Are we artificially shifting to smaller bucks through harvest choices?

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Outline
• What is issue?
• History of Hunting trends - past and present
• Current studies, research, opinions
• Future directions, where do we go from here?

It's Survival of the Weak and Scrawny
Researchers are developing a hormone pill for zebra-striped mice with the...
History

• Hunting has been a part of culture for quite a while

History

• Sioux and other tribes hunted for sustenance, and out of need...

History

...as well as for shelter & clothing

• Plains Indians vs. Eastern Indians
History
Late 1800’s – Early 1900’s
• Theodore Roosevelt and others - Trophy hunting
• No hunting regulations
• Practiced fair-chase
• Conservation movement started –”to preserve for future generations”
• Founded Boone and Crockett

History ~1930-1940
• Great depression
• Men were off to war
• Where possible, many women hunted for sustenance
• 1940 –Bureau of Biological Survey and Bureau of Fisheries merged and USFWS was established

History 1950’s – 1970’s
• Animal rights concerns increased
• Increased interest in environmental protection
History 1970’s – 2000

- Al Brothers from Texas started movement from trophy deer management to quality deer management - QDMA
- Focus on quality bucks, does AND fawns
- Seeks a 1:1 buck:doe ratio
- Founded in 1988 as a state-based organization in South Carolina
- Expanded to a nationally recognized organization in 1990

Current Status

- More deer now than ever
- less hunters
- More restricted hunting allows more deer to walk

Question at hand....

Are we killing bigger deer, allowing the smaller, weaker deer to pass along their genes?

....some say YES: taking out the biggest deer with the best genes will limit the passing of those genes...
....taking the larger bucks out, is counter to the natural selection process, hence evolution in reverse
Question at hand…
Are we killing bigger deer, allowing the smaller, weaker deer to pass along their genes?

...more people think NO: with the opinion that by the time deer reach their “trophy prime” at 5-7 years, their reproduction has slowed, which isn’t always the case

(How many people do YOU know that kill 5-7 yr old deer around here?)

So, what IS the answer?
• No clear cut answers exist, a study on bighorn sheep actually showed that animals were actually getting larger
• In Theory, seems possible, but there’s no hard evidence to back it up
• More research needs to be done in this area

What to do next?
OPTIONS
• Could it be this is all just media hype by non-hunters and animal rights activists?
• If we ignore it will it go away?
• Maybe hunters should look at their choices, limit the number of larger bucks they choose to harvest?
• Promote QDM to a more widespread area?
QDMA Promotes

- Safe and ethical hunting
- Adherence to wildlife and trespass laws
- Adequate harvests of adult does
- Restraint in harvesting young bucks
- Hunter involvement in education and management

QDMA Promotes:

- Cooperation with wildlife biologists and enforcement officers
- Education of hunters and non-hunters toward a better understanding of wildlife management
- Stewardship and appreciation of all wildlife

QDMA not necessarily for everyone!

What do YOU think?
Opinions? Questions?

Vs. = ??
THANKS!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

1/18/2010