

**MEMORANDUM**

February 17, 2009

TO: Public Safety Committee

FROM: Linda McMillan, Senior Legislative Analyst 

SUBJECT: **Discussion: FY 2009 Report of the Deer Management Work Group;**  
**Worksession: Executive Regulation 34-08, Discharge of Guns within**  
Montgomery County, and impact of changes in weapons  
discharge law;  
Annual Report on changes to the urban boundary;  
**Update: Lyme Disease and Rabies**

At this session, the Committee will have an opportunity to discuss the FY 2009 Annual Report and Recommendations of the Montgomery County Deer Management Work Group; discuss the status impact of last year's changes to the weapons discharge law; make a recommendation regarding Executive Regulation 34-08, Discharge of Guns within Montgomery County, which implements the law; and receive an update on the prevalence of Lyme Disease and rabies.

**Those expected for this session:**

- Rob Gibbs, M-NCPPC staff and Chair of the Deer Management Work Group
- Dr. Ulder Tillman, Public Health Officer, Department of Health and Human Services
- Dr. Helen Lettlow, Deputy Health Officer, Department of Health and Human Services
- Commander Don Johnson, Montgomery County Police Department
- William Snoddy, Assistant County Attorney

**Background on Deer Management Work Group**

In 1993, the County Council established a White-tailed Deer Task Force charged with developing a range of ways to deal with this growing problem. The Deer Management Program has been in place since 1995. Since that time, Park and Planning has continued to staff the Deer Management Work Group and has issued annual reports identifying problems and making recommendations for the upcoming year.

The objectives of the Deer Management Program are:

1. Reduce, on a county-wide basis, the number of deer-vehicle collisions.
2. Reduce depredation on agricultural crops and home landscapes to levels acceptable to county residents.
3. Reduce the negative impacts of deer on natural communities to preserve plant and animal diversity.
4. Continue a countywide education program to provide residents with information on deer, deer problems, and how to minimize or prevent deer-human conflicts.

### **FY 2009 Annual Report**

The FY 2009 Annual Report and Recommendations of the Deer Management Work Group is attached at ©1-14. The FY 2008 accomplishments are included at © 3. Recommendations are included at ©11-14. Mr. Gibbs will provide the Committee with an overview of the report.

The report contains recommendations regarding Lyme disease which will be discussed later in this memo.

### **Deer Vehicle Collisions**

The report contains information about deer vehicle collisions (©3-4). The data included in the report and provided in the following table show that there was a decline from 2006 to 2007 in the number of collisions reported to the Montgomery County Police. The number has declined every year since 2002 and is now very close to the number of collisions that were reported in 1999 (1,891). The report notes that a study conducted from the years 1996-2002 shows a decline in collisions near parks where deer management practices (including hunting) were conducted. A map of collision sites and deer carcasses collected by Animal Services is included at © 6.

#### **Reported Deer-Vehicle Collisions**

Reported by	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
MC Police Dept	2,033	2,003	2,127	2,047	1,997	1,969	1,951	1,867

A press release from Park and Planning that was issued last fall offering tips on how to avoid deer vehicle collisions is attached at © 15-16.

### **Managed and Sharpshooter Hunting on Public Land**

A summary of public land with deer management programs is included at © 11. Park and Planning properties that had managed deer hunts during the 2008-2009 include: Blockhouse Point Conservation Park, Great Seneca Stream Valley Park, Hoyles Mill Conservation Park, Little Bennett Regional Park, North Germantown Greenway Park, Rachael Carson Conservation Park, and Wood stock Equestrian Park (© 17-20). The September 22 press release (© 19) indicates that Park and Planning is exploring proposals to implement new deer management efforts on parkland in Darnestown, Fairland, and Travillah. The annual report (© 11) indicates

that areas for future deer management efforts include: C&O Canal Goldmine Tract, County-owned property managed by the Division of Solid Waste in Dickerson, Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park, Serpentine Barrens Conservation Park, Rock Creek Stream Valley Unit 2, Sligo Creek Stream Valley Units 4 and 5, and the Countryside area of the Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley Park.

The Committee should discuss with those present the outcome of this seasons managed and sharpshooter hunts. The Council does continue to receive letters of concern from citizens about the over abundance of deer, mostly focused on the downcounty areas and some of the smaller parks, including stream valley parks. Citizens who are opposed to hunting also continue to ask if there are other more effective ways to impact the deer population.

**Deer Harvest 2008-2009 Season**

The Department of Natural Resources recently release information on the number of deer harvested in the 2008-09 season. Across the state, deer hunters harvested 100,437 deer which is the highest number for a single season in the State of Maryland (see press release © 21-22). The following table provides a summary of the last nine years. There was almost a 25% increase in the number of antlered deer killed and a very small increase (1.2%) in the number of antlerless deer killed during the season.

**Deer Harvest in Montgomery County**

2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
3,670	3,546	4,385	4,174	4,969	5,112	5,116	4,808	5,163

In addition to the regular hunting season, farmers may obtain a deer damage permit when deer are found to be destroying their commercial crops. For the past few years, between 400 and 500 deer are harvested in Montgomery County through this program.

Attached at © 23-24 is an October article from the Gazette discussing the deer donation program. This program has helped to ensure that meat from deer can be donated to food banks or charities rather than go to waste. The article notes that almost 8,000 pounds of venison was collected in the 2007-08 hunting season.

**Executive Regulation 34-08, Discharge of Guns within Montgomery County**

On December 4, 2007, the Council enacted Bill 43-05, Weapons – Restrictions – Deer Management. The bill became effective March 17, 2008. The bill made several changes to the rules about discharging a gun in the urban area of the county including: allowing hunting when the parcel of land is at least 50 acres (this may consist of several contiguous parcels), requiring notice must be provided to the Chief of Police 15 days before any gun is discharged; requiring the notice identify the days, times, and persons who will be hunting; and requiring that the gun must be discharged from an elevated position. The law requires executive regulations be promulgated to require signs be posted at least 15 days before the hunting is to occur. The written permission of each property owner is required. A property owner whose property is less than 50 acres in size may apply for a deer damage control permit from the Department of Natural Resources. If issued by DNR, the hunting must be approved by the Chief of Police.

The bill reduced from 100 yards to 50 yards the distance a person must be from a public road to discharge a gun outside of the urban area and reduced the distance from a building or camp from 200 yards to 150 yards.

The bill removed the requirement that a person be more than 100 yards away from a public road when discharging a bow. This applies county-wide as there is no difference in the rules for bow hunting between the urban area and the rest of the county.

On October 7, 2008, the Council received Temporary Executive Regulation 34-08T which was promulgated to ensure that regulations were in place for the 2008-2009 hunting season. An October press release outlining the changes is attached at © 25-26. The temporary regulation expires on April 14, 2008. On December 11, 2008, the Council received Executive Regulation 34-08, the permanent version of the temporary regulation. It is a method (2) regulation. The Council has extended time for consideration of the permanent regulation to June 30, 2009. A copy of Executive Regulation 34-08 is attached at © 27-30.

In Council staff's view, the proposed executive regulation meets the requirements in the law by specifying that (1) when a deer damage control permit has been requested of DNR for a parcel less than 50 acres in size in the urban area, a DNR agent and an executive officer from the Montgomery County Police Department will inspect the location to determine the need for the hunting permit (DNR responsibility) and safety issues such as proximity to buildings and roadways; (2) the Chief of Police will review the request and any conditions placed on the permit by DNR and the Police executive officer and determine whether the request should be approved; and (3) when the hunting is to take place on a parcel at least 50 acres in size within the urban area, there are specific requirements for signage. **However, Council staff understands that the Executive will propose amendments to the regulation in response to concerns raised by DNR that are generally related to coordination issues. These amendments will be available at the worksession.**

## **Impacts from Bill 43-05**

On January 12, 2009, the Washington Post ran an article, "Once Scorned, Deer Hunters Find Welcome in Suburban Md." (© 31-33) The article discussed the increase in bow hunting in the urban area of the county. It noted that increased hunting was allowed because, in the case of bow hunters, they were no longer required to be 100 yards from a public road when discharging a bow. Bow season is longer than the firearms hunting season. The 2008-09 season in the "Suburban Deer Archery Zone," which includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery and Prince George's counties, was September 15, 2008 through January 31, 2009.

Chapter 57 of the Montgomery County Code prohibits a person from discharging a bow in the county: (1) from, onto, or across a public road; (2) into or within 150 yards of a building or camp designed for human occupancy without the owner or occupant's written consent; or, (3) from, onto, or across public or private property without the owner or occupant's written consent. (These rules do not apply to target archery.) Therefore it is possible to see a bow hunters next to a public road as long as they are discharging their weapon away from the road and have the property owners permission. During the worksession on Bill 43-05, the Public Safety Committee and Council discussed what the distance from a public road should be for both

hunters using guns and bow hunters. The Council approved a distance of 50 yards (from 100) for firearms and eliminated the requirement for bow hunting.

With regards to the new provisions for the discharge of a firearm, the Police Department received two notices from property owners who intended to allow hunting on their parcels. In both cases the parcels were larger than 50 acres. One parcel was on Batchellors Forest Road and the other was the Webb Tract. The owners of the Webb Tract decided not to allow hunting on the property.

**Public education (both to hunters and the public at large) about the rules for hunting in the urban area are extremely important. The Committee should discuss how this information is being disseminated and who citizens can call if they believe that there is illegal hunting occurring. It is expected that there will be more requests for hunting in the urban area during the 2009-10 seasons as property owners become aware of the new rules.**

### **Annual Report on the Urban Boundary**

Section 57-3 of the County Code requires that by February 1 of each year, the County Executive, after consulting with the Firearm Safety Committee, must recommend to the County Council any appropriate change to the boundary of the urban area based on new development or reported incidents of weapons discharge near developed areas. While the Council has not officially received the annual report from the Executive, Council staff understands that the Firearms Safety Committee has recommended that there be no boundary changes at this time.

### **Update on Lyme Disease and Rabies**

The Department of Health and Human Services will provide the Committee with an update on the trends in the incidence of Lyme Disease. Material for the presentation is attached at © 34-44.

The Committee has previously discussed the growth in the known number of cases in Lyme Disease. The information provided by DHHS indicates that there were about 2,500 cases in Maryland in 2007. The number of cases in the county grew to almost 500 in 2008 but there is a new classification system (© 42). The Committee was previously informed that in 2005, 24% of the identified cases of Lyme Disease were in children age 10 or less, 29% were in persons age 11 to 39, and 47% were in persons age 40 years and older. Montgomery County's rate of Lyme Disease is just above that of the State (State rate 45.1 per 100,000; see © 41).

The Committee will also be provided with an update on the number of confirmed cases of rabies during 2008. The information included at © 45-46 shows that the highest number of cases were related to raccoons (59 cases), followed by fox (10 cases). There is more opportunity for concern by citizens as some animals that used to be rarely seen or only seen at night (such as fox) are now often seen during daylight hours. A September 2008 article from the Gazette that highlights some of the confusion that can occur when a citizen wants to report a potentially rabid animal is attached at © 47-48.

# Montgomery County Deer Management Program

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## Annual Report and Recommendations FY 2009

Prepared by  
Montgomery County Deer Management Work Group  
Rob Gibbs, Chair  
June 2008

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### The Montgomery County Deer Management Work Group

Maryland Department of Natural Resources Wildlife and Heritage Service,  
M-NCPPC, Montgomery County Department of Parks  
Montgomery County Cooperative Extension  
Montgomery County Police Department  
USGS, Biological Services Division, Patuxent Wildlife Research Station  
U. S. National Park Service  
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

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## Montgomery County Deer Management Program Annual Report and Recommendations FY 2009

### Introduction

The Comprehensive Management Plan For White-tailed Deer in Montgomery County, MD, (Montgomery County Deer Management Work Group, 1995) calls for the Montgomery County Deer Management Work Group (DMWG), on an annual basis, to review deer-impact data and present a list of recommendations for the upcoming year. Recommendations are submitted to and implemented by key County and State agencies and private landowners as appropriate.

This report briefly reviews the current status of the County's Deer Management Program, makes recommendations for FY 2009 (July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009) and describes the rationale upon which these recommendations are based.

Information on all aspects of the County's Deer Management Program is available on the Internet at [www.parksdeermanagement.org](http://www.parksdeermanagement.org). The website includes data from the past 13 years on deer-vehicle collisions, impacts to natural ecosystems, damage to agricultural crops, local deer populations and other pertinent information about the program including locations and application procedures for managed hunts on County Parkland. Comments and specific questions regarding this report can be addressed to Rob Gibbs at [rob.gibbs@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:rob.gibbs@montgomeryparks.org) or 301-949-2909.

### Citizen Notification and Comment Periods for Proposed Managed Hunts on County Parkland

A new method of notifying citizens about M-NCPPC managed hunts and receiving public comments was initiated 2005 and will be continued. Instead of holding public meetings, which had very low attendance in previous years, M-NCPPC will publicize this information through press releases to local newspapers, planning board agendas, and the Internet. Following these public announcements there will be a comment period during which citizens can submit comments through the mail, e-mail, or by telephone. It is felt that this will provide greater and more convenient opportunities for citizens to learn about and comment on deer population management actions that are proposed on parkland throughout the county. Information will be provided at [www.parksdeermanagement.org](http://www.parksdeermanagement.org).

### Goal and Objectives

The goal of Montgomery County's deer management program is to reduce deer-human conflicts to a level that is compatible with human priorities and land uses. The deer management plan lists four objectives for attaining this goal.

1. Reduce, on a countywide basis, the number of deer-vehicle collisions (DVCs).
2. Reduce depredation on agricultural crops and home landscapes to levels acceptable to county residents.
3. Reduce negative impacts of deer on natural communities to preserve native plant and animal diversity.
4. Continue a countywide education program to provide residents with information on deer, deer problems and how to minimize or prevent deer-human conflicts.

### Overview of Deer Management Program

The Deer Management Program has been in operation since 1995. During the past 13 years many deer management actions have been implemented in the county and progress has been made in addressing many of the negative impacts associated with high deer populations. The following sections outline the actions and accomplishments of the program to date and the current status of the various deer impacts including the progress we have made and problems that still need attention. For those interested in additional data related to the program visit [www.parksdeermanagement.org](http://www.parksdeermanagement.org) and click on "Deer Data 1996-2007", under quick links.

