

**GEORGIA'S
DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN
2005-2014**



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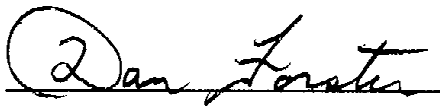
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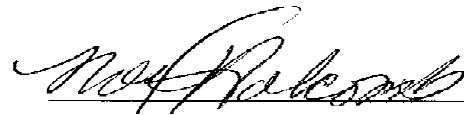
**Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife Resources Division
Game Management Section**

GEORGIA'S DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife Resources Division

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Dan Forster, Director
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Noel Holcomb, Commissioner
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

State law charges the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) with the management and conservation of Georgia's wildlife resources. White-tailed deer are one of these important wildlife resources and Georgia's most popular game species. Deer provide diverse recreational opportunities and significant economic revenue, but also contribute to a variety of deer-human conflicts.

Over the past 32 years, Georgia's human population has increased from 4.8 million people to over 8.2 million while the deer population has increased from 198,000 deer to 1.2 million. Deer hunter numbers have not kept pace with the population growth of people or deer. Deer hunter success has steadily increased resulting in harvest levels sufficient to stabilize the deer herd, but not cause a significant statewide decline. Over these decades, forested land has decreased from 39,000 to 37,000 square miles, with most of the decline occurring in north Georgia.

The 2004 pre-hunt statewide deer population exceeds 32 deer per square mile of forested acreage. Overall physical condition of the deer herd is good. However, there are isolated or localized areas where deer populations are overabundant and in poor to fair condition. In these areas, deer populations frequently exceed social tolerances.

WRD has managed deer herds for long-term sustainability in balance with dynamic habitat capabilities and social tolerances. At the core of deer management is the question: how many deer should Georgia have? The answer depends upon objectives for hunting, wildlife viewing, ecological functions, agricultural and property damage, and deer-vehicle collisions.

Management of Georgia's deer population occurs through regulated hunting. In an effort to broaden the issue of deer management and better fulfill its mandate to all Georgians, WRD initiated the development of a citizen-directed deer management plan involving multiple levels of public involvement.

Planning was directed by a citizen-based steering committee representing broad interests in deer and deer management. The Steering Committee identified five conservation-based and five method-based key issues, established four geographic-based subcommittees to develop management recommendations, and approved or amended recommended actions. Key conservation issues identified by the Steering Committee were: 1) hunter access; 2) deer density; 3) deer-vehicle collisions; 4) public/private ownership; and 5) urban and nuisance deer management. These issues focused on biological and social aspects of deer management in Georgia. Key method issues identified by the Steering Committee were: 1) hunting deer with dogs; 2) hunting seasons and bag limits; 3) WRD policies; 4) supplemental feeding and baiting; and 5) wildlife management and hunting techniques.

The four subcommittees (Mountains/Ridge and Valley, Piedmont, Upper Coastal Plains, and Flatwoods/Lower Coastal Plain) used public input and technical information to develop recommendations on all key issues that impacted their geographic area. Information used by the Steering Committee and subcommittees included input from five public meetings, written and e-mailed comments, technical input from WRD's wildlife biologists, and an independent scientific survey of Georgia residents, landowners, and hunters ("Opinions and Attitudes of Georgia Residents, Hunters, and Landowners Toward Deer Management in Georgia", Responsive Management, Inc., 2004).

All committees functioned on a consensus basis. “Consensus” meant that all representatives can accept a proposed action even if any one representative does not consider the proposal ideal. This approach ensured working to solutions where all interests were served and improved. When consensus could not be reached the alternative was voting.

The public and the subcommittees raised several issues peripheral, but not directly related, to deer management. While these were not integral to this deer management plan, they were considered important, and as such are included as an appendix and addressed with WRD actions.

The bulleted list below provides the DNR-WRD action items, specific to key issues, identified and approved by the Steering Committee to direct deer management in Georgia over the next decade. For a more detailed and comprehensive discussion of the planning process, public input, scientific survey, and subcommittee discussions and recommendations refer to the complete “Georgia’s Deer Management Plan 2005-2014.”

WRD ACTION ITEMS BY KEY CONSERVATION ISSUE

Hunter Access

- Land acquisition is critical and deer management issues and recreational deer hunting will be addressed on acquired lands.
- Beginning in 2005-2006 deer hunting will be established on certain State Parks. Recreational deer hunting will be encouraged on all suitable State Parks. WRD will provide technical assistance.
- Pursue changes in Farm Bill ranking criteria that provide additional points for deer hunting access and additional options for tax breaks to landowners who allow deer hunting.
- In the annual seasons and regulations guides, publish information explaining the legal protections from liability for landowners allowing hunting.

Deer Density

- Propose regulations promoting population reductions in DMUs 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8, and maintaining current population levels in DMUs 1, 2, 6, and 9.

Deer-Vehicle Collisions

- Develop educational items to reduce deer-vehicle collisions that include:
 - 1) Brochure for state and local governments, and landowners with a list of forages attractive to deer that should be avoided along highway rights-of-way. Include a list of alternative plantings that are less desirable for deer.
 - 2) Brochure on avoiding deer-vehicle collisions for distribution at county offices.
 - 3) Driver education video on avoiding collisions with deer for driver education classes.
 - 4) Public service announcements for identified deer-vehicle collision problem areas.

- Monitor road segments with high incidence of deer-vehicle collisions and identify physical characteristics that can be modified to minimize deer-vehicle collisions.
- Implement deer management plans for large tracts of deer habitat, public and private, in close proximity to problem roads.
- Work in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and university researchers to identify mitigation techniques for reducing deer-vehicle collisions.

Public/Private Ownership

- Propose a regulation change that prohibits the confinement of white-tailed deer on acreages less than 640 acres, requires a deer management plan approved by WRD to confine deer on acreages equal to or greater than 640, and allows anyone confining live white-tailed deer in an enclosure less than 640 acres prior to the adoption of this rule to continue to confine these animals and their offspring.
- Continue to oppose the hunting of exotic deer confined by fences.

Urban & Nuisance Deer Management

- Encourage agencies with management responsibilities for public lands to allow deer hunting.
- Initiate a public planning process to facilitate gaining hunter access to private urban and suburban wildlife habitat.
- Extend archery deer hunting season to January 15 in archery-only counties.
- Provide technical assistance for deer management plans and strategies for State Parks.
- Change crop damage policy to allow assistants to serve on more than two permits.
- Maintain current system for lethal removal of deer in developed areas (i.e. airport authority employees may be permitted for lethal removal from airports, and WRD and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-Wildlife Services professionals may lethally remove deer from developed areas when it is consistent with sound principles of wildlife management).

WRD ACTION ITEMS BY KEY METHODS ISSUE

Hunting Deer with Dogs

- Pursue a law change to:
 - 1) Allow permits for hunting deer with dogs to be issued to private landowners with a minimum of 250 contiguous acres.
 - 2) Remove the requirement for vehicles to be marked with the permit number.
 - 3) Eliminate the permit fee.
- Maintain the current minimum acreage requirement of 1,000 contiguous acres for leased lands.
- Maintain the requirement under the current permit system for dogs to be tagged with the permit number.
- Extend season for hunting deer with dogs season to run concurrent with the proposed extension of the Southern Zone firearms deer season (i.e. January 15).

Hunting Seasons & Bag Limits

- Extend the firearms deer hunting season by regulation in the southern deer zone to January 15.
- Increase antlerless bag limit when and where needed to meet management objectives. Bag limit increase will require law and/or regulation changes. These changes will not be passed until there is public support for them.
- Propose an increase in the number of either-sex days and provide these days earlier in the hunting season for Deer Management Unit (DMU) 2.
- Maintain conservative doe harvest in DMU 1.
- Maintain existing buck bag limits and current antler restrictions statewide.
- Increase educational efforts informing the public and hunters about the importance of antlerless deer harvest in controlling deer populations.

WRD Policies

- Continue banning the importation of cervids and monitoring associated wildlife diseases.
- Review deer rehabilitation guidelines and facilities, and implement changes to avoid releasing deer that are habituated to people.
- Encourage deer-processors and/or volunteers to participate in venison donation programs.

- Seek an increase in non-resident hunting license fees and charge non-consumptive users on WMAs.

Supplemental Feeding & Baiting

- Develop an educational brochure on the use and impacts of food plots, supplemental feeding, and baiting in wildlife management.
- Maintain the current laws regarding hunting of deer and other wildlife over bait.

Hunting & Wildlife Management Techniques

- Pursue a law change to allow scopes on muzzleloaders during the primitive weapons hunting season.
- Pursue a law to prohibit release of hogs in unfenced areas.
- On private lands allow by permit the control of feral hogs by shooting over bait, at night with a light, and from a vehicle except during deer and turkey hunting seasons.

Peripheral Issues

- Open more gates for small game hunters on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).
- Use in-house funding for land acquisition when possible.
- Increase hog hunting opportunities on WMAs.
- Encourage the Georgia Department of Agriculture to allow processing of hunter-harvested feral hogs by deer processors.
- WRD's Law Enforcement Section (LE) has initiated an in-house law enforcement review process. Committees are addressing the issues of ticket writing, complaint reporting, supervision, hiring and training, and simplification of laws and regulations.
- Responsive Management, Inc. is conducting a survey of public opinions and attitudes towards the law enforcement activities of WRD. The survey is projected to be complete by January 1, 2005. Incorporating the input from the survey and implementation of the recommendations from the law enforcement review process will address identified public relations issues.
- Encourage a "Good Samaritan" law to reduce liability risk associated with processing of venison to be donated to charitable organizations.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CWD	Chronic Wasting Disease
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
DMU	Deer Management Unit
FLCP	Flatwoods/Lower Coastal Plain
GDNR	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
HFTH	Hunters For The Hungry
LE	Law Enforcement Section
MRV	Mountains and Ridge & Valley
OCGA	Official Code of Georgia Annotated
RMS	Responsive Management Survey
UCP	Upper Coastal Plain
USFS	United States Forest Service
WMA	Wildlife Management Area
WRD	Wildlife Resources Division

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) is charged by State law with the management and conservation of Georgia's wildlife resources for present and future generations. The white-tailed deer is one of these important wildlife resources and Georgia's most popular game species. Deer provide recreation for hunters and wildlife observers, and deer hunting contributes over \$400 million annually to Georgia's economy. Deer also cause agricultural and property damage, and present driving safety concerns.

Because of Georgia's diverse landscape, the deer herd has grown at various rates throughout the state. WRD's goal is to maintain a herd that provides excellent hunting and viewing opportunities that are sustainable, statewide and regionally. Sustainability requires deer numbers in balance with habitat capabilities and within social tolerances. Management of Georgia's white-tailed deer herd is increasingly challenging and often a mix of controversial issues.

At the core of most of these issues lies the question: how many deer should we have? The answer depends upon whom you ask and the area of reference. Currently, management of our deer population occurs primarily through regulated hunting. However, there are a number of non-hunting issues and opportunities directly linked to this resource. These include wildlife viewing, ecological functions, agricultural and property damage, and deer-vehicle collisions. In an effort to broaden the scope of deer management, better fulfill its mandate, and become a more responsive agency, WRD initiated a planning process that involved multiple levels of public involvement.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

From a statewide perspective, Georgia's deer herd has been stable for the past one and a half decades. Despite this success at controlling deer numbers, there are a number of key issues in deer management that need to be addressed. Toward this end, the WRD-WRD decided to undertake a statewide deer management planning process.

Statewide deer plans are not new for Georgia. Hunting regulation changes that allowed WRD and Georgia hunters to control deer numbers were developed from a series of science-based deer plans written by WRD professionals. The foundation of the 2005-2014 deer management plan is that four levels of public involvement have been added to the professional input.

Level One of public involvement was the appointment of a 16-member steering committee by the DNR Commissioner, working in conjunction with the Governor's Office and the WRD Director. The Steering Committee represents broad interests in deer and deer management including university researchers, transportation interests, legislators, outdoor media, agribusiness, forest industry, deer hunting, small game hunting, sportsmen organizations, and one WRD professional (non-voting member; [Appendix I](#)). The Steering Committee's jobs were to identify membership of four regional subcommittees, to identify key issues for subcommittee review, and to amend or approve WRD actions resulting from subcommittee reports. The Steering Committee began by identifying 28 key issues, which they consolidated to 15. These were further consolidated to 10 divided between conservation issues and method issues.

Level Two of public involvement was discussion and formal recommendations from four geographic-based subcommittees. These subcommittees were assigned to

Mountains/Ridge and Valley, Piedmont, Upper Coastal Plain, and Flatwoods/Lower Coastal Plain provinces. As with the Steering Committee, all subcommittees were comprised of broad interests in hunting (big and small game), conservation, and deer management ([Appendix II-V](#)). Subcommittees were tasked with reviewing key issues as identified by the Steering Committee and discussed in open-house public meetings. Subcommittees developed recommendations on all key issues that impacted their geographic areas. Retired natural resources professionals, who are trained facilitators, managed subcommittee meetings. Each subcommittee chairperson wrote a report of the results of the subcommittee meeting.

Level Three was public involvement through public meetings. Open house meetings were held in August of 2004 in Ellijay, Jesup, Dacula, Macon, and Albany. Input was taken on key issues identified by the Steering Committee and on any other topics desired by participants ([Appendix VI-X](#)). Meetings were advertised in a variety of outlets. Again, WRD sought input from a wide variety of interests in deer and deer management. Additionally, information presented at the public meetings was posted on the WRD website allowing citizens, who were unable to attend the public meetings, to provide written and e-mailed comments ([Appendix XI](#)). In January 2005, the draft plan was presented at eight WRD meetings on hunting regulations. Concurrently, public comments on the draft deer plan were taken ([Appendix XII](#)). Finally, open house public hearings specific to the draft deer plan were held in February 2005 in Cordele, Covington, Jasper, and Jesup. Comments were taken on the draft plan at these meetings as well as written letters and e-mails ([Appendix XIII](#)).

Level Four of public involvement was a scientific survey of public opinion on deer. WRD contracted with Responsive Management, Inc. of Harrisburg, Virginia to conduct a survey of the general population (N=402), landowners (N=212), and hunters (N=418). The survey results ([Appendix XIV](#)) were presented to the Steering Committee and subcommittees by WRD as background for development of key issues and to further understanding of public attitudes.

All committees functioned on a consensus basis. "Consensus" means that all representatives can accept a proposed action even if any one representative does not consider the proposal ideal. This approach ensures working toward solutions where all interests are served and improved. The alternative is voting which means that one side wins and one loses. Voting was only done when consensus could not be reached.

The four geographic subcommittee reports were consolidated into one statewide plan. The consolidated plan was presented to the Steering Committee for their consideration. After some modification to proposed WRD actions, the plan was adopted by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee reached consensus on all WRD action items with the exception of the action to change regulations pursuant to confinement of white-tailed deer. The action item to limit enclosures to no less than 640 acres was adopted by a vote of six in favor, 3 opposed and one abstained. The Steering Committee reached consensus on an action item to increase the doe bag limit from 10 to 15. However, after receiving strong opposition to this proposal at public meetings held across the state in January and February 2005, WRD recommended the proposal be revised to increase the antlerless bag limit when and where needed to meet management objectives and only when there was strong public support for an increase. The DNR Commissioner and the WRD Director endorsed the recommended

change. The plan became final upon the signature of the DNR Commissioner and WRD Director.

The public and the subcommittees raised several issues peripheral, but not directly related, to deer management. While these were not integral to this deer management plan, they were considered important, and are included as an appendix with WRD actions in [Appendix XV](#).

STATE OF THE STATE

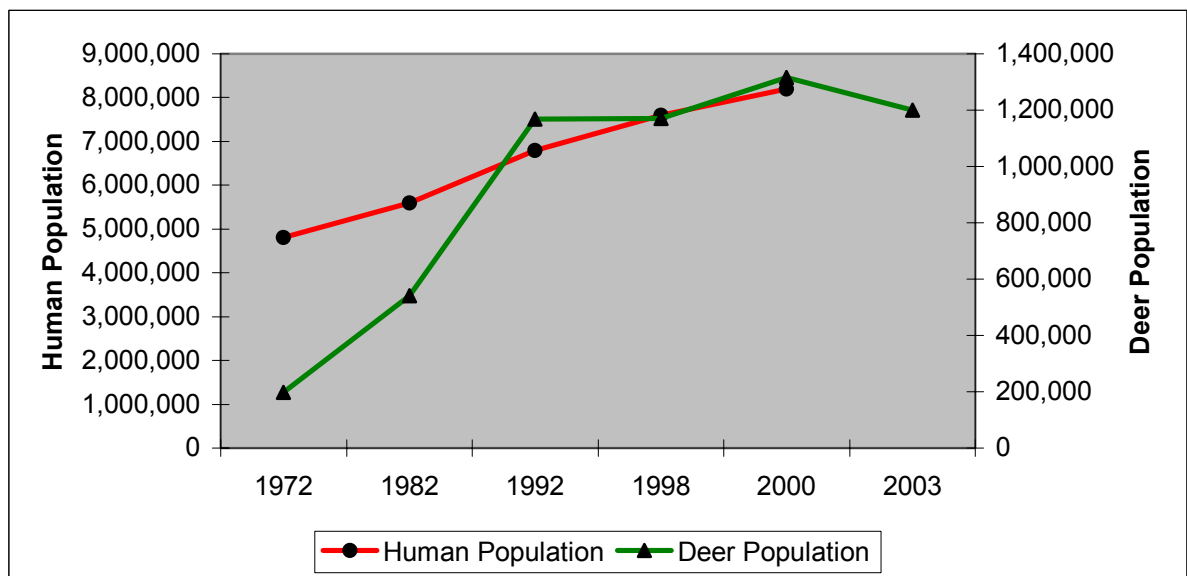
I. Trends for People, Forests, Deer and Hunters

The number of people in Georgia has grown from 4,800,000 in 1972 to 8,200,000 in 2000 (Table 1). Approximately 150,000 new residents move into the state each year. Over these 32 years, the deer population grew from 198,000 to 1.2 million, a six-fold increase (Figure 1). Deer topped one million in 1987 and have since fluctuated between 1.0 and 1.4 million. Deer hunters (and hunting license sales) have not kept pace with the statewide population growth of people or deer. Deer hunter numbers increased less than 50%, and most of this was before 1992 (Figure 2).

Table 1. Thirty-year trends in Georgia's human population, forested acreage, hunter population and hunting license sales.

Year	Human Population	Forested Land (mi ²)	Estimated Deer Population	Estimated Deer Harvest	Total Deer Hunters	Big Game License Sales
1972	4,800,000	39,435	198,000	51,000	220,900	159,640
1982	5,600,000	37,885	540,000	144,000	294,100	246,524
1992	6,800,000	37,412	1,211,000	347,000	335,600	275,069
1998	7,600,000	37,181	1,170,000	427,000	316,600	253,944
2000	8,200,000	37,483	1,315,000	402,000	294,600	259,555
2003			1,200,000	484,000	304,300	241,091

Figure 1. Georgia's Human and Deer Populations Since 1972.



Since 1992, both deer hunters and big game license sales have decreased while the deer herd has remained stable for the most part. Hunter success rates have steadily increased resulting in a current deer harvest between 450,000 and 500,000, a ten-fold increase since 1972 (Figure 2). This harvest has been sufficient to stabilize the statewide deer herd since the late 1980's. It has not caused a significant statewide decline. Recent record doe harvests of 300,000 may have initiated a slight decline, but this is not yet evident in the data.

Forested land decreased by 5% since 1972 (39,000 versus 37,000 square miles) (Figure 3). The decline has been primarily in northern Georgia due to urbanization. The Conservation Reserve Program and reductions in agricultural acreages have actually translated to gains in forested lands in parts of southern Georgia.

Figure 2. Georgia's Deer Harvest, Hunter Numbers, and Big Game License Sales Since 1972.

