

East Central and Eastern Foothills Regional Working Group

6pm WEDNESDAY JULY 24th 2013

Damon Hall, Hartland Town Offices

Fish and Wildlife Department Staff: Adam Murkowski, Scott Darling

Fish and Wildlife Board Members: Justin Lindholm, Theresa Elmer, Brian Ames

East Central and Eastern Foothills Working Group Members: Terry Reil, Ralph Kurash, Jeff Howard, Kyle Gould, Tyler Mitchell

General Public: Roy Kilburn

A. QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, and GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. WMU revisions, - what is proposed and why?

B. CROSSBOW DISCUSSION

1. Perception is crossbows are not the way to hunt among older archers. There are no obvious advantages of crossbows over traditional bow. No reason to not allow increased crossbow use.

2. Enjoys bow hunting, and doesn't see anything wrong with crossbows. Legal in 22 out of 48 states.

3. Performance is the same, but it is easier with a crossbow. Could use optics, aim like a gun. They might take more shots and wound more deer.

4. There should be an education component of the archery hunter education program.

5. Almost anyone can get a permit if they are disabled and have a doctor's note.

6. One consideration may be limiting scopes.

7. Increased participation and retention with legalization of crossbows.

8. Seems fine to allow crossbows where we allow bows to be used – any season.

9. There wouldn't be impact on poaching, perhaps except tempting bow hunters on their way home.

10. Get data on implements used in poaching.

11. Could use crossbows during regular bow season.

C. APR DISCUSSION

1. Shoot bigger bucks before breeding and smaller bucks do most of the mating.

2. Offered QDMA's; 2012 report on buck age class by state.
3. APR concern – saw 3 spikes left in rifle and 1 left in woods in muzzleloader season. Losing protected bucks, without APR, these deer would be brought home.
4. Questions the 10% wounding rate estimate. Thinks it's higher with the APR.
5. Deer are very different across boundaries.
6. Question about if Department is concerned about spikehorns doing more breeding and influencing genetics of the deer herd.

D. GROUP DISCUSSION

Question 1: What did deer hunters perceive as the goal/objective of the current Antler Point Regulation?

- Some felt a way for VT to have bigger bucks and hence, bigger revenues. Some think it was monetary driven.
- To shoot a larger antlered deer and the trend toward QDMA.
- If 40% of deer were spikes, we would save them to be bigger bucks on the landscape.
- Bigger deer and older age class deer. Won't get caliber in VT.
- So much pressure on harvest, save young bucks.
- Hunter satisfaction was a motivator.

Question 2: Based off of information in the survey and/or biological review has the current APR moved us towards these goals/objectives?

- Moving away from APR, more 2 ½'s, but fewer 3 and 4 yr olds
- Agrees with assessment of impact of current APR.
- Most hunters will shoot the first legal buck they see. It is personal preference if they want to.
- Have license sales declined since APR?
- Opinions are localized. Some are seeing better bucks, but fewer of them.

Question 3: What are/should be the goals/objectives of Vermont's deer/buck management?

- Consistency in amount of deer as in baseline
- Deer herd management – healthy deer herd a top priority.
- Access to land has changed.
- Current use posting is an issue.
- Hunting opportunities to see a deer or bag a deer.
- Sustain hunter participation and satisfaction.
- Youth participation and they need to see deer.
- Mentor program change so don't need to use the other person's tag.
- How NH treats non-licensed hunters with free tag available.
- People want to see older deer, but can we grow them?