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Urban Deer Management Proposal for Joint Deer Management Task Force

White-tailed deer are highly adaptable animals that thrive in urban, suburban and exurban areas (collectively termed “urban” areas) in the State. The Joint Deer Task Force (JDTF) recognizes that significant deer numbers combined with continuing urban development may result in public concern about deer-vehicle collisions and other negative deer-human interactions. Uncontrolled deer populations may also cause damage to natural areas situated in these urban locales. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) currently serves in an extension capacity to help resolve urban deer conflicts by providing information and technical assistance to the general public and to land-managing agencies/municipalities. IDNR also regulates the use of nontraditional (i.e., non-hunting) techniques to manage urban deer through oversight of the Deer Population Control Permit program. In cooperation with the University of Illinois Extension Service, IDNR recently expanded these efforts by launching a new “Living with Wildlife” website (www.livingwithwildlife.uiuc.edu) to provide information about identifying and reducing problems caused by several species of wildlife, including deer. Per recommendations of the JDTF, the white-tailed deer section of this website will be bolstered to provide additional information on deer population control alternatives and damage abatement techniques, or a new website specific to deer will be created. Deer management in urban areas poses unique problems as a result of potentially high numbers of both humans and deer occupying the same space, and because deer control methods traditionally used in rural situations may seem foreign and impractical to some in urban settings. However, controlled hunting programs implemented throughout the country in urban situations have demonstrated that hunting can be used as a safe, effective, and economical approach to urban deer control. JDTF acknowledges that conflicts between humans and deer are likely to affect more urban areas statewide in the future, and recommends that controlled hunting be considered and implemented wherever possible to address deer damage and deer overpopulation concerns in these urban situations.