

THE 1981 GREAT LAKES DEER GROUP MEETING  
ALBERTA, MICHIGAN  
SEPTEMBER 22, 23, 24

Attendance (officially) was (approximately) 25 persons, but at times students from Michigan Tech sat in on the various sessions. Ontario, Manitoba, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin were officially represented. The meeting place was at the Ford Forestry Center of Michigan Tech at Alberta in the Upper Peninsula. The program really began Monday evening (September 21st) at a cocktail "get acquainted" hour which lasted from 6 p.m. to ---?

The following are the minutes of the sessions: (See also, the attached agenda)

I. 1980 DEER SEASON REVIEW

1. Manitoba - given by Herb Goulden  
42,000 hunters killed 25,000 deer - almost all in southwest part of the province. 1,000 archers killed 150 deer. Goulden feels that the crippling loss in Manitoba is high (perhaps 50% of the legal kill). Estimated deer population: 150,000. Key to survival at this northern extremity of the white-tailed deer range is a mild winter. Losses are cumulative (hunting kill plus winter stress).

2. Minnesota - given by L. Rutzke  
350,000 deer licenses sold. About a 22% success ratio. (A hunter can kill only 1 deer per year. Either bow and arrow, gun, or muzzle loader).

|               |         |
|---------------|---------|
| Firearm       | 136,460 |
| Archery       | 28,110  |
| Muzzle loader | 920     |
|               | <hr/>   |
|               | 165,490 |

(This looks like a 47% success ratio to me - Dreis)

Field personnel make recommendations to the Commission. Regulations are finalized by the Commission. (Public pressure can and does influence the decisions). Minnesota intends to continue with compulsory deer registration. There is no landowner preference on quota permits.

3. Ontario - given by Peter Smith  
Opposition to hunting is growing in southern Ontario. In the past, seasons were "any deer" and hunting with dogs was legal. Have now gone to a selective harvest (quota) system. 72 management zones (same as Wisconsin's "units"). Buck plus quotas for antlerless harvest.

Hunting with dogs accounts for only 22% of the kill, but 37% of the hunting effort. (Sounds counter productive).

4. Wisconsin - given by F. Haberland
  - 1980 season was the second best in our history.
  - 139,000 deer gun kill
  - 21,000 bow and arrow kill (a record)
  - Explained the computerized tally from compulsory registration.
  - Explained change over from party permit (4 persons) to Hunter's Choice (1 person) system. Party permit gave 4 persons one extra deer while Hunter's Choice does not. (The hunter can take either buck - statewide - or an antlerless deer in a specified unit).
  
5. Michigan - given by George Burgoyne
  - They thought they would have a reduced kill, but had an increase (same as Wisconsin). There was a big increase in main road traffic counts later in season which indicates sustained hunting effort.
  
  - 108,250 bucks killed
  - 28,000 antlerless
  - (Second largest kill on record - same as Wisconsin)
  - (Issued 100,000 plus antlerless permits)

## II. MICHIGAN'S FOREST INVENTORY - given by Dr. J. Meter

He described the Ford Forestry Center and the Forestry program at Michigan Tech at Houghton. He then described in some detail the computerized forest inventory program the State of Michigan has (similar to Wisconsin). Wildlife interests are an integral part of this system (deer yards, etc). It is a multi-disciplinary tool by cover type units (compartments). 45% of the State is now inventoried. Wildlife aspects are coded on the first page.

## III. MICHIGAN MOOSE - given by Ralph Bailey

Not much to tell. Like Wisconsin, moose are either occasional visitors or are widely scattered. They probably are victims of poaching or brainworm.

The following actions and proposals for moose were discussed:

- a. Appraised U.P. where deer declined.
- b. Determined that various areas could support 1000+ moose.
- c. Can have moose where deer populations are not larger than 5 per square mile.
- d. Local people are in favor of moose introductions.
- e. Sample deer pellets to determine incidence of brainworms.
- f. Costs? Possibly too high. (Must use helicopters)
- g. There is a potential for private cash donations.
- h. Prime Michigan moose habitat:
  - (Seney) - Betsy Lake Area - NW Marquette Co. - Tip of Keweenaw peninsula.
  - Prime habitat contains mixtures of conifers, willow, aspen and hardwoods.

#### IV. MICHIGAN ELK - given by Robert Strong

Elk now exist in the wild in 4 counties in the northern part of the lower peninsula. (NE of Gaylord). Occupy about 600 square miles. Original release was 18 animals. Present population estimated at 500 animals.

Some controlled seasons were held in the past which did reduce the herd. Goal=600 to 800 animals. Fast approaching this goal. Will soon need another controlled hunting season. Public participation is needed to sell it.

