

**USDA APHIS WILDLIFE SERVICES
ACTIVITIES SUMMARY REPORT
2025 WHITE-TAILED DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
TOWNSHIP OF UPPER ST. CLAIR
(April 2025)**

USDA APHIS Wildlife Services (WS) was requested by the Township of Upper St. Clair (TOWNSHIP) to conduct white-tailed deer culling throughout the TOWNSHIP. The operational control program to reduce deer densities was first implemented in 2005 and has been continued in the subsequent years. In addition, deer culling is conducted to decrease property damage, nuisance complaints, and deer-vehicle collisions throughout the TOWNSHIP, with special emphasis along the State Route 19 corridor. WS conducted operations under a Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) Special Use Permit for deer control issued to the TOWNSHIP to achieve program objectives. The following report includes program methods, results, analysis, and recommendations.

METHODS

Public and private properties are utilized in the TOWNSHIP as part of WS operational control in cooperation with the TOWNSHIP and PGC. Written permission is obtained from private properties (using WS form 12A) each year before control operations take place. Each property is examined for potential baiting sites that allow a clear line of site from a shooting position and sufficient backstop. Bait is placed to draw deer from dense cover and position them in safe locations for targeted removal.

Direct control operations utilized mobile units equipped with a suppressed .243 rifle and a suppressed 300 Whisper. Frangible and controlled fracturing ammunition are used to minimize the passage of rounds through deer. Each mobile unit consisted of three members assigned specific roles to accomplish safe and effective removal of deer (driver, spotter and shooter). Hand-held Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) units and night vision units are used to locate deer without the aid of spotlights. Once located, mobile units move into a safe shooting position and observe deer with a spotlight. The use of the spotlight allows the shooter to confirm the target and observe any obstructions or debris between them and the deer. When the shot is determined safe, the deer is humanely euthanized with a quick-kill shot. This method of euthanasia is in concurrence with American Veterinary Medical Association Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals. Upon removal, the deer's age, sex, tag number, location and injuries are recorded, and the deer are taken to a processor for distribution to local food banks.

The order in which deer are removed is determined by the availability of safe shots, age, sex and injuries. Ultimately, adult does and injured deer are ranked highest in priority while juveniles and antlered deer are taken last; all depending on availability of safe shots. This allows the reduction of the breeding population and aids in the removal of multiple juveniles within the same group. Large antlered bucks and uniquely identifiable deer such as albino and piebald deer are not targeted for removal to leave opportunities for archery hunters and the general public to enjoy. Deer removal consisted of multiple nights between January 28, 2025, and April 3, 2025. The duration of each effort was highly dependent on deer activity and weather but averaged approximately 9 hours per night.

RESULTS

WS successfully removed a total of 109 deer from various locations within the TOWNSHIP during the 2025 deer management program. (Table 1)

