy holders carrying only liability insurance.

From July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012 there were 1,142,910 claims in the three regions. This was 13 percent higher than five years ago and 22 percent higher than nine years ago. Much of this increase was in the Southeast. The Midwest and Northeast each increased 18 percent from 2002-03 to 2011-12 while the Southeast increased almost twice as much (+35 percent). A regional look at the greatest trend increases shows Mississippi's claims increased 53 percent while Oklahoma's increased 90 percent. In the Northeast, Massachusetts' claims increased 84 percent and Rhode Island's increased 167 percent! In the Midwest, Nebraska's claims increased 63 percent and Kansas' increased 82 percent. North Dakota was the only state in all three regions with fewer claims in 2011-12 than 2002-03 (-26 percent).

This whitetail was the victim of a deer-vehicle accident near QDMA's National Headquarters in Athens, Georgia. From 2002-03 to 2011-12, the Southeast saw a more than 35% increase in deer-vehicle accidents.

Top-5 States
Deer Vehicle Accidents

State	2011-12 Accidents
Pennsylvania	115,571
Michigan	97,856
New York	80,262
Ohio	67,699
Wisconsin	52,525

Top-5 States
Deer-Vehicle Accidents Per Road Mile

State	Accidents/Road Mile
Maryland	0.50
Pennsylvania	0.46
Michigan	0.38
West Virginia	0.38
New Jersey	0.37

Across the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast regions, motorists hit over 1.1 million deer in 2011-12; that's 33 percent of the hunting season harvest!

Numerically, Pennsylvania led the nation with 115,571 claims. Michigan was next with 97,856 and New York was third with 80,262. North Carolina led the Southeast with 48,362 claims. Obviously some states have more deer-vehicle accidents due to their size, number of road miles and human population. Thus, a good way to assess this data is to compare it to the number taken during the deer season and on a per road mile basis. Ideally the number hit by vehicles would be a small percentage of the number taken by hunters. In the Southeast, the number hit during 2011-12 was 19 percent of the 2011 deer harvest. Thus, approximately one deer

was hit on the road for every five taken by hunters. This seems high, but it is far worse in the Midwest (37 percent) and Northeast (58 percent). Motorists in the Northeast hit nearly six deer for every 10 taken by hunters! Talk about a waste of the resource and a personal safety factor for drivers and their passengers. Across the three regions motorists hit over 1.1 million deer in 2011-12; that's 33 percent of the hunting season harvest. It would be far better to take more deer during the season and fewer on our roads.

Mississippi led the nation with the fewest accidents at only 6 percent of the hunter harvest. Alabama, Louisiana, North Dakota and Texas all had percentages under 10; kudos to these states. Rhode Island had the highest percentage where deer-vehicle accidents equaled 83 percent of the hunter harvest. Connecticut and Massachusetts also had percentages over 75.

On a per road mile basis, Maryland led the nation with 0.50 deer-vehicle accidents per road mile. That is one collision with a deer for every 2 miles of road! Pennsylvania was next (0.46), and Michigan and West Virginia tied for third with 0.38 deer-vehicle accidents per road mile. The three-region average was 0.17 accidents per road mile. While the Southeast had the largest percentage increase in accidents from 2002-03 to 2011-12, the Northeast averaged twice as many accidents as the Midwest and three times as many as the Southeast per mile of road.

QDMA's Recommendations

The majority of deer-vehicle accidents occur during the spring (fawning) and fall (breeding). The best techniques for reducing deer-vehicle accidents are to balance deer herds with the habitat and make motorists aware of high-risk time periods and areas. QDMA recommends private, state and federal deer managers use regulated hunting to manage deer herds at levels that are in balance with the habitat. Balanced populations reduce the number of animals available for accidents, and knowledgeable motorists can drive more defensively.

State Farm Estimates of Total Deer-Vehicle Accidents, 2002-03 to 2011-12

State	2002-03	2006-07	2011-12	% Change 07-12	% Change 03-12	2011 Harvest	2012 % of 2011 harvest	DVA/ Road Mile
Illinois	46,361	50,711	51,627	2	11	181,451	28	0.18
Indiana	31,444	36,611	34,000	-7	8	129,018	26	0.17
Iowa	28,292	31,148	30,117	-3	6	121,407	25	0.13
Kansas	8,715	10,119	15,887	57	82	94,813	17	0.06
Kentucky	16,969	17,810	22,650	27	33	119,663	19	0.14
Michigan	92,134	96,451	97,856	1	6	416,721	23	0.38
Minnesota	28,547	35,504	41,165	16	44	192,500	21	0.15
Missouri	28,158	29,804	36,592	23	30	288,594	13	0.14
Nebraska	7,782	9,350	12,707	36	63	76,443	17	0.07
North Dakota	6,229	5,578	4,586	-18	-26	52,511	9	0.03
Ohio	54,459	65,006	67,699	4	24	219,748	31	0.26
South Dakota	7,031	7,171	8,863	24	26	85,160	10	0.05
Wisconsin	47,519	47,589	52,525	10	11	344,793	15	0.22
Midwest Total	**403,640**	**442,852**	**476,274**	**8**	**18**	**1,300,733**	**37**	**0.16**
Connecticut	7,955	10,000	9,800	-2	23	12,897	76	0.22
Delaware	3,055	3,553	4,963	40	62	13,559	37	0.36
Maine	4,671	4,390	4,924	12	5	19,156	26	0.11
Maryland	26,169	26,273	34,112	30	30	95,372	36	0.50
Massachusetts	4,750	5,669	8,750	54	84	11,133	79	0.11
New Hampshire	2,973	3,009	3,705	23	25	11,109	33	0.11
New Jersey	22,574	28,687	31,192	9	38	50,108	62	0.37
New York	65,293	63,686	80,262	26	23	228,359	35	0.33
Pennsylvania	111,142	98,313	115,571	18	4	336,200	34	0.46
Rhode Island	750	1,625	2,000	23	167	2,418	83	0.15
Vermont	2,310	3,831	2,848	-26	23	12,132	23	0.10
Virginia	41,072	47,681	52,369	10	28	232,988	22	0.33
West Virginia	28,802	23,607	30,203	28	5	143,696	21	0.38
Northeast Total	**321,516**	**320,324**	**380,699**	**19**	**18**	**658,540**	**58**	**0.33**
Alabama	19,753	23,080	26,050	13	32	337,000	8	0.13
Arkansas	13,751	17,557	20,281	16	47	192,748	11	0.10
Florida	10,939	12,328	14,082	14	29	136,188	10	0.05
Georgia	38,122	41,841	42,996	3	13	411,481	10	0.17
Louisiana	9,249	9,707	10,182	5	10	133,500	8	0.08
Mississippi	10,480	13,197	16,004	21	53	272,275	6	0.10
North Carolina	32,218	42,054	48,362	15	50	173,553	28	0.22
Oklahoma	6,347	8,595	12,056	40	90	112,863	11	0.05
South Carolina	20,534	20,991	26,408	26	29	226,458	12	0.19
Tennessee	16,873	20,935	24,098	15	43	167,702	14	0.12
Texas	33,072	38,765	45,418	17	37	574,808	8	0.07
Southeast Total	**211,338**	**249,050**	**285,937**	**15**	**35**	**1,502,433**	**19**	**0.11**
3-Region total	**936,494**	**1,012,226**	**1,142,910**	**13**	**22**	**3,461,706**	**33**	**0.17**

2012 Hemorrhagic Disease Outbreak – One for the Record Books?

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As of late December 2012, SCWDS confirmed hemorrhagic disease (HD) in 27 states, and one other (Ohio) had an internal diagnostic lab confirm deer mortality in their state as being caused by HD. In addition, two other states (Alabama and South Carolina) reported HD-suspected mortality.

QDMA member Mali Vujanic captured this image on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in Caroline County in September. Scenes like this were all too common in 2012 with 30 states reporting suspected or confirmed HD cases.

What is Hemorrhagic Disease?

HD is an infectious, blood-borne disease of deer and elk that is transmitted by biting midges or flies; it is caused by either of two closely related viruses, epizootic hemorrhagic disease virus (EHD) or bluetongue virus (BTV). Since the symptoms and disease features produced by both viruses are relatively indistinguishable, the general term "HD" is often used. For additional information on the biology of HD, see pages 20-22 of the *2009 Whitetail Report*, which is available online at www.QDMA.com.

Is this the all-time worst outbreak of HD?

"It's going to rival 2007, if not exceed it," said SCWDS researcher and University of Georgia professor Dr. David E. Stallknecht. Previously, the 2007 outbreak was viewed as the year HD affected the most deer. That year, SCWDS received reports of suspected or confirmed HD activity in 31 states and a total mortality of greater than 65,000 deer. Based on early reports of suspected HD activity from 2012, last year was also an exceptional year for HD, and SCWDS acknowledges that it may, in fact, be one for the record books. Generally speaking, the largest impact from the virus in 2012 seems to have occurred in the eastern and Midwestern United States.

The first HD case of 2012 was confirmed on July 18 – much earlier in the year than normal – in a white-tailed deer from North Carolina. By December, researchers had isolated and identified nearly 200 HD viruses from wild ungulates in 27 states. States reporting HD are shown on the map in the middle of the page, though the final tally will not be calculated until all states complete their annual HD surveillance report and return it to SCWDS.

In samples studied by SCWDS last year, nearly the entire 2012 HD outbreak had been confirmed as EHD with less than 3 percent attributed to BTV. Interestingly, all three major EHD subtypes were confirmed in deer in three states (Indiana, Michigan and Missouri), some of the hardest hit areas of the country. As of mid/late November, there had been 14,032 wild white-tailed deer reported dead as possible HD cases in Michigan alone, while Missouri has had another 6,119 deer deaths attributed to HD. Nebraska and South Dakota wildlife agencies both considered reducing the number of deer licenses or permits available to hunters as a result of HD outbreaks.

States with Hemorrhagic Disease (HD) in 2012

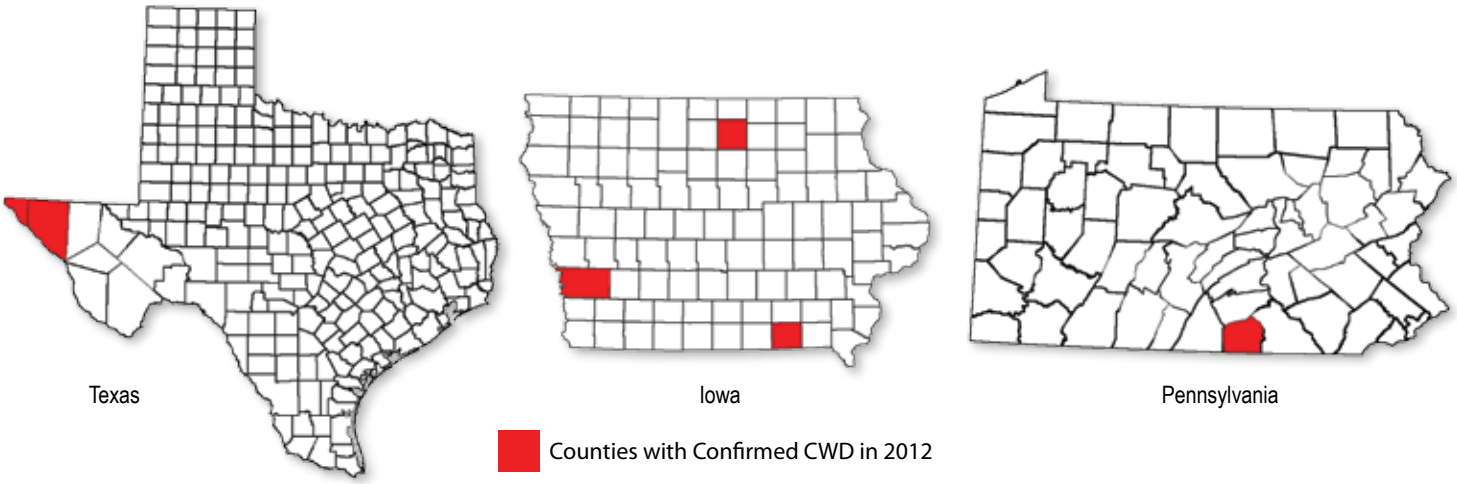
HD Suspected/Confirmed in 2012

As in 2007, much of the reported HD activity in 2012 was in northern states, areas that historically report HD on rare occasions or not at all. Since 2007, SCWDS researchers have confirmed recurring activity in many of these same areas. For example, from 2007 to 2012, EHD was isolated during most years in Indiana (four years), Michigan (four years), New Jersey (four years) and Pennsylvania (three years). The causes for this apparent northern expansion are not known, but the trend certainly deserves future attention.

QDMA's Recommendations

Since the disease is spread by insects, there is nothing we can do to prevent HD, and outbreaks will end with the onset of cold weather. Even so, when Quality Deer Managers work diligently over multiple seasons to increase numbers of mature bucks and balance the sex ratio, finding even one quality buck or scores of dead antlerless deer that are victims of HD can be frustrating. Although HD's impact on deer populations is minor on a nationwide scale, it can be locally severe especially in areas where the disease is relatively new. QDMA recommends hunters who experience significant losses closely monitor population indicators to determine if reducing the local antlerless harvest is necessary.

Chronic Wasting Disease Confirmed in Major Deer States in 2012



In 2012, three new states were added to the growing list of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) positives, and you could not have handpicked three more popular deer hunting destinations. On July 10, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department announced CWD had been confirmed in two mule deer taken in far West Texas in El Paso and Hudspeth counties as part of sample collection efforts after the disease was detected in the Hueco Mountains of New Mexico during the 2011-12 hunting season.

Later that month, on July 21, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources announced a white-tailed deer at a hunting preserve in Davis County tested positive for CWD. Following that discovery, five deer at a breeding facility in Pottawattamie County and one at a breeding facility in Cerro Gordo County tested positive for the disease.

Then, on October 11, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture announced the state's first positive case of CWD on a deer farm in Adams County. In addition to that farm, the Department also immediately quarantined two other farms directly associated with the positive deer in Lycoming and York counties. By early November the list of quarantined farms grew to 27 in 16 counties, and a second positive deer was confirmed at the Adams County farm.

These three states are major deer hunting states as Texas routinely harvests more antlered bucks and total deer annually than any other state, Pennsylvania always ranks at or near the top for the number of deer hunters, and Iowa is one of the most well known trophy whitetail destinations in North America. Texas and Pennsylvania also lead the U.S. in deer farms with over 1,300 and 1,100 captive facilities, respectively.

CWD is an always fatal neurological disease that affects deer, elk and moose. There is no vaccine or cure for CWD and this contagious disease can be spread via urine, feces, saliva, blood and possibly other vectors. As of December 2012, CWD has been identified in captive and free-ranging herds in 22 U.S. states, two Canadian provinces and Korea (from an elk imported from Canada in 1997). CWD has been identified in white-tailed and mule deer, Rocky Mountain elk and moose. Black-tailed deer are also susceptible as they are a subspecies of mule deer.

QDMA's Recommendations

Disease transmission from captive to free-ranging deer and elk is a tangible threat to the future of wildlife management and hunting in North America. QDMA recommends maintaining or enhancing strict movement restrictions and testing protocols on captive cervids. QDMA also recommends full authority over captive cervid facilities and regulations lie with the state/provincial wildlife agencies. Currently, some state/provinces have this authority while the Department of Agriculture shares it or maintains sole possession in others.

Source: Chronic Wasting Disease Alliance (www.cwd-info.org)

CWD has been identified in 22 U.S. States, two Canadian provinces and Korea as of December 2012.
See more about the disease dangers of CWD on pages 26-27.

Fawn and Yearling Buck Weights

One tenet of a successful QDM program is herd monitoring, and collecting harvest data falls within that cornerstone. A jawbone is the most important piece of harvest data to collect as this allows all other data to be compared or analyzed by age classes. Weights are also important as they are an index to herd and habitat health as well as a herd's reproductive potential with regard to doe fawn breeding rates.

The majority of states in the Southeast collect live weights. The majority in the Northeast collect field dressed weights. Unfortunately, none in the Midwest and only New Brunswick in Canada collect any weights. For the regions that do, weights by age classes are a good statistic to monitor for long-term trends.

In the Southeast in 2011, buck fawns averaged 62 pounds live and 53 pounds dressed weight. Arkansas and South Carolina topped the list at 70 pounds (live) and 62 pounds (dressed), respectively. Doe fawns were slightly smaller at 58 pounds live and 48 pounds dressed. Arkansas and South Carolina were tops again at 68 pounds (live) and 57 pounds (dressed), respectively. Yearling bucks (1½ years) were substantially heavier and averaged 107 pounds (live) and 94 pounds (dressed). Louisiana had the heaviest live weight yearlings at 113 pounds while South Carolina and Tennessee had the heaviest field dressed yearlings at 107 pounds.

In the Northeast, buck fawns averaged 60 pounds dressed. Maine averaged the most, and six of eight states that reported weights ranged from 60 to 66 pounds. Doe fawns averaged 55 pounds dressed, and Maine again topped the list at 62 pounds. Yearling bucks averaged 107 pounds dressed (equal to the average live weight of yearling bucks in the Southeast). Maine yearlings averaged 121 pounds with Vermont and New Hampshire closely behind at 118 and 117 pounds, respectively. The Northern locale and lower density herds combine to grow big deer in northern New England.

New Brunswick borders Maine to the east and this province's weights were equal to or greater than Maine's. New Brunswick's yearling bucks averaged a whopping 129 pounds field dressed. That's an estimated 165 pounds live weight and is massive for a 1½-year-old deer with its first set of antlers!

QDMA's Recommendations

QDMA recommends all hunters collect harvest data from deer they shoot. This allows comparisons to deer in your area as well as other regions, and provides the necessary information for calculating (or fine tuning) the annual target antlerless harvest. This guards against harvesting too few or too many antlerless deer and alerts managers to changes in habitat quality, age structure, and fawn survival (and thus predation) rates.

Buck and Doe Fawn and Yearling Buck Weights (Lbs.), 2011

State/Province	Buck Fawn	Doe Fawn	Yearling Buck	Live or Field Dressed
Connecticut	62	59	112	Field Dressed
Delaware	*	*	*	
Maine	66	62	121	Field Dressed
Maryland	60	56	102	Field Dressed
Massachusetts	60	54	108	Field Dressed
New Hampshire	63	57	117	Field Dressed
New Jersey	*	*	*	
New York	*	*	*	
Pennsylvania	*	*	*	
Rhode Island	56	51	103	Field Dressed
Vermont	64	56	118	Field Dressed
Virginia	49	48	84	Field Dressed
West Virginia	*	*	98	Field Dressed
Northeast Average	**60**	**55**	**107**	**Dressed**
Alabama	58	55	102	Live
Arkansas	70	68	111	Live
Florida	53	51	100	Live
Georgia	43	39	80	Field Dressed
Louisiana	66	53	113	Live
Mississippi	67	64	*	Live
North Carolina	60	57	107	Live
Oklahoma	*	*	*	
South Carolina	62	57	107	Field Dressed
Tennessee	*	*	107	Field Dressed
Texas	*	*	*	
Southeast Average	**62**	**58**	**107**	**Live**
Southeast Average	**53**	**48**	**94**	**Dressed**
Alberta	*	*	*	
British Columbia	*	*	*	
Manitoba	*	*	*	
New Brunswick	66	66	129	Field Dressed
Nova Scotia	*	*	*	
Ontario	*	*	*	
Quebec	*	*	*	
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	
Canada Average	**66**	**66**	**129**	**Dressed**

* data not available; none of the Midwest states collect weight data.

Successful Hunters

Which region and state have the most successful hunters? In 2011 the Southeast was that region, with the state of Tennessee leading the way. We surveyed every state wildlife agency in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast and each provincial agency in Canada on the percentage of hunters who shot one, two and three or more deer during the hunting season.

In the U.S., an average of 48 percent of hunters successfully harvested at least one deer. In the Southeast, that number was 58 percent, ranging from 41 to 83 percent. More than eight of 10 hunters in Tennessee tagged a whitetail! South Carolina hunters were also highly prolific as 33 percent tagged three or more whitetails.

In the Northeast, 43 percent of hunters took home venison, and it ranged from 15 to 80 percent for individual states. Virginia was tops in the region as 80 percent of hunters were successful, including 24 percent who tagged two deer. New Jersey followed with 63 percent, and had a national best 34 percent who shot three or more deer; that's a higher percentage than the number who shot one deer in neighboring Pennsylvania.

In the Midwest, 42 percent of hunters tagged a deer with a range from 33 to 56 percent. Indiana topped the list and also had the highest percentage of hunters taking two deer (12 percent) and three or more deer (14 percent). Surprisingly, the agriculturally-rich Midwest had the lowest percentage of hunters shooting three or more deer (5 vs. 10 percent in the Northeast and 15 percent in the Southeast).

In Canada, 28 percent of hunters were successful, but this data was limited to Nova Scotia and Quebec, with the vast majority shooting one deer. This is testament to the harsh conditions for deer populations living at their northern extreme.

Multiple deer bag limits are the norm today, and some states even allow an unlimited number of antlerless deer to be taken. Some hunters (and non-hunters) perceive this as assuring an overharvest of deer. However, the reality is a small percentage of hunters actually fill all of their tags. For example, a license in Georgia allows two bucks and 10 antlerless deer, but nearly half of Georgia's hunters do not harvest a single whitetail.

QDMA's Recommendations

QDMA recommends balancing deer herds with the available habitat, and this requires harvesting the biologically appropriate number of antlerless deer annually. The appropriate number is determined pre-season using the best available data, and obtaining the target harvest is achieved using the combination of hunter numbers, access, seasons and bag limits. Bag limits by themselves do not make or break a management program, rather they are one piece of a much larger program that can be manipulated to allow for success.

