

Lake Plains and Western Foothills Regional Working Group

6pm MONDAY JULY 22nd 2013

Dead Creek WMA Refugee Headquarters

Fish and Wildlife Department Staff: Adam Murkowski, Scott Darling

Fish and Wildlife Board Members: Justin Lindholm, Craig Nolan

Lake Plains and Western Foothills Working Group Members: Keith Mason, Nick Cupoli, Jon Audet, April St. Francis, Tom Wilson

A. QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, and GENERAL DISCUSSION

Why are we allowing the use of natural-based urine lures? Feels natural-based urine lures should be prohibited.

B. CROSSBOW DISCUSSION

1. Allows for more hunters to help license sales. I wonder if they can't find a bow hunting class. At least you can look on-line and schedule the one day class.
2. Crossbow provides opportunity for younger and older. Crossbow makes sense, and higher success rates, higher but they may be more of a meat hunter than the traditional bow hunter.
3. Abuse may occur (poaching) but why not have the opportunity despite the potential to be abused.
4. Have seen kids with crossbows in Ohio that probably could not adequately draw a vertical bow.
5. Missing an opportunity as many people go out of state to hunt with their crossbows.
6. Could help manage deer herds in urban areas.
7. VFWD needs to decide what we need to do to manage herd, and see how crossbow fits into the plan.
8. Is it a separate season, a separate fee?

C. APR DISCUSSION

1. Adam reviewed APR report with working group.
2. If you have/see more bucks, the more likely they'll will be to pass on younger deer.
3. If we discuss other alternatives, hunters are willing to consider some ideas from meat hunters.
4. 1 buck/yr limit would allow meat hunters to kill a buck and those who want a bigger deer can pass on the younger bucks.

5. There are different ways to accomplish buck management goals other than the current APR.
6. Data suggests not to expand APR, but need to educate people on future management strategies.
7. Not seeing increases in the number of 2 ½+ yr olds bucks. Key data/finding from APR report.
8. Some think 1 buck limit is same as APR and won't work. We are over-harvesting bucks and we need to rehash entire state – breaking it down to 3 zones like we have for the regional working groups. 1 buck limits opportunity. Shorter rifle and muzzleloader seasons.
9. There are ways to have different restrictions in different areas.

D. GROUP DISCUSSION

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

- Seeing and harvesting larger antlered deer and older deer.
- Getting more mature animals and getting age back up.
- They thought it would carry further into older age classes.

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

- Data shows the APR is not achieving what we thought we would achieve.
- If people saw the data on the APR they would agree.
- Not as many older bucks as expected. If goal was just a 2 ½ yr old, we accomplished that. If we wanted a 2 ½ + yr old, we have not achieved it.
- No one says they have seen or shot more, older deer. Some people might think it though because all you see at a check stations are non-spikes.
- Half of the people are satisfied with APR half are not.

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

- Hunter satisfaction, bigger better bucks.
- Manage it to keep the most people happy. Not a QDMA policy
- Sustainable healthy deer herd.
- Just knowing older deer (3.5+) are out there is important. It is much more interesting than knowing there are more 2 ½ yr old bucks.

Question 4: If goals/objectives are not currently being met or were not met prior to APR implementation how can they be achieved?

- Stop the APR.
- Shorten firearm season, take it out of the rut.

- Reduce pressure on buck population. You are overharvesting your bucks. 3 zone seems to make sense.
- If get shorter rifle season, increased crossbow opportunity to help offset lost opportunity.
- Keep rifle season on Thanksgiving weekend, but take away early season
- Move hunter pressure to the Mountains and help relieve the valleys of so much hunting pressure.
- Would not support changing the rifle season.
- Consider shotgun season
- Muzzleloader only zones
- Expand muzzleloader season, but shorten rifle season.