## Deer Program Accomplishments

### FY2008

- The County Executive in response to citizen concerns and recommendations from the DMWG established a Lyme Disease Awareness Task Force in 2008. The Task Force comprised of representatives from The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (Chair), Department of Recreation, M-NCPPC Montgomery County Department of Parks (M-NCPPC), the DMWG, and concerned citizens developed a citizen awareness program to promote better understand of the disease, its causes and prevention. The County Executive announced the program in late April. May, 2008 was proclaimed to be Lyme Disease Awareness Month.
- The DMWG completed work with County Council staff to make changes to County Code to change the distance requirements for hunting in the County to better conform to state laws and regulations and allow exemptions to weapons restrictions for large parcels of land. These changes are designed to better match state regulations and facilitate deer management on private land.
- The M-NCPPC continued its deer population management program in 19 parks covering over 15,000 acres.
- M-NCPPC and the DMWG continued with The State Highway Administration (SHA) to design appropriate parkland crossings for the Inter-county Connector (ICC) to reduce the potential for DVCs.

### Other Management Actions Implemented to Date

- A comprehensive educational program on deer, their impacts and remedial methods including: informational brochures and publications, library materials, phone numbers for help, the seasonal use of Public Service Announcements about deer-vehicle collisions, local Cable TV Programs on deer management in the county, programs on deer through County nature centers.
- The DMWG working with other local government agencies through the Council of Governments (COG) completed and released an educational video on preventing Deer-vehicle collisions. This program began being aired on Montgomery Cable TV in Fall 2006 and is available for use in local government and private driver education programs.
- County deer information Internet web page ([www.parksdeermanagement.org](http://www.parksdeermanagement.org)) with educational information, phone numbers for reporting deer damage and receiving helpful information (301-949-2909/4149 or 1-877-463-6497).
- An extremely successful program of workshops for homeowners on protecting their property from deer damage. Well over 1600 county residents and landscape professionals have attended. Community groups can schedule a program by calling 301-590-2809 or 301-949-2909.
- Wildlife reflector systems and experimental warning signs were tested at eight locations along County roads identified as having high numbers of deer-vehicle collisions. These signs have proven to have no effect in reducing DVCs and are no longer being employed.
- Improved data collection for deer-vehicle collisions and other impacts using GIS system mapping.
- Program to identify and monitor impacts to natural vegetation on County Parkland.
- Cooperative effort with County and State road agencies to better address deer-vehicle collisions (DVCs) through roadway design.
- Cooperative effort with M-NCPPC Transportation Planning Office to review projects that include bridges that cross wildlife corridors in order to allow for safe passage of wildlife under roadways.
- Cooperative effort with Washington area Council of Governments (COG) Wildlife-Vehicle Avoidance Working Group to promote education and explore methods to reduce DVCs regionally.

- Cooperative effort with County and State park officials to initiate deer population management in parks where high deer populations were contributing to high numbers of deer-vehicle collisions, crop damage and/or damage to natural vegetation.
- Cooperative effort with MD Department of Natural Resources to adjust hunting regulations to help increase antlerless deer harvest in order to reduce deer populations in areas open to hunting.
- ~~Changes were made to County Code in early 2003 to allow for use of 8-foot deer fencing in residential side and backyards and all types of fencing on agricultural properties.~~
- The Department of Economic Development (DED), working closely with the DMWG, conducted a successful workshop for Agricultural growers in 2004 on implementing effective deer population management program. DED continues to work with farmers to reduce deer damage to crops
- The DED, working closely with area farmers, has established two refrigerated storage facilities – one in Poolesville and the other near Laytonsville - to facilitate the ability of farmers to better manage deer on their property and donate the meat to charity. Several local farmers coordinate the program.
- M-NCPPC initiated a workshop in 2007 of local and regional government agencies and wildlife experts, who are currently conducting deer population management in this and other regions, to assess the state of the art of this work and develop new strategies for addressing non-traditional deer population management in suburban settings.

### Deer-vehicle Collisions

Deer-vehicle Collisions (DVCs) countywide (see table 1 and figure 1) have leveled off to a slight downward trend since 2000 after rising much more steeply through the mid-1990s. Last year's count of 1,867 DVCs was slightly lower than the previous year. This is the fifth year in a row for such a decline. This is a positive sign especially given that population has increased by over 10%, since 2000 and total vehicle miles traveled in the County increased by approximately 11% between 2000 and 2006.

Table 1. Deer-vehicle Collision Data 1994 - 2007

Source	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
MCPD <sup>a</sup>	1,343	1,244	1,776	1,705	1,774	1,891	2,033	2,003	2,127	2,047	1,997	1,969	1,951	1,867
Animal Control <sup>b</sup>	447	509	521	547	631	1,059	1,112	1,123	1,194	1,180	1,086	1,340	1,347	1,407
SHA <sup>*</sup>	211	192	200	390	608	572	675	713	NA	341	NA	756 <sup>c</sup>	780	311

a - Montgomery County Police Department – This is the most comprehensive and systematically collected data set and the one used as the “official” number for deer-vehicle collisions in the County.

b - Mapped locations – this data set provides the best location data for mapping, but is highly variable from year to year.

c - new data collection system for SHA begun in 2005 may have resulted in increased reporting

Various sources as noted

NA = Not Available

Several approaches have been taken to reduce DVCs countywide including education, use of signage, structural design (e.g. designing bridges and fencing where possible to keep deer off roadways; see “Deer Program Accomplishments” above) and Deer Population Management (see that section below).

During the first seven years of the deer population management program (1996-2002), Montgomery County Police analyzed DVC data on roads surrounding several parks where management was conducted. In each case, data showed a significant and sometimes dramatic decline in DVCs as deer populations were reduced. More recent DVC data strongly suggest that this is the case at most deer population

management sites.

While accidents have declined around parks where population management has been employed, other areas have seen an increase. These are mostly more urban/suburban areas where conducting deer population management is more problematic and limited. See the sections below titled "Deer Population Management" and "Education" for more discussion on how these efforts impact DVCs.

### **Agricultural Damage**

In 2004 the County's agricultural community declared that deer overpopulation was the number-one threat to farming in the County. Consequently, agricultural damage has been a particular focus of the DMWG's recommendations for the past several years and continues to be an important concern. The nationally acclaimed Agricultural Preserve is an important component of the County's General Plan. It helps maintain open space and contributes significantly to the county's character and quality of life. The existence of the Agricultural Preserve depends on the continued viability of agriculture.

A 2004 survey of County farmers indicated significant losses to agricultural crops due to deer browse. Thirty-six (36) farmers reported losses on corn, soybeans, wheat and hay. Thirty-four (34) producers reported losses on tree fruit, small fruit or vegetables. Twenty-seven (27) producers suffered losses on nursery, Christmas trees, grapes and other agricultural crops. In all, over 2000 acres of agricultural land has been removed from production due to deer crop damage and 2/3 of survey respondents believe crop damage from deer is on the increase.

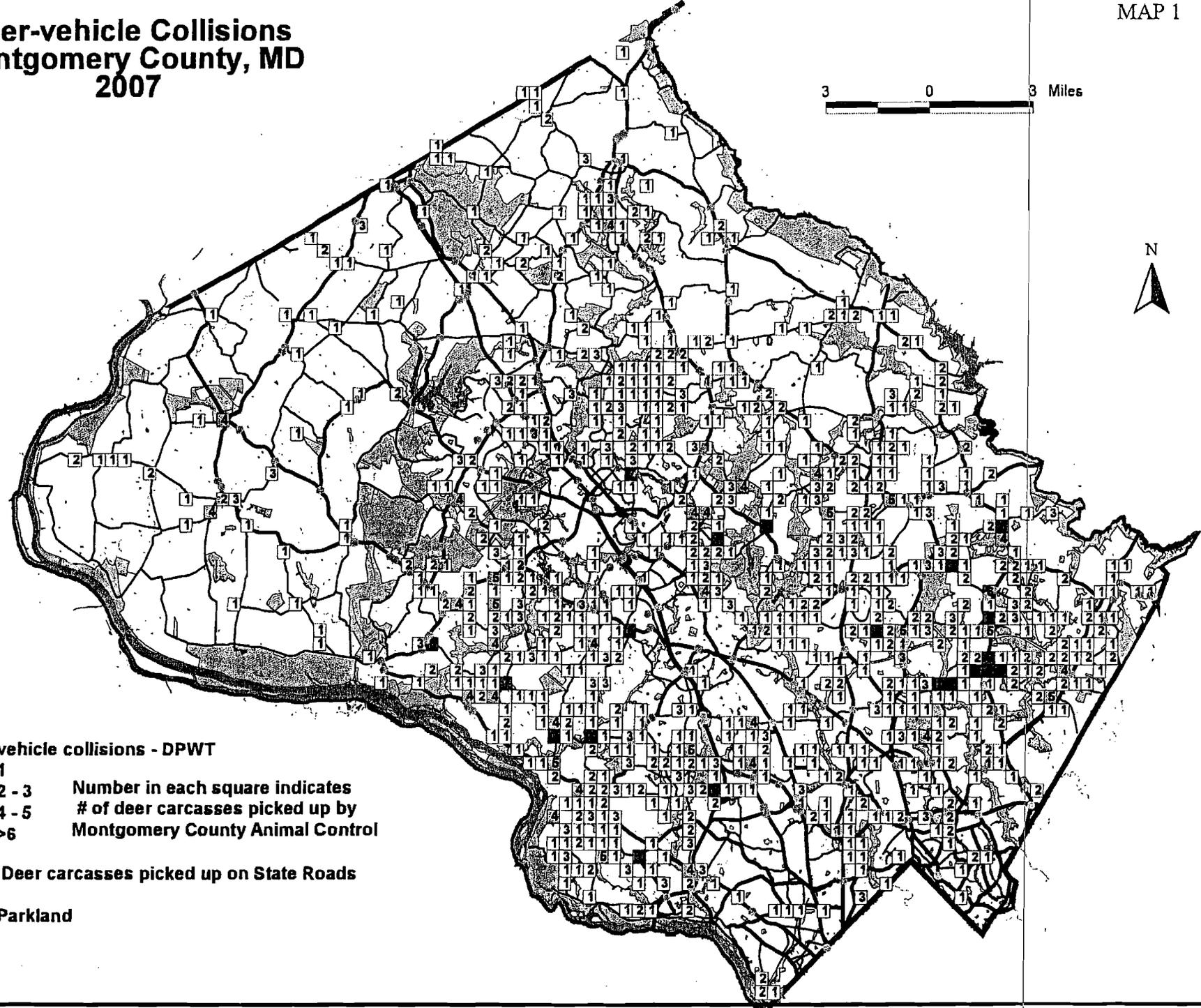
Farmers are using a variety of strategies to attempt to minimize damage to their crops. Thirty-seven (37) have used fencing and/or cages around tree trunks to prevent rubbing damage. The farmers generally report that fencing as being effective in limiting damage to crops but at a significant cost to the individual farmer. Thirty-two (32) reported using deer repellents with very limited success. Nine (9) farmers were using scare tactics other than having dogs (i.e. noisemaking devises, motion activated lights, etc.). Forty-seven (47) have used dogs as deterrent with most indicating some success with this method. Deer control methods that rely on live dogs or noise making devices can be bothersome to neighbors. Possible effects on neighboring properties must be considered when considering options for deer management.

Over 100 landowners allowed hunting and/or used crop damage permits in an effort to control deer populations. Many feel higher deer harvest will help limit crop damage.

The 2006 Wildlife Damage Survey conducted by Maryland Agricultural Statistics indicated central Maryland farmers had sustained losses of over \$4 million due to deer browse. The central Maryland area includes Montgomery, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard and Washington Counties. Damage in the central Maryland region is reported to be much higher than in other areas. Higher crop prices in 2007 and 2008 have contributed to increased economic losses. Crop damage losses on corn and soybeans will exceed \$1 million in 2008.

Many changes have been made to State and local regulations and educational programs in recent years aimed at helping the agricultural community reduce deer damage to their products. These efforts have made an impact but crop damage by deer remains a problem for local farmers.

# Deer-vehicle Collisions Montgomery County, MD 2007



- Deer-vehicle collisions - DPWT**
- 1
  - 2 - 3
  - 4 - 5
  - >6
- Number in each square indicates # of deer carcasses picked up by Montgomery County Animal Control
- Deer carcasses picked up on State Roads
  - Parkland

6

### **Impacts to Home Gardens and Landscaping**

Many residents are still experiencing impacts to home gardens and landscaping. Though much work remains to be done, many citizens are taking advantage of the educational materials, workshops, and regulation changes that have been made to help them reduce impacts to their home landscapes. Homeowners experiencing deer damage can call for information and register their complaint at 301-949-2909/4149. Homeowner or Community Associations that would like a free workshop on controlling deer damage around the home can call 301-590-9650 or 301-949-2909. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources webpage lists various deer management options at the following web address: [www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/ddmtintro.asp](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/ddmtintro.asp).

### **Impacts to Natural Communities**

An overabundance of deer can have a profound impact on native vegetation and habitat for other wildlife. Park studies and observations have shown that where deer populations are high forest trees are not reproducing, the park understory of shrubs and wildflowers is being destroyed and rare plants are declining and in many parks have disappeared due to deer feeding habits. The only way to reduce damage to natural communities is to reduce deer populations within park areas. The Department has undertaken an aggressive program of deer population management – see section below titled “Deer population Management” for more details on this effort.

Even after deer populations have been reduced, recovery of vegetation may occur slowly over many years. Current staffing and funding has not permitted detailed studies to quantify the extent of vegetative recovery in parks where management is taking place. However, general observation by long-time naturalists and other qualitative information strongly suggest that understory vegetation and tree survival is increasing where deer populations have been reduced. A number of species, especially orchids and lilies that had not been seen for years are now blooming again as well, though in limited numbers. As discussed below under “Deer Population Management,” deer reductions are fairly local and new management techniques will be required to address impacts to the smaller, more urban park areas in the County.

### **Educational Program**

Education is a cornerstone of the Countywide Deer Management Program. In order to achieve the deer plan’s goal of reducing deer impacts to acceptable levels, two things must happen, 1) Deer populations must be managed – see more on this throughout this report and 2) just as importantly, county residents must become educated in how to live with deer and how to minimize their negative impacts. A long list of educational efforts is described under “Deer Program Accomplishments” and includes: homeowner workshops, brochures, educational programs at Nature Centers and on County Cable Television, a new DVD on avoiding deer-vehicle collisions, regular public service announcements and talks for local citizen groups. As citizens become more educated on ways to reduce deer impacts and begin to put this education into practice (e.g. adopt driving habits that help avoid deer-vehicle collisions, or use different methods to protect their home landscaping or farm crops) they will lower deer impacts and raise their tolerance for deer in the landscape.

