

WESTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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MEMORANDUM

TO: BOARD OF SELECTMEN
FROM: WESTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
SUBJECT: 2018 DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM SUMMARY
DATE: APRIL 12, 2019

Weston Conservation Commission has completed the seventh year of its Deer Management Program. This multifaceted program includes studying the effects of deer on Weston's forests, educating residents on Lyme disease and deer tick prevention, and reducing the deer population to ecologically appropriate levels.

The Conservation Commission has established several vegetation monitoring programs to assess the long-term effects of deer browse on Weston's forests. With help from the Weston Garden Club, lady slipper abundance was assessed at several conservation lands. A total of ten deer exclosures are being monitored by Brandeis University students and Harvard Forest. Two high school teachers are utilizing a deer exclosure located near the Middle School to study, with their students, the effects of deer browse on vegetation.

Below, please find the summary from the 2018 hunting season, and our recommendations for 2019.

Results based on Hunter Log Database

- The following nine properties were open to regulated hunting: Blaney Aquifer, Coburn Meadows, College Pond Conservation Area, Dickson Fields, Doublet Hill, Highland Forest, Ogilvie Town Forest, Jericho Town Forest, Old Road, Trailside (new this year) and the Sears Land.
- A total of 35 deer were harvested from 37 hunters – 19 does and 16 bucks.
- A total of 414 hunting/scouting/volunteer days were reported from 36 hunters (a hunter day reflects a hunting/scouting/volunteer event entered into the electronic hunter log database). On average, each of the hunters participated in 12 hunting days during the season.
- Hunters donated a total of 106 hours of land management work clearing trails, installing and removing temporary hunting signage, looking for illegal deer stands, picking up trash and litter, and removing debris from the Hobbs Pond Dam.
- Hunters observed dogs running in the woods unattended.
- Other wildlife observed by hunters included red-tailed hawk, fisher, owl, coyotes, red fox, turkey, chipmunks, and squirrels.
- Hunter/resident interaction – Hunters reported numerous positive interactions with residents.



Other 2018 Deer Population Impacts

- 17 deer-car collisions were reported to the Weston Police Dept. This is the lowest number of deer-car collisions reported since 1995.
- According to the MA Div. of Fisheries and Wildlife, 18 additional deer were harvested on private land in Weston.

Cause of Deer Morality in Weston	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Deer/car collisionsⁱ	28	26	24	23	34	28	22	20	17
Deer harvested on conservation land	N/A	N/A	18	20	25	26	32	29	35
Deer harvested on private land	18	12	18	22	19	14	19	22	18
Total	46	38	60	65	78	68	73	71	70

Conservation Land	Huntable acres	# hunters	# deer harvested in 2018
Blaney Aquifer	23	3	5
Coburn Meadows	5	1	1
College Pond Conservation Area	70	2	3
Dickson Fields	23	2	4
Doublet Hill	24	2	0
Highland Forest	203	4	4
Jericho Town Forest	572	13	10
Ogilvie Town Forest	197	5	6
Old Road	5	1	1
Sears Land	87	2	0
Trailside	13	2	1
Total	1,170	38	35

Conservation Commission Recommendation

The Commission deems that the program, including preparation, implementation, and follow-up, continues to be successful. Over the course of seven years, 185 deer have been harvested on town conservation land (and an additional 132 on private land).

In addition to continuing the regulated deer hunting at the nine properties discussed above, on April 9, 2019, the Commission unanimously voted to expand the program as follows:

- Continue discussions with MWRA to consider opening Norumbega Reservoir to hunting.
- Work with Weston Forest and Trail Association to open up a section of WFTA land which abuts Trailside Conservation Land.
- Assess various options the town can pursue regarding major deer damage experienced by Land's Sake Inc. at 40-acre field and other fields they farm in town.

The Commission is available to meet with the Selectmen to discuss this summary and recommendation.

ⁱ Only collisions reported to the Weston Police Dept. are noted here. In general, car insurance companies don't require a police report to be filed and therefore, many deer-car collisions are not reported to the Police Dept.