

**REPORT OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE**

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON INLAND FISHERIES &
WILDLIFE**

L.D. 1569 Sec. 9

**AN ACT TO RESTORE THE WHITE-TAILED DEER POPULATION AND
IMPROVE MAINE'S WILDLIFE ECONOMY AND HERITAGE; MAINE GAME
PLAN FOR DEER**

SPONSORED BY: PRESIDENT RAYE OF WASHINGTON

**COSPONSORED BY: REPRESENTATIVE CRAFTS OF LISBON
REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS OF SANGERVILLE
REPRESENTATIVE ESPLING OF NEW GLOUCESTER
SENATOR MARTIN OF KENNEBEC
REPRESENTATIVE SHAW OF STANDISH
SENATOR TRAHAN OF LINCOLN**

JANUARY 9, 2012

**Addendum: A Plan to Increase Maine's
Northern, Eastern, and Western Deer Herd**

LD 1569, An Act To Restore the White-tail Deer Population and Improve Maine's Wildlife Economy and Heritage, directed the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to "...expand its Maine Game Plan for Deer to the entire State and submit that plan to the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries & Wildlife no later than February 1, 2012." This addendum, to be incorporated into the Maine Game Plan for Deer, accomplishes that directive.



The Wildlife Management Districts shown in green to the left are that portion of Maine addressed in the original Maine Game Plan for Deer. This addendum to the plan will focus on the remaining WMDs, shown in white.

Deer in central and southern Maine attain higher densities than deer in eastern, western, and northern Maine because of more favorable wintering conditions (less reliance on deer wintering areas or DWAs), greater availability of DWAs, and higher recruitment rates (Lavigne 1986). In addition, deer populations are more responsive to changes in doe

harvest in the central and southern Maine because hunting mortality there is a greater contributor to all-cause annual losses. Central and southern Maine WMDs exhibit the greatest response to conservative doe harvesting, helped along by moderating wintering conditions.

Deer population management in central and southern must consider motor vehicle collisions with deer; complaints about browsing damage to crops and ornamental plantings; and in areas that are favorable for survival of deer ticks, increasing deer populations are linked to increased human risk of contracting Lyme disease (Rand et al 2003).

Significant residential development has occurred in many locations within central and southern Maine (Lavigne 1999). This had the simultaneous effects of increasing potential conflicts between people and deer and of impeding efforts to control deer populations using recreational hunting with firearms. Overcoming obstacles to deer control posed by municipal firearms discharge bans, land posted against hunting, and safety zones in developed areas, has received increasing attention by MDIFW.

In Maine's more populous central and southern WMDs, deer population goals reflect a desire to strike an appropriate balance between hunters' and deer watchers' desire for an abundant deer resource with the practical reality that adverse impacts must be held to tolerable levels.

For the 2000 to 2015 planning period, the Department set upper limits on deer density in Maine's central and southern WMDs. Wintering herd objectives were set at 15 deer/mi² in our more populous WMDs (i.e., districts 15, 20, 21, 25, and 29). More rural districts we believed could accommodate slightly higher deer populations. Therefore, the Department established a wintering population objective of 20 deer/mi² in WMDs 16, 17, 22, 23, and 26.

As currently estimated deer populations in Maine's central and southern WMDs vary from nearly 13 to 22 deer/mi²; they collectively total nearly 115,800 wintering deer.

To meet population objectives set for 2000 to 2015 deer populations need to be maintained near their current levels or increased to 125,000 deer at which time the regional population would be held at roughly 35% of MSP. The Department will seek to accomplish this by the regulation of the doe harvest using the any-deer permit system.