### **Lyme Disease**

Lyme Disease is a bacterial illness transmitted through the bite of the Black-legged Tick. Early symptoms range from flu-like headache, fever, and general fatigue to joint and muscle pain. A circular rash may occur in 70-90% of individuals. If left untreated, the disease can become chronic and debilitating. Lyme Disease continues to be a growing concern in the county.

Over the winter of 2007/2008, the County Executive established a Task Force on Lyme Disease Awareness, chaired by The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and

declared May 2008 to be Lyme Disease Awareness Month. The County has developed a new brochure and website with the latest information on Lyme Disease and its prevention. Warning signs have also been posted in park areas and on trails to remind users of the problem.

While Lyme Disease is often linked to deer management in the mind of the public because it is transferred through the bite of the so-called deer tick (the new accepted name is the black-legged tick), it is widely accepted that reducing deer numbers cannot effectively control the spread of the Disease.

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Black-legged ticks feed on many species of mammals and birds and most often pick up the disease by feeding on infected mice and chipmunks not deer. For these reasons, Lyme Disease is best viewed as a public health issue.

The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) tracks cases of Lyme Disease and provides education for the public and health professionals. Increased surveillance by HHS beginning in 2005 resulted in a dramatic increase in cases from 39 in 2004 to 216. However, this increase reflects the higher level of effort to properly account for cases rather than a true increase in the disease. Cases in 2006 and 2007 were 228 and 238 respectively. Whether the slow increase over the past 3 years is actual or reflects continued improvement and fine tuning of data collection efforts is unclear. Several more years of data are needed at this new effort to fully evaluate any trends. It should be noted however, that even with the jump in reported cases resulting from better surveillance, case rates per 100,000 residents in Montgomery County are lower than most other counties and about average for the State (see chart 1).

Part of the increased effort to track Lyme Disease is resulting in increased feedback and education to the medical community. Each doctor who has a patient with a positive test for Lyme Disease receives surveillance materials including information on detection and treatment. This is important for a number of reasons. When caught early Lyme Disease is usually easily treated with antibiotics. The disease, however, can be difficult to diagnose because many tests are unreliable and the symptoms resemble those of other ailments including the flu and arthritis. Left untreated Lyme Disease can become chronic resulting in long-lasting and debilitating health problems. This most often results when it is not diagnosed and treatment is delayed for an extended period of time. The increased education efforts directed at the public and doctors should help ensure that the disease is detected and treated more quickly.

Additional efforts by the Department of Health and Human Services to address Lyme Disease include:

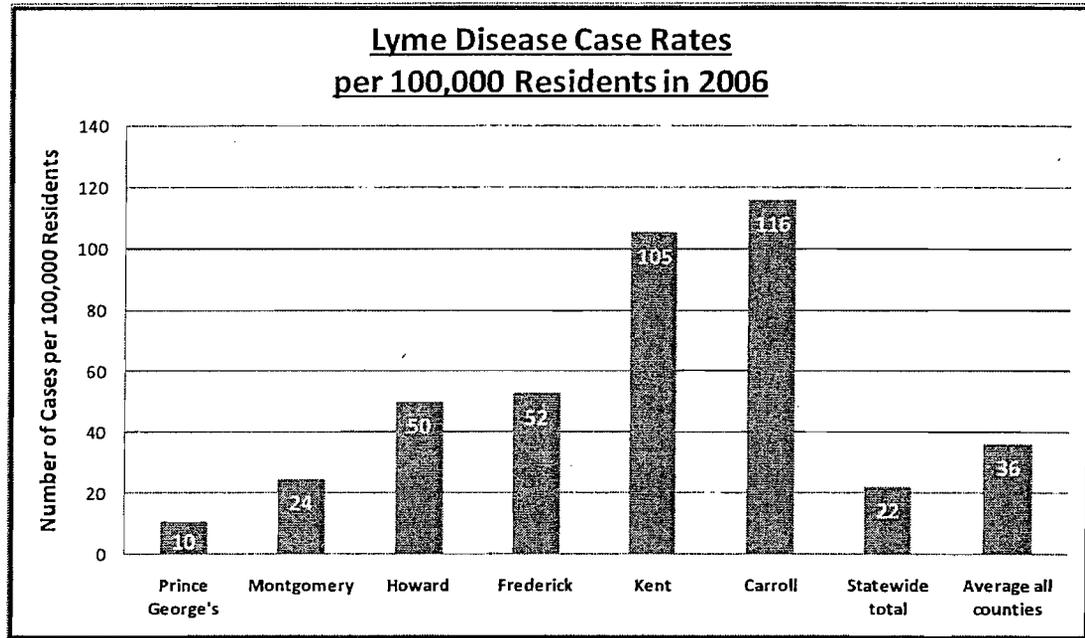
- Presentations in the community
- Distribution of literature on Lyme Disease prevention
- Counseling of individual patients on prevention (n=300 per year)
- Surveillance on +lab slips to identify true cases (n=900 per year)
- Referrals to physicians for diagnosis and treatment
- Education of community physicians on Lyme Disease diagnosis and treatment

Montgomery County promotes personal protection from ticks and awareness of the symptoms of the illness as the best defense against Lyme Disease. General information is available at:

- The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services - [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/lymedisease](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/lymedisease) or 240-777-1755
- The Centers for Disease Control – [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).
- The Lyme Disease Foundation - [www.lyme.org](http://www.lyme.org); 24 hour information line at 800-886-5963.
- The National Capital Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Association has information and offers local support groups - [www.natcaplyme.org](http://www.natcaplyme.org) or (703) 821-8833.
- The American Lyme Disease Foundation, [www.aldf.com/fourPoster.shtml](http://www.aldf.com/fourPoster.shtml) - has information on a product to help reduce the number of ticks in an area called the four poster feeder.

Chart 1

Lyme Disease Case Rates by Select Jurisdictions, Calendar Year 2006

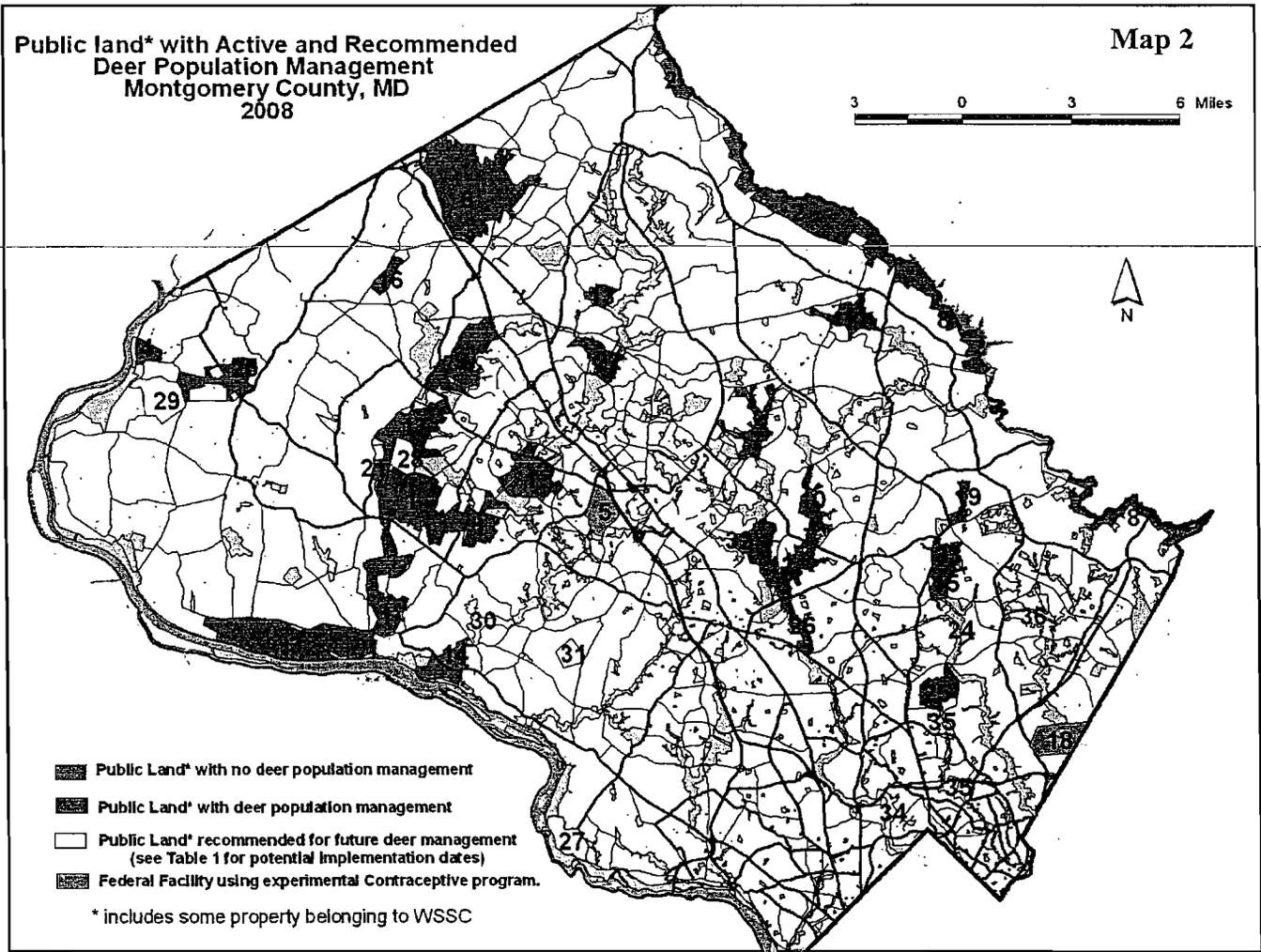


### Deer Population Management

Based on trends in deer hunting harvest data for the county, DNR believes that deer populations are stable or declining within areas of the county where hunting occurs. DNR has significantly liberalized antlerless bag limits during the past decade that promote the harvest of female deer which effectively limits population growth. However, as urbanization of the county continues, regulating the deer population will become even more difficult, as lethal management via hunting often is not an option in urban and suburban settings.

Several strategies have been taken over the past 13 years to help reduce deer populations in areas where traditional hunting is limited including parkland and suburban/urban areas. These include managed hunts on State and County parkland and WSSC properties and sharpshooting in some county parks where hunting is not an option. Regulation changes to facilitate population management on private properties include, changes to county weapons laws and hunting regulations.

Deer population management was conducted on 25 parcels of public land in FY07 totaling over 27,000 acres. These included 19 County parks, 3 state park/wildlife management areas, 2 federal facilities, and property owned and operated by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. Population management efforts are now in place on most large parcels of public parkland in the county (see figure 2 and table 1). Populations are being reduced and associated deer impacts are declining. However, due to the small home range of deer, the effects of these efforts remain localized. Outside of these areas deer populations remain high or are increasing due to lack of population controls and as a result of continued development forcing deer into smaller and smaller areas.



Many acres of parkland in narrow stream valleys, small local parks, and in highly populated areas are not currently being managed. Effective deer population management in these smaller urban areas can be very difficult, costly, and in some cases not feasible at all. Efforts are underway to explore new methods to address these locations. Contraception, while favored by many as a potential method to reduce deer numbers, is still very much in the experimental stages and not available for use in free ranging deer at this time.

Deer population management on private properties continues to be an important part of countywide management efforts. Despite liberalized bag limits and regulations that have increased the hunting of antlerless deer, many parcels of privately owned land are not hunted efficiently enough to significantly reduce deer numbers. Educational efforts targeting both landowners and hunters in more effective management techniques will be continued and expanded. As already mentioned, population management becomes more difficult as you move from rural to more suburban and urban parts of the county. Nevertheless, there are opportunities for some communities to manage deer populations within their neighborhoods where the community can reach agreement on the methods. For assistance in developing community deer management plans contact the DMWG at 301-949-2909/4149 or Maryland Department of Natural Resources at 301-948-8243.

**Table 1 Public Land with current and proposed deer population management programs – See Map 2**

	Park Area	FY initiated	Recommended Action
1	Seneca Creek State Park	1997	Continue population mgt
2	Patuxent River State Park	Prior to 1994	Continue population mgt
3	McKee-beshers Wildlife Mgt Area	Prior to 1994	Continue population mgt
4	Dickerson Conservation Park	Prior to 1994	Continue population mgt
5	Nat Institute of Standards and Tech.	1994	Continue population mgt
6	Little Bennett Reg. Park	1997	Continue population mgt
7	Ag/History Farm Park	1997	Continue population mgt
8	WSSC Reservoirs	1999	Continue population mgt
9	Black Hill Regional Park	2001	Continue population mgt
10	Northbranch SVP	2001	Continue population mgt
11	Rachel Carson Cons. Park	2002	Continue population mgt
12	Rock Creek Regional Park	2002	Continue population mgt
13	Goshen Recreational Park	2002	Continue population mgt
14	Blockhouse Point Cons. Park	2003	Continue population mgt
15	NW Branch Recreation Park	2004	Continue population mgt
16	Bucklodge Forest Cons Park	2004	Continue population mgt
17	Hoyles Mill Cons. Park	2004	Continue population mgt
18	White Oak Federal Facility	2004	Continue population mgt
19	Woodlawn Special Park	2004	Continue population mgt
20	Woodstock Special Park	2005	Continue population mgt
21	Little Seneca SVP unit 1	2005	Continue population mgt
22	Germantown Greenway Park	2006	Continue population mgt
23	Great Seneca Stream Valley Unit 2	2006	Continue population mgt
25	Wheaton Regional Park	2006	Continue population mgt
26	Rock Creek Stream Valley Unit 7	2008	Continue population mgt
27	C&O Canal National Historical Park Goldmine Tract	Future	Investigate future mgt
28	SHA purchase future Hoyles Mill CP	Future	Investigate mgt for FY09
29	DPWT Property in Dickerson	Future	Investigate future mgt
30	Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park	Future	Investigate mgt for FY09
31	Serpentine Barrens Conservation Park	Future	Investigate mgt for FY09
32	Rock Creek Golf Course	2002	Continue mgt begun in 2002
33	Northwest Branch Golf Course	2004	Continue mgt begun in 2004
34	Rock Creek Stream Valley Unit 2	Future	Investigate future mgt
35	Sligo Creek Stream Valley Unit 4,5	Future	Investigate mgt for FY09
36	Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley Pk	Future	Investigate mgt of Countryside area for FY09

**Deer Management Recommendations for FY 2009**

In accordance with the Comprehensive Management Plan for White-tailed deer in Montgomery County, Maryland, the DMWG recommends the following actions for FY 2009. Agencies that should take lead responsibility for each recommendation are listed in parenthesis after that action. The final decision to proceed with any recommendation is up to the lead agency or agencies and it is expected that appropriate public input will be considered.