Active drilling for oil is now occurring in the elk range. Because of this, the range has shrunk since 1975. Brainworms kill elk as they do moose.

#### V. BIG GAME RESEARCH

1. Minnesota - given by Pat Karns  
He described their research set up. The Big Game Group is comprised of 4 persons. The biggest study at present is the deer-wolf interaction study by Todd Fuller (who was also present).

And right here I received information that runs up a red flag for Wisconsin. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration says animals to be killed and used for human consumption cannot be anesthetized with Ketamine for 30 days prior to killing and Rom-Pom for 180 days! (Some of the compounds resulting during metabolic decomposition may be carcinogenic!) Also, persons using these materials must be registered as drug and narcotic applicators.

2. Manitoba - given by Herb Goulden  
They are developing a population model for their deer herd. Much deer damage occurs to stored grains and hay bales. On damage complaints they feed pelletized rations to deer to keep the deer away from damage locations. Have paid as much as \$250,000 annually for deer damage. (Pay up to \$1 million on waterfowl damage.)

Because of high interest rates on mortgages, the younger farmers have little sympathy for wildlife eating their crops.

The problems of "Native Canadian" rights for sustenance puts a "chink" in the computer model.

There is an elk herd near Brandon, Manitoba which is expanding into farm lands. Have a hunting season to control. Issue 50 tags to 100 hunters. Season concurrent with deer season.

North of Winnipeg - elk were introduced. First season last fall. The Indians claimed they were promised the first chance at hunting the introduced elk. No documentation on this. Thus a big problem has developed. Herb cautioned us to document all agreements. Don't make 'em verbal.

Moose - Indian rights are supreme. No research on moose.

3. Ontario - given by Peter Smith  
There is (or has been) a brain drain from the research section due to advancements, resignations, austerity, etc. Most research now at a low ebb. The telemetry studies on big game are at a halt, but they are stockpiling equipment pending the acquisition of live human bodies to get the programs going.
4. Wisconsin - given by Frank Haberland  
Described the set up. (Farm wildlife - wetlands - big game)  
Projects described: Deer Aging - Winter Trails Surveys (which replace the pellet group counts) - Winter Severity Index. He cited McCaffrey's latest bulletin on forest openings.

New Proposals:

- a. Deer reproduction (last done in 1950's)
  - b. Deer population modelling
  - c. Opening Studies - narrow down the need to a finite level.  
(How much do roads, private lands, R-O-W's, etc. contribute to the opening needs of deer?)
  - d. Bow and arrow wounding loss study on Sandhill Wildlife Area.
5. Michigan - given by Carl Bennett  
Quarter - township studies are now coming to an end. (8 test areas each 9 miles square. 2 each on different cutting schedules - fire - roller chapper - clear cuts. Deer response was best in the 25% and 50% opening plots.)

Antler Development:

Late green up vs. early green up (the early green up with acorns produced the largest antler growth). Now working on diets and general physical well being.

Photoperiodicity - the question is: Is the change in fawn production related to diet or photoperiodicity? (The controlled testing of lighting is significant, statistically. The change in onset of puberty occurs with a change of exposure to lights. It is delayed, i.e. no fawns produced under certain conditions. The more the exposure to light, the more puberty is enhance.)

Pigeon River State Forest Study - Effects of deer and elk browsing on large toothed aspen.

Sludge Disposal Study - not so funny. Proposals are to dispose on wildlife lands. Some sludge from Detroit area has 238 ppm of cadmium. If it gets into the wildlife food chain, it could eventually wind up in humans.

Deer Repellants (Robert Aho)

He described the Michigan procedure (use noise makers, repellants and as a last resort, shooting).

Described various repellants. "Deer Away" - odor repellant; "Hot Sauce" - taste repellant; "Hinder" - a vapor repellant.

None are long term in effectiveness. Other problems: Repeated spraying resulted in leaf burn. Also, sprayer nozzle plugging occurred.

## VI. HABITAT MANAGEMENT

## 1. Manitoba (by Goulden)

- Two Major Issues: 1) Sportsmen - Indian relationships  
2) Impact of agricultural Development

The agricultural impact on deer in the southwest part of the province is serious. 50% to 75% of deer are in the southwest. 70% deer are raised on private land (and 60% of all waterfowl). Losing 2% of all woodlands annually in southwest corner (and 40,000 acres of wetlands). This translates into an annual loss of 8,000 deer and 70,000 ducks. Program to counter:

1. A rebate system (in lieu of taxes) for wildlife lands.
2. Habitat easements of 5 to 15 year duration.
3. Land Lease - to be handled by Fish and Game Associations. The Associations borrows the money and in 50 years the land reverts to the Crown.

