

# Wildlife Damage to Agricultural Interests in Maryland



**Maryland Department of Natural Resources**

*Wildlife and Heritage Service*

# General Overview

Wildlife damage to agricultural crops takes many forms:

- Row crops
- Orchards
- Nurseries
- Truck crops
- Forestry operations
- Livestock



## National Agricultural Statistics Service

NASS surveys producers in Maryland to obtain an estimate of damage to crops from wildlife.

- Presents this information annually via a News Release.

Estimate for 2009 was \$9.9 million for Maryland.

- Has been consistent for several years.



### NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture  
**NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE**  
 MARYLAND FIELD OFFICE  
 50 HARRY S. TRUMAN PARKWAY SUITE 202  
 ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
 March 30, 2010

Contact: Barbara Rater  
 (410) 841-5740

#### Maryland Farmers Estimate \$9.9 Million in 2009 Wildlife Related Crop Losses

The Maryland Field Office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service recently reported that Maryland farmers lost an estimated \$9.9 million in potential crop production income due to wildlife damage in 2009. The survey results were collected and tabulated from the agency's fall acreage and production survey, with nearly 1,000 reports tabulated. Damage statewide was attributed to the following wildlife species with the corresponding estimated percent loss due to each species: deer, 74 percent; resident geese, 8 percent; migrant geese, 5 percent; and groundhogs, 10 percent.

Estimated economic loss was greatest in North Central Maryland, with crop losses reported at \$3.2 million, 32 percent of the state's total estimated losses. Most of these losses were due to deer damage (72 percent) followed by groundhogs. Other regional losses in order of magnitude were as follows: Southern Eastern Shore, \$2.3 million, Northern Eastern Shore, \$2.1 million; Southern Maryland, \$2.0 million; and Western Maryland, \$0.31 million. Crop farmers across Maryland spent an estimated \$0.69 million in 2009 on preventative measures such as fences, frightening devices, and repellents, with North Eastern Shore growers spending the most, at \$0.195 million.

Region	Estimated Economic Loss	Percent of Loss by Species						Amount Spent on Preventative Measures
		Deer	Resident Geese	Migrant Geese	Bear	Ground-hogs	Other Species <sup>2)</sup>	
	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Percent</i>						<i>dollars</i>
Western (Allegany, Garrett)	310,000	79	1	1	12	4	3	25,000
North Central (Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Washington)	3,200,000	72	11	3	∅	12	∅	195,000
Southern (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, St. Mary's)	2,000,000	71	7	6	∅	12	∅	180,000
Northern Eastern Shore (Cecil, Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot)	2,100,000	73	4	12	∅	6	∅	175,000
Southern Eastern Shore (Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico, Worcester)	2,300,000	82	6	3	∅	7	∅	115,000
Maryland	9,910,000	74	8	5	∅	10	∅	690,000

<sup>1)</sup> Data not published due to insufficient number of reports.

<sup>2)</sup> Other Species include fox, beaver, muskrat, squirrel, vole, other birds, raccoon, and coyote.

## NASS also estimates the value of certain crops grown in Maryland.

Total value of corn, soybeans and small grains was under \$500 million in 2009.

- Places loss to wildlife just under 2% of total value.



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## NASS also breaks down the loss by wildlife species:

In 2009 that was:

- Deer = 74%
- Groundhogs = 10%
- Resident geese = 8%
- Migrant geese = 5%
- “Others” = remainder





# Deer Damage

Deer make up the vast majority of damage.