Percentage of Successful Hunters, 2011

State/Province	1 Deer	2 Deer	3+Deer	% Successful
Illinois	28	10	5	43
Indiana	30	12	14	56
Iowa	29	8	6	43
Kansas	*	*	*	*
Kentucky	*	*	*	*
Michigan	31	10	4	45
Minnesota	30	3	<1	33
Missouri	29	8	3	40
Nebraska	*	*	*	*
North Dakota	*	*	*	*
Ohio	25	7	3	35
South Dakota	*	*	*	*
Wisconsin	28	8	3	39
Midwest Average	**29**	**8**	**5**	**42**
Connecticut	*	*	*	*
Delaware	25	*	*	50
Maine	*	*	*	*
Maryland	25	12	20	57
Massachusetts	15	3	2	20
New Hampshire	13	2	<1	15
New Jersey	22	7	34	63
New York	*	*	*	*
Pennsylvania	18	6	2	26
Rhode Island	*	*	*	*
Vermont	16	12	2	30
Virginia	54	24	2	80
West Virginia	*	*	*	*
Northeast Average	**24**	**9**	**10**	**43**
Alabama	*	*	*	*
Arkansas	*	*	*	*
Florida	*	*	*	*
Georgia	20	15	20	55
Louisiana	25	11	5	41
Mississippi	*	*	*	65
North Carolina	23	12	14	49
Oklahoma	29	12	5	46
South Carolina	21	16	33	70
Tennessee	47	26	10	83
Texas	*	*	*	58
Southeast Average	**28**	**15**	**15**	**58**
U.S. Average	**27**	**11**	**10**	**48**
Alberta	*	*	*	*
British Columbia	*	*	*	*
Manitoba	*	*	*	*
New Brunswick	*	*	*	*
Nova Scotia	25	*	*	25
Ontario	*	*	*	*
Quebec	26	3	<1	29
Saskatchewan	*	*	*	*
Canada Average	**26**	**3**	**<1**	**28**

* data not available; Top-5 states with the most successful hunters highlighted in red.

Hunter Numbers on the Rise

Everyone loves a comeback story. Nowhere is this truer than in recreational sports, where fans love to root for the little guy. Examples like this abound, like the 2004 Boston Red Sox coming back from a 0-3 deficit series (best of 7) to beat the New York Yankees, their bitter rival, during the American League Championship Series, and eventually going on to win the World Series.

Let's hope the same type of story is beginning to unfold in the world of hunting. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) latest National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, the overall participation of hunting in the United States increased 9 percent from 2006 to 2011. What makes this significant is it is the first time this statistic has nationally trended upward since 1975 (see graph).

This means that roughly 13.7 million people 16 years old and older hunted in 2011, representing 6 percent of the U.S. population, a numerical increase of almost 1.2 million from 2006. If we were to break it down, big game species like whitetailed deer, elk and wild turkey attracted 11.6 million hunters (85 percent) in 2011. During that same year, over 4.5 million (33 percent) pursued small game; 2.6 million hunters (19 percent) pursued migratory birds; and, 2.2 million (16 percent) hunted for other animals such as coyotes, groundhogs and raccoons. Notably, since 2006, the number of big game hunters increased 8 percent, while the number of small game hunters declined 6 percent.

Continuing with the analysis of states in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast, hunters from these three regions made up an astounding 94 percent (12.9 million) of all U.S. hunters; a 6 percent rise since 2006 (see table). The Midwest topped the list for total hunters at nearly 5.3 million, followed by the Southeast and the Northeast with 4.6 and 2.9 million, respectively. However, the Northeast (11.4) nearly doubled the Midwest (6.1) and Southeast's (6.2) number of hunters per square mile (PSM), and was about 10 times higher than the West's (1.2 hunters PSM). In fact, Pennsylvania (20.3 hunters PSM) and Rhode Island (16.5 hunters PSM) led the nation in this statistic. No wonder hunting pressure and crowding is a big issue for northeastern hunters.

Overall, Texas recorded the most hunters in one state with an estimated 1.1 million hunters afield in 2011. Pennsylvania and Wisconsin were not far behind. New York gained the most hunters from 2006 to 2011 (+257,000), while Wisconsin (+198,000), Illinois (+196,000), and Mississippi (+179,000) also had substantial increases. Interestingly, the state of Alaska made the largest percentage gain in hunters with a 76 percent increase between 2006 and 2011! The overall increase in hunters is even more impressive given that two perennial powerhouses – Michigan and Pennsylvania – both supposedly lost a significant number of hunters over this five-year period.

Top-5 States
2011 Number of Hunters

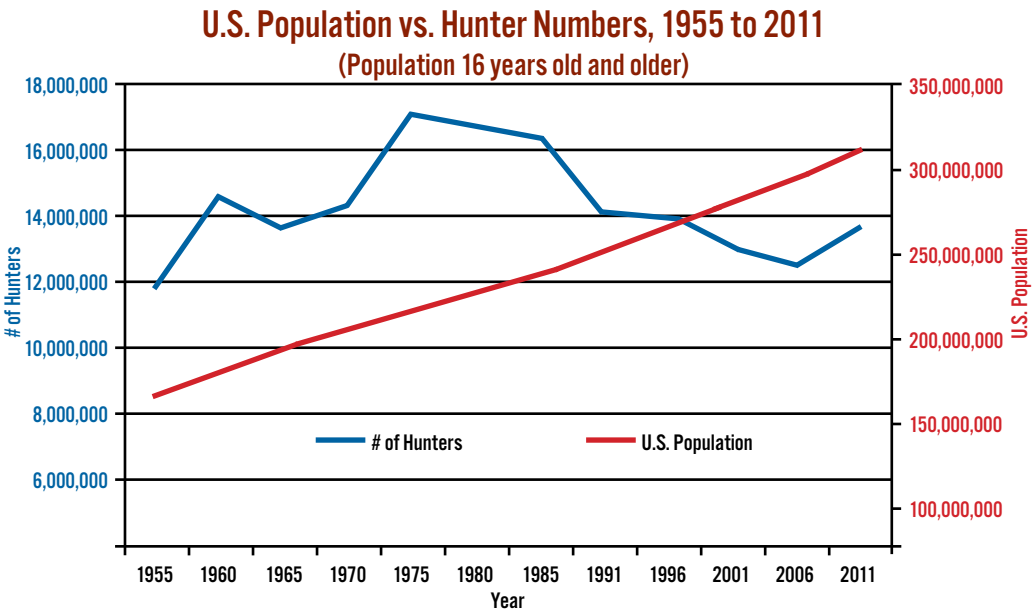
Texas	1,147,000
Pennsylvania	933,000
Wisconsin	895,000
New York	823,000
Michigan	648,000

Top-5 States
2011 Hunters/Square Mile

Pennsylvania	20.3
Rhode Island	16.5
New York	15.1
Wisconsin	13.7
Ohio	12.3

The USFWS reported Pennsylvania lost 269,000 hunters and Michigan lost 224,000. However, we contacted the Michigan DNR and Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) and learned the number of hunters reported in 2011 was incorrect for both states. Michigan was listed as having 529,000 hunters while the DNR reported over 648,000 (+119,000), and Pennsylvania was listed as having 775,000 hunters while the PGC reported over 933,000 (+158,000). Both states reported numbers only slightly below their 2006 values.

In the Southeast, Mississippi had the largest percentage gain in hunters from 2006 to 2011 (59 percent), followed by Alabama (37 percent) and South Carolina (22 percent), while Georgia lost the most (-19 percent). Other notables include the states of Florida and North Carolina, with each reporting consecutive periods of growth from 2001 to 2006 and from 2006 to 2011. For the Midwest,



From 2006 to 2011, hunting participation in the U.S. trended upward for the first time since 1975. Graph references the U.S. Census Bureau and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service National Survey.

Illinois (62 percent), South Dakota (58 percent), and Indiana (44 percent) had the largest percentage increases in hunter numbers from 2006 to 2011, whereas North Dakota had the largest decrease (-36 percent). Five of 13 Midwestern states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio and Wisconsin) reported two consecutive periods of growth since 2001. In the Northeast, New York had the largest proportional increase in hunters (45 percent) from 2006 to 2011, followed by Rhode Island (43 percent) and Connecticut (32 percent); while Delaware and Maryland tied for losing the most (-45 percent). Meanwhile, Maine, Rhode Island and Virginia reported increases in their hunter numbers during each of the past two USFWS surveys.

QDMA's Recommendations

Losing hunters for over 30 straight years has, in fact, negatively impacted our wildlife management programs and state wildlife agencies, and has even threatened the future of hunting. This latest increase in hunter numbers is an encouraging sign that a comeback may be in our midst; however, we must remain vigilant in our current recruitment and retention efforts. Recent increases in female hunter participation are a positive sign (see page 31 of the *2012 Whitetail Report*) and may be a contributing factor. Outreach programs like Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW), QDMA's Rack Pack, and NWTF's Families Afield create hunting and educational opportunities for women, youth and entire families, and should be utilized/supported by all hunters. As hunters and wildlife managers, we can help continue this positive trend of gaining new hunters to our ranks by promoting sound management philosophies, like QDM, adhering to the highest ethical standards in our pursuits, and above all, by being good stewards of our natural resources and thus a benefit to all society. Can't you hear the *Rocky* theme song now!

Total Hunters by State Where Hunting Took Place, 2001 to 2011

(Population 16 Years Old and Older)

State	2001	2006	2011	% Change 2006-11	'11 Hunters/Square Mile of Total Area
Illinois	310,000	316,000	512,000	62%	8.8
Indiana	290,000	272,000	392,000	44%	10.8
Iowa	243,000	251,000	253,000	1%	4.5
Kansas	291,000	271,000	283,000	4%	3.4
Kentucky	323,000	291,000	347,000	19%	8.6
Michigan	754,000	753,000	(529,000) 648,000	-14%	6.7
Minnesota	597,000	535,000	477,000	-11%	5.5
Missouri	489,000	608,000	576,000	-5%	8.3
Nebraska	173,000	118,000	128,000	8%	1.7
North Dakota	139,000	128,000	82,000	-36%	1.2
Ohio	490,000	500,000	553,000	11%	12.3
South Dakota	209,000	171,000	270,000	58%	3.5
Wisconsin	660,000	697,000	895,000	28%	13.7
Midwest Total	**4,968,000**	**4,911,000**	**5,297,000**	**8%**	**6.1**
Connecticut	45,000	38,000	50,000	32%	9.0
Delaware	16,000	42,000	23,000	-45%	11.8
Maine	164,000	175,000	181,000	3%	5.1
Maryland	145,000	161,000	88,000	-45%	8.9
Massachusetts	66,000	73,000	56,000	-23%	5.3
New Hampshire	78,000	61,000	56,000	-8%	6.0
New Jersey	135,000	89,000	94,000	6%	10.8
New York	714,000	566,000	823,000	45%	15.1
Pennsylvania	1,000,000	1,044,000	(775,000) 933,000	-11%	20.3
Rhode Island	9,000	14,000	20,000	43%	16.5
Vermont	100,000	73,000	90,000	23%	9.4
Virginia	355,000	413,000	432,000	5%	10.9
West Virginia	284,000	269,000	247,000	-8%	10.3
Northeast Total	**3,111,000**	**3,018,000**	**2,935,000**	**-3%**	**11.4**
Alabama	423,000	391,000	535,000	37%	10.4
Arkansas	431,000	354,000	363,000	3%	6.9
Florida	226,000	236,000	242,000	3%	4.7
Georgia	417,000	481,000	392,000	-19%	6.8
Louisiana	333,000	270,000	277,000	3%	6.7
Mississippi	357,000	304,000	483,000	59%	10.2
North Carolina	295,000	304,000	335,000	10%	6.9
Oklahoma	261,000	251,000	244,000	-3%	3.5
South Carolina	265,000	208,000	254,000	22%	8.4
Tennessee	359,000	329,000	375,000	14%	8.9
Texas	1,201,000	1,101,000	1,147,000	4%	4.4
Southeast Total	**4,568,000**	**4,229,000**	**4,647,000**	**10%**	**6.2**
3-Region Total	**12,647,000**	**12,158,000**	**12,879,000**	**6%**	**6.9**
Arizona	148,000	159,000	269,000	69%	2.4
California	274,000	281,000	394,000	40%	2.4
Colorado	281,000	259,000	259,000	0%	2.5
Idaho	197,000	187,000	246,000	32%	2.9
Montana	229,000	197,000	150,000	-24%	1.0
Nevada	47,000	63,000	43,000	-32%	0.4
New Mexico	130,000	99,000	69,000	-30%	0.6
Oregon	248,000	237,000	196,000	-17%	2.0
Utah	198,000	166,000	193,000	16%	2.3
Washington	227,000	182,000	219,000	20%	3.1
Wyoming	133,000	102,000	140,000	37%	1.4
Alaska	93,000	71,000	125,000	76%	0.2
Hawaii	17,000	18,000	23,000	28%	2.1
West Total	**2,222,000**	**2,021,000**	**2,326,000**	**17%**	**1.2**
U.S. Total*	**13,034,000**	**12,510,000**	**13,674,000**	**9%**	**3.7**

*State totals do not sum to U.S. total because of multiple responses. U.S. totals include responses from participants residing in the District of Columbia.

For Michigan and Pennsylvania numbers: (USFWS reported number in parentheses) followed by State Reported Number.

Largest Corn Crop in 75 Years

Unprecedented warm weather across much of the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast during spring 2012 allowed farmers to hit the fields early. This, and high corn prices, resulted in over 96 million acres of corn planted in the U.S., the most in the past 75 years. Unfortunately, historic drought across much of the Midwest significantly impacted growth rates, and the 2012 U.S. corn crop was 10.8 billion bushels – 13 percent lower than in 2011. Staying with our regional analysis, the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast planted over 93 million acres of corn in 2012 – 5 percent more than in 2011. Iowa and Illinois led the nation with 14 and 13 million acres, respectively. Each of these states planted nearly twice as much corn as the entire Southeast combined and over three times as much as the entire Northeast combined! Every state in the Midwest planted more than 1.5 million acres of corn, and only one state in the other two regions, Texas, reached this threshold. Canada planted over 35 million acres which was 18 percent more than in 2011. Ontario led all reporting provinces with over 22 million acres (63 percent of all corn planted in Canada).

Top-5 States
Corn Acres Planted in 2012

Iowa	14,000,000
Illinois	13,000,000
Nebraska	9,900,000
Minnesota	8,700,000
Indiana	6,200,000
For perspective:	
Southeast Total	7,135,000
Northeast Total	4,142,000

Top-5 States
Soybean Acres Planted in 2012

Iowa	9,500,000
Illinois	8,600,000
Minnesota	7,000,000
Missouri	5,300,000
Nebraska	5,100,000
For perspective:	
Southeast Total	10,995,000
Northeast Total	2,195,000

Top-5 States
Alfalfa Acres Planted in 2012

South Dakota	2,300,000
North Dakota	1,570,000
Minnesota	1,000,000
Wisconsin	1,000,000
Iowa	800,000
For perspective:	
Southeast Total	347,000
Northeast Total	1,050,000

To gain some perspective, the Northeast planted 4.1 million acres (+3 percent from 2011), the Southeast planted 7.1 million acres (+1 percent from 2011), and the Midwest planted nearly 82 million acres (+5 percent from 2011)! The Midwest planted 88 percent of the total corn in these three regions of the U.S. No wonder John Deere is based in Illinois and Nebraska is the Cornhusker state.

With respect to deer forage, all three regions also planted more acres of soybeans in 2012 than 2011. The Northeast increased 5 percent to nearly 2.2 million acres, the Southeast increased 7 percent to nearly 11 million acres, and the Midwest increased less than 1 percent to nearly 63 million acres. Similar to corn, the Midwest planted 83 percent of all the soybeans in these three regions. Iowa and Illinois led the nation again with 9.5 and 8.6 million acres of soybeans, respectively. The greatest difference in soybean acreage was between the Midwest and Northeast where Iowa and Illinois each planted about four times the amount of soybeans as the entire Northeast combined. The Northeast's mountainous terrain is great for growing oaks, maples and spruces, but not for soybeans and corn. Canada planted 42.9 million acres of soybeans which was 12 percent more than in 2011. Ontario again led with 26.5 million acres (62 percent of all soybeans planted in Canada).

Iowa and Illinois combined to plant 27 million acres of corn in 2012 – nearly four times as much corn as the entire Southeast and over six times as much as the entire Northeast!

The final deer forage acreage we analyzed was alfalfa. South Dakota and North Dakota led the nation with 2.3 and 1.6 million acres of alfalfa and alfalfa mixes in 2012, respectively. The Southeast planted 347,000 acres (+4 percent from 2011), the Northeast planted over 1 million acres (+6 percent from 2011), and the Midwest planted nearly 10.3 million acres. This was 2 percent less than in 2011, but with 155 million acres of corn, soybeans and alfalfa, we don't think the Midwest's deer were starving. Canada's agricultural planting statistics did not include alfalfa.

QDMA's Recommendations

As hunters throughout North America develop a more complete understanding of Quality Deer Management (QDM), the importance of habitat quality and availability becomes paramount. Of QDM's Four Cornerstones, herd management is often the first that hunters gravitate to, but habitat management quickly grabs the attention of many QDM practitioners and frequently is one of the most satisfying aspects of a deer management program. This includes managing the forests, old fields, and cultivated areas, such as food plots. However, one thing that most recreational landowners and hunters don't have control over is the amount and type of commercial agricultural production in their area. Therefore, QDMA encourages landowners and sportsmen and women to educate themselves as to both small and broad changes in the quantity and types of commercially grown agriculture nearby before developing annual habitat prescriptions. QDMA also recommends that both herd and habitat management planning is fully integrated with the most recent knowledge of local farming practices; only then can a comprehensive QDM program work to its fullest capability.

Acres Planted of Corn, Soybean & Alfalfa, 2011 to 2012

State	Corn 2011	Corn 2012	% Change	Soybean 2011	Soybean 2012	% Change	Alfalfa 2011	Alfalfa 2012	% Change
Illinois	12,600,000	13,000,000	3	8,900,000	8,600,000	-3	280,000	350,000	25
Indiana	5,900,000	6,200,000	5	5,300,000	5,000,000	-6	300,000	280,000	-7
Iowa	14,100,000	14,000,000	-1	9,350,000	9,500,000	2	820,000	800,000	-2
Kansas	4,900,000	4,700,000	-4	4,000,000	3,600,000	-10	650,000	750,000	15
Kentucky	1,380,000	1,600,000	16	1,490,000	1,400,000	-6	210,000	200,000	-5
Michigan	2,500,000	2,400,000	-4	1,950,000	2,000,000	3	700,000	660,000	-6
Minnesota	8,100,000	8,700,000	7	7,100,000	7,000,000	-1	1,100,000	1,000,000	-9
Missouri	3,300,000	3,600,000	9	5,350,000	5,300,000	-1	250,000	240,000	-4
Nebraska	9,850,000	9,900,000	1	4,900,000	5,100,000	4	780,000	790,000	1
North Dakota	2,230,000	3,400,000	52	4,000,000	4,600,000	15	1,550,000	1,570,000	1
Ohio	3,400,000	3,900,000	15	4,550,000	4,600,000	1	380,000	350,000	-8
South Dakota	5,200,000	6,000,000	15	4,100,000	4,500,000	10	2,350,000	2,300,000	-2
Wisconsin	4,150,000	4,350,000	5	1,610,000	1,690,000	5	1,150,000	1,000,000	-13
Midwest Total	**77,610,000**	**81,750,000**	**5**	**62,600,000**	**62,890,000**	**0**	**10,520,000**	**10,290,000**	**-2**
Connecticut	27,000	28,000	4	*	*		7,000	7,000	0
Delaware	190,000	195,000	3	170,000	180,000	6	5,000	5,000	0
Maine	29,000	31,000	7	*	*		7,000	8,000	14
Maryland	500,000	490,000	-2	470,000	480,000	2	35,000	35,000	0
Massachusetts	17,000	17,000	0	*	*		9,000	9,000	0
New Hampshire	15,000	14,000	-7	*	*		4,000	5,000	25
New Jersey	90,000	90,000	0	88,000	95,000	8	20,000	20,000	0
New York	1,100,000	1,160,000	5	280,000	340,000	21	350,000	380,000	9
Pennsylvania	1,420,000	1,460,000	3	500,000	530,000	6	410,000	440,000	7
Rhode Island	2,000	1,000	-50	*	*		1,000	1,000	0
Vermont	90,000	94,000	4	*	*		30,000	35,000	17
Virginia	490,000	510,000	4	560,000	550,000	-2	90,000	80,000	-11
West Virginia	48,000	52,000	8	20,000	20,000	0	20,000	25,000	25
Northeast Total	**4,018,000**	**4,142,000**	**3**	**2,088,000**	**2,195,000**	**5**	**988,000**	**1,050,000**	**6**
Alabama	270,000	290,000	7	300,000	330,000	10	*	*	*
Arkansas	560,000	660,000	18	3,330,000	3,250,000	-2	10,000	10,000	0
Florida	65,000	70,000	8	18,000	25,000	39	*	*	*
Georgia	345,000	335,000	-3	155,000	190,000	23	*	*	*
Louisiana	580,000	570,000	-2	1,020,000	1,140,000	12	*	*	*
Mississippi	810,000	840,000	4	1,820,000	2,130,000	17	*	*	*
North Carolina	870,000	850,000	-2	1,380,000	1,670,000	21	5,000	7,000	40
Oklahoma	380,000	370,000	-3	440,000	410,000	-7	200,000	200,000	0
South Carolina	360,000	320,000	-1	370,000	420,000	14	*	*	*
Tennessee	790,000	930,000	18	1,290,000	1,330,000	3	20,000	10,000	-50
Texas	2,050,000	1,900,000	-7	165,000	100,000	-39	100,000	120,000	20
Southeast Total	**7,080,000**	**7,135,000**	**1**	**10,288,000**	**10,995,000**	**7**	**335,000**	**347,000**	**4**
3-Region total	**88,708,000**	**93,027,000**	**5**	**74,976,000**	**76,080,000**	**1**	**11,843,000**	**11,687,000**	**-1**
Alberta	*	*		*	*		*	*	
British Columbia	*	*		*	*		*	*	
Manitoba	1,800,000	3,000,000	67	5,750,000	8,500,000	48	*	*	
New Brunswick	105,000	125,000	19	110,000	95,000	-14	*	*	
Nova Scotia	165,000	200,000	21	75,000	80,000	7	*	*	
Ontario	19,000,000	22,250,000	17	24,400,000	26,500,000	9	*	*	
Quebec	8,822,000	10,008,000	13	7,413,000	7,215,000	-3	*	*	
Saskatchewan	*	*		*	*		*	*	
Canada Total	**29,892,000**	**35,583,000**	**27**	**37,748,000**	**42,390,000**	**9**	**0**	**0**	

QDMA's Stance on Captive Deer Breeding

On February 22, 2012 the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) issued a national press release urging its members and other concerned sportsmen in several states to contact their elected officials and urge them to oppose legislation initiated by the deer breeding industry that would enable introduction of captive deer breeding operations or expansion of these practices within those states.

