



# QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Date: 21 April 2008  
To: Pennsylvania Game Commission  
From: Steve Trupe, President, Pennsylvania State Chapter QDMA  
Kip Adams, Northern Director of Education and Outreach  
Re: 2008-09 Deer Season

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) and the Pennsylvania State Chapter we wish to voice our views on the proposed changes to Pennsylvania's 2008-09 deer season. The QDMA is an international nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ethical hunting, sound deer management and preservation of the deer-hunting heritage. The QDMA has over 50,000 members including more than 2,500 of the nation's leading wildlife and forestry professionals. As such, QDMA is widely regarded as the most respected whitetail organization in the U.S.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission has made great strides in the past several years with respect to deer management. Pennsylvania's deer herd is more in balance with the available habitat, it has a more balanced adult sex ratio, it has a more complete male age structure, and it has provided some incredible hunting experiences. Antlerless deer harvests have been predictable based on allocation rates within consistent seasons, and Pennsylvania hunters have had some fantastic buck hunting. These improvements were made possible by antler restrictions, concurrent seasons, the deer management assistance program (DMAP), the October antlerless season and a science-based approach to antlerless license allocations.

However, improvements do not come easily and they are not accepted by all stakeholders. We understand there are places in Pennsylvania where the deer population is below what the habitat can support, and we understand there are places where the deer population remains above this balance point. We also recognize the controversy surrounding deer densities in Pennsylvania.

The QDMA supports the Game Commission listening to hunters and trying to improve their hunting opportunities. We support you trying to provide an influx of dollars into rural economies during our hunting seasons. We support that potential changes will be thoroughly researched to provide unbiased information to use in future management recommendations. We understand there are political pressures on the Game Commission to make changes to the deer season, and we recognize the existing budget constraints and support a license fee increase so the Game Commission can return to full strength with regard to manpower and programs. Finally, we support the Game Commission's deer management program and its measurable goal system of herd health, habitat health and deer-human conflicts.

While the current proposal to limit antlerless hunting in WMUs 2D, 2G, 3C and 4B will likely benefit areas within each WMU needing to reduce the antlerless harvest, it will likely hinder other areas needing to maintain or increase the antlerless harvest. Allowing DMAP permits to be used during the first five days will help offset this restriction and we support this addition to the original proposal. The proposal also unnecessarily removes opportunity from hunters unable to acquire a DMAP permit that can only hunt during the first five days, and it places additional pressure on bucks during this time.

According to the Bureau of Wildlife Management's research division, as of June 2007, forest habitat health was considered fair or poor in 95% of the state's WMUs. This includes a rating of fair in three of the WMUs with proposed changes, and a rating of poor in the fourth. Based on this information, and on current Game Commission hunter density and harvest data, this proposal is counterproductive to the established goals within the deer management program and it unnecessarily restricts hunters in these four WMUs during the first five days of the rifle season. Therefore, even though we appreciate the Game Commission's efforts to make necessary changes to the deer management program, we do not support these proposed changes to the rifle season.

We recognize the difficult task before you today and hope you continue managing Pennsylvania's deer herd using concurrent seasons, antler restrictions, DMAP, an October antlerless season and antlerless allocations based on the wildlife staff's science-based recommendations. Thank you for your time and commitment to Pennsylvania's natural resources.

Respectfully,

Steve Trupe  
Pennsylvania State Chapter President

Kip Adams  
Director of Education & Outreach

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and the preservation of the deer-hunting heritage.*

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