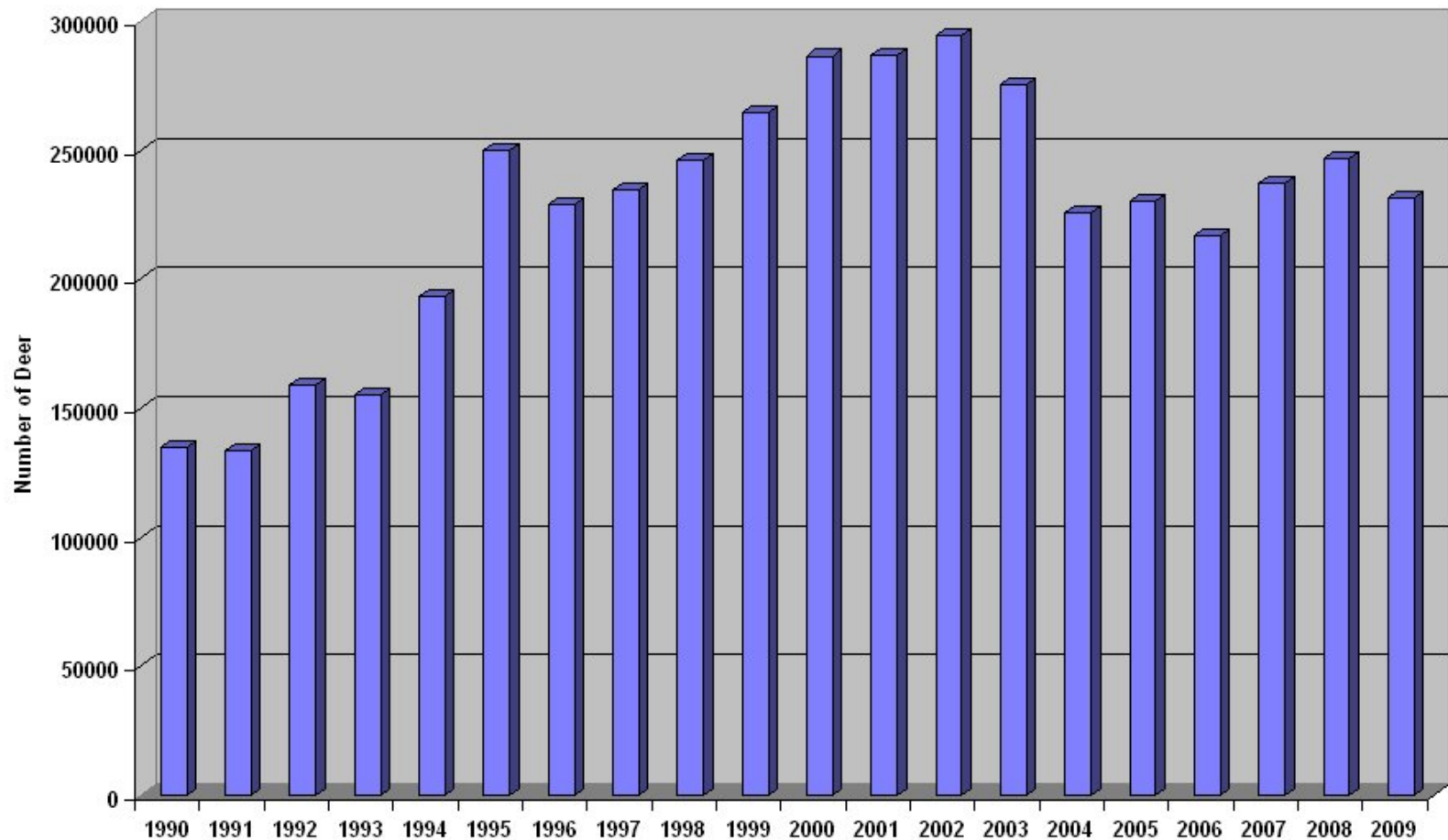
- Hit nearly every crop to some degree, from row crops to vegetables to tree plantings.
- Problem statewide.



