

**New Jersey Chapter
The Wildlife Society**

<http://wildlife.org/new-jersey/>



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May 6, 2019

RE: Response to opinion article, NJ Deer Policy, published February 9, 2019

Dear Mr. Sforza and Mr. Lowry:

The New Jersey Chapter of The Wildlife Society, Northeast Section of The Wildlife Society, and The Wildlife Society (TWS) are writing to respond and correct a *northjersey.com* opinion article by Susan Russell published February 9, 2019, titled, “NJ deer policy needs more honesty, less schtick”.

Contrary to the article’s assertion, membership of TWS, including that of the New Jersey Chapter and the Northeast Section, is not “dominated by state (wildlife) managers”, but rather includes professional wildlife biologists, educators, and technicians from all sectors of the wildlife field, including academia, federal wildlife agencies, non-profit organizations, private (corporate/consulting) organizations, state wildlife agencies, and students. Many TWS members have completed a rigorous education and field experience curriculum to be credentialed as a Certified Wildlife Biologist® (CWB). To maintain certification, members must also complete continuing education credits. As an organization rooted in science and education, TWS “endorses the principle that hunting, when properly regulated following biological principles, is an appropriate means of managing wildlife populations.” ([TWS Standing Position on Hunting](#)). TWS supports hunting as a wildlife management tool, *when it is supported by scientific evidence to be sustainable*, and not necessarily to the exclusion of other science-based management and conservation methods.

TWS supports science-based processes to identify management needs and implement decisions ([TWS Standing Position on Use of Science in Policy and Management Decisions](#)). This could include processes like the Community Based Deer Management Program (CBDMP), The Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP), and promulgation of regulated hunting seasons set

forth by New Jersey's Division of Fish and Wildlife (NJDFW) to help meet population goals of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) in New Jersey. The exponential growth of New Jersey deer populations in the 20th century stems from a combination of factors that include land use change, removal of natural predators, and more restrictive hunting seasons. Today, the highly urbanized landscape of New Jersey still supports robust deer populations, which can lead to human-wildlife conflicts. In response, NJDFW developed the CBDMP to encourage alternative control measures, such as non-lethal chemical control, that can be implemented by local governments when ordinances or residential zoning preclude hunting as a management option ([TWS Standing Position on Wildlife Fertility Control](#)). In 2009 the NJDFW introduced the DMAP to provide landowners, farmers, county parks, suburban communities, and other entities within designated Deer Management Zones the capability of removing more deer from their property than normally permitted within state hunting regulations. TWS supports these efforts by state wildlife agencies to implement biologically-based decision making and regulated hunting as an effective and efficient management tool to sustain ecological balance and provide long-term conservation of the deer population.

Trap-and-transfer techniques for deer have proven to be time intensive and prohibitively expensive, and create a highly stressful situation for deer that can cause mortality ([TWS Standing Position on Wildlife Damage Management](#)). The Deer-Forest Study in Pennsylvania captured and translocated deer in 2015 and concluded that capturing and transporting of one deer costs about \$1,000. Enclosures to capture deer can cost up to \$20,000 ([NJDFW Community Based Deer Management Manual for Municipalities](#)). Additionally, trap-and-transfer is strongly discouraged due to the elevated risk of spreading Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) to new locations (AFWA 2018)¹. Many states, including New Jersey, have placed an emergency ban on importing deer and elk to reduce the risk of spreading or introducing CWD into captive and wild herds across state boundaries. Relocation of deer also may simply transfer a nuisance problem from one location to another, rather than resolving the problem.

Non-lethal control measures have seen mixed success. Two unresolved problems with non-lethal deer population control is that reducing reproduction takes longer than direct lethal means (*i.e.*, hunting) to reduce populations, and does not stop immigration of deer from surrounding landscapes. Evidence from Cornell's experience suggested that fertility control may ultimately have promoted immigration, thereby defeating the purpose of localized population control. Human-wildlife conflicts, including overabundant deer, is an issue that affects us all. The Wildlife Society encourages and helps people to thoroughly understand wildlife management issues through our conferences, publications, and the work of our professional membership. Wildlife managers face a difficult task of managing overabundant wildlife; techniques used should be based in peer-reviewed science.

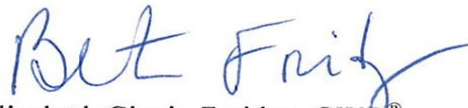
The Wildlife Society (TWS) is the professional society for wildlife biologists, which promotes professional development and ethical standards in the wildlife professions. The Wildlife Society serves to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and their habitat through science-based management and conservation. Founded in 1937, TWS and

¹ Gillin, Colin M., and Mawdsley, Jonathan R. 2018. AFWA Technical Report on Best Management Practices for Surveillance, Management and Control of Chronic Wasting Disease. Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Washington, D. C. 111 pp

its network of affiliated chapters and sections represents more than 15,000 professional wildlife biologists, managers, and educators dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship. The New Jersey Chapter and the Northeast Section of The Wildlife Society serve and represent wildlife professionals in these regions.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our viewpoints and concerns regarding these matters.

Sincerely,



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New Jersey Chapter of The Wildlife Society



Scott Williams, CWB®
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Darren Miller, PhD, CWB®
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