



MARYLAND STATE CHAPTER

Quality Deer Management Association

www.marylandqdma.com

On behalf of the Maryland state chapter of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) we thank you for the opportunity to provide input on Maryland's white-tailed deer management plan. The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ethical hunting, sound deer management and preservation of the deer-hunting heritage. Among QDMA's 45,000 members are 1,600 Maryland members and more than 2,500 wildlife biologists, foresters and natural resource professionals. As such, QDMA is widely regarded as the most respected whitetail organization in the U.S.

We would like to commend the Department on your deer management program. Your deer seasons provide abundant recreational opportunities and your liberal bag limits provide abundant antlerless harvest opportunities. These opportunities enable hunters to spend additional time afield and are necessary to balance deer herds with their habitats and maximize youth hunter recruitment and retention.

To add to your successful deer management program, we offer the following suggestions:

- Reduce the percentage of yearling bucks in the harvest in Garrett, Allegany and Washington Counties. The yearling buck frequency ranges from 70-87% in these counties and is much higher than the remaining counties. We suggest a voluntary Quality Deer Management (QDM) program aimed at educating western Maryland hunters on the benefits of passing yearling bucks. The Maryland QDMA state chapter and branches would be happy to assist with any such educational programs.
- Balance the adult sex ratio on deer herds in the Appalachian plateau region. This region has the most skewed sex ratios in the state. This may be accomplished through additional antlerless harvest opportunities in combination with a reduced harvest of yearling bucks.
- Publicize the benefits of voluntarily passing yearling bucks and using antler spread as an indicator of yearling versus 2.5+ year-old bucks in the Deer Season and Bag Limits section of the *Guide to Hunting and Trapping*.
- Continue pursuing avenues to harvest additional antlerless deer in areas where deer density is negatively impacting native habitat. These avenues may be additional days (longer seasons and/or additional Sundays), seasons or other innovative measures. Additional antlerless harvest is especially needed in the suburban, center portion of the state.

- Continue increasing the number of educational materials and programs you offer for managing deer in urban and suburban environments. Examples include programs similar to Howard and Montgomery Counties. QDMA's *Living with White-tailed Deer* educational program can be a valuable tool for these issues.
- Work with county, state and federal agencies to provide additional hunting opportunities on public lands.
- Investigate the feasibility of dividing Region B into two regions with the Eastern Shore counties comprising their own region.
- Encourage hunters to donate deer to venison coalitions such as Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry. Less than 1/3 of Maryland's successful hunters take more than one deer. Therefore, many hunters could spend more time afield, take additional antlerless deer, and provide much needed meat to food pantries at no cost.
- Encourage hunters and the general public to participate in educational events to increase their knowledge on deer biology and deer and habitat management. Topics such as harvesting bucks based on age or a combination of age/antler spread are advantageous to creating more knowledgeable hunters and better stewards of our natural resources. The Maryland QDMA state chapter and branches will conduct numerous educational seminars, workshops and field days on an annual basis.

We reiterate our support for your deer management program and thank you for the opportunity to comment on the new 10-year management plan. We look forward to working with the Department on deer issues in the future.

Respectfully,

EW Grimes
President / Director
Maryland State Chapter QDMA
Office: 410-239-3146
Mobile: 410-984-3356
egrimes@marylandqdma.com

Kip Adams
Director of Education & Outreach
QDMA
Office: 814-326-4023
Mobile: 570-439-1973
kadams@QDMA.com