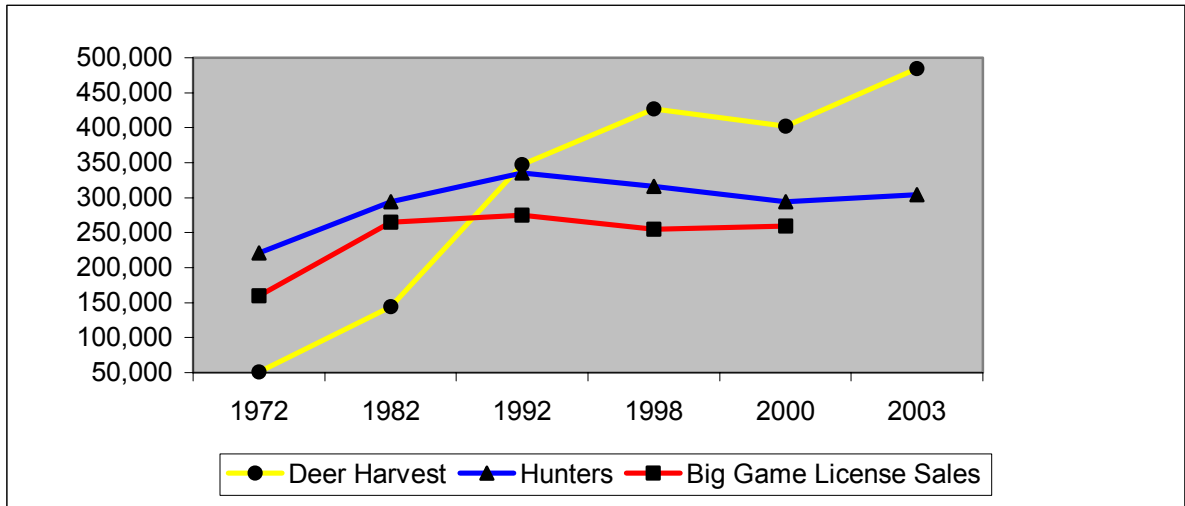
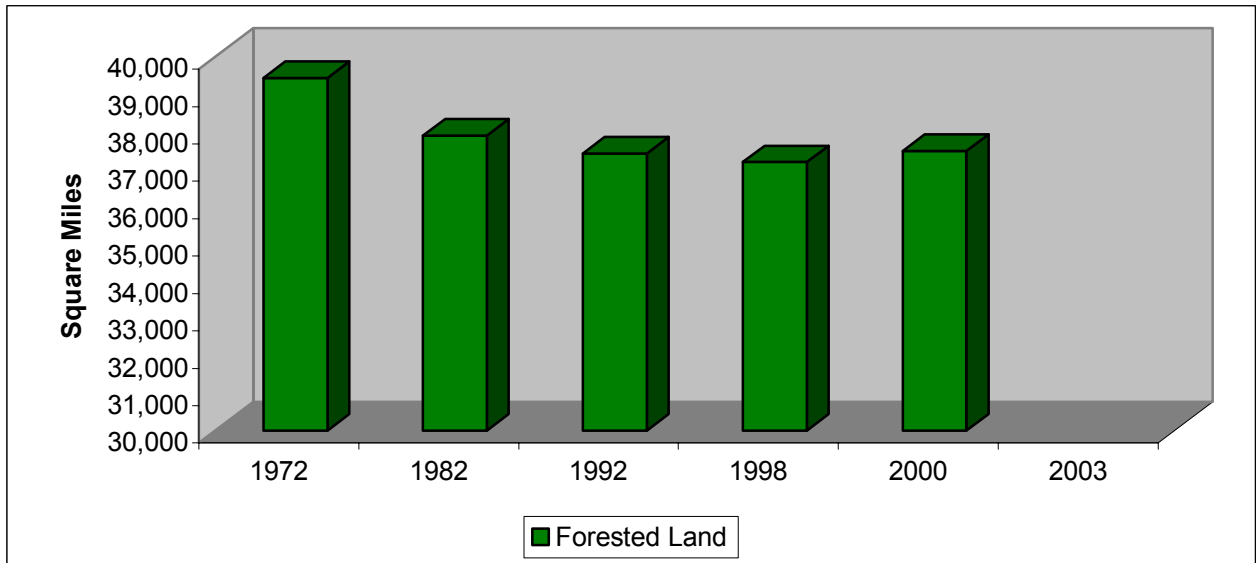


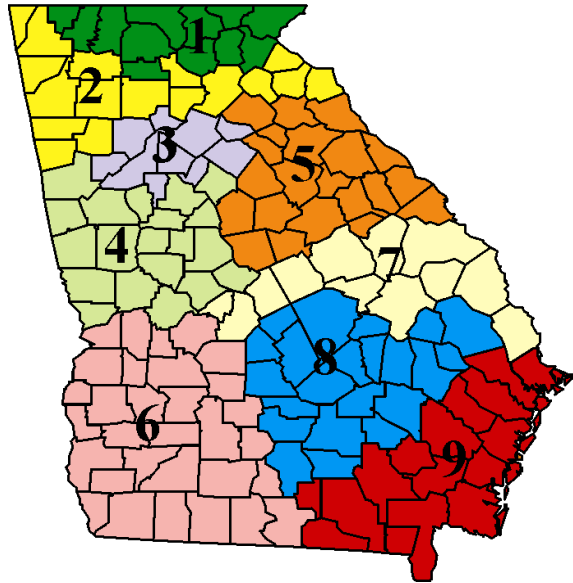
Figure 3. Georgia's Forested Land Since 1972.



II. Current Deer Herd Conditions

Following the 1987 deer-hunting season, WRD developed Deer Management Units (DMUs; Figure 4). Prior to this, hunting regulations, deer data analysis, and management decisions were based on administrative and geographic boundaries. The DMUs represented groups of counties with similar habitat and deer population characteristics. Parameters such as percent does in reported harvest, the number of either-sex hunting days, average antler diameter of 1.5 year-old bucks and population density estimates for all counties were examined and plotted on county outline maps. From these data, 13 initial DMUs were delineated. In 1995, boundaries were adjusted to reduce the total to 9 DMUs, which form the current county groupings. Management of nine units is supported by data from county cooler locker checks, hunt club harvest data, and by a telephone survey of Georgia hunters.

Figure 4. Georgia's deer management units.



III. Deer Population Parameters by DMU

Deer Management Unit 1 - DMU 1 includes Ridge and Valley and Upper Piedmont counties, which can sustain 30 deer per square mile of forested acreage and Blue Ridge Mountain counties, which can sustain 20. From 1995 to 2003 deer populations have fluctuated between 50,000 and 90,000 deer or an average deer density of 27 deer per square mile of forested acreage. Loss of habitat to suburban development is anticipated to reduce deer habitat in DMU 1 in the future.

Deer Management Unit 2 - DMU 2 includes Ridge and Valley and the Upper Piedmont counties. Forested land in this unit has the capacity to sustain populations of 30 deer per square mile of forested acreage. From 1995 to 2003 the deer population estimate ranged from 97,000 to 163,000 and averaged 35 deer per square mile of forested acreage.

Deer Management Unit 3 - Deer in DMU 3 (9 metro Atlanta counties) occur at lower densities than found in the surrounding piedmont. Loss of deer habitat has accelerated over the last 2 decades. Despite habitat loss, deer populations increased. From 1995 to 2003, the deer population ranged between 20,000 and 40,000 and averaged 29 deer per square mile of forested acreage.

Deer Management Unit 4 - DMU 4 includes 20 counties in the west central Piedmont and Upper Coastal Plain. These counties are heavily wooded with approximately 67.6% of the land forested. Suburban and commercial development have heavily influenced wildlife habitat in Bibb, Fayette, Henry and Troup counties. From 1995 to 2003, the deer population

ranged between 140,000 and 220,000 and averaged 40 deer per square mile of forested acreage.

This DMU's deer population has been stable throughout the 1990's. Current population densities are at levels that are acceptable to hunters. Many hunting clubs in the DMU are managing their lands according to the quality deer management philosophy. Four counties in the DMU (Harris, Meriwether, Talbot, and Troup) have mandatory antler restrictions in regulation.

Deer Management Unit 5 - DMU 5 is comprised of 20 counties in the east-central Piedmont. This area of the state has supported high deer densities and remains popular with hunters. High deer densities, changes in forested habitat, changes in agriculture, and urban development have altered habitat across this area. From 1995 to 2003, the deer population ranged between 174,000 and 270,000 and averaged 44 deer per square mile of forested acreage. Optimum deer density is 35 per square mile.

Deer Management Unit 6 - DMU 6 consists of 31 counties in the Upper Coastal Plain of southwest Georgia. Habitat within the DMU is diverse with a high percentage of agricultural land interspersed throughout forested habitat. The addition of either-sex hunting days and hunters' acceptance of taking antlerless deer have reduced deer densities in many counties. Quality deer management is popular in this DMU. Dooly, Macon and Randolph counties have mandatory antler restrictions in regulation. From 1995 to 2003, the deer population ranged between 95,000 and 200,000 and averaged 21 deer per square mile of forested acreage.

Deer Management Unit 7 - DMU 7, in east-central Georgia, is comprised of 13 counties in the Upper Coastal Plain. These counties have extensive agriculture and timberlands. The deer population has increased slightly during the past 5 years despite liberal either-sex hunting opportunities. From 1995 to 2003, the deer population ranged between 105,000 and 210,000 and averaged 36 deer per square mile of forested acreage.

Deer Management Unit 8 - DMU 8 in southeast Georgia is comprised of 12 upper and 10 Lower Coastal Plain counties bordering the Piedmont province. From 1995 to 2003, the deer population ranged between 120,000 and 180,000 and averaged 26 deer per square mile of forested acreage.

Deer Management Unit 9 - DMU 9 includes 15 Lower Coastal Plain counties of southeastern Georgia. Almost 63% of this DMU is forested. Deer densities across this DMU vary from 10-40 per square mile. From 1995 to 2003, the deer population ranged between 170,000 and 230,000 and averaged 39 deer per square mile of forested acreage.

IV. Statewide Statistics

Georgia's 2004 pre-hunt deer herd is currently estimated at slightly more than 1.2 million deer (Table 2). This is equivalent to more than 32 deer per square mile of forested acreage of forested habitat. The 2003-2004 harvest of 484,000 deer was composed of roughly 184,000 males and 300,000 females (62% does). Yearling bucks (1.5 years old) accounted for 42% of the antlered harvest. The current pre-hunt standing population is

composed of 400,000 fawns (assumed 1:1 female to male), 310,000 adult males and 500,000 adult females. The estimated adult sex ratio is 1.6 females for every male.

Table 2. Estimated total pre-hunt deer population (2004), estimated deer per square mile of forested acreage, deer harvest estimates (2003), and percent does in harvest (2003).

TOTAL POPULATION (2004)	DEER PER SQUARE MILE	2003 TOTAL HARVEST	2003 ANTLERED HARVEST	2003 ANTLERLESS HARVEST	2003 PERCENT YEARLING MALES	2003 PERCENT DOES	2004 PREHUNT POPULATION		
							ADULT MALE	ADULT FEMALE	FAWNS
1,200,500	32.4	484,000	118,000	366,000	42%	61.1%	310,000	500,000	400,000

The overall physical condition of the deer herd is good with isolated areas of deer in poor to fair condition. Antler development, while varying with annual environmental conditions, continues to be within long-term averages. No information is available on a statewide basis for deer weights. However, data from Georgia’s Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) indicate that weights by age class are stable and within long-term averages.

V. Social Carrying Capacity

Deer Crop Damage Permits - WRD began issuing deer crop damage permits to farmers suffering economic damage to commercial agriculture crops in 1977. This system provided relief to farmers experiencing deer damage. Permittees had to demonstrate damage on an initial investigation by WRD staff. They also agreed to stringent controls on the number of deer killed, selection of assistants, methods of take, notifying local law enforcement authorities, and the distribution of edible venison. Recent modifications better meet the needs of farmers, and address agency and public concerns. To collect information on the value and success of the program, a tri-annual survey of permit holders began in 1999. Statewide data of the most recent survey (2002) are presented in Table 3.

Across the state, eighty-three percent (83%) attempted to harvest deer under their crop damage permits in 2002. A majority allowed deer hunter access to their property. Slightly more than one-third reported that the use of alternative deterrent methods was effective. An average of 8.1 deer were killed per permit issued among those reporting killing deer. Total deer removal was reported to be 664 (10% sample), with a buck to doe ratio of approximately 1: 6.4. Permittees attempted to exercise use of the permit 24.3 days per year, using 2.6 people for an average of 2.2 hours per attempt.

Estimated crop damage ranged from the lowest in northwest Georgia (\$1,671.43) to the highest in the southwest (\$11,107.14). Statewide the average estimated damage reported was \$5,255.68 for a total of \$499,290.00. On the basis that the survey represents approximately 10% of the 977 individuals permitted across the state, extrapolation of this data suggests total statewide damage would exceed \$5 million. While the accuracy of these damage estimates cannot be verified, permittees perceive deer as causing significant economic damage. Permit holders also indicated the effectiveness of the crop damage permits as “Greatly Helps” (45.5%), “Helps Somewhat” (49.5%), and “Not Help at All” (5.1%). These responses suggest that deer control permits are an asset to these farmers.

Table 3. Statewide cumulative deer control permit survey sample results (N = number of responses per question of 100 surveyed).

Responses	N	Mean	\pmSE	Total
Attempted	100			83%
Effective Alternatives	100			36%
Hunting Access	100			85%
Effectiveness	100			
		Greatly Helps		45.5%
		Helps Somewhat		49.5%
		Not Help At All		5.1%
Total Deer	81	8.10	\pm 1.36	664
		Bucks	\pm 0.22	84
		Does	\pm 1.38	542
		Sex Unknown		38
Days Attempted	80	24.28	\pm 3.51	1942
Number of People	83	2.55	\pm 0.20	212
Hours/Attempt	82	2.21	\pm 0.16	181
Estimated Damage	95	\$5255.68	\pm \$768.88	\$499,290

Deer Vehicle Collisions in Georgia - Deer-vehicle collisions are increasing across the state of Georgia. As larger population centers like Atlanta, Augusta, Macon and Columbus grow, subdivisions and shopping centers occupy what once was deer habitat. Deer still occur in and near these developments. Deer-vehicle collisions are of high concern in developed areas because of the density of roads and vehicles. Likewise, in rural areas, commuter routes between residential developments and urban job centers have high rates of deer-vehicle collisions. This problem is further complicated because there often are constraints on hunting near these heavily traveled areas. Hunting is the major mechanism for managing deer herds across Georgia. The utility of hunting to manage deer herds in developed areas is limited by lack of hunter access.

Based on insurance company accident data, WRD estimates there are about 50,000 deer-vehicle collisions annually in Georgia. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety documented 9,609 deer-vehicle collisions with 708 injuries and 7 fatalities during 2002. Deer-vehicle collisions constitute about 13.5% of all collisions in Georgia and account for 0.5% of injuries and 0.5% of fatalities from accidents.

Figure 6. Counties with more than 150 deer-vehicle collisions reported to Georgia law enforcement agencies during 2002.

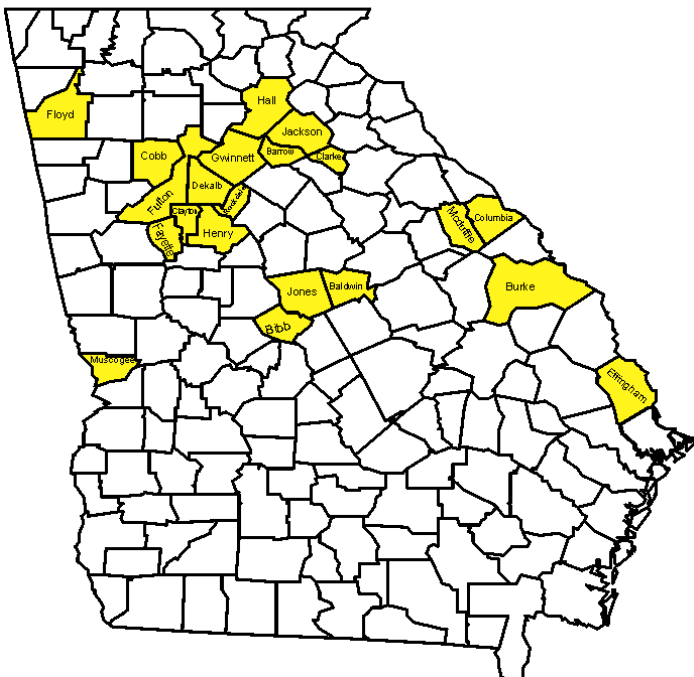
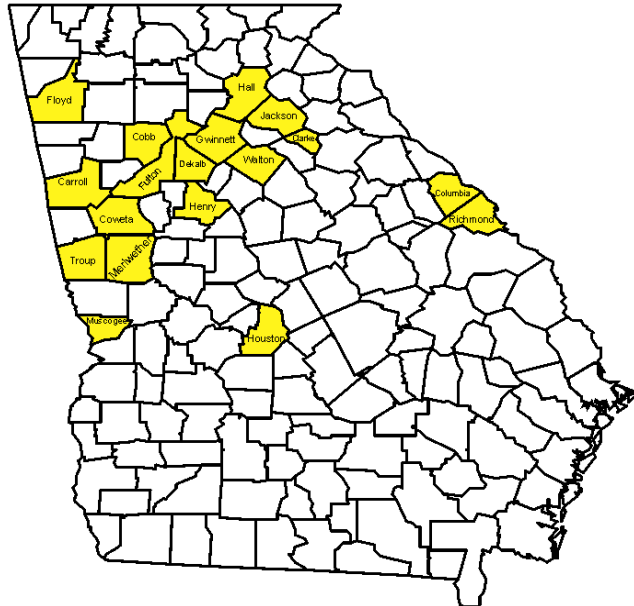


Figure 5. Counties with a deer-vehicle collision index greater than 1.0 for 2002. The average county index is 0.5 (based on insurance company data).



Collision data show areas of the state that are of special concern. Insurance company data indicate the worst areas for deer-vehicle collisions are in the northern half of the state (Figure 5). The counties shown in Figure 5 make up 11% of Georgia's counties but account for 34% of deer-vehicle insurance claims.

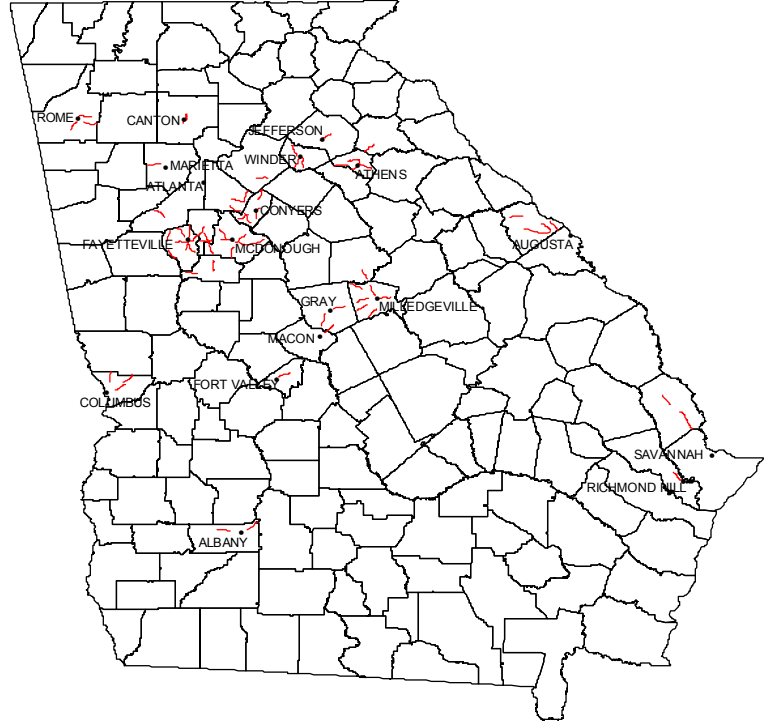
Deer-vehicle collisions reported by law enforcement agencies across Georgia provide another source for documenting the extent of the problem. Counties indicated in Figure 6 make up 13% of Georgia's counties and account

for 55% of deer-vehicle collisions reported to law enforcement agencies. Each of these counties contained at least 150 reported deer-vehicle collisions.

Accident reports provide road specific collision locations. Figure 7 shows the five-mile segments of Georgia State highways that had at least ten reported deer-vehicle collisions during 2002.

The frequency of deer-vehicle collisions is a function of deer density, deer behavior and biology, number and speed of vehicles, structure and type of roadside vegetation, road and shoulder width, and the timing of peak traffic. High volumes of traffic during periods of peak deer movement can result in frequent deer-vehicle collisions, even in areas of low deer densities. Figures 5-7 all show greater problems in areas of high human populations. Commuter routes that transect deer habitat between residential areas and urban work destinations are particularly important. Routes through rural areas between Milledgeville, Gray, and Macon (Figure 7) reveal where deer habitat and commuter traffic combine to create a deer-vehicle collision area of high concern.

Figure 7. Georgia state highway five mile road segments that experienced 10 or more deer-vehicle collisions during 2002.



Efficient methods for significantly reducing deer-vehicle collisions are not yet available. Reflectors and “deer whistles” have shown variable results at best. Deer can’t see red light, and they do not hear at frequencies supposedly produced by deer whistles. Fences high enough to exclude deer are expensive. Researchers at the University of Georgia and Berry College are working under contract with the GDOT to investigate techniques that might be used to minimize deer-vehicle collisions. The second phase of this research will test potential mitigation techniques. Hopefully, the results of this unique study will provide additional tools needed to minimize deer-vehicle collisions on Georgia’s roads.

VI. Public Perception/Human Dimensions

During June and July of 2004, Responsive Management, Inc. of Harrisonburg, VA conducted a telephone survey for WRD entitled “Opinions and Attitudes of Georgia Residents, Hunters, and Landowners Toward Deer Management in Georgia.” A random sample of Georgia residents, hunters, and landowners provided completed interviews with 403 individuals from the general population at least 18 years old, 418 licensed, resident hunters, and 212 Georgia landowners (≥ 100 acres owned).

Most Georgians (83%) enjoy seeing deer; however, 38% worry about problems deer cause. Only a small percentage of Georgians (7%) generally regards deer as a nuisance.

Individuals who suffered damage from deer were more likely to consider deer as a nuisance. Most Georgians (89%) think it is important that deer are properly managed in Georgia, and 77% agree that it is important that people have the opportunity to hunt deer. Respondents think the deer herd in Georgia is very or somewhat healthy (74% of the general population, 85% of hunters, and 79% of landowners).

Respondents, in general, think the deer population in their county has grown over the past five years. Majorities of the general population (51%) and hunters (59%) think the deer population in their county is about right. However, 31% of the general population, 28% of hunters, and 44% of landowners think the deer population in their county is overabundant.

Respondents place a high value on deer management. Majorities of the general population (89%), hunters (96%), and landowners (88%) said knowing that deer populations are being properly managed in Georgia was very important to them. Agreement was much higher (46%) than disagreement (26%) among the general population that deer are properly managed in Georgia. A high percentage of hunters (72%) and landowners (51%) agreed that deer are properly managed. A majority of deer hunters (71%) indicated they would support an increase in deer hunting license fees if they knew the money would be used for deer management. However, 85% of hunters oppose an increase in fees if the money would not be used for deer management.

There was strong support for controlling deer in urban and suburban areas (79% of the general population, 89% of hunters, and 86% of landowners). However, there was less agreement on the best way to achieve that control. Hunting, archery hunting only, and trap and relocation were most often selected as preferred control techniques. Generally, there was more support for some form of hunting as opposed to the use of sharpshooters and professionals for controlling deer in urban and suburban areas, parks, and other recreational areas.

Strong majorities of all three groups (82% of the general population, 99% of hunters, and 96% of landowners) support legal deer hunting in Georgia. A large majority (81%) of hunters are satisfied with the current deer season structure. However, more hunters support (61%) than oppose (28%) a longer deer hunting season with 77% support for extending the deer hunting season in the northern zone to match the southern zone.

Majorities of all groups said hunting white-tailed deer, and other large animals, inside fenced enclosures should be illegal. Majorities of the general population (59%) and landowners (54%), and just under a majority of hunters (49%) think it should be illegal to hunt deer using bait.

Among the general population and landowners, majorities said scientific information and professional judgment of WRD biologists should be very important in making deer management decisions. Among hunters, majorities said scientific information, professional judgment of WRD biologists, and the economic impact of hunting in Georgia should be very important. Complete survey results are provided in Appendix XII.

BASIC CONSERVATION ISSUES

I. Hunter Access

Two consistent themes received substantial public comment on the issue of hunter access. These included the need for a land acquisition program that provides deer hunting and the use of hunting access to address deer management concerns on state parks, municipal, and other publicly-owned lands. Other recurring themes included expanding opportunities for disabled and youth hunters, expanding feral hog hunting opportunities on WMAs, and open/closed gates as it relates to hunter access on WMAs and Forest Service lands.

Results from the Responsive Management Survey (RMS) indicated that a majority of deer hunters hunt primarily on private land (Appendix XII). However, a substantial number hunt at least some on WMAs. Work obligations and lack of access are the most common factors that have reduced the quality of deer hunting experiences.

Most landowners use their land primarily for farming and forestry. Landowners who allow deer hunting most commonly allow immediate family members to hunt, followed closely by friends and acquaintances. Most do not charge a fee for others to hunt. Legal liability was listed by a majority of landowners as a major concern when considering allowing hunting. About a third of landowners said they would likely allow more deer hunting if they did not have to worry about legal liability issues. Likewise, over one-third of landowners said they would likely allow more deer hunting if they could receive financial benefits. Of those landowners who do not allow deer hunting, nearly a quarter previously had allowed deer hunting. These landowners cited poor behavior of hunters, trespassing, crowding, and legal liability as reasons they stopped allowing hunting. Trespassing was the most common problem listed by those who had problems with hunters.

Subcommittee Comments:

The Mountain and Ridge and Valley (MRV) Subcommittee expressed the concern that hunter recruitment depends on access to both public and private lands. They felt that WMAs are under utilized for hunter recruitment efforts. Managed hunting should be allowed to address deer management issues on State Parks. Additionally, this subcommittee acknowledged the perception of hunting public areas being unsafe and suggested addressing this concern through education. The subcommittee felt that incentives should be developed for private landowners that encourage public hunting and that private lands should be open for small game hunting in February. Finally, they recognized the difficulty for the State to regulate incentives for hunting.

The Piedmont Subcommittee considered hunter access to be critical to wildlife management and to the recruitment and retention of hunters. The subcommittee generally felt that deer hunting should be encouraged but not to the exclusion of small game hunting. The group considered land acquisition to be a critical statewide need for wildlife conservation. Although numerous ideas (e.g. license fees, fines for wildlife violations, impact fees) for funding such a program were suggested, concerns over a permanent and dependable source that generated significant revenue were never fully reconciled. This subcommittee reverted to the idea of an increase in the real-estate transfer fee because everyone affects wildlife conservation, everyone is responsible for loss of greenspace, and everyone benefits from wildlife conservation and greenspace. Deer management is important

on parks, municipal properties and other areas traditionally closed to hunting. The group believes that deer hunting should be pursued on such properties and that hunting can also serve as a source of revenue for these areas. The subcommittee recognizes that perceived safety concerns are often a hindrance. Other ideas discussed included encouraging bow hunting on urban lands and establishing a program to encourage hunter access on private lands.

The Upper Coastal Plain (UCP) Subcommittee felt that incentives should be offered to landowners to encourage hunter access and public hunting. They suggested that more deer hunting opportunity be explored on WMAs and, in particular, that more opportunity for hunting deer with dogs be offered since only two WMAs currently provide this opportunity. Additionally, the group felt that WMA regulations could be relaxed to offer more feral hog hunting with archery equipment. Finally, the group discussed the need for more intensive habitat management on WMAs.

The Flatwoods/Lower Coastal Plain (FLCP) Subcommittee recognized the potential for losing current WMA acreages and expressed the need to explore avenues to protect public hunting lands. The group considered and discussed the need for a land acquisition program to purchase lands of high wildlife and ecological value and to protect at-risk WMAs. The subcommittee acknowledged a need for landowner incentives that encourage public hunting on private lands. The suggestion was made to follow the examples of conservation easements. Finally, the group agreed that WMAs offer a good mix of quantity and quality hunting opportunities.

Subcommittee Recommendations:

MRV Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- WRD offer more special WMA hunting opportunities (squirrel, women only, adult/child) to recruit hunters.
- DNR allow hunter access to state parks for better management of habitat and deer population control.
- WRD emphasize the safety of hunting public areas in the hunting regulations, news releases, brochures, and on the WRD and USFS website.
- WRD educate landowners with respect to liability concerns.

Piedmont Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- The General Assembly and WRD explore options to provide tax breaks to landowners who allow public hunting.
- WRD explore the Open Fields program and consider changes to the State's Farm Bill ranking criteria that provides additional points for public access hunting.
- WRD continue to consider concerns of access for small game hunters in establishing deer season dates.

- WRD and USFS open more gates to accommodate access for small game hunters.
- The State of Georgia establish and fund a permanent land acquisition program, and that deer management issues be addressed on all lands purchased.
- The State of Georgia fund a permanent land acquisition program with an increase in the real estate transfer tax.
- If the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) or CARA-Lite funds are acquired, funds should be applied to land acquisition where statutorily possible.
- DNR use hunting as a deer management tool on State Parks.

UPC Subcommittee recommended:

- Property or income tax breaks be given to landowners who allow public hunting on their land. (Consensus reached).
- WRD increase the number of days for deer hunting on WMAs where biologically feasible. (Consensus reached).
- WRD increase the number of WMAs where hunting deer with dogs hunting is allowed. (Six voted in favor of this recommendation with five opposed).
- WRD change regulations to allow archery hunting for feral hog on WMAs year round. (Consensus reached).
- WRD increase habitat management on WMAs, such as prescribed burning, food plots, etc., as funds and personnel are available. (Consensus reached).

FLCP Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- WRD secure and protect (purchase or long term leases) sites of current WMA lands.
- Development of a funding mechanism to acquire more lands (purchase/secure leases) with an increased focus on purchase. Further, lands to be purchased must have high value with regards to wildlife and ecological importance.
- Development of incentives (payment or tax breaks) for farmers and landowners to promote public hunting on private lands.

WRD Proposed Actions:

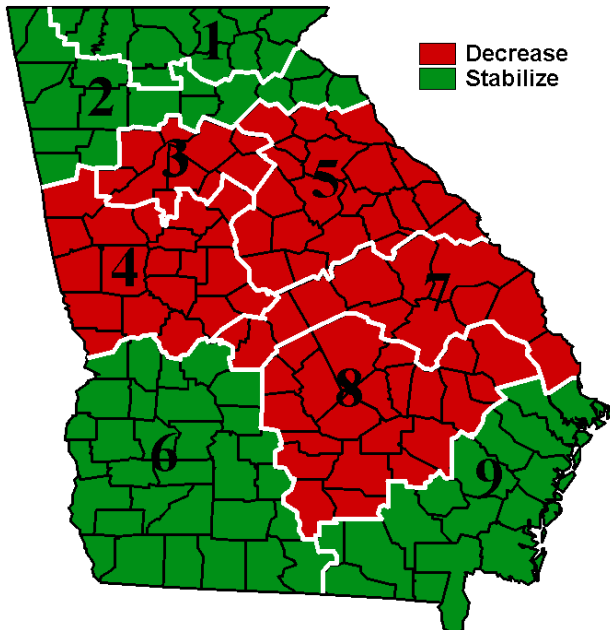
- Land acquisition is critical and deer management issues and recreational deer hunting will be addressed on acquired lands.
- Beginning in 2005-2006 deer hunting will be established on certain State Parks. Recreational deer hunting will be encouraged on all suitable State Parks. WRD will provide technical assistance.
- Pursue changes in Farm Bill ranking criteria that provide additional points for deer hunting access and additional options for tax breaks to landowners who allow deer hunting.
- In the annual seasons and regulations guides, publish information explaining the legal protections from liability for landowners allowing hunting.

II. Deer Density

With the exception of DMU 1 in the MRV region of the state, comments from public meetings and surveys show that deer densities in the state need to be reduced or maintained stable. Public meeting respondents promoted an increase in DMU 1. Stability was promoted for DMU's 2, 6, and 9 while reductions were promoted for DMU's 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8. Public comment indicated that responsibility for local overpopulation concerns was equally shared among State and local governments, landowners and hunters. Public comments supported the position that deer population objectives and management should be based on scientific data.

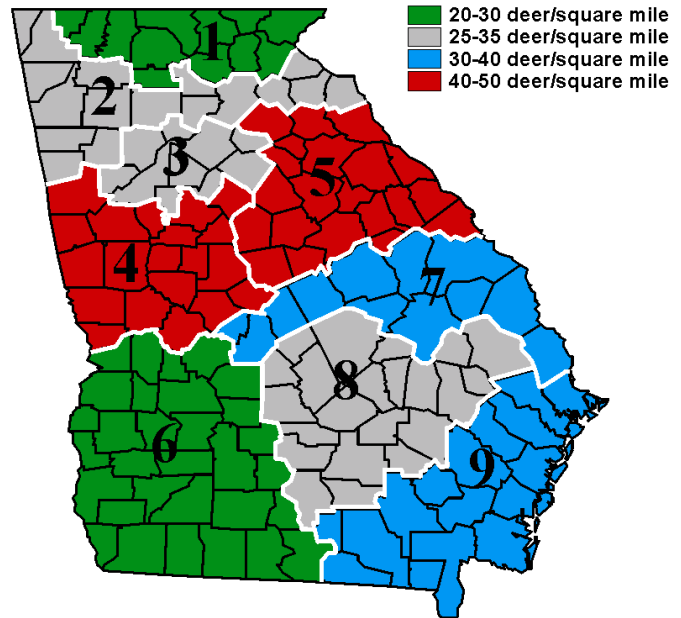
Current deer density estimates by DMU are represented in Figure 8. The desired trends for each DMU reflect public opinion, public comment, and consensus of the respective subcommittees (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Desired Deer Population Trends for Georgia DMU's Based on Public Opinion, Public Comment, and the Consensus of Deer Management Plan Subcommittees, 2004.



felt that the deer herd is too high and needs to be decreased. This subcommittee believed that adjustments in the deer population should be based on science. The FLCP Subcommittee felt that the herd is about right. Some participants had observed a slight upward trend, or that the population was abundant and patchy. The group suggested that the population goals should

Figure 8. Deer Density Estimates for Georgia DMUs, 2004.



When considering all stakeholders, statewide deer densities must simultaneously meet several, often conflicting, criteria. While many DMUs of the state have stable deer populations, there are isolated or localized areas within DMUs where deer populations are overabundant. Overabundant populations are often found in developed, urban and suburban areas where hunting is restricted or absent.

Subcommittee Comments:

The MRV Subcommittee felt that the deer population in the Mountain region should be allowed to increase, while the deer population in the Ridge & Valley and Upper Piedmont should be stabilized. Consensus of the Piedmont Subcommittee was the deer herd in the Piedmont needs to be decreased. The UCP Subcommittee

be more a function of habitat, land use, and herd health than sociology. Members said that they have faith in WRD to manage the population and felt clubs and landowners manage deer well.

Regarding responsibility for overpopulation in urban settings, FLCP Subcommittee members felt WRD is ultimately responsible. There was extensive discussion about the issue and consensus rested with nested authority. Even though WRD holds the ultimate responsibility, members felt that communities and municipalities hold some responsibility in addressing problems. The subcommittee felt that WRD should provide the mechanism by which nuisance situations can be addressed but that the funding and liability for the resolution should fall on municipalities/landowners/communities. Members also expressed an interest in WRD's recommendations for and about deer populations relative to damage and habitat impacts.

Subcommittee Recommendations:

MRV Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- Deer populations in DMU 1 be increased.
- Deer populations in DMU 2 be stabilized.

Piedmont Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached):

- WRD reduce deer density in the Piedmont to the densities recommended in WRD's "Georgia White-tailed Deer Management Plan 2000-2005."

UPC Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- Deer herd density in the UPC region of Georgia be reduced.
- Although the deer density in most areas of the state is too high, scientific data should be used to adjust harvest strategies in certain areas as needed and determined by the WRD.

FLCP Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- Framework changes and education, which would allow for management at smaller units.
- Decreasing the deer population because of Georgia's growth and development.

WRD Proposed Actions:

- Propose regulations promoting population reductions in DMUs 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8, and maintaining current population levels in DMUs 1, 2, 6, and 9.

III. Deer-Vehicle Collisions

The issue of deer-vehicle collisions in Georgia can be divided into two areas of concern. The first occurs in and around urban/suburban areas where road densities and numbers of vehicles increase the chances of deer-vehicle collisions. Even low deer densities can create traffic problems in areas where food attracts deer to roadsides or deer travel routes intersect busy highways. In many respects deer-vehicle collisions in urban areas are part of the overall urban deer management challenge.

The second area of concern occurs in rural portions of Georgia where high deer densities contribute to increased rates of deer-vehicle collisions. A good example of this situation occurs in Taliaferro County, which has a low human population and road density but consistently ranks as the county with the highest deer-vehicle collision rate in the state. Additionally, some high volume commuter routes through rural deer habitat experience large numbers of deer-vehicle collisions.

The public generally acknowledged deer as a road hazard and commonly indicated that too many deer is a contributing factor. Reducing deer numbers, particularly in urban areas, and educational efforts (e.g. brochures, driver training) were most often suggested as solutions.

About one-fourth to one-third of respondents, in the RMS, reported that they or someone from their household had a collision with a deer in the past two years. The majority of all respondents indicated that deer are a minor hazard rather than a major hazard. Careless and drunk drivers are considered much greater driving risks than deer.

Subcommittee Comments:

Members of the MRV Subcommittee acknowledged deer-vehicle collision concerns as evidenced by the public comment and RMS, media reports and expressed legislative concerns. The group feels that litigation could become a future concern. Additionally, the subcommittee regarded this topic as primarily an urban issue. Members recognized educational efforts as a potential solution.

The Piedmont Subcommittee felt that recommendations that serve to reduce the deer density provided under the issues of Deer Density, Controlling Urban & Nuisance Deer, and Hunting & Wildlife Management Techniques could address the deer-vehicle concerns.

Subcommittee Recommendations:

All Deer Management Plan subcommittees recognized the concerns deer-vehicle collisions present and recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- WRD work with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to minimize the establishment of forages attractive to deer on roadsides.
- WRD incorporate deer-vehicle collision avoidance into driver education. Produce educational flyers that would be distributed at vehicle registration renewals.
- WRD produce video on avoiding deer-vehicle collisions for new drivers.
- WRD identify locations of high collisions and address issues such as land use and hunting access that might reduce collisions at those locations.

- WRD develop public service announcements for high deer-vehicle collision areas.
- WRD continue to support research on deer-vehicle collision deterrents and avoidance techniques and make sound recommendations to GDOT.

WRD Proposed Actions:

- Develop educational items to reduce deer-vehicle collisions that include:
 - 1) Brochure for state and local governments, and landowners with a list of forages attractive to deer that should be avoided along highway rights-of-way. Include a list of alternative plantings that are less desirable for deer.
 - 2) Brochure on avoiding deer-vehicle collisions for distribution at county offices.
 - 3) Driver education video on avoiding collisions with deer for driver education classes.
 - 4) Public service announcements for identified deer-vehicle collision problem areas.
- Monitor road segments with high incidence of deer-vehicle collisions and identify physical characteristics that can be modified to minimize deer-vehicle collisions.
- Implement deer management plans for large tracts of deer habitat, public and private, in close proximity to problem roads.
- Work in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and university researchers to identify mitigation techniques for reducing deer-vehicle collisions.

IV. Public/Private Ownership

The North American model of wildlife conservation is regarded as the world's most successful conservation system. Evidence of this successful model includes restoration of multiple big game species, recovery of several endangered species, and maintenance of large carnivore populations (e.g. bears, cougars, etc.). The core tenet of this successful model is that wildlife belongs not to individuals, but to the people of the state and that management of this public resource is entrusted to state wildlife management agencies for the benefit of all people. Issues regarding private property rights have presently expanded into the realm of wildlife ownership through high fencing confinement of deer for private or commercial use resulting in a *de facto* reduction of a public resource to private ownership.

Summarizing the public comments, provided from all sources, reveals that the public is opposed to privatization of wildlife. In fact, no comments were received in support of privatization. Public comment was overwhelmingly in opposition to hunting white-tailed and exotic deer inside of high fences. Further, public comment was in opposition to importation of deer and to deer farming.

Results from the RMS further indicate that the general population and hunters are overwhelmingly opposed to high-fenced hunting of white-tailed deer and a majority of

landowners are opposed. A majority of all groups said hunting white-tailed deer and other large animals inside fenced enclosures should be illegal. When a condition is placed on the question about allowing fenced hunting of white-tailed deer (i.e. would the respondent support it if it would generate economic activity for rural Georgia) there was still much more opposition than support. The results regarding fenced hunting of non-native, exotic deer were similar. An overwhelming majority of the general population and a majority of landowners and hunters think it should be illegal to hunt non-native exotic deer in a fenced enclosure. When a condition is placed on the question about fenced hunting of non-native, exotic deer—would the respondent support it if it would generate economic activity for rural Georgia—there is still much more opposition than support.

Subcommittee Comments:

The MRV Subcommittee expressed concerns related to Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), brucellosis and tuberculosis being introduced into Georgia as a result of high fencing and the associated privatization and commercialization. The group questioned whether or not the activity of high fencing is legal considering the basis of public ownership of wildlife. Members also voiced concerns regarding the issue of fair chase inside high fences and acknowledged the resultant ramifications to public acceptance of hunting.

The Piedmont Subcommittee felt that the activity of hunting deer held under high fences cast hunting, and hunters, in a negative light resulting in an undesirable public perception. The group recognized that management of deer under high fence could have both negative and positive impacts. Members acknowledged the threat of wildlife disease issues associated with management of deer behind high fences. The subcommittee specifically expressed concern regarding the association of CWD transmission with deer exchange among high fence operations.

Members of the UCP and FLCP Subcommittees felt that the laws and regulations pertaining to high fences should not be relaxed and were opposed to both activities.

Subcommittee Recommendations:

MRV Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- WRD continue to prohibit private ownership of wildlife.
- WRD maintain opposition on hunting deer inside fenced enclosures.

Piedmont Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- The General Assembly, with WRD, pursue a law change that prohibits the confinement of native white-tailed deer while grandfathering existing facilities.
- The General Assembly with WRD continues to support the existing law prohibiting the hunting of exotic wild animals and farmed deer within enclosures.

Upper Coastal Plain Subcommittee recommended:

- WRD keep existing laws and regulations concerning the hunting of exotic wildlife and white-tailed deer in fenced enclosures in place (Ten voted in favor of this recommendation with 1 opposed).

FLCP Subcommittee (Consensus reached on the recommendation):

- WRD should prohibit hunting inside of enclosures.

WRD Proposed Actions:

- Propose a regulation change that prohibits the confinement of white-tailed deer on acreages less than 640 acres, requires a deer management plan approved by WRD to confine deer on acreages equal to or greater than 640, and allows anyone confining live white-tailed deer in an enclosure less than 640 acres prior to the adoption of this rule to continue to confine these animals and their offspring.
- Continue to oppose the hunting of exotic deer confined by fences.

V. Urban & Nuisance Deer Management

One of the greatest deer management challenges is control of deer populations in urban and suburban areas. As Georgia's human population increases, more rural deer habitat is converted to subdivisions, industrial parks, and shopping malls. Deer adjust to these changes and often do quite well in areas of remaining habitat in and between developments.

Over most of rural Georgia, regulated hunting is used to control the deer herd. Modern firearms deer hunting accounted for 83% of Georgia's 484,000 deer harvested during the 2003-2004 hunting season. In developing areas of the state, large tracts of land become subdivided, hunter access becomes more restricted, and firearms ordinances limit the effectiveness of hunting to manage deer herds. In effect, hunters have been removed from the landscape. Added to this effect is the general interest in maintaining greenspace in and around urban areas. Greenspace provides additional habitat for deer and other wildlife and also increases the need for deer management.

Most people recognize urban deer management concerns and overwhelmingly support managing urban deer populations. Although there were more comments in support of using regulated hunting as a tool to manage urban deer herds, there was also substantial support for using fertility control. A majority of public comment was in opposition to sharpshooting and there was equal opposition and support for trapping/relocation. There was also some support for permitted removal of deer.

When asked during the RMS if they support or oppose controlling deer in urban and suburban areas, large majorities of all three groups supported doing so (79% of the general population, 89% of hunters, and 86% of landowners). Regarding the use of regulated archery hunting to control deer in urban and suburban environments, 55% of the general population supported this technique and 34% opposed it. On the issue of using regulated hunting in parks and other recreational lands traditionally closed to hunting, 51% supported this technique, and 38% opposed it. The use of professional sharpshooters to control deer in urban and suburban environments was supported by 40% of the general population and opposed by 50%. Birth control and trap/relocation techniques are suggested by some of the

public as alternatives. The majority of wildlife professionals do not consider these techniques effective or practical.

Subcommittee Comments:

The MRV Subcommittee acknowledged concerns (i.e. landscape damage) relating to the urban deer management issue and mentioned specific locales (Chateau Elan, Big Canoe, Big Tree, Sweetwater Creek State Park, and the Chattahoochee River Recreation Area). The group believed that archery hunting could offer an effective and acceptable solution toward addressing this issue.

Members of the Piedmont Subcommittee felt that hunter access is key to resolving this issue. Deer management is important and critical on urban lands including parks, municipal properties and other areas traditionally closed to hunting. The group believed that deer hunting should be pursued on such properties and that hunting can also serve as a source of revenue for these areas. Opportunities that place hunters back on the landscape should be encouraged. It was also expressed by the subcommittee that where hunting is determined to not be appropriate, the USDA Wildlife Services program is adequately meeting deer reduction needs.

The FLCP Subcommittee felt that education of the public is important. WRD should be proactive and develop a process, which includes public input, for education, evaluation, funding and control options. The group further believed that in situations where deer damage is occurring on governmental lands that have not traditionally been hunted, archery hunting, holds promise to address the problem. Education, outreach, and public involvement are important components of a solution. The subcommittee determined that removal of deer by non-governmental personnel should be left unchanged, i.e. WRD or USDA-Wildlife Services personnel should handle this type of work when it is not covered by current crop damage or nuisance wildlife policies.

Subcommittee Recommendations:

MRV Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- WRD investigate the use of highly regulated private sharpshooter groups as a method of deer control provided that sharpshooting be used only when regulated hunting will not work.
- WRD should investigate options for providing deer removal for a fee.

Piedmont Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- WRD limit permitted non-WRD personnel for deer removal to those currently approved.
- WRD extend season by special permit to allow urban deer control by bowhunters.

UPC Subcommittee: No recommendations on this issue.

FLCP Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- WRD develop a public input process that includes and considers education, evaluation, funding and control options to address urban/nuisance deer conflicts.
- WRD address deer management on governmental lands that have not traditionally been hunted.
- WRD maintain current regulations and policies pertaining to permitted removal of deer by non-governmental personnel.

Proposed WRD Actions:

- Encourage agencies with management responsibilities for public lands to allow deer hunting.
- Initiate a public planning process to facilitate gaining hunter access to private urban and suburban wildlife habitat.
- Extend archery deer hunting season to January 15 in archery-only counties.
- Provide technical assistance for deer management plans and strategies for State Parks.
- Change crop damage policy to allow assistants to serve on more than two permits.
- Maintain current system for lethal removal of deer in developed areas (i.e. airport authority employees may be permitted for lethal removal from airports, and WRD and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-Wildlife Services professionals may lethally remove deer from developed areas when it is consistent with sound principles of wildlife management).

ISSUES OF METHODS

I. Hunting Deer with Dogs

The season for hunting deer with dogs runs concurrent with the Southern Zone firearms deer hunting season in 33 counties. Another eight counties have a season that runs from either Thanksgiving or the first Saturday in December, through the end of the deer firearms season.

Trespassing, hunting from public roads, and discourteous behavior are historically reported problems. The most common complaint involves dogs running off of dog clubs onto the lands of another.

In 2003, O.C.G.A. §27-3-17 was amended to provide for DNR to issue permits to landowners and lessees prior to hunting deer with dogs; require the permit to be specific to a piece of property; restrict permittable properties to lands of at least 1,000 contiguous acres; require that all dogs and hunting vehicles be marked with the permit number at all times during the hunt; establish a permit fee; and provide a procedure for revoking permits. As authorized in OCGA 27-3-17, the DNR promulgated rules (391-4-2-.17) to provide for definitions, application procedures, guidelines for hunting deer with dogs on permitted tracts, and conditions for revocation and denial of permits.

From the public meetings, a total of 16 participants indicated that they supported hunting deer with dogs with an additional six comments being made relative to the desire of the participants to see increased opportunities for hunting deer with dogs. Seven participants commented that they opposed hunting deer with dogs. Seven participants were opposed and 13 supported the recently passed law (O.C.G.A. §27-3-17). Two participants supported the permit system but indicated that they would support modification of permit parameters. One comment supported inclusion of smaller tract sizes and one comment supported increasing the minimum acreage of eligible lands. A total of nine comments were received relative to increased WRD enforcement, scrutiny, and fines relating to violations of the permit system for hunting deer with dogs.

Results from the RMS revealed that the majority of the general public (58%), hunters (51%), and landowners (62%) oppose hunting deer with dogs. The primary reason given for this opposition was because dog hunting for deer is not perceived as fair chase. Other reasons for opposition included it was inhumane to deer, inhumane to dogs, and increased the chance for trespass. Those that supported hunting deer with dogs offered two main reasons: it increases a hunter's chance of harvest and tradition.

Of the 22% of southern zone hunters who had hunted deer with dogs at some time, only 14% had hunted deer with dogs in the past 12 months.

Among landowners, 6% and 5% had experienced problems with hunters who hunted deer with dogs illegally and legally, respectively. Trespassing was by far the greatest problem among landowners that experienced problems with hunters who hunted deer with dogs legally (73%).

Subcommittee Comments:

Subcommittees supported O.C.G.A. §27-3-17 as implemented in 2003. There were several recommendations regarding modification of the law as it relates to minimum acreages and permit number identification on vehicles and dogs.

Subcommittee Recommendations:

MRV Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached):

- WRD enforce current law.

Piedmont Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached):

- WRD maintain current law and permitting process.

UPC Subcommittee recommended:

- WRD remove the decal requirement for vehicles for dog hunting clubs. (Consensus reached).
- WRD remove the dog identification requirements for dog hunting clubs. (Ten in favor; 1 opposed).
- WRD swap the first week of the season for hunting deer with dogs with the last week of deer season. (Consensus reached).

FLCP Subcommittee recommended (Consensus was not reached on any recommendations; Tables 4 & 5 represent the vote breakdown):

- Reduce minimum acreage for landowners hunting on their own property to 250 contiguous acres and continue with leased property minimum acreage of 1000 contiguous acres.
- Require no minimum acreage on private lands and a minimum of 500 contiguous acres on leased property.
- Remove requirement for displaying permit number in vehicle.
- Remove requirement for displaying permit number in vehicle and on dog, but require hunter name, address, and phone number on dog.

Table 4. Representation of the FLCP Subcommittee vote on recommendations pertaining to acreage requirements for permits for hunting deer with dogs.

Private Land	No Change	250 Min. Acreage	No Min. Acreage
		1	8
Leased Land	No Change	500 Min. Acreage	
		9	1

Table 5. Representation of FLCP Subcommittee vote on recommendations pertaining to no change in current law (leave as is) and removing permit number from vehicles and dogs.

No Change	Permit # Off Vehicle		Permit # Off Dog	
	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
3	5	0	3	2

Proposed WRD Actions:

- Pursue a law change to:
 - 1) Allow permits for hunting deer with dogs to be issued to private landowners with a minimum of 250 contiguous acres.
 - 2) Remove the requirement for vehicles to be marked with the permit number.
 - 3) Eliminate the permit fee.
- Maintain the current minimum acreage requirement of 1,000 contiguous acres for leased lands.
- Maintain the requirement under the current permit system for dogs to be tagged with the permit number.
- Extend deer-dog season to run concurrent with the proposed extension of the Southern Zone firearms deer season (i.e. January 15).

II. Hunting Seasons & Bag Limits

Public comments identified numerous issues relative to Georgia's deer hunting seasons and bag limits. Opinions were mixed on the issue of deer hunting season length. Several hunters suggested eliminating the north-south deer hunting zones. Some hunters suggested that the current deer-hunting season is too long limiting opportunity for other user groups, such as small game hunters. Some specifically mentioned reinstating the "December break" to address this concern. There was strong support for some type of season extension and comments in support of the current deer-hunting season. An extended hunting season was especially popular in Southwest Georgia in counties where many hunters hold the opinion that the rut occurs after the current season closes.

Opinions on deer bag limits also were mixed. There was significant support to increase bag limits for bucks and does. However, there also was strong support for maintaining current bag limits. Among those who indicated a desire to increase the doe bag limit, some suggested allowing one doe per day, requiring the harvest of one or more does prior to allowing the harvest of a buck, or altogether removing the doe bag limit.

Antler restrictions were an issue for many of the public. At public meetings, support for antler restrictions outweighed opposition. Some participants also suggested that buck fawns be protected. There was some desire expressed among hunters for additional flexibility in harvesting animals perceived to be genetically inferior or "cull bucks". Many who opposed antler restrictions expressed concerns that these regulations reduce opportunity and harvest success for youth.

RMS respondents valued scientific information and professional judgment of biological staff over social and political concerns in making deer management decisions. RMS data indicated that hunters overwhelmingly support harvest of either-sex deer at any time during the hunting season. The proposal of requiring hunters to harvest at least one doe prior to harvesting a buck was not supported by most hunters.

Subcommittee Comments:

The MRV Subcommittee expressed the need to harvest more antlerless deer to control deer populations. Discussions centered on facilitating increased deer harvest with the acknowledgement that changing bag limits might have little effect on deer harvest. Allowing hunters to harvest one doe per day, selling doe tags to individual landowners, and allowing local governments to control antlerless deer harvest were suggested. Members recognized that in some parts of these regions, habitat is poor and in need of improvement; therefore, region-wide hunting regulations may not work well.

The Piedmont Subcommittee supported current hunting seasons and bag limits, and felt that proposed changes should be based on sound, biological information. This group was skeptical that changes to seasons and bag limits would result in an increase in deer harvest. They recognized that certain landowners might need flexibility in harvesting antlerless deer but felt that WRD should maintain authority over deer harvests. Special permits for bowhunters after the regular season was suggested to improve urban deer control. There also were discussions about potential conflicts between deer hunting and small game hunting opportunity. Deer hunting negatively impacts small game hunting opportunity and could negatively impact hunter retention and recruitment.

Discussions in the UCP Subcommittee centered on extending the deer hunting season later into January, increasing doe harvest in the region, and offering flexibility to landowners to better control deer populations.

Members of the FLCP Subcommittee expressed concern that the current hunting seasons and bag limits are too liberal and limit other hunting opportunities. The value of “gaps” between managed deer hunts on public lands to small game hunting opportunity was acknowledged. The idea of re-establishing a split deer-hunting season to increase small game hunting opportunity was discussed. In addition, there were discussions about ways to increase antlerless deer harvest and extending the deer season into January. Five out of 11 members supported the idea of extending the deer season through the end of the January. Opening the season later and extending it to January 24th was supported by four of 11 members.

Subcommittee Recommendations:

MRV Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- WRD set earlier doe days in DMU 2.
- WRD sell tags to target doe harvests to specific areas within DMU 2.
- WRD maintain conservative doe harvest in DMU 1.
- WRD provide flexibility for hunters by implementing earlier doe days, offering more doe days, or sell tags to target doe harvest to specific areas in DMU 1.
- WRD maintain existing buck limits.

Piedmont Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- WRD maintain the current seasons and bag limits.
- WRD sell permits for doe harvests on private lands and develop guidelines for a program providing flexibility for private landowners in management of harvests and populations.

UPC Subcommittee recommended:

- WRD maintain the existing buck limit (2 antlered buck limit with 1 having a minimum of four 1" points on one side). (Consensus reached).
- WRD shift the deer-hunting season in southwest Georgia counties to end January 31st. (Seven voted in favor with others voting on different scenarios).

FLCP Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- WRD leave the deer hunting season unchanged and allow WRD's biological staff to determine bag limits.
- WRD provide a method (e.g. additional doe tags, no limit on does) for landowners trying to manage their herd through additional doe harvests. This special management agreement would be between the landowner and WRD and would be in response to a biologically reasonable goal identified for a specific property. (Consensus reached).

Proposed WRD Actions:

- Extend the firearms deer hunting season by regulation in the southern deer zone to January 15.
- Increase antlerless bag limit when and where needed to meet management objectives. Bag limit increase will require law and/or regulation changes. These changes will not be passed until there is public support for them.
- Propose an increase in the number of either-sex days and provide these days earlier in the hunting season for Deer Management Unit (DMU) 2.
- Maintain conservative doe harvest in DMU 1.
- Maintain existing buck bag limits and current antler restrictions statewide.
- Increase educational efforts informing the public and hunters about the importance of antlerless deer harvest in controlling deer populations.

III. WRD Policies

Law Enforcement Issues – Improved public relations on the part of the Law Enforcement Section (LE) was suggested at public and subcommittee meetings. Participants expressed concern over inconsistencies in the penalties for violations of laws and regulations. General consensus was that current penalties are insufficient.

Wildlife Diseases - Concern over introduction of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and other diseases through importation of cervids remains high. Current state regulations ban importation of deer.

Rehabilitation of White-tailed Deer – The Piedmont Subcommittee identified problems associated with the rehabilitation of white-tailed deer. These included rehabilitated deer becoming too tame and some rehabilitators marking animals as “pets”. Both practices discourage hunters from harvesting these animals and contribute to human conflicts with deer.

Hunters for the Hungry Program - Hunters for the Hungry (HFTH) is a cooperative effort between WRD, the Georgia Department of Agriculture, the Georgia Department of Corrections, the Georgia Outdoor Network and the Georgia Wildlife Federation that provides a means for hunters to donate venison to local food banks. Concerns were raised at public and subcommittee meetings over an insufficient number of donation sites, an inadequate donation period, and an insufficient number of cooperating deer-processors to meet demand. Currently, hunters may donate harvested deer at any of 10 collection sites during November.

Fees for Non-consumptive Users on WMAs - Participation in non-consumptive recreational activities on WMAs, such as bird watching and hiking, has increased significantly in recent years. WRD does not charge access fees or require purchase of WMA licenses to these users.

Non-resident License Fees - A non-resident big game and hunting license, combined, currently cost \$177 dollars in Georgia. Comparable license fees in South Carolina and Alabama total \$225 and \$250, respectively. Public input demonstrated strong support for an increase in non-resident hunting license fees to an amount comparable to these states.

Subcommittee Comments:

The MRV Subcommittee believed that HFTH could encourage deer hunters to shoot more deer. However, HFTH needs more convenient donation sites. Members expressed concerns over littering problems and the need for greater litter enforcement. Some members also felt that some WRD law enforcement personnel convey a guilty until proven innocent attitude.

The Piedmont Subcommittee briefly discussed numerous topics under this issue. Topics of trespass, inadequate and inconsistent penalties for wildlife violations, role of the HFTH program as an incentive to achieve harvest goals, and rehabilitation of white-tailed deer were the focus. The group believed that current penalties for violation of game and fish laws and regulations are inadequate and that adjudication is too lenient, lacks standardization and is inconsistent among jurisdictions. Discussions on this topic included making some violations felonies (e.g. trespass) and standardizing fines and penalties across the state.

Members considered the HFTH and other deer-donation programs to be important in management of deer density. Distribution and availability of the program to hunters was an obstacle. There was diverse discussion on how this problem could be solved. The group agreed that more locations were needed and the time period for donations needed to be

extended. Beginning in 2004, one processor will charge an extra dollar for each deer processed. These funds will be used to cover expenses incurred in processing and packaging donated deer into ground venison for a local food bank. The subcommittee also discussed rehabilitation of white-tailed deer. The group questioned whether WRD should allow deer to be rehabilitated considering the deer density issues and other concerns. The group felt WRD should not allow licensed rehabilitators to accept white-tailed deer for rehabilitation.

The majority of FLCP Subcommittee members supported the idea of higher fines and increased penalties, along with uniform fines across the state, for hunters who violate laws and regulations pertaining to hunting and land access issues.

Subcommittee Recommendations:

MRV Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- WRD make HFTH more convenient and better coordinated with similar programs.
- Law Enforcement Section should adopt a policy to be more user friendly. Responsive enforcement still needed for trespass and litter; but officers should not assume guilt.

Piedmont Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- DNR's Commissioner exercise the authority to revoke hunting privileges more frequently on habitual trespassers and violators of game and fish laws and regulations.
- The General Assembly and WRD pursue a law change for trespassing that sets a minimum fine of \$5,000 for multiple trespass violations on one property.
- WRD mail invitations from Bill Hillsman to other deer processors to join him in charging \$1 extra per deer. Apply proceeds to accepting donated deer and processing these deer for \$1 per pound and providing ground venison to local food banks.
- WRD coordinate a statewide permanent program for placing hunter-harvested deer with needy families.
- WRD investigate tax incentives for hunters and processors to donate deer and processing to food banks.
- WRD prohibit the tagging of rehabilitated deer.
- WRD establish guidelines that limit public access to rehabilitated deer.
- WRD develop rehabilitation guidelines for deer that prevents production of tame deer.

UPC Subcommittee recommended: No recommendations.

FLCP Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- WRD promote and facilitate localized HFTH events in an effort to increase that program.
- WRD and Department of Agriculture maintain the ban against importation of cervids.

Proposed WRD Actions:

- Continue banning the importation of cervids and monitoring associated wildlife diseases.
- Review deer rehabilitation guidelines and facilities, and implement changes to avoid releasing deer that are habituated to people.
- Encourage deer-processors and/or volunteers to participate in venison donation programs.
- Seek an increase in non-resident hunting license fees and charge non-consumptive users on WMAs.

IV. Supplemental Feeding & Baiting

Supplemental feeding and baiting (the hunting of deer in the immediate vicinity of where feed has been placed) are issues of interest and concern for hunters and wildlife resource managers. Georgia allows unregulated supplemental feeding for deer, but limits the proximity in which a hunter can hunt around a baited area. The current law (O.C.G.A. 27-3-9) states that bait or feed must be a minimum of 200 yards from the hunter and out of direct line of sight.

Input from public meetings showed that most hunters support supplemental feeding, but views on baiting are divided. The majority of attendees at the Jesup and Albany meetings commenting on the baiting issue were in favor of legalizing baiting. The majority of attendees who commented on the baiting issue at the more northerly public meetings were opposed to legalizing baiting.

The RMS showed a majority of the general population (59%) and landowners (54%) think it should be illegal to hunt deer using bait. Forty-nine percent (49%) of hunters surveyed think baiting deer should be illegal; forty-five percent (45%) of hunters think it should be legal.

Subcommittee Comments:

The MRV Subcommittee expressed varied concerns over legalizing hunting deer over bait including public perception and disease issues. However, the group generally believed that baiting should be a tool reserved for special circumstances (e.g. controlling urban deer herds and feral hogs).

Members of the Piedmont Subcommittee felt that legalizing hunting over bait would be negative for hunters and hunting in Georgia. The group noted scientific research and data

from South Carolina and other states indicate that legalized baiting will not be effective at helping to reduce the deer herd. They also believed that Georgia is currently a hunter-friendly state, but legalizing an activity that is opposed by a majority of people would tarnish the image of hunters. Perhaps baiting would change the positive perception of hunting. Some members also expressed concern over diseases and social issues such as defensive baiting (i.e. not wanting to do it, but having to bait to compete with neighbors for deer) and ethical concerns. The subcommittee commented on the need to disseminate factual information about this issue and for WRD to provide a clear position on baiting and supplemental feeding.

Subcommittee Recommendations:

MRV Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- WRD allow hunting hogs over bait except during hunting seasons.
- Hunting deer over bait remain illegal.

Piedmont Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- The State of Georgia keep hunting deer over bait illegal.
- The General Assembly and WRD continue to honor the current law, which recognized compromises made in 2002 when the law was changed (reducing the distance from 300 yards to 200 yards and maintaining out of line of sight restriction).

UPC Subcommittee recommended:

- WRD establish a system whereby year-round supplemental feeding programs may be established and registered for a fee. Minimum criteria for feed quality would be determined and hunters may hunt in the area around registered feeding sites. (Six favored; 5 opposed).
- WRD keep the hunting of feral hogs over bait illegal. (9 favored; 2 opposed).

FLCP Subcommittee recommended:

- WRD provide education and guidance for the use of supplemental feed such as proper use and feed quality. (Consensus reached).
- WRD keep hunting over bait illegal. (9 favored; 2 opposed).

Proposed WRD Actions:

- Develop an educational brochure on the use and impacts of food plots, supplemental feeding, and baiting in wildlife management.
- Maintain the current laws regarding hunting of deer and other wildlife over bait.

V. Hunting & Wildlife Management Techniques

Input from the public meetings, while diverse, focused on three issues. These were legalizing the use of scopes on muzzleloaders during the primitive weapons deer season, increasing opportunity to control feral hogs, and providing flexibility for predator control. There was greater support, than opposition, for legalizing scopes on muzzleloaders during the primitive weapons deer season. With respect to feral hog control, comments demonstrated concern over the damage caused by feral hogs, trapping and relocating feral hogs, and hunting opportunity on public lands. Concerns over predator control focused on coyotes and their impact on deer and wild turkey.

Data from the RMS indicated overwhelming support among hunters (76%) for legalizing scopes on muzzleloaders during the primitive weapons season. Only 18% were opposed. Additionally, a majority of landowners (59%) and the general population (52%) supported legalizing the use of scopes during the primitive weapons deer season.

Subcommittee Comments:

The MRV Subcommittee generally felt that allowing scopes on muzzleloaders is no longer an issue. Some concern was expressed regarding the potential of muzzleloader season infringing on archery season. Members were concerned over the impact of coyotes on turkey and deer.

Generally, the Piedmont Subcommittee felt that scopes on muzzleloaders is a social, not a biological issue; that current laws and regulations adequately address predator control; and that feral hogs are an important biological issue that needs to be addressed.

The FLCF Subcommittee supported allowing the use of scopes on muzzleloaders. Members generally felt that laws and regulations addressing predator control and feral hogs are adequate.

Subcommittee Recommendations:

MRV Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on the recommendation):

- WRD legalize the use of scopes on muzzleloaders during the primitive weapons season.

Piedmont Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- WRD legalize the use of scopes on muzzleloaders during the primitive weapons season.
- No changes are needed to address predator control.
- WRD expand feral hog hunting opportunities on WMAs.
- WRD establish a permit program that allows shooting hogs over bait outside of game seasons and consider charging a fee for the permit.
- The General Assembly and WRD pursue a law change to make it illegal to transport and release feral hogs into unfenced areas.
- WRD allow hog dogs on WMAs.

- WRD extend archery hunting season by special permit to allow urban deer control by archery hunters.

UPC Subcommittee recommended:

- Scopes remain illegal to use on muzzleloaders during primitive weapon season. (10 favored; 1 opposed).
- WRD develop a more strict definition of a “primitive weapon” for use during the early deer season. They felt that crossbows and in-line muzzleloaders should not be allowed as primitive weapons. (Consensus reached).

FLCP Subcommittee recommended (Consensus reached on all recommendations):

- WRD legalize the use of scopes on muzzleloaders during the primitive weapons season.
- No change to laws/regulations pertaining to feral hog and predator control.

Proposed WRD Actions:

- Pursue a law change to allow scopes on muzzleloaders during the primitive weapons hunting season.
- Pursue a law to prohibit release of hogs in unfenced areas.
- On private lands allow by permit the control of feral hogs by shooting over bait, at night with a light, and from a vehicle except during deer and turkey hunting seasons.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

I. STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Steve Burch
Madison, GA

Dr. Randy Davidson
Athens, GA

Mr. Gary Johnson
Atlanta, GA

Mr. Wesley Langdale
Valdosta, GA

Mr. Jerry McCollum
Covington, GA

Senator Jeff Mullis
Chickamauga, GA

Mr. Brian Murphy
Watkinsville, GA

Mr. Alec Poitevint
Bainbridge, GA

Mr. Bryant Poole
Atlanta, GA

Mr. Craig Ellerbee
Macon, GA

Mr. Mike Stewart
Atlanta, GA

Mr. Scott Tanner
Atlanta, GA

Mr. Bryan Tolar
Douglasville, GA

Dr. Bob Warren
Athens, GA

Representative Pete Warren
Augusta, GA

Mr. Todd Holbrook, Chair
Social Circle, GA

APPENDIX II

II. MOUNTAINS/RIDGE & VALLEY SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Kent Kammermeyer, Chair
Gainesville, GA

Mr. Larry McSwain, Facilitator
Covington, GA

Mrs. Wanda Carlock
Toccoa, GA

Mr. Johnny Chastain
Blue Ridge, GA

Mr. Woody Coffee
Baldwin, GA

Dr. Wilbur Dellinger
Gainesville, GA

Mr. Glen Dowling
Hiawassee, GA

Mr. Ted Everett
Cedartown, GA

Mr. George Frady
Canton, GA

Dr. George Gallagher
Armuchee, GA

Mr. Jimmy Jacobs
Marietta, GA

Mr. Herb McClure
Cleveland, GA

Mr. John Morgan
Alpharetta, GA

Mr. Robert H. Neel
Cartersville, GA

Mr. Jerry Shuler
Gainesville, GA

Mr. Chip Utsey
Loganville, GA

Dr. James Vick
Rome, GA

APPENDIX III

III. PIEDMONT SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Mr. John W. Bowers, Chair
Social Circle, GA

Mr. Mike Gennings, Facilitator
Stone Mountain, GA

Mr. Jeff Banks
Madison, GA

Mr. Jim Buckner
Junction City, GA

Mrs. Liz Caldwell
Eatonton, GA

Mr. Doug Hall
Athens, GA

Mr. Ray Hammond
Flowery Branch, GA

Mr. Bill Hillsman
McDonough, GA

Mr. Andy Johnson
Muscadine, AL

Mr. Charlie Killmaster
Athens, GA

Mr. Daryl Kirby
Buckhead, GA

Mr. Bill Millican
Marietta, GA

Mr. Steve Moonyham
Alpharetta, GA

Mr. David Osborn
Athens, GA

Mr. Hilton Purvis
Commerce, GA

Mr. Steve Scruggs
Watkinsville, GA

Mr. Mike Tallant
Morrow, GA

Mr. Lindsay Thomas
Watkinsville, GA

APPENDIX IV

IV. UPPER COASTAL PLAIN SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Greg Waters, Chair
Fitzgerald, GA

Mr. Terry Kile, Facilitator
Leesburg, GA

Mr. Zack Aultman
Albany, GA

Mike Conner, PhD.
Newton, GA

Mr. Rusty Hatton
Bainbridge, GA

Mr. Tommy Gregors
Albany, GA

Mr. Matt Haun
Winder, GA

Mr. Wayne Hutcheson
Brunswick, GA

Mr. Aubrey Iler
Newton, GA

Mr. Chuck Leavelle
Dry Branch, GA

Mr. Lester McNair
Edison, GA

Mr. Dave Crockett Murray
Guyton, GA

Mr. Jake Rocker
Macon, GA

Mr. Ed Sandefur
Elko, GA

Mr. Jimmy Sands
Claxton, GA

Mr. Kenny Shockley
Perkins, GA

Mr. Dick Whittington
Ft. Valley, GA

Mr. Donald Wood
Phenix City, AL

APPENDIX V

V. COASTAL/FLATWOODS SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Mrs. Carmen Martin, Chair
Brunswick, GA

Mr. Tom Payne, Facilitator
Stockbridge, GA

Mr. Gino D'Angelo
Winterville, GA

Mr. Ben Brewton
Pembroke, GA

Mr. Jay Childers
St. Simon's Island, GA

Mr. Mike Deal
Jesup, GA

Mr. Tim Harris
Jesup, GA

Mr. Sam Manior, Jr.
Rincon, GA

Mr. Skippy Reeves
Folkston, GA

Mr. Gordon Rogers
Waynesville, GA

Mr. Bobby Schwallenburg
Collins, GA

Mr. Robert Smith
Woodbine, GA

Mr. Bubba Sumerlin
Richmond Hill, GA

Mr. Mickey Whittington
Jesup, GA

APPENDIX VI

VI. Summary of Public Comments – Ellijay August 2, 2004

Survey Results

A total of 33 people attended the Ellijay meeting. Of that 33, 23 (70%) were landowners in Floyd, Gilmer, Fannin, Pickens, Cherokee, White, Wilkes, Talbot, Hart, Lincoln, and Gordon counties. Land ownership ranged from 1 to 160 acres. Twenty-eight (85%) were hunters, five (36%) were farmers, and four (12%) were non-hunters.

Counties listed where our participants hunted included: Floyd, Gilmer, Fannin, Pickens, Cherokee, White, Wilkes, Talbot, Hart, Lincoln, Hancock, Oglethorpe, Jenkins, Wheeler, Whitfield, Greene, Dawson, and Lumpkin counties. Twenty-three (70%) of the participants responded that they hunted deer on public lands, 17 (52%) on their own lands, and 22 (67%) on other private lands. Nineteen (58%) responded that they are small game hunters. None of our participants were opposed to hunting.

When asked about the status of the deer population where they lived, 14 (42%) felt the population is about what is needed, seven (21%) felt as though there are too many deer, and eight (24%) felt there are too few deer. Four individuals responded, “don’t know”. When asked about the status of the deer population where they hunted, 15 (45%) felt it is about what is needed. Nine (27%) responded that there were too few deer and 5 (15%) responded there were too many.

Sixteen (58%) people responded that deer don’t cause too much damage where they live. Other participants felt that deer were causing too much damage where they live and nine (27%) felt that the damage was occurring to vehicles (in the way of collisions), 10 (30%) felt that it was occurring to landscaping and gardens, one (3%) felt it was occurring to commercial crops, and four (12%) responded that they didn’t know. Twenty (61%) of the participants, or a member of their immediate family, had hit a deer with a vehicle.

Participants were composed of 27 males and six females. Age of participants ranged from 37 to 80 with the majority of the participants being over 50 (64%).

KEY ISSUES SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

General Comments

- Need more meetings like this (1)
- These meetings should be held in every county (1)
- No QDM restrictions on young hunters (1)
- Minimum caliber of .223 for deer (1)
- More honorary hunts in North GA (not grouped with adult/child hunts) (1)
- No camping within one mile of a food plot (1)
- All persons entering WMAs and National Forest during hunting season required to wear fluorescent orange (1)
- More access for hunters in archery only counties (1)

- WRD does splendid job with deer herd (1)
- Legalize raccoon trapping in North Georgia (1)

Privatization of Wildlife

- No exotic deer in Georgia (2)
- No hunting in enclosures (5)
- No hunting whitetails inside fence (3)
- Hunting exotics inside fence okay (2)
- No hunting exotics in enclosures (1)
- Inspect all fenced enclosures for animal health & welfare (1)
- Against privatized wildlife (1)

Private Lands Incentives

- Tax incentives for food plots or deer management (4)
- Financial incentives for landowners to allow hunting (1)
- Monitor logging compliance for Best Management Practices (1)

Antlerless Deer Management & Hunting

- Bow hunt in January for antlerless deer (2)
- Open more areas to hunting (1)
- No special flexibility for landowners re: antlerless deer (2)
- Take antlerless deer before allowing antlered deer (2)
- More doe days needed (2)
- Landowners need to harvest does any day of season (1)
- Landowners contact WRD and have Youth Hunt (1)

Wildlife Management Techniques

- Reduce hog population (2)
- Allow baiting for hogs (2)
- Open feral hog season all year for everyone (5)
- Hog hunting on WMAs beginning on August 15th (1)
- Make feral hogs a game animal controlled by WRD (1)
- Legalize scopes on muzzleloaders (13)
- No scopes on muzzleloaders (2)
- Scopes on muzzleloaders for senior citizens only (1)
- Opposed to sharpshooting deer (4)
- Predator control year round (1)
- Shoot fox and bobcats during deer season (1)
- Permit deer removal by non-WRD as needed (2)
- Predator and feral hog control by non-WRD person okay (1)

- Predator control for coyotes (5)

License Issues

- All license money should go toward game management (1)
- License increase for land acquisition (3)
- Fees for all WMA users (8)
- Encourage sale of lifetime license (1)
- License fees should stay at current level (2)
- Non-residents should pay price equal to other states (1)
- Increased license fees if hunt quality improved (1)
- Limit number of non-resident hunters (1)
- Reduced license fees for hunters over 50 (1)
- All license fees to WRD not general funds (1)
- Request breakdown on use of license fees (1)
- Favor license increase (1)

Deer Car Collisions

- Deer-car collisions a serious problem (2)
- Deer-car collisions caused by more vehicles (1)
- WRD & Department of Public Safety educate drivers to avoid deer collisions (1)

Deer Density

- Fannin county needs more doe days (3)
- Fannin county (east) has too many does (1)
- Mountains – more doe days (1)
- Increase population in mountains (1)
- Gilmer county deer about right (1)
- Gilmer county needs more doe days (1)
- Not enough deer in Wilkes county (1)
- Parks is responsible for local overpopulation (1)
- Local government is responsible for local overpopulation (1)
- Decrease deer population in Whitfield County (1)
- Landowner is responsible for local overpopulation (2)
- WMA has no deer, no food (1)
- No overpopulation except where hunting not allowed (1)
- Reduce density in urban areas (1)
- Deer population is about right (1)
- Deer population needs to increase (1)
- State is responsible for overpopulation (1)
- Increase deer density on Cohutta WMA (1)
- Increase deer population on WMAs (1)

WRD Policy Issues and Hunter Concerns

- Need more enforcement (1)
- Need more enforcement personnel (3)
- Penalties are too low (3)
- Trespass should be treated more seriously in counties (2)
- Lack of response to trespass complaints (1)
- Need more locations for Hunters for the Hungry (3)
- Research/Demonstration projects needed for better deer management (1)
- Trespass is OKAY to track wounded game (1)
- Trespass is increasing (1)
- Need more hog processing facilities (1)
- Deer processors should be trained to recognize diseases (1)
- Need better Turn In Poachers response (1)

Hunting Season/Bag Limits

- Let the county ranger decide bag limit (1)
- Gun season should go from early November to end of January (1)
- Bag limit should be controlled by WRD (1)
- Current bag limits are okay (2)
- Current buck bag limit is okay (2)
- Raise buck bag limit (3)
- Statewide seasons the same Northern and Southern zones (5)
- No harvest of buck fawns (5)
- Doe bag limit is too high (3)
- No more doe hunts (1)

Hunting Deer with Dogs

- Continue dog-deer hunting (3)
- Discontinue dog-deer hunting (1)
- Current dog-deer hunting laws are good (3)

Education/Outreach Efforts by WRD

- Reduce landowner liability (4)
- Hunter ethics-tougher laws needed (1)
- Need public education about deer (1)
- Continue Hunter Education Program (1)
- Programs on hunting and safety needed in public schools (1)
- Notify landowners of all hunter safety liabilities (1)
- Hunter Safety live, no cd's (1)
- Landowners driving up lease prices (1)

- Fair chase is important (1)
- Allow hunters in tree stand to remove fluorescent orange (1)
- Public education efforts adequate (1)
- Need more education efforts (1)
- Need more enforcement on WMAs (1)
- Need more doe days in North Georgia (2)
- Current antler restrictions are good (1)
- Private landowners should have same statewide bag limit (1)
- Issue agricultural damage permits (1)
- Need longer deer season (1)
- Longer deer season not needed (3)
- Need more QDM counties in Northern Zone (1)
- Statewide season should be September 1 through January 10th (1)
- Cull bucks should be allowed in QDM counties (1)
- Need more hunting days on WMAs (1)
- Need cheaper license for hunters over 50 (1)
- Open bow hunting in January (1)
- Bag limit for landowners no different than anyone else (2)
- Both bucks should have at least 3 points/side (1)
- Require does to be taken before bucks are taken (2)
- Protect all bucks until 2 ½ years old by antler restriction (1)

Hunter Access

- Allow hunting on state parks with shotgun (2)
- Allow bow hunting on state parks (6)
- Allow hunting on state parks by handicapped (1)
- Hunters should control deer on parks/urban areas (1)
- Need more land acquisition (3)
- Need more hunter access on WMAs (2)
- Public lands should be managed for quality (1)
- Allow game retrieval with 4-wheeler (1)
- Every WMA should have disabled hunts (1)
- Need more hunter access for handicapped (1)
- Antler restrictions on WMAs (1)

Hunting Over Bait

- Legalize hunting over bait (5)
- Legalize hunting over bait on private land (3)
- No hunting over bait (9)
- Legalize hunting over bait for bow season (1)

Supplemental feeding

- Supplemental feeding is okay (4)
- Need more food plots and prescribed burning (1)
- Supplemental feeding okay but not corn or pellets (1)

Controlling Urban Deer/Nuisance

- Need urban deer controlled like on Red Top Mountain (2)
- Urban deer should be controlled by bowhunting (4)
- Crop damage control governed by WRD (1)
- No flexibility for private landowners to control deer (2)
- No birth control (3)
- No sharpshooting (1)
- Crop damage permits not justified (1)
- Need more flexibility for private landowners to control deer (1)
- Trap and relocate nuisance deer (2)
- Crop damage permit only way to remove deer (1)
- Crop damage-apple orchards account for deer killed (1)

APPENDIX VII

VII. Summary of Public Comments – Dacula August 3, 2004

Survey Results

A total of 56 people attended the meeting. Thirty (30; 53.5%) of the participants were landowners in Appling, Barrow, Bibb, Dawson, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hancock, Jackson, Jasper, Lincoln, Madison, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Pike, Putnam, Walton and Wilkes counties. Land ownership ranged from 1 to 2,000 acres. Of these, four (13%) were farmers.

Of the participants, 53 (95%) were hunters and three (5%) were non-hunters (no non-hunters were opposed to hunting). Counties listed where participants hunted were: Appling, Baldwin, Barrow, DeKalb, Fulton, Greene, Gwinnett, Hall, Hancock, Heard, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Jones, Lincoln, Madison, Marion, Morgan, Oglethorpe, Pike, Putnam, Washington, and Wilkes. Of those that identified themselves as hunters, 22 (42%) hunted deer on public lands, 30 (57%) hunted on their own lands, and 44 (83%) hunted on other private lands. Thirty-five (66%) responded that they were small game hunters.

When asked about the status of the deer population where they lived, 24 (43%) felt the population is about what is needed, 23 (41%) felt as though there were too many deer, five (9%) indicated that they didn't know, and four (7%) felt there were too few deer. When asked about the status of the deer population where they hunted, 30 (57%) felt it is about what is needed, 11 (21%) responded that there were too few deer, nine (17%) responded there were too many, and three (5%) indicated that they didn't know.

Regarding the level of deer damage, 23 (41%) responded that deer don't cause too much damage where they live. Other participants felt that deer are causing too much damage where they live and 11 (20%) felt that the damage was occurring to vehicles (in the way of collisions), eight (14%) felt that it was occurring to landscaping and gardens, and five (9%) responded that they didn't know. Seven (12%) felt that the damage was occurring both to vehicles (collisions) and landscaping and gardening, one (2%) felt that it was occurring to commercial crops and landscaping and gardening, and one (2%) felt it was occurring to commercial crops and vehicles. A total of 40 (71%) participants, or a member of their immediate family, had hit a deer with a vehicle.

Participants were composed of 54 males and two females. Age of participants ranged from 12 to 80 with the majority of the participants age being between 40 and 60.

KEY ISSUES SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

General Comments

- WRD is doing a good job (5)
- WRD should have authority/control of wildlife management/hunting (2)
- Supports providing more funding to WRD (1)
- Supports extending trapping season (1)

- Supports allowing electronic calls for predator hunting (1)

Privatization of Wildlife

- Opposed to high fences (13)
- Opposed to deer farming (5)
- Opposed to privatization (5)
- Supports greater acreage requirements for high fencing (3)
- Supports high fence hunting of exotics (2)
- Supports intensive management (1)

Private Lands Incentives

- Supports incentives to private landowners (9)
- Incentives should be tied to hunting access/habitat management (5)
- Supports incentives for leased lands/hunting clubs (1)
- Opposed to incentives (1)

Antlerless Deer Management

- Supports more antlerless opportunity (4)
- Opposes more antlerless opportunity (1)
- Supports special tags for landowners (2)
- Opposes flexibility for special groups (1)
- Supports no limit on antlerless deer (1)

Wildlife Management Techniques

- Supports legalizing scopes on muzzleloaders (14)
- Opposed to legalizing scopes on muzzleloaders (7)
- Supports allowing permitted removal by non-WRD persons (11)
- Opposed to permitted removal by non-WRD persons (6)
- Supports more flexibility for predator control (5)
- Supports more flexibility to control feral hogs (4)
- Supports more feral hog hunting on public lands (4)

License Issues

- Supports non-consumptive fees for WMA users (11)
- Supports license fee increase (8)
- Opposed to license fees going to General Fund (6)
- Supports increasing non-resident fees (3)
- Opposed to re-direction of license fees for other uses (2)
- Non-resident fees should be more reciprocal among adjacent states (1)
- Supports reduced-fee licenses for non-resident landowners (1)

- Supports non-resident license fees for plantation hunters (1)

Deer Car Collisions

- Supports providing more educational information on how to avoid collisions (2)
- Supports greater hunting opportunity in urban areas to reduce collisions (2)
- Supports requiring deterrents (horns, whistles, etc) (1)

Deer Density

- Population is stable/just right (11)
- Population is too high (5)
- Population on public lands is too low (2)
- Population is too low (1)
- Landowners are responsible for overpopulation problems (2)
- Government is responsible for overpopulation problems (1)
- Hunters are responsible for overpopulation problems (1)

WRD Policy Issues and Hunter Concerns

- Supports statewide, uniform penalties for offenses (10)
- Increase penalties for offenses (6)
- Expand Hunters for the Hungry (HFTH) program (6)
- Confiscate equipment of violators (3)
- Supports collected fines to be put in WRD budget (3)
- Supports continuation of HFTH program (3)
- Deer donated to HFTH should not count against limit (2)
- Supports need for more enforcement (2)
- Supports continued/strengthened efforts to combat CWD (2)
- Supports stronger trespass laws (2)
- Supports more research/survey (2)
- Opposed to deer rehabilitation program (1)
- Supports reducing penalties for offenses (1)
- Need more feral hog processors (1)
- Opposed to checking hunters on the stand (1)

Hunting Seasons/Bag Limits

- Supports current bag limits (13)
- Supports antler restriction regulations (9)
- Supports season extension (8)
- Supports later season (6)
- Opposed to alternative bag limits for special groups (5)
- Supports alternative bag limits for special groups (4)

- Supports shortening the season (4)
- Opposed to liberal doe bag limit (4)
- Supports later primitive weapons season (4)
- Supports current season (3)
- Supports more WMA opportunity (2)
- Supports more either-sex days on WMAs (2)
- Supports elimination of zone line (2)
- Supports later primitive weapons season (2)
- Move honorary WMA hunts to later in season (1)
- Supports more localized bag limit regulations (1)
- Supports increase in buck bag limit (1)
- Supports use of buck tags (1)
- Opposes antler restrictions for youth (1)
- Opposes antler restrictions (1)
- Supports more archery opportunity on public lands (1)

Hunting Deer with Dogs

- Supports current laws/regulations (7)
- Opposed to hunting deer with dogs (4)
- Supports hunting deer with dogs (3)
- Opposed to hunting deer with dogs in Northern Zone (1)
- Supports additional opportunity for hunting deer with dogs (1)

Education/Outreach Efforts by WRD

- Need more recruitment of hunters & youth (3)
- Need more ethics in hunter education (2)
- Provide deer management seminars (2)
- Keep hunter education requirements (1)
- Require hunter education in schools (1)
- Add field/range time to hunter education classes (1)
- More educational programs in urban areas (1)
- More collaboration with other groups (1)
- Provide more information to public (1)
- State should regulate “fair chase” (1)

Hunter Access

- Supports hunting/access to other state/municipal/parks/urban lands (19)
- Supports more WMAs/public hunting lands (9)
- Supports more WMA specialty hunts (4)
- Supports more small game opportunity on public lands (2)
- Supports fewer WMA quota hunts (1)

- Opposed to ATV use on public lands (1)
- Opposed to more public land (1)
- Closed roads/gates prohibit hunter access on public lands (1)

Hunting Over Bait

- Opposed to legalizing hunting over bait (28)
- Supports legalizing hunting over bait (4)
- Supports changing law to total prohibition (1)
- Supports greater enforcement of baiting laws (1)
- Supports reducing distance requirement Supports eliminating distance; require out of sight only (1)
- Supports baiting only if done 12 months a year (1)
- Supports use of bait for control of feral hogs (4)

Supplemental Feeding

- Supports supplemental feeding (12)
- Opposed to supplemental feeding (9)
- Supports law prohibiting supplemental feeding (1)

Controlling Urban Deer/Nuisance

- Supports hunting to manage urban/nuisance deer (13)
- Supports more flexibility for land/home-owners to control nuisance deer (7)
- Opposes more flexibility for land/home-owners to control nuisance deer (1)
- Supports permitted removal of urban/nuisance deer (4)
- Opposes permitted removal of urban/nuisance deer (2)
- Opposes sharpshooting to remove urban/nuisance deer (4)
- Supports sharpshooting to remove urban/nuisance deer (3)
- Supports trap/relocate for urban/nuisance deer (1)
- Opposes trap/relocate for urban/nuisance deer (1)
- Supports fertility control for urban/nuisance deer (1)
- Opposes fertility control for urban/nuisance deer (1)
- Supports no management for urban/nuisance deer (1)

APPENDIX VIII

VIII. Summary of Public Comments – Macon August 3, 2004

Survey Results

A total of 18 people attended the meeting. Fifteen (83%) were landowners in Baldwin, Bibb, Crawford, Houston, Jones, Macon, Morgan, Pike, and Twiggs counties. Land ownership ranged from 2 to 1,200 acres.

Sixteen (89%) were hunters, five (28%) were farmers, and two (11%) were non-hunters. Counties listed where participants hunted included: Baldwin, Bibb, Crawford, Houston, Jones, Macon, Morgan, Monroe and Twiggs. Seven (39%) of the participants responded that they hunted deer on public lands, 13 (72%) hunt on their own lands, and 11 (61%) hunt on other private lands. Nine (50%) responded that they were small game hunters. One participant opposed hunting.

When asked about the status of the deer population where they lived, 11 (61%) felt as though the population is about what is needed, four (22%) felt as though there were too many deer, and one felt there were too few deer. When asked about the status of the deer population where they hunted, 10 (56%) felt it is about what is needed. Two (11%) responded that there were too few deer and four (22%) responded there were too many deer.

Eight (44%) people responded that deer don't cause too much damage where they live. Other participants felt that deer were causing too much damage where they live and five (28%) felt that damage was occurring to vehicles (in the way of collisions), five (28%) felt it was occurring to landscaping and gardens, three (17%) felt it was occurring to commercial crops, and one responded that they didn't know. Thirteen (72%) of the participants, or a member of their immediate family, had hit a deer with a vehicle.

Participants were composed of 15 males and 3 females. Age of participants ranged from 11 to 72 with the majority of the participants age being between 50 and 70.

KEY ISSUES SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

Privatization of Wildlife

- Opposed to hunting inside fenced areas (2)
- Opposed to the privatization of wildlife (1)
- Favors allowing preserve owners to pay for trapping f deer in overpopulated areas (1)

Antlerless Deer Management

- Encourage special interest groups (Insurance, Farm Lobby) to pay for processing some deer harvested in overpopulated areas (1)

Wildlife Management Techniques

- Opposed to scopes on muzzleloaders (2)
- Support for increased opportunity for predator control (1)

License Issues

- Favor fees charged to non-consumptive users on Wildlife Management Areas (1)
- Support license fee Increase for non-residents or lower their bag limits (1)
- Suggestion to eliminate license fees for Georgia residents that do not own land, favors higher taxes on ammunition and firearms instead (1)

Deer Car Collisions

- Allow hunting adjacent to roadways (1)

WRD Policy Issues & Hunter Concerns

- Need more drop off points for Hunters for the Hungry (4)
- Desire that WRD work more closely with private landowners on intensive wildlife management (1)

Hunting Season/Bag Limits

- Get rid of Deer Zones and have one season (1)
- Bag limits are generous enough (1)
- Bow Season is too early and too short (1)
- Rifle season should open later and close for December (1)
- In favor of buck management regulations (2)
- Only farmers should set bag limits (1)
- Increased bag limits will not increase the harvest (1)
- Combine archery, crossbow and black powder in an early primitive weapon hunt (1)
- Allow for the removal of genetic culls in mandatory QDM counties (1)
- Would like to see a last week or first week of youth only gun seasons (1)

Hunting Deer with Dogs

- Do not add more regulations in an attempt to satisfy everybody (1)
- Opposed to Hunting deer with dogs (1)
- Does not like dogs trespassing on private land (1)

Education & Outreach Effort by WRD

- Add topic to hunter safety to instruct correct way to shoulder a firearm (1)

Hunter Access

- Allow hunters access to approved areas with overpopulations of deer (1)
- Supports a land acquisition program (1)
- Supports allowing archery harvest for feral hogs during entire year on WMAs (1)

Hunting Over Bait

- Opposed to hunting over bait (3)
- Hunting over bait is the same as hunting over a food plot (1)
- Supports hunting over bait (2)
- Needs bait to compete for deer with neighbors (1)

Controlling Urban Deer/Nuisance

- Allow night hunting to thin the population (1)
- Allow archery hunts in suburban areas before a problem develops (1)
- Opposed to birth control (1)
- Urban populations can be controlled in the county first and this will help eliminate urban deer problems (1)

APPENDIX IX

IX. Summary of Public Comments – Albany August 10, 2004

Survey Results

A total of 55 people attended the meeting. Twenty-four (44%) were landowners in the following counties: Baker, Dougherty, Berrien, Clay, Sumter, Mitchell, Lee, Colquitt, Worth, Tift, Terrell, Thomas, Early and Marion. Land ownership ranged from 10 to 5,500 acres and averaged 551 acres.

Fifty-two (96%) were hunters, 11 (20%) were farmers, and two were non-hunters. Counties listed where participants hunted included: Baker, Dougherty, Berrien, Clay, Sumter, Mitchell, Lee, Colquitt, Worth, Tift, Terrell, Thomas, Early, Randolph, Decatur, Calhoun, Jones, Grady, Telfair, Quitman and Marion. Twenty-four (44%) of the participants responded that they hunted deer on public lands, 20 (37%) on their own lands, and 45 (83%) on other private lands. Thirty-eight (70%) responded that they were small game hunters. None of our participants opposed hunting.

When asked about the status of the deer population where they lived, 23 (41%) felt it is about what is needed. Thirteen (24%) responded that there are too few deer and 17 (31%) responded there are too many. Two (3%) individuals responded, “don’t know”. When asked about the status of the deer population where they hunted, 25 (45%) felt it is about what is needed. Eight (15%) responded that there were too few deer and 16 (29%) responded there were too many. Six (11%) individuals responded “don’t know” to the question relative to the current status of deer populations where they hunted.

Twenty-five (46%) people responded that deer don’t cause too much damage where they live. Other participants (53%) felt that deer are causing too much damage where they live and 19 (35%) felt that the damage was occurring to vehicles (in the way of collisions), seven (13%) felt it was occurring to landscaping and gardens, 18 (33%) felt it was occurring to commercial crops, and two (3%) responded that they didn’t know. Thirty-three (61%) of the participants, or a member of their immediate family, had hit a deer with a vehicle.

Participants were composed of 54 males and 1 female. Age of participants ranged from 15 to 79 with the majority of the participants age being between 35 and 60.

KEY ISSUES SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

General Comments

- No complaints about WRD (1)
- WRD is doing great so far in all areas (1)
- Have a weekend youth hunt before regular firearms season begins (1)
- Go to a system of fines; 3 over limit = \$100 fine, over 3 = \$50/bird (1)
- WRD and sportsmen and women are suffering at the hands of our government. We should all work together to increase the budget and availability of funds to support WRD, sportsmen, and land acquisition or our heritage will end with coming generations (1)

- WRD is badly understaffed (1)
- Open Cumberland Island for 6 months during winter for hog control (1)
- Plant feed and more food plots on WMAs in order to compete with private land around site (1)
- Supports elimination of dove zone line (1)

Education & Outreach Effort by WRD

- Hunters need to recruit and retain more hunters (6)
- WRD needs to improve hunter ethics, recruitment and retention, education training (5)
- WRD does an exceptional job recruiting hunters (1)
- Landowners should not be held liable for accidents on their land due to other people's carelessness, especially when people are poaching/trespassing (2)
- Demonstration plots at Moultrie AG Expo would be helpful to people (1)

Privatization of Wildlife

- Supports hunting inside fences (2)
- Opposes hunting inside fences (16)
- Believes in fair chase (3)
- Opposes importation of exotic wildlife (8)
- Importation of exotic game could bring disease (5)
- Supports importation of exotic wildlife (1)
- Paid hunts increase the temptation for people to break game laws (1)
- Landowners need more flexibility in taking care of their land (2)
- Use revenue from permits to buy feed and seed for plots on state-owned lands (1)
- Landowners do not need more flexibility (1)

Hunting Season/Bag Limits

- Bag limit should remain as is (10)
- Bag limit should be increased (8)
- Bag limits are not the determining factor for the number of deer killed. Processing fees are deterring folks from killing more deer. If the state found a way to subsidize processing fees, more deer would be killed (2)
- WRD needs to enforce bag limits (1)
- Need longer deer season (10)
- Supports current season (3)
- Change archery or muzzleloader season (3)
- Antlerless bucks should be counted as does (2)
- Supports quality deer management (11)
- Opposes expansion of QDM areas (1)
- Opposes QDM regulations (2)

Hunting and Wildlife Management Techniques

- Scopes should not be allowed on muzzleloaders (13)

- Scopes should be allowed on muzzleloaders (8)
- Need greater control of feral hogs (15)
- Opposes hog control (1)
- Need a permit system for hog control like we have for turkeys (1)
- Favors predator control (2)
- Opposes predator control (2)
- Landowners/farmers should be able to shoot deer when there is sufficient damage (4)
- Lethal deer removal should be done by WRD persons only (3)
- Landowners that don't allow hunting should not be issued a deer permit (2)
- The State should not allow the hiring of professionals to remove deer, opportunities should go to sportsmen (1)

License Issues

- Supports increase in license fees (2)
- Current license fees are appropriate (4)
- Reduce resident license fees (1)
- Reduce nonresident license fees (1)
- Increase non-resident license fees (8)
- Supports limiting non-resident hunters (2)
- Limit number of non-resident hunters allowed (1)
- Resident hunters should receive preference over non-residents for quota hunts (2)
- No fees for non-consumptive users (2)
- Non-consumptive users should be charged a usage fee for WMAs (9)

Hunter Access

- Current number of WMAs is adequate (1)
- The state needs to purchase more land/WMAs (11)
- WRD needs to manage its present WMAs before acquiring more (1)
- No one should be deprived of using state lands (2)
- Hunters should have access to municipal properties or parks (9)
- Hunters should not have access to private lands unless invited by owner (1)
- Allow more archery hunting on WMAs (4)
- Open WMAs for year round hog hunting with small game weapons (3)
- Supports longer firearms seasons on state lands (2)
- Need more handicap accessible areas/assistance on WMAs (4)
- Need more youth hunts on WMAs (2)
- WMAs need bathrooms, showers, electric outlets, especially for handicap sites and families (1)

Deer Density

- Deer density should be decreased (7)
- Population should remain as is (5)
- Landowners should control deer density (7)
- Hunters should be responsible for keeping the deer population under control (2)

- Population is too high in areas with large landowners that do not allow enough hunting and suburban areas. WRD cannot control this issue. (1)
- Deer population should be increased (1)

WRD Policy Issues & Hunter Concerns

- Need more WRD officers/personnel (4)
- Need an incentive for people to turn in illegal hunters (1)
- Penalties for trespassers should be increased (6)
- Penalties for poachers should be increased (4)
- WRD should increase patrols for trespassers (4)
- WRD should create a trespasser database and publish list (1)
- Feral hog processing should be allowed/controlled by processor (2)
- Supports strong control over wild hog processing (1)
- Improve availability and accessibility of Hunters for the Hungry (11)
- More deer research should be done (1)
- WRD should tell the truth about CWD (1)
- An overview of known diseases should be included in season regulations (1)
- Need to more closely monitor wildlife diseases (1)
- Deer management learning opportunities are not the responsibility of WRD. There already are plenty of opportunities. (1)
- Need more public forums in more areas to spread word of WRD policies (1)

Controlling Urban Deer/Nuisance

- Supports deer control (15)
- Landowners should have the ability to determine their own bag limits (4)
- Landowners take advantage of the deer permit system (5)
- A landowner should only be given a permit if they allow hunting (1)
- Does not support lethal removal of deer (1)
- Supports compensation for deer damage (1)
- Does not support relocation as a control option (2)
- Supports trapping/relocation of deer (2)
- Supports birth control for deer in urban areas (1)
- Does not support birth control as a method to control deer herd (1)

Private Lands Incentives

- Supports private lands incentives (11)
- Need more incentives for private landowners to have youth hunts (2)
- Provide tax incentives to landowners who participate in a walk-in access program, similar to Kansas (1)

Antlerless Deer Management

- Hard to harvest as many as are allowed now (1)
- Increase antlerless deer harvest (6)
- Harvest is liberal enough (2)

Deer Car Collisions

- Decreasing deer population would help reduce number of deer-car collisions (3)
- Change drivers' habits to reduce collisions (6)
- Mark more crossings, plot areas of frequent collisions to develop idea of where collisions are likely to occur (1)
- Allow greater landowner input (1)
- Allowing baiting would reduce collisions by keeping deer in woods (1)
- Only hear complaints about deer-car collisions from insurance industry (1)

Hunting deer with dogs

- Supports Dog Hunting (9)
- New rules for dog-hunters are too strict (2)
- Deer/Dog hunting should be closely scrutinized/restricted (5)
- Deer dog-hunting disrupts other hunters (2)

Hunting Over Bait

- Supports the current law (13)
- Shooting over bait is not hunting (2)
- Will give public a negative view of hunters (2)
- Opposes baiting because of disease transmission (1)
- Baiting is occurring everywhere and is out of control (1)
- Remove words "out of sight" and reduce distance to 100 yards
- Baiting should be legalized (16)
- WRD should provide input on the subject of baiting (1)

Supplemental Feeding

- Supports supplemental feeding (16)
- Opposes supplemental feeding (3)
- If CWD or other highly contagious disease appears, supplemental feeding should be banned (1)

APPENDIX X

X. Summary of Public Comments – Jesup August 2, 2004

Survey Results

A total of 33 people attended the meeting. Twenty-five (75%) were landowners in Appling, Bacon, Bryan, Burke, Liberty, Long, Pierce, and Wayne counties. Land ownership ranged from 3 to 1,000 acres.

Thirty-one (94%) were hunters, 12 (36%) were farmers, and one was a non-hunter. Counties listed where participants hunted included: Appling, Bacon, Brantley, Bryan, Glynn, Jasper, Liberty, Long, Tattnall, Toombs, Pierce, Putnam, and Wayne. Eighteen (55%) of the participants responded that they hunted deer on public lands, 19 (58%) hunted on their own lands, and 26 (79%) hunted on other private lands. Twenty (60%) responded that they were small game hunters. None of our participants opposed hunting.

When asked about the status of the deer population where they lived, 16 (49%) felt the population is about what is needed, 10 (30%) felt there were too many deer, and six (18%) felt there were too few deer. When asked about the status of the deer population where they hunted, 19 (58%) felt it is about what is needed. Seven (21%) responded that there were too few deer and six (18%) responded there were too many. One individual responded “don’t know” to both questions relative to the current status of deer populations.

Fifteen (45%) people responded that deer don’t cause too much damage where they live. Other participants felt that deer are causing too much damage where they live and nine (27%) felt that the damage was occurring vehicles (in the way of collisions), seven (21%) felt it was occurring to landscaping and gardens, seven (21%) felt it was occurring to commercial crops, and three (9%) responded that they didn’t know. Twenty-one (64%) of the participants, or a member of their immediate family, had hit a deer with a vehicle.

Participants were composed of 29 males and four females. Age of participants ranged from 26 to 79 with the majority of the participants age being between 40 and 60. We had two individuals whose comments were received by phone and e-mail.

