The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board held a meeting at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday March 20th, 2019 at 1 National Life Drive, Montpelier, VT 05620 in the Dewey Building.

Members of the Board in attendance: Tim Biebel (Board Chair), Johanna Laggis, Wendy Butler, Bryan McCarthy, Michael Kolsun, Dennis Mewes, Pete Allard, Brian Bailey, Michael Bancroft, David Fielding, Bill Pickens, Cheryl Frank Sullivan, and David Robillard.

Fish and Wildlife Department Staff: Louis Porter (Commissioner), Mark Scott (Director of Wildlife), Col. Jason Batchelder (Director of Law Enforcement), Susan Warner (Director of Outreach), Eric Palmer (Director of Fisheries), Catherine Gjessing (General Counsel), Will Duane (Executive Assistant), Lt. Carl Wedin, (Game Warden), Tom Jones (Fish Health Biologist), Nick Fortin (Deer Project Leader), Scott Darling (Wildlife Management Manager), Tom Rogers (Information Specialist) and Evan Spencer (Outreach Division Intern).

Members of the Public in Attendance: Jay Sweeny, John Liccardi, Justin Lindholm, Rick Kaminski, and Molly Cook

The Board meeting was called to order at 5:01 PM by the Board Chair Tim Biebel

1) Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion: Bryan McCarthy moved to approve the February 27th Board meeting minutes as amended. Cheryl Frank Sullivan seconded the motion.

Discussion: Some typographical errors were noted and corrected.

Vote: Unanimous voice vote to approve the minutes as drafted.

The Approved Minutes From February, 27th, 2019 Can Be Found Here.
2) **Public Comments (Limited to 2 minutes per speaker)**

John Licardi—I’d like to urge caution with the proposal for crossbows for all. Based on data from my local check-in station it seems that 50% of all archery season deer are taken with a crossbow. It’s a very effective weapon, but it’s a very lethal one. There is a different learning curve from a standard bow or a long bow relating to safety. It might be worth the Department’s time to gather more data before allowing young hunters to use these implements. I’ve spoken with a warden in New York who indicates that crossbows seem to be the weapon of choice for poachers; they are silent, accurate, and lethal.

Justin Lindholm – I’ve been talking to folks around the state about the new deer proposal. I’ve found that people are generally in favor. I did not expect to find such favorability. There are some concerns regarding the novice season and the extension of crossbows for all. I believe this proposal is intended to get more people into the sport of hunting, but let’s please focus on the details.

3) **Deer Rule — Proposed Amendments — 1st Board Vote**

Commissioner Porter and Mark Scott recapped where the Board is in the current regulatory process and introduced Scott Darling and Nick Fortin who walked the Board through the Department’s final recommendation for changes to the current deer management rules.

The Department presented the Board with its final proposal and rulemaking language. At the previous meeting the Board requested that the Department make some changes to its proposed recommendation, specifically the proposed archery season and the proposed novice season. The final proposal represents those changes and is attached at the end of these minutes.

Nick Fortin and Scott Darling described the elements of the Department’s final proposal and flagged elements of the proposal to revisit for further discussion after the walk-through.

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There was a Break for dinner 6:15-6:45

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**Motion:** Bryan McCarthy motioned to review individual items in the Department’s recommendation and to vote to approve the proposed rule after discussing these elements. Bill Pickens seconded the motion.
**Discussion:**

Items flagged for discussion include:

**Section 3.10**: Novice Season. After discussion the Board decided against making changes to this section of the proposal.

**Section 5.5**: Multiple Implements. After discussion the Board decided by a vote 8 to 3 not to make changes to this section of the proposal.

**Section 7.6**: Crossbow Locks, Cases and Gun Stock Blocks. After discussion the Board decided not to make changes to this section of the proposal.

**Antler Point Restrictions**: David Robillard raised concerns about WMU D1 being used as an experimental unit by lifting the antler point restriction on young bucks. Nick Fortin confirmed that D1 is indeed an experimental unit, but that data is needed from this unit to compare with other similar WMUs to gauge the success of the new regulations statewide, and assess better the data on bucks shot during youths weekend compared to rifle season. Fortin confirmed that the APR can be modified again after 5 years if the regime is not working as intended. After discussion, Robillard did not request a vote to make a change to this section.

