White-tailed Deer Conservation and Management in the United States of America

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Distribution – all or parts of 45 states
Value of “Big Game” Recreation (2006)

10.7 million hunters spent $12B
2.3 million recreationists spent $4.6B
(Conover 2011)
Management Authority

State Regulatory Authority

◦ Primary Management Goals
  ◦ Hunter Opportunity
  ◦ Population Density
  ◦ Deer Health
  ◦ Hunter Satisfaction
  ◦ Agriculture Damage

Private vs Public Lands
Management Approaches

Male-Biased Harvest
- Maximize recreational harvest of younger aged males
- Unbalanced sex ratio

Quality Deer Management
- Optimize harvest of middle-aged bucks
- Balanced sex ratio

Trophy Buck Management
- Maximize harvest of mature bucks
- Balance sex ratio
Regulatory Approaches to Buck Management

Antler Restrictions – limit harvest of smaller-antlered young bucks, eastern US
Limit Access – restrict harvest rate, western US
Antler Restriction Variations

- Antler Points
- Antler Spread
- Combination
- None
Whitetail Adult Buck Annual Harvest

(QDMA Whitetail Report 2018)
Adult Buck Harvest Variation: Male-biased Harvest

(QDMA Whitetail Report 2018)
Adult Buck Harvest Variation: Quality & Trophy Management

Average 69% 3+ Year Old Bucks In Harvest

(QDMA Whitetail Report 2018)
Whitetail Antlerless Harvest

(QDMA Whitetail Report 2018)
Doe Harvest Rates Vary – Least and Greatest States

Average

0.3/sq mi
0.1/sq km

Average

4.6/sq mi
1.9/sq km

(QDMA Whitetail Report 2018)
Method of Harvest

(QDMA Whitetail Report 2018)
Concern Regarding Predation Losses

- Small scale concern
- Generally not a problem at state/region level
Human Safety and Disease Concerns

Urban Archery
Sharpshooting
Birth Control
Chronic Wasting Disease Distribution

- **Areas with CWD infected Cervid populations**
- **States/Provinces where CWD has been found in captive populations**

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CWD Issues: Regulatory Authority for Captive Cervids

- **Wildlife**
- **Livestock**
- **Other Classification**
- **No Captives**
- **No Information**
Challenging But Hopeful Future