QDMA supports the legal, ethical pursuit and taking of wild deer living in adequate native/naturalized habitat in a manner that does not give the hunter an unfair advantage and provides the hunted animals with a reasonable opportunity to escape the hunter. QDMA does not oppose high-fence operations that meet the above conditions.

What is the captive deer breeding Industry?

The captive deer breeding industry (also called the deer farming industry or captive cervid industry) uses artificial means to breed captive deer for profit – typically realized through sales of live animals for controlled breeding and shooting, as well as semen and embryos. Current estimates suggest there are approximately 10,000 deer breeders in North America. In general, breeders seek to establish one or more genetic "lines" of deer to produce bucks with the antler size and configuration they desire. Bucks that do not meet this objective typically are sold to fenced shooting preserves, with some killed only days or weeks after release.

The process of selective breeding typically requires animals of known and often narrow pedigrees to be intensively handled and frequently medicated. Bucks from which semen is collected often are physically or chemically restrained and subjected to electro-ejaculation, whereby an electric probe is inserted into the buck's rectum and energized until ejaculation occurs. In does, artificial insemination is common, whereby a doe may be stimulated to ovulate through use of estrous-synchronizing drugs, followed typically by insertion of semen into the doe's reproductive tract.

Why is this issue one that QDMA felt the need to address?

QDMA's mission is to ensure the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. This mission is specific to wild white-tailed deer, not those genetically altered, artificially created and human-habituated. QDMA believes that growth and expansion of the captive deer breeding industry could threaten North America's wild white-tailed deer and the deer-hunting heritage. QDMA is responding to aggressive moves to legalize deer breeding in several new states and to loosen regulations in others. Previously, such efforts were limited to just a few states annually (which QDMA also opposed). However, during the 2012 legislative season, this number swelled to 10 states. Simply stated, QDMA believes the potential negative implications warrant our actions.

"It is QDMA's hope this will lead to a long overdue nationwide discussion on this topic and development of safeguards to protect North America's 32 million wild white-tailed deer, 16 million whitetail hunters and our hunting heritage from potential risks."

Isn't this a private property rights issue?

QDMA has a long history of supporting private property rights, especially those which do not infringe on our members' rights to hunt healthy, wild, white-tailed deer on the properties they own, manage or hunt. Under the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation and the Public Trust Doctrine, wildlife, including white-tailed deer, are collectively owned by all citizens rather than individuals. We contend that captive deer breeding facilities infringe upon the tenets of the North American Model. Thus, we see this as a resource issue (use, access, and allocation) rather than a private property rights issue.

Isn't this just dividing hunters?

The underlying ethics of North America's hunting heritage were well articulated by early conservation pioneers such as Teddy Roosevelt and Aldo Leopold. We believe that to the vast majority of hunters, deer hunting is the pursuit of wild deer produced without direct human contact or artificial manipulation that are hunted and harvested in an ethical manner. We adhere to Webster's definition of "wild" as follows: "living in a state of nature not ordinarily tame or domesticated." Therefore, we don't agree we are dividing hunters, but rather distinguishing between hunting and shooting based on whether or not the quarry is wild. While practices such as Internet shooting, poaching, and canned shoots involve killing of animals, the hunting community, as well as the majority of the non-hunting public, widely reject these practices as hunting.

What are some of QDMA's primary concerns with this industry?

1. *Erosion of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation and the Public Trust Doctrine*

The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation is recognized globally as the premier model for wildlife conservation and management. We believe the captive deer breeding industry undermines important tenets of this model, notably that wildlife is a Public Trust resource owned collectively by the people, not individuals.

2. *Loss of public support for hunting*

Multiple surveys have confirmed that a wide majority of hunters and non-hunters alike support ethical hunting and venison consumption. Therefore, we have concerns that expansion of rearing or shooting of artificially manipulated deer may erode public support for our deer-hunting heritage.

3. *Unnatural and extreme manipulation of white-tailed deer*

This industry routinely produces bucks with unnatural, often grotesque antlers through controlled breeding, often of closely related animals. In fact, some breeders have produced bucks with antlers so large they can barely keep their heads off the ground. During this process, there

has been minimal focus on other genetic traits important to long-term health and survival. Basic genetics shows that focusing on a single trait such as antler size often is highly detrimental to a species in the long-term.

4. *Potential spread of disease and other biological agents*

Any time an animal is moved, any disease or parasite associated with that animal also is moved. With an estimated 10,000 deer breeding facilities in North America, including many in states which can import and/or export deer to other states, the potential for spread of disease is undeniable. Some diseases of concern include chronic wasting disease (CWD), bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis, though certain internal and external parasites also could threaten the health of wild deer.

While there has yet to be conclusive evidence related to transmission of CWD from captive to wild deer, most states and Canadian provinces where CWD has been documented in wild deer also are home to captive deer facilities. This poses tremendous risks with respect to CWD since the most reliable test for this disease can only be performed on dead animals. CWD incubation time in whitetails can be several years, and therefore unidentified CWD-positive deer can be unknowingly transported across state lines and/or among captive facilities. Despite a lack of conclusive evidence confirming transmission of CWD from captive to wild deer, there have been some suspicious cases. For example, CWD was discovered in a captive deer facility in Missouri in 2010, and in two wild bucks within two miles of that facility in 2012. Numerous disease experts agree the distribution map of CWD suggests that CWD likely arrived in several new states through transportation of live deer or deer parts (either legally or illegally) and not spontaneously or through natural deer movements.

5. *Lack of benefits for wild deer or the vast majority of deer hunters*

For the overwhelming majority of deer hunters in North America who will never be a deer breeder nor have the resources or inclination to shoot an artificially manipulated, human-habituated buck, there are numerous risks and no tangible benefits of the captive deer-breeding industry to them or wild deer.

6. *Public cost*

Where deer breeding exists, wildlife and agricultural agencies have considerable oversight responsibilities related to permitting, testing, surveillance and enforcement. Collectively, this consumes considerable time and resources from already depleted budgets. This is hunter and taxpayer money that we believe would be far better spent providing public hunting access, technical assistance to landowners, and wildlife law enforcement. Also, when CWD or other diseases which require state/provincial-mandated action are confirmed, the cost to taxpayers often runs in the millions of dollars. Also, unlike some other diseases, there is no way to decontaminate an area after CWD is identified. It remains present in the soil with the ability to infect deer that come in contact with it in the future. This presents a tremendous long-term risk to wild deer, sportsmen and our state wildlife agencies.

7. *Devaluation of the intrinsic value of deer and the hunting experience*

We believe the proliferation of the captive deer breeding industry and related shooting facilities are negatively affecting public perceptions of wild deer and related hunting experiences. Further, we are concerned that the widespread availability of captive-reared, abnormally large-antlered "shooter" bucks could alter hunter expectations and change the fundamental hunting experience, thus exacerbating hunter declines and associated economic contributions.

Conclusion

We believe the time is now for engagement and solutions to this complex issue. It is QDMA's hope this will lead to a long overdue nationwide discussion on this topic and development of safeguards to protect North America's 32 million wild white-tailed deer, 16 million whitetail hunters and our hunting heritage from potential risks.

Disease Dangers of Captive Deer

By December 2012, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) had been identified in 22 states, two provinces and Korea (see map on page 17). In 2012, there was a flurry of activity relating to captive deer legislation and advocacy work by QDMA staff, Branches and members.

Ten states debated legislation initiated by the deer breeding industry to enable introduction of captive deer breeding operations or expansion of these practices – Georgia, Indiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee and West Virginia. QDMA opposed each piece of legislation and issued a national press release in February urging hunters to do the same (Thankfully, efforts by sportsmen's groups resulted in the defeat of nearly all of this legislation).

Following the press release, QDMA issued answers to frequently asked questions about our stance on captive deer breeding (see www.QDMA.com) to provide additional information on the risks of this industry and to elaborate on some points in our initial press release. The potential spread of disease and other biological agents is only one risk associated with the captive deer breeding industry, but it is one that warrants further discussion. This article provides a quick summary of our current knowledge of CWD and the dangers of transporting deer.

Quick Review

CWD is an always fatal neurological disease that affects deer, elk and moose. There is no vaccine or cure for CWD, and this contagious disease is likely spread via urine, feces, saliva, blood, antler velvet, and contact with diseased carcasses and contaminated environments.

According to Dr. Christopher Johnson, a scientist with the U.S. Geological Survey's National Wildlife Health Center, prions (the infectious proteins causing the disease) are not killed by most detergents, cooking, freezing, or by autoclaving (a method used to sterilize medical instruments). Dr. Johnson also states that when prions are released into the environment by infected deer, they can stay infectious for many years, even decades.

Interestingly, University of Alberta researchers reported that prions are still viable after being incinerated at 1,562 degrees Fahrenheit.

Current Status

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as of March 2012 CWD had been identified in approximately 100 captive herds in 15 states, provinces and in South Korea. One such depopulated facility, Buckhorn Flats near Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, holds the distinction of having the highest CWD prevalence rate ever detected in any facility – 60 of 76 deer (77 percent) on this farm were CWD positive.

Each CWD-positive facility presents a major problem. Research clearly shows our inability to decontaminate a site after CWD is identified, as healthy deer have contracted the disease after being exposed to water, feed buckets and bedding used by CWD-positive deer. CWD was first identified at Colorado State University's Foothills Wildlife Research Facility in 1967. Since then, there have been several attempts to decontaminate the deer pens, and they have been unsuccessful every time. When new animals are brought in they still contract CWD, so it is a big issue for people and wild deer living near any CWD-positive facility. Importantly, numerous disease experts agree the distribution map of CWD suggests the disease likely arrived in several new states through transportation of live deer or deer parts and not spontaneously or through natural deer movements.

CWD Incubation Period

Dr. Elizabeth Williams (now deceased) from the University of Wyoming's Department of Veterinary Sciences reported that CWD has a prolonged incubation period with a minimum of 16 months and likely averaging two to four years. Also, the Michigan DNR and Department of Agriculture's CWD response plan states the incubation period for CWD ranges from 16 to 60 months or more in individual cases. This means a deer could be carrying the disease for years – and shedding infective prions in its environment or wherever it is moved to – without showing any signs of having the disease or alerting farm owners, deer managers, authorities, or potential buyers.

Dr. Williams also reported that within CWD endemic areas, more than 97 percent of CWD cases in free-ranging deer and elk detected in the course of surveillance activities were subclinical – meaning the animals showed no outward signs of having CWD.

In 2004, researchers Michael Miller and Margaret Wild of the Colorado Division of Wildlife reported on the epidemiology of CWD in captive white-tailed and mule deer. They stated, "[CWD] affected white-tailed deer died or were killed because of terminal CWD at age 49 to 76 months." Thus, some of these animals lived for over six years in a captive facility after being exposed to CWD.

This problem is further exacerbated by the lack of a practical live-animal test for CWD. Currently, the most effective test used is on the brain stem of a dead deer. Live deer can be tested using a tonsil biopsy, and the test is pretty accurate, but it requires anesthetizing the animal and removing a portion of the tonsils – an option that is more costly than testing the brain stem. Because it is costly to anesthetize deer, costly to run the test, and you risk infection to deer following the tonsil biopsy, this technique has only been used under research conditions. No state or federal agency requires this test, no deer farms administer this test, and CWD-positive deer can therefore unknowingly be moved between or among facilities.

Industry Travel Standard

Most states require five years of disease monitoring for interstate commerce, but at least one (South Dakota) only requires three years. As stated earlier, some CWD-positive deer live longer than five years without showing any signs of having the disease. Thus, unfortunately regulations currently allow movement of animals that could unknowingly be CWD-positive. Additionally, the CDC reported that CWD testing among states varies considerably in scope from mandatory testing of all dead animals to voluntary herd certification programs or mandatory testing of only animals suspected of dying of CWD.

Documented Escapes

Expansion of "alternative agriculture" sounds like a great opportunity for farmers and rural landowners. However, whitetails are not cows, and nothing in the livestock industry (other than possibly bovine tuberculosis) presents as large a risk to free-ranging whitetails as CWD. Since CWD can unknowingly be moved among captive facilities, live deer can carry and spread the disease without showing outward signs of infection, and captive deer escape on an all-too-frequent basis.

For example, the Wisconsin DNR reported in March 2003 that 671 deer had escaped from game farms, including 436 that were never found. The DNR also estimated that captive deer had escaped from one third of the state's 550 deer farms over the lifetime of the operations. In 2004, Michigan, another CWD-positive state, documented 456 previously unreported escapes. Between 2006 and 2009 another 595 escapes were reported in Wisconsin, including 266 whitetails, 78 elk, and 251 exotics. We realize the owners of these animals have a vested interest in preventing escapes. However, people leave gates open, vandals cut fences, and trees fall on fences. Whatever the reason, captive deer routinely escape.

Compelling Evidence

Currently there is no proof that captive deer have ever spread CWD to wild deer, and disease experts agree there is no "smoking gun" case. However, there is compounding circumstantial evidence and we'll share two compelling cases.

Missouri was CWD-free until February 2010 when a deer at a captive facility tested positive. Another deer at a nearby captive facility (same owner) tested positive in October 2011. Then in January 2012, the Missouri Department of Conservation (DOC) reported two free-ranging whitetails tested positive for CWD. The deer were harvested by hunters during the fall 2011 firearms season within 2 miles of the captive facilities where CWD was initially found. There is no proof those facilities had anything to do with the two wild deer contracting the disease, but it sure is suspicious that the DOC had tested more than 34,000 free-ranging deer for CWD from all parts of the state since 2002 and the only CWD-positive deer they've found were within 2 miles of the captive facilities, and they found them shortly after deer in both facilities tested positive for the disease.

Finally, an ear-tagged deer that escaped from a Walworth County, Wisconsin deer farm roamed freely for at least six months before sharpshooters killed it on October 22, 2002. That deer tested positive for CWD. Thus, that escapee exposed wild deer to infective CWD prions directly for at least 6 months, and indirectly for years via urine, feces, etc. deposited in the environment. How many wild deer contracted, or may still contract, CWD from that animal? We'll never know. Some claim there is no proof and nothing to worry about from a disease perspective. Based on the totality of the scientific evidence, we strongly disagree.

QDMA is standing up for 16 million deer hunters and all future deer hunters. We'll do all we can to ensure the future of wild white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage.

QDMA supports the legal, ethical pursuit and taking of wild deer living in adequate native/naturalized habitat in a manner that does not give the hunter an unfair advantage and provides the hunted animals with a reasonable opportunity to escape the hunter. QDMA does not oppose high-fence operations that meet the above conditions. We are concerned about the captive deer breeding industry, especially in regard to animal welfare, human health/safety, disease, compliance with regulations, and our hunting heritage. Therefore, to gauge the relative size of this industry, and to gain a better understanding of its current practices as they relate to our concerns, in 2012 we surveyed all 48 contiguous state wildlife agencies and all provincial wildlife agencies in Canada. The majority of western states did not respond to our data requests, so we limited our U.S. reporting and analysis to the 37 states comprising the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast. The five pages that follow summarize the data collected from this survey.

Breeding Facilities, Shooting Preserves and Whitetails

We asked state and provincial wildlife agencies for the number of breeding facilities and shooting preserves and the number of whitetails enclosed in each in 2012. Some states reported exact numbers, some provided estimates and others reported that information was unknown. Data in the attached table should be viewed as a minimum estimate for each state and province.

The three regions in the U.S. included at least 5,555 captive whitetail breeding facilities and another 795 whitetail shooting preserves. The Southeast has the most breeding facilities (2,282) followed closely by the Midwest (2,091) and distantly by the Northeast (1,182). No Canadian provinces reported a single breeding facility. Eight of 11 Southeast states (73 percent) have breeding facilities, and they range from 18 in Mississippi to 1,332 in Texas. Texas led the nation in this category. Only Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee reported no breeding facilities in this region. Nine of 10 Midwest states (90 percent) that provided information have breeding facilities, and they range from five in South Dakota to 642 in Ohio. Illinois did not know how many were present, and Iowa reported the number in their voluntary CWD surveillance program. Conversely, only five of 13 Northeast states (38 percent) have breeding facilities as eight states do not allow them for whitetails. Four of the five states that allow them have few facilities (10 to 37) while Pennsylvania contains at least 1,100; although this number includes all captive whitetail facilities and does not distinguish breeding facilities from shooting preserves. Texas and Pennsylvania alone contain nearly half (44 percent) of all breeding facilities reported from the three regions.

States reported far fewer shooting preserves. The Southeast again has the most (405), followed by the Midwest (287) and Northeast (103). In Canada, only Saskatchewan has shooting preserves, but it has more (108) than the entire Northeast. Michigan leads the U.S. with 150 whitetail shooting preserves, followed by Mississippi (108), Florida (90) and New York (90).

There were 163,001 whitetails enclosed in breeding facilities in the three U.S. regions with Texas reporting 100,000 of them. Texas alone was responsible for 61 percent of the three-region total. Other states with large captive numbers included Pennsylvania (23,000), Mississippi (9,000), Wisconsin (8,900) and Michigan (7,500). There are 22 states in the U.S. with Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), and four of the top five states for captive whitetails are CWD-positive.

There were another 25,467 whitetails enclosed in shooting preserves in the three U.S. regions, and 6,200 whitetails in Saskatchewan. Numerous states reported "unknown" for this number – a fact that's very unsettling to deer managers. Michigan and Wisconsin reported the most at 18,000 and 7,000 whitetails, respectively. These two states accounted for 98 percent of the total number of whitetails reported in shooting preserves in the three regions. Notably, both states have CWD, as does Saskatchewan, which reported the third largest number of whitetails in these facilities.

In a survey of 37 state wildlife agencies in the Midwest, Northeast and Southeast, and all provincial wildlife agencies in Canada, the three U.S. regions reported at least 5,555 captive whitetail breeding facilities and another 795 whitetail shooting preserves. Meanwhile, no Canadian provinces reported a single breeding facility.

The captive deer breeding industry claims there are more than 10,000 whitetailed deer breeding and/or shooting facilities in the U.S. We were unable to obtain data from western states, but the number claimed appears high based on our survey.

Number of Breeding Facilities and Shooting Preserves

State/ Province	# of Breeding Facilities (BF)	# of Shooting Preserves (SP)	# of Deer in BF	# of Deer in SP
Illinois	Unknown	2	Unknown	Unknown
Indiana	400	4	2,500	120
Iowa	103***	10	3,460	Unknown
Kansas	*	*	*	*
Kentucky	*	*	*	*
Michigan	370	150	7,500	18,000
Minnesota	*	*	*	*
Missouri	277	27	9,000	Unknown
Nebraska	0	0	0	0
North Dakota	24**	0	870**	0
Ohio	642	34	Unknown	Unknown
South Dakota	5	0	156	0
Wisconsin	270	60	8,900	7,000
Midwest Total	**2,091**	**287**	**32,386**	**25,120**
Connecticut	10	0	>=30	0
Delaware	0	0	0	0
Maine	0	0	0	0
Maryland	0	0	0	0
Massachusetts	0	0	0	0
New Hampshire	0	1	0	Unknown
New Jersey	15	2	371	347
New York	20	90	Unknown	Unknown
Pennsylvania	1,100**	n/a	23,000**	n/a
Rhode Island	0	0	0	0
Vermont	0	2	0	Unknown
Virginia	0	4	0	Unknown
West Virginia	37	4	900	Unknown
Northeast Total	**1,182**	**103**	**24,301**	**347**
Alabama	90	0	Unknown	0
Arkansas	31	10	1,332	Unknown
Florida	313	90	Unknown	Unknown
Georgia	0	53	0	Unknown
Louisiana	260	70	Unknown	Unknown
Mississippi	18	108	708	Unknown
North Carolina	23	0	274	0
Oklahoma	215	46	4,000	Unknown
South Carolina	0	28	0	Unknown
Tennessee	0	0	0	0
Texas	1,332	0	100,000	0
Southeast Total	**2,282**	**405**	**106,314**	
3 -Region total	**5,555**	**795**	**163,001**	**25,467**
Alberta	0	0	0	0
British Columbia	0	0	0	0
Manitoba	0	0	0	0
New Brunswick	0	0	0	0
Nova Scotia	0	0	0	0
Ontario	0	0	0	0
Quebec	0	0	0	0
Saskatchewan	0	108	0	6,200

* data not provided
** includes total for breeding facilities and shooting preserves
*** includes number in voluntary CWD surveillance program

Co-mingling and Tagging

It's well known that a number of economically and culturally important diseases are spread among deer through transmission of feces, urine, saliva, blood, antler velvet, and parasites. It is also a serious concern to mix farm-raised and native deer, especially if they cannot be distinguished via prominent ear tags. Therefore, we asked state and provincial wildlife agencies whether pen-raised whitetails could be co-mingled with native deer in breeding facilities or shooting preserves, and whether deer released into captive facilities were required to be visibly and permanently tagged.

In the Midwest, none of the reporting states allow co-mingling in breeding facilities or shooting preserves, and nine of 10 states (90 percent) require visible and permanent tagging. Only Illinois does not require tagging.

In the Northeast, none of the reporting states allow co-mingling in breeding facilities and only Virginia allows it in shooting preserves. For states that allow captive whitetails and answered the tagging question, three of six states (50 percent; New York, Vermont and West Virginia) require visible and permanent tagging.

In the Southeast, three of 11 states (27 percent; Alabama, Florida and Mississippi) allow co-mingling in breeding facilities and four of 10 states (40 percent; Alabama, Florida, Mississippi and Texas) allow it in shooting preserves. Five of eight states (63 percent) that allowed captive whitetails require visible and permanent tagging. Alabama requires internal (vs. visible) tagging.

In Canada, no provinces allow co-mingling in breeding facilities or shooting preserves, and all provinces reported that tagging is required (or the question was not applicable to them).

Tagging is required by 17 of the 24 states and all provinces that allow captive whitetails.