Many recommendations are on-going or require multiple years to be fully implemented thus there is considerable overlap in recommendations from year to year. It is expected that all actions will be done in cooperation with the DMWG.

1. **Continue public education efforts.** This includes educating the public about deer issues, particularly on available non-lethal methods to reduce deer damage to personal property.
  - a. Continue the very successful Homeowner Workshop Program. Update program and publicize better to increase number of programs. Coordinate workshops with DNR education efforts. (MNCPPC, Montgomery County Cooperative Extension [MCE])



- b. Continue efforts to expand educational efforts via the Internet, Educational DVDs the County Fair and County Cable TV. (MCE, County Cable Montgomery [CCM], M-NCPPC)
  - c. The County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) should continue their increased efforts to enhance surveillance, educate the public and doctors on the prevention, early detection and treatment of Lyme Disease. A concerted effort to get educational materials to all doctors should be a priority. (HHS)
- 

**2. Continue efforts to improve road fencing, signage and design to reduce deer-vehicle collisions.**

- a. DPWT and SHA, in coordination with the DMWG, should continue to evaluate roadway hotspots and examine accident mitigation methods. (DMWG, Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT), Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA))
- b. SHA should implement a program to inspect and repair the wildlife fencing along the entire length of 270, 495 and other fenced roads, at least once per year. Fences with holes can create a situation where deer that happen to wander through the hole become trapped on the road. (SHA)
- c. DPWT should install wildlife fencing along Shady Grove Road in the vicinity of where the Inter County Connector (ICC) will cross it to reduce the potential for Deer Vehicle Collisions. (DPWT, DMWG)
- d. Keep current and, where possible, cooperate with other studies that investigate methods of reducing deer-vehicle collisions. (DPWT, M-NCPPC, SHA, DNR,)
- e. Continue to work with appropriate agencies on new and retrofit road projects to better design roadways and bridges for wildlife passage (DPWT, SHA, M-NCPPC)

**3. Continue to monitor progress in the use of contraception to regulate deer populations.**

- a. Continue to monitor on-going efforts at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) being conducted by The Humane Society of the U.S. as well as other study sites around the country; review the final report for the deer reduction and contraception project completed in 2007 at the White Oak Federal Center by the United States Department of Agriculture/Animal Plant Health Inspection Service. (USDA) (DNR, DMWG, USDA)
- b. Continue to monitor progress in approval process of drugs by FDA. (DNR, DMWG, USDA)

**4. Continue to encourage more community involvement in deer management efforts.**

In many cases it is incumbent upon a community to work together and address community concerns regarding deer. Several approaches to reducing deer damage to home landscaping and gardens may have a greater effect when applied on a community level. Neighbors or communities can work together in their use of fencing, vegetation management, and repellents. Adjustments to community covenants that reduce fencing restrictions or enactment of “no deer feeding” policies are examples of cooperative efforts. Communities, in many cases, may be better able than the county or state to fund and/or implement other local management efforts such as installation of fencing, localized efforts to reduce tick populations to prevent Lyme disease or even a community based managed hunting program on private lands. Any of these efforts will involve a high level of cooperation, organization and communication within the community as well as coordination with appropriate county or state agencies.

- a. The County and State should continue to provide information and assistance to communities that

express a desire to address local deer impacts. These might include local public meetings, educational workshops, literature and recommendations on specific management efforts that could be undertaken by the community. DNR provides technical advice for communities on deer management issues. (M-NCPPC, DNR, MCE)

- b. Continue to promote the MD-DNR website for available community-based deer management options at - [www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/ddmtintro.asp](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/ddmtintro.asp) (MCE, M-NCPPC, DNR)

## **5. Continue to encourage effective deer population management on private properties.**

The vast majority of land in the County is private and any effort to manage deer populations on these lands can only be undertaken by the landowners. Managing deer impacts countywide requires the cooperation of county agencies and private landowners. Parcels of land that are forested, in agriculture or slated for development all need to be managed.

Many landowners that do allow hunting on their property are not doing it effectively and would benefit greatly from reviewing the DNR publication, "Deer Hunting - a Valuable Deer Management Tool for Private Landowners".

- a. The Department of Economic Development (DED) should continue and improve as needed their cooperative cooler box program to assist farmers in storing, transporting, processing and donating to charity, deer harvested from agricultural lands. (DED)
- b. DMWG, M-NCPPC and other appropriate agencies should work together and possibly with sportsman's groups, to develop and publish lists of hunting groups that are participating in county deer population management programs along with the criteria for participation. This list could then be available to assist private landowners in finding hunters for deer management efforts on private lands. (M-NCPPC, DMWG)
- c. Promote Quality Deer Management (QDM) as a philosophy and information source to encourage landowners and hunters to better manage deer herds on private property. More information is available at [www.qdma.com](http://www.qdma.com) and [www.marylandqdma.com](http://www.marylandqdma.com).
- d. DED, the DMWG, and the Firearms Safety Committee (FSC) should work with appropriate staff to publicize the changes to the County Weapons Law that were completed in 2007. (DED, DMWG, FSC)
- e. M-NCPPC should continue to offer to work with landowners growing crops on private land adjacent to parkland where deer management is being conducted, to coordinate their management efforts. Landowners should contact M-NCPPC at 301-949-4149 for this program. (M-NCPPC)
- f. DNR should add links to their deer website including to other agencies' sites and documents related to urban deer management to provide better service and education to State residents. (DNR)

## **6. Continue and expand population reduction programs on select State and County lands.**

Table 1 lists public land on which deer population management is currently being conducted and land on which the DMWG recommends deer management in the future. Decisions as to the type of population management implemented, the duration of the operation, and annual harvest goals should be decided by the appropriate agencies and DNR. The timing of implementation is subject to the

resources and budget of the agency managing the property. Tight budgets for FY09 will most likely limit which of the following recommendations can be implemented in the upcoming year.

- a. Seneca Creek State Park should re-implement management in the day-use area of the park. (DNR)
- b. The National Park Service should consider addressing deer management needs in the Goldmine Tract of the C&O Canal Historic Park in Potomac. (NPS)
- c. The Montgomery County Division of Solid Waste should implement deer population management on the approximately 800 acres of County owned property that they manage in the Dickerson area to help reduce impacts to agriculture in the area. These properties are located between Martinsburg and Wasche Roads. Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Deer Management Work Group can provide assistance in developing a program. (DPWT)
- d. SHA should work with M-NCPPC or on their own to ensure that deer management continues on the 400 acre tract purchased as mitigation for the ICC that will be added to the Hoyles Mill Conservation Park located in Germantown. (Map 2 and Table 1, #28) (SHA)
- e. The Montgomery County Revenue Authority (MCRA) should re-implement deer population management on the Golf Courses that they operate in the County that was begun by M-NCPPC prior to transfer of the courses to MCRA. This would most easily be done in cooperation with M-NCPPC's deer management program. (Map 2 and Table 1, #32 & 33) (MCRA, M-NCPPC)
- f. M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks should continue ongoing deer population management programs adjusting methods and harvest goals as needed and continue to expand these efforts, as budgets and staffing allow, into new areas in order to reduce deer impacts to park resources and adjacent property. (M-NCPPC)
- g. The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) should continue current deer population management programs on their lands and continue to expand these efforts, as required to protect WSSC resources and adjacent property. (WSSC)
- h. Continue to investigate methods that are appropriate for managing deer populations in smaller more urban parks that provide the level of control and safety required. (DMWG, M-NCPPC)

## Media Center

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October 30, 2008

### November Peak Time for Deer-Vehicle Collisions, Department of Parks Reminds Drivers to Take Caution, Offers Tips

**SILVER SPRING, MD**—The Montgomery County Department of Parks and Montgomery County Deer Management Work Group remind county residents that it is peak time for deer-vehicle collisions in the county. Deer breeding season runs from mid-October to January, with peak activity the first three weeks of November. During this time deer are more active than usual and less wary of their surroundings, posing a greater than normal danger on the roads.

“The time change from daylight savings to standard time moves the peak of the evening commute into the hours of dusk, a time when deer are especially active and can be difficult to see,” cautioned Rob Gibbs, natural resources manager for the Montgomery County Department of Parks and chair of the county’s Deer Management Work Group.

#### Driving in Deer Country Tips

- Most importantly, drive the speed limit.
- At night reduce speeds below the limit, especially during precipitation or fog.
- Keep in mind deer are most active at dawn and dusk.
- Watch for deer where roads pass through wooded or rural areas.
- As you drive, scan roadsides for the eye shine of deer.
- Deer crossing signs indicate where heavily used deer trails cross roadways. Slow down and watch for the eye shine of deer near road edges.
- Deer usually travel in groups. If you see a deer cross the road, slow down and use caution; more are likely to follow.
- Be especially cautious during seasons of high deer activity including October to January—breeding season and May and June—when yearlings are seeking new territories.

#### Tips for When a Deer is Suddenly in Front of Your Car

- The most important thing to remember is to maintain control of your car.
- Apply the brakes in a controlled manner.
- Deer are quick and agile animals; it is more likely that they will leap out of your path than that you will be able to brake and steer around them.
- Don’t skid out of control, leave the road, or worst of all, swerve into oncoming traffic to avoid the deer—this is when the most serious injuries occur.
- Think ahead and practice an appropriate reaction. These circumstances can arise quickly allowing very little time to react. When drivers see a deer crossing sign, think about what to do if a deer suddenly jumped into the road, mentally practice keeping a cool head and reacting in a controlled fashion.

Throughout the 1990s, the number of deer-vehicle collisions rose dramatically as both deer and human populations increased in Montgomery County. Since the year 2000, the number of accidents has leveled off and declined slightly, but still remains high. Montgomery County Police reported 1,867 deer-vehicle collisions last year. However, not all accidents are reported.

### **Tips for Deer in Your Yard**

- The Montgomery County Deer Management Work Group offers free workshops, co-sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service and Montgomery County Department of Parks, for homeowner groups suffering deer damage to their landscaping.
- Using defensive landscaping, repellents, fencing and other methods can control deer damage around the home and keep deer out of your yard.
- Civic and homeowner associations that would like to schedule a free workshop can call (301) 590-2809 or (301) 949-2909.

For more information on deer in Montgomery County, see [www.ParksDeerManagement.org](http://www.ParksDeerManagement.org).

# # #

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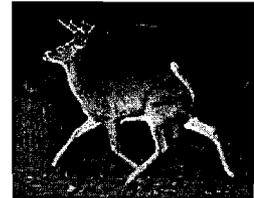
Posted at 09:04 AM in [Parks](#) | [Permalink](#)

MontgomeryParks.org

# Deer Population Management

## Managed Deer Hunts

Montgomery County Department of Parks, in order to reduce and maintain deer populations in accordance with the goals of the County's deer management plan, conducts managed deer hunts in select parks during the Fall and Winter.



Programming is designed with public safety being paramount. Managed hunting programs are directed and supervised by the Department's Wildlife staff and participants are required to follow strict safety and procedural guidelines. Safety buffers are established to meet and exceed State and County ordinance and hunting sites are selected to use terrain, distance, and habitat to enhance safe weapons discharge. Many sites are inspected and approved by the Montgomery County Department of Police.

Weapons discharge is directed into the ground and/or other suitable backdrops, and in many cases, hunting from an elevated position is *required* to ensure that hunters' have a suitable backstop. A variety of harvest strategies have been employed using all weapons legal in the county. However, most programming requires participants to utilize rifled shotguns to harvest deer. On dates when managed hunting is occurring the park is closed to the public.

Managed hunts were implemented in the county in the Fall of 1996 and have occurred annually ever since. To date, the Department has conducted managed deer hunting programs in nine county parks with exceptional results. Currently, managed hunts are being conducted on eight county parks annually.

To learn more about the Montgomery Parks managed deer hunting programs, please click [here](#) to review Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) regarding deer population management being conducted on County parkland. If you are interested in learning how to become involved as a participant in the lottery based managed deer hunting program, please click [here](#) for pre-screening information.

### 2008– 2009 Park Closures for Managed Deer Hunts

**NOTE:** The following Parks are closed sunrise through sunset on the dates indicated due to Managed Deer Hunts

- **Blockhouse Point Conservation Park** (Darnestown)  
Tuesday, November 18 and Tuesday, December 16, 2008
- **Great Seneca Stream Valley Park, Unit 2** (Gaithersburg)  
Wednesday, November 19; Wednesday, December 3 and Wednesday, December 17, 2008
- **Hoyles Mill Conservation Park and attached segments of Little Seneca Stream Valley Park** (Boyds)  
Friday, October 24; Saturday, November 1; Friday, November 7; Saturday, November 15; Saturday, December 6; Friday, December 12, 2008 and Friday, January 2; Saturday, January 10; Friday, January 30 and Saturday, February 7
- **Little Bennett Regional Park** (Clarksburg)  
Monday, December 8 through Friday, December 12, 2008 and Friday, January 9, 2009
- **North Germantown Greenway Park**, Blunt Rd. North to Brink Rd. (Clarksburg)  
Wednesday, November 19; Wednesday, December 3 and Wednesday, December 17, 2008
- **South Germantown Greenway Park** (Clarksburg)



**Rachel Carson Conservation Park (Brookville)**

Monday, November 17; Monday, December 15, 2008 and Monday, January 5, 2009

• **Woodstock Equestrian Park (Beallsville)**

Saturday, October 25; Saturday, November 8; Friday, November 14; Friday, December 5; Saturday, December 13, 2008 and Saturday, January 3; Friday, January 9; Saturday, January 31 and Friday, February 6, 2009.

## Park Police-based Sharpshooting

Montgomery County Department of Parks, in order to reduce and maintain deer populations in accordance with the goals of the County's deer management plan, conducts Police-based sharpshooting in select parks during the period of January through March.

Deer population reductions are conducted from Sunset until Sunrise while the parks are closed to the public. Programming is designed with public safety being paramount. Police-based sharpshooting programs are directed and supervised by the Department's Park Police Division and Wildlife staff. Park Police Officers participating in this program have received extensive training and certification and utilize the most advance equipment and techniques available. Weapons discharge is conducted in a safe manner with safe backdrops identified prior to firing.

Deer are removed safely, humanely, and discretely. All deer harvested during such programming are donated to the Capital Area Food Band for distribution to the regions charitable organizations.

Police-based sharpshooting was implemented in the county in the spring of 1999 and has occurred annually ever since. To date, the Department has conducted Police-based sharpshooting programs in ten county parks with exceptional results. Police-based sharpshooting is being conducted annually, and the Department continues to investigate expanding efforts to parklands in need of deer population reduction. Click [here](#) to review Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) on this topic.

