



A "4-poster" device consists of a bait station that supplies corn to attract deer and 4 rollers that apply a pesticide to deer as they feed. The pesticide is meant to kill ticks.

Deer Herd Reduction Options

Sharpshooting

"Sharpshooting" usually means hiring experienced marksmen who have special authorization from the state wildlife agency to remove overabundant deer. Sharpshooting has been successful in addressing small-scale deer problems in many states.^(13, 15, 17, 25) For sharpshooting to be successful, special equipment and techniques, such as silencers, bait, and the ability to shoot deer at night with the aid of lights or night-vision equipment, are required. Deer harvested during sharpshooting programs often are donated to food charities.

In 2003, the Connecticut General Assembly passed a bill (Public Act 03-192) that allows municipalities, homeowner associations, and nonprofit land holding organizations to use methods, such as sharpshooting, when severe nuisance or ecological damage can be demonstrated (C.G.S. 26-82). Individual landowners are not eligible under the law to implement sharpshooting programs. Authorization to conduct a sharpshooting program must be obtained from the Connecticut DEP. Applicants must be experiencing severe nuisance (deer-vehicle accidents, property damage, agricultural damage) or ecosystem damage caused by deer. Applicants must prepare and submit a deer management plan to the DEP for review and approval. For complete details about requirements for implementing a sharpshooting program, log onto the DEP's website at www.ct.gov/dep or contact the DEP's Deer Management Program (see page 25).

In March 2005, the Town of Greenwich contracted sharpshooters who removed 80 deer in 4 nights at an estimated cost to the community of \$646 per deer. A total of 2,400 pounds of venison was donated to the lower Fairfield County food pantry.

Regulated Hunting

Hunting results in immediate removal of animals from the population, is cost-effective, and is the principal management tool used by all state agencies to manage free-ranging deer. Deer spend their life in a defined area called a home range. In urban-suburban areas in Connecticut, deer home ranges are relatively small (about 100-300 acres). Research on urban deer has shown that when deer are removed from an area, other deer will not abandon their home range to fill that void.^(34, 38, 41) However, over time, young deer searching for their own home range will disperse in random directions, slowly repopulating the area. Because urban deer typically have small home ranges, hunting can produce localized reductions in deer populations.

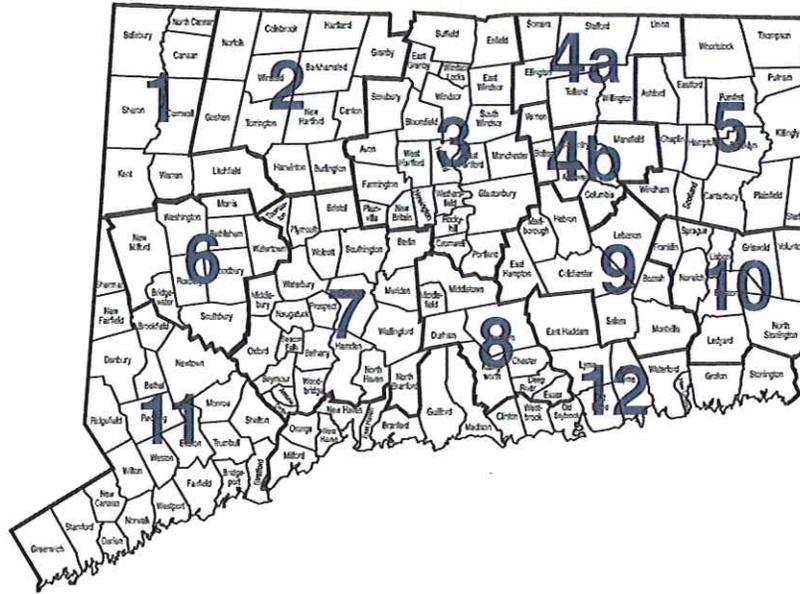
In Connecticut, all new hunters are required to take a 16-hour Conservation Education/ Firearms Safety (CE/FS) course administered by the DEP before they can purchase a hunting license. All Connecticut bowhunters are required to pass an 8-hour CE/FS bowhunting safety course before they can purchase an archery permit. No hunting accidents have occurred during special controlled hunts implemented in residential communities.^(13, 32, 36) In many circumstances, additional hunting requirements, such as passing a shooting proficiency test, hunter interviews, and restricting hunting hours or hunting methods (i.e., archery only or hunting from tree stands), have been imposed to address specific concerns of communities.^(13, 32, 36)

The DEP continues to liberalize the regulated deer hunting season framework to control population growth especially in urban-suburban areas (deer management zones 11 and 12) where deer populations are high (Figure 3). In 1998, a new antlerless replacement tag program allowed hunters to harvest unlimited numbers of antlerless deer in these zones. The reported annual archery harvest increased four-fold during the first 6 years of the antlerless tag program. Removal of antlerless



Sharpshooters are experienced marksmen with special equipment who have authorization from the state wildlife agency to remove deer outside the normal regulated hunting season.

Figure 3. Statewide map of hunting requirements and opportunities in Connecticut, 2007.



Bowhunting opportunities statewide and in zones 11 and 12.

	Statewide	Zones 11 & 12
Hunter safety course required	Yes	Yes
Landowner permission required	Yes	Yes
Archery season length	9/15-12/31	9/15-1/31
Use of bait	No	Yes
Unlimited antlerless tags	No	Yes
Earn-a-buck program	No	Yes
Minimum property size	No	No
Minimum distance from house	None	None
Special crossbow season	No	Under consideration

deer (primarily adult females) is the most effective method for reducing population growth. In 2002, the archery season was extended to include the month of January (27 extra days) and in 2003, hunters were allowed to hunt over bait (private land only). Using bait during the hunting season increases hunter ability to position deer for better shot placement, shooting safety, and hunter success. During the 2003 season, the deer harvest in areas where baiting was allowed increased nearly 17%, while harvest in other zones increased less than 2%.

A survey of deer hunters in Connecticut found that the opportunity to earn an

additional buck tag was an important incentive for hunters to harvest additional antlerless deer.⁽²⁹⁾ Based on this information, an earn-a-buck program was initiated in 2005 to provide hunters an incentive to harvest additional antlerless deer. After harvesting 3 antlerless deer from zones 11 and 12 during the same hunting season, hunters were eligible to receive an extra either-sex tag that allows a buck to be harvested. These liberalizations have reduced population growth in these areas. The DEP Wildlife Division will continue to monitor harvest trends and develop innovative strategies for controlling deer population growth.



Using bait during the hunting season increases hunter ability to position deer for better shot placement, shooting safety, and hunter success.

Controlled Hunts

Controlled deer hunts are specialized hunts tailored to meet the needs and objectives of landowners. Controlled hunts usually include restrictions imposed by the landowner, such as limiting hunter numbers, restricting days or times for hunting, requiring shooting proficiency tests, and strategically distributing hunters on the property, often in



An “earn-a-buck” program was initiated in 2005 to provide hunters incentives to harvest antlerless deer. In special deer management zones, hunters can earn an either-sex tag for harvesting an extra buck after harvesting 3 antlerless deer.

elevated tree stands.⁽³⁷⁾ The DEP may provide technical assistance to large landowners in developing effective controlled hunt programs.



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