Where Co-mingling is Allowed and Tagging is Required

State/Province	Co-mingling in Breeding Facility	Co-mingling Shooting Preserve	External Tags Required?
Illinois	No	No	No
Indiana	No	No	Yes
Iowa	No	No	Yes
Kansas	*	*	*
Kentucky	*	*	*
Michigan	No	No	Yes
Minnesota	No	No	Yes
Missouri	No	No	Yes
Nebraska	*	*	*
North Dakota	No	No	Yes
Ohio	No	No	Yes
South Dakota	No	n/a	Yes
Wisconsin	No	No	Yes
Connecticut	No	No	No
Delaware	n/a	n/a	n/a
Maine	n/a	n/a	n/a
Maryland	n/a	n/a	n/a
Massachusetts	*	*	*
New Hampshire	n/a	n/a	n/a
New Jersey	No	No	No
New York	No	No	Yes
Pennsylvania	*	*	*
Rhode Island	*	*	*
Vermont	No	No	Yes
Virginia	n/a	Yes	No
West Virginia	No	No	Yes
Alabama	Yes	Yes	No
Arkansas	No	No	No
Florida	Yes	Yes	No
Georgia	n/a	n/a	n/a
Louisiana	No	*	Yes
Mississippi	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Carolina	No	n/a	Yes
Oklahoma	No	No	Yes
South Carolina	n/a	n/a	n/a
Tennessee	n/a	n/a	n/a
Texas	No	Yes	Yes
Alberta	n/a	n/a	n/a
British Columbia	n/a	n/a	n/a
Manitoba	No	n/a	Yes
New Brunswick	No	No	n/a
Nova Scotia	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ontario	n/a	n/a	n/a
Quebec	No	No	Yes
Saskatchewan	No	No	Yes

* data not provided

Acreage and Habitat Requirements and Stocking Density

We asked state and provincial wildlife agencies whether they have a minimum acreage for white-tailed deer breeding facilities or shooting preserves, whether they have any habitat requirements for captive deer facilities, and whether they have any regulations regarding stocking density of pen-raised deer in captive facilities.

In the Midwest, two states (Missouri and Wisconsin) have acreage minimums for breeding facilities and four states (Iowa, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin) do for shooting preserves. Only Indiana reported having habitat requirements, and those included the need to provide windbreaks, shelters and supplemental feed if natural vegetation was inadequate. Two states (Minnesota and Missouri) reported having stocking density regulations.

In the Northeast, two states (New York and West Virginia) have acreage minimums for breeding facilities and three states (New Jersey, New York and West Virginia) do for shooting preserves. Only West Virginia reported having habitat requirements and those included ground cover and clean free water. Two states (New York and West Virginia) reported having stocking density regulations.

In the Southeast, only North Carolina has an acreage minimum for breeding facilities, and six states (Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee) do for shooting preserves. Four states reported having habitat requirements. Arkansas requires 60 percent forested area in shooting preserves, Florida requires a minimum of 200 acres with at least 100 acres in woody vegetation for shooting preserves, Mississippi requires at least 50 percent of the area be suitable deer habitat, and Oklahoma requires natural or man-made shelters. Two states (Florida and North Carolina) reported having stocking density regulations.

In Canada, no provinces have breeding facilities, and only Saskatchewan has shooting preserves. Saskatchewan does not have an acreage minimum for shooting preserves or habitat or stocking density requirements for captive facilities.

Out of the 37 states surveyed, only six have habitat requirements for captive deer facilities – Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma and West Virginia.

Acreage, Habitat and Stocking Density Requirements

State/Province	Min. Acreage in Breeding Facility	Min. Acreage Shooting Preserve	Habitat Requirements?	Stocking Density?
Illinois	None	None	No	No
Indiana	n/a	n/a	Yes	Unknown
Iowa	None	320	No	No
Kansas	*	*	*	*
Kentucky	*	*	*	*
Michigan	0	0	No	No
Minnesota	*	*	No	Yes
Missouri	0.01	320	No	Yes
Nebraska	*	*	*	*
North Dakota	None	None	No	*
Ohio	None	80	No	No
South Dakota	n/a	n/a	No	No
Wisconsin	0.5	80	No	No
Connecticut	None	None	No	No
Delaware	Don't Allow	Don't Allow	No	n/a
Maine	Don't Allow	Don't Allow	n/a	n/a
Maryland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Massachusetts	*	*	*	*
New Hampshire	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
New Jersey	None	50	No	No
New York	0.34	10	No	Yes
Pennsylvania	*	*	*	*
Rhode Island	*	*	*	*
Vermont	None	None	No	No
Virginia	n/a	n/a	No	No
West Virginia	0.11	300	Yes	Yes
Alabama	n/a	n/a	No	No
Arkansas	n/a	500	Yes	No
Florida	<=2000	200-10000	Yes	Yes
Georgia	Not Legal	640	n/a	n/a
Louisiana	*	300	*	*
Mississippi	<=5 Acres/Pen	300	Yes	No
North Carolina	0.22	*	No	Yes
Oklahoma	None	*	Yes	No
South Carolina	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Tennessee	n/a	20	No	n/a
Texas	None	n/a	No	No
Alberta	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
British Columbia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Manitoba	n/a	n/a	Yes	n/a
New Brunswick	0	0	n/a	n/a
Nova Scotia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ontario	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Quebec	none	none	No	No
Saskatchewan	none	none	No	none

* data not provided

Classification, Minimum Release Time and Consumption

We asked state and provincial wildlife agencies how captive whitetails in shooting preserves were classified (wildlife, livestock or other), whether there were minimum release times before whitetails could be shot in shooting preserves, and whether it was legal to consume meat from whitetails killed in shooting preserves. The consumption question is important as some drugs commonly used on captive whitetails have potential human health concerns.

In the Midwest, Missouri and Ohio consider whitetails in shooting preserves as wildlife or wild animals and six states consider them livestock. In general, captive deer regulations tend to be more liberal in states where whitetails are considered livestock as opposed to wildlife. No state reported a minimum release time although Ohio does not allow deer to be shot as they are released (for example, while stepping off a trailer), and all states that reported data allow whitetails killed in shooting preserves to be consumed. The lack of minimum release time is troubling and this is exacerbated by allowing deer to be consumed without any record of drug usage and necessary withdrawal times.

In the Northeast, no states consider whitetails in shooting preserves as livestock, New York considers them domestic game animals, and New Jersey, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia consider them wildlife. No state reported a minimum release time before white-tailed deer could be shot in a shooting preserve, and six of seven states allow consumption of deer killed in shooting preserves; only Vermont prohibits it.

In the Southeast, six of nine states consider whitetails in shooting preserves as wildlife, Louisiana and Oklahoma consider them livestock, and Alabama considers them game animals. Four states reported minimum release times. Florida requires one day, Alabama and Texas require 10 days, and Mississippi requires more than 10 days before hunting season for bucks with antlers. Eight of 10 states allow consumption of deer killed in shooting preserves; only Alabama and Tennessee prohibit it.

In Canada, only Saskatchewan has shooting preserves and it considers whitetails in these facilities as domestic game farm animals. Saskatchewan does not have a minimum release time before these deer could be shot and it does allow them to be consumed. Quebec reported having no shooting preserves but said deer in them would be eligible for consumption.

Twenty-four of the 37 states surveyed and two Canadian provinces reported that it is legal to consume meat from whitetails killed in shooting preserves.

Classification, Minimum Release Time and Consumption of Captive Cervids

State/Province	Captive Whitetails Classification	Min. Release Time (Days)	Legal to Consume?
Illinois	Livestock	None	Yes
Indiana	Not Sure	n/a	Yes
Iowa	Livestock	None	Yes
Kansas	*	*	*
Kentucky	*	*	*
Michigan	Livestock	0	Yes
Minnesota	Livestock	*	Yes
Missouri	Wildlife	0	Yes
Nebraska	*	*	*
North Dakota	Livestock	None	Yes
Ohio	Wild Animal	0	Yes
South Dakota	n/a	n/a	Yes
Wisconsin	Livestock	No Rules	Yes
Connecticut	n/a	n/a	Yes
Delaware	n/a	n/a	n/a
Maine	n/a	n/a	n/a
Maryland	n/a	n/a	n/a
Massachusetts	*	*	*
New Hampshire	n/a	n/a	Yes
New Jersey	Wildlife	None	Yes
New York	Domestic Game Animals	0	Yes
Pennsylvania	*	*	*
Rhode Island	*	*	*
Vermont	Wildlife	None	No
Virginia	Wildlife	n/a	Yes
West Virginia	Wildlife	0	Yes
Alabama	Game Animals	10	No
Arkansas	*	n/a	Yes
Florida	Wildlife	1	Yes
Georgia	Wildlife	n/a	Yes
Louisiana	Livestock	*	Yes
Mississippi	Wildlife	>10 Days Before Season	Yes
North Carolina	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oklahoma	Livestock	0	Yes
South Carolina	Wildlife	n/a	Yes
Tennessee	Wildlife	n/a	No
Texas	Wildlife	10	Yes
Alberta	n/a	n/a	n/a
British Columbia	n/a	n/a	n/a
Manitoba	n/a	n/a	n/a
New Brunswick	Illegal	*	No
Nova Scotia	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ontario	*	n/a	n/a
Quebec	Other	0	Yes
Saskatchewan	Domestic Game Farm Animals	0	Yes

* data not provided

Movement of Captive Deer

We asked state and provincial wildlife agencies whether it was legal to import and export deer to/from other state/provinces into breeding facilities or shooting preserves. In the Midwest, nine of 11 states allow whitetails to be imported and exported, and only Minnesota and Nebraska prohibit their movement. In the Northeast, only two of 11 states (New York and Vermont) allow whitetails to be imported while five of 10 states (Connecticut, Delaware, New Jersey, New York and West Virginia) allow them to be exported. Surprisingly, Vermont allows deer to be brought into the Green Mountain State but does not allow them to leave. In the Southeast, only four of 11 states (Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina and Oklahoma) allow deer to be imported, while seven of 10 states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina and Texas) allow them to be exported.

Where is it Legal to Import and Export Deer?

State/Province	Import Allowed?	Export Allowed?
Illinois	Yes	Yes
Indiana	Yes	Yes
Iowa	Yes	Yes
Kansas	*	*
Kentucky	*	*
Michigan	Yes	Yes
Minnesota	No	No
Missouri	Yes	Yes
Nebraska	No	No
North Dakota	Yes	Yes
Ohio	Yes	Yes
South Dakota	Yes	Yes
Wisconsin	Yes	Yes
Connecticut	No	Yes
Delaware	No	Yes
Maine	No	No
Maryland	No	No
Massachusetts	No	*
New Hampshire	No	No
New Jersey	No	Yes
New York	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	*	*
Rhode Island	No	No
Vermont	Yes	No
Virginia	No	No
West Virginia	No	Yes
Alabama	No	Yes
Arkansas	No	Yes
Florida	Yes	Yes
Georgia	No	No
Louisiana	Yes	Yes
Mississippi	No	Yes
North Carolina	Yes	Yes
Oklahoma	Yes	*
South Carolina	No	No
Tennessee	No	No
Texas	No	Yes
Alberta	No	No
British Columbia	No	No
Manitoba	No	No
New Brunswick	Yes	Yes
Nova Scotia	No	No
Ontario	No	No
Quebec	Yes	Yes
Saskatchewan	Yes	Yes

* data not provided

Across all three U.S. regions surveyed, 15 states allow the importation of deer into breeding facilities or shooting preserves. A total of 21 states allow the exportation of deer.

Based on results of QDMA's 2012 wildlife agency survey we are concerned by the lack of consistency in breeding facility and shooting preserve regulations as they relate to our concerns for animal welfare, human health/safety, disease, compliance with regulations, and our hunting heritage. Thus, we believe the time has come for a nationwide discussion on these topics among all relevant stakeholders to identify and implement necessary safeguards to protect North America's wild white-tailed deer and our hunting heritage.

QDMA 13th Annual National Convention

25th Anniversary - A proven past, a promising future

Come see us in our hometown of Athens, Georgia!

Night Events!

July 18-21, 2013
Thursday-Sunday

Auctions & Raffles

A Variety of Youth Activities!

Downtown Attractions

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Athens, Georgia, nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and only a little more than 60 miles east of Atlanta, is known as the "Classic City" and has an eclectic culture with a little bit of everything for everyone – a world-renowned music scene, unique shopping, a range of top-notch cuisine, lively nightlife, college athletics, outdoor recreation, history museums, performance arts and much more! Athens is also home to the University of Georgia Deer Lab!

Athens photos provided by VisitAthensGA.com

Registration opens in February. Check QDMA.com for updates!

For info, call QDMA at (800) 209-3337 or go to QDMA.com

Scrape Use by Fawns

It's common knowledge that bucks use scrapes to advertise their presence and gain information on other deer in the neighborhood during the breeding season. Many hunters even know that most scrape visitations occur at night (about 84 percent), and thus hunting right over scrapes is generally unproductive. But, did you know that bucks may use scrapes throughout the year, even in northern environments, or that does and fawns also use scrapes?

Scrapes serve as signposts or bulletin boards for whitetails. They are a place to exchange information with others in the area. Deer can leave information via their forehead and preorbital glands and saliva on the "licking" branch above the scrape, and via their interdigital gland and urine in the scrape. Given a whitetail's highly complex olfactory system, scrape use and behavior is a perfect way to communicate. Thus, it only makes sense that does and fawns take advantage of it too.

Doe Use of Scrapes

As anyone who has ever hung a trail-camera over a scrape can attest, does routinely visit scrapes during the breeding season. In most instances they are collecting information about prior visitors, as they less frequently "work" the licking branch or urinate in the scrape. Nonetheless, by visiting scrapes they increase the amount of deer activity and scent at those locations, which can help attract bucks and thus help us narrow down the ideal tree to hunt from. While most scrape use is at night, a large portion of it is right after dark, so some scouting combined with a plan and a little knowledge of deer travel patterns can help us cross paths with a buck en route to a scrape during legal shooting hours.

Fawn Use of Scrapes

Fawns learn much about the world from their mother and other does. They can learn where seasonal food sources are, how to avoid predators, where the best cover or wintering areas area, and countless other crucial items. They also quickly learn the importance of scrapes. Some may even

This Wisconsin button buck spent more than 45 minutes at this scrape site on November 14 – pawing, sniffing and even bedding down in the scrape. The series comes from QDMA member Todd Reabe of Brillion, Wisconsin.

use scrapes to obtain a potential breeding opportunity. Many hunters rarely think of fawns with regard to breeding does or having fawns, but it occurs throughout much of the whitetails range, and it is very common in some areas.

Fawns can become sexually mature at less than a year old if they reach a threshold weight of about 70 to 80 pounds (live weight). It is easier to estimate the percentage of doe fawns that breed because we can do so by checking for fetuses in harvested fawns or by checking the lactation status of 1½-year-old harvested does. We can also check a fawn's ovaries for ovulation sites (corpora lutea scars), although the average hunter is not going to be able do that.

Doe Fawn Breeding

Depending on your location, doe fawn breeding may be extremely rare or fairly common. A 2009 QDMA survey of state wildlife agencies revealed that nationwide, 23 percent of doe fawns bred in 2008; this was down from 26 percent in 1998. However, since this index is so closely tied to a region's habitat quality, it is difficult to lump the breeding rates across a region or even a state or province together. For example, in Pennsylvania an average of 25 percent of the doe fawns bred in 2008, but that percentage varied from 0 to 48 percent across the state's wildlife management units (WMU). Similar ranges occurred in Alabama (0 to 33 percent), New Hampshire (0 to 25 percent), South Dakota (0 to 58 percent), and Virginia (3 to 49 percent). These rates likely varied even more across specific properties within any WMU. This is one reason why collecting data from your location and using that to make site-specific harvest recommendations can benefit your deer management program. Also, you can compare your data to WMU or state/provincial averages and assess how your management program measures up, and whether you have realistic expectations for what you can accomplish. Amazingly, 70 percent of doe fawns breed in Iowa. This is testament to the mineral-rich soils and volume of agriculture in Iowa that provides abundant high-quality forage, and allows fawns to grow rapidly. Even more amazing is that 10 percent of the doe fawns that breed in Iowa give birth to twins, and 21 percent of the doe fawns that breed in Ohio's farmland region have twins!

The doe was limping at a very slow pace, and a buck fawn had mounted her. The comical part was a second buck fawn had mounted the first, and a third buck fawn had mounted the second!

Buck Fawn Breeding

Outside of DNA analysis it is nearly impossible to estimate the percentage of buck fawns that sire fawns. That doesn't mean that sexually mature buck fawns don't try or that some aren't successful breeders. We can assess the average weight of buck fawns in an area to estimate the percentage that are likely to become sexually mature. In South Carolina for example, the average dressed weight of buck fawns is 62 pounds (see page 18), so their average live weight would be around 75 to 80 pounds. In Virginia, the average live weight for buck fawns is 60 to 65 pounds. It jumps to 80 to 85 pounds in New Hampshire and 85 to 90 pounds in Iowa. Obviously, the potential for breeding is higher in populations with a larger percentage of the fawn crop attaining sexual maturity.

Buck Fawn Breeding in the Real World

Weights and percentages are one thing, but actual breeding is another (and conception is further yet). Being sexually mature doesn't guarantee the opportunity to breed or the ability to "get the job done." Let us explain. While in graduate school at the University of New Hampshire Kip was supervisor of the University's deer research facility. There were deer in multiple pens, and that allowed for pairing of specific bucks and does. We hand-reared all fawns at the facility so they were separated from adult deer from two days of age through at least 12 months of age. One fall morning while feeding the deer Kip noticed a doe limping badly. Fearing for her safety, he removed her from the pen and put her in a pen that contained only fawns. Well, she must have come in estrus that night because when he checked on her the next morning he saw quite a sight. She was limping at a very slow pace and a buck fawn had mounted her. The comical part was a second buck fawn had mounted the first and a third buck fawn had mounted the second! There was this poor injured doe with three buck fawns in tow. Being on a high-quality ration, all three fawns had likely reached sexual maturity.

So, who bred the doe? None of the three. While all may have been physiologically capable to breed, none were "structurally" capable. As the bucks traded places, each got their front legs up on the doe's back but none were tall enough to connect the necessary parts.

We hope the above story made you laugh, but we hope it also made you realize that deer management is about more than just numbers and ratios. To be most successful, it must include personal observations, application of data to local conditions, and a sharing of experiences with family and friends. Kip was alone at the research facility that morning, and that was long before the days when everyone had a camera built into the phone in their pocket. He was the only one who got to see the event, but he's shared the story many times. We believe that buck fawns sire very few fawns in most situations, but it's like hunting. We may not shoot something every time we go afield, but that doesn't stop us from trying!

Quality Habitat on a Budget

Food plots are incredibly popular among hunters and deer managers, and they are used across the whitetail's range to provide high-quality forage for deer and attraction sites for hunters. Food plots can provide tons of food per acre, and some species such as corn, sorghum and sunflowers can also provide cover. Food plots can also attract numerous insects which provide additional food for turkeys, quail and other birds. Research at the University of Georgia has even shown clover plots benefit forest songbirds, including several species that are declining and of national concern – remember that tip when talking to anti-hunters about the importance of hunting to wildlife conservation.

On the flip side, food plots can be expensive to plant and maintain, and this is especially true given the current prices of fuel and fertilizer. Herbicide, lime, seed and fertilizer can range from $200 to $400 per acre that you plant, and this doesn't include equipment costs, labor or fuel. Few landowners spend even a fraction of this amount per acre to manage their forestland or early successional habitats. Given this, more and more landowners and deer managers are food-plotting on a budget.

Here are a few ways to reduce your food plot expenditures while still providing high-quality forage for whitetails.

Plant Legumes

First, you can reduce your fertilizer costs by planting legumes. Legumes are species that take nitrogen (N) from the air and convert it in the soil to a form that is usable by plants. Popular legumes for deer include alfalfa, clover, trefoil, soybeans and peas. With regard to savings, white clover can "fix" 50 to 200 pounds of nitrogen per acre. Using current nitrogen fertilizer costs, this is a savings of $40 to $160 per acre! We don't know about you, but we sure appreciate the fact that we don't have to purchase that nitrogen or apply it to our plots. Plus, whatever nitrogen is left in the soil when you replant the field can be used by the new plant species. This is one reason why clover is arguably the most commonly planted species for whitetails.

Scavenge Nitrogen

A second way to food plot on a budget goes hand-in-hand with what we just discussed. We can reduce fertilizer costs for plants requiring nitrogen by taking advantage of the nitrogen in the soil created by legumes. For example, corn and brassicas are great for deer, but they both require a lot of nitrogen. Planting these species in fields that grew legumes the year before allows them to scavenge nitrogen the legumes created and reduces the amount of nitrogen you need to purchase and apply. This is why farmers routinely rotate corn and soybeans. Corn needs a lot of nitrogen and soybeans are a legume that creates it.

Buy in Bulk

A third way to food plot on a budget is to buy your lime, fertilizer and herbicide in bulk. Get with your neighbors, QDM Cooperative members, and others and pool your needs. You often can get discounts when buying fertilizer by the ton versus in 50-lb. bags or when buying lime and herbicides in larger quantities. This can be a great way to start a QDM Cooperative or to keep Cooperative members happy and engaged.

Frost-Seeding

Finally, if you live in an area that freezes during winter, you can save fuel and equipment costs by frost-seeding a portion of your plots. Frost seeding involves spreading seed on frozen ground and

allowing the freeze-thaw-freeze-thaw cycle that occurs as spring approaches to provide good seed-to-soil contact. This works best with minimal to no competing vegetation, and you achieve this by spraying the field with the appropriate herbicide the fall before you frost seed, or by frost seeding a field that was planted in an annual the year before.

In our areas of northern Pennsylvania and upstate New York, green-up occurs in mid-April so the preferred time for frost seeding is generally from late February through March, and we like to frost seed onto a couple inches of snow if possible. You can frost seed cool-season perennials such as alfalfa, clover, trefoil and chicory, and cool-season annuals like oats, wheat or rye. Do not frost seed warm-season annuals such as corn or soybeans, and while brassicas can be frost-seeded, we prefer to plant them later in the summer. You can frost-seed a new plot or frost-seed cool-season species into an existing plot that is thinning. You won't get as high of a germination rate as you do with more intensive planting techniques, but it's one way to save some money, and we've had great results from frost seeding during the past several years.

Develop Old Fields

Many hunters need to scale their deer expenses back but cringe at the thought of providing less food for deer. Depending on the species, food plots generally produce 1 to 5 tons of food per acre, but as stated earlier, can average $200 to $400 per acre in input costs. An alternative strategy is to focus additional management effort on early successional habitat. Many refer to these as "old fields," and they are extremely valuable to deer and numerous other wildlife species. By removing cool-season grasses such as fescue and orchardgrass that provide very little for whitetails you can create a field full of forbs, warm-season grasses, brambles and other highly beneficial species. You generally create this composition with herbicides, and then maintain it with properly timed disking, prescribed fire, or other management strategies – none of which involve a bushhog! Rotary mowers destroy far more habitat on an annual basis than they enhance. Early

In areas that freeze during the winter, frost-seeding can help save on fuel and equipment costs.

successional habitats can provide 1 to 3 tons of high-quality forage per acre, and they also provide tremendous cover for fawns and adults! If you're in an area with a lot of coyotes, bears or other predators, these areas can help reduce fawn predation rates. They're great places for adult deer to bed in, and they are excellent places to hunt in the fall.

