

Deer Damage Meeting Talking Points

Meeting schedule:

April 2 – Wauneta, Wauneta Senior Center, 231 N. Tecumseh St., 7 p.m.

April 3 – McCook, Red Willow County Fairgrounds 4-H building, 1412 W. 5th St., 7 p.m.

April 4 – Oxford, Fire Hall, 310 Odell St., 7 p.m.

- The Commission knows that problems exist with wildlife damage. The objective of these meetings is to listen to the issues landowners are facing and offer some tools to help with the problems.
- We understand these are serious problems for landowners that deserve a serious discussion about solutions.
- The tools we currently have to offer are hunting, hazing/harassing, exclusion, and damage control permits, we are discussing these and other options with landowners
- The Commission has created goals to increase antlerless deer harvest by 30% in the Frenchman West Unit in southwest Nebraska. This approach includes increasing antlerless deer permits by 25%. We are also committed to work with landowners with damage, using damage control permits, to harvest an additional 10% of antlerless deer and reduce damage on lands with high deer concentrations.
- In many cases, additional hunting opportunities, especially for antlerless deer during regular hunting seasons is great solution for deer damage issues
 - If landowners agree, NGPC can direct interested hunters to them to help harvest antlerless deer
 - If land is leased for deer hunting, NGPC would encourage landowners to request or require their hunters to harvest an antlerless deer when populations are higher than desired on their property
- The first step for landowners having a depredation problem is for the landowner to reach out to NGPC and make us aware of the issue, they can call any district office or visit our website and fill out an online request at:
<http://outdoornebraska.gov/depredation/>
 - Once help is requested, a call and (if needed) an on-site visit will be completed by an NGPC employee.
 - Scare devices such as pyrotechnics and Zon Guns can help haze and harass wildlife when hunting seasons are not an option, NGPC may have these available to loan to interested landowners.
 - In some cases, exclusion (especially hay bales in a stack yard) can help alleviate the damage problems, NGPC may help pay for materials needed to build fences.
 - Damage control permits are an option, especially when there is not a hunting season occurring during the time of the damage.
 - A written request must be received by the landowner.
 - A certain number of animals will be allowed to be harvested over a specified period of time.
 - There is no charge for damage control permits, and reporting of animals killed is required.

- All animals taken must be offered for human consumption.
 - Only individuals listed on the damage control permit may harvest the animals.
- Most Nebraskans want a healthy deer population, the NGPC tries to balance hunting opportunity with a deer population that landowners can accept.
- Our landowners and hunters are both important to wildlife, together with NGPC we are the driving force for wildlife conservation in Nebraska.
 - Landowners provide habitat and access.
 - Hunters provide the funding for conservation.
 - NGPC is mandated to manage wildlife on behalf of all Nebraskans.
- There are a lot of pressures on our farmers and ranchers in Nebraska:
 - Property taxes
 - Fluctuations in crop commodity prices
 - Weather
 - And wildlife damage
- Wildlife damage is only one of the four pressures and alone is not the only cause for the pressures.

Other Information:

- NGPC does not pay directly for damage; the only way to make a claim against the state is through the State Claims Board: <http://das.nebraska.gov/risk/claims.html> (to date, no claim has been paid for wildlife damage).
- NGPC earns about \$5.1 million per year in permits from big game (deer, antelope, elk, bighorn sheep).
- NGPC spends between \$2-3 million per year in programs for private landowners that benefit wildlife or wildlife recreational opportunities.
- Economic impact of hunting in Nebraska is \$848 million per year.
- NGPC issues between 20-30 damage control permits and spends roughly \$200,000 per year in time and materials on animal damage issues.
- There are other states that offer payments to landowners for damage (including CO, WY, and ID), those states earn 3 to 4 times more in big game permits than Nebraska, some have additional fees on their permits, and some of their programs require landowners to open their land to public hunting if they partake in the damage programs.
- No other state around Nebraska offers a landowner only season prior to the regular hunting season.