

## POSITION STATEMENT OF THE NORTH DAKOTA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY REGARDING BIG GAME DEPREDATION MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

The North Dakota Chapter of the Wildlife Society promotes the management of all game species within the tenants of the North American Model of Wildlife Management. In accordance with these tenants, wild big game populations are to be managed at a level which yield maximum sustained recreational opportunities, which are acceptable to landowners and sportsmen, and are within the carrying capacity of the land. Big game sometimes damage private and public property, such as agricultural crops, ornamental trees, gardens, and winter livestock forage supplies. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has developed a series of programs, that are compliant to state law under North Dakota Century Code 20.1-02-05(17), 20.1-02-05(19), 20.1-02-05(28), and 20.1-02-31, to address big game depredation issues. Prevention and control of deer damage can be as simple as changes in livestock feeding and feed storage techniques, use of preventive measures such as repellants or physical exclusion, or directing hunters to areas with chronic depredation issues.

The position of the North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society regarding big game depredation and management and associated problems is to support:

- 1) Sustained regulated annual harvest of big game as a first step in maintaining population densities at sufficient levels to provide maximum recreational opportunities acceptable to landowners and sportsmen. This should include annual hunting seasons (archery, gun, and muzzleloader) commensurate with harvest regulations established by the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, the resource agency responsible for deer management.
- 2) The use of landowner contact programs that direct hunters to private lands with chronic depredation issues.
- 3) Encourage further research and development of predictive capabilities for big game population trends and the establishment of appropriate fall harvest levels.
- 4) The use of safe, efficient, practical and economical methods of minimizing big game depredation.
- 5) The development of educational and technical support programs for big game depredation prevention and control.

The North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society does not support:

- 1) Artificial or supplemental feeding to maintain big game populations at inappropriate high levels. Artificial or supplemental big game feeding in North Dakota is not considered a standard wildlife management practice and should be avoided.
- 2) Monetary compensation or replacement for losses due to big game depredation.

- 3) The use of kill permits to reduce big game depredation.
- 4) The use of immunocontraceptives to control big game populations.
- 5) Big game damage management on any lands, except those zoned for non-hunting, where hunter access is denied or where big game hunting access fees are charged. Restricted access and legal harvest can create artificially high local big game populations and create problems for neighboring agricultural operations.

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