Think about this for a minute. Early successional habitat can produce as much food per acre as some food plots, they provide a lot more cover than most food plots, they require little maintenance relative to food plots, and their per-acre cost is only a fraction of a food plots'. Don't get us wrong, we are big fans of food plots, but many hunters are missing the boat by not doing a better job with this critical habitat component.

Many hunters only think of food when trying to attract deer to their property or hold them during hunting season. Food is good and in most cases deer will use it, but it's not doing your hunting any good if they're only using it at night. This is especially true on small properties. We strongly encourage all landowners to assess the amount and quality of cover on their property. Deer need cover and they will spend most daylight hours in cover. Thus, if you don't have it, or if your neighbor has better cover, you can expect deer to spend more time during the day on your neighbor's property. Those deer may visit your food plots at night, or if you're lucky, they may visit them at dusk, but you can greatly improve your odds of seeing whitetails during shooting hours by providing high-quality cover on your property. Fortunately there are many ways to achieve this. A few include hinge-cutting your hardwoods, opening the forest canopy to allow a flush of vegetation at ground level, creating early successional habitats, and planting native warm-season grasses.

While improving that cover, you have the perfect opportunity to create other habitat features that can aid your harvest success. Small ponds or vernal pools within cover are attractive to deer, and they can add diversity to the habitat. Whitetails are well aware of all nuances in the habitat within their home range. So, you may have good habitat, but if someone else nearby has great habitat, deer will tend to use that more. Combat this by having great habitat with a lot of diversity. A mix of young and mature forests, thick and nasty hinge-cut areas, early successional habitat, warm-season grasses, wetland or shallow ponds, soft-mast orchards, and the icing on the cake being high-quality food plots. The more components you have, the better. You can even create travel funnels in the woods with your habitat work or in fields by strategically planting warm-season grasses, corn, or woody travel corridors.

Fortunately, you don't need big, fancy equipment to do any of this. A chainsaw, backpack sprayer and over-the-shoulder seed spreader can be just as good for improving habitat as the largest tractor and implements. Regardless of the size of equipment at your disposal, the sky is the limit, so be creative and allow your imagination to run wild. Cover is key for whitetails, and especially for mature bucks, and it is even more important on small properties. So, improve the cover on your land and you'll immediately enhance your odds of crossing paths with the buck of your dreams.

Get More Info Online

Watch a video of Kip discussing planting food plots on a budget and ways to maximize your properties potential at www.beararcheryproducts.com/hunting-webisodes?v-13.

Are You an Average Hunter?

For you older hunters, Webster's defines average as, "A typical or usual level, degree or kind." For you younger hunters, Wikipedia defines average as, "A measure of the middle or typical value of a data set." So, as you read this, would you consider yourself an average hunter? Many would be offended if considered average, especially with respect to our prowess at chasing and tagging whitetails. Ourselves included as we dedicate a tremendous amount of time during the year to learning more about this amazing creature in order to put ourselves in better viewing and shooting positions.

Our use of "average" in this case though pertains more to hunting expenditures than success in the field. Every five years the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conducts a national survey of fishing, hunting and wildlife-associated recreation. The most current survey was in 2011, and the results are recently available. The following information is from that survey.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's national survey of fishing, hunting and wildlife-associated recreation, the average hunter spent $2,484 on all things hunting related in 2011.

If your spouse hunts with you, that's great. Read on. If your spouse doesn't hunt with you, do not let him or her see this data under any circumstance!

In 2011, the average hunter spent $2,484 on all things hunting related. Nearly $2,500 is a substantial sum, and one that may make even the most understanding significant other roll their eyes. Let's break that down into the top 10 items we spent money on and you can determine for yourself how "average" you are.

10) Private Land Use Fees:

The average hunter spent $55 on this item in 2011 for a total of $755 million. However, only 9 percent of hunters actually spent money on this category, and those few spent an average of $633 each. These were not lease fees as that is a separate category.

9) Bows, Arrows and Archery Equipment:

The average hunter spent $68 on this item for a total of nearly $935 million. Twenty-five percent of hunters spent in this category and we were way "above average" here. Expanded archery seasons and crossbow use both contributed to this category's seat in the top 10. In fact, over 50 percent of the total deer harvest in New Jersey in 2011 was by archers.

8) Hunting Dogs and Associated Costs:

The average hunter spent $70 for a total of over $951 million. Only 7 percent of hunters spent here, and the average per spender was $945. Hunting dogs aren't cheap, but good ones are certainly worth the expense.

7) Licenses, Stamps, Tags and Permits:

The average hunter spent $72 for a total of over $986 million. How much does the average anti-hunter spend for wildlife conservation? Far less than the average hunter, and be sure to remind them of that at every opportunity. Seventy-five percent of all hunters contributed to this category. The remaining hunters are exempt due to age, landowner status, etc.

6) Ammunition:

The average hunter spent $95 for a total of nearly $1.3 billion. Amazingly, only 65 percent of hunters spent money on ammunition in 2011. We guess the rest

Hunters spent more than $3 billion purchasing firearms (rifles, shotguns, muzzleloaders and handguns) in 2011. With 22 percent of hunters reporting spending on firearms, that's an average of $1,015 each.

were stocked up from prior years or they have some really giving friends.

5) Firearms:

The average hunter spent $223 for a total of over $3 billion. Twenty-two percent of hunters spent in this category for an average of $1,015 each. This category included rifles, shotguns, muzzleloaders and handguns. Note: you can win a firearm at a QDMA Branch event for far less than $1,015 – support your local Branch!

4) Food (for hunting trips):

The average hunter spent $235 for a total of over $3.2 billion. Equal to the license category, 75 percent of hunters spent in this category. Interestingly, food and lodging are often discussed together as hunting expenditures, but lodging expenses were only a fraction of food's. The average hunter only spent $49 on lodging in 2011.

In 2011, hunters spent nearly $4.4 billion on special equipment – including boats, campers, cabins, ATVs, pickups and more. Only 4 percent of hunters reported spending on special equipment for a spender average of $7,159!

3) Special Equipment:

This is a big category as it included boats, campers, cabins, ATVs, pickups, and more. The average hunter spent $321 in this category for a total of nearly $4.4 billion. However, only 4 percent of hunters spent here for a spender average of $7,159!

2) Transportation:

The average hunter spent $349 on transportation for a total of over $4.7 billion. Eighty percent of hunters spent in this category making it the most popularly purchased item. This total included both public and private transportation.

Drum roll please.

1) Land Leasing and Ownership:

The average hunter spent $540 for a total of nearly $7.4 billion. This was by far the top category as it was 57 percent higher than the second item. The survey did not separate leasing and land purchasing, but another U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service survey showed just under 7 percent of hunters leased land in the U.S. in 2006. That same survey showed 1.3 million hunters owned over 134 million acres, and over a decade ago (2001) the number of hunters owning land exceeded the number leasing land. How do QDMA members fit in this? Many feel all QDMA members are large landowners. In reality, a full third of our members (33 percent) do not own any land, and over half of our members hunt (not own) on less than 500 acres.

Other items of particular interest that just missed the top 10 are Plantings (No. 11) and Taxidermy/Processing Costs (tied Lodging at No. 12). Notably, the Plantings category was not even listed in the 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. It is amazing that in the past five years the average hunter went from spending less than $2 (the smallest category in the 2006 survey) to $51 on plantings for a total of over $702 million. No wonder there are so many food plot blends and products available today. This is an increase of over 2,400 percent!

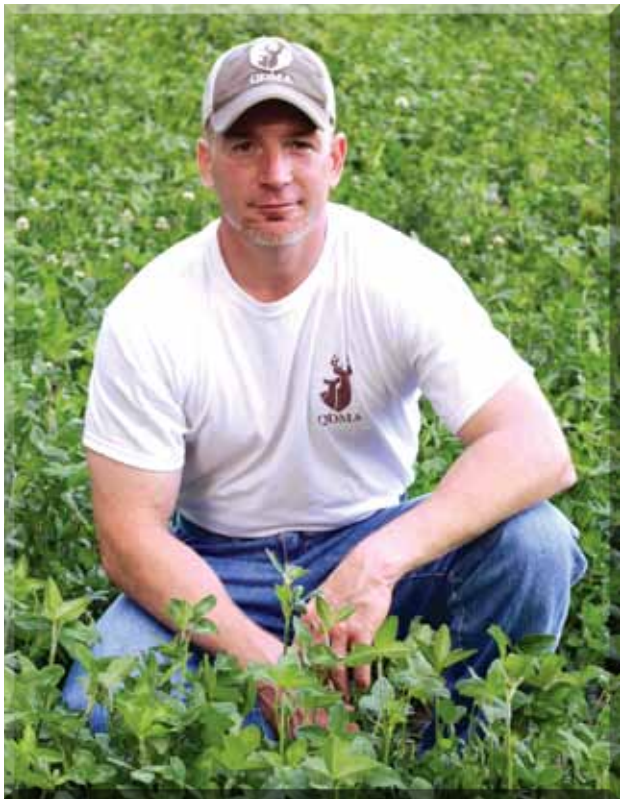
Back to the original question, "Are you an average hunter?" Simply by being a QDMA member and reading *Quality Whitetails* you're clearly above average with regard to your knowledge about deer, their habitat, and the importance of ensuring our hunting heritage. That's where it really counts, so here's to above average.

Year-Round Deer Season

The explosion of Quality Deer Management (QDM) throughout the whitetail's range has vastly improved the health of deer herds and habitats, as well as created tremendous hunting and viewing opportunities. One benefit of a QDM program is the opportunity for year-round involvement with deer and their habitat. Growing up in the North meant "deer season" was only two weeks long, and in reality it was only two to four days long for nearly every hunter in our camp. Granted, they were an incredibly exciting two to four days, but it was a long, long offseason. Longer and additional seasons can provide more opportunity, but they are still essentially relegated to the fall and/or winter depending on your location.

QDM changed this.

Today, I am involved in some facet of deer or habitat management every month of the year. I realize I am extremely fortunate to be a landowner, but even if I wasn't, I could (and would) still be engaged in some management activity year-round.



Kip Adams, QDMA's Director of Education & Outreach, is actively involved in some aspect of deer or habitat management every month of the year on his family's Pennsylvania land, extending the rewards of deer hunting through QDM.

Here is a list of what I do each month on my family's piece of heaven in Tioga County in north-central Pennsylvania. Depending on where you live, the months may need shifting ahead or back, but the relative sequence of events should hold true.

JANUARY – Pennsylvania's flintlock and late archery seasons are open, but my in-line and percussion cap aren't allowed, and I've generally put my bow away by now. I spend this month analyzing and interpreting our harvest and observation data and writing our annual camp report. The report (hopefully) shows how we've progressed toward our goals and is a great way to capture and re-live all of the excitement from the season. It's also a great document to share with neighbors to maintain and/or enhance relationships. On the habitat side, January is a great month to begin our timber stand improvement (TSI) work. We cut inferior and sub-dominant trees to improve our forest and gain the added benefit of putting food and cover at ground level. Deer, rabbits and other wildlife species benefit from this work.

FEBRUARY – I hunt out of a typical Northern deer camp. This means my hunting buddies and I spend a lot of time there during archery and rifle seasons. As a little payback we have an annual camp dinner each February where we take our wives and girlfriends out for a nice meal. From a management perspective, February is perfect for continued TSI work with the end of the month occasionally offering good conditions for frost-seeding food plots.

MARCH – This is the ideal frost-seeding month as we typically start getting some warm days that create the necessary freeze-thaw-freeze-thaw conditions you're looking for. We usually frost-seed clover, but you can use this technique with other cool-season perennials like chicory and alfalfa. This is also when we conduct our annual pellet count and browse surveys (if the snow has melted) to estimate deer density and habitat quality, hunt for shed antlers, replenish our mineral sites, and I move my trail-cameras to the mineral sites.

APRIL – Here is when food plot work really begins. I spray the broadleaf weeds in our clover plots with an herbicide containing 2,4-DB (such as Butyrac or MCP-Amine 4), and I plant our cool-season perennials like clover, chicory and alfalfa, if necessary. This is also the month I fertilize clover plots, pull soil samples and get them tested for food plots to be planted later, plant fruit trees, and conduct our pellet-count and browse surveys if we still had snow in March.

MAY – In Pennsylvania, this is planting time for warm-season annuals. We plant corn when the soil temperature 2 inches deep at 8 a.m. is 55° F and soybeans when the soil temperature is 62°. I use a $7 meat thermometer from my local grocery store and check the soil temperature every morning to ensure I don't plant too early. If you don't want to do this, just watch your local farmers. They'll let you know when the time is right. This month is also when I start seeing the first fawns on the ground.

JUNE – The bulk of our fawns are born in June, and does can be extremely protective of them. That makes this month the perfect time for my daughter and me to sit in a hedgerow or other good fawning cover and call does. My daughter can blow a predator call and perfectly mimic a fawn in distress. If a doe is anywhere nearby, she will immediately come to the fawn's rescue. My daughter called in her first does when she was only 3 years old. She even called one in to less than 5 feet away from us. Calling does won't do much for your management program, but it will do wonders for your relationship with your child. June is also

the time to knock the tops off the broadleaf weeds in clover plots, move trail-cameras to emerging food sources, and especially for spending time watching deer in food plots and agricultural fields.

JULY – This is the time to get everything in order for fall food plots. I plant all of our brassicas and winter wheat in August, so July is the time to prepare those plots via spraying, disking or whatever is necessary. This is also the time I should begin hanging stands, although I'll admit it never happens.

AUGUST – I love August. I start shooting my bow the first week in August every year. I could start sooner, but I'll shoot thousands of arrows before archery season arrives, so practice time isn't limited. Just as the Monday after Thanksgiving is always the beginning of our rifle season, the first of August is always the beginning of my bow-practice season, and I excitedly await its arrival like the return of an old friend. August is also when I plant our fall food plots, conduct our annual trail-camera survey, and calculate our target harvest prescriptions for the upcoming season. I also like August because for the past two years it's when we've hosted our National Convention, and I always enjoy seeing and talking with QDMA members from across North America.

SEPTEMBER – This is when I spray for perennial cool-season grasses in our clover plots using clethodim (the active ingredient for several brand-name herbicides, and the one available for me locally is called Intensity). You can top kill the grasses by spraying earlier in the summer, but you can really kill them by spraying in September.

I remove any remaining minerals and the top layer of soil from our mineral sites at the beginning of the month. This is strictly due to baiting being illegal in Pennsylvania. Our archery season starts the last Saturday of September or the first Saturday in October, and all baits and feeds must be removed 30 days before the season. My local wildlife conservation officer (WCO) suggests removing the top layer of soil to ensure no salt or minerals are present, so I follow his guidance. I recommend you contact your local WCO to ensure you're in compliance too.

March is the ideal frost-seeding month for Kip, who lives in Pennsylvania. As the soil freezes and thaws, it's a good opportunity to over-seed food plots of cool-season perennials like chicory, clover and alfalfa.

We also have our annual camp work day in September. This is when we cut our wood supply for the year, check the property and sanctuary boundary signs, and fix anything in need of repair at camp. It's also a chance to get together with everyone, and that evening is when I give our annual camp talk that includes where we are relative to our goals, our target harvest prescriptions (for bucks, does and fawns), and a safety reminder for the season.

OCTOBER, NOVEMBER and DECEMBER – Hunt, hunt, and hunt some more! (and, of course, collect observation and harvest data while you're at it) Get in the woods with your family and friends.

True story: last November my best friend Scott Beebe shot the biggest buck of his life during archery season (photo above). I know it was his biggest because we've been best friends and hunting partners since we were kids. He called in my first spring gobbler, my Golden retrieved his first quail... you get the picture. Anyway, he made a perfect shot, and it was the easiest blood trail I've ever followed. He could easily have retrieved the buck, but he called me so we could do it together. A quick and very short walk ended at a magnificent 5½-year-old animal. We were so excited, and I was genuinely appreciative for being able to share that moment with him. His young daughter was with us, and as she relayed the story to Scott's dad that night, she said "Grandpa, when we found the buck, Daddy and Kip hugged each other. Isn't that silly?"

It may have seemed silly to an 8-year-old, but even though I wasn't in the tree with Scott, I sure got to feel a part of the hunt by being able to retrieve it with him. Scott will shoot bigger bucks in coming years (he's a great hunter), but this one will forever be special to both of us because we found it together. So, share the hunting experience with someone this fall!

Good luck this season, and I hope you're as thankful as I am that today's "deer season" is a lot more than two to four days long.

Kip (right) and his best friend Scott Beebe with a buck Scott killed last season.

Annuals, Perennials and Row Crops

Food plots are incredibly popular across the whitetail's range, but their proper preparation, planting and maintenance can get confusing very quickly. Even a discussion of commonly-planted species can leave food plotters scratching their heads. This article clearly explains the main groups of food plot species and describes how they can be used in a food plot program.

Annuals are food plot species that complete their life cycle in a single year. They tend to germinate and grow very quickly, and they can provide several tons of forage per acre for numerous wildlife species. Popular annuals for whitetails include corn, soybeans, peas, brassicas, wheat, oats and some clovers such as crimson and arrowleaf. They provide high-quality forage, some provide cover, and depending on species, they can provide food for nearly every month of the year. For example, winter wheat and annual clovers planted in late summer and fall are some of the first species to green-up in the spring. This early food is crucial for does in the final stage of gestation, for bucks with developing antlers, and especially important for all deer following a hard winter. Soybeans and peas can feed deer all summer, corn and clover can feed them during fall, and then corn and brassicas can provide food all winter. High-quality year-round forage is possible, and using a diversity of annuals can pay huge dividends to the deer herd and your hunting opportunities.

Perennials on the other hand are food plot species that can live for several years. They germinate and grow slower than annuals because they spend more time initially developing their root system. However, once established, they'll provide forage for whitetails for a few to numerous years depending on the species. For example, red clover is listed as a biennial but often lasts for at least 3 years. White clover on the other hand is longer lived and can last for 5 to 7 years or more with proper maintenance. Popular perennials for whitetails include red clover, white clover, ladino clover, alfalfa, and chicory. Clovers are arguably the most commonly planted species for deer, and for good reason. Clovers are high in protein, highly digestible, highly preferred by deer, and

Annuals are food plot species that complete their life cycle in a single year.

Dave Powell, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

Perennials on the other hand are food plot species that can live for several years.

Keith Weller, USDA Agricultural Research Service, Bugwood.org

Row crops are not different types of plants, rather they are species that are literally planted in rows, and the most popular row crops for deer are corn and soybeans (both annuals).

there are varieties available that will grow in nearly every corner of the whitetail's range. Perennials are highly attractive, can provide forage from spring to fall, and should be a component of nearly all food plot programs.

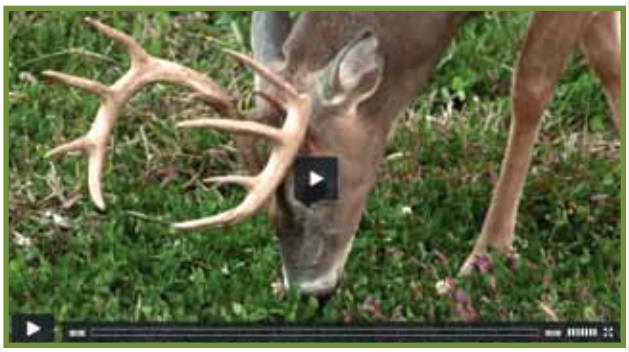
Some food plots will contain a mix of annual and perennial species. The most common reasons for this strategy are to use the faster growing annual species as a "nurse" crop for the slower establishing perennials, or to extend the length of time the plot is providing forage for whitetails. Two popular mixes include using a cereal grain such as oats, wheat or rye as a nurse crop in a clover or clover/chicory planting. The cereal grain establishes quickly and provides forage for deer while the slower establishing clover and/or chicory develop their root systems. This is a great use of an annual to protect the perennials and also to minimize the amount of time the plot is unproductive for deer. Another example is to mix clover and brassicas. The brassicas protect the developing clover, but more importantly they can provide forage for months after the clover goes dormant in the fall.

Row crops are not different types of plants, rather they are species that are literally planted in rows, and the most popular row crops for deer are corn and soybeans (both annuals). These two species are planted in late spring after soil temperatures reach 55 degrees for corn and 62 degrees for soybeans, and they can provide tons of forage per acre for whitetails. Soybeans can feed deer all summer and into fall until the leaves and pods are fully consumed. Very, very few species are more preferred by whitetails than soybeans. Corn can provide food and cover during summer, fall and into winter until all the ears are consumed. Corn is high in energy, highly preferred by deer, and can be a great draw during deer season.

A food plot program should be designed to provide food for as close to year-round as possible. You accomplish this by planting some cool-season perennials such as clover and alfalfa, some cool-season annuals like oats or brassicas, and some warm-season annuals like corn and soybeans. None of these species can do it by themselves, but when used in combination with each other the results can be outstanding.

Courtesy of Realtree, QDMA's website, www.QDMA.com, features four videos on Annuals, Perennials and Row Crops:

QDMA.com



In the first video of the series, QDMA's Kip Adams and Whitetail Properties' Dan Perez discuss both annuals and perennials.

In the second video, Kip and Dan dive further into annuals and their role in deer management.

Kip and Dan then explore more about perennials and their role in deer management in the third video.

In the fourth video of the series, Kip and Whitetail Properties' Rich Baugh discuss row crops and their role in deer management.

QDM Cooperatives

Quality deer management (QDM) is about balancing the deer herd with the habitat, balancing the adult sex ratio, and balancing the age structure for bucks and does. Sometimes, this is easier said than done, especially when most deer managers own or manage acreages far smaller than deer home ranges. This is where QDM cooperatives come into play. A QDM cooperative is a group of landowners and hunters working together to improve the quality of the deer herd, habitat and hunting experiences on their collective acreage. QDM cooperatives are rapidly spreading across the whitetail's range, and a recent survey of QDMA members showed an astounding 34 percent of respondents were involved in a QDM cooperative. That equates to tens of thousands of hunters and millions of acres, resulting in an enormous impact on deer herds and wildlife habitats across the whitetail's range.

