



What Do You Think?

Deer Population Management Techniques

Option 1

Feeding Ban

Introduction of a Municipal By-law prohibiting the feeding of deer.

- Education and/or regulations may reduce the number of people who feed deer.
- Nonlethal management techniques are generally accepted by the public.

Pros

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- Nonlethal management techniques are generally accepted by the public.

Cons

- Many people enjoy providing food for deer and other wildlife during the winter which contributes to an artificially high deer population.
- Supplemental food can enhance deer reproductive rates, encourage deer to congregate in sensitive areas and make deer more tolerant of people.
- Food provisioning can lead to deer crowding and increased susceptibility to diseases.
- Difficult to prevent residents from feeding deer without a concerted effort by the community and law enforcement agencies.

Option 2

Controlled Hunt

Controlled hunting is the application of legal deer hunting methods that are closely regulated and controlled by the Provincial Department of Natural Resources. This may include the issuance of special licenses to hunters or hunting by authorized municipal staff.

Pros

- Estimated costs range from \$125 to \$250 CAD per deer harvested.
- Archery hunting for deer has the advantage of being a relatively discreet and silent activity. The limited shooting range for archery equipment makes archery hunting a safe and non-disruptive removal technique.
- A controlled hunt would likely make the deer nervous about being near human habitats and convince them to go back to the woods.
- Harvested meat can be donated to area food banks.

Cons

- To be effective, hunters must take does and fawns which may result in negative feedback from the community and animal welfare groups as well as potentially damaging the community's image on a broader scale.
- Archery has the disadvantage of being less efficient at reducing deer density than firearm hunting because of lower success rates for bow hunters.

Option 3

Sharpshooting

Involves hunting by authorized individuals approved by the Department of Natural Resources and Town Police and possibly directly employed or contracted by the municipality.

Pros

- Sharpshooting is a humane form of euthanasia.
- A variety of techniques can be used in sharp shooting programs to maximize safety, humaneness, discretion, and efficiency.
- Firearms used in the hunt can be fitted with suppressors which would help minimize negative public reaction to sharpshooting.
- Archery equipment has been used to remove deer in suburban areas, where firearms discharge is not permitted.
- Public safety can be enhanced by having police or other uniformed officials responsible for shooting the deer.
- Harvested meat can be donated to area food banks.

Cons

- Estimated costs ranging from \$250 to \$500 CAD per deer for sharpshooting and processing is an additional \$100-\$150 CAD per deer.
- The noise associated with discharging firearms after dark in suburban areas must be considered when developing a sharpshooting program.
- Human safety concerns are often associated with the discharge of firearms in urban landscapes.

Option 4

Trap and Euthanasia

Deer are trapped and then euthanized.

Pros

- This technique can be used in areas where there is a concern about the discharge of firearms or in areas with very high deer densities.
- Physical restraint and euthanasia of deer in traps is sometimes preferred over chemical means since it allows for the consumption of meat from the deer.
- Opportunity to donation harvested venison meat to local charities or Food Banks.

Cons

- Seen as being inefficient and expensive, with costs exceeding \$400 CAD per deer.
- Requires trained personnel to euthanize captured deer.
- Deer are greatly stressed during the restraint phase of the capturing process.
- The use of drugs to capture or kill the deer however would preclude using the venison for human consumption.
- If the meat is not to be consumed, disposal of carcasses could pose an issue.

Option 5

Trap & Translocate

Deer are trapped and relocated to rural areas outside of Town.

Pros

- Nonlethal management techniques are generally accepted by the public

Cons

- Capture and translocation has been demonstrated to be impractical and expensive with a costs of up to \$800 per deer captured, depending on the method used.
- This method is extremely stressful to the handled deer.
- Land-use conflicts and disease concerns caused by relocated deer could lead to questions of liability.
- Areas within the range of the white-tailed deer that could potentially benefit from deer releases are rare.
- High post-release mortality attributed to stress caused by capture and the unfamiliarity with the release site.
- Moving deer can spread disease and parasites such as Lyme disease and tuberculosis.
- Most deer immobilization drugs are classified as controlled substances, and their use requires licenses.

Option 6

Fertility Control

Birth control methods including synthetic chemical steroids and immunocontraceptives. Deer are typically trapped and then injected.

Pros

- Nonlethal management techniques are generally accepted by the public.
- Techniques which do not require handling deer such as dart injection or oral baits offer the most hope for practical field applications.