# Deer Damage

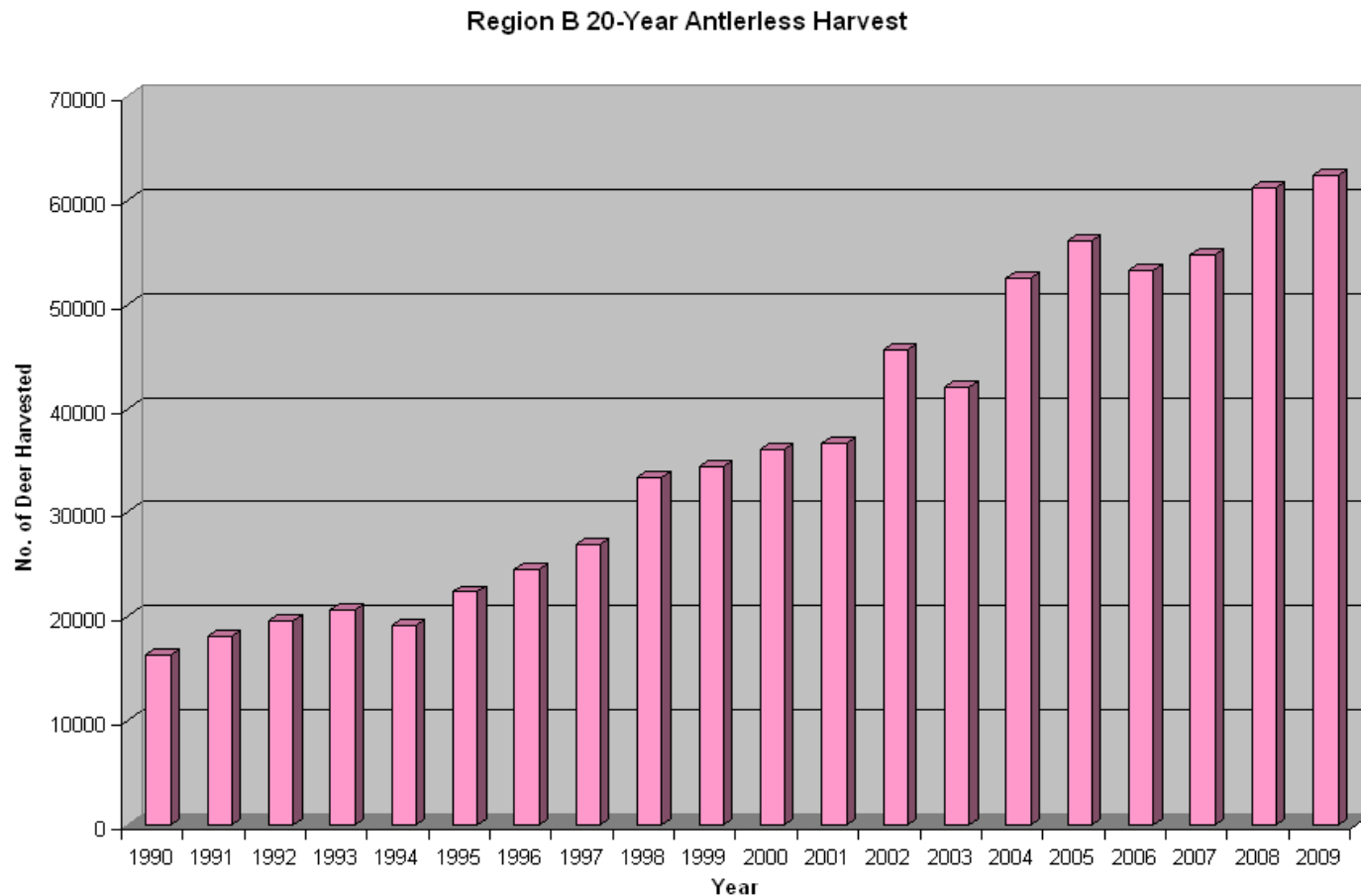
Reduced the deer population via liberalized hunting regulations.

Maryland Statewide Estimated White-tailed Deer Population



# Deer Damage

Achieved via an increase in harvest of female, or antlerless deer.