Let's face it, most hunters don't own enough land to completely contain a single deer's movement patterns, let alone multiple deer or an entire population. Fortunately, cooperatives allow landowners to pool their lands to have a much larger impact on deer herds and management programs. Cooperatives offer numerous benefits to landowners including reduced management costs, reduced trespassing, the ability to share data for a better "picture" of the local deer herd, and most importantly, increased acreage to manage.

The size of a cooperative can vary based on the number of people involved. Some may be as small as a few hundred acres with a handful of landowners, while others may be thousands of acres with hundreds of participants. Bigger is typically better, but any increase in acreage generally improves the success of your management efforts.

Cooperatives are always voluntary and in no way entitle hunters access to other properties or diminish the landowner's control. They simply pool acreage to be managed under common objectives and goals. Participation requirements vary with each co-op. At a minimum, most require members to make a legitimate effort to protect yearling bucks and harvest an appropriate number of does. In all cases the rules are determined and voted on by the members of the co-op.

Now that you know what a QDM co-op is and understand the benefits of belonging to one, here's how to get one established. The first step is to identify a potential area. Generally it is centered around a group of hunters already participating in or interested in establishing

a QDM program. Properties immediately adjacent to the central property are the most important, so concentrate initial efforts there. Once all the landowners and hunting groups have been identified, contact each personally and invite them to a meeting to discuss the possibility of forming a QDM cooperative.

The next step is to select a central meeting location, date and time. In most cases a community center, social club lodge, restaurant, hunting camp, or similar location is most appropriate. Determine the meeting date and time based on availability and proximity of attendees. If possible, provide a complimentary meal as it will increase attendance and demonstrate your level of commitment. An informal BBQ is a great way to get folks to attend and enjoy themselves.

It is a good idea to obtain the assistance of a local wildlife biologist. He/she can answer biological questions relating to the benefits of a co-op and provide info on the local deer herd. There are several sources for wildlife biologists including state wildlife agencies, timber companies, private consultants, universities, and QDMA. If possible we strongly encourage you to include a representative from another successful cooperative. They can help alleviate concerns and provide support for the co-op.

Some landowners may not be interested initially. That is fine - do not press them. Respect their right to dictate the type of management they desire on their properties. Often they will join at a later date as they become convinced of the merits by other participants.

The first meeting should be to explore the possibility of forming a cooperative, not to actually form one. This is an important distinction. An appointed spokesperson should outline how the cooperative could work and could include key points like protecting yearling bucks, shooting the right number of antlerless deer, collecting harvest data, etc.

You should maintain communication with all interested participants and host the second meeting within two months. This is when you establish the co-op. Some landowners and hunting groups will have already committed to establishing a cooperative. This helps create a friendly atmosphere for others to join. The follow up meeting should begin with a quick recap of the first meeting, and then begin securing commitments to the cooperative and establishing basic membership guidelines.

Membership in the QDM cooperative can be formal or informal. In general, the more properties and people involved, the greater the need for a formalized membership process. It is a good idea to establish some acknowledgement of cooperative members such as property signs, vehicle decals, and/or membership cards. In most cases, no fee is attached to membership in the cooperative. Possible exceptions may include costs associated with mailings to cooperative members, signs, decals, awards, or food for an annual meeting.

Hopefully as the cooperative becomes successful, additional landowners and hunt clubs will want to join. This is great and it's exactly what you're looking for. The success of a QDM cooperative is dictated by the quality and efforts of participants.

Members of the East Olive Co-op in Clinton County, Michigan, who are also members of the Clinton/Ionia Branch of QDMA, gathered with a just a small representation of their accomplishments prior to a meeting in September 2012. The East Olive Co-op, named after the local elementary school that is in the middle of the cooperative, has grown from 20 members and about 200 acres to around 130 members and well over 10,000 acres in the past six years.

New members can bring excitement and new ideas.

Unfortunately every co-op has to deal with uncooperative neighbors at some point. Often, activities on non-member properties within or adjacent to cooperative boundaries will create problems. These activities may range from no hunting at all to the harvest of young bucks. Regardless, never give up hope and keep these landowners and non-member groups informed of the activities and successes with the cooperative. Nothing will do more to encourage their participation in the future than to make it clear that they are missing out on the benefits of membership. It also is a good idea to encourage these landowners and hunters to attend QDM seminars or to join QDMA. Once they gain a better understanding of QDM, they will be more likely to join the cooperative in the future. If all else fails, recognize that some losses to neighboring properties will occur and manage accordingly.

Once the cooperative is formed, realistic deer management goals and strategies must be established. The goals should be specific and measurable. For example, goals could include increasing the average body weight and/or antler measurements for a given buck age class, improving the adult sex ratio, and reducing the percentage of button bucks in the harvest. The time required to achieve these goals depends on the management strategies selected, habitat quality, and commitment level of participants. Changes will not occur over night, and participants should commit for a minimum of three to five years.

Once a cooperative is established, the challenge is to maintain it and promote participation by neighbors. The key is to ensure that involvement is enjoyable. Also, keep members informed. We recommend co-ops meet at least annually to review progress and fine-tune their goals. Many cooperatives meet prior to and following the hunting season. The pre-season meeting should involve a review of the previous year's data to establish objectives for the upcoming season. The post-season meeting provides a opportunity to review how well members adhered to the guidelines and any problems that arose. It is also a great time for members to bring the mounted heads, antlers, or photos of any harvested bucks for members to view. Under the QDM cooperative approach, when a mature buck is harvested, pride is shared by all members as one or more may have passed the buck at an earlier age.

Communication is critical to the success of a cooperative. Typical ways of keeping members informed include distribution of annual harvest reports and periodic newsletters. These can be simple or elaborate depending on the needs of the cooperative and the time and abilities of the person(s) coordinating such efforts. Finally, be patient, expect mistakes and obstacles, and always work as a team.

If you're a small-acreage landowner, a QDM co-op can be a great benefit to you. The best way to ensure the young bucks in your area are protected is to get as many of your neighbors as possible involved in the cooperative. Given the distances some bucks move, it's to your benefit to talk to your immediate neighbors, the landowners who border your neighbors, and even the landowners two or more properties removed from yours. It is true that not all of them will be interested in QDM, but many will. Begin communicating with those who are interested, and chances are your success will grow over time. This doesn't mean you can't have a high-quality QDM program without a cooperative, but in most cases you can be far more successful by being involved in one.

For more information on QDM Cooperatives, visit www.QDMA.com and look for "How to Organize a QDMA Cooperative" in the video section, and *QDMA's Developing Successful Cooperatives* booklet available in The Shed, the Official Store of the QDMA, by clicking "Shop the Shed" on the menu and navigating to the books product category.

Important Deer Foods/Cover: Trees

Food studies have identified several hundred plant species that deer will consume during the course of a year. Some are used seasonally, some only when little else is available, and some are preferred regardless of season and other species' availability. As deer managers, it is important to understand the preferred forages where you live and/or hunt, and while learning everything deer eat in your area is a daunting task, QDMA has just made it a little easier.

Whitetails eat a variety of plant types such as trees, shrubs, herbaceous forages (forbs), and agricultural crops. Most hunters can easily identify the agricultural crops in their area, and they are well versed in which ones deer prefer. However, many hunters come up short when trying to identify the preferred, native, uncultivated vegetation found in forested or early-successional environments. To try and remedy this, we surveyed every state and provincial deer project leader for the 2012 Whitetail Report and asked them to provide 10 of the top naturally-occurring native herbaceous and shrub species that whitetails use in their jurisdiction. This proved to be an extremely popular article with our members; so, as a follow up, this year we asked similar experts to identify the predominant tree species in their area that deer use.

First, we combined states into three regions – the Midwest, Northeast, and Southeast – and then asked professional deer researchers and managers in each to provide a list of 10 of the top trees for deer in their region; we then did the same for eastern Canada. Importantly, all participants were also veteran deer hunters. Please recognize that the relative "importance" of each tree varies, as some are listed because they provide deer a critical source of soft or hard mast, while others for the browse and/or cover they offer during a particular time of year. The species in these lists (see table) are arranged alphabetically, and most were identified by the expert/biologist as species commonly eaten or used by deer in their jurisdiction (not based on scientific analyses). We present this data only on an informational basis, but strongly encourage deer hunters and managers to learn to identify (and in many cases promote) the species listed for their region. Additional information is provided below, including a few more "notable" species for each region.

Some species are region specific while others are used across much of the whitetail's range. For example, white oak and apple/crabapple were reported as important trees for deer in all three U.S. regions, and northern red oak and red maple were listed as important in two of three U.S. regions and eastern Canada. American beech, black cherry and persimmon were listed as top trees in two of the three U.S. regions, and quaking aspen was listed in one of the U.S. regions and in eastern Canada. Numerous trees were listed as "notable" species as well. To break down what was reported here is what the experts provided, by region:

Crabapple, a source of soft mast and browse for whitetails, was identified as a top 10 naturally-occurring tree in all three U.S. regions surveyed.

Midwest – Apple/crabapple, northern red oak, persimmon, post oak and white oak were most often reported. Black cherry, red maple, wild plum, pin oak and other oak species (black, blackjack, bur, chestnut, chinquapin and scarlet) were also important. Other notable plants included American beech, honey locust, paw paw, and red and white elm.

Northeast – Balsam fir, eastern hemlock, northern red oak, red maple and white spruce were most often reported. American beech, apple/crabapple, black oak, quaking aspen and white oak were also important species. Other notable plants in the Northeast included northern white cedar, red spruce, striped maple, sugar maple and yellow birch.

Southeast – Persimmon, water oak and white oak were most often reported. Also, American beech, apple/crabapple, black cherry, blackgum, live oak, southern red oak and other oak species (black, cherrybark, scarlet and swamp chestnut oak) were important. Other notable plants included eastern hemlock, eastern red cedar, elms, mulberry, northern white cedar, red maple, wild plum and yellow poplar.

Eastern Canada – The most important species in eastern Canada included balsam poplar, big-toothed aspen, northern red oak, northern white cedar, quaking aspen, red maple, striped maple, sugar maple, white birch and yellow birch. Other notable plants included pin cherry and white ash.

QDMA's Recommendations

The species included in the table should not be viewed as the **"10 most important"** tree species for each region. Some, such as red maple, are highly preferred browse species, widely distributed and very reliably found in the diet of deer annually. Others, such as many of the oaks listed, may have a ubiquitous distribution within a region, but only provide mast occasionally, depending on annual masting cycles; when they do, they become a major portion of the deer diet in that area. And, as mentioned earlier, some provide deer forage and others provide seasonal or annual cover, and some provide all three (browse, mast and cover). However, all of these species should be viewed by the reader as an important tree to identify and monitor. Numerous manuals are available to help with tree identification, and QDMA recommends that all deer hunters and managers should familiarize themselves with this skill set.

Top Tree Species Used By Whitetails

Region	Common Name	Latin Name	Primary Value
Midwest	Apple/Crabapple	*Malus* spp.	Soft mast, browse
	Black Cherry	*Prunus serotina*	Soft mast
	Northern Red Oak	*Quercus rubra*	Hard mast, browse
	Oak spp. (others not listed here)	*Quercus* spp.	Hard mast, browse
	Persimmon	*Diospyros virginiana*	Soft mast
	Pin Oak	*Quercus palustris*	Hard mast, browse
	Post Oak	*Quercus stellata*	Hard mast, browse
	Red Maple	*Acer rubrum*	Browse, cover
	White Oak	*Quercus alba*	Hard mast, browse
	Wild Plum	*Prunus americana*	Soft mast, browse, cover
Northeast	American Beech	*Fagus grandifolia*	Hard mast
	Apple/Crabapple	*Malus* spp.	Soft mast, browse
	Balsam Fir	*Abies balsamea*	Cover, winter browse
	Black Oak	*Quercus velutina*	Hard mast, browse
	Eastern Hemlock	*Tsuga canadensis*	Cover, winter browse
	Northern Red Oak	*Quercus rubra*	Hard mast, browse
	Quaking Aspen	*Populus tremuloides*	Browse, cover
	Red Maple	*Acer rubrum*	Browse, cover
	White Oak	*Quercus alba*	Hard mast, browse
	White Spruce	*Picea glauca*	Cover
Southeast	American Beech	*Fagus grandifolia*	Hard mast, cover
	Apple/Crabapple	*Malus* spp.	Soft mast, browse
	Black Cherry	*Prunus serotina*	Soft mast
	Blackgum	*Nyssa sylvatica*	Soft mast, browse
	Live Oak	*Quercus virginiana*	Hard mast
	Oak spp. (others not listed here)	*Quercus* spp.	Hard mast, browse
	Persimmon	*Diospyros virginiana*	Soft mast
	Southern Red Oak	*Quercus falcata*	Hard mast, browse
	Water Oak	*Quercus nigra*	Hard mast
	White Oak	*Quercus alba*	Hard mast, browse
Eastern Canada	Balsam Poplar	*Populus balsamifera*	Browse
	Big-toothed Aspen	*Populus grandidentata*	Browse, cover
	Northern Red Oak	*Quercus rubra*	Hard mast, browse
	Northern White Cedar	*Thuja occidentalis*	Winter browse, cover
	Quaking Aspen	*Populus temuloides*	Browse, cover
	Red Maple	*Acer rubrum*	Browse, cover
	Striped Maple	*Acer pensylvanicum*	Browse
	Sugar Maple	*Acer saccharum*	Browse
	White Birch	*Betula papyrifera*	Browse
	Yellow Birch	*Betula alleghaniensis*	Browse

QDMA Website Resources

QDMA announced the launch of its redesigned website, QDMA.com, on March 21, 2012. The new website, produced in partnership with Caddis Interactive, was designed to be easy to navigate while becoming more informative, interactive and visually appealing through several enhancements and new features. As an addendum to the previous contents in Part 3, here is a quick reference of several other worthwhile articles found on QDMA.com.

WHITETAIL BIOLOGY

• **Can Deer See Blaze Orange?** (by Lindsay Thomas Jr.): By studying the physiological make up of a white-tailed deer eye, wildlife researchers help answer that age old question- can that deer really see me?

• **When Do Bucks Visit Scrapes?** (by Matt Ross): Are you wasting your time hunting over a fresh buck scrape? Read this short article to find out.

• **Spike on One Side: Genetics or Injury** (by Gabe Karns): Helping dispel the myth of cull bucks, one lopsided antler at a time.

• **The Antler Growth Bell Curve** (by Lindsay Thomas, Jr.) There's a simple rule underlying antler development in whitetail bucks that all hunters should understand. Awareness of this rule provides a bridge over many of the false expectations, myths, mistakes and frustrations that lie waiting along your path to QDM success.

QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT

• **QDM Practiced Here:** The Benefits of Boundary Signs (by Lindsay Thomas Jr.): By putting up signs advertising your QDM efforts, are you actually inviting poachers and trespassers to come kill "your" bucks? Read this to learn more.

• **The Guy Next Door** (by Shawn Bevins) Communicating with your neighbors is often the first step to QDM bliss. This isn't a high school dance; find out why you should summon the courage to go knock on a few doors this year.

• **The Rewards of Restraint** (by Lindsay Thomas Jr.): Sometimes tag soup is a meal best served without humble pie. Don't make the mistake of just shooting a buck to shoot one. Restraint can be just as tasty and satisfying.

• **Leading Others to QDM** (by Lindsay Thomas Jr.): Follow these simple rules to convince your friends, family, hunting partners, and neighbors why QDM is the future of deer hunting.

HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

• **Tips for Using Tree Shelter Tubes** (by Lindsay Thomas Jr.): Not often does the phrase "go toward the light" mean a good thing. Read why tree shelter tubes are a must when planting trees or shrubs for deer and other wildlife.

• **How to Winterize Your Chainsaw** (by Bob Westerfield) Complete with diagrams and descriptions, the author gives a very detailed account of the step-by-step process that you will need to take to store that chainsaw for winter.

• **Plant This, Not That** (by Matt Ross): Just because deer eat it doesn't mean it's good for them. Explore some alternative plantings to many of the worst offending non-native, invasive plant species found on the landscape.

• **Don't Fear The Reaper: Timber Harvest is Good for Deer** (by Lindsay Thomas Jr.): Cutting Trees = Sunlight = New Ground Level Vegetation = Better Deer, Better Deer Hunting.

HERD MANAGEMENT

• **Fawn Survival Research:** The Home Stretch (by Melinda Nelson): The authors summer blog series gives a rare inside look into the world of wildlife research involving coyote predation on white-tailed deer fawns. You'll be surprised what she finds.

• **Five Reasons to Take Does Early** (by Lindsay Thomas Jr.): Meeting your doe-harvest goal early each year will result in better hunting for bucks down the road. Period.

• **Which Bucks Can I Shoot?** (by Lindsay Thomas Jr.): Use this great idea to catalog and display the bucks that are available to harvest on your property this year!

• **Why We Can't Manage Deer Genetics** (by Lindsay Thomas Jr.): Too many reasons to count, this article arms you with the best information about why deer genetics are impossible to control in a wild, free-ranging deer herd.

HERD MONITORING

• **Estimating Deer Age with Cementum Annuli** (by Brian Murphy): Is there a better method than the Tooth Replacement and Wear technique to determine a deer's age?

• **How to Run a Trail-Camera Survey** (by Lindsay Thomas Jr.): A trail-camera survey – put simply – is the most powerful herd monitoring tool you can use that doesn't require the assistance of a professional wildlife biologist.

• **Detecting the Rut Peak** (by Kip Adams): Fetal aging sounds like a technique used by Ob/Gyn doctors and ultrasound technicians, but deer managers can learn a lot about the population they're managing by taking some annual fetal measurements.

• **Five Ways to Track Predator Abundance** (by Lindsay Thomas Jr.): When trying to increase fawn survival through trapping and hunting predators, you need to know whether your efforts are effective. Counting actual predator density is not feasible, but there are several ways to gauge the relative abundance of predators.

DEER HUNTING

• **How to Hunt Native Warm Season Grasses** (by Jennifer Pudenz): Native grasses provide excellent cover for whitetails, including winter cover, fawning cover, and bedding cover. Read this article to learn how to effectively hunt them as well.

• **How to Blood-Trail a Deer** (by Bob Westerfield): You have worked hard on your land all season long preparing food plots, hanging stands and clearing trails. Finally, the season has arrived and the moment of truth has just walked into your luscious food plot. Follow these tips to ensure a speedy recovery after the shot.

• **Digest This: Scouting Deer Food from the Inside Out** (by Dave Edwards): Deer are slaves to their stomachs, they feed many times each day, and food is what drives their movement. Identifying deer movement patterns results in successful hunts. To do this you can scout food sources on the ground, or you can study the stomach contents of harvested deer.

• **Sanctuaries: Attract, Protect, Hold, Hunt** (by Lindsay Thomas Jr.): As the QDM philosophy becomes further anchored as the dominant mindset among whitetail hunters, achieving greater numbers of mature bucks is not the hurdle it once was. Instead, there's another hurdle: Killing them. Answering that challenge is unique landscape feature known as a "sanctuary".

FOOD PLOTS

• **Try these Cool-Season Food Plot Mixes** (by Dr. Craig Harper): There are a myriad of combinations that can be used with cool-season food plots. Here the author shares his top mixtures, after years of testing, and guarantees that they will work well when planted together on your property.

• **Five Reasons Food Plots Fail** (by Brian Grossman): With more and more sportsmen making the transition from deer hunter to deer manager, the interest in planting food plots has never been higher. Unfortunately, many simply buy a bag of seed, work up an opening, scatter some seed and hope for the best. While this may occasionally work out, more times than not it is going to lead to wasted money and disappointment.

• **Avoiding Glyphosate Resistance** (by Brian Sheppard): Over the last 30 years, no other herbicide has proved as useful to corn and soybean farmers and deer managers as glyphosate. However, glyphosate has been used so extensively in that time that now glyphosate-resistant weeds have resulted. Read this to know how to deal with them.

• **How to Calibrate a Food Plot Sprayer** (by Dr. Craig Harper): So, you have learned to identify your major weed problems. You have done your homework and identified the herbicide necessary to control the weeds in your food plots. You have planned ahead, and you are spraying at the correct time. However, none of this matters if you haven't calibrated your sprayer!

Find these and many more articles at QDMA.com

Overview: QDMA's REACH Program

In early 2006, the Quality Deer Management Association unveiled their exciting new REACH Program. REACH is an aggressive national education and outreach program designed to benefit hunters, landowners, and deer managers in several ways. REACH is the acronym for Research, Educate, Advocate, Certify, and Hunt. The program specifically addresses all of QDMA's core mission elements and was developed with input from QDMA members, state agency personnel, conservation leaders, and QDMA staff and National Board members. QDMA's goals for the program are ambitious, and they will directly benefit all QDMA members. Here is a brief synopsis of each element of REACH, along with our major accomplishments listed from 2012.

RESEARCH

Since 2006, QDMA has greatly expanded its role in designing, influencing, conducting, and funding research on practical projects impacting white-tailed deer biology, ecology, management, and hunting. QDMA's stance on deer management issues is based on good science, and good science comes from research. The first major accomplishment with this element of REACH occurred in May of that year when QDMA announced they had secured a $50,000 grant for a cooperative project between the Pennsylvania Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Penn State University and the Pennsylvania Game Commission. In total, over the past seven years QDMA has secured over $500,000 to support worthwhile research projects in over 20 states. For a complete list of QDMA-sponsored research projects, visit www.qdma.com/corporate/research.

2012 Research Accomplishments

- Completed genetic study of white-tailed deer to provide essential knowledge to guide chronic wasting disease (CWD) management efforts. This study was conducted by Texas A&M University/Kingsville and the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources.
- Continued a multi-agency project with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - National Wildlife Refuge System, National Park Service, Concordia University and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources investigating impacts of human population growth and habitat fragmentation on deer hunting and management.
- Continued white-tailed deer research project with South Dakota State University evaluating the hypothesis regarding the effects of mature males on the timing and degree of reproductive effort of young males.
- Continued habitat manipulation project, conducted by Dr. Craig Harper at the University of Tennessee, investigating long-term and seasonal effects of prescribed fire on white-tailed deer habitat in mixed hardwood forests.
- Secured $50,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to establish three wildlife management cooperatives around National Wildlife Refuges in Michigan and Oklahoma, and held initial meetings at each with potential cooperative members.

EDUCATE

QDMA also has expanded educational opportunities and activities on deer management and habitat improvement for QDMA members, natural resource professionals, and the general public. QDMA continues conducting seminars, workshops, and short courses and also now provides interested parties web-based information, as well as new books, charts, DVDs, and posters.