**Vote**: The Board voted to approve amending the deer management rule (attached to minutes) as proposed by the Department, 12-1. David Robillard was the single NO vote.

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4) **Public Hearings — Review**

Mark Scott explained the public hearing format for Board Members, expectations of Board Members at the public hearings, and how to collect comments and facilitate small group discussions.

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5) **Commissioner’s Update**

The Commissioner and Mark Scott informed the Board that the Department is working to provide the Board with data on turkey populations in WMU C in response to Bill Pickens request, and will have that information soon.

Fish stocking for Lake Champlain is starting at the end of March. Inland waters will start in mid-April.
Industrial sugaring was a topic at a recent Forest Roundtable discussion. The Forest Roundtable is a collection of stakeholders relating to forestry policy issues. There is still not enough good data to know about possible impacts to wildlife and wildlife recreation.

There will be 2 Board meeting in April on the 3rd and the 24th.

The Legislature has taken steps to keep the Salisbury fish hatchery open for the time being.

There are changes to the deer seasons and in the moose permitting process that need to come from the Legislature. It is still uncertain if those changes will happen this year or next.

There is a wanton waste bill in the Legislature that the Department continues to monitor. The Department supports wanton waste provisions on a species by species approach through rulemaking.

This is Pete Allard’s final meeting, his presence at these Board meetings will certainly be missed.

The Meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 8:45 pm.

The mission of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is the conservation of all species of fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the people of Vermont.
§ 2d. Second archery deer hunting licenses
Pursuant to Title 10 V.S.A. § 4084(a), relating to deer, the Fish and Wildlife Board establishes that:
1.0 A person taking a deer on a second archery license, pursuant to § 4084(a), may take an anterless deer during the period from the first Saturday in October and running for 28 consecutive calendar days and the nine consecutive calendar days starting on the first Saturday after the completion of the regular rifle deer hunting season.

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§ 4. Bow and arrow hunting
Unless otherwise provided, any game which may be taken by shooting may be taken by use of bow and arrow, or by crossbow where authorized under 10 V.S.A. § 4711 or authorized by Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board rules.

§ 7. Bear Management Rule
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3.10 "Legal means" or "Legal method" means the taking of a black bear by muzzleloader, rifle, handgun, archery equipment, or crossbow when authorized.
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6.1 Licenses and Permits Any person hunting, pursuing, harvesting, or in any manner involved in the taking of a black bear with the use of dogs must hold a valid Vermont Big Game Hunting License, use only Department Registered Dogs and have purchased possess a valid bear tag. In addition, the person hunting, pursuing, harvesting, or in any manner involved in the taking of a black bear with the use of dogs must hold a valid bear dog permit or accompany a bear dog permit holder. The permit shall be carried at all times by the permittee while hunting with dogs or taking black bear and exhibited to a game warden, landowner, or law enforcement officer upon demand.
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9.1 Any person who harvests a bear shall collect a premolar tooth and submit the tooth to a game warden, official Fish and Wildlife Department Reporting Station, or to a person designated by the Commissioner to receive the biological collection, within 48 hours (30) thirty days of taking the bear.

§ 22. Turkey Seasons
6.0 Legal Method of Taking:
6.1 Only a shotgun, crossbow, or bow and arrow may be used. A crossbow may only be used by a hunter who is 50 years or older or has a permit in accordance with 10 V.S.A. § 4711.
6.2 Only number 2 through number 8 shot shall be used or possessed.
6.3 An arrowhead must be at least 7/8th of an inch in width and have two or more cutting edges.
6.4 Rifles shall not be used or carried by any person while hunting turkeys. A person taking a turkey with a crossbow or bow and arrow may carry a handgun in accordance with 10 V.S.A. § 4252(b), however, that person may not use the handgun to take turkey.
6.5 No person shall use dogs in the spring, nor electronic calling devices, bait, live decoys, or participate in cooperative drives during either season.
6.6 Any person wishing to hunt turkey with a crossbow or bow and arrow must hold proof of having held an archery license or a certificate of satisfactory completion of a bowhunter education course from Vermont or another state or province of Canada which is approved by the Commissioner.
6.7 Unless it is uncocked, a person shall not possess or transport a crossbow in or on a motor vehicle, motorboat, airplane, snowmobile, or other motor-propelled vehicle except as permitted in accordance with 10 V.S.A. § 4705.