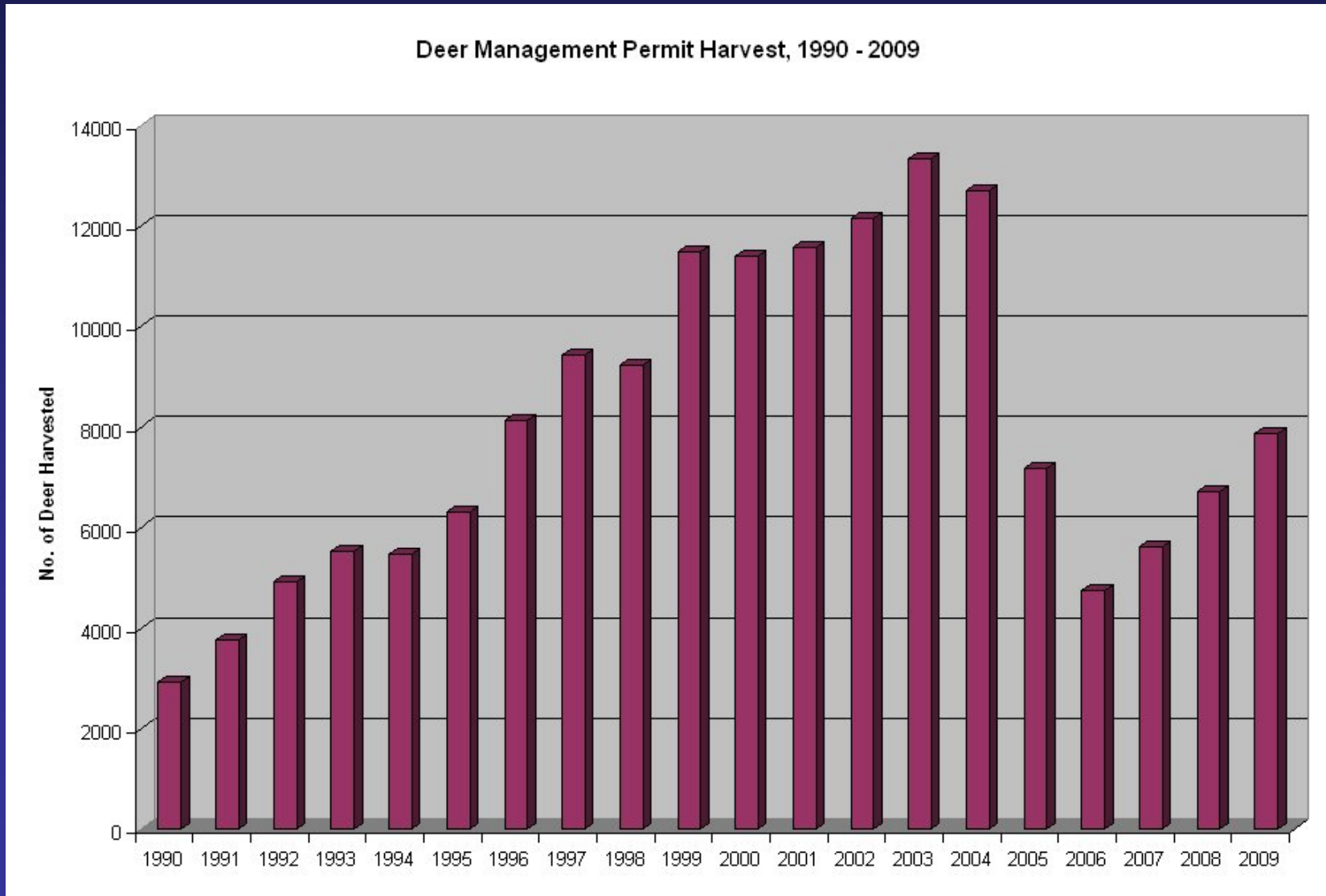
# Deer Damage

## Issue Deer Management Permits (aka: crop damage permits).

- Allow landowners with damage to commercial crops to shoot deer year-round,
- Free,
- Report take via phone or internet,
- Liberal number of deer may be taken,
- Use weapons legal for that county (i.e. rifles vs shotguns)
- May add family or friends as shooters,
- Around 950 permits issued annually in Maryland.

