



QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Date: 17 April 2007
To: Pennsylvania Game Commission
From: Steve Trupe, President, Pennsylvania State Chapter QDMA
Kip Adams, Director of Education and Outreach – Northern Region
Re: 2007-08 Deer Season

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) and the Pennsylvania State Chapter we wish to voice our views on Pennsylvania's deer management program. The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ethical hunting, sound deer management and preservation of the deer-hunting heritage. Among QDMA's nearly 45,000 members are 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 few 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 the allocation rates 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. We also understand there are places where the deer population remains above what the habitat can support. The Pennsylvania Game Commission regulates the antlerless harvest, and ultimately where deer herds are in relation to the habitat's ability to support them, through the allocation of antlerless licenses. We recognize the controversy surrounding deer densities in Pennsylvania and we urge you to use a science-based approach to setting the number and distribution of antlerless licenses.

Habitat management is also critical to productive deer herds and healthy habitats. Aggressive habitat management is occurring on private lands across the commonwealth. Many of these landowners have higher quality habitat than what is found on adjacent state lands. This is one reason why many private landowners continue to have high deer densities while public land hunters complain of few deer. We encourage you to increase the intensity of forest management programs on game lands to increase the habitat quality for deer and other wildlife populations.

Finally, we fully support the DMAP program but disagree with charging nearly double (\$10 vs. \$6) for a DMAP permit than for an antlerless license. Pennsylvania already has one of the most restrictive DMAP programs in the East (i.e., cost for permits, nontransferability between hunters, length of time between completing a coupon application and receiving a DMAP permit, ineligibility for participation on leased lands). The DMAP program is intended to assist landowners in harvesting additional antlerless deer to balance deer herds with the habitat, and nearly doubling the cost of a permit is counterproductive to this goal. Not allowing hunt clubs that lease land to participate is also counterproductive to this goal.

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. We also hope you consider increasing the intensity of forest management programs on state game lands, keeping DMAP permits equal in price to antlerless licenses, and expanding the DMAP program to include leased lands. Thank you for your time and commitment to Pennsylvania's natural resources.

Steve Trupe
President, Pennsylvania State Chapter QDMA

Kip Adams
Dir. of Education & Outreach

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and the preservation of the deer-hunting heritage.*