Date of last update: September 30, 2008

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## Media Center

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September 22, 2008

### Fall/Winter Park Closures as Department of Parks Conducts Annual Deer Management Operations

**SILVER SPRING, MD**—Today, the Montgomery County Department of Parks announces its fall 2008, winter 2009 deer management operations season, which will result in several intermittent park closures. The department's seasonal deer management operations will begin Friday, October 24 at Hoyles Mill Conservation Park and will be completed on Tuesday, March 31, 2009. Park users are encouraged to note park closures, affecting specific park locations during this period. "Park Closed" signs will be posted surrounding the affected parks.

"We continue to see declining deer populations and deer impacts in areas where we have been able to employ these valuable deer management operations," said Department of Parks Natural Resources Specialist and Wildlife Ecologist Bill Hamilton.

On select dates from October 2008 through February 2009, seven county parks will be closed from Sunrise until Sunset for managed deer hunts. [For a complete list of the scheduled park closures.](#) From January 1 through March 31, 2009, additional county parks will be closed from 5:30 pm until Sunrise—at night when the parks are closed to the public—for Maryland-National Capital Park Police-based sharpshooting of deer. Parks which will be affected by the Park Police-based sharpshooting program will be posted at [www.ParksDeerManagement.org](http://www.ParksDeerManagement.org) after December 1, 2008.

"For more than a decade, the Department of Parks has maintained an impeccable safety record during these operations and we work diligently to make sure park users and neighbors are aware of these activities," noted Hamilton. "We thank park patrons for their patience with these closures as we conduct these essential deer management operations to preserve the delicate balance of natural resources and public safety throughout the park system and its surrounding communities."

Since these operations were implemented in December 1996, the Department of Parks has worked to control deer populations in county parks through managed hunts and Park Police-based sharpshooting. These operations are conducted carefully and with the utmost regard for protecting public safety. Private hunters conducting managed hunts for deer in county parks must meet the highest level of state and county safety standards in order to participate and the sharpshooting operations in the parks are conducted by expertly trained Park Police officers only.

The county parks department's deer management operations have served as a model for much of the region. State, county and private agencies have employed similar programs in response to similar community impacts from deer and concerns about protecting natural areas. In Montgomery County, several government agencies and affiliates, as well, have implemented deer management efforts as a result of countywide concern.

"The Department of Parks also continues to seek out opportunities to expand our effort to maintain appropriate deer population densities throughout parklands," Hamilton added.

In this regard, the department will explore proposals this year to implement new deer management operations on parkland in Darnestown, Fairland and Travillah. The Department of Parks will notify and solicit comments from communities likely to be affected by these proposals prior to making any decision regarding these parks.

For more on the Department of Parks' deer management program, including a copy of the county's deer management plan, Montgomery County Deer Management Work Group annual reports and information on newly proposed deer management operations, visit [www.ParksDeerManagement.org](http://www.ParksDeerManagement.org).

# # #

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Posted at 09:00 AM in [Parks](#) | [Permalink](#)



## Maryland Deer Hunters Set New Record

***More than 100,000 Deer Harvested in 2008-2009***

**Annapolis, Md. (February 13, 2009)** — Deer Hunters in the state of Maryland harvested over 100,000 deer in a single season for the first time since modern deer management began in the early 1900's. The record 100,437 deer taken during the 2008-2009 deer season eclipsed the previous record of 94,114 deer set in 2002-2003 and is 9% higher than last year's harvest of 92,208 deer. Reaching this numerical milestone is consistent with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) goal to reduce or stabilize deer numbers in most of the state.

This year's antlered harvest increased 8% from 32,221 deer (898 sika deer) in 2007-2008 to 34,725 deer (1,076 sika deer). The antlerless harvest increased 10% from 59,987 deer (956 sika deer) last year to 65,712 deer (1,103 sika deer) this year.

"Hunting license sales increased slightly this year, but we believe the major factor for the record harvest was that hunters increased their efforts to put more venison in the freezer during these lean economic times," said DNR Deer Project Leader Brian Eyer. "The 10% increase in the antlerless harvest is great news and will aide us in managing deer numbers across the state."

In Deer Management Region A (Garrett and Allegany counties), hunters reported 9,876 deer this year, a 10% increase over the 9,004 deer taken last year. The antlered harvest of 5,367 deer this year was slightly higher than the 2007-2008 harvest of 5,208 deer, while the antlerless harvest of 4,509 deer was a 19% increase over last year's harvest of 3,796 deer. The large increase in the Region A antlerless harvest can be partially attributed to an additional day of antlerless firearm hunting on private lands beginning with the 2008-2009 season. The extra day for antlerless deer hunting was provided at the request of landowners in the region who wanted more opportunities to effectively manage deer numbers on their land.

The reported deer harvest in the remainder of the state (Region B) increased in most counties. Hunters in Region B reported taking 90,561 deer for the year. The antlered harvest of 29,358 deer was 9% higher than the 27,013 antlered deer taken last year, while the antlerless harvest also increased 9% from 56,191 deer last year to 61,203 deer this year. Washington County led the harvest totals for 2008-2009 with 9,227 deer, followed by Frederick County with 8,238 deer, and Baltimore County with 7,016 deer.

The deer harvest in Maryland's suburban counties (Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's) also increased in 2008-2009. Hunters in these counties took an average of 15% more antlerless deer this year than in 2007-2008. In recent years, DNR has liberalized antlerless harvest regulations in these counties in an effort to address the impacts that high deer populations have had on Maryland's suburban landscape and residents.

"Controlling the deer population in the suburban areas of the state is a challenging task. Fortunately, Maryland's hunters have taken advantage of the liberalized antlerless deer hunting opportunities in these areas" said Wildlife and Heritage Service Acting Director Jonathan McKnight. "Without their efforts, deer management in the suburban areas would be much more difficult."

A chart showing harvest results by county is attached.

**Maryland Reported Antlered and Antlerless Deer Harvest for the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 Hunting Season**

County	Antlered			Antlerless			Total		
	2007-2008	2008-2009	% Change	2007-2008	2008-2009	% Change	2007-2008	2008-2009	% Change
Allegany	2,478	2,582	4.2	1,767	2,059	16.5	4,245	4,641	9.3
Anne Arundel	805	1,014	26.0	1,778	2,091	17.6	2,583	3,105	20.2
Baltimore	1,728	1,952	13.0	4,062	5,064	24.7	5,790	7,016	21.2
Calvert	569	692	21.6	1,081	1,140	5.5	1,650	1,832	11.0
Caroline									
whitetail	752	799	6.3	1,747	1,980	13.3	2,499	2,779	11.2
sika	0	0	*	0	2	*	0	2	*
Carroll	1,774	1,914	7.9	3,245	3,576	10.2	5,019	5,490	9.4
Cecil	968	1,142	18.0	2,157	2,544	17.9	3,125	3,686	18.0
Charles	1,438	1,664	15.7	2,515	3,083	22.6	3,953	4,747	20.1
Dorchester									
whitetail	907	934	3.0	1,970	1,954	-0.8	2,877	2,888	0.4
sika	837	996	19.0	885	997	12.7	1,722	1,993	15.7
Frederick	2,580	2,853	10.6	4,760	5,385	13.1	7,340	8,238	12.2
Garrett	2,730	2,785	2.0	2,029	2,450	20.7	4,759	5,235	10.0
Harford	1,004	1,147	14.2	2,238	2,437	8.9	3,242	3,584	10.6
Aberdeen Prv. Grds.	200	144	-28.0	459	305	-33.6	659	449	-31.9
Howard	701	857	22.3	1,899	1,988	4.7	2,600	2,845	9.4
Kent	1,007	1,137	12.9	2,148	2,414	12.4	3,155	3,551	12.6
Montgomery	1,266	1,580	24.8	3,542	3,583	1.2	4,808	5,163	7.4
Prince George's	755	1,009	33.6	1,493	1,887	26.4	2,248	2,896	28.8
Queen Anne's	1,159	1,241	7.1	2,416	2,767	14.5	3,575	4,008	12.1
St. Mary's	1,031	1,111	7.8	2,053	1,943	-5.4	3,084	3,054	-1.0
Somerset									
whitetail	872	786	-9.9	2,083	1,895	-9.5	2,955	2,681	-9.6
sika	1	1	*	1	4	*	2	5	*
Talbot	830	862	3.9	2,030	2,308	13.7	2,860	3,170	10.8
Washington	3,143	3,129	-0.4	5,677	6,098	7.4	8,820	9,227	4.6
Wicomico									
whitetail	1,183	1,034	-12.6	2,395	2,478	3.4	3,578	3,510	-1.9
sika	25	38	52.0	22	28	27.3	47	66	40.4
Worcester									
whitetail	276	28	-89.9	677	318	-53.0	953	263	-72.3
sika	35	17	-51.4	48	7	-85.4	83	15	-81.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,221</b>	<b>34,725</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>59,987</b>	<b>65,712</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>92,208</b>	<b>100,437</b>	<b>8.9</b>

\*Small sample size

February 13, 2009

Contact: Ray Weaver  
 410-260-8002 office | 410-507-7526 cell  
[rweaver@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:rweaver@dnr.state.md.us)

Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is the state agency responsible for providing natural and living resource-related services to citizens and visitors. DNR manages more than 449,000 acres of public lands and 17,000 miles of waterways, along with Maryland's forests, fisheries and wildlife for maximum environmental, economic and quality of life benefits. A national leader in land conservation, DNR-managed parks and natural, historic and cultural resources attract 12 million visitors annually. DNR is the lead agency in Maryland's effort to restore the Chesapeake Bay, the state's number one environmental priority. Learn more at [www.dnr.maryland.gov](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov)



Wednesday, Oct. 1, 2008

## Deer evolve from nuisance to nutrient

### Feeding program donates venison to food banks to feed hungry

by Meghan Tierney | Staff Writer

For four years, the county has partnered with a nonprofit to turn an old saying on its head — when life gives you a rapidly expanding deer population, make venison for the hungry.

Montgomery County's deer donation program, launched in 2004 at the urging of farmers tired of seeing their crops picked to pieces by the native grazers, returned with the start of the deer hunting season. Hunters can take advantage of liberal hunting limits meant to help control the deer population without wasting meat by bringing their excess haul to drop-off spots in Poolesville and Laytonsville. There the deer are inspected and stored until the meat is processed and delivered to food pantries or charities.

Hunter participation increased incrementally in the first three years, and the program collected 197 deer, or 7,880 pounds of venison, in the 2007-08 hunting season, a 131 percent increase from the previous year, according to the county Department of Economic Development's Web site.

"A lot of people just don't know about it, but it's a great program for hunters, especially ones that are trying to manage their populations" on their own property, said Joe Brown, coordinator at the Poolesville drop-off and co-owner of Barnesville-based Patriot Land and Wildlife Management Services. "An average hunter just needs two deer, but that's nowhere near enough to bring populations down to sustainable levels."

The number of white-tailed deer is a growing problem in the county, where development has forced the animals into smaller spaces and created dense, urban areas generally unsuited for hunting. Deer have no natural predators aside from man, and a population can double in size in one to two years, according to the Maryland Department of Natural Resource's Web site.

The deer have become a headache for farmers as well. In 2005, deer were responsible for 86 percent of the \$4.16 million in wildlife crop losses suffered by farmers in North Central Maryland, which includes Montgomery County, according to the most recent data available from the National Agricultural Statistics Service. And in a 2004 survey, county farmers said that deer overpopulation was the biggest threat to the area's agriculture, according to DED.

"They love it all, they're not picky," said grain farmer Tom Linthicum, coordinator for the Laytonsville drop-off, which opened last year to serve hunters in the eastern part of the county. Linthicum, like many area farmers, allows managed hunts on his property to keep deer numbers down.

Once at the drop-offs, both located on farms, deer are stored in a refrigerated truck mounted on cinderblocks until they are transported to butchers. The meat is distributed to charities and food pantries by Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry, a nonprofit based in Washington County with coordinators in 26 states. For the last few years, the meat collected in Montgomery County has been given to the Capital Area Food Bank, which serves the Washington, D.C., region, according to Josh Wilson, operations director for Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry.

Due to its high cost, fresh meat is often hard for food pantries to come by, according to the group.

"It's different than beef — it's a leaner meat, so depending on how it's cooked, it can be a little drier," Wilson said. "It's also very good in spaghetti or tacos."

Even among those opposed to hunting, Wilson said most people he's talked to about deer donation have been supportive because the meat goes to a good cause.

Jeremy Criss, the county's agricultural services manager and coordinator of the deer donation program, agreed, citing the dangers large deer populations can create.

"It's interesting, most people who don't care for the program usually change their mind after they have a deer collision," he said.

By the numbers

Number of deer and pounds of venison collected in Montgomery County.

2004-5: 39 deer, 1,560 lbs.

2005-6: 51 deer, 2,040 lbs.

2006-7: 85 deer, 3,400 lbs.

2007-8: 197 deer, 7,880 lbs.

Source: Montgomery County Department of Economic Development

The county accepts deer daily except Sundays and holidays through April. Drop-off by appointment only.

To drop off deer in Poolesville, 20301 Whites Ferry Road, call Joe Brown between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. at 240-388-0602. To drop off deer in Laytonsville, 22310 Laytonsville Road, call Tom Linthicum between 9 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. at 240-398-0122. For more information, contact the county's Agricultural Services Division at 301-590-2823.

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND****News Release**

For Immediate Release: 10/15/2008

### Changes in County's Weapons Law to Affect Deer Hunting Season

In an effort to address the increasing deer over-population in Montgomery County and the problems associated with it, the County Council enacted a law that went into effect in March 2008 that provides more flexibility for deer hunting under controlled circumstances. The new law gives the County additional tools for addressing the problem while protecting the public's safety. The proliferation of deer in the County has caused significant problems to the agricultural community and has contributed to an increase in automobile collisions and the spread of Lyme disease. The key components of the new law pertain to deer only.

With the impending start of firearms hunting season in Montgomery County beginning October 16 and running through January 10, 2009, deer hunting under controlled circumstances will be permitted on parcels of land that are 50 acres or larger in the urban area, as recommended by the County's Deer Management Work Group. The urban area covers approximately two-thirds of the county, from the southern border with the District of Columbia, as far north as Black Hills Regional Park in Germantown. A map that specifically outlines the boundaries of the urban area can be found through a link on the County's website at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov). If the property is at least 50 acres in size hunters no longer need to obtain a deer damage control permit under the law from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources or approval from the Montgomery County Police Department. However, prior to hunting, specific requirements must be met as follows:

- guns may be discharged only from an elevated position;
- guns cannot be loaded until the person is in an elevated position;
- guns are unloaded before descending from the elevated position;
- the projectile has a downward trajectory;
- the property owner complies with any public notice requirements in regulations; and
- the property owner gives written notice to the Chief of Police at least 15 days before any gun is discharged on the property which identifies the date and time that deer hunting will occur, lists names of participating hunters and includes a copy of the record plat or tax assessment record for the property.

For properties less than 50 acres in size and inside the urban boundary, the regulation remains unchanged.

Temporary regulations can also be found through a link on the County's homepage.

On parcels smaller than 50 acres, a person may still discharge a gun in the urban area if approved by the Chief of Police, under a deer damage control permit issued by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, subject to the same restrictions as the

discharge of a gun outside the urban area. Guns may also be discharged on property owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission as a part of a deer management program conducted by the commission that complies with safety requirements approved by the Chief of Police.

The County Executive has formulated regulations which require signs to be posted along the perimeter of each applicable property at least 15 days before any gun is discharged on the property. The regulations specify the size, wording and location of each sign.

Bow season started on September 15 and runs through January 31. Hunting with muzzle-loaders goes from October 16 through 25 and again from December 20 through January 3, 2009. Hunting with other types of firearms, including muzzle-loaders, begins on November 29 and goes through December 13 and again on January 9 and 10, 2009.

Additional changes to the County law include:

- Up to five owners of contiguous parcels of property may aggregate their property to meet the 50-acre requirement. Written permission must be obtained from each property owner before a person may discharge a gun for the purpose of deer hunting on the properties.
- Modifying the current "safety zone" to prohibit the discharge of a gun into or within 150 yards (reduced from 200 yards) of a building or camp designed for human occupancy.
- Repealing language that prohibits the discharge of a gun or bow within 100 yards of a public road. The new law now prohibits the discharge of a gun onto, across, or within 50 yards of a public road. (A bow may not be discharged on, from, or across a public road.)
- Repealing language that requires the Chief of Police to approve the discharge of a gun outside the urban area in connection with a deer damage control permit, issued by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

The Weapons Ordinance, Chapter 57, of the Montgomery County Code can be viewed at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/countyattorney](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/countyattorney), under the Services and Resources link.

For more information about the County weapons law, call the Montgomery County Police Department at **240-773-5030**. For information about laws pertaining to hunting on parkland, call Rob Gibbs at the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission at **301-949-2909**.

###

Release ID: 08-411  
Media Contact: Sue Tucker 240-777-6530

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Best viewed with IE 5.0 or Netscape 6.0 and higher



*Exec Regs*



LAM  
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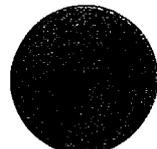
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

039365

MEMORANDUM

December 11, 2008



TO: Phil Andrews, President  
Montgomery County Council

FROM: Isiah Leggett, County Executive *Isiah Leggett*

SUBJECT: Executive Regulation 34-08 - Discharge of Guns Within Montgomery County

On October 7, 2008, I forwarded to the Council temporary regulation 34-08T, Discharge of Guns within Montgomery County, which established requirements relating to the issuance of deer damage control permits and deer hunting on private property of 50 acres or more with the urban area. The corresponding permanent regulation was published in the November 2008 County Register. No comments were received prior to the deadline. I am now forwarding permanent regulation 34-08 for the Council's review and approval, as well as the fiscal impact statement for the regulation.

I look forward to working with the Council on this important matter.

Attachments

RECEIVED  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
COUNCIL

2008 DEC 11 PM 2:37

21



# MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXECUTIVE REGULATION

Offices of the County Executive • 101 Monroe Street • Rockville, Maryland 20850

<b>Subject</b> <b>WEAPONS</b>	<b>Number</b> <b>34-08</b>
<b>Originating Department</b> <b>MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>

Montgomery County Regulation on  
DISCHARGE OF GUNS WITHIN MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

Issued by: County Executive  
Regulation No.  
COMCOR

Authority: Montgomery County Code, 1965, as amended  
Section 2-22, Section 57-4(e) and 2A-15  
Supersedes: 16-93

Council Review: Method 2, under Code Section 2A-15  
Register Vol. 25 No. 10

Comment Deadline: November 30, 2008

Effective Date:  
Sunset Date: None

**SUMMARY:** The purpose of this regulation is to establish procedures and criteria that the Chief of Police must use to determine whether it is safe to discharge a gun under a deer damage control permit issued by the Department of Natural Resources and to establish rules for deer hunting on land at least 50 acres in size within the Urban Area.

**ADDRESS:** Montgomery County Department of Police  
2350 Research Boulevard  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

**STAFF CONTACT:** Captain Donald Johnson, Commander  
Third District  
Telephone (301) 565-7740

**BACKGROUND:** The current overpopulation of deer in the County has been causing substantial economic harm to the County's farmers and other agriculturalists. According to a 2004 landowner survey, the deer have destroyed the forest habitat in the County and account for more than \$1 million in crop losses to Montgomery County farmers. Recent amendments to Montgomery County Code, Chapter 57, Weapons, make it easier for residents to protect their property from deer impacts by permitting the discharge of firearms on private land without police approval or a site inspection so long as certain requirements are met. This regulation is intended to ensure the public's safety during hunts on these parcels.



# MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXECUTIVE REGULATION

Offices of the County Executive • 101 Monroe Street • Rockville, Maryland 20850

<b>Subject</b> <b>WEAPONS</b>	<b>Number</b> <b>34-08</b>
<b>Originating Department</b> <b>MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>

Sec. 1. Purpose. Procedure to allow the discharge of a firearm within the urban area under a deer damage control permit issued by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and approved by the Chief of Police and to establish rules for deer hunting on private property at least 50 acres in size.

Sec. 2. Procedures. (a) When the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) receives a request for a deer damage control permit at a location that is less than 50 acres within the urban area, DNR will contact the Montgomery County Police Department's (MCPD) police district serving the area in which the requestor's site is located. The DNR agent and an executive officer (lieutenant or above) from the police district will thereafter meet at the location where the permit has been requested within three (3) calendar days of the formal request.

The DNR agent and MCPD executive officer will together inspect the location to resolve any issues or questions. The DNR agent will have the sole responsibility for determining the need for the issuance of the deer damage control permit. The MCPD executive officer will inspect the site from the standpoint of safety issues, including, but not limited to, the location's proximity to occupied buildings and/or roadways, whether the location provides for downward trajectory, and any other considerations that may necessitate restricting the use of a firearm to carry out the stated purpose of the deer damage control permit.

If the DNR agent determines that a deer damage control permit is to be issued, he will complete the permit listing the permit's tag numbers to be used and give the completed permit to the MCPD executive officer. The MCPD executive officer will then complete a MCP Form # 590, Addendum to DNR Deer Damage Control Permit, listing all deer tag numbers and restrictions with which the permit holder must comply. The MCPD executive officer will forward the deer damage control permit and addendum along with a memorandum outlining the reasons for any restrictions to the Chief of Police for review and signature within three (3) calendar days.

After reviewing the documentation submitted for the deer damage control permit from both the DNR and MCPD executive officer, the Chief of Police will either approve or disapprove the request, sign and date the MCP Form # 590. After signing, the originals of the MCP Form # 590 and the Deer Damage Control Permit will be returned to the person requesting the permit by U.S. mail within four calendar days. The remaining two copies of the forms will be forwarded to the Department of Natural Resources for their records. The Department of Police will maintain its [their our] files.

(b) Whenever deer hunting is to occur on private property of at least 50 acres in size, the property owner(s) must, at least 15 days before any weapon is discharged, post the perimeter of the property and, where applicable, at each road entrance to the property, with signs that:



# MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXECUTIVE REGULATION

Offices of the County Executive • 101 Monroe Street • Rockville, Maryland 20850

<b>Subject</b> <b>WEAPONS</b>	<b>Number</b> <b>34-08</b>
<b>Originating Department</b> <b>MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>

- (1) are placed where the signs may reasonably be seen by passersby or from any adjacent roadway or public waterway and other land adjoining the property;
- (2) are posted at least every 100 yards along the perimeter of the property;
- (3) are at least 12 inches wide by 17 inches high
- (4) have black lettering on a yellow background;
- (5) that include the following warning: "CAUTION: Firearms in use for deer hunting on this property from (date) to (date). No Trespassing."

Sec. 3. Applicability. Any person within an urban area whose livelihood is threatened by property damage caused by deer may apply for a deer damage control permit, except that no permit is necessary on land at least 50 acres in size.

Sec. 4. Severability. If a court holds that part of this regulation is invalid, the invalidity does not affect other parts.

[Sec. 5. Effective Date. This regulation becomes effective 30 calendar days after approval by the County Council or 90 calendar days after Council receipt of the Regulation if Council takes no action within 60 days of receipt.]

Approved:

Dec 10, 2008  
Date

Isiah Leggett  
Isiah Leggett, County Executive

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY  
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

By: [Signature]  
Associate County Attorney

Date: 12/3/08

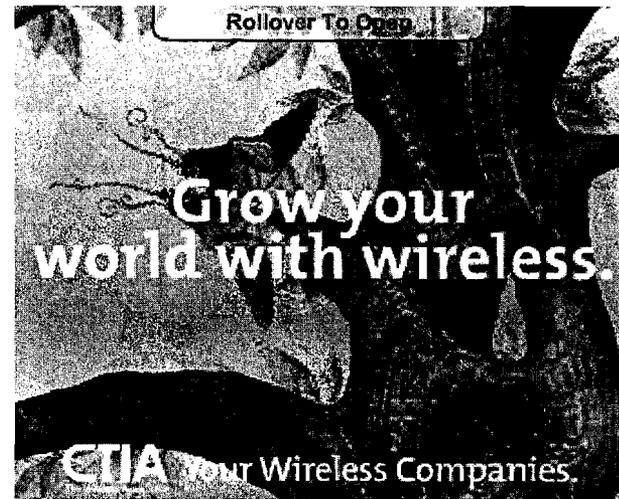
washingtonpost.com

## Once Scorned, Deer Hunters Find Welcome in Suburban Md.

By Steve Hendrix  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Monday, January 12, 2009; A01

A year ago, this would have been illegal: Mark Eakin, a federal oceanographer and avid deer hunter, sat in a portable tree stand with his bow at the ready, overlooking a small creek and two Rockville back yards on a cold January morning. As the camo-clad Eakin peered down, the weekday routine rolled down the street behind him, school buses, trash trucks and commuters heading toward Wootton Parkway.

Advertisement



"The worst is when people are out here with their leaf blowers," Eakin said. "You don't see a lot of deer then."

But Eakin, who has bagged eight deer since bow season began in September, isn't complaining about the suburban conditions. In fact, he's one of several hunters, game officials and residents to hail Montgomery County's surprising emergence as something of a deer-hunting haven.

Even as neighboring Howard County has proposed tightening rules on where hunters can hunt, after an incident last month when one shot out the window of a day-care center, Montgomery is going the other way. In spring, the County Council overturned what had been some of the state's most restrictive hunting rules and freed up more downcounty areas to bow and shotgun hunting.

Last season, Eakin's Rockville perch would have been prohibited as too close to a road. But now he is able to set up his stand with the permission of surrounding homeowners. "It's not that people embrace the hunting," said Eakin, who belongs to a group of volunteer archers who hunt at the request of neighborhoods with large deer populations, "but they know something needs to be done."

Behind Montgomery's new openness to hunting, officials said, is public frustration with the whitetail population boom. Crumpled fenders, ruined gardens and the risk of Lyme disease have made residents much more receptive to hunters.

"They've gone from 'How dare you propose shooting the deer' to 'When are you coming to my neighborhood?' " said Rob Gibbs, head of Montgomery's Deer Management Working Group.

John Yakaitis, 62, has watched increasing numbers of deer destroy his shrubs and the surrounding forest understory. His wife hit a deer two years ago, doing more than \$1,000 in damage to their car.

"There are just so many of them, they're eating everything in sight and they're still starving," Yakaitis said. "A lot of folks who were opposed to it are signing up" to allow hunters, he said.

When Gibbs's working group proposed changing the law to make it easier on hunters, the council approved the plan unanimously. Gibbs predicted that the shift would build on progress the county has

made in recent years in stabilizing the deer population in parklands through controlled hunting in those areas.

"What we hear from the public now is that they want the county to do more to thin the deer population," said Montgomery Council member Phil Andrews (D-Gaithersburg-Rockville), chairman of the public safety committee.

The council had an object lesson in deer danger in late 2007 when council member George L. Leventhal (D-At Large) was injured in a collision with a deer on the Capital Beltway. Leventhal, who suffered serious facial damage, had additional reconstructive surgery Wednesday at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

"I do think my accident dramatized for elected officials in Montgomery County the hazards associated with overpopulation of deer," Leventhal said by e-mail from his hospital room.

The new rules largely do away with the added restrictions the county had maintained in the so-called urban zone of southern Montgomery, almost two-thirds of the county stretching from near Germantown to the District border. No longer do licensed hunters there have to obtain special permission from Montgomery police to hunt with firearms on land parcels of at least 50 acres, as long as they have the owner's permission.

The rules also reduce from 200 yards to 150 yards the distance hunters must stay from houses or buildings. And there is no longer a requirement that bow hunters be at least 100 yards from any road; now they can station themselves near a road as long as they don't shoot across it. Hunters are also required to shoot downward from an elevated stand, which reduces the distance a slug or arrow can travel.

The changes bring southern Montgomery more in line with the northern, more rural areas of the county and the rest of Maryland.

In Northern Virginia, deer complaints have also led officials to loosen some hunting rules. The regular deer season ended last weekend, but the state has extended doe hunting until March 28 in Fairfax, Loudon, Prince William and Fauquier counties. "Frankly, we had so many complaints about damage up there that we needed to extend the season," said Julia Dixon, spokeswoman for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. In Arlington County, however, local regulations effectively prohibit deer hunting by firearm or bow, Dixon said.

Maryland's relaxed rules haven't just attracted hunters such as Eakin, whose Animal Connection group shoots deer to reduce the population and donates the venison to food banks. Trophy hunters, too, are increasingly keen to get a bead on the big bucks lurking in the woodsier parts of Rockville and Potomac.

"There is definitely a trend now of hunters looking for suburban lots to hunt on," said Cpl. JoAnn Berisford, the state game ranger who patrols Montgomery. "A lot of these places have never been hunted, and they grow these monster bucks. We're talking [antlers of] 12, 14 points."