The key is to preserve "thermal cover" and then follow with a feeding program.

## 2. Minnesota - given by LeRoy Rutzke

Gave a history of wetland acquisition - 1 million acres on 900 different areas in western part of Minnesota. Also used by deer. Some leasing of corn fields for winter deer food. In 1971 they got into deer habitat improvement. Got involved in timber access road development and in openings maintenance. (No mention of chemicals - Dreis)

In 1980:

- 46 miles of timbers access roads
- 1000 acres of browse regeneration
- 1400 acres of forest openings
- 50 acres of cover development (white spruce along North Shore)
- \$40,000 spent on food plots in agricultural areas.

## 3. Ontario (Peter Smith)

Deer range is in the southern, agricultural part of the province. Program is carried out in concert with forestry. Work in and adjacent to deer yards. Browse cutting, etc. Funds for these activities are now disappearing.

Predator control on wolves by trapping.

Major thrust now is input into master planning of Provincial Parks. Do supplemental feeding. In southern Ontario only 5 yards exist where deer use aspen as a winter food.

## 4. Wisconsin (Haberland and Dreis)

Our forest wildlife habitat program of aspen regeneration and forest openings was described.

At this point I gave a short report on Tordon and the problem it created in the Northwest District. Almost no discussion occurred in the group at this time, but considerable private discussion later. 15 copies of the Tordon Environmental Impact Assessment were given out.

## 5. Michigan (G. Burgoyne)

Ratio of hunters and harvest of deer by area:

| <u>Area</u>    | <u>Hunters</u> | <u>Harvest</u> |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Upper Pen.     | 1              | 1              |
| No. Lower Pen. | 4+             | 2+             |
| So. Lower Pen. | 2+             | 4+             |

Deer range improvements are mostly in the U.P. and northern L.P. Dollars must be spent for "effective deer habitat management". Program began with 16,000 acres worked on annually. Went up to 35,000 acres annually. Now back down to 16,000 acres annually even though much more money is now being spent. Inflation is to blame.

## 6. Minnesota (by Pat Karns)

Forest openings are important for nutritious food needs:

- 1) Just prior to winter yarding.
- 2) Just after emerging from winter yards.

A task force created a policy on forest habitat programming that called for habitat evaluation and guidelines. They have not had enough economic timber cutting to make an impact on deer habitat.

## VII. ARCHERY DEER HUNTING (by Ed Langineau)

He reported on a research project on a 17 square mile area - the "Porter Ranch". Monitored deer and hunters. A very great increase in deer achery hunting.

| <u>1969</u> | <u>1979</u> |  |
|-------------|-------------|--|
| 62,670      | 216,190     | Bow hunters (Statewide)                    |
| 4.1         | 11.9        | Success rate                               |
| 11.7        | 14.8        | Number of <u>days</u> hunted on an average |

On Porter Ranch, 1/2 deer hunting pressure by bow and arrow hunters. 12% of all bow and arrow hunters were from out-of-state, but took 37% of the deer killed.

Characteristics of these hunters:

Younger - hunt more days

Bow and arrow hunter were not selective. Compound bow users had more years of experience, but had only the same success ratio as recurved bow users.

- 27% Hunted out of tree stands
- 47% Sometimes used tree stands
- 26% Never used tree stands

{ Success rate 5 times higher for those who hunt from tree stands, but they had a crippling rate 3 times higher.

Jim Raber (from Wisconsin) presented some data for northeast Wisconsin

In 1970 12.9% of the total deer harvest was by archery  
 In 1980 18.2% of the total deer harvest was by archery

A discussion group problem (exercise) was done on: solutions and/or management strategies for archery and gun hunter problems. There were a variety of solutions offered, but the group I was in had the best answers. (Naturally!)

#### VIII. DEER YARD MGT. GUIDELINES given by L. Verme

All discussion was on research and results from the Cusino Research Station and applied generally. Deer must conserve energy to survive the winter, so first of all, and most important, they must seek shelter from the winter elements (especially the wind). They will eat only what is in the yards. Therefore, we must manage yards with a series of even aged stands, about 5 years apart. In theory, this will give cover, food and protection to a given number of deer forever. In relation to the U.P. this means white cedar management because that is where the deer winter in the U.P.