# Deer Damage

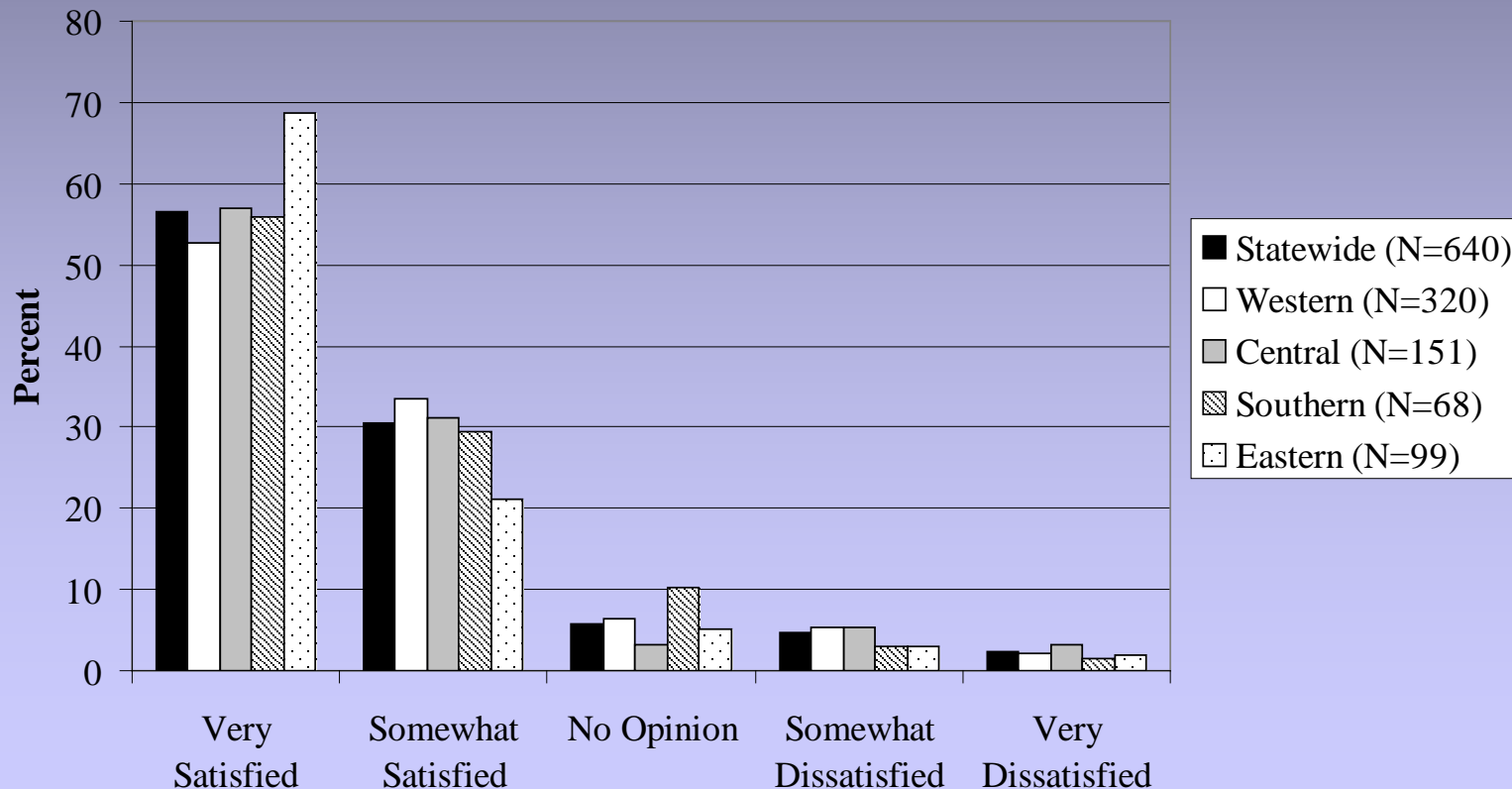
Deer Management Permit take has dropped since a peak in 2003.