KEY ISSUES SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

General Comments

- Increase management and opportunity for small game hunting (4)
- Increase opportunity for fishing (2)

Privatization of Wildlife

- Opposed to hunting inside fenced areas (3)
- Support hunting inside fenced areas (2)

Private Lands Incentives

- Support for increased bag and extended season for private landowners that are attempting to manage antlerless deer populations. (1)

Antlerless Deer Management

- Support for a longer season relative to the harvest of antlerless deer off private, agricultural lands with the restriction that permitted disabled hunters to harvest deer on property participating in program (2)

Wildlife Management Techniques

- Opposed to scopes on muzzleloaders (5)
- Support increased opportunities to harvest feral hogs (4)
- Deer in urban areas should be controlled by WRD, or a system developed (Furbearer Permit) that allows for licensed animal nuisance operators to remove unwanted deer in trouble areas (3)
- Support for increased opportunity for predator control (2)
- Scopes should not be allowed on muzzleloaders for the hunting public. A special exception should be made for hunters with vision issues (trifocal) (1)
- Support scopes on muzzleloaders (1)

License Issues

- Favor fees charged to non-consumptive users on Wildlife Management Areas (6)
- Favor implementation of a “camping fee” for hunters that camp on WMAs or National Forest lands (1)
- Support restructuring of quota system to allow GA residents first choice on quota hunts (1)
- Support for a reduced cost for students on non-resident hunting & fishing licenses (1)
- Support for a license fee increase and the money to go toward the purchase more state lands (1)

Deer Car Collisions

- Does not see a problem with deer population and car collisions (1)
- Hunting deer with dogs has the potential to increase the likelihood of deer car collisions (1)

Deer Density

- Many feel as though deer populations are adequate and should be maintained at present levels (3)
- Support for management of deer populations at more localized levels as opposed to a DMU standpoint (2)
- Some feel as though the deer population is less than adequate (1)
- Support for the continued jurisdiction of the state over the management of the deer herd (1)

WRD Policy Issues & Hunter Concerns

- Support for stricter fines relative to game and fish violations (6)
- It is important for WRD to manage disease issues (1)

Hunting Season/Bag Limits

- Support for QDM regulations or movement toward management for higher quality bucks (5)
- Oppose antler restrictions (3)
- Support for modified season dates (3)
- Support for a longer deer season (3)
- Support reduction and restructuring in deer bag limits (1)
- Limit amount/availability of dog training/fox dog running on Wildlife Management Areas (1)
- Season and Bag limits are generous. (1)

Hunting deer with dogs

- Opposed to HB 815 that established the Deer Dog Permit system (5)
- Favor increased opportunity for hunting deer with dogs (5)
- Favor HB 815 as a tool to regulate dog deer hunters (3)
- Support modification of permit system to allow for smaller tract sizes (1)
- Support modification of permit system to increase tract size of eligible lands (1)
- Oppose hunting deer with dogs in south Bryan County (1)
- Increased WRD efforts and scrutiny in investigating deer dog complaints (1)
- Favor increased enforcement of HB 815 and fines (1)
- Support for hunting deer with dogs (1)
- Oppose hunting deer with dogs (1)
- Favor modification of the deer season to reduce conflicts between still and dog hunters (1)

Hunter Access

- Support increased opportunities (more days open) for deer hunting on our Wildlife Management Areas (4)
- Support acquisition of additional state lands (3)
- Support the Department in an effort for balance as far as availability of public land, quality vs. quantity, handicapped access, etc. WRD has done a great job making as much available to as many hunters as possible (2)
- Support for development of a trophy archery hunting area, increased food plot development, and steps taken to develop areas for handicapped and youth hunting on Richmond Hill Wildlife Management Area (1)

Hunting Over Bait

- Support for hunting over bait (9)
- Opposed to hunting over bait (4)
- Support current laws that allow for feeding with hunting restrictions (1)

Supplemental Feeding

- Support current laws and regulations allowing for supplemental feeding programs (2)
- Oppose changes in law or regulations that would apply a tax to game feeders (1)

Controlling Urban Deer/Nuisance

- Favor increased opportunity for hunters to harvest deer in over populated areas (3)
- Favor increased spending with regard to trapping and relocating or on birth control methods (2)

APPENDIX XI

XI. Summary of Emailed & Written Comments

A total of 133 individuals submitted comments by e-mail
A total of 45 individuals submitted comments by written letter

KEY ISSUES SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

General Comments

- WRD should have authority/control of wildlife management/hunting (11)
- WRD doing a good job (6)
- Re-instate small game hunting on Ossabaw (1)
- Establish a wildlife vanity plate for front of vehicle (1)
- Re-introduce elk, buffalo, and antelope (1)
- Turkey hunting over bait should be illegal (1)
- Too much development (3)
- Open dove season at sunrise on opening day (1)

Privatization of Wildlife

- Opposes high fences/high fence hunting of white-tailed deer (29)
- Supports high fences/high fence hunting of white-tailed deer (4)
- Opposes high fence hunting of exotics (14)
- Supports high fence hunting of exotics (3)
- Opposes privatization (10)
- Opposes importation of deer (3)
- Supports greater acreage requirements for high fencing (2)
- Supports flexibility for landowners to intensively manage (4)
- Opposes flexibility for landowners to intensively manage (2)
- WRD should have oversight/authority (1)

Private Lands Incentives

- Supports incentives to private landowners (9)
- Incentives should be tied to hunting access/habitat management (6)
- Supports incentives for leased lands/hunting clubs (1)
- Opposes incentives (2)

Antlerless Deer Management

- Supports more antlerless opportunity (16)
- Opposes more antlerless opportunity (2)
- Reduce antlerless bag limit (3)
- Educate on need to kill antlerless deer (1)
- Supports flexibility for landowners (7)
- Opposes flexibility for landowners (2)

- Need lower processing fees to encourage more harvest (1)
- Supports WRD decisions (1)

Wildlife Management Techniques

- Supports legalizing scopes on muzzleloaders (17)
- Opposes legalizing scopes on muzzleloaders (11)
- Opposes crossbows as archery equipment (3)
- Opposes allowing scopes on crossbows (1)
- Opposes in-line muzzleloaders as primitive weapons (1)
- Supports allowing permitted removal by non-WRD persons (6)
- Opposes allowing permitted removal by non-WRD persons (3)
- Supports more flexibility for predator control (9)
- Current laws address flexibility for predator control (1)
- Supports more flexibility to control feral hogs (8)
- Supports more feral hog hunting on public lands (4)
- Opposes trophy hunting (1)
- Need stronger laws against transporting and releasing feral hogs (1)
- Extend trapping season to the end of February (1)

License Issues

- Supports non-consumptive fees for WMA users (12)
- Opposes non-consumptive fees for WMA users (2)
- Supports license fee increase (5)
- Opposed to re-direction of license fees for other uses (1)
- Opposed to license fees going to General Fund (4)
- Supports increasing non-resident fees (4)
- Non-resident fees should be more reciprocal among adjacent states (3)
- Supports reduced-fee licenses for non-resident (2)
- Limit number of non-resident licenses (2)
- Allow non-resident youth to hunt as resident youth (no fees) (2)
- Allow reciprocity with Tennessee (1)
- Supports increased license fees for more enforcement (1)
- WMAs should be reserved for sportsman (1)
- Reduce cost of trapping license or include in sportsman/lifetime license (1)

Deer Car Collisions

- Major road hazard (6)
- Minor road hazard (4)
- Supports providing more educational information on how to avoid collisions (4)
- Supports reducing herd to reduce collisions (7)
- Too many deer is the problem (5)
- Hunters should pay for deer-vehicle damages (1)
- Collisions are over-exaggerated (1)
- Problem is too many people (2)

- Collaborate with DOT on roadside vegetation management (1)

Deer Density

- Population is too high (38)
- Population is stable/just right (8)
- Population is too low (5)
- Density issues should be based on WRD assessments/science (8)
- Government is responsible for overpopulation problems (2)
- Everyone's responsible (1)
- Problem is too many people (1)

WRD Policy Issues and Hunter Concerns

- Increase penalties for offenses (8)
- Supports statewide, uniform penalties for offenses (3)
- Confiscate equipment of violators (1)
- Supports collected fines to be put in WRD budget (1)
- Supports stronger trespass laws (4)
- Supports need for more enforcement (5)
- Expand Hunters for the Hungry (HFTH) program (13)
- Supports continuation of HFTH program (4)
- Opposes HFTH program (1)
- Restrict hunters to only one donated deer to HFTH (1)
- Need more feral hog processors (1)
- Supports continued/strengthened efforts to combat CWD/diseases (4)
- Supports more research/survey (5)
- Opposes deer rehabilitation program (3)
- Supports red meat licensing requirements (1)
- Opposes checking hunters on the stand (1)
- Opposes fluorescent orange requirements when hunting own land (1)

Hunting Seasons/Bag Limits

- Supports current bag limits (17)
- Supports increased bag limits (4)
- Supports bag limit that rewards hunters for taking does (4)
- Opposes current doe bag limit (too liberal) (6)
- Supports more localized bag limit regulations (3)
- Opposes alternative bag limits for special groups (3)
- Supports alternative bag limits for special groups (2)
- Supports antler restriction regulations (7)
- Opposes antler restrictions (4)
- Regulate harvest of buck fawns (2)
- Supports management for more natural age structure (1)
- Supports season extension/longer season (20)
- Supports current season (12)

- Supports shortening the firearms season (6)
- Supports later opening of archery/firearms season (5)
- Opposes season extension/longer season (4)
- Supports re-instating December break (3)
- Supports longer archery season (8)
- Supports longer archery season in urban areas (4)
- Supports elimination of zone line (3)
- Simplify seasons (1)
- Seasons/bag limits should be WRD responsibility (1)
- Supports more WMA opportunity (3)
- Supports more archery opportunity on public lands (4)
- Supports more quality deer hunts on WMAs (2)
- Supports more either-sex days on WMAs (1)
- Opposes relaxing adult/child hunt restrictions on WMAs (1)
- Supports later primitive weapons season (3)
- Supports longer primitive weapons season (2)
- Supports making primitive weapons season part of firearms season (1)
- Supports less restrictions on either-sex opportunity (1)
- Opposes hunting (3)

Hunting Deer with Dogs

- Opposes hunting deer with dogs (9)
- Supports hunting deer with dogs (4)
- Supports current laws/regulations (5)
- Opposes current regulations/law (1)
- Opposes hunting deer with dogs in Northern Zone (2)

Education/Outreach Efforts by WRD

- Sponsor inclusion of conservation-related curriculum in Public Education (4)
- More ethics in hunter education (4)
- More promotion of fair chase and hunting ethics (4)
- Promote role of hunters and their contributions more (2)
- Keep hunter education requirements (1)
- Require Bowhunter Education (NBEF) (1)
- More educational programs in urban areas (1)
- More collaboration with other groups (1)
- Provide more information/programs to public (4)
- WRD should be more involved in media (3)
- WRD need a stronger marketing program (1)
- Need landowner liability relief/education (3)
- More recruitment of hunters & youth (3)
- Opposes hunter recruitment (1)
- Publish hunting accident statistics (1)
- Provide more funding to these activities (1)

Hunter Access

- Supports hunting/access to other state/municipal/parks/urban lands (19)
- Opposes hunting/access to other state/municipal/parks/urban lands (1)
- Supports more acquiring WMAs/public hunting lands (12)
- Closed roads/gates prohibit hunter access on public lands (1)
- More disabled hunter access to public lands (2)
- Establish more disabled hunts/areas (1)
- Disables access is adequate (1)
- Supports WRD acquiring hunter access through private landowner programs (1)
- Provide access to public lands for trapping/trappers (1)

Hunting Over Bait

- Opposes legalizing hunting over bait (39)
- Supports legalizing hunting over bait (30)
- Supports changing baiting law to total prohibition (2)
- Allow baiting only for registered quality deer management clubs (1)
- Supports use of bait to manage urban deer (3)
- Use of bait to control deer should only be done by professionals (1)
- Supports use of bait only for control of feral hogs (8)

Supplemental Feeding

- Supports supplemental feeding (5)
- Supplemental feeding should be outlawed (only contributes to problem) (4)
- Supports only in non-hunted areas (1)
- Should be regulated by WRD (1)

Controlling Urban Deer/Nuisance

- Supports hunting to manage urban/nuisance deer (14)
- Opposes hunting for control of urban deer (7)
- Supports reducing urban deer (5)
- Opposes use of high-powered rifles in urban areas (1)
- Allow year-round archery hunting in problem areas (1)
- Supports more flexibility for land/home-owners to control nuisance deer (9)
- Opposes more flexibility for land/home-owners to control nuisance deer (1)
- Opposes sharpshooting to remove urban/nuisance deer (10)
- Supports sharpshooting to remove urban/nuisance deer (3)
- Supports trap/relocate for urban/nuisance deer (8)
- Opposes trap/relocate for urban/nuisance deer (6)
- Supports fertility control for urban/nuisance deer (13)
- Opposes fertility control for urban/nuisance deer (5)
- Require hunters to pay for fertility control programs (1)
- Supports “no management” for urban/nuisance deer (3)
- Opposed to crop damage permit program (2)

- Include guidelines in Greenspace program address deer management (1)
- WRD should have authority over any deer control programs (1)

APPENDIX XII

XII. Summary of Public Comment – January 2005

*Taken from public meetings (8), e-mails and written letters on hunting regulations
January 3-6, 2005*

KEY ISSUES SUMMARY OF COMMENT

Hunter Access

- Supports land acquisition and addressing deer hunting on acquired lands (10)
- Supports deer hunting on State Parks (6)
- Opposes deer hunting on State Parks (1)

Urban & Nuisance Deer Management

- Supports encouraging more hunting on public lands (1)
- Supports gaining hunter access to urban/suburban lands (1)
- Supports extending archery deer season to January 15 in archery-only counties (1)

Deer Density

- Not enough deer (14)
- Too many deer (2)

Deer Vehicle Collisions

- Supports educational items (3)

Public/Private Ownership

- Prohibit hunting any deer confined by fences (7)
- Supports totally prohibiting the confinement of deer (6)
- Supports prohibition of hunting exotics confined by fences (1)
- Supports increasing the acreage to 640 for confinement of white-tailed deer (1)

Hunting Deer with Dogs

- Supports maintaining current law (11)
- Supports reducing acreage to 250 for private landowners (2)
- Opposes extending season for hunting deer with dogs (2)
- Supports extending season for hunting deer with dogs (1)
- Supports hunting deer with dogs (1)
- Opposes maintaining minimum of 1000 acres for leased land (1)

Hunting Seasons & Bag Limits

- Opposed to bag limit increase (92)
- Too many doe days (18)
- Extend the deer season statewide, not just southern zone (17)
- Opposed to season extension (11)
- Supports maintaining current doe bag limit (5)
- Eliminate deer zone line (5)
- Supports extending the firearms deer season in southern zone to January 15 (4)
- Supports bag limit increase (3)
- Supports either-sex day changes in DMU 2 (3)
- Supports current season (2)
- Supports maintaining existing buck bag limit and antler restrictions (1)
- Supports maintaining conservative harvest in DMU 1 (1)
- Increase doe days in DMU 1 (1)

WRD Policies

- Supports increasing non-resident hunting license fees (6)
- Supports charging non-consumptive WMA users (3)
- Opposes increase in non-resident license fees (3)
- Opposes charging non-consumptive user fees (3)
- Supports license fee increase for all licenses (1)
- Eliminate deer rehabilitation (1)

Supplemental Feeding & Baiting

- Opposed to legalizing the hunting of deer over bait (34)
- Supports legalizing the hunting of deer over bait (28)
- Prohibit supplemental feeding (2)

Hunting & Wildlife Management Techniques

- Supports legalizing the use of scopes on muzzleloaders (111)
- Oppose legalizing the use of scopes on muzzleloaders (24)
- Supports control of feral hogs by permit (12)
- Opposes control of feral hogs by permit (4)

Peripheral Issues

- Supports opening more gates on WMAs for small game hunting (8)
- Increase hog hunting opportunities on WMAs (1)
- Supports flexibility for processing of feral hogs by deer processors (1)
- Opposes flexibility for processing of feral hogs by deer processors (1)

APPENDIX XIII

XIII. Summary of Public Comments – February 2005 *All Open House Public Hearings (4), E-mails, & Written Comments* 417 Participants

KEY ISSUES SUMMARY OF COMMENT

Hunter Access

- Supports land acquisition and addressing deer hunting on acquired lands (55)
- Supports deer hunting on State Parks (51)
- Supports changes in Farm Bill that encourage hunting access (37)
- Supports publishing landowner liability information in regulations guide (30)
- Opposes deer hunting on State Parks (1)

Urban & Nuisance Deer Management

- Supports encouraging more hunting on public lands (33)
- Supports gaining hunter access to urban/suburban lands (33)
- Supports extending archery deer season to January 15 in archery-only counties (27)
- Supports providing deer management assistance to State Parks (18)
- Supports maintaining current system for lethal removal (13)
- Supports changing crop damage policy (12)
- Opposes changing crop damage policy (11)
- Opposes use of sharpshooting for lethal removal (8)
- Opposes extending archery deer season to January 15 in archery-only counties (4)
- Opposes gaining hunter access to urban/suburban lands (2)

Deer Density

- Opposes reduction in DMUs 3, 4, 5, 7, & 8 (11)
- Supports recommendations (9)
- Opposes reductions (5)
- Opposes reduction in DMU 5 (3)
- Opposes reduction in DMU 8 (2)
- Stabilize DMU 8 (2)
- Supports reduction in 3, 4, 5, & 7 (1)
- Supports reduction in DMU 3 (1)
- Opposes reduction in DMUs 4, 5, 7, & 8 (1)
- Opposes reductions in DMU 7 & 8 (1)
- Stabilize statewide (1)

Deer Vehicle Collisions

- Supports educational items (26)
- Supports monitoring and modifications to road segments (18)
- Supports implementing deer plans on tracts near problem roads (16)
- Supports working with GA DOT and university researchers (15)
- Opposes implementing deer plans on tracts near problem roads (3)
- Opposes educational items (1)
- Opposes all actions (1)

Public/Private Ownership

- Supports prohibition of hunting exotics confined by fences (40)
- Supports totally prohibiting the confinement of deer (35)
- Prohibit hunting any deer confined by fences (17)
- Supports increasing the acreage to 640 for confinement of white-tailed deer (14)
- Opposes increasing the acreage to 640 for confinement of white-tailed deer (5)
- Increase acreage to 1,000 or more acres (3)
- Supports hunting exotics confined by fences (2)

Hunting Deer with Dogs

- Supports maintaining current law (25)
- Supports reducing acreage to 250 for private landowners (21)
- Supports maintaining minimum of 1000 acres for leased land (16)
- Supports removing requirement to mark vehicles (16)
- Supports eliminating permit fee (15)
- Supports maintaining requirement to mark dogs (16)
- Opposes reducing acreage to 250 for private landowners (12)
- Supports extending season for hunting deer with dogs (9)
- Opposed to hunting deer with dogs (7)
- Opposes maintaining minimum of 1000 acres for leased land (6)
- Opposes extending season for hunting deer with dogs (6)
- Opposes requirement to mark dogs (5)
- Opposes removing requirement to mark vehicles (4)
- Opposes eliminating permit fee (3)
- Allow hunters to shoot trespassing dogs (1)

Hunting Seasons & Bag Limits

- Opposed to bag limit increase (223)
- Extend the deer season statewide, not just southern zone (57)
- Supports maintaining existing buck bag limit and antler restrictions (52)
- Supports extending the firearms deer season in southern zone to January 15 (51)
- Supports maintaining conservative harvest in DMU 1 (50)
- Supports either-sex day changes in DMU 2 (23)
- Opposed to season extension (18)
- Supports education efforts on importance of antlerless harvest (16)

- Supports maintaining current doe bag limit (16)
- Opposes increase in either-sex days in DMU 2 (12)
- Increase doe days in DMU 1 (10)
- Supports bag limit increase (7)
- Opposes antler restrictions on bucks (4)
- Opposes maintaining existing buck bag limit and antler restrictions (1)

WRD Policies

- Supports charging non-consumptive WMA users (71)
- Supports increasing non-resident hunting license fees (56)
- Supports encouraging more deer processor participation in venison donation (42)
- Supports continued ban on cervid importation (32)
- Opposes increase in non-resident license fees (24)
- Supports review of deer rehabilitation guidelines and policies (19)
- Opposes charging non-consumptive user fees (6)
- Supports license fee increase for all licenses (3)
- Age restrictions for residents should also apply to non-residents (1)

Supplemental Feeding & Baiting

- Opposed to legalizing the hunting of deer over bait (89)
- Supports legalizing the hunting of deer over bait (65)
- Supports development of an educational brochure on baiting and feeding (27)
- Opposed to educational brochure (3)

Hunting & Wildlife Management Techniques

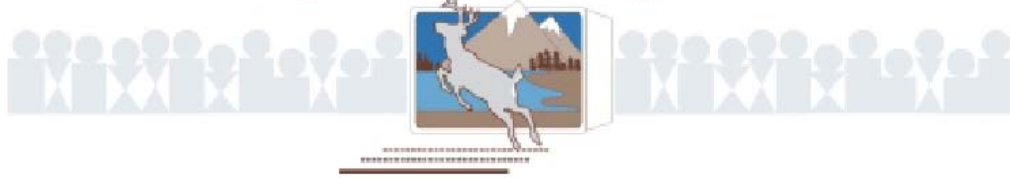
- Supports legalizing the use of scopes on muzzleloaders (125)
- Supports control of feral hogs by permit (63)
- Supports a law to prohibit release of feral hogs (48)
- Oppose legalizing the use of scopes on muzzleloaders (39)
- Opposes control of feral hogs by permit (22)

Peripheral Issues

- Supports opening more gates on WMAs for small game hunting (44)
- Increase hog hunting opportunities on WMAs (43)
- Supports flexibility for processing of feral hogs by deer processors (27)
- Supports “good Samaritan” law for donation of processed venison (26)
- Supports use of in-house funds for land purchases (22)
- Supports LE review process (14)
- Opposes opening more gates on WMAs for small game hunting (6)

APPENDIX XIV

Responsive Management



OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES OF GEORGIA RESIDENTS, HUNTERS, AND LANDOWNERS TOWARD DEER MANAGEMENT IN GEORGIA

Conducted for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources
by Responsive Management
2004

OPINIONS AND ATTITUDES OF GEORGIA RESIDENTS, HUNTERS, AND LANDOWNERS TOWARD DEER MANAGEMENT IN GEORGIA

2004

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR) to determine the opinions and attitudes of the general population, hunters, and large landowners regarding deer management in Georgia. The study entailed a telephone survey of Georgia residents, hunters, and landowners who own at least 100 acres. Hereinafter, any reference to the landowners sample refers to landowners who own 100 acres or more. Additionally, note that a further criterion for landowners to be asked any of the questions specific to landowners (Questions 87 through 125) was that they own a tract that was at least 20 contiguous acres.