The arrival of more hunters decked out in camouflage and sporting bows or shotguns has made for some jarring encounters, Berisford said. She recently responded to a complaint of a bow hunter stationed atop playground equipment in a Potomac back yard. But because the hunter had the permission of surrounding homeowners, Berisford said, the jungle gym made a perfectly legal deer stand.

Not all residents are happy with the increased hunting. Judy Scott Feldman, a few doors from Yakaitis,

doesn't let the archers use her property, saying she would rather endure damaged landscaping than participate in a blood sport.

"I understand there's a problem, but I just can't bring myself to see deer dying in my yard," Feldman said. "It's starting to become commonplace, but I'm not going to change." One morning in November, Feldman was disturbed to see a deer standing by the side of her street with an arrow sticking from its side. "The school buses go right by there," Feldman said.

With the state's firearm deer hunting season coming to a close Sunday, county officials said they have no reports of problems related to the new rules. Bow hunting is allowed until the end of January.

Howard officials, meanwhile, are poised to make hunting rules more restrictive in that county. Although no one was hurt when a hunter's shotgun blast shattered a day-care window Dec. 10, County Executive Ken Ulman and others want to double the distance hunters must be from occupied buildings, from 150 to 300 yards.

"We owe it to ourselves to have a community discussion about what is the appropriate distances," Ulman said. "Hunting can be done safely -- that's demonstrated every day. But I think the fact that this happened and that it didn't appear to violate local statutes warrants a good look to make sure we're doing all we can [to keep people] safe."

Back in Rockville, Eakin climbed down after a few fruitless hours, loaded his gear into his truck and immediately confronted another fact of suburban deer hunting: the rush-hour traffic jam on Falls Road.

*Staff writer Lori Aratani contributed to this report.*

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**Lyme Disease Update**  
**Public Safety Committee**  
**Montgomery County Council**  
**February 19, 2009**

**Cindy Edwards MCHA, BSN, RN Manager III**

**Carol Jordan MPH, BSN, RN Manager II**

**Communicable Disease & Epidemiology**  
**Department of Health and Human Services**  
**Public Health Services**



# Lyme Disease

- Most common reported vector-borne disease in the United States
  - Caused by *Borrelia burgdorferi*
  - Transmitted by bite of infected tick, *Ixodes scapularis*
- Number U.S. cases doubled since 1991
  - >20,000 U.S. cases reported in 2005
- Number MD cases doubled from 2006
  - ~2500 cases (as of 3/4/08) in MD for 2007

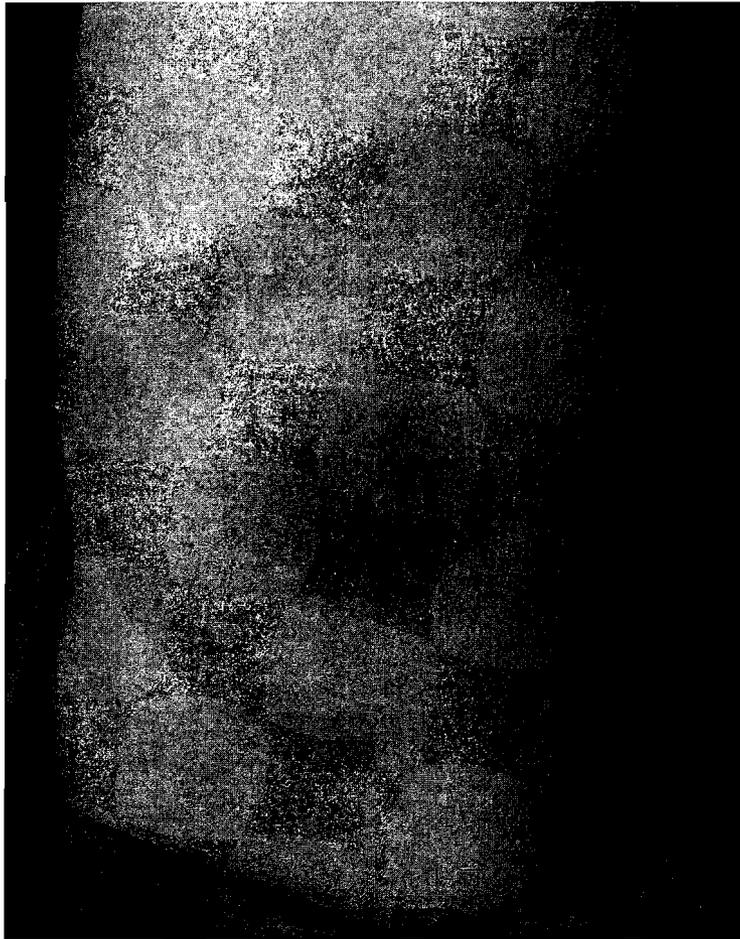
# Public Health Efforts 2008

- Organized Lyme Disease Task Force
- Developed and distributed brochures and Lyme warning sign
- Presented educational information to MC Recreation Department camp directors, to community groups and associations, and to Montgomery County employees
- Coordinated with Montgomery County Deer Management Work Group
- Participated in Lyme Disease Awareness Month May 2008

# Disease Control Program Efforts

- Enhanced surveillance
- Mailed over 1000 surveillance letters to over 550 medical providers
- Nursing review of all medical reports
- NEDSS
- Intake system in place to respond to calls from the public on Lyme Disease

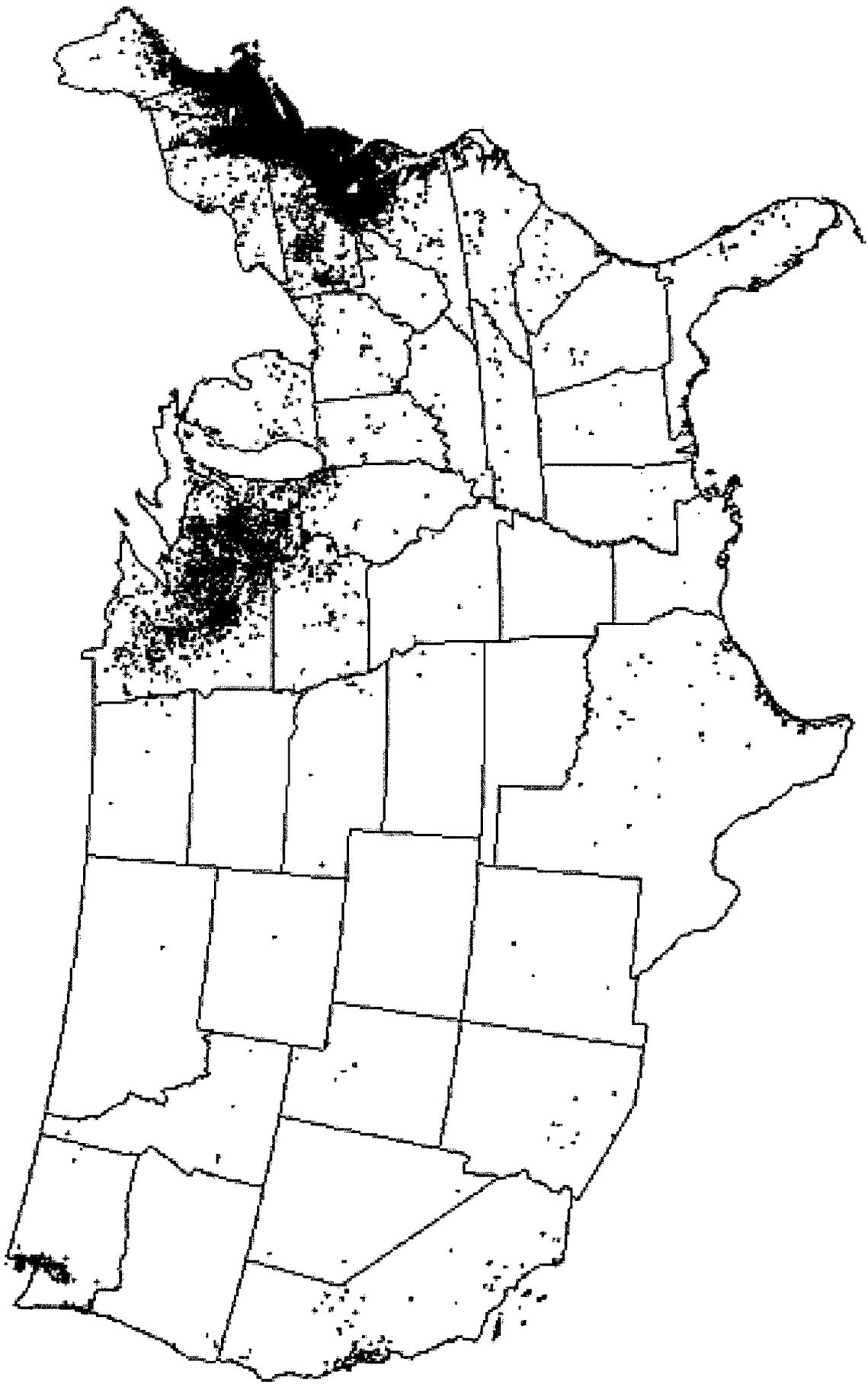
# Lyme Disease – Clinical Presentation



- Systemic, tick-borne disease with protean manifestations
- Incubation period: 3-30 days
- Three stages
  - Early localized
  - Early disseminated
  - Late disseminated

From CDC PHIL – MD woman with EM on right posterior upper arm

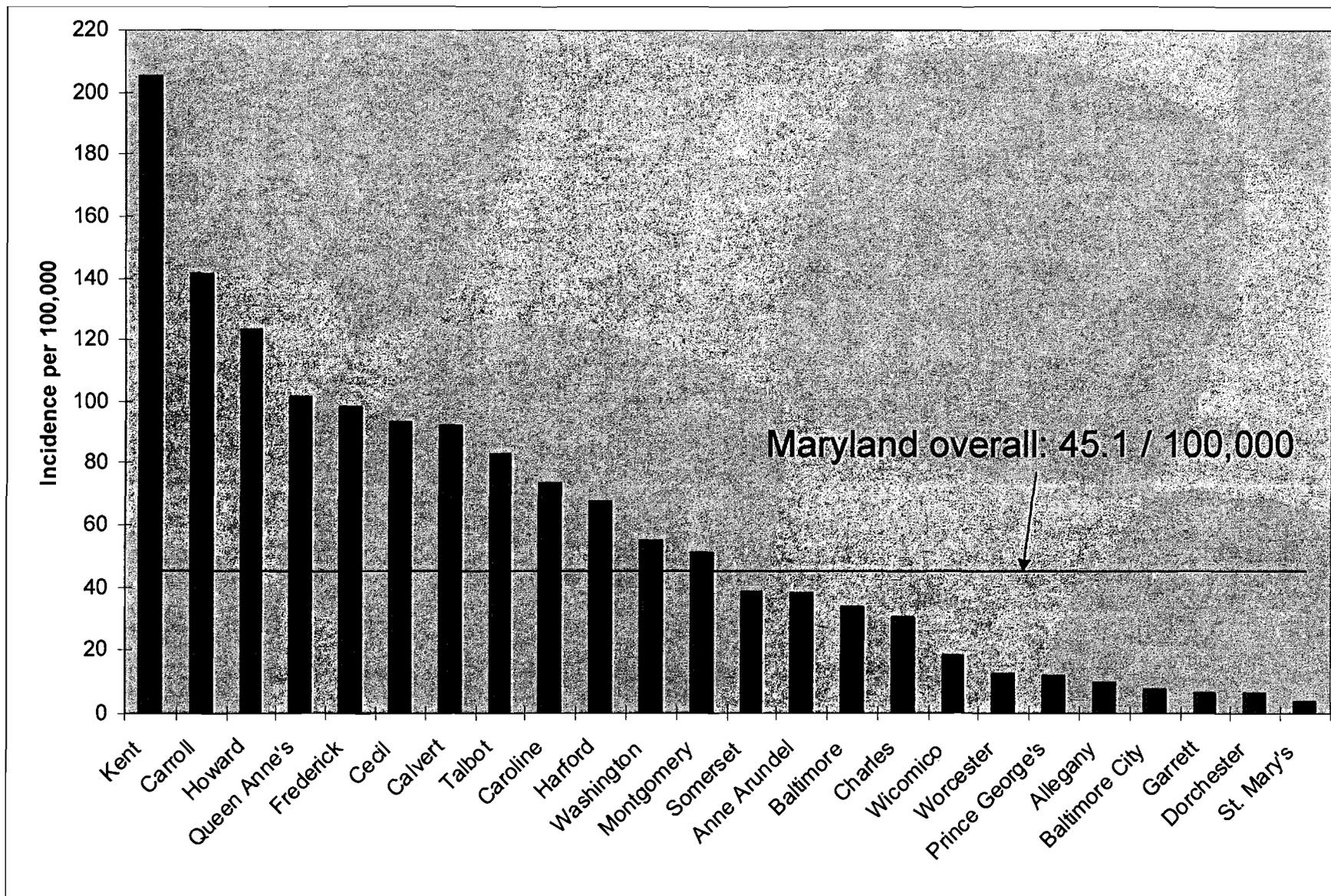
# Reported Cases of Lyme Disease -- United States, 2006



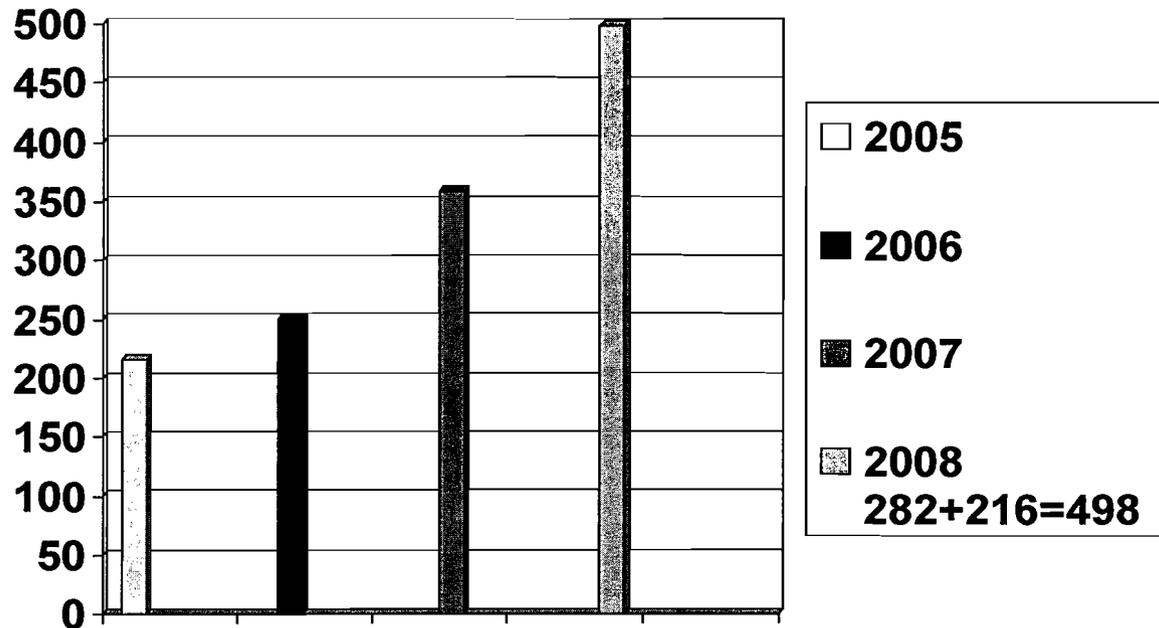
1 dot placed randomly within county of residence for each reported case

# Lyme Disease Case Rates,\* Maryland, 2007

## \*Provisional Results



# Lyme Disease Cases in Montgomery County



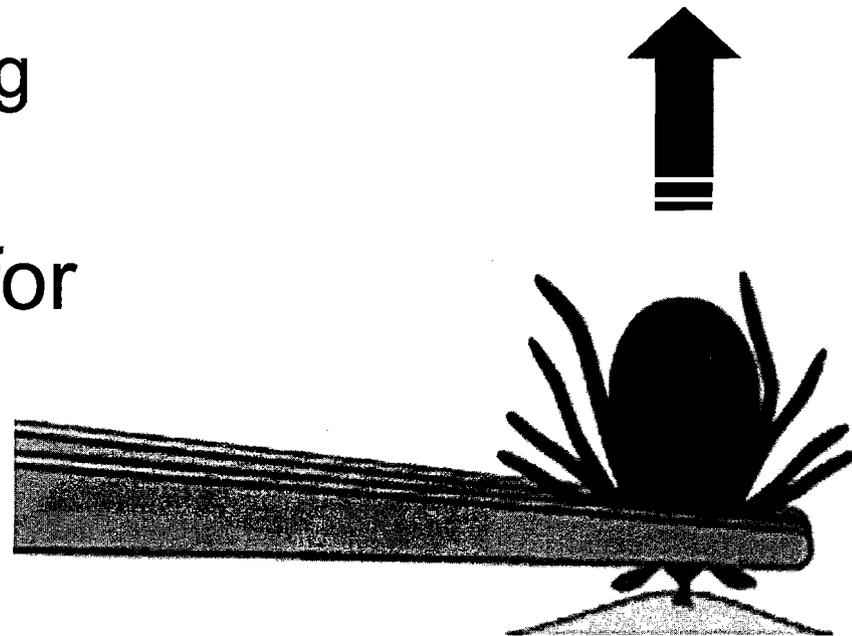
Number of cases\*

Case definition for surveillance changed 2008. Prior to that only Case/Not a Case.

2008 Case definition = Confirmed/Probable/Suspect/Not a Case  
CDC recognizes Confirmed (227) and Probable (55) =Case (282).

# Prevention of Tickborne Diseases

- Tick bite prevention
  - Repellent
  - Protective clothing
  - Daily tick checks
- Tick preventives for pets
- Environmental management



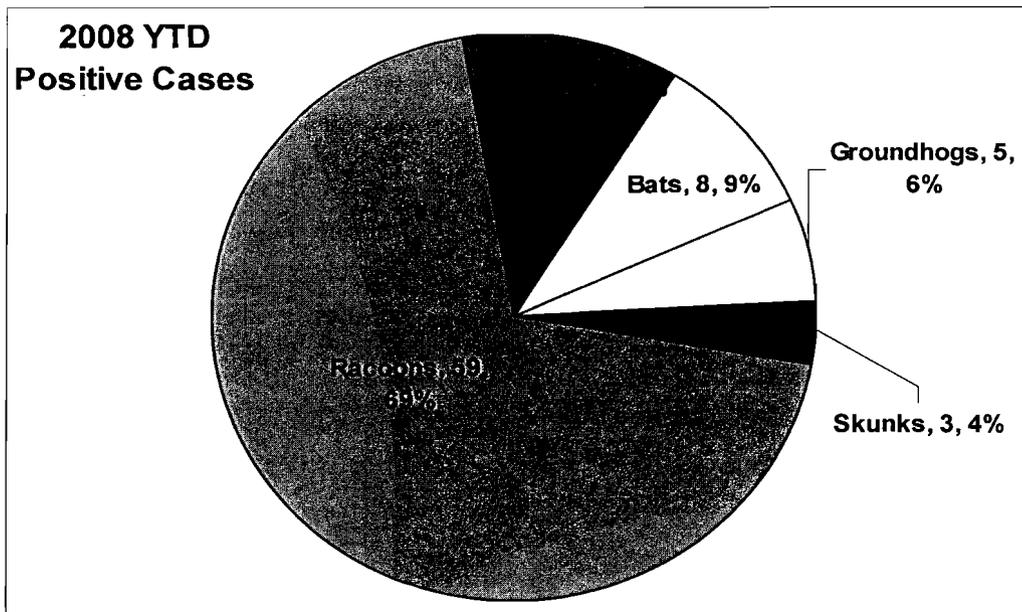
CC/CID/VBID

# Public Health Action Steps 2009

- Continue enhanced surveillance to better capture burden of disease
- Increase outreach and education to private medical providers for early diagnosis and treatment
- Continue education and outreach efforts to raise awareness about risk, prevention, and early identification



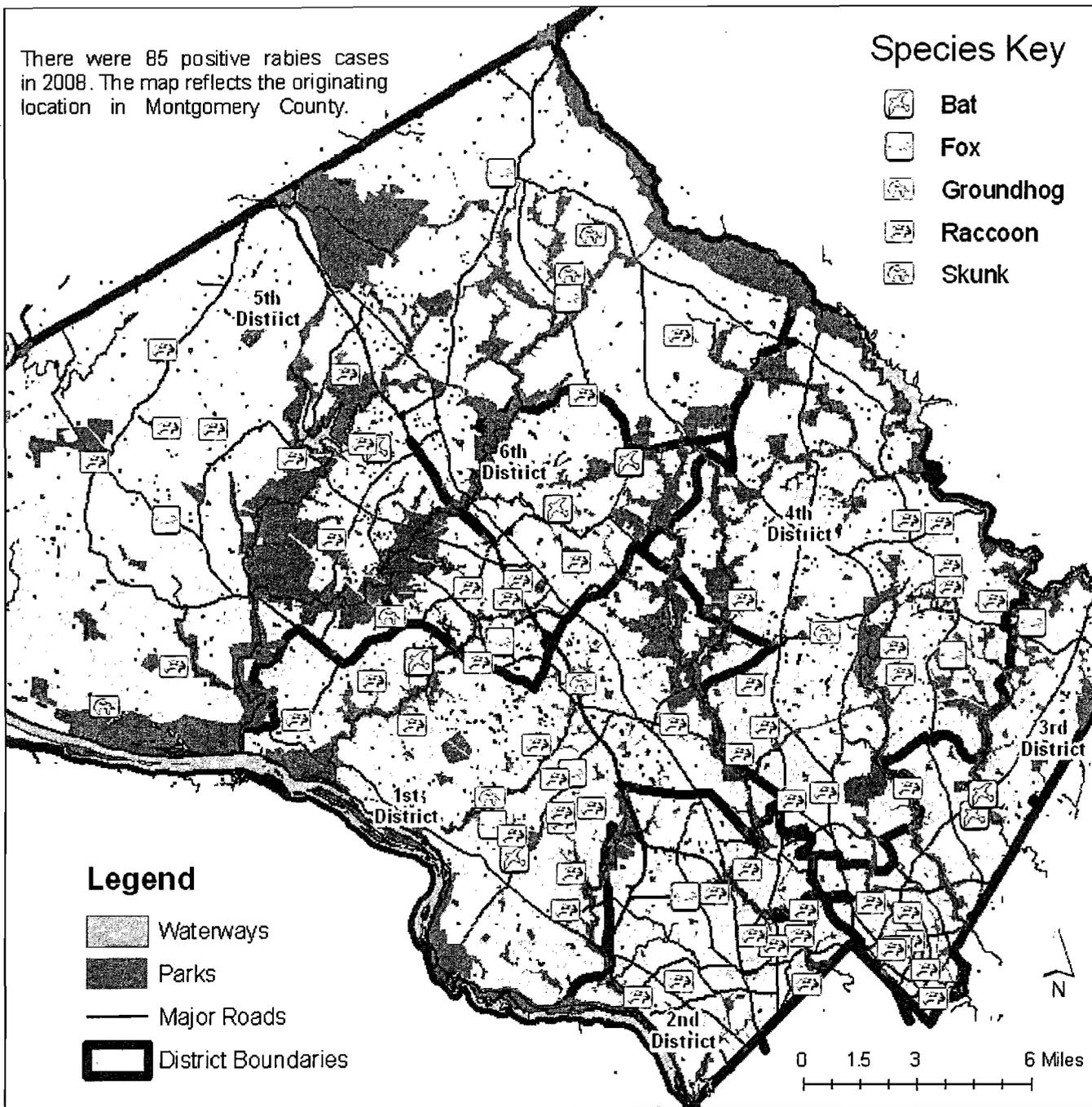
	<b>Racoons</b>	<b>Foxes</b>	<b>Bats</b>	<b>Groundhogs</b>	<b>Skunks</b>	<b>Total</b>
Jan	3	0	1	0	1	<b>5</b>
Feb	5	1	0	0	1	<b>7</b>
Mar	9	1	0	0	1	<b>11</b>
Apr	7	2	0	0	0	<b>9</b>
May	8	0	0	1	0	<b>9</b>
Jun	4	1	3	4	0	<b>12</b>
Jul	4	2	1	0	0	<b>7</b>
Aug	3	2	3	0	0	<b>8</b>
Sep	6	1	0	0	0	<b>7</b>
Oct	7	0	0	0	0	<b>7</b>
Nov	2	0	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
Dec	1	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>85</b>



There were 85 positive rabies cases in 2008. The map reflects the originating location in Montgomery County.

### Species Key

-  Bat
-  Fox
-  Groundhog
-  Raccoon
-  Skunk



### Legend

-  Waterways
-  Parks
-  Major Roads
-  District Boundaries

Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2008

## Rabid fox scare raises concern about response

### Multiple agencies can routinely respond to animal emergencies

When a suspiciously acting fox appeared in North Potomac resident Cynthia Fain's yard Aug. 26, she said she expected a quick response from county officials to contain the animal.

The fox, she said, was panting and shaking, and was attacking inanimate objects in her yard. She suspected it might be rabid.

"He took my birdbath and threw it up in the air and tore down the garden fencing," Fain said. "I said, 'Oh, my God.' I got on the phone and started making calls."

What followed would highlight what appears to be a convoluted approach in the official response to a rabid animal that can encompass local, state and sometimes even federal agencies, and confusion over just who is authorized to trap wild animals.

Shortly after sighting the fox, around mid- to late afternoon, Fain said she contacted the Montgomery County Police's Animal Services Division and was connected through an automated menu with an emergency dispatcher.

The animal emergency dispatch service is run through the Montgomery County Humane Society. She said the dispatcher told her that the group was not authorized to trap an ambulatory animal, and to either set a humane trap herself or to hire a contractor to do it, after which they could pick the animal up.

She said she was also told to contact the Montgomery County police, who directed her back to animal services. She also attempted to contact the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, a state agency that typically deals with wildlife. DNR officials told her to attempt to get a response from the county first before they sent someone to respond to the scene, she said.

A county police officer arrived around 8 p.m., she said, after she said she was "trapped" in her home for several hours, afraid to so much as check the mail. The officer stayed for about 45 minutes before leaving, because the fox could not be found.

"The fox made a sighting right before the police officer got here, but when the police officer pulled up, the fox was gone," Fain said. "That fox was out there in my yard for hours; it was ample opportunity."

Confused, Fain said she eventually left her home after nearly 24 hours — unsure whether the fox was still roaming the area — in order to buy a humane trap, which cost \$70. She said she couldn't afford to hire a contractor, which would have cost \$400. She never set the trap, afraid that the aggressive animal would reappear.

When contacted by The Gazette, Montgomery County Humane Society officials said that Fain's call was forwarded to police due to a backlog in emergency calls that day. Nicholas Gilman, interim executive director of the Montgomery County Humane Society, said that responding to a rabid animal can sometimes cause confusion, though he said the dispatch service should properly direct each call. "It's not always terribly simple which agency responds, depending on the circumstances," he said.

Gilman said the Humane Society routinely responds to sick or injured animals – usually those who are unable to move – and confirmed that the group is not licensed to trap wild animals. Gilman said that in the case of wildlife that are ambulatory and posing a threat, the Department of Natural Resources would typically respond.

Gilman also said that if the animal is protected, federal agencies may need to become involved.

"Though I encourage people to call the Humane Society, if they have animal concerns that are controlled by DNR, there are times when neither the Humane Society or Animal Control can respond to that," Gilman said.

The Department of Natural Resources, however, told The Gazette that the county should be the first line of response for potentially rabid animals. "The bottom line is if [the county] gets a call about a rabid animal, they investigate it first, and if they need assistance then we come out," said Bob Beyer, associate director of DNR's Wildlife and Heritage Service, adding that rabies is endemic in Maryland and that DNR would be unable to respond to each call. "We rely on them to tell us what they see and the symptoms so that we know we're not going on a wild goose chase."

Adding to the confusion surrounding the case, Gilman was baffled that the dispatcher advised Fain to trap the animal herself.

"We should never and will never advise any private citizen to trap any wild animal, period," Gilman said.

Gilman also said his group is not authorized to pick up animals after they have been trapped. However, he and Stephen Dickstein, of the county police's Animal Services Division, said that some callers are occasionally advised to seek a trapping contractor.

Fain said she remains confused about the proper protocol for dealing with rabid animals in the county.

"It seems there isn't a coherent way [to get a response] if you've got a rabid animal in your yard," Fain said.

For animal emergencies, call the Montgomery County Police's Animal Services Division at 240-773-5900.

For animal emergencies within the City of Rockville, call 240-314-8930.

For animal emergencies within the City of Gaithersburg, call 301-258-6343.

For wildlife nuisance problems, such as wild animals in the home, call the Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Heritage Service at 877-463-6497.