## DNR surveyed DMP holders in late 2009

Question 1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the current DMP program?

-Maryland DNR Deer Management Permit Survey, 2009





# Deer Damage

## WHAT CAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS DO?

Avoid creating a deer refuge!



## Counties should develop a deer management plan.

- Painful at first due to widely differing opinions.
- Worth the effort in the long run as it ultimately allows for efficient management.
- DNR can help by providing management options to county staff and public.

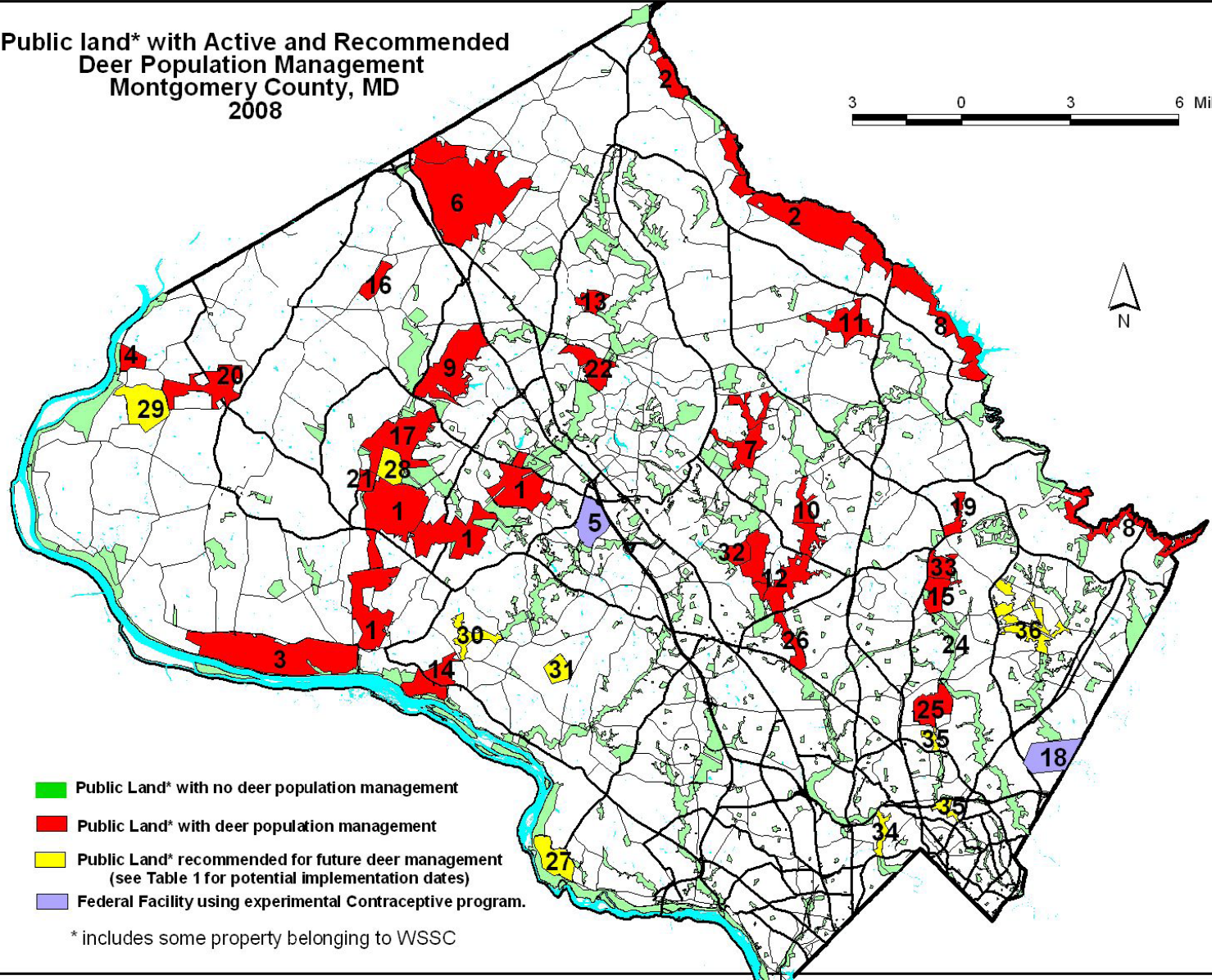
## Montgomery and Howard Counties have excellent Deer Management programs.

