Lesson Overview
- Deer Management Strategies
- QDM Building Blocks
- Common Questions

Deer Management Strategies
Do you want trophy bucks, quality bucks, or just bucks?
- Trophy Deer Management
- Quality Deer Management
- Traditional Deer Management

Deer Management Strategies
- Trophy Deer Management
  - Involves a very intensive program of herd population control, extremely restricted buck harvest, intensive habitat manipulation, and often supplemental feeding.
  - Expect to harvest 1 trophy buck/1,000 acres.
Deer Management Strategies

- Traditional Deer Management
  - The approach under which any legal buck, regardless of age or antler quality, is harvested and antlerless deer harvest is restricted.
  - Numbers deer management

- Quality Deer Management
  - The approach under which young bucks are protected from harvest combined with an adequate harvest of female deer to produce healthy deer herds in balance with existing habitat conditions.

Quality Deer Management

The four building blocks of QDM

1. Herd Management
2. Habitat Management
3. Hunter Management
4. Herd Monitoring
Quality Deer Management

The four building blocks of QDM

Herd Management

1. Antlerless Deer Management
2. Antlered Deer Management

The most important half-inch in deer management

Herd Management

- Antlerless Deer Management
Herd Management

- Antlerless Deer Management
  - Major objective is to establish and maintain a 1:1 or 1:2 adult sex ratio
  - Done through doe harvest
- Considerations
  - Why?
  - When?
  - How many?
  - Which ones?

- Why harvest does?
  1. Control population growth and density.
  2. Balance sex ratio.
  4. Increase reproductive success and fawn recruitment.
  5. Provide reproductive data.

- When to harvest does?
  - As soon as fawns are weaned (45-60 days)
  - Why?
    1. Reduce the harvest of buck fawns.
    2. Increase nutrition available to other deer.
    3. Improve sex ratio prior to rut.
    4. Increase competition for breeding (genetic selection).
    5. Ensure the antlerless harvest goal is achieved.
Herd Management

- **Antlerless Deer Management**
  - How many does do I harvest?
  
  Depends on:
  1. Deer Management Goals
  2. Property Size
  3. Deer Density
  4. Sex Ratio
  5. Doe Age Structure
  6. Fawn Recruitment
  7. Habitat Quality
  8. Seasonal Condition

* Consult your local biologist.

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Herd Management

- **Antlerless Deer Management**
  - How many does do I harvest?

  - **Adult Does** 1 per 30-125 ac.
  - **Doe Fawns** 1 per 100-250 ac.
  - **Buck Fawns** as few as possible

* Rough estimates

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Herd Management

- **Antlerless Deer Management**
  - Which ones?

  - When possible harvest adult does because:
    1. They are the most reproductive segment of the population.
    2. It reduces the chance of harvesting buck fawns.
  
  Otherwise harvest does that provide the first and best opportunity.
Herd Management

- Antlered Deer Management

Herd Management

- Common Harvest Restriction Methods
  - Minimum number of antler points
  - Minimum antler spread
  - Age-body characteristics
  - Gross Boone & Crockett
  - Quotas or bag limit restrictions

* Each has advantages and disadvantages

Herd Management

- Minimum number of antler points

Simple, but ineffective in high quality habitats.
Herd Management

- **Minimum antler spread**
  - Better than points but may not protect narrow, tall antler bucks.

- **Age-body Characteristics**
  - Very good but requires field judging skills.
    - 1.5
    - 2.5
    - 3.5
    - 4.5+

- **Gross B&C score**
  - Difficult for most hunters to estimate accurately.
Herd Management

- Gross B&C score
  - Difficult for most hunters to estimate accurately.
  
  Score = 118

Herd Management

- Quotas or bag limit restrictions
  - Limiting the number of bucks harvested.

Herd Management

- Antlered Deer Management Summary
  - Buck harvest criteria should be based on local deer herd.
  - Age and/or antler spread may be the most effective selection criteria.
  - Age is the determining factor!
Herd Management

- South Texas capture study (7+ Years)
  - 2,659 bucks captured
  - 732 > 5.5 years old
    - 150+ = 11.2%
    - 160+ = 4.9%
    - 170+ = 1.5%
    - 180+ = 0.3%
    - 190+ = 0.1%
  - Average B&C score for 5.5+ = 128 3/8”

“If you do not have a mature buck or two dying each year, you are not yet properly managing the buck age structure.”

Bob Zaiglin 2005
Quality Deer Management
The four building blocks of QDM

Herd Management
Habitat Management
Hunter Management
Herd Monitoring

Herd Monitoring

- Harvest Data
  - Age
  - Weight
  - Antler measurements
  - Reproductive status
  - Fetus presence
  - Body condition

- Observational data
Herd Monitoring

- Observational Data
  - Hunter observations
  - Trail camera observations
  - Browse surveys
  - Spot-light surveys
  - Incidental sightings

- Interpreting Data
  - Buck:doe ratio
  - Acres/deer
  - Doe age structure
  - Average age of bucks
  - Antler quality
  - Dressed weights

Summary QDM

- Set realistic goals for your area.
- Make a plan.
- Keep records!!
- Utilize outside resources (books, biologists, etc.)
Summary QDM

- **Herd Management**
  - Age structures
  - Sex ratios
- **Habitat Management**
  - Quality habitat
- **Hunter Management**
  - Educate hunters
- **Herd Monitoring**
  - Keep Records!!!

Common Questions

- "If I don’t shoot him my neighbor will."
  - Does your neighbor stop hunting when you put your tag on that young buck that you shot because you didn’t want your neighbor to shoot it?
    - Result: 2 young deer dead.
  - Who is more likely to benefit from your restraint?
    - You are...you have fooled him once and he is on your property but may not spend any of his time on your neighbors property.
  - Form coops, establish similar goals and work cooperatively to achieve them.

Common Questions

- **What about spikes?**
  - Factors
    - Genetics
    - Environment
    - Timing of birth
  - What to consider:
    - Habitat quality
    - Deer density
    - Recruitment rate
    - Sex ratios
Common Questions

- Should I acquire a breeder buck or obtain outside genetics to boost antler potential?
  - The current buck herd’s avg. B&C = 140
  - We want the avg. to = 165 B&C
  - Start with 2,000 deer in a closed population
  - 1,334 female, 666 males (2:1 sex ratio)
  - 0.50 heritability value
  - How many 185 B&C bucks do we need to introduce to the herd?

Common Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>185 B&amp;C Sires</th>
<th>% of Highbred Sires</th>
<th>Years to hit 165 B&amp;C Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 of 666</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>43 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 of 666</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 of 666</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 of 666</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>11 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Habitat Management

- What is the best thing to plant to improve the overall nutrition of my white-tailed deer herd?
Habitat Management

- What is the best thing to plant to improve the overall nutrition of my white-tailed deer herd?

Lead.....It is cheap and provides quick results.