For the survey, telephones were selected as the preferred sampling medium because of the universality of telephone ownership. The telephone survey questionnaire was developed cooperatively by Responsive Management and the GDNR. Responsive Management conducted a pre-test of the questionnaire, and revisions were made to the questionnaire based on the pretest. Interviews were conducted Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday noon to 6:00 p.m., and Sunday from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., all local time. The survey was conducted in June through July 2004. Responsive Management obtained a total of 1,033 completed interviews.

The software used for data collection was Questionnaire Programming Language 4.1. The analysis of data was performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software as well as proprietary software developed by Responsive Management.

The results were weighted. A randomly stratified sample of hunters and the general population and an unstratified sample of large landowners were used for this study. All three groups were assigned to northern and southern Georgia counties using their telephone area codes and prefixes. The proportions of the general population and hunters in each region (north and south) were then used to weight the data so that the data represented the actual proportion of respondents in the general population and hunter samples. In the general population sample, the actual populations of individuals 18 and older were known, and that information was used to create weights to apply to those respondents. The proportions of

hunters from the north and the south were not known; however, a large random sample (20,000 license holders) was available to create an estimate of the proportions of the population of hunters in the north and the south. That information was used to generate weights. Finally, the actual numbers and proportions of landowners were not known; therefore, those data were not weighted.

OPINIONS ON AND VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH DEER

- Most commonly, respondents describe their feelings about deer positively, saying that they enjoy seeing and having deer around. Substantial percentages, however, said they enjoy seeing deer but worry about the problems they cause. Finally, small percentages regard deer as a nuisance, with landowners being much more likely to regard deer as a nuisance.

- Respondents were asked five questions regarding deer management and the values associated with deer. Majorities of the general population and landowners said four of the five were very important, the exception being that "you have deer around your home," which just under half (49%) of both the general population and landowners said was very important. Majorities of hunters said each of the five were very important.
 - Hunters had a greater percentage saying each value was very important than did the general population and landowners.
 - The top statement for hunters and landowners was that people have the opportunity to hunt deer in Georgia (this was the second ranked value among the general population).
 - The top statement for the general population was that deer populations are being properly managed in Georgia.

OPINIONS ON DEER MANAGEMENT IN GEORGIA

- Agreement was much higher than disagreement that deer are properly managed in Georgia; nonetheless, there were substantial percentages in disagreement.

- Agreement exceeded disagreement that landowners properly manage deer on their land in Georgia.
- Respondents place a high value on deer management: overwhelming majorities of the general population (89%), hunters (96%), and landowners (88%) said knowing that deer populations are being properly managed in Georgia is very or somewhat important to them. Furthermore, a large majority of deer hunters (71%) indicated that they would support an increase in deer hunting license fees if they knew that the money would be used for deer management. The support for an increase in license fees evaporates when the money would not be used for deer management: 85% oppose an increase in fees if the money would not be used for deer management.
- When asked if they support or oppose controlling deer in urban and suburban areas, large majorities of all three groups support doing so (79% of the general population, 89% of hunters, and 86% of landowners). There is not wide agreement on the method for controlling deer in these areas, however: substantial percentages advocate some form of hunting, but sizable percentages favor trapping and relocation.
- In general, the GDNR received positive ratings, with large majorities of all three groups rating the performance of the GDNR as excellent or good. When asked specifically to rate the GDNR's Deer Management Program, the ratings are again positive, with excellent and good ratings far exceeding fair and poor ratings. Also, an overwhelming majority of deer hunters are satisfied with how well the GDNR incorporates hunters' wants and needs into the management of the state's deer population. Finally, a majority of landowners said that the GDNR does excellent or good at incorporating landowners' wants and needs into the state's deer management.
- Despite the positive ratings of the GDNR, respondents more often think the GDNR should provide more, rather than less, deer management assistance to private landowners.

- Respondents' perceived knowledge levels of the GDNR's Deer Management Program are fairly widely distributed, with hunters claiming the most knowledge, followed by landowners, then the general population.
- Regarding deer management strategies, overwhelming majorities of all three groups (82% of the general population, 99% of hunters, and 96% of landowners) support legal deer hunting in Georgia. Most of that support is strong support. The support is also high when respondents are asked if they support hunting as a way to manage deer populations (82% of the general population, 98% of hunters, and 93% of landowners strongly or moderately support hunting as a way to manage deer).
- As discussed above, there was no general consensus on the best way to manage deer in urban and suburban environments when respondents were asked in a follow-up question to whether deer should be controlled in urban and suburban areas. Respondents were asked about control strategies individually, as well.
 - Of the two questions about controlling deer populations in urban and suburban areas, there was more support for use of regulated archery hunting than there was for use of sharpshooters and professionals to control deer in urban and suburban areas.
- Regarding strategies to control deer in parks and other recreation areas that traditionally been closed to hunting, there was more support for regulated hunting than for use of sharpshooters and professionals.
- Finally, regarding deer hunting regulations that may have an effect on deer populations and deer management, there was much support for management to favor large-antlered deer and for allowing muzzleloaders to use magnifying scopes on their guns. There was less support for allowing hunting of deer over bait, and there was low support, relative to the other deer management regulations, for fenced hunting, either of white-tailed deer or exotic deer.

- Regarding the making of deer management decisions, respondents value scientific information and the professional judgment of GDNR biologists; social concerns and political concerns are not considered important in deer management decisions.
 - Among the general population and landowners, majorities said scientific information and professional judgment of GDNR biologists should be very important in making deer management decisions. Among hunters, majorities said scientific information, professional judgment of GDNR biologists, and the economic impact of hunting in Georgia should be very important.

- Overall, respondents think the deer herd in Georgia is very or somewhat healthy (74% of the general population, 85% of hunters, and 79% of landowners).

- Respondents, in general, think the deer population in their county has grown over the past 5 years.

- Majorities of the general population (51%) and hunters (59%) think the deer population in their county is about right, but a little less than a majority of landowners (44%) think the deer population is about right. Substantial percentages, however, think the deer population in their county is overabundant (31% of the general population, 28% of hunters, and 44% of landowners). Indeed, for each group, the percentage saying deer are overabundant greatly exceeds the percentage saying deer are under-abundant. Mirroring these results, when asked if the deer population in their county should be increased or decreased, majorities of all groups said it should remain the same (51% of the general population and landowners, and 61% of hunters), although substantial percentages said it should be decreased; the percentages answering "decreased" exceeded the percentages answering "increased."
 - Those who answered that the deer population in their county should remain the same most commonly gave as their reasoning that they have not had problems with deer, followed by those saying that the hunting is good and that they do not see too many deer.

- Those respondents who said that they thought the deer population in their county should be increased most commonly gave as their reasoning that doing so would offer better hunting opportunities or that they believe the deer population is too low.

- In follow up, those respondents who said that they thought the deer population in their county should be increased were asked about their support for increasing the deer population when five specific consequences were discussed. Three of the five consequences did not greatly erode support, with majorities in support of increasing the deer population, even if it means more damage to gardens and landscaping, even if it means more crop damage, and even if it means there would be more automobile-deer collisions. Support nearly completely disappears if respondents are informed that an increased deer population could result in less food and poorer quality habitat for other wildlife or in poorer health for the deer herd.

- Those respondents who said that they thought the deer population in their county should be decreased most commonly gave as their reasoning a reduction in automobile-deer collisions. Among landowners, a large percentage cited damage to crops.

- In follow up, those respondents who said that they thought the deer population in their county should be decreased were asked about their support for decreasing the deer population when four specific consequences were discussed. Majorities were still in support despite any of the consequences named: that fewer people would be able to see a deer, that fewer hunters would be spending money, that fewer wildlife watchers would be spending money, and that fewer hunters would be able to harvest a deer.

- The general population (75%) and hunters (81%) overwhelmingly said that they have not experienced any damage caused by deer over the past 12 months; however, landowners are more divided, with 56% saying they did not experience any damage, but 43% saying that they did.
 - The most common types of damage were to gardens and crops and through automobile collisions.

- Regarding automobile-deer collisions, substantial percentages (29% of the general population, 27% of hunters, and 35% of landowners) reported that they or someone from their household had a collision with a deer in the past 2 years. Relative to other driving hazards, majorities of respondents say that deer are a minor hazard rather than a major hazard. Very low percentages said deer are not a road hazard. Careless drivers and drunk drivers are considered much greater hazards.
- Majorities of all groups did not know how well the GDNR responds to property owner requests for assistance to reduce damage caused by nuisance wildlife; however, of those who gave an answer, ratings of excellent or good exceeded ratings of fair or poor, particularly among hunters and landowners.
- Respondents are split whether responsibility for managing deer-human conflicts should change (from the GDNR and its use of hunting as a control means) in areas where urbanization has closed hunting access, although slightly more respondents said that the responsibility should change than said it should not change.
 - Those who said the responsibility should change most commonly indicated that the state government should assume responsibility for managing deer-human conflicts in developing areas. Other important answers were community groups, the new landowners in the developing areas, and county animal control officers.
- Finally, there is more agreement than disagreement, particularly among hunters, that municipalities that pass firearm ordinances, thereby preventing deer hunting, should be required to mitigate deer damage.
- Regarding managing for a quality deer herd, it is instructive to first determine what deer hunters think "quality deer" means. Most commonly, deer hunters think management for quality deer means larger deer (64%), although a substantial percentage think it means more healthy deer (29%).
 - Only 7% think it means an increased number of deer.

- When all respondents were asked if they support or oppose management for large-antlered deer, hunters were the most likely to support, although support was still in the majority among the other groups. Indeed, majorities of all groups support such management: 63% of the general population, 87% of hunters, and 67% of landowners support management for large-antlered deer.
- When asked about specific management strategies for quality deer, hunters are overwhelmingly willing to give up the chance to shoot small-antlered bucks while at the same time shooting more does for an increased chance in later years of shooting large-antlered bucks (83%). However, deer hunters do not support a regulation requiring that a deer hunter must harvest a doe before he or she can harvest a buck (52% oppose, while 38% support).

OPINIONS ON DEER HUNTING IN GEORGIA

- Regarding deer management strategies, overwhelming majorities of all three groups (82% of the general population, 99% of hunters, and 96% of landowners) support legal deer hunting in Georgia. Most of that support is strong support. The support is also high when respondents are asked if they support hunting as a way to manage deer populations (82% of the general population, 98% of hunters, and 93% of landowners strongly or moderately support hunting as a way to manage deer).
- Regarding two strategies to control deer in places where hunting is restricted (urban/suburban areas and in parks/recreation lands), there is more support than opposition to use of regulated archery hunting to control deer in urban and suburban areas and the use of regulated hunting in parks and recreation lands that have traditionally been closed to hunting. The support is much greater than opposition among hunters and landowners, but the difference is less pronounced among the general population.
- A large majority of hunters are satisfied (81%) with the current deer season structure. Nearly the same percentage of deer hunters (82%) are satisfied with how well the GDNR incorporates hunters' wants and needs into the management of the state's deer population.

- Regarding specific regulations, more hunters support (61%) than oppose (28%) a longer deer hunting season in Georgia. Many more hunters support (77%) than oppose (7%) extending the deer hunting season in the northern zone to match the southern zone. There is also much more support (75%) than opposition (20%) to allowing the hunting of does at any time during the deer season. Finally, respondents were asked their opinions about two regulations. Among hunters, there is much more support (58%) than opposition (21%) to having one statewide season for deer with no zones, and there is much more support (76%) than opposition (18%) for allowing hunters who use muzzleloaders to use magnifying scopes. Among the general population and landowners, support exceeded opposition to both, but not as greatly as among hunters.

- A large majority of deer hunters (71%) indicated that they would support an increase in deer hunting license fees if they knew that the money would be used for deer management. The support for an increase in license fees evaporates when the money would not be used for deer management: only 8% would support, and 85% would oppose, an increase in fees if the money would not be used for deer management.

- When asked about specific management strategies for quality deer, hunters are overwhelmingly willing to give up the chance to shoot small-antlered bucks while at the same time shooting more does for an increased chance in later years of shooting a large-antlered bucks (83%). However, deer hunters do not support a regulation requiring that a deer hunter must harvest a doe before he or she can harvest a buck (52% oppose, while 38% support).

- Opposition exceeds support for hunters using dogs to hunt deer, even among hunters.
 - Among hunters, 39% support and 51% oppose hunters using dogs to hunt deer.
 - Those who support commonly cite tradition and an increased chance of harvest as reasons they support hunters hunting with dogs.
 - Those who oppose commonly say they do so because hunting with dogs does not give the deer a fair chance or that hunting deer with dogs is inhumane to the deer.

Landowners also indicate that hunting with dogs increases the chance of hunters trespassing.

- There is much more opposition (i.e., those saying it should be illegal) than support (those saying it should be legal) to fenced hunting of white-tailed deer and other large animals, even among hunters (indeed, the most support was among landowners): majorities of all groups said hunting white-tailed deer and other large animals inside fenced enclosures should be illegal. When a condition is placed on the question about fenced hunting of white-tailed deer-would the respondent support it if it would generate economic activity for rural Georgia-there is still much more opposition than support, and mostly strong opposition.
- The results regarding fenced hunting of non-native, exotic deer are similar. The large majority of respondents think it should be illegal to hunt non-native deer in a fenced enclosure, and they oppose it, even if it would generate economic activity for rural Georgia.
- There are greater percentages in each group who think that hunting white-tailed deer by attracting them using bait should be illegal than think it should be legal, when there are no conditions attached to the question, although the difference is not great among hunters and landowners.
 - Majorities of the general population (59%) and landowners (54%), and just less than a majority of hunters (49%), think it should be illegal to hunt deer using bait unconditionally.
 - Those who support do so most commonly because it will increase the hunters' chance of harvest, that it allows for better deer population control, and that it helps with quality deer management. Tradition was also cited by many.
 - Those who oppose do so most commonly because it is not perceived as fair to the deer and that it is unethical to trick the deer.
 - When the condition is place on the question about support or opposition for hunting deer directly over bait if it were part of a year-round feeding program, opposition

(52%) still exceeds support (31%) among the general population, but not among hunters, who had more support (56%) than opposition (37%), and among landowners, who were evenly split between support (45%) and opposition (45%).

PARTICIPATION IN DEER HUNTING IN GEORGIA

- Participation in any type of hunting in the past 2 years obviously varied widely among groups: 22% of the general population, 89% of hunters, and 44% of landowners had hunted in the past 2 years in Georgia. Most of those who had hunted had hunted deer. The next question asked specifically about deer hunting: 20% of the general population, 84% of hunters, and 38% of landowners had hunted deer. Additionally, substantial percentages of each group said that other members of their household had hunted deer in Georgia in the past 2 years: 36% of the general population, 59% of hunters, and 49% of landowners said another member of their household had hunted deer.
 - Hunters were also asked whether they hunted deer primarily on private or public land, with the overwhelming majority (79%) of deer hunters saying they hunted primarily on private land.
 - Deer hunters were asked on which public lands they had hunted; the most common types of public land on which they had hunted were Wildlife Management Areas and National Forest lands.
- Hunting deer with dogs is not common: 18% of deer hunters have hunted with dogs in the past, and 6% have hunted deer with dogs in the past year.
- Roughly two-thirds of hunters who had hunted deer in the past season in Georgia had harvested a deer.
- Hunters were asked about the number of days they had hunted deer in the past season in Georgia: the responses followed a bell curve, with the most common answer falling from 20 to 29 days.

- The most common motivation of deer hunters for hunting deer is for the sport or recreation, followed closely by those who hunt deer for the meat.
- Work obligations and lack of access are the most common factors that have reduced the quality of deer hunting experiences.

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES OF LAND

- All respondents were asked if they own land in Georgia: 71% of the general population own land, and a slightly higher percentage of hunters (81%) own land.
- A majority of landowners who own a tract of least 20 acres use the tract for farming (53%); substantial percentages of landowners of tracts of at least 20 acres use the tract for forestry (34%) or ranching (17%).
- Agreement exceeded disagreement that landowners properly manage deer on their land in Georgia, although substantial percentages disagreed.
- Respondents more often think the GDNR should provide more deer management assistance to private landowners than think the GDNR should provide less assistance.
 - The types of assistance desired of those who think the GDNR should provide more assistance to private landowners managing deer include technical assistance, education, and the development of deer habitat. A substantial percentage of landowners also said they desired law enforcement assistance.
- An overwhelming percentage (80%) of landowners who own a tract of at least 20 acres personally deer hunt and/or allow others to deer hunt on their tract.
 - Of those owners of tracts of at least 20 acres who answered that they do not allow deer hunting, nearly a quarter (24%) previously had allowed deer hunting. These people who had allowed deer hunting but now do not cited poor behavior of hunters, trespassing, crowding, and legal liability as reasons that they stopped allowing deer hunting on the tract.

- Those owners of tracts of at least 20 acres who allow deer hunting on their tract most commonly allow immediate family to hunt deer, followed closely by friends and acquaintances.
 - A large majority (74%) of owners of tracts of at least 20 acres do not charge a fee for others to hunt deer on their tract; 14% charge a fee.
 - A majority (53%) of owners of tracts of at least 20 acres said legal liability is a major concern when considering whether to allow hunting access, and an additional 25% said it is a minor concern (78% in total said legal liability is a concern).
- Owners of tracts of at least 20 acres of land were asked about whether they agreed with three statements about allowing access to their land. Similar majorities disagreed with each statement (from 55% to 61%).
- 61% disagreed that they would allow more hunting but are worried about excessive government intrusion.
 - 57% disagreed that they would be very likely to allow more deer hunting if they did not have to worry about legal liability issues.
 - 55% disagreed that they would be very likely to allow more deer hunting if they received a financial benefit for doing so.
- Landowners were asked if they experienced problems with legal and illegal hunters, with and without dogs, on their land. A substantial percentages (22%) had experienced problems with illegal hunters hunting without dogs. Otherwise, problems with hunters were low-7% or less.
- The most common problems with hunters were trespassing, violating game laws, and damaging fences and/or leaving gates open. Lesser problems were unsafe behavior, littering, damaging structures, and discourteous behavior.
 - The problems caused by illegal hunters, with or without dogs, were considered major problems by a majority of landowners who had experienced problems. The problems caused by legal hunters, with or without dogs, were considered minor problems by a majority of landowners who had experienced problems.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION ABOUT DEER IN GEORGIA

- Direct mail (between 30% and 31% for all groups) was the most commonly given answer regarding the best way to provide the respondent with information about deer in Georgia. This was followed by magazines, newspapers, and TV.

PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Participation in outdoor activities varied greatly from group to group. Hunters were the most active group—a larger percentage of hunters relative to the general population and landowners had participated in each of the five activities discussed in the survey. Landowners were more active than were the general population.
- The top activity among the general population was watching wildlife within 1 mile of home (64%), and 39% had taken a trip of at least a mile to view wildlife. Just under half of the general population had fished (47%).
- The top activity among hunters was fishing (84%), followed closely by big game hunting (83%). A majority of hunters had viewed wildlife within 1 mile of home (78%) or taken a trip of at least 1 mile to view wildlife (64%).
- The top activity among landowners was wildlife viewing within 1 mile of home (75%), and a majority had fished (58%). Landowners' rates of big game and small game hunting was approximately double that of the general population.

APPENDIX XV

Peripheral Issues

- Open more gates for small game hunters on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).
- Use in-house funding for land acquisition when possible.
- Increase hog hunting opportunities on WMAs.
- Encourage the Georgia Department of Agriculture to allow processing of hunter-harvested feral hogs by deer processors.
- WRD's Law Enforcement Section (LE) has initiated an in-house law enforcement review process. Committees are addressing the issues of ticket writing, complaint reporting, supervision, hiring and training, and simplification of laws and regulations.
- Responsive Management, Inc. is conducting a survey of public opinions and attitudes towards the law enforcement activities of DNR. The survey is projected to be complete by January 1, 2005. Incorporating the input from the survey and implementation of the recommendations from the law enforcement review process will address identified public relations issues.
- Encourage a "Good Samaritan" law to reduce liability risk associated with processing of venison to be donated to charitable organizations.