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# Relative Effects of Baiting and Supplemental Antlerless Seasons on Wisconsin's 2003 Deer Harvest

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Establishing hunting regulations that facilitate population reduction is an important white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) management strategy. Increased opportunity to hunt antlerless deer and use of bait to attract are 2 strategies widely used by managers to increase harvests. While facilitating harvest, baiting deer also may increase disease transmission, create hunter conflict, or adversely impact other resources. Management for reduced deer populations requires that costs associated with baiting (e.g., disease transmission risk) be weighed against benefits (e.g., increased hunter efficiency). We quantified the effects of baiting on Wisconsin's firearm and archery deer harvests relative to supplemental antlerless-only firearm seasons (SAFS) by modeling changes in the 2002–2003 harvests as functions of deer density, population goals, supplemental antlerless seasons, and a partial ban on baiting in 2003. With other variables held constant, the 2003 bait ban equated to roughly 0.1 deer/km<sup>2</sup> fewer deer harvested by archers (antlerless and antlered). The reduction was offset by an equivalent increase in harvest by deer hunters with firearms. Thus, the net impact of a baiting ban was negligible. In 2003, SAFS resulted in an increase of 1.2 antlerless deer/km<sup>2</sup> killed even though a decrease of 1.6 antlerless deer/km<sup>2</sup> killed was associated with SAFS in 2002. Our analysis suggests that creating additional opportunities for hunting antlerless deer with firearms was more effective at achieving herd reduction than baiting.

**Keywords:** antlerless seasons, baiting, firearms, harvest, hunting, *Odocoileus virginianus*, regulations, white-tailed deer, Wisconsin

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