2012 Education Accomplishments

- Published QDMA's 2012 *Whitetail Report*, an annual report on the status of white-tailed deer, the foundation of the hunting industry in North America (available at QDMA.com).
- Wrote chapter on managing deer in the eastern U.S. for Boone and Crockett's Records of North American Whitetail Deer.
- Completed and released the Community Version of "Living with White-tailed Deer" suburban educational program.
- Conducted nearly 60 radio, newspaper, magazine, and TV interviews throughout North America.
- Hosted the 12th Annual QDMA National Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. This was the most successful convention to date with many new records set!
- Conducted National Leadership Summit at QDMA Headquarters and state-level summits in Michigan and Pennsylvania.

REACH in the NEWS: 2012

QDMA Receives $50K to Establish Three Wildlife Management Cooperatives

QDMA recently received a $50,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to establish three wildlife management cooperatives, including two in Oklahoma and one in Michigan.

"Landowner cooperatives are rapidly spreading across the United States, and this is a very positive sign for the future of hunting and wildlife management programs," said QDMA Director of Education and Outreach Kip Adams.

Wildlife management cooperatives (WMC) are groups of neighboring landowners or property lessees working together to improve wildlife and/or habitat management programs. QDMA helped form one of the largest WMCs in the southern United States in April 2008 called the Greater Noxubee Wildlife Management Cooperative covering over 146,000 acres. The WMC's purpose is to maximize landscape level conservation while enhancing wildlife habitat, hunting opportunities and stakeholder relationships. Using the Greater Noxubee WMC as a model, QDMA proposed the creation of three additional WMCs surrounding National Wildlife Refuges (NWR).

QDMA worked with Fish and Wildlife Service staff to select NWRs with the best potential for developing successful cooperative relationships with neighboring landowners and/or property lessees. The selected refuges for this project included Deer Fork NWR and Washita NWR in Oklahoma, and Shiawassee NWR in Michigan.

QDMA will oversee each WMC during the first year of establishment to ensure continued success. After year one, QDMA will remain involved as a member and turn oversight of the WMCs over to the respective NWR managers or appointed designees.

REACH in the NEWS: 2012

QDMA Offers New "Aging & Scoring Bucks On The Hoof" DVD

Accurately estimating the ages and scores of live whitetail bucks is a critical skill for hunters who wish to produce and harvest more mature bucks where they hunt. QDMA, in partnership with Whitetail Properties TV, has produced a unique new DVD to help hunters sharpen their field aging and scoring skills.

QDMA's staff biologists spent hours reviewing footage of live whitetails to produce *Aging and Scoring Bucks on the Hoof*. Numerous examples of live bucks of many different ages are shown throughout the video, combined with narration and graphics that teach the viewer to recognize age-related characteristics. From yearlings – the most critical age group to recognize and protect – to fully mature bucks, viewers will see and learn from dozens of live whitetails.

In addition, QDMA's new DVD also offers tips on estimating Boone & Crockett score in the field. Biologists provide their estimates and explain how they arrived at their score using field-tested techniques. The DVD also introduces viewers to Buckscore, computer software that estimates age and score of bucks in trail-camera photos.

The final portion of the 35-minute DVD includes a number of test sequences that allow viewers to practice what they've learned. After watching a short video clip of a live whitetail, the viewer is given a few seconds to arrive at their own age and score estimate before the answer is revealed.

The *Aging and Scoring Bucks on the Hoof* DVD can be purchased alone for $19.95 (plus S/H), but it is currently being offered as a free gift to every new member who joins QDMA at the annual membership rate of $30. That includes the DVD plus six issues of QDMA's *Quality Whitetails* magazine and other benefits. To join QDMA and receive the DVD free, or to purchase the DVD separately, call (800) 209-3337 or visit www.QDMA.com/shop.

- Completed QDMA's Aging and Scoring Bucks on the Hoof DVD – and offered as a new membership promotion.
- Filmed regular spots on Whitetail Properties TV.
- Filmed spots for Whitetail Slam TV.
- Supplied timely content for the new QDMA.com website.

ADVOCATE

Over the past seven years, QDMA also increased its involvement in whitetail hunting and management issues at the state and federal levels. Our Education and Outreach Director serves as a liaison between QDMA members/Branches and their respective state and federal agencies. This strengthened QDMA's ties with its members, state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, and other stakeholders. Since 2006, QDMA has engaged in nearly 450 legislative and management issues. For a QDMA advocacy summary, visit www.qdma.com/corporate/advocacy.

2012 Advocacy Accomplishments

- Engaged in 72 policy, legislative or management issues: 24 at the national level and 43 at the state level in 20 states (AL, IN,KS,KY,MD,MI,MN,MS,MO,NH,NJ, NY,NC,OH,PA,SC,TN,TX,VA and WV), and 5 provincial issues. These included:
- Urged President Obama to provide some

REACH in the NEWS: 2012

QDMA Encourages Alabama's Big Buck Project Not to Release Captive Deer

QDMA is working to convince the organizers of Alabama's "Big Buck Project" – a private effort to release captive whitetail "breeder bucks" into the wild in Marengo County – to reconsider and keep the farm deer behind their fence.

"Releasing captive-bred, farm-raised deer carries significant risks for wild deer, and that's why QDMA opposes this project, and why it's illegal in nearly every state," said QDMA CEO and wildlife biologist Brian Murphy. "I was shocked to learn that Alabama does not have a law that prevents what is being proposed in Marengo County. Across the nation, wildlife and agricultural agencies have stringent requirements to keep captive deer behind fences because of their potential risks to wild deer. Captive deer have the potential to carry diseases or parasites not present in wild populations, some of them deadly."

Another of QDMA's concerns is that the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (DWFF) was apparently not consulted on the project nor asked to be involved.

"To my knowledge, no one in the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries spoke with the project's organizers before it was announced, nor have we been asked to be involved in any manner," said Gary Moody, Chief of Wildlife, Alabama DWFF.

According to BigBuckProject.org, the Big Buck Project led by Tutt Land Company began releasing captive-bred breeder bucks across Marengo County in fall 2012 to "restore 'Record Book Genetics' to the local Whitetail Population."

However, QDMA staff biologists and many other deer experts believe this aspect of the project has little if any chance of success.

"This is like trying to change the salinity of the ocean by adding a gallon of fresh water," said Brian Murphy. "If Marengo County isn't producing the quality of deer that hunters expect, it's not because of 'bad genetics' but rather poor deer herd and habitat management.

"If this project proceeds, it would set a dangerous precedent, blurring the line between captive and wild animals and opening a can of worms in Alabama that could quickly lead to similar efforts in other counties," said Murphy. "At the very least, we sincerely hope the Alabama legislature acts quickly to close this loophole and make it illegal to release captive-bred deer into the wild. If not, sooner or later, there will be negative, if not catastrophic, consequences, and Alabama hunters, landowners and residents will be the ultimate losers."

In December, the Big Buck Project was put on hold when Alabama Conservation Commissioner N. Gunter Guy Jr. signed a regulation to prohibit the release of captive-raised deer into the wild effective immediately until further review by the Conservation Advisory Board, slated to meet in February of 2013.

BP settlement revenues to natural resources and economic restoration in the Gulf of Mexico.

- Urged Congress to pass the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act Reauthorization.
- Supported the Conservation Title of the Farm Bill.
- Supported RESTORE Act and Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- Supported the Sportsmen's Heritage Act.
- Issued national press releases urging hunters to oppose captive cervid legislation in numerous states (GA, IN, MS, MO, NC, NJ, NY, OH, TN, and WV).
- Selected a steering committee and began preparations for 2014 North American Whitetail Summit (see page 63).
- Served on an advisory panel in New York state to help develop recommendations on incorporating habitat/forest impacts into their state-wide deer management model.

CERTIFY

In 2006, QDMA created an individual certification program that includes three levels of potential achievement, and each must be completed in sequence. Deer Steward I provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the key principles of deer and habitat biology, ecology, and management. Deer Steward II teaches students how to apply the principles learned in Level I through hands-on and field experience. Finally, Deer Steward III, the most prestigious, must be earned through an individual's long-term service to whitetailed deer and/or QDMA. QDMA also launched the Land Certification Program in 2012. The goal of these programs is to create more knowledgeable hunters and managers and to have improved deer herds and habitats. Visit http://www.qdma.com/corporate/certification for more information on QDMA's certification programs.

2012 Certification Accomplishments

- Conducted two Deer Steward I courses and had 44 students attend from 17 states and one Canadian province.
- Conducted two Deer Steward II courses and had 43 students attend from 19 states and one Canadian province.
- Launched the online Deer Steward I class through Clemson University (nearly 150 total registrants in 2012).
- To date, nearly 700 individuals have completed the Deer Steward Program, with 427 Level I, 240 Level II, and 28 Level III graduates, representing 41 states and the Nation's capitol, three Canadian provinces, one of the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Australia. At the end of 2012, another

REACH in the NEWS: 2012

Registration Opens for Land Certification Program (LCP) Inspector Training

Registration opened for Land Certification Program (LCP) Inspector Training offered by QDMA. LCP Inspectors are the qualified natural resource professionals who will help implement QDMA's new program by visiting, evaluating and providing guidance on hunting lands throughout North America.

QDMA launched the Land Certification Program at its 2012 National Convention. The long-awaited companion to the Deer Steward courses – which are aimed at certifying individuals – the LCP is a multi-level, voluntary process which will evaluate and certify one or more properties against an established list of Quality Deer Management (QDM) standards and performance measures.

The LCP was developed to recognize the accomplishments of landowners and sportsmen implementing the four cornerstones of QDM throughout North America, as well as those committed to ethics, conservation and biodiversity through land stewardship; and to encourage management practices on participating lands that will enhance deer and other wildlife species, habitat conditions, and hunting experiences by providing incentives, recommendations and/or assistance; and finally to inspire others to engage in sound wildlife management and conservation of our natural resources.

To learn more about the entire LCP including the standards and performance measures, the three levels of land designation and how to contact a LCP inspector, log onto www.QDMA.com and navigate to "QDMA In Action" and select "Certification."

To ensure that everyone had access to a qualified property inspector, QDMA hosted a series of half-day LCP inspector training sessions across the country in 2012. Some of those sessions included co-sponsored training with the American Tree Farm Systems (ATFS), and attendees were able to become certified inspectors for both organizations in one day/location. To learn more about ATFS and the ATFS inspector eligibility requirements visit www.treefarmsystem.org. Dates for QDMA's 2013 LCP inspector training will be posted on the Certification page in early 2013.

Who Is Eligible?

QDMA will approve LCP inspectors through a rigid set of professional standards. If you are interested in becoming a LCP property inspector, you can sign up for one of these training sessions if you satisfy at least one of the following:

• Have an accredited college degree AND two years experience in forestry, wildlife, or another natural resource management field; OR

• Have completed QDMA Deer Steward II (or higher) course AND three years of wildlife and habitat management field experience*

Those who do not meet either of the above guidelines but wish to become eligible to participate, can submit a written request outlining your qualifications and experience. QDMA will review each submission on a case-by-case basis to determine eligibility.

*Wildlife management experience refers to actively managing wildlife population(s) at either the property or landscape level. Habitat management experience refers to personally manipulating vegetation species and composition at the property or landscape level in accordance with wildlife management prescriptions.

More info about the LCP can be found on page 61.

72 individuals were also enrolled in the Deer Steward I online class and had yet to complete the course.

- The Land Certification Program was launched at the 2012 National Convention.
- Half-day training courses to qualify Land Certification Program property inspectors were conducted in GA, LA, MI, MO, NY, SC and New Brunswick, Canada. Three (MO, NY and SC) were held in cooperation with American Tree Farm System (ATFS) inspector trainings. To date, over 180 QDMA inspectors are available to QDMA members.
- Conducted advanced training in conjunction with the Missouri Department of Conservation for their private lands biological staff.

HUNT

QDMA launched a national mentored hunting program in 2006 which is an innovative, hunter education and recruitment program designed to increase the number of youth and first-time hunters. The program incorporates multiple recreational pursuits and is superior to "one time" events designed to expose (vs. mentor) newcomers to the sport. The official name of the program is the QDMA Mentored Hunting Program (MHP), and it is strongly recommended for adoption by QDMA Branches, QDMA members, and any individual or group interested in recruiting new hunters. It emphasizes the development of woods skills, wildlife knowledge, hunter safety, and shooting skills. Small game and white-tailed deer hunting are both integral parts of the program. Skills are learned and discussed throughout the calendar year and may be reinforced in subsequent years. This is an excellent program that helps combat the declining youth recruitment rates across the country.

To accompany the MHP, QDMA also launched our new Youth Education and Outreach program, named the Rack Pack, in August at the National Convention in Nashville, TN. For more information on QDMA's exciting new program, see page 58 or log onto www.rackpack.qdma.com.

In October 2012, QDMA held its annual National Youth Hunt, and nine hunters from around the nation with limited hunting opportunities took part in the dream deer hunt.

2012 Hunting Heritage Accomplishments

- QDMA's Youth Education and Outreach program was officially launched at the 2012 National Convention. This program strives to recruit individuals 17 years of age and under into the hunting community, to provide them learning opportunities, and to enrich their hunting and outdoor experiences.
- The Rack Pack website also went live in 2012, with a goal to promote interaction and engagement with QDMA and youth from around North America.
- Established a partnership with MidwayUSA, who also gave the Rack Pack a donation of $550,000 (see page 58).
- Developed the Rack Pack Field Staff, which includes several youth ages 8 to 18 from around North America.
- QDMA Branches held hunts for hundreds of youth, physically-challenged or military personnel, including the inspirational and well-organized Kentucky Military Youth Hunt. This event was collaboration between three QDMA Branches and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.
- Conducted our annual National Youth Hunt in Georgia that involved nine young hunters from the following eight states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas.

REACH in the NEWS: 2012

QDMA Announces $550,000 Donation from MidwayUSA to its Youth Program

In October, QDMA announced that it would receive a $550,000 donation from Larry and Brenda Potterfield with MidwayUSA to support its recently launched youth education and outreach program, the Rack Pack.

Of the total, $400,000 will be used to establish a Youth Wildlife Conservation Experience Endowment. This permanent source of funding within the Rack Pack program will be used to introduce high school students to careers in wildlife conservation and management, as well as the importance of hunting and shooting in these endeavors. The remaining $150,000 will be used to purchase items for auction at QDMA banquets across the nation in 2013 to raise money for MidwayUSA Foundation's Adopt-A-Team program and the Rack Pack program.

"The generous support from MidwayUSA will enable us to greatly increase the number of young people we can positively impact through our Rack Pack program," said QDMA CEO Brian Murphy. "The endowment will allow us to impact the conservation leaders of the future while the proceeds from the auction items will allow us to introduce today's youth to shooting and hunting. We cannot thank Larry and Brenda enough for their generosity and steadfast commitment to youth."

"Brenda and I couldn't be more excited about the introduction of the Youth Wildlife Conservation Experience at QDMA events," said MidwayUSA founder and CEO Larry Potterfield. "The mission of QDMA and YWCE is similar; educate our youth on conservation, ethical and safe hunting practices and above all, preserving our hunting heritage. This endowment will create a permanent fund at QDMA and will allow them to continue educating youth for years to come."

2011 Honor Roll of Donors

The following were generous donors during 2011 to QDMA's REACH Program or Endowment Fund.

QDMA's REACH program is made possible in large part by the generous donations of many of our supporters. Numerous people and groups make annual donations. Below are the names of those who donated to QDMA in calendar year 2011 (the most recent year available as a complete list for this report). QDMA is grateful to these donors for their support, which makes it possible for QDMA to continue pursuing our research, education, advocacy, certification, and hunting goals.

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Emery Yoder
Fuzzy Zoeller

Numerous other individuals and companies made monetary donations, as well as products or services, to QDMA and to QDMA fundraising events in 2011. We would like to extend our gratitude to these individuals as well.

The following were generous donors during 2011 to QDMA's Rack Pack Program

The Rack Pack is QDMA's new Youth Education and Outreach program (see page 58). Its official launch was made possible in large part by the generous donations we received in 2011. Below are the names of those who donated specifically to the Rack Pack in calendar year 2011. QDMA and current and future members of the Rack Pack are grateful to these donors for their support and for helping get this program off the ground, as now thousands of youth will be exposed to hunting, deer and habitat management, conservation and the QDM philosophy.

Chairman's Circle
Mac Bullock, Jr.
Scott Griffin
Judge Holdford
QDMA Midlands Branch
QDMA Southeast Pennsylvania Branch
Mark Thomas
QDMA Thumb Area Branch
Craig West

Directors Club
Billie Eason
Rudson Wooten Lamm
C. David Smith

Leadership Circle
Douglas Bonds
Edwin Collins
Stuart Hicks
Ernest L Ross
Mark Thompson
James Whitley

Friend Level Donors
QDMA ACE Basin Branch
Skip Valentine

2012 QDMA Branch Highlights




No doubt, the heart and soul of the QDMA is our volunteers; and, as a grassroots, member-based conservation organization, our network of local volunteers is integral to helping QDMA spread our mission and spread the message about Quality Deer Management (QDM).

2012 Branch Accomplishments

- QDMA Branches conducted nearly 170 educational events (field days, seminars and workshops) in 35 states and 3 Canadian provinces.
- QDMA Branches hosted 93 fundraising events across the United States and Canada.
- QDMA Branches raised over $2.3 million for conservation.
- Branches enrolled nearly 10,000 QDMA members – including more than 400 youth members and nearly 400 sponsor and life members.
- QDMA Regional Directors formed 33 new Branches.
- Regional Directors maintained 194 active Branches in the United States and Canada.
- QDMA Branches organized more than 50 youth, military and/or special hunts. Highlights included an event in Kentucky for youth of military families where three Branches participated and involved the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky Hunters for the Hungry, YMCA and others.
- QDMA Branches or Branch members started and/or maintained approximately 100 QDM Cooperatives.
- QDMA Branches contributed nearly 35 tons of venison - representing over 275,000 meals - to venison donation programs and soup kitchens. Highlights included the states of Delaware and Michigan each contributed 28,000 pounds!

It was a great year for QDMA Branches and for those impacted by their efforts. Importantly, we look forward to an even better 2013.

Would you like to become a volunteer leader in your local hunting community, helping spread QDMA's message of sound deer management? Consider starting an official QDMA Branch – that's our name for local groups of QDMA members who join together for fellowship, fundraising, and promotion of the philosophy at the grassroots level. By volunteering to help lead a QDMA Branch, you get to know other like-minded deer hunters in your area and have fun working together to grow QDMA membership and QDM knowledge in your community. QDMA Branches host annual banquets and other fundraisers, field days, youth hunts, and other educational and promotional events.

QDMA needs volunteer leaders like you! Join the fun by sending an e-mail to backyard@qdma.com and letting us know you would be willing to help form or grow a QDMA Branch in your area. We look forward to working with you to ensure the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage!

2012 QDMA Conservation Awards

Ron Haas (left) earned the ***Al Brothers Deer Manager of the Year (non-professional)*** award. A charter member of the Delaware Branch of QDMA, Ron joined Delaware Wild Lands, Inc., in 2004 and implements projects and programs designed to maintain and enhance the Roman Fischer Farm and the biologic diversity and longevity of the Great Cypress Swamp. Though not specifically designed to do so, Ron's work indirectly benefits a multitude of wildlife species. Additionally, at his own personal initiative and expense, Ron designed, planted, and maintains food plots at Roman Fischer Farm.

David Moreland (left) earned the ***Al Brothers Deer Manager of the Year (professional)*** award. Now "retired," Dave spent 31 years with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), the last three of which he served as the Wildlife Division Administrator. From 1992 to 2004, Dave was the Deer Program Manager for the LDWF. The author of four books, Dave maintains a monthly column, *Grunts and Gobbles*, and writes feature articles for *Louisiana Sportsman*, the premier magazine for hunting and fishing enthusiasts in the state of Louisiana. He has also been published in *Quality Whitetails*.

Dr. Jon Gassett accepted the ***Agency of the Year*** award for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR). KDFWR has established itself as one of the most respected and successful agencies in the U.S. and has developed a tremendous working relationship with QDMA. KDFWR was also named Agency of the Year in 2004, making it the first repeat winner of the award.

Dr. Karl V. Miller (right) received the ***Joe Hamilton Lifetime Achievement Award***, which was presented by QDMA founder Joe Hamilton. A Charter Life Member of QDMA, Karl is a professor of wildlife management at the University of Georgia Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, where he has served as thesis advisor for over 43 Master of Science students and as dissertation advisor for 14 PhD students. One of the nation's foremost white-tailed deer researchers, Karl has published more than 135 peer reviewed publications, 20 book chapters, 55 technical reports, 30 proceeding articles and five books. Also pictured: Karl's wife Renee, author of the "A Taste of Quality" recipes that appear in each issue of *Quality Whitetails*.

Trophy Rock won the ***Corporate Achievement Award*** for its long-time support of QDMA. In addition to being a corporate partner, Trophy Rock been an ambassador for QDMA and has significantly aided in growing QDMA membership and promoting the practice of QDM. Here (left to right), Blake Butler, Gene Price and Joe Anderson accept the award.

Owner, publisher, and editor of Wildlife Trends Journal Andy Whitaker (right) received the ***Signpost Communicator of the Year*** award from QDMA Director of Communications Lindsay Thomas Jr. The award recognizes outstanding efforts to share accurate, reliable information about deer and deer management with hunters.

2012 QDMA Branch Achievement Awards

The Ace Basin Branch of South Carolina was the ***Branch of the Year***. (From Left to Right) South Carolina DNR Take One Make One Volunteer of the Year Wes Chappell, Branch president Nicole Garris and Joseph Holt accepted the award. One of the many highlights from the Branch's list of accomplishments is working to establish a QDMA S.C. license plate program.

The Midlands Branch of South Carolina was recognized as the ***Fundraising Branch of the Year***. The Branch surpassed all others in net income from their banquet, netting $33,218.83, a true sign of their dedication to white-tailed deer and QDMA. Hayden Harrington (left) and Branch vice president J.W. "Snookie" McCullar accepted the award.

The ***Education Branch of the Year*** award was presented to the North Carolina State Chapter and accepted by Chapter president Arthur Dick (center). The Chapter was a driving force for the Cape Fear Wildlife Expo and the many outdoor related programs the Expo offers. One in particular, the Kids Gone Wild Program that reaches out to 680 students, all organized and coordinated by this team of volunteers.