- Example: Howard County uses a mix of managed hunting and sharpshooting on county lands.
- Removed 362 deer from county tracts in 2009-10.



# Deer Damage

Public land\* with Active and Recommended  
Deer Population Management  
Montgomery County, MD  
2008



\* includes some property belonging to WSSC



# Canada Goose Damage

## Resident geese versus migrant geese

### Resident geese:

- Larger,
- Non-native to Maryland,
- Don't migrate,
- Nest locally,
- Remnants from captive flocks from 1930's.

### Migrant geese:

- Smaller,
- Native to Maryland,
- Nest in northern Quebec in Canada.



Good place to recognize major partner: USDA Wildlife Services (part of APHIS).



WS Wildlife Services

Protecting People | Protecting Agriculture | Protecting Wildlife

# Canada Goose Damage

Two types of permits available to landowners with goose problems (issued via USDA-APHIS for DNR):

- Permit to destroy goose nests and/or eggs.
  - Available easily online.
- Permit to kill geese depredating on crops.
  - Available via phone call – can be valid the same day.
- New permits with just a few years history.
  - Last year producers destroyed 34 eggs and killed 329 geese under this program.
  - Growing as landowners become familiar with program.



# Canada Goose Damage

## WHAT CAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS DO?

Manage ponds to minimize waterfowl flocks.

- Minimize large expanses of mowed grass.
- Address waterfowl populations BEFORE they get too large.
- Get permits to addle eggs.
  - Spray with corn oil, and
  - Replace to avoid renesting.





# Livestock Loss

Significant livestock loss is uncommon in Maryland.

Nuisance Wildlife Hotline is a joint effort by DNR and USDA - APHIS.

- Toll free phone line for resolving problem wildlife.
- They issued 4 permits to control coyotes in the last 5 years.

We have a network of licensed wildlife damage control operators.

- Respond for a fee and remove the problem animals.



# Bear Damage

Occurs to crops, livestock and beehives.

- Limited to our western counties.
- DNR addresses bear issues on a case by case basis, 24/7 when needed.
- State Law requires a compensation program but doesn't fund it.
  - Paid out 52% of the claims last year, 61 % in 2008.





## Animal Damage Management is a **SHARED RESPONSIBILITY**

DNR offers a variety of free, easily obtainable permits to address most problems as they occur – learn to use them.

Develop logical hunting programs to reduce wildlife populations during the open seasons – especially for deer.

- Avoid the ‘buck only’ syndrome, work with hunters to remove female deer.

Local Governments should monitor their properties to address problem wildlife populations **BEFORE** they reach a crisis level.

- Strongly recommend a county level Deer Management Plan.

## Success Story: Chester River QDM Cooperative

- Grown to include 10+/- farms in Queen Anne's County with more requesting membership.
- Hunting rules include strict limits on bucks taken (via antler size).
- Places intense hunting pressure on adult does (most productive in herd).

### Results:

- Hunters have reduced deer densities nicely.
- Crop yields have gone up considerably.
- Info is available online.



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# Deer Damage

## How does DNR address deer issues?

- add bullet points here
- add pictures as you desire