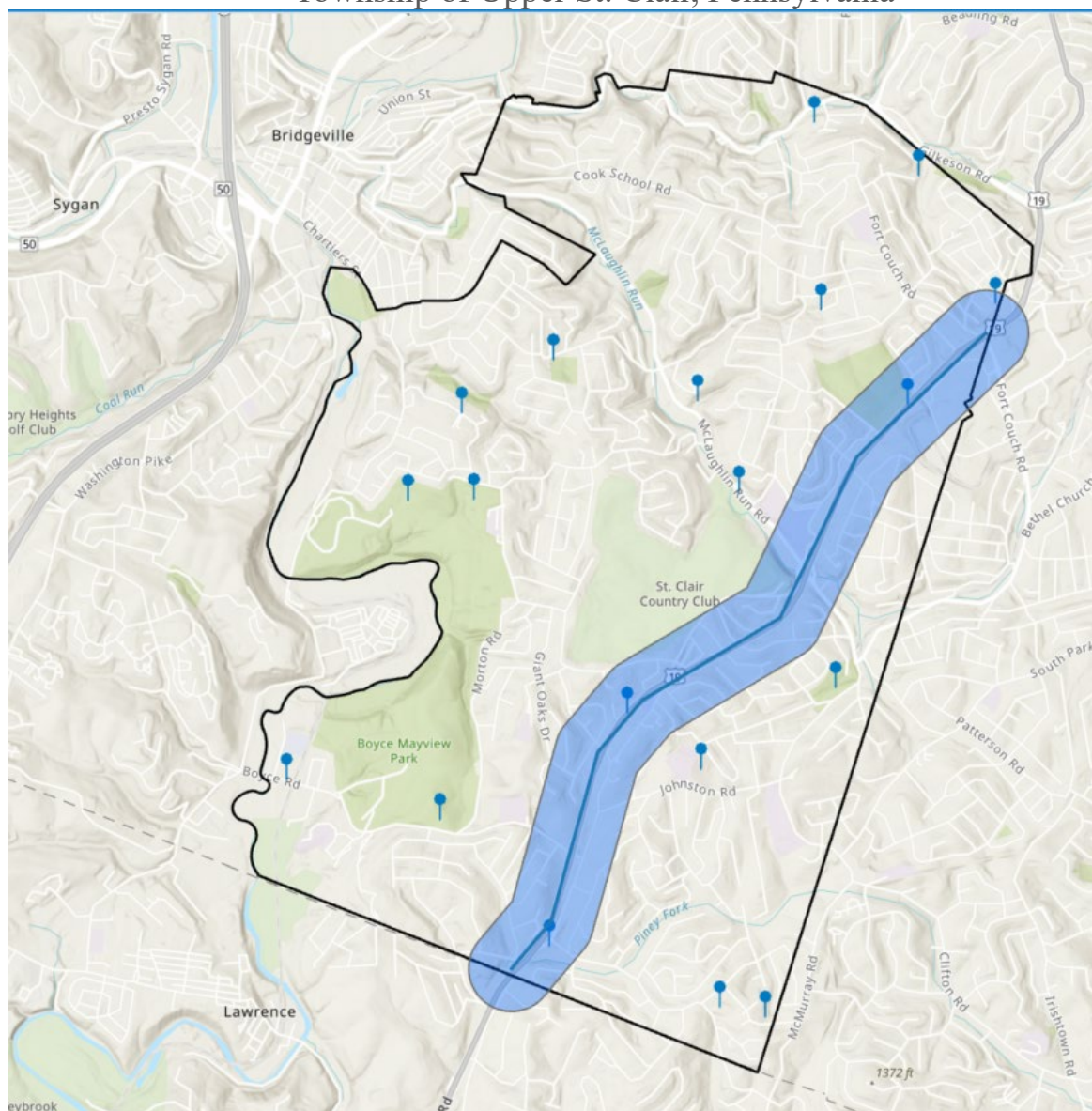
Deer were harvested on both public (106) and private properties (3) (Table 1), and were comprised of 83 (76.1%) adult, 26 (23.8%) juvenile, 54 (49.5%) females, and 55 (50.4%) males.

Table 1. Number of deer culled during 2025, by property, in the Township of Upper St. Clair, Pennsylvania.	
Baker Park	1
Beadling Field	4
Boyce Gardens	14
Boyce Mayview Park	23
Brush Run Pump Station	10
Gilfillan Park	8
Hays Park	1
Johnston Park	4
Morton Complex	6
Private Property	3
Public Works Building	5
Route 19 Fire Station	0
Salt Dome – McLaughlin Run	1
Trotwood Park	0
Tustin Park	4
Wiltshire Park	8

Approximately 4360 pounds of venison was processed and distributed to citizens in Western Pennsylvania food banks. This equates to about 17,440 meals.

Of the 109 deer culled, 20 (18%) were taken from the properties selected due to their $\frac{1}{4}$ mile or less distance from State Route 19 to help reduce deer/vehicle collisions along the township's most used road. (Figure 1) Two (1%) of the 109 culled deer had injuries consistent with automobile encounters.