Cons

- Very expensive.
- Not a viable approach when a quick reduction in deer numbers is sought.
- An extremely high percentage of the females in a deer population must become unproductive to control population growth.
- Currently there are no registered drugs are currently commercially available for controlling fertility of white-tailed deer.
- Lack of public understanding regarding the availability and practicality of fertility control has caused unnecessary delays in the implementation of effective management programs, as fertility control is often perceived as the ideal solution.
- Non-lethal techniques may not affect deer impacts to plants and animals on a community-wide scale because these methods were designed to supplement, not replace, deer population management.

Option 7

Surgical Sterilization

This technique removes the deer's ovaries and is similar to, but less invasive than a cat or dog spay. The technique begins with deer capture via tranquilizer dart. The deer is then transported to a surgical bay. The surgical prep and surgery take approximately 20 minutes. After surgery, the deer is returned to the field, a reversal agent is administered and the animal is observed from a distance to ensure all is well.

Pros

- Nonlethal management techniques are generally accepted by the public.
- The animal is typically in and out of surgery in less than 20 minutes and the mortality rate is less than 2%.

Cons

- Very expensive.
- Difficult to obtain sufficiently skilled staff.
- This method is not a readily available, still in an experimental stage of development.
- Not a viable approach when a quick reduction in deer numbers is sought.
- Methods requiring capturing and handling deer offer the least hope for practical field applications because of the difficulty in capturing enough deer to control a population.

Option 8

Gardening Techniques

Encourage gardeners to incorporate less palatable herbaceous and woody plants that deer do not eat into their landscaping plans.

Pros

- Simple and cost effective approach that is a nonlethal management technique.

Cons

- There are very few ornamental plant varieties that deer will not eat.
- Repellants need to be applied regularly and after each rainfall.
- Only effective if deer feeding pressure is low to moderate.

TRURO

make the connection



Option 9

Fencing

Installation of fencing to prevent access by deer.

Pros

- Fencing is a reliable method to address site-specific problems such as landscape or agricultural damage.
- Historical evidence shows that fencing was the most economical and most effective method for reducing deer-vehicle collisions along short stretches of highway.
- Barrier fencing around schoolyards and other high-risk areas to minimize deer access, tick abundance, and the associated risks of contracting Lyme disease.
- Residents may find fencing and repellents acceptable for protecting gardens or shrubs.

Cons

- High installation costs for large scale applications.
- Fencing must be high to prevent deer from jumping, raising concerns about compliance with municipal by-laws and aesthetics.
- Fencing is impractical for dealing with problems over large areas.
- Fencing must be frequently inspected with breaks or erosion gullies quickly repaired, because deer will find gaps or weak points where they can cross.

Option 10

Repellents

Repellents work by reducing the attractiveness and palatability of treated plants to a level lower than that for other available forage.

Pros

- Repellents are best suited for use in orchards, nurseries, gardens, and on ornamentals or other high-value plants.
- The primary advantage of odor-based products is that deer usually realize the plants are treated when they approach within a few feet leaving the plants undamaged.
- Soap bars applied to trees may reduce deer damage, with each bar appearing to protect a radius of about a half-yard.

Cons

- Cost estimates for one chemical repellent treatment of orchards and nursery stock range from \$10 to \$400 per acre not counting equipment or labor costs.
- Chemical repellents may cause plant damage and leave noxious or offensive residues.
- High application cost, label restrictions on use, and variable effectiveness make most repellents impractical for row crops, pastures, or other low-value commodities.
- Deer often ignore repellents as food becomes scarce and competition for food increases.
- Total elimination of damage should not be expected.
- Use of some products may be very labor-intensive.
- Repellents must be reapplied frequently as repellents only protect the foliage to which they are applied. New growth that emerges after the application of the treatment is unprotected.

Option 11

Deer Deterrence

Property owners actively create an unwelcoming environment for deer by frightening them, chasing them off, or installing motion activated devices that scare the animals.

Pros

- Simple and cost effective approach that is a nonlethal management technique.

Cons

- Frightening or shooing deer away is only effective if implemented either before or at the initial stages of a conflict situation as deer movements or behavioral patterns are difficult to modify once they have been established.
- With increased deer density, deer may not leave the general vicinity and complaints may arise from neighbors about the noise made by the devices.
- Unlikely to provide effective long-term solutions to damage problems when there are too many deer.

Option 12

Supplemental Feeding

Providing feeding stations for deer in areas away from urban development to draw deer away from specific high density problem areas.

Pros

- Nonlethal management techniques are generally well accepted by the public.

Cons

- Implementation of a supplemental feeding program to prevent malnutrition would be counterproductive to control efforts directed at free-ranging herds because it could encourage additional population growth.
- Supplemental feeding could increase deer-human conflicts in many areas, possibly increasing disease transmission or predation of deer by dogs and coyotes.
- Expensive to provide winter feed for deer.