

TOWNSHIP OF UPPER ST. CLAIR
WHITETAIL DEER MANAGEMENT REPORT
MAY 2005

Last fall (2004), the Township received authorization from the Pennsylvania Game Commission to use sharpshooters under a "Special Use Permit" as a means of countering the growing deer population and addressing vehicular safety concerns. Township Commissioners subsequently approved a budget of \$20,000 and authorized the execution of a contract with the USDA Wildlife Services to carry out culling operations.

USDA Wildlife Services, in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Game Commission officials and Township Staff, conducted the program between January 31, 2005 and March 4, 2005, concentrating on areas which would have the highest impact on reducing accidents within the Route 19 corridor. The number of animals taken through the USDA program was 117, which equates to a reduction of 200 whitetail deer (spring population) based upon the Game Commission's detailed pre-birth analysis. The number of deer taken by Whitetail Management during the fall/winter archery season was 39.

A review of Upper St. Clair's historical deer vehicle accident data (attached) shows a significant upswing in population over the past two years. In 2004, 207 deer vehicle collisions were tallied; 52 more (a 33% increase) than the 2003 total of 155. One of the most telling statistics is the January 2005 deer vehicle accident total of 33, which is more than double the historical high for the month of January. You will note the deer vehicle collisions from February 2005 through April 2005 are less than the same period in 2004, but similar to 2003 where the collision rate surged to a new record high. Had the culling program not been initiated this year, the Township would very likely have posted another record high deer-vehicle collision statistic in 2005.

The cost of the 2005 USDA program was approximately \$17,500. The savings to the Township in reduced animal control services is estimated at approximately \$3,300 (60 deer @ \$55.00 pick-up and disposal). The benefits as far as increased public safety and reduced personal property damage should well exceed the expenditures for this program. Additionally, the harvested animals provided 3,200 lbs. of venison to various food banks and needy families.

Staff will be seeking a renewal of the Special Use Permit from the Pennsylvania Game Commission for 2006 and recommending a similar budget appropriation. The Township will continue to monitor deer-vehicle collisions and will work with the USDA and Game Commission officials in reviewing the correlation between the culling program results and the corresponding reduction of accidents in the Township.

Lastly, the participating officials from the USDA Wildlife Services and the Game Commission are to be commended on their professionalism and their dedication to Upper St. Clair's whitetail management program.

Attachment: Chart 2000-2005