§ 33. Moose Management Rule
1.0 Authority

13.2 Regular Season: Moose may be taken only with the following implements and restrictions:
   a) Centerfire rifles or handguns not less than .25 caliber.
   b) A muzzleloading firearm of not less than .45 caliber, with a minimum barrel length of 20 inches and designed to be fired from the shoulder, or a muzzleloading handgun of not less than .45 caliber and with a minimum barrel length of 10 inches.
   c) Bows of not less than 50 pound draw weight, based on the archer's normal draw length for traditional bows, and using arrowheads with a minimum of 7/8 of an inch in width with two or more cutting edges. A person taking moose may use a crossbow as a means of take during any season that permits the use of a bow and arrow-only when holding a valid permit issued pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 4711 or when the person is 50 years or older; and the crossbow is used in accordance with this subsection.
13.3 Archery Season: Moose may be taken only with the following implements and restrictions:
   a) Bows of not less than 50 pound draw weight, based on the archer's normal draw length for traditional bows, and using arrowheads with a minimum of 7/8 of an inch in width with no fewer than two or more cutting edges.
   b) A person taking moose may use and possess a crossbow only when holding a valid permit issued pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 4711 or when the person is 50 years or older. Crossbow bolts shall have arrowheads with a minimum of 7/8 of an inch in width with two or more cutting edges.
§ 36. Youth hunting day—Deer
(1)(a) On the Sunday prior to the opening day of the regular deer season a resident who is under 16 years of age and has received a permit upon successful completion of a hunter firearms safety course may take one (1) wild deer with one antler at least three inches in length.
(b) However, if the Fish and Wildlife Board determines that taking of antlerless deer will be allowed then the Wildlife Management Units where this will be allowed and numbers of antlerless deer that may be taken will be adopted by rule, relating to the taking of antlerless deer.
(c) If a deer of either sex may be taken, as determined by (a) and (b), then the limit shall be one deer.
(2) Issuance of Tags; Proof of Residency:
Proof of satisfactory compliance in a hunter firearms safety course and proof of residency must be presented before the issuance of a tag.
(3) Nonresidents will not be eligible for this hunt.
(4) To hunt under this section each person shall hold a valid hunting license under 10 V.S.A. § 4255., except a minor of a landowner pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 4253. (10 V.S.A. § 4742(b))
(5) Each person hunting under this section shall be accompanied by an unarmed adult who holds a valid hunting license and who is over 18 years of age. (10 V.S.A. § 4742(b))
(6) An adult accompanying a youth under this section shall accompany no more than two (2) permittees at one time. (10 V.S.A. § 4742(b))
(7) No person shall hunt under this section on privately owned land without first obtaining the permission of the owner or occupant. (10 V.S.A. § 4742(d))
(8) Tagging:
A deer taken pursuant to this section shall immediately be tagged upon being taken into a person’s possession by attaching the tag to the deer carcass. The tag shall be placed on the deer carcass in a location that is open to view. Such tag shall remain on the deer carcass during possession and transportation and until such time that the animal is cut up for consumption. A person shall not transport parts of a deer taken under this section unless the parts or package containing them are marked with a name and address of the person who killed the deer. (10 V.S.A. App. § 2a)
(9) Reporting:
A person taking a deer pursuant to this section shall within 48 hours report the taking and exhibit the carcass to the nearest Game Warden, official Fish & Wildlife Department Reporting Station, or to a person designated by the Commissioner to receive the reports. No deer taken under this section shall be transported out of the State without first being reported as required herein. (10 V.S.A. App. § 2(a))
(10) A person taking a deer under a permit pursuant to this regulation and 10 V.S.A. § 4742 will be eligible to take a deer during the regular deer season and other remaining open seasons if they have not taken three deer in the calendar year as prescribed in 10 V.S.A. § 4753.