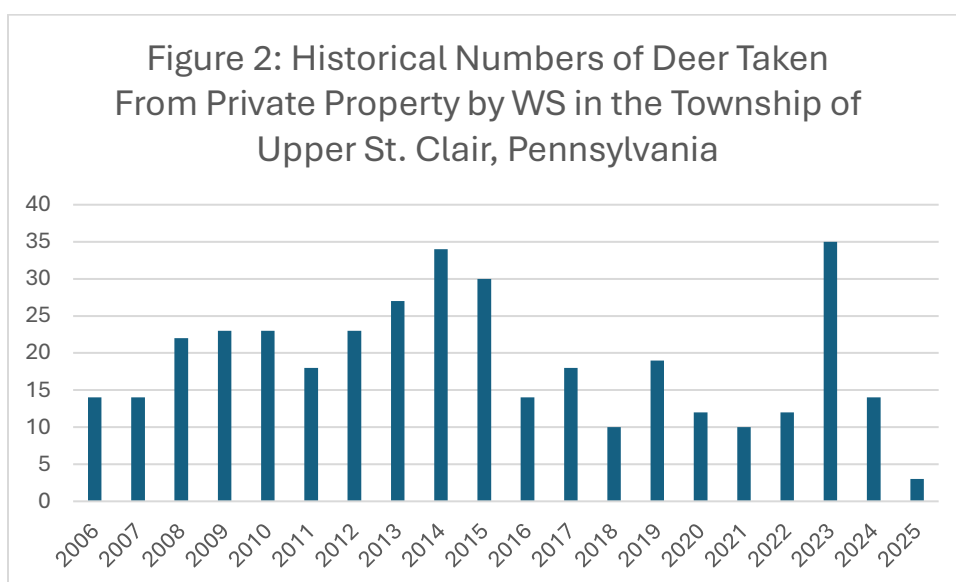
Figure 1: Locations of deer taken within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of State Route 19 by WS in the Township of Upper St. Clair, Pennsylvania



ANALYSIS

WS has culled 2,696 deer from the TOWNSHIP since the inception of the deer management program in 2005. The program successes experienced to date are largely due to an expansive baiting program and private property access. New private property access is essential to deer culling operations. In 2016, private properties enrolling in the program fell from 36 to 28 sites and to 3 active sites in 2025. Deer damage is greatly reduced from the inception of the program and not as many residents are experiencing deer damage or deer vehicle collisions, therefore, residents may not see a need to have culling take place on their property.

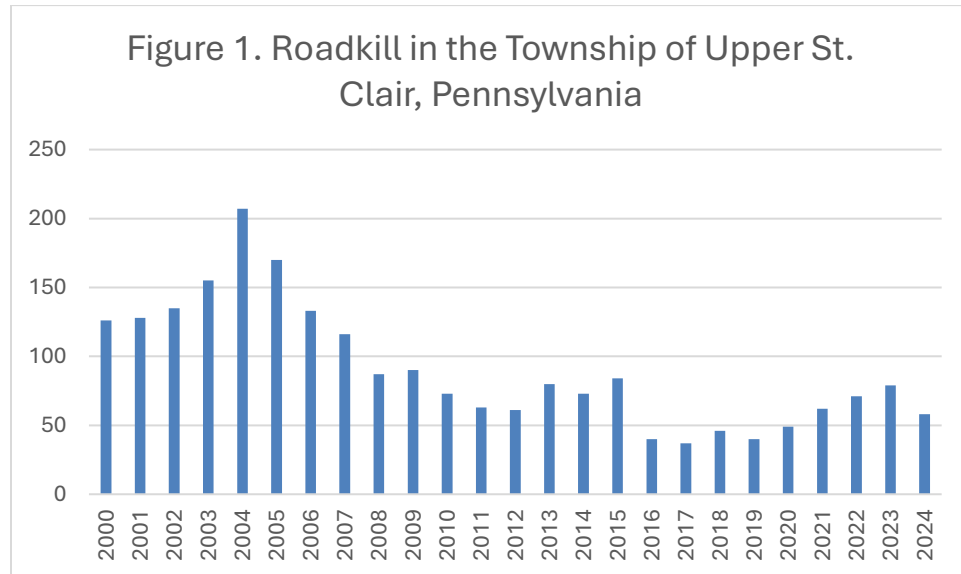
Historically, private properties are critical to the success of the management program. Figure 2 shows how many deer are taken from private properties that otherwise would have not been accessible since the inception of the program. Increasing private property access continues to be vitally important to the future success of the program, especially in the State Route 19 access corridor.