For a fourth straight-year, the Midlands Branch of South Carolina won the ***Sponsor Membership Branch of the Year*** award bringing in 76 sponsor memberships. The Branch also earned a new award, the ***Membership Branch of the Year***, by recruiting a total of 290 QDMA general members. Presented by QDMA COO Bob Mazgaj, these awards were accepted by Joel Wilson.

Pat Morstad of Henning, Minnesota (center holding plaque) received the ***Volunteer of the Year*** award, which was presented by QDMA Midwest Regional Director Chris Blackledge, who was joined on stage by all of QDMA's Regional Directors, Board of Directors Chairman Mark Thomas (left) and CEO Brian Murphy (right) for the presentation. The first and only State Chapter President in Minnesota, Pat has been an active vice president of the Prairie to Woods Whitetail Branch for approximately five years. An advocate for QDM and QDMA, Pat has helped with the formation of four new Branches, is a participant in the Minnesota DNR roundtable, and is a guest speaker on outdoor radio talk shows representing QDMA.

Vicky and Irv Timm (center) accepted the ***Event of the Year*** award for the Northeast Michigan Branch Expo and Banquet, which broke from traditional models and provided an all-day event that included an expo attended by approximately 1,000 people, an educational component and a banquet that was attended by nearly 400 people and netted approximately $15,000 and 220 members.

The ***New Branch of the Year*** award went to the Blue Stem Branch of Kansas. The Branch hosted several field days with 75 or more attendees at each one, ran a booth at the Kansas Monster Buck Classic, hosted workshops at Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's, and had 80 people attend their first banquet. Branch president Tim Donges (right) accepted the award.

The Lowcountry Branch of South Carolina won the ***New Fundraising Branch of the Year*** award, which was accepted by Branch president Freddie St. Laurent (right). The Lowcountry Branch generated the highest net income from their banquet among all other Branches that were formed within the past year, raising $22,775.88 in net income!

QDMA Launches "Rack Pack" Youth Program

QDMA officially launched its youth education and outreach program, the Rack Pack, in August of 2012.

The Rack Pack is a youth-led, multi-media program intended to create and enrich future hunters and leaders in conservation. The Rack Pack strives to provide learning opportunities, interaction and engagement for youth 17 and under that will help them become better hunters and stewards of the land through website content at www.rackpack.qdma.com. On the local level, fun and exciting field days and events will be held by QDMA Branches to provide hands-on instruction and activities.

The Rack Pack program prides itself on using engaging and creative methods to get kids involved in the outdoors and hunting. It is the mission of the Rack Pack to teach Quality Deer Management, ethical hunting and conservation to the next generation of hunters.

There are two types of Rack Pack memberships available – free online memberships and the Official Rack Pack Memberships. The free membership enables interested youth to gain full access to the Rack Pack website and to receive electronic versions of several components of the membership packet.

The Official Rack Pack Membership is identical to the online membership but with many more benefits! This is a paid membership, and for only $15 each youth receives a personalized member card, Rack Pack poster and wristband, coupon to QDMA's official online store The Shed, stickers and decals, and a personalized certificate to follow their journey to becoming a Pro-Staff Rack Packer!

facebook.com/RackPack

@RackPackQDMA

Rack Pack Website Goes Live

The Rack Pack website, **www.rackpack.qdma.com**, went live August 7, 2012.

The goal of the Rack Pack website is to promote interaction and engagement with QDMA and youth from around North America. The website features some great interactive and informational components. One such component is the Track the Pack section. This section includes blogs and stories from youth Rack Pack members. From articles and blogs to photos and videos, the group that is sharing their experiences is dedicated to providing this content on a regular basis.

Track the Pack is the blog section of the Rack Pack website. At Track the Pack, visitors will find multiple blogs they can follow to stay up-to-date with the latest happenings of the Rack Pack and the Field Staff.

QDMA Announces $550,000 Donation from MidwayUSA to its Youth Program

In October, QDMA announced that it would receive a $550,000 donation from Larry and Brenda Potterfield with MidwayUSA to support its recently launched youth education and outreach program, the Rack Pack.

Of the total, $400,000 will be used to establish a Youth Wildlife Conservation Experience Endowment. This permanent source of funding within the Rack Pack program will be used to introduce high school students to careers in wildlife conservation and management, as well as the importance of hunting and shooting in these endeavors. The remaining $150,000 will be used to purchase items for auction at QDMA banquets across the nation in 2013 to raise money for MidwayUSA Foundation's Adopt-A-Team program and the Rack Pack program.

How to Donate to QDMA

Joe Hamilton's grandson, Baines Hamilton Pierce, is QDMA's youngest Life Member. QDMA's Rack Pack will have a new member as well when he is old enough. What about a Life Membership for your children or grandchildren?

Help Keep the Home Fires Burning

By Joe Hamilton

There have been a couple of monumental changes in my life in the past year. I became a grandfather on August 15, 2011, and my title with QDMA changed to Director of Development in January, 2012. My message to you faithful members of QDMA is influenced by each of my new titles.

Grandfathering is an absolute pleasure. My work in "development" is a pleasure as well, and relates to all of the ways of securing financial support for the organization I founded in 1988.

This is a particularly exciting time for QDMA because our 25th anniversary is just around the corner. QDMA has flourished over the years for one reason: *you*. QDMA is the premier whitetail organization in North America, and you have brought us to this point through your continuous requests for more education and your financial support. We will continue to grow in services and membership as long as we keep the home fires burning.

We have made it as easy as possible for you to support QDMA. On this page are suggested ways to get more involved and methods to contact us. Together, we can support QDMA's mission: *To ensure the future of the white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage.*

Remember, the future of the whitetail is our future, too! Please consider fulfilling the role as a donor by contributing to QDMA. Your support will be greatly appreciated and used wisely to further our mission.

- Make a donation to QDMA in memory or honor of a relative, close friend, or fellow QDMA member.
- Become a Life Member of QDMA.
- Be an active Branch member by attending all activities.
- Attend our next National Convention (July 18-21, 2013, in Athens, Ga.).
- Attend QDMA's Deer Steward Certification courses.
- Join QDMA's Land Certification Program.
- Provide gift memberships to family, fellow hunters and neighbors.
- Involve your children or grandchildren in the "Rack Pack" Program.
- Include QDMA in your will, or participate in a variety of other Planned Giving categories.
- **800-209-3337** - Call our toll-free number to donate by credit card.
- **www.QDMA.com** - Visit our website to donate through PayPal.
- Send a personal check to our National Headquarters: P.O. Box 160, Bogart, GA, 30622
- Contact Joe Hamilton, Director of Development: jhamilton@qdma.com

QDMA Certification Programs

A 2012 Deer Steward Level I course was held at NASCAR's Tony Stewart's Hidden Hollow Ranch in Columbus, Indiana.

Nearly 700 Deer Stewards and Counting!

QDMA's Deer Steward Certification program is a personal educational experience designed to offer hunters, landowners, and natural resource professionals an opportunity to learn from the Nation's top experts about QDM. The first two Levels are courses, Level III is an application; all three need to be taken in succession. By taking Levels I and II, graduates are able to design and implement their personal comprehensive property-specific white-tailed deer management plan. Level III is an honor earned after giving back to the resource over a long period of time, rather than something you can learn in a course.

To date, nearly 700 individuals have participated in the Deer Steward program, with 427 Level I, 240 Level II, and 28 Level III graduates, representing 41 states and the nation's capitol, three Canadian provinces, one of the U.S. Virgin Islands and Australia. Since 2007, the QDMA has held 16 Level I classes and 10 Level II classes in the following states: Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Texas.

To learn more about the Deer Steward Certification program, or about registering for an upcoming course, visit www.QDMA.com and navigate to the Deer Steward Courses page under the Advanced Ed menu option.

States with Deer Steward graduates

Online Deer Steward Courses

In the sixth year of the Deer Steward Certification program, QDMA's popular educational series offered the option to take the first Level online, making it as convenient and affordable as it's ever been; and, boy was it popular. In the first year alone, nearly 150 people registered to participate in the Level I course from the comfort of their home or office.

To put it simply, all that is required is a high-speed internet connection (and the Mozilla Firefox web browser) and you can enroll in the Level I class online. Once registered, attendees gain access to a digital recording of one of our previous Deer Steward Level I courses (filmed in front of a live audience at Clemson University) and will have up to 180 days to complete the series of six sessions (approximately 17 one-hour topics) at their own pace. Speakers include Kip Adams, Dr. David Guynn, Joe Hamilton, Dr. Craig Harper, Dr. Karl V. Miller, Brian Murphy, Matt Ross and Dr. Grant Woods.

Just like the in-person classes, registrants must pass an exam to graduate, and Continuing Forestry Education (CFEs) credits from the Society of American Foresters are available. Graduates of online Deer Steward will be eligible to take one of the in-person Level II courses upon completion.

For additional details, visit www.QDMA.com and navigate to the Deer Steward Online page under the Advanced Ed menu option.

Those who enroll in the on-line version of Deer Steward Level I can do so at $200 for non-members, $175 for QDMA members, and $150 for Life and Sponsor members (on-line fees increase $50 with CFEs).

Land Certification Program Update

In 2012, QDMA launched its new Land Certification Program (LCP). The LCP was created in response to numerous member and landowner requests. Collectively, these individuals sought a means to: 1) Determine if the property they owned, leased or managed met a baseline Quality Deer Management (QDM) standard; and 2) receive specific management recommendations on their hunting property from qualified QDM professionals; and 3) promote QDM in their area by displaying a sign that recognizes their efforts.

The LCP was developed to recognize the accomplishments of landowners and sportsmen implementing the Four Cornerstones of QDM throughout North America, as well as those committed to ethics, conservation and biodiversity through land stewardship. The LCP will also encourage management practices on participating lands that will enhance deer and other wildlife species, habitat conditions, and hunting experiences by providing incentives and/or assistance.

The LCP is a multi-level, voluntary process which evaluates one or more properties against an established list of standards. Three categories of achievement are outlined in the program, including Pledged Lands, Certified Lands and Legacy Lands. Criteria are established for each level of achievement.

Numerous half-day training courses to qualify LCP property inspectors were also conducted last year in the states of Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, New York and South Carolina and in New Brunswick, Canada. Three (Missouri, New York and South Carolina) were held in cooperation with American Tree Farm System (ATFS) inspector trainings. To date, over 180 LCP inspectors are now available to QDMA members and can be found online at www.QDMA.com by navigating to the Land Certification page under the Advanced Ed menu option.

In addition to the Land Certification website, more information can be obtained by contacting QDMA Certification Programs Manager, Matt Ross by e-mail at mross@qdma.com or by calling (518) 280-3714.

QDMA Certification Programs Manager Matt Ross goes over the inspection process at a Land Certification Program inspector training session held in Athens, Ga., in 2012.

Sneak Peak at Two Major Upcoming Events

QDMA's 13th Annual National Convention

Celebrating our 25th Anniversary!

DATE: July 18-21, 2013
WHERE: The Classic Center, Athens, Georgia

What's the big deal all about?

QDMA will celebrate its 25th anniversary at the 2013 National Convention as the event returns to Athens, home of QDMA's National Headquarters. Athens was host of the first two QDMA National Conventions in 2001 and 2002.

A new Convention format will be implemented in 2013 designed to be more fun, exciting and engaging than ever before. Recognizing how critical the education component is to Convention, the family-friendly format will include traditional seminars along with field trips as well as workshops for small groups focused on hunting tips and strategies.

Additional features of the 2013 QDMA National Convention format include:

• An exhibit hall where registered Convention attendees can converse one-on-one with QDMA sponsors and partners about the latest hunting and deer management products

• The opportunity for volunteers and members to meet by region to discuss regional issues and current regional news

• A major entertainment act in the adjoining Classic Center Theatre

• Side-tours of notable Athens landmarks

• A "ladies only" event

• Rack Pack youth activities

• And much, much more!

Log onto www.QDMA.com and visit the QDMA National Convention web page for additional updates and registration information as it becomes available. For questions, contact QDMA at (800) 209-3337 (DEER).

FREE Media Registration for QDMA's National Convention

QDMA invites professional outdoor communicators to attend the National Convention free of charge on an annual basis and will continue the tradition again this year. All functions, events and meals associated with the National Convention are on us (lodging is not included).

Our media guests in years past have left the convention with interviews and material for numerous articles. You'll also enjoy networking with the leading experts in deer hunting, biology and management at evening events.

Information about how to apply/register for a Media Badge will be e-mailed to members of QDMA's Media Outreach Network in the spring. To join the Media Outreach Network and receive National Convention information as well as QDMA press releases, send your contact information and media affiliation to QDMA communications manager Tanner Tedeschi at tanner@qdma.com.

North American Whitetail Summit

Hosted by QDMA in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bass Pro Shops

DATE: March 3-6, 2014

WHERE: Bass Pro's Big Cedar Lodge and Conference Center, Branson, Missouri

What is the Whitetail Summit?

White-tailed deer are the most hunted and economically important big game species in North America and the backbone of the North American hunting heritage. Yet today whitetails face many challenges and threats. The Whitetail Summit is a first-of-its-kind gathering of representatives from all sectors of the deer hunting and management community to address these concerns. The Summit format is designed to spark discussion and identify opportunities for all sectors to work cooperatively toward solutions that will ensure the future of white-tailed deer and our hunting heritage.

What is the Summit's Goal?

To lay the groundwork for a sustainable future for whitetail hunting and management within the context of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation through identification of clear, practical and achievable action items that can be collaboratively addressed by key stakeholder groups.

Key Summit Objectives:

• To identify key threats and priorities facing the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat, and our deer-hunting heritage in North America.

• To facilitate constructive dialogue among key, and often diverse, stakeholder groups to aid in establishing collaborative partnerships and solutions on key whitetail issues.

• To create a voluntary and broad-based coalition to serve as the national voice of the whitetail through which members can unite in support of, or opposition to, proposed regulatory, legislative or social actions affecting deer hunting and management.

• To explore common goals and opportunities for cooperation among state wildlife agencies.

• To establish working groups to continue refining information and strategies on key issues.

• To share meeting outcomes broadly within the hunting and non-hunting community through all possible media vehicles.

Who can attend?

Attendance at the inaugural North American Whitetail Summit will be limited to approximately 300 attendees and will be by invitation only. Attendees will be selected and assigned to one of five stakeholder groups:

1. Hunters, including the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that represent them.

2. State Wildlife Agencies.

3. Landownership/management, including public lands (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, etc.) and private lands (timber companies).

4. The Scientific Community, including universities, research institutes, and others involved in deer research.

5. The Hunting Industry, including individual corporations and trade associations.

A sixth group, select members of the Outdoor Media, will be invited as well and will be free to cover the deliberations of the five stakeholder groups as they choose.

For more information, contact Kip Adams, QDMA's Director of Education and Outreach, by e-mail kadams@qdma.com or by calling (814) 326-4023.

Contact a QDMA Branch Near You

Branch Name	Town	State	Branch Contact	Phone	E-mail
AL Black Belt Branch	Greenville	Alabama	Jeff Cummings	(334) 202-4421	jeff@southerncapitaladvisors.com
Lake Martin Branch	Alexander City	Alabama	Jerry Brown	(256) 839-5154	brown3331@bellsouth.net
Delta Droptine Branch	Lake Village	Arkansas	Joey Williamson	(870) 265-1206	sales@southernaquaculturesupply.com
NE Arkansas Branch	Jonesboro	Arkansas	Chris Kimbrell	(870) 926-2719	clkimbrell@yahoo.com
Red River Basin Branch	Texarkana	Arkansas	Cole Law	(903) 278-7821	wateroak32@yahoo.com
Connecticut River Valley	North Haven	Connecticut	Ronnie Reaves	(203) 239-1106	crvb-qdma@sbcglobal.net
Delaware Branch	Millsboro	Delaware	Chip West	(302) 238-0137	deqdma@gmail.com
Delaware State Chapter	Millsboro	Delaware	Chip West	(302) 238-0137	deqdma@gmail.com
Big Bend Branch	Tallahassee	Florida	Travis McKinney	(850) 210-5106	travisofaim@yahoo.com
Devils Garden Branch	Clewiston	Florida	Marc Proudfoot	(954) 445-9199	marc.proudfoot@gmail.com
FL Gulf Coast Branch	Bonifay	Florida	Erick French	(850) 326-3712	broerfrench@yahoo.com
GA Lake Country Branch	Milledgeville	Georgia	Jim Flanders	(478) 968-2222	jimflanders@hotmail.com
Middle GA Branch	Macon	Georgia	Jason Butler	(478) 992-9803	jbutler@fickling.com
Illinois State Chapter	Joy	Illinois	Chase Burns	(309) 368-0370	wci_qdma@frontier.com
Southern Illinois Branch	Murphysboro	Illinois	Matt Duffy	(618) 806-1405	matthew.duffy@countryfinancial.com
West-Central Branch	Joy	Illinois	Chase Burns	(309) 368-0370	wci_qdma@frontier.com
Indiana Branch	McCordsville	Indiana	Tom James	(317) 752-5781	tom@modernhabitatsolutions.com
Laughery Valley Branch	Batesville	Indiana	Tom Grills	(912) 689-5156	tom.grills@yahoo.com
Purdue University Branch	West Lafayfette	Indiana	Weston Schrank	(502) 802-8804	wschrank@purdue.edu
Mid Iowa Branch	Granger	Iowa	Terry Sedivec	(515) 999-2184	tsedivec@netzero.com
Tri-State Area Branch	Dubuque	Iowa	Dennis Althaus	(563) 552-2628	dalthaus@yousq.net
Bluestem Branch	EL Dorado	Kansas	Timothy Donges	(316) 641-0011	tim.donges@hotmail.com
Greater Kansas City Branch	Shawnee	Kansas	Sue Brothers	(913) 461-5198	sbrothers2009@gmail.com
North Central Kansas	Scandia	Kansas	Pete Gile	(785) 452-0592	pete_gile@yahoo.com
Barren River Branch	Bowling Green	Kentucky	Travis Callis	(615) 325-5733	travisc@southernsalesinc.com
Derby City Branch	Louisville	Kentucky	Pete Blandford	(502) 231-2625	blanford_pete@bellsouth.net
Hoptown Branch	Hopkinsville	Kentucky	Jim Harnage	(931) 980-1423	jim.harnage@gmail.com
Kentucky Heartland Branch	Elizabethtown	Kentucky	Tony Lawson	(502) 710-1912	bigdeerhuntertony@gmail.com
Purchase Area Branch	Paducah	Kentucky	Justin Mason	(618) 638-5031	jmason@whitetailproperties.tv
Bayou Branch #2913	Thibodaux	Louisiana	Ben Caillouet	(985) 859-6270	qdmabayoubranch@gmail.com
Central Louisiana Branch	Alexandria	Louisiana	Bob Stevens	(318) 445-9224	stevensb@rapides.k12.la.us
Louisiana Delta Branch	Pineville	Louisiana	Porter Trimble	(318) 201-3474	porter@honeybrake.com
Louisiana State Chapter	Alexandria	Louisiana	Bob Stevens	(318) 487-1158	stevensb@rapides.k12.la.us
Northeast Louisiana Branch	West Monroe	Louisiana	Bobby Aulds	(318) 355-8974	bobby@greensportusa.com
Red River Branch	Benton	Louisiana	Sean McKay	(318) 965-4815	sean@crawfordforesty.com
South Louisiana Branch	Plaquemine	Louisiana	Vic Blanchard	(225) 933-5705	vblanchard@awilbertsons.com
Webster Parish Branch	Minden	Louisiana	Mitzi Thomas	(318) 377-3065	mindenfarmand gar@bellsouth.net
Casco Bay Branch	South Portland	Maine	Matthew Snyder	(207) 595-2365	prelude8626@aol.com
Downeast Branch	East Machias	Maine	Mike Look	(207) 255-4167	michaellook501@hotmail.com
First Maine Branch	Palmyra	Maine	Jeff Nicholas	(207) 938-2742	Pres1stmaineqdma@aol.com
Maine State Chapter	Palmyra	Maine	Jeff Nicholas	(207) 938-2742	Pres1stmaineqdma@aol.com
Bachman Valley Branch	Westminster	Maryland	Barry Harden	(410) 346-0990	bharden@marylandqdma.com
Chester River Branch	Centreville	Maryland	Temple Rhodes	(410) 310-8165	chestnutm@verizon.net
Forstburg State University Branch	Walkersville	Maryland	Chris Keiser	(301) 845-6177	cakeiser0@frostburg.edu
Maryland State Chapter	Westminster	Maryland	E.W. Grimes	(410) 984-3356	ewgrimes@marylandqdma.com
Mountain Maryland Branch	Swanton	Maryland	A.J. Fleming	(301) 387-5465	afleming13@verizon.net
Western Chesapeake Watershed Branch	Barnesville	Maryland	Joe Brown	(240) 388-0602	jbrown@patriotlwm.com
Barry County Branch	Hastings	Michigan	Mike Flohr	(269) 838-6268	mikeflohr@hotmail.com
Bluewater Michigan Branch	Ft. Gratiot	Michigan	Kyle Brunk	(810) 334-5767	kebru@hotmail.com
Capital Area Branch	Mason	Michigan	Dick Seehase	(517) 993-8475	rjs@cqtpp.com
Central Michigan Branch	Elwell	Michigan	Jarred Waldren	(517) 403-9328	headhunter01jarred@yahoo.com
Clinton Ionia Branch	St. Johns	Michigan	Chad Thelen	(517) 819-6344	cthelen8@hotmail.com
Costabella QDMA Branch	Weidman	Michigan	Kasey Thren	(231) 972-3200	mecostacountyqdma@gmail.com
Eaton County Michigan Branch	Potterville	Michigan	Aaron Lundy	(517) 643-1220	alundy@airliftcompany.com
Mackinac Branch	Mulliken	Michigan	Billy Keiper	(906) 322-5425	keiperw@mail.gvsu.edu
Michiana Branch	Athens	Michigan	Steve Casselman	(269) 832-3187	casselmansteve@hotmail.com
Mid Michigan Branch	Clare	Michigan	Bill Brown	(989) 615-7755	whitetailchef@gmail.com
Montcalm County Branch	Fenwick	Michigan	Mike Myers	(989) 613-0670	michaeltmyers1990@yahoo.com
North East Michigan Branch	Herron	Michigan	Irv Timm	(989) 727-2594	vltimm@peoplepc.com
North West Michigan Branch	Lake Ann	Michigan	Ryan Ratacjazk	(231) 275-3349	ryan@northwoodstrailcameras.com
Northern Jack Pine Branch	Westbranch	Michigan	Todd Johnson	(989) 390-1359	todd.johnson@weyerhaeuser.com
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