Subchapter 3. Quadrupeds
§ 37. Deer Management Rule

1.0 Authority

1.1 This rule is adopted pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 4081(b). In adopting this rule, the fish and wildlife board is following the policy established by the General Assembly that the protection, propagation, control, management, and conservation of fish, wildlife and fur-bearing animals in this state is in the interest of the public welfare and that the safeguarding of this valuable resource for the people of the state requires a constant and continual vigilance.

1.2 In accordance with 10 V.S.A. § 4082, this rule is designed to maintain the best health, population and utilization levels of the deer herd.

1.3 In accordance with 10 V.S.A. § 4084, this rule establishes open seasons; establishes daily, season and possession limits; prescribes the manner and means of taking white-tailed deer and establishes restrictions on taking based on sex and antler characteristics.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this rule is to manage the white-tailed deer herd, implementing will of the General Assembly to design rules to maintain the best health, population and utilization levels of the deer herd.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Antlerless Deer: "Antlerless Deer" are defined as those deer without antlers or antlers less than three (3") inches in length.

3.2 Antlerless Deer Permit: An “antlerless deer permit” is a permit issued pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 4081(g) that allows a person to take one antlerless deer during the antlerless or muzzleloader seasons.

3.3 Antler Point: A "point" is an antler projection of at least 1" measured from the base of the point at the main beam to the tip of the point. A broken main beam shall count as a point regardless of length.

3.4 Bait: For the purposes of this regulation, "bait" is defined as any animal, vegetable, fruit or mineral matter placed with the intention of attracting wildlife. Natural and artificial scents and lures that are not prohibited under Section 11-13 of this regulation and are not designed to be consumed by eating or licking, shall not be bait for the purposes of this rule.
3.5 Baiting: "Baiting" is the use of any animal, vegetable or mineral matter, including scents and lures prohibited under section 11 of this regulation: that has the effect of enticing wildlife to a certain location.

3.6 Board: The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board.

3.7 Bona fide agricultural practices: Practices that have been employed to plant, grow and harvest an agricultural product conducted in the usual manner.

3.8 Crossbows: A crossbow means a device consisting of a bow mounted to a rigid stock for discharging bolts or arrows and having a mechanical means to hold and release the drawn string, which must be fired from the shoulder. A bolt means a short projectile, designed for a crossbow, that resembles an arrow. No person shall hunt wild animals or game with a crossbow if the bolt has an arrowhead less than seven-eighths of an inch at its widest point and has less than two sharp cutting edges. A crossbow shall have a minimum pull of 125 pounds, a working mechanical safety and a stock no less than 23 inches in length.

3.9 Legal Buck: in Wildlife Management Units C, D1, D2 E1, E2, G, I, L, M, P, Q, any white-tailed deer with at least one antler three (3”) inches or more in length; and in Wildlife Management Units A, B, F1, F2, H, J1, J2, K, N, and O a legal buck shall be any white-tailed deer with at least one antler with two or more antler points one inch in length or longer.

3.10 Novice: A person who purchased their first hunting license within the past 12 months and is 16 years of age or older.

3.11 Youth: A person who is 15 years of age or younger.

4.0 Annual Deer Limit

4.1 A person shall not take more than three-four white-tailed deer-in a calendar year, only two of which may be a legal buck.

a) Youth and novice hunters shall be allowed to take two legal bucks, provided that one is taken during the youth or novice season, not to exceed the annual limit of four white-tailed deer.

5.0 Antlerless Deer Season

5.1 For four consecutive days, commencing on the Thursday 16 days prior to the opening day of the regular rifle season shall be the antlerless deer season.

5.2 A person hunting under this section shall obtain a muzzleloader license as provided in 10 V.S.A. § 4252 and must possess an antlerless deer permit.
5.3 A person may take one antlerless deer per antlerless deer permit. A person may take additional antlerless deer if they obtain additional antlerless deer permits not to exceed the annual limit as prescribed in section 4.1 of this rule. No person may purchase or possess more than one antlerless deer permit at a time, or purchase a subsequent antlerless deer permit until the person has harvested an antlerless deer. If a person possesses a permit to take an antlerless deer, then the person may take an antlerless deer.

