Urban Deer Management Programs

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VDGIF Role in Urban Deer Management

- Regulate hunting
- Issue out-of-season kill permits to citizens/officials per Code of Virginia
- Permit deer removal operations by local government officials
- Inform/educate about nonlethal options
- Offer management programs directed by the Virginia Deer Management Plan (http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/deer/management-plan/)
- Does not conduct urban deer removal operations

Hunting Programs

- General deer seasons (firearms, archery, muzzleloader)
- Urban archery deer season
- Deer Management Assistance Program
- Damage Control Assistance Program
- Localities may restrict weapons use and safety, but in general do not regulate hunting.

General Seasons

- Effectiveness based on harvest of antlerless deer (females)
- Unlimited bonus tags for antlerless deer
- Full-season for antlerless deer in problem areas
- Impediment: perceived or real safety risk, resulting in weapons restrictions

Urban archery deer season

- 1 month before + 3 months after statewide archery season (> 7 months total)
- Antlerless deer only (for population control)
- All cities, towns, and some counties are eligible; opt in or out by April 1
- 35 localities participating during 2011-2012 season

Deer Management Assistance Program

- During regular hunting seasons
- Landowner sets objectives: quality deer management, damage or population control
- Flexible antlerless tag issuance (unlimited daily and annual bag limit)
- Mandatory data collection

Damage Control Assistance Program

- Agricultural and suburban settings
- Increase antlerless deer kill during season (unlimited daily and annual bag limit)
- Toggles off of kill permit issuance

Kill permits

- Available at time of damage (any time, but generally not during a hunting season)
- "Shall issue" for commercial and "may issue" for residential damage
- VDGIF has MOU with several localities for direct issuance

Sharpshooter Programs

- MOU kill permit with several localities
- Deer Population Reduction Program

Deer Population Reduction Program

- Generally public land or communities
- 2 options: sharpshooting and managed hunts
- Permit conditions tailored to specific area

Non-lethal options – Localities

- Do nothing
- Cannot trap and transfer
- Fertility control
  - "Gonacon" registered by EPA Sept 2009; not approved in VA yet
  - Most effective in closed populations (fenced, island)
- For deer vehicle collisions:
  - Fencing and wildlife crossings/underpasses effective
  - Signage variably effective
  - Whistles and reflectors not effective so far

Non-lethal Options - Landowners

- Exclusion (fences, tubes, netting)
- Repellents (chemicals, dogs)
- Plant selection and placement
- Removal of intentional feed (feeding illegal Sept. 1 – first Sat. in Jan.)
- Online information: http://icwdm.org

Summary

- Variety of programs available
- Focus on antlerless deer reduction
- Limited non-lethal options
- If there is a need, we will create a tool!