

Conservation Results In Excessive Wildlife

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Early in the 1900s, when there were few deer and bears left in Pennsylvania, it became apparent that their populations would require protection and management for their survival. Now, 100 years later, according to a Penn State wildlife expert, it appears that these conservation efforts worked well — perhaps too well.

"The situation has changed," says Gary San Julian, professor of wildlife resources in the College of Agricultural Sciences. "We now have too many white-tailed deer in many places and our bear population has tripled in size during the last few decades."

Bear- and deer-damage complaints are significant, according to San Julian. The most important management tool for these species, sport hunting, is becoming less popular in many parts of the nation and fewer young hunters are joining the hunting ranks.

Pennsylvania so far has bucked that trend, actually selling more junior hunting licenses

this year than ever before, according to Pennsylvania Game Commission spokesman Jerry Feaser. But even he worries about an apparent decrease in hunting pressure resulting in hunting being less effective as a game management tool.

"The fact that our hunting license sales numbers have stayed consistent and even increased slightly is testimony to Pennsylvania's extremely strong hunting heritage," Feaser says, "but it does seem to be true that perhaps due to our modern lifestyle and demands on their time, hunters don't hunt as hard, as long or as often as they used to. Still, our big game harvests are as high as ever."

"Modern wildlife management has been very successful and through protection and conservative harvest limits we have increased populations of most of our game species," San Julian says. "But before hunting seasons this year there were 1.5 million deer and 15,000 bears in Pennsylvania. As wildlife populations increase and the interest in hunting levels off or de-

creases, we are going to have to reexamine our regulations."

In the northeastern states, according to San Julian, the increase in the deer and bear populations has caused greater interaction with humans, which too often takes the form of collisions with vehicles and damage to crops and ornamental plants. As the human population has grown — with corresponding increases in road-building and development — big-game habitat has shrunk.

"Deer, bear and resident Canada geese overpopulation are among the top wildlife dilemmas managers face these days," says San Julian. "We are probably going to have to look at how we create our regulations. Actually it's already happening. For the first time this fall here in Pennsylvania we had concurrent buck and antlerless deer-hunting seasons."

Feaser said the growth in the bear population has game commission biologists considering a concurrent deer-bear hunting season in some parts of the state.

Some other states have resorted to liberalized bag limits to control game populations. For example in North Carolina, a hunter can shoot six deer a year, four of which must be does. "If hunting pressure declines, we may have to look at using some sort of incentives to get more

people to participate in hunting," San Julian says. "In some states, officials are asking their citizens how big a deer population they want, because the deer

herd has an impact on everyone. In Fairmount Park in Philadelphia and in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, they have used sharpshooters and archers to reduce the deer population."

Milking School Day Set For Butler

BUTLER (Butler Co.) — A milking school to give dairy workers a greater understanding of milking topics will be offered on a Butler County dairy farm March 8.

Dan Bowley, Dean Dairy Products field inspector, and Jean Kummer and Gene Schurman, Penn State extension agents, will lead the program.

Topics will include understanding milk quality reports, causes of high somatic cell

counts and mastitis, the economics of mastitis, an udder dissection, proper udder preparation, deciding when to treat cows, and using the udder singe method to remove hair.

The milking school will take place on the farm of LeRoy and Mary Bergbigler, 263 Game Reserve Road, Butler.

Registration deadline is March 5. Call Jean Kummer at (724) 287-4761.

Beekeeping Seminar Set For Western Pa.

MONACA (Beaver Co.) — A western Pennsylvania beekeeping seminar here March 8 and 9 will offer the expertise of two nationally known bee researchers.

Dr. Medhat Nasr, Rutgers, and Dr. Nancy Ostiguy, Penn State, will join other bee experts in bringing recent research data and practical ideas to improve beekeeping techniques.

A National Honey Board rep-

resentative will also be on hand. Topic offerings at the seminar include beekeeping pest management, honey marketing, basic bee management, brood diseases, and electrically heated beehives.

The seminar will take place at the Penn State Beaver Campus, Monaca. Registration deadline is March 1. Call Beaver County extension office for more details.



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