

DEER COOPERATOR PERMIT GUIDELINES

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Wildlife & Heritage Service

Deer Project



INTRODUCTION

In an effort to assist local communities or landowners in controlling deer numbers, DNR has promulgated regulations to permit the use of a Deer Cooperator Permit (COMAR 08.03.09.11).

The Department strives to maintain deer densities at levels consistent with biological and cultural expectations. Management alternatives to achieve these objectives include: regulated hunting seasons, hunting season timing and the types of permits issued. In areas where hunting is limited or prohibited by federal, state, county or municipal statute, Deer Cooperator Permits may be issued. Deer Cooperator Permits may also be issued to individuals or municipalities desiring to facilitate removal of dead deer from public roads.

Any individual or group interested in becoming a Deer Cooperator Permit holder must comply with the instructions in the Guidelines below. Multiple deer control operations may occur under the authority of the permit, but each will require the filing of a separate operational plan prior to initiation of deer control activities.

GUIDELINES FOR DEER COOPERATOR PERMITS

Types of Permits

There are two types of Deer Cooperator Permits available, a Standard Deer Cooperator Permit and an Agricultural Deer Cooperator Permit. The Standard Deer Cooperator Permit allows the applicant to conduct deer removal operations on any lands that are approved through an Operational Plan. The Agricultural Deer Cooperator Permit is site-specific and is only valid for agricultural lands actively farmed for commercial crops. Applicants for an Agricultural Deer Cooperator Permit must be the owner, lessee, or employee of the property. Any shooters acting under authority of an Agricultural Deer Cooperator Permit must also be an owner, lessee, or employee. Anyone shooting under authority of either the Standard or Agricultural Deer Cooperator Permit must pass both the written and shooter qualification tests described below unless otherwise exempted.

Fees

Upon approval of the application there will be a fee of \$100 to apply for both the Standard Deer Cooperator Permit and the Agricultural Deer Cooperator Permit. This fee applies for the application of the permit only, and is not applicable for operational plans. If a permit is not issued, the fee will be refunded.

Length of Permit

Deer Cooperator Permits will be valid for one year from the date of issuance.

Requirements

Applicants must adhere to any federal, state or local regulations pertaining to possession or transportation of deer, possession of drugs for anesthetizing deer, or delivery of anesthetizing drugs.

Insurance

Applicants are not required to have comprehensive liability insurance. However, the Department strongly encourages applicants to possess insurance in the following minimum amounts: for bodily injury, \$1,000,000 per occurrence, \$500,000 per person; and for property damage, \$500,000 per occurrence. Applicants must also comply with Maryland's Workmen Compensation Act (Article 1-401).

Qualifications

1. Any individual who has been convicted of a state or federal natural resources violation within 5 years of the date of application will be denied a permit.
2. All persons applying for a Deer Cooperator Permit must successfully complete a written examination administered by WHS. This includes all shooters listed in the operational plan. The examination will cover various topics related to deer biology and management. Applicants who are only applying for deer carcass removal (removing dead deer from public roads) will not be required to take the written test. Their application will serve as the test. Review the Deer Cooperator Permit regulation (COMAR 08.03.09.11) for further information.
3. All individuals applying for a Deer Cooperator Permit are required to successfully pass a shooting proficiency test administered by an NRA Certified Instructor. This includes all shooters listed in the operational plan. The operational plan will list all the shooters and contain a copy of each shooter's shooting proficiency card. Each shooter will be required to successfully complete a shooting proficiency test once every 3 years. This requirement will be waived for individuals who are applying to only remove deer carcasses. The permittee needs to demonstrate proficiency in the weapons and field conditions proposed in the operational plan or permit application.

4. The requirement for a written examination and shooting proficiency test will be waived if the individual has at least 2 active years of deer handling or control experience within the last 3 years. An individual requesting the waiver shall do so in writing to the WHS and provide written documentation to show that the individual has met the conditions to allow for the waiver (approved operational plans from previous deer control operations, letters of authority from other governmental entities, etc.).

Operational Plan

1. An operational plan is required before a Deer Cooperator can initiate any deer control operation.
2. An operational plan must be submitted to WHS by the permittee by January 1 of each year. Applicants must follow the outline presented in the attached Deer Cooperator Permit regulation (COMAR 08.03.09.11).
3. Each operational plan will include written permission from the landowner where the deer control operation will take place. An aerial photograph depicting the subject property will be included in the operational plan and describe all shooting locations and any 'safety zones'.

Lethal Control of Deer

If the operational plan provides for the lethal control of deer, the Deer Cooperator shall demonstrate his/her ability to use lethal deer management techniques. Applicants must include types of weapons to be used, carcass disposal techniques, entrapment disposal methods, and avenues for venison use. Specific details are found in the Deer Cooperator Permit regulation (COMAR 08.03.09.11).

Nonlethal Control of Deer

If the operational plan provides for the nonlethal control of deer, the Deer Cooperator shall demonstrate the ability to use nonlethal deer management techniques. It is imperative that each applicant has a working knowledge of chemical immobilization and animal handling restraint systems. More specific details are found in the Deer Cooperator Permit regulation (COMAR 08.03.09.11).

Live Capture and Handling of Deer

If the operational plan provides for the live capture and handling of deer, the Deer Cooperator shall demonstrate his/her ability to properly handle live deer. Applicants should have professional training and experience in live animal handling techniques. More specific details are found in the Deer Cooperator Permit regulation (COMAR 08.03.09.11).

Any chemical introduced by any means into free-ranging deer for the purpose of population control must be approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration and the United States Department of Agriculture for use on free-ranging deer and/or food producing animals. Additionally, any such drug must have been shown, through published scientific research, to have no harmful effects upon predators, humans and scavengers feeding upon the flesh of an animal treated with said drug. Any deer that is anesthetized and later released must be marked with appropriate ear tags as designated by the Department.

Live capture, translocation and release of wild deer into a free-ranging situation, as a method of population control, will not be permitted. Live capture and translocation of free-ranging deer to privