White-tailed Deer Management Challenges in Mexico

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Abstract

White-tailed deer represents a huge income in terms of hunting and recreation enterprises, especially in northern Mexico. However, the cultural, ecological and technological issues in different regions in Mexico have a different effect on conservation and management of the species.

Most of the 14 white-tailed deer subspecies are located in central and south regions of Mexico where poverty is more accentuated. Additionally, the northern Mexico region has acquired more experience in terms of population and habitat management techniques for white-tailed deer because of the proximity of the United States and the fact that some of the white-tailed deer subspecies are sharing distribution ranges between USA-Mexico borders.

This is the case of Texas white-tailed deer which is present on most of the southern part of Texas and northeastern Mexico represented by the states of Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas. Even when white-tailed deer conservation and management in northeastern region is more advanced as compared to western states in northern Mexico, gaps of knowledge exist in conservation and management of the species.

At the national level, Mexico possesses wildlife management units called UMA’s, which is wildlife utilization scheme that promotes conservation, management and proper level of harvest of game species. However, this scheme has been criticized because it does not consider the proper space scale of management to avoid the “tragedy of the commons”, especially in very small UMA’s.

The lack of use of ecological sound management techniques such as prescribed fire has been underestimated to improve the habitat for white tailed deer. In this regard, in the United States, the use of fire as ecological tool has been used for many years as habitat management technique for multiples species of wildlife. However, in Mexico, the prescribed fire has not been used extensively and it is being used just as prevention of wildfires without specific goals for game species management and, the time of utilization is restricted to fall and winter seasons. The validation of this technique in different ecoregions such as Chihuahuan desert, Sonora desert and Tamaulipan thornscrub must be evaluated to know the effect of this tool to improve white tailed deer habitat.

Another important issue that is threatening the conservation of native genetics of white tailed deer subspecies, especially in northeaster Mexico is the fact of the introduction of “northern blood lines” as a strategy to improve the B&C scores, and thus, losing the native genetic of WTD subspecies. Mexico have tremendous opportunities to use management techniques to improve white-deer conservation and management and to promote the sport hunting heritage in North America.
References