5.4 A person hunting with a muzzleloading firearm pursuant to this rule shall not carry any firearms other than one single-barreled muzzleloading firearm as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 4001(33) while hunting deer during this season.

5.5 No person taking deer by means of muzzleloader may possess archery equipment or crossbow while hunting.

6.0 Deer; Seasons for Taking by Muzzleloading Firearm

Muzzleloader Season

6.1 Muzzleloader Season: For the nine consecutive calendar days commencing on the first Saturday after the completion of the regular rifle deer hunting season, a person may take:

a) One legal buck by muzzleloading firearm, provided that they have not yet taken a buck as prescribed in Section 4.1 of this rule, and

b) If the Board has authorized the taking of antlerless deer, and if an individual possesses a permit to take an antlerless deer permit, then the individual may take an antlerless deer as authorized. No person may purchase or possess more than one antlerless deer permit and can only purchase a subsequent antlerless deer permit after the person has harvested an antlerless deer, not to exceed the annual limit as prescribed in section 4.1 of this rule.

6.2 A person hunting with a muzzleloading firearm under this section shall obtain a muzzleloader license as provided in 10 V.S.A. § 4252.

6.3. A person hunting with a muzzleloading firearm pursuant to this rule shall not carry any firearms other than one single-barreled muzzleloading firearm as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 4001(33) while hunting deer during this season.

6.4 No person taking deer by means of muzzleloader may possess archery equipment or crossbow while hunting.

7.5 Limit: No more than two deer, only one of which may be a legal buck, may be taken during muzzleloader season, not to exceed the annual limit as prescribed in Section 5.1 of this rule.

7.0 Archery Season for Taking by Bow and Arrow or Crossbow
7.1 Archery Season: October 1 through December 15, except during the regular rifle deer hunting season: During the period from the first Saturday in October running for 28 consecutive calendar days and the nine consecutive calendar days starting on the first Saturday after the completion of the regular rifle deer hunting season.

a. One legal buck may be taken by bow and arrow or crossbow, during the archery season anywhere in the state; not to exceed the annual limit as prescribed in Section 5.1 of this rule, and

b. In Wildlife Management Units declared open by the Board to the taking of antlerless deer, a person may take antlerless deer.

7.2 A person hunting with a bow and arrow or crossbow under this section shall obtain an archery license as provided in 10 V.S.A. § 4252. An archery license will be valid for one deer; additional archery tags are required for the taking of additional deer in accordance with 10 V.S.A. § 4252 and section 7.6 of this rule.

7.3 The Board may establish Expanded Archery Zones

a) Within these zones, the archery season shall begin September 15. From September 15 to September 30, only antlerless deer may be taken.

b) [Zone Boundaries]

7.4 Crossbows may be used as a means of take during any season that permits the use of a bow and arrow by any person who is 50 years or older or by a person holding a permit issued under 10 V.S.A. § 4711.

7.5 The holder of an archery license or a super sport license, hunting with a bow and arrow or a crossbow, may possess a handgun while archery hunting, in accordance with 10 V.S.A. § 4252 (b), provided that the license holder shall not take game by firearm while hunting.

8.7 Limit: No more than two deer, only one of which may be a legal buck, may be taken during the archery season; not to exceed the annual limit as prescribed in Section 5.1 of this rule.

7.6 Unless it is uncocked, a person shall not possess or transport a crossbow in or on a motor vehicle, motorboat, airplane, snowmobile, or other motor-propelled vehicle except as permitted in accordance with 10 V.S.A. §4705.

8.0 Regular Rifle Season

Pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 4741, for the 16 consecutive calendar days commencing 12 days prior to Thanksgiving day, a person may take by lawful means one legal buck; except that a youth and novice may take two bucks, as prescribed in Section 4.1 of this rule.
9.0 Youth Deer Hunting Weekend

9.1 Pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 4742a, the Saturday and Sunday three weeks prior to the opening day of the regular rifle deer hunting season shall be youth deer hunting weekend.

9.2 Limit: One white-tailed deer. One legal buck may be taken during the youth deer hunting weekend, or any deer if the Board has authorized the taking of antlerless deer during youth hunting weekend.