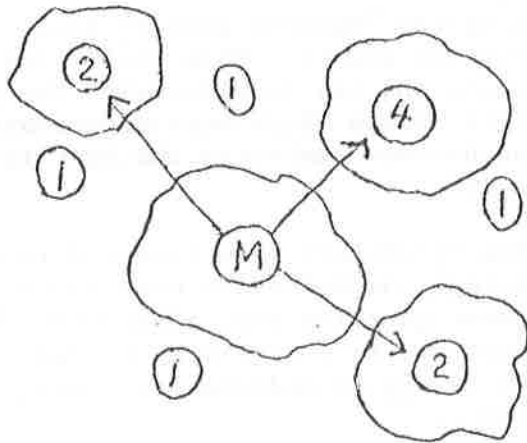
Deer yard management can only be undertaken when the deer herd using a given yard is controlled. An uncontrolled herd will negate any attempts to manage deer yard vegetation. And this is the problem that confronts most all of us.

There was considerable discussion on the management techniques employed in white cedar management at Cusino.

#### IX. DEER RESEARCH given by Ozoga

In great detail, Mr. Ozoga explained deer social behavior. He made a study on female deer in a 600 acre enclosed area.

A matriarchial range: this can be a 200 to 300 acre matriarchy  
 10 to 20 acres/doe territory



Material behavior classes:

- ① 1 year old = nonpregnant
- ② 2 year old = produces first fawn
- ③ 3 year old = produces second fawn(s)
- ④ 4 to 5 year old = produces third and fourth fawns

(The large circles are the individual territories). A spring and summer condition.

Considerable data and discussion took place. Data was based upon the Cusino enclosure and supplemental feeding was done to remove food stress.

A paper on this study will be published in the April 1982 issue of the Journal of Wildlife Management. I found this session extremely interesting. A sidelight: fawn mortality varies. One year a bear got into the enclosure and fawn mortality rose to 38%. (In the U.P. and probably northwest Wisconsin, bear predation could be a significant mortality factor!)

#### X. EVENING SESSION

The wildlifers were trounced by the Michigan Tech. students in a softball game. The evening session was optional, but because we were at least 100 miles from the amenities of civilization, we all attended.

##### 1. Nonconsumptive use of deer

No one had too much to say. Most use is by people and tourists driving around to look at deer. We talked about the value of deer to the economy. Concensus was that we are unable to come up with real dollar values to compete with industrial values of a resource. (Deer vs. Mining and Deer vs. Agriculture)

##### 2. Party Permits

After describing each state's or province's system (basically similar) we launched into landowner preferences and its problems. Minnesota uses it for moose, provided the landowner is engaged in agriculture. Other states use it for turkeys.

The discussion took up the "hunters number" idea. A hunter is given a life-long hunting number. This would simplify the problems of landowner preference and (as in Wisconsin) the preference for applicants for hunters choice which were unsuccessful. Concensus was that a life-long hunters number is the best tool to work with--if we can get it!

P.S.=Correction: The wildlifers were trounced in the softball game on Tuesday evening. On Wednesday evening the wildlifers refrained from any beer guzzling and, along with the fact that the Michigan Tech students put in a girl-type pitcher, this enabled the noble wildlifers to win on Wednesday evening. (Score 38 to 10 or something like that.)



## XI. DEER SEASON PROSPECTS

1. Manitoba  
The uniform for deer hunting is a various combination of blaze orange and white. More and more posting of land is being encountered. Expect season to be comparable to last year.
2. Minnesota  
Expected kill 80,000 to 90,000 deer. Considerable discussion on use of crossbows. Questions the safety factor. Penetration of the darts and killing power is not good except at close range.
3. Ontario  
A good crop of deer available. No evidence of winter mortality. Went to a quota system for the first time last year. Will continue it this year.
4. Wisconsin  
Expect a super season = 150,000+ deer gun kill  
25,000 archery kill

Total state deer population now = 850,000 deer  
Will issue 108,430 hunter's choice permits to take 57,800 antlerless deer. (Some of the hunters will take antlered deer, but this does not count in the hunter's choice success %)

Expect 625,000 gun hunters  
160,000 bow and arrow hunters

5. Michigan  
Has 725,000 gun hunters  
200,000 archery hunters  
Herd is the highest (right now) in 30 years. Should have a very good season.

1981 prediction: 115,000 bucks  
49,350 antlerless deer  
164,350 deer

Add this to 26,000 archery deer!

## XII. BEAR REGULATIONS by El Harger (Michigan)

800 to 1000 bears taken in Michigan each year, mostly from the Upper Peninsula. Only 26% are taken with dogs. Hunting over bait is the big method. About 10,000 bear hunters.

## XIII. BUSINESS MEETING

Wisconsin will host the group next year. Keep the present 3 day format. Keep it an annual meeting. Time: late August. The Forest Game Research Section and Bureau of Wildlife Management will set it up.

RED:ja