

Minutes of Great Lakes Deer Group Meeting, Dryden, Ontario.

Sept. 21-24, 1964.

Monday, Sept. 21.

Evening session

1. The meeting was opened by Gerry Coyne, District Forester, Kenora Forest District, who welcomed the Group and outlined the history of the Western Region and the present status of timber and game production. He described the geology of the Region, which is dominated by the Laurentian Shield, overlain in certain areas (Ft. Frances - Rainy River, Dryden) by lacustrine deposits from glacial lakes. Colonization by Europeans engaged in the fur trade and later by lumbermen and farmers. Logging for pulp and sawlogs, and subsequent large forest fires, created excellent deer and moose range. Deer appeared in western Ontario for the first time in the 1890's and have since extended their range north to the English River. Moose are now abundant and both deer and moose underharvested.
2. Various announcements regarding the program for the meeting.

Tuesday, Sept. 22.

Morning session

1. Review of 1963 deer season, 1964 regulations and prospects. Most of this information was distributed in printed form. Random remarks: Michigan can detect no relationship between density of hunters or type of hunting and number or rate of hunting accidents. Interesting account of careful planning for Michigan's first elk season in many years. Manitoba sold 26,000 licenses and shot 13,500 deer in 1963; the herd is apparently declining so a buck season is in force in the south of the Province; number of hunters were reduced by setting the season late and in one area by allowing hunting in the morning only; the range is generally forested in the S.E., aspen parkland and wooded river valleys in the S. and S.W. Ontario spokesman stressed the great difference in range conditions, herd level and hunting pressure between the eastern and western sections of the range. Of 121,000 licenses in 1963, 15,000 were sold in the western region where hunter success was 45%, the rest in eastern Ontario where hunter success was 20%; complaints of hunter crowding in the east, underharvest in the west. Discussion of the poaching problem - all agreed it could control deer numbers in some localities.

2. Forest Streams, USDA Forest Service: The role of herbs and low brush as deer food and their measurement. The weight of annual growth on dwarf shrubs and other species under 1.5 ft. was measured in 40 yr. old plantations in lower Michigan. Jack pine plantations contained 3.5 lbs. per acre of forbs, 77 lbs. per acre of shrubs and 9 lbs. per acre of tree regeneration; openings in the plantation contained 6, 190 and 50 lbs. per acre (dry weight) respectively. Houghton Lake plantations thinned at 40 yrs. produced as follows: Jack pine thinned to 100 sq. ft. basal area - 102 lbs./acre low shrubs and forbs (mostly blueberry and bearberry), 2 lbs./acre browse (fresh weight); red pine thinned to 60 sq. ft. basal area - 230 lbs. forbs, 117 lbs. browse (the control area in this plantation produced about 70 and 140 lbs. respectively). Work in central Wisconsin showed about as much low brush available to deer as browse. Methods include 30-40 plots per type 0.0001 acre in size. Even smaller plots may be used in future; 30-40 plots can be tallied per man-day. Mr. Stearns' long-term object is to measure browse production, including the forbs and dwarf shrubs, in all major lake state forest types.

3. Blair Dawson, Ont. Dept. Lands and Forests: Moose management in Ontario. There are probably more moose in Ontario now than at any former time. There was no 'open season 1888 to 1900 and only a rather short bull season from 1900 to 1948. No open season 1949, 1950. Since 1951 hunting regulations have steadily become more liberal. We now have an "any moose" season lasting up to 3½ months. In 1963, 47,000 hunters took over 14,000 moose. Management practices include 1) aerial inventory (low-altitude visual searching of random plots in winter) which produced an estimate of 125,000 moose on 180,000 sq. miles of range; 2) harvest statistics derived from post-season mail survey and road checking stations; 3) range surveys (mapping of concentration areas, browse surveys); 4) studies of parasitism and disease - see particularly Anderson, Roy C., Neurologic disease in moose infected experimentally with Pneumostromylus tenuis from whitetailed deer". Path. Vet. 1:289-322, 1964. Most pressing management problem is the underharvest aggravated by poor access.

4. Ken Chambers, Ont. Dept. Lands and Forests: Moose and browse studies in Kenora District and details of field trip. For the second year, a 1.8 sq. mile plot on Maynard Lake was surveyed for available browse, amount of browse eaten, and numbers of overwintering deer and moose. A summary of the browse tally indicated 15,650 living stems per acre, an increase of 4,500 over 1963. From the crotising count it was estimated that 12 moose and 39 deer per sq. mile inhabited this area during the previous winter. The field trip was to Maynard Lake to demonstrate the effect of a high big game population on relatively productive range in northwestern Ontario and the improvement in food supply caused by balsam budworm infestations. Mimeographed summaries were distributed.

Afternoon session

1. The Group was flown in Ont. Dept. Lands and Forests aircraft to Maynard Lake and after the field trip, back to Dryden.

Evening session

1. Robin Hepburn, Ont. Dept. Lands and Forests: Current status of woodland caribou in Ontario. Slide talk. Copies of "Preliminary survey of the range of woodland caribou in Ontario" by T. Ahti and R. L. Hepburn were distributed.

Wednesday, Sept. 23.

Morning session

1. Dr. John McGowan, Provincial Veterinarian, Winnipeg, Man.: Leptospirosis in Ontario, with particular reference to deer and moose. Serologic evidence of infection with Leptospira pomona has been found in deer and moose widely distributed in Ontario (56 reactors out of 310 deer and 4 in 90 moose). Antibody in animals in areas devoid of farm livestock point to a source of infection in nature. The possible role of deer and moose as maintenance host of L. pomona is not clear. Other animals may be implicated. L. pomona was isolated from a naturally infected whitetailed deer and also from her diseased foetus. See McGowan, Karstad and Fish: "Leptospirosis in Ontario Cervidae". Trans. 28th N.A. Wildl. Nat. Res. Conf., :199-206.
2. Panel discussion: Deer management in agricultural and highly populated areas. All states and provinces agreed that their agricultural land had a high potential for deer production and most did support quite high densities, but Manitoba's potential is not being realized - whitetails replaced mule deer, peaked in 1940's then had food problems and die-offs. Most relied on short seasons and heavy hunting pressure to control agricultural deer. In many localities shotguns only are allowed, for safety's sake. Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan had a reported highway kill from 2,000 to 6,000, with about half reported. Apart from hunter-farmer problems, present systems seem to be working well, except in Ontario where final permission to hold open seasons in agricultural areas rests with the municipality, and many have refused to allow open seasons, with consequent over populations resulting. Some mysterious declines in agricultural deer herds. Census is generally difficult. Some management is aimed at control to alleviate crop damage and highway accidents.

3. Panel discussion: Coordinating timber and big game management. All agreed that this is a vital necessity, and is being undertaken in all states and provinces in some degree. Most private logging companies are sympathetic and co-operative. Attention focussed mainly on winter yarding areas. Since good forest management is usually also good deer management, it is better and cheaper to use ordinary forest operations than special techniques except in vital situations. Little conflict of interests has arisen because often the poorer forestry sites produce more deer than the better sites, where the shrub stage in succession after a cut is short and tree growth very strong. More work is needed in stand conversion, particularly in getting conifers back into the pure hardwood stands. Pulp species easier to handle than sawlog species because of shorter rotation period.
4. R. B. Hall, Ont. Dept. Lands and Forests: Deer browse studies in the Detour Point area. In the study area a cut of jack pine and black spruce started in 1963-64 will continue in 1964-65. We plan to scarify, seed, plant and burn slash in an attempt to establish quick regeneration. A browse survey showed 4,300 stems per acre from 13% to 43% browsed. Crotising counts indicated 22 deer and 1 moose per square mile.

Afternoon session

1. Field trip cancelled because of rain.
2. Free discussion, meeting of research committee.

Evening session

1. Dinner, a festive meal in honour of Ilo H. Bartlett, Michigan for his many outstanding services to the cause of sound deer management over a long period of years. Presentations, compliments and all good wishes to Ilo H. Bartlett - all richly deserved.
2. Social hour. The billiards championship was not held in an orderly fashion and therefor the issue was undecided.

Thursday, Sept. 24.

Morning session

1. Larry Krefting announced that the GLDG's publication "Deer research in the Great Lakes Region" was now ready for processing and financial responsibilities had been assigned to the agencies involved. It should be out in about 2 months. A vote of thanks was offered to Mr. Krefting for the large effort he has put into this review.

2. Minnesota suggested that the 1965 meeting, which they will sponsor, be held on Isle Royale. Everyone liked this idea.

General notes

Many members took advantage of the complimentary hunting licenses offered by the Province of Ontario, and a certain number of grouse, etc. met their demise during the meeting as a result.

The free afternoon on Wednesday was a great blessing. Many of the most valuable discussions were held informally at that time. Many expressed the hope that a similar free period be included in future meetings.

Highlights were the dinner for Ilo Bartlett and the aerial field trip.

The less said about the dysentary which struck nearly us all, the better.

Errors and omissions are the fault of the secretary.

REGISTRATION - 1964 Great Lakes Deer Group Meeting

<u>Michigan</u>	Bill Laycock Dave Arnold Louis Verme Herb Johnson Ilo H. Bartlett Lawrence Dayton Don McBeath Ted Black	<u>Wisconsin</u>	George Hartman William Creed Keith McCaffery James B. Hale
<u>Ontario</u>	Gerry Coyne Russ Hall Blair Dawson Robin Hepburn Ken Chambers Tim Timmerman Ted Swift B. H. Gibson	<u>Minnesota</u>	Pat Karns Forrest Lee Milt Stenlund Verne Gunvalson
<u>Manitoba</u>	John McGowan A. B. Ransom	<u>New York</u>	William Severinghaus Stuart Free
		<u>U.S. Forest Service</u>	Herman Olson Bill Irvine Lester Magnus Forest Stearns
		<u>U.S. Fish & Wildl. Service</u>	Larry Krefting Bill Aultfather Arthur Eustis