9.3 To participate in the youth deer hunt, a qualified youth must be 15 years of age or younger and have a valid Vermont hunting license and a youth deer weekend license.

9.4 The youth must be accompanied by an unarmed adult who holds a valid Vermont hunting license and who is over 18 years of age. An adult accompanying a youth under this section shall accompany no more than two young people at one time. As used in this section, "accompany," "accompanied," or "accompanying" means direct control and supervision, including the ability to see and communicate with the youth hunter without the aid of artificial devices such as radios or binoculars, except for medically necessary devices such as hearing aids or eyeglasses.

9.5 No youth shall hunt under this section on privately owned land without first obtaining the permission of the owner or occupant.

10.0 Novice Season

10.1 Novice Season: This season shall be concurrent with the Youth Deer Hunting Weekend as prescribed in 10 V.S.A. § 4742a and section 10.1 of this rule.

10.2 Limit: One white-tailed deer. One legal buck may be taken during this season, or any deer if the Board has authorized the taking of antlerless deer during youth hunting weekend.

10.3 To participate in the novice season, a qualified person must have a valid Vermont hunting license, and follow the requirements of youth hunting week-end.

10.4 The novice hunter must be accompanied by an unarmed adult who holds a valid Vermont hunting license and who is over 18 years of age. An adult accompanying a novice under this section shall accompany no more than two novice hunters at one time. As used in this section, "accompany," "accompanied," or "accompanying" means direct control and supervision, including the ability to see and communicate with the novice hunter without the aid of artificial devices such as radios or binoculars, except for medically necessary devices such as hearing aids or eyeglasses.

10.5 No Novice hunter shall hunt under this section on privately owned land without first obtaining the permission of the owner or occupant.
11.0 Reporting

11.1 Any person who harvests a deer, shall dress the deer carcass shall be field dressed prior to reporting in accordance with 10 V.S.A. App. § 2.

11.2 Upon request, the person harvesting a deer shall show and return to the kill site with a Game Warden.

12.0 Feeding of Deer

12.1 No person shall feed white-tailed deer at any time in Vermont except:

a. Under a license or permit issued pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 4152 by the Department for bona fide scientific research, mitigation of wildlife damage or nuisance problems, or wildlife population reduction programs only; or

b. By planting, cultivating or harvesting of crops directly associated with bona fide agricultural practices, including planted wildlife food plots; or

c. By distribution of food material for livestock directly associated with bona fide agricultural practices; or

d. By cutting of trees or brush; or

e. By incidental feeding by an elevated bird/squirrel feeders (feeders must be at least five feet above the ground) providing seed, grain, fruit, worms, or suet for birds or squirrels, located within 100 feet of an occupied dwelling.

13.0 Baiting

13.1 No person shall take deer by using bait. Exempted from this prohibition are:

a. Incidental feeding of wildlife within active livestock operations;

b. Standing crops planted and left standing as food plots for wildlife;

c. Grain or other feed scattered or distributed solely as a result of normal agricultural, gardening, or soil stabilization, and logging practices;

d. Vegetation or food/seed naturally deposited.

13.2 No person shall take any game or wild animal by using bait during deer seasons established under Part 4 of Title 10 or by rules of the Board, except that persons taking fur-
bearers as authorized under 10 V.S.A. § 4252(3) may use bait in conjunction with traps being set to take fur-bearers.

14.0 The Ban of urine and other natural lures

14.1 Authority.

The Fish & Wildlife Board finds that, in order to protect the health of white-tailed deer in Vermont, it is necessary to prohibit the use of cervid urine, blood, glands, gland oil, feces, or other bodily fluids for the purpose of taking or attempting to take deer.

14.2 Restricted and Permitted Uses of cervid urine, blood, glands, gland oil, feces, or other bodily fluids.

a) No person shall possess while hunting or use, for the purposes of taking or attempting to take, attracting, surveillance or scouting deer; any product that contains or purports to contain any cervid urine, blood, gland oil, feces, or other bodily fluids.

b) A person may utilize the body parts of a wild Vermont white-tailed deer legally taken or acquired by that person for coyote hunting.