

Options for Producers Deer Damage Management

The DNR is responsible for managing Iowa's wildlife for all of Iowa's citizens. One of the Department's responsibilities is to provide farmers and landowners with guidance and assistance to effectively deal with wildlife damage.

OPTIONS FOR ALL PRODUCERS

1. Technical advice on how to exclude or deter the animals causing damage.

A biologist can provide sources and advice on how to use fences, repellents or scare devices to keep animals from damaging crops.



2. Alternative horticulture or silviculture practices that will minimize or eliminate the damage.

A biologist can provide sources for materials and advice on how to use tree tubes, fencing or other practices to prevent deer from having easy access to young trees. These techniques allow the seedlings to grow above the level where most damage occurs.



3. Recommendations to increase hunting pressure and take more antlerless deer within existing seasons and with existing hunters.

The producer and the hunters already hunting the property may significantly reduce deer numbers by harvesting more antlerless deer. This is especially true if the current harvest is mainly bucks. In many counties hunters could use the antlerless licenses available in each county to increase the number of does taken during the seasons they already hunt.

Hunters on properties where deer damage is occurring should significantly increase the number of does killed and be selective on the buck harvest.

In some instances, producers may need to have frank discussions with their hunters to explain the need to harvest more does if the hunter wants to continue to enjoy the privilege of hunting on the property. Land managers should insist that any hunter who wants to hunt help by taking a specific number of additional does.

If the producer does not currently have enough hunters to obtain an adequate harvest the DNR can assist with recruiting additional hunters. A list of these hunters can be made available, but it is up to the producer to contact hunters and the producer always controls who has permission to hunt on the property.

4. Assistance to high end commodity produce.

Biologist can offer technical guidance on creative and flexible solutions to slow or eliminate damage to specialty growers such as vineyards, orchards, truck farms, etc.

OPTIONS FOR PRODUCERS WITH SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE

If a producer is selling a commodity crop and has \$1,000 in damage or likely will sustain \$1,000 in damage (Iowa Code 481C.2) they are eligible to obtain extra licenses.

To receive these licenses the depredation biologist will first arrange to meet with the producer to assess the amount and type of damage occurring. If there is significant damage due to deer, the biologist and producer will agree on a management plan. The plan specifies an antlerless deer harvest goal and the number of licenses that will be needed to meet goals. These additional licenses will be at a reduced price. The plan will also include recommendations on how regular hunting practices can be used to harvest more antlerless deer and any other information that will help the producer reduce or prevent damage. An annual report will be available to the producer showing depredation program use and the total number of deer that were harvested.

Biologists will review the plan annually and work with the producer if more assistance is needed. The goal of the plan will be to reduce deer numbers to a level where long-term deer management can be accomplished with regular deer licenses. Properties that have restricted access or leased hunting rights are not eligible for additional licenses or permits.

THE TWO TYPES OPTIONS AVAILABLE:

DEPREDATION LICENSES AND SHOOTING PERMITS

| <p style="text-align: center;">DEPREDATION LICENSES hunting deer within existing seasons</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">SHOOTING PERMITS harvesting deer outside of existing seasons</p> |
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| <p>If the producer signs a depredation agreement they will receive a quota of depredation licenses as vouchers. The vouchers are given to individual hunters who have permission to hunt on the property. These vouchers can be redeemed at any in person ELSI vendor to purchase a reduced price antlerless depredation license.</p> <p>These licenses are issued for a specific season and will be valid for antlerless deer only. They are at a reduced price, costing the hunter \$7 each. Only Iowa resident hunters are eligible to use depredation tags.</p> <p>The depredation licenses may also be used on adjacent land. Any resident hunter with permission may utilize the tags on neighboring property.</p> <p>All deer harvested must be reported to the DNR and all regulations for the selected season apply. As hunters harvest deer they can continue to utilize additional depredation tags and hunt additional seasons. They will need to get an authorization number from the producer for each additional license.</p> | <p>Shooting permits are issued to producers or their designees in situations where substantial damage is occurring outside of the regular hunting seasons and action needs to be taken immediately.</p> <p>These permits are issued for a specific time period. These permits may be issued for either sex of deer depending upon the type of damage. Antlered deer may need to be killed to prevent damage even though this will not control the population. Producers will however be encouraged to use the shooting permits for antlerless deer. All deer killed must be recovered, the meat processed for consumption, and the harvest reported to the DNR. The producer or designee may keep the meat or donate it to others.</p> <p>All antlers from deer taken using these permits will be turned over to a DNR officer and disposed of according to DNR rules.</p> <p>Out of season shooting permits cost the same as the depredation tags, \$7 each.</p> |

WORKING WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS.

It is essential to work cooperatively with neighbors to keep deer populations at acceptable levels. The biologist can help producers who are experiencing damage by working with adjacent landowners to increase the hunting pressure on adjacent land as well as on the producer’s land. A producer may experience substantial damage to their crops but if the deer spend the majority of their time on the adjacent property, successfully reducing the damage will require cooperation with neighboring landowners. This may involve sharing depredation licenses with neighbors or coordinating hunting opportunities in a larger block of properties.

Working together, producers and the DNR can manage a deer herd that balances the needs of all of Iowa’s citizens.