

Deer Management Advisory Committee

To: **Bernards Township Committee**

Subject: **Annual Report for Deer Season 2019-2020**

For analysis and reporting purposes we use a Deer Season Year (DSY) that begins on July 1 and ends on June 30. This report is for DSY 2019-2020 that ended this past June. It covers the 2019-2020 hunting season and related activities and events.

Deer Harvest: The Township Committee authorized two private hunting groups to hunt on forty- one tracts owned by Bernards Township, and county officials did the same for three tracts owned by Somerset County. The two groups are Whitetail Solution (WS) and Bernards Township Protective Association (BTPA). WS uses archery only and BTPA uses both archery and firearms. Hunting group members are all certified (every two years) by licensed firearms and archery instructors/testers and the hunting program is supervised by a member of the Bernards Township Police Department. All hunting was in accordance with regulations for regular sport hunting promulgated by the NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife (DFW), including the extended season described below.

The regular sport hunting season ran from September 14, 2019 thru February 14, 2020. A Community Based Deer Management Plan (CBDMP) approved by DFW authorized hunting by WS and BTPA on public lands thru March 31, 2020. At the request of DFW, private hunters, with verifiable permission, also hunted private lands for an additional six weeks thru March 31.

Hunting results for the past two seasons are in the table below.

Quantity of Harvested Deer	2019-2020	2018-2019
By BTPA and WS on public lands	166	198
By BTPA and WS on private lands	22	17
Deer harvested in extended season (included in above numbers)	19	31
Total for BTPA and WS	188	215
By other hunters on private lands	0	0
Total for season reported by DFW	188	215

Deer-Motor Vehicle Collisions: Some deer are killed in deer-vehicle collisions on public roads. Our local police report all those that are found dead on roads in the township, except for I-78 and I-287. Records have been kept of these "road kills" since DSY 2001. (As of April 2012, the deer vs. motor vehicles hits are reported by Somerset County Communications Center). The count for DSY 2019-2020 is 57. This is 80.3% below the count of 289 for the base year 2001.

Program Costs and Venison Donation: Costs for the 2019-20 season are:

Expenses for 2019-2020 Season	Costs
Printing	\$0.00
Postage	\$1.75
Advertising	\$102.00
Miscellaneous supplies	\$0.00
Trail cameras, SD cards, batteries	\$0.00
Police liaison	\$6,000.00
Committee secretary	\$800.00
Disposal	\$630.00
Deer feed	\$4,950.00
Deer butchering (24 Donated deer) **	\$1,800.00
Deer hunter/Agent fees	\$1,775.00
Total expenses	\$16,058.75
Total deer culled on public and private land	188
Average cost per deer	\$85.42

The average cost for 215 deer in the prior season was \$81.24.

** The butchering line item above is for 24 deer that were donated to the Lyons Veterans Administration Community Hope and other charitable organizations that service veterans at a unit butchering cost of \$75.00. Additionally, 11 deer were donated by hunters to other Veterans organizations. With an average venison yield estimated to be 30-35 pounds per deer, the contribution of venison by the Township was approximately 1,150 pounds.

CBDMP: We propose to submit a new CBDMP for the coming year. We will again request an extended season from mid February thru end of March 2021.

Wrap up: We believe our deer program continues to make progress in reducing the deer population and the harmful impacts of deer – we are one of only four successful programs in NJ. Our Committee is prepared to present at the League of Municipalities in November.

We thank the Township Committee for its continued support.