The first year of deer culling operations in 2005 resulted in 117 deer removed from the TOWNSHIP in 201.5 hours of effort (1.7 hours per deer). In 2025, 109 deer were culled with 291 hours of effort (2.6 hours per deer). As property access decreases and population gaps widen, more time is required to remove each deer.

Archery hunting within the TOWNSHIP is continuing with low harvest numbers. The 2024-2025 archery season ended with 1 deer being harvested. Although 1 deer was removed, archery hunting is an important recreation opportunity for hunters in Allegheny County and also the most cost-effective management tool.

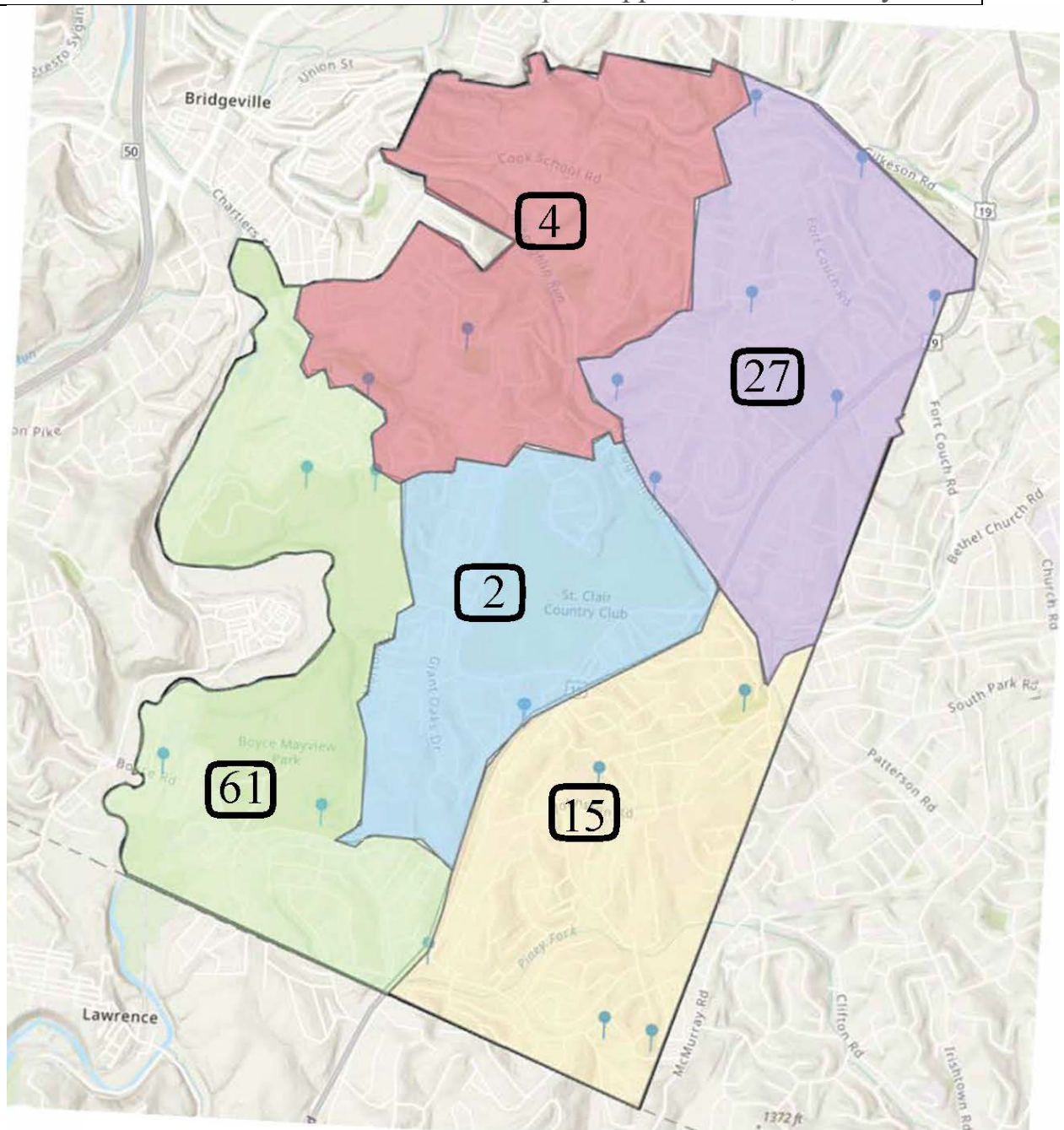
One of the goals of the TOWNSHIP is to keep deer/vehicle collisions at fewer than 100 per year. Currently the TOWNSHIP is in the 19th consecutive year in achieving that goal. Roadkill numbers trended down in 2024 with 58 reported this year (Figure 3). In the last four years, roadkill numbers have gradually increased until this year in Upper St Clair as well as neighboring townships. The roadkill number falls below 24-year average of 90.



Numbers of deer taken each year are based upon several factors. One of which is the number of deer observed on a nightly basis by the mobile unit. The number of deer culled in 2025 decreased from 2024, as did the sightings of deer. Overall sightings have decreased especially on working properties.

Access to private properties is an essential part of successful removal of deer throughout the TOWNSHIP. WS also analyzed locations in the TOWNSHIP where deer were being culled. The highest numbers of deer were taken from the SW section of the TOWNSHIP (Figure 4) which consists of a large amount of public land. Access and the availability of safe shooting opportunities could explain the high number of deer removed from this area.

Figure 4. Deer Removed Per Section in Township of Upper St. Clair, Pennsylvania



WS believes management target numbers were increased appropriately in 2014 to keep deer/vehicle collisions under 100 per year as part of the TOWNSHIP'S Deer Management Plan as roadkill numbers slightly rose again. The Deer Management Plan was updated in 2014 to include valuable information from accomplishments of deer management in the TOWNSHIP. Increased traffic volume and decreased deer-vehicle collision rates for a decade suggest that WS deer management activities are effective at reducing deer-human conflicts within the

TOWNSHIP. Increased culling activities utilizing targeted removal and archery hunting will be necessary to maintain deer-vehicle collisions at acceptable levels.

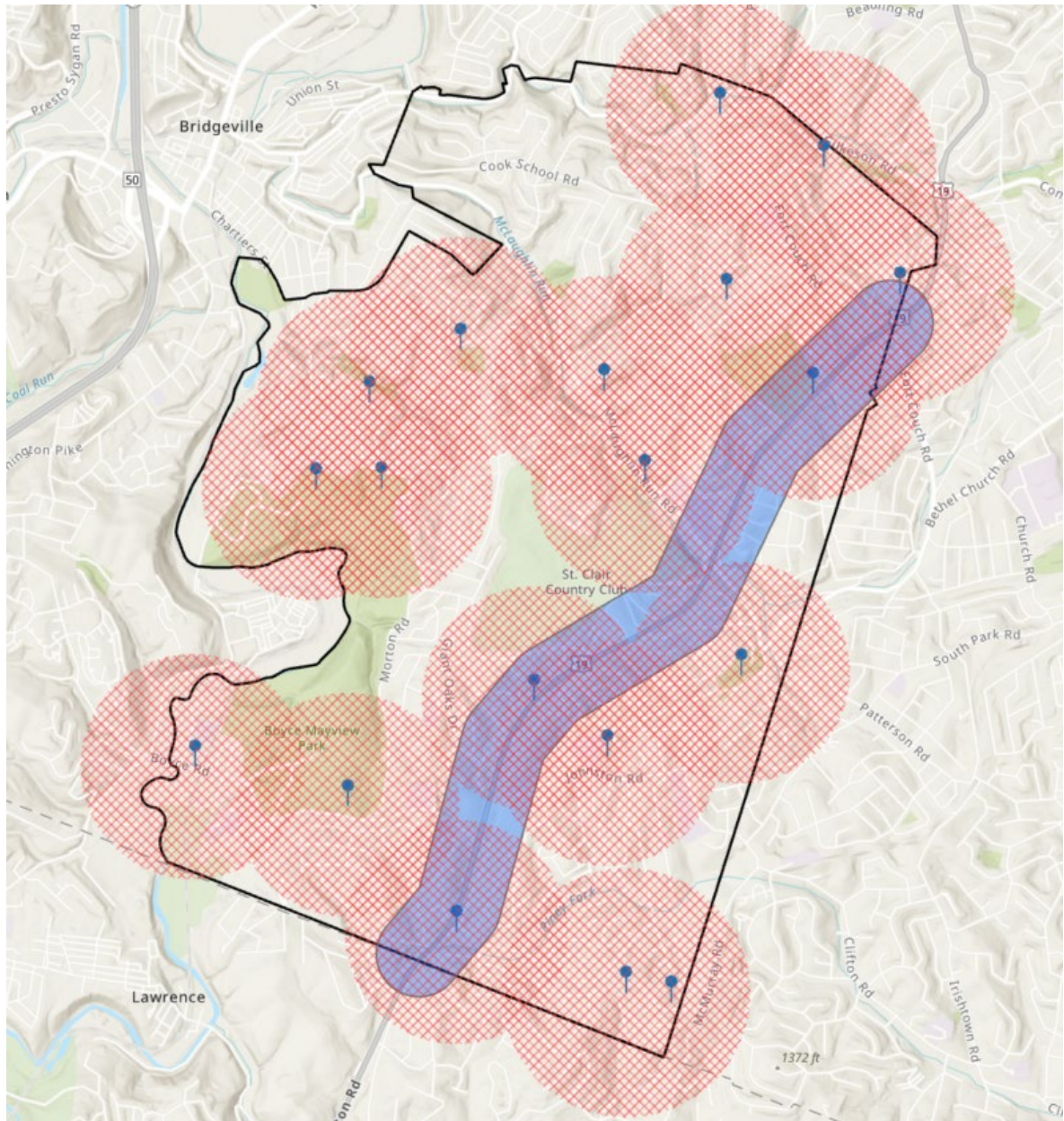
The 2025 cull resulted in a decrease in take from the past 5 years of increases. Until last year, deer take has gradually increased over the last 5 years, as have roadkill numbers. This year the roadkill number did fall slightly as did the take number. This was likely due to a change in deer herd dynamics with changing weather patterns. As of 2025 more townships around Upper St Clair have begun their own deer culling efforts. This should help lower the overall population and lead to fewer deer/auto collisions within the township as well as neighboring communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WS recommends continuing the deer damage management program each year to maintain deer-vehicle collisions below 100 per year and keep complaints at a minimum. WS recommends management activities consisting of at least ten nights, targeting 100 or more deer. However, the number of nights allocated to culling should incorporate the following factors: (1) nightly mobile unit observations of deer sightings; (2) weather events; (3) vehicle/deer collision rates; (4) impacts of over-abundant deer on local environments and; (5) available monetary resources.

WS recommends the addition of new private properties available to shooting. An increase in private properties available to shooting is crucial in the success of the program. WS recommends reissuing a call for new properties for 2026. Green space becomes more limited each year, but deer still have access to neighborhood backyards. To continue to be able to cull over-abundant deer within neighborhoods, access is essential. A push to find new properties, especially in the gapped areas (Figure 5) should be made.

Figure 5. Coverage of removal locations based on 1 mile home range of whitetails in Township of Upper St. Clair, Pennsylvania



Finally, WS recommends a reevaluation of the current archery program within the TOWNSHIP. Every deer taken during the archery season benefits the community and requires less deer to be culled to reach the townships management goal. Ideally, the archery program could return to historic numbers and be considered a far more effective management tool. New hunters or increased hunters could be beneficial to overall success of the program.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wildlife Services would like to thank everyone involved with deer management in the Township of Upper St. Clair. Deer control operations have continued for 20 years with great support from the community and its leadership. Wildlife Services would like to thank the community in the Township of Upper St. Clair. Without their support, a deer culling operation would not be possible.

Wildlife Services would also like to thank our private cooperators for allowing us to utilize their property and the entire Upper St. Clair Police Department for their outstanding contributions to a safe and efficient culling program. We would also like to thank the Pennsylvania Game Commission for their ongoing support for the program. Wildlife damage management programs must be multifaceted to be successful and this includes multiple partners and agencies. All participants should be recognized for their support and assistance with the deer damage management program and be applauded for their contributions.