

Notes From  
THE GREAT LAKES DEER GROUP  
September 22-25, 1980

Aspen Management - Don Perala (USFS)

Aspen produces billions of seeds per year, but seedling reproduction is uncommon. Optimal temperature for aspen suckering is 70°F. Hot, damp weather promotes rapid growth. Burning aspen reduces suckering by about 20% depending on fire intensity. Repeated burning continues to reduce vigor but does not kill. Best kill is obtained by herbicide treatment immediately after complete shoot elongation (ca. July 4).

Red pine is more nutrient efficient than aspen and will outproduce aspen on sites through SI 65. Difficulty in converting better sites is going to be aggravated by herbicide restrictions. Furthermore, red pine is genetically vulnerable to epidemics.

Timber Supply/Demand - Dave Lothner (USFS) and John Mathweg (MDNR)

RPA projections cause foresters to promote expanded wood fiber supply, but most ignore impact of rising prices on demand. Demand in Minnesota is not likely to exceed supply before 2,000 AD. The national wood consumption of 13.4 billion ft<sup>3</sup> has remained relatively unchanged from 1900-1975, but mix of products (fuel, saw timber, pulp, etc.) has changed.

High transportation cost has recently reduced softwood importing and has caused steep rise in domestic demand. Wilderness set-aside has seriously impacted Minnesota softwood supplies. The species allowable cut for aspen may be reached within 5 years in Minnesota with the expansion and addition of flakeboard mills. Fuelwood consumption in Minnesota is heading toward 2000 cfs.

Hunting Seasons - 1979

	<u>Man.</u>	<u>Mich.</u>	<u>Minn.</u>	<u>Ont.</u>	<u>Wis.</u>
Gun hunters (deer)	40M	71M	29M	30M	62M
Gun deer kill	15-20M	112M	55M	14.6M	125M
Bow hunters (deer)	N.A.	217M	36M	N.A.	145M
Bow deer kill	N.A.	25.6M	2.6M	N.A.	16M

Michigan (Joe Vogt): Issued 103,000 Hunter's Choice permits and obtained 21,000 antlerless harvest. Landowner permits (preference) are available in "deer damage units" but are undersubscribed. Winter and other losses in 1973-79 in the NLP were 100,000. Expect nearly 1,000,000 deer population this year. UP public does not believe in shooting does.

Minnesota (LeRoy Rutske): Issued 57,000 Hunter's Choice permits and killed 16,000 antlerless. Plan to issue 67,000 Hunter's Choice permits in 1980. Habitat program is run by Regions without central coordination.

Wisconsin (Frank Haberland): New Hunter's Choice season planned for 1980 with estimated kill of 100,000 deer.

Manitoba (Herb Gulden): Deer herd crashed from 200,000 to 30,000 following bad winters. Three-year closure built herd to 90,000. Typically have 40,000 hunters and kill 15,000 to 20,000 deer. Hunter success remained above 40% during herd decline. Deer starvation is not density dependent. Prime SW aspen parkland is being lost at 2%/year. New farmers love money, not land or deer. Monitor herds by aerial census. Province feeds pellets to mitigate damage to baled stocks (mainly hay) and reduce winter starvation. Two feeders are used/100 deer. \$66,000 is ear-marked from license revenue to pay for feeding program.

#### Crop Damage Management

Minnesota (Henry Wulf, Chuck Kinsey): Statutes remove state liability for damage but state "must be responsive to public". Claims can be paid directly through Legislature. Crop Reporting Service does not consider wildlife damage as significant even though locally it can be. Kinsey-Pavlov electric fence has been successful as a deterrent.

Manitoba (Herb Gulden): Deer damage often results in farmer bulldozing "bush", thereby eliminating habitat and deer while bringing more land into production. To prevent this, Province acts quickly on complaints and even anticipates . . . Blood meal is used as a repellent. Alternative foods (pellets) are often provided nearby. \$50,000 is available annually for damage compensation.

Wisconsin (Frank Haberland): Damage compensation program existed from 1931-80. Legislature annually appropriated \$40,000 for compensation over most of that period. Maximum compensation was 30% of claim. Claims exceeding appropriation were prorated. Claims began to exceed \$200,000 in the 1970's as damage was claimed for a variety of wildlife. Only about 200 of 95,000 farmers filed claims. Payments were terminated on June 30, 1980. Now offer extension service on abatement. Absorbent cotton rope soaked in Magic Circle is sometimes a successful repellent. Shooting permits are issued to farmer as last resort.

Michigan (Joe Vogt): Hinder (TM) is the preferred repellent on farm crops. BGR (TM) is used on conifer seedlings. Eighty acres can be protected with Hinder for \$75/application. Complainants must exhaust all other reasonable alternatives before shooting. Up to 5 tags may be issued at a time to the farmer for killing deer. Dead deer are recorded and disposed of (utilized) at the farmer's discretion. Required record-keeping for shooting permits appeared to be quite detailed.

#### Deer Mortality Estimates

Minnesota (Bernier, Berg, Karns): They estimate 3% of fall population is lost to crippling mortality; 5% of post-season population lost to dogs; 6-10% illegal poaching loss (35-50% of legal kill). Predation by wolves (25,000), coyotes (15,000), bobcats (3,000), etc., may total 40,000-50,000 deer.

Michigan (Vogt): Haymowing is believed to be a significant cause of farm mortality in farm range. Roadkill is higher than reported.

Manitoba (Gulden): Assume 5% of herd is lost to poaching. Winter loss is about 5% in mild winter, 5-10% in moderate winter, and 10-15% in severe winter. Deer winter in aspen and temperature is a significant factor in mortality.

Ontario (Darby): Dead deer records show 23% of overwinter loss is due to wolves. This is about 5% of fall population. Legal kill is about 6 1/2% of fall population. Crippling mortality is estimated to be 3% of legal kill.

Wisconsin (McCaffery): Central Wisconsin studies found crippling mortality to be 8-9% of legal kill. Reported wounding at Sandhill averaged 13% of harvest. Illegal and accidental kills during hunts in Jackson County approximated 10-15% of fall herd, equalled the buck harvest, and was 42% of total harvest. A deductive model estimates poaching losses in Wood County to be 1-7% of fall population.

#### On-going Research

Minnesota (Pat Karns): A deer mortality study is being planned which is funded by ESSA. The study area is north of Grand Rapids. Over 100 deer will be radio-tagged with an external collar. Radio sends a signal after 4 hours of inactivity. Cause of mortality will be determined. The study is aimed at measuring wolf predation in relation to other mortality causes.

John Ludwig is conducting a fawn mortality study in southeast Minnesota using radios. Jack Mooty is beginning a "deer pasture" study to estimate carrying capacity of various forest habitats. Lynn Rogers (USFS) has a food habits study in northeast Minnesota involving tame, free-ranging deer.

Wisconsin (John Kubisiak): Studies are continuing that monitor statewide deer populations by management unit. A final report is being prepared on the impacts of forest opening construction. Sandhill studies are focusing on trophy buck management and hunter attitudes. Proposed new studies include an analysis of poaching, statewide reinventory of deer range, deer productivity, and an intensive measurement of open land within selected deer management units.

Michigan (Joe Vogt): Many of the research projects in Michigan are in the report-writing phase. Social behavior is being studied in the Cusino enclosure. Dominant bucks have been removed to determine behavior and efficiency of yearling bucks.

#### Comments on 2000 A.D.

Wildlife profession, itself, is increasingly composed of urban kids. Outdoor education centers are increasingly manned by "naturalist" types (anti-trapping, anti-hunting).

In Manitoba, only 7% of the population hunts and most deer hunters are in the 50+ age group.

"Anti" movement may be a product of an affluent society. As population increases, energy decreases, and standard of living goes down, hunting popularity may grow. You could ban hunting, but some people would still hunt.

Public land is increasingly used for nonhunting activities. Incentives must be found to open private lands to public hunting. Large corporation lands have great potential for improved habitat management.

Manitoba is losing eight wetlands/mi<sup>2</sup>/yr and 2% of its bush cover/year. Energy constraints may reverse farming intensity -- zero tillage, less land clearing, etc. Otherwise, hunting is likely to be pay-as-you-go. Harmonizing need for bread with habitat preservation is difficult.

Wood energy availability may attract industries to the North and result in younger forest habitats. Peat production (MN) and mining (WI) may profoundly affect complexion of North.

Quality restrictions are likely to be imposed on hunters. One way might be to require 40 hr/yr of voluntary service before issuing a license.

In retrospect, we have not really made any quantum leaps in programs, policies, or attitudes since 1960. How likely are "quantum leaps" by 2000?

#### Minnesota Deer Hunter's Association

A new group has been formed to pressure Legislature to fund deer programs, etc. It is patterned after 134 legislative districts and 7 DNR Regions. Representatives will be elected at each level to formulate positions and policies. Goals are as noble as Wallace Grange and "his" Conservation Congress, but Wisconsin conferees remained skeptical of the future!

#### Session Summary (Pete Jordan, UM)

GLDG has good scope (narrow problem-wise, but fairly broad diversity and geography). Meetings are efficient and informal -- much better than urban hotel and neckties. Could have used greater research participation this year and more common denominators in management presentations (hunters-, deer-, kills/mi<sup>2</sup> of deer range). Deer management is selling a product; an experience. We all know what that experience is for us, but how do we quantify expectations of others?

#### Wisconsin Delegation

Frank Haberland  
James March  
Cliff Wita  
John Kubisiak  
Keith McCaffery

Wisconsin's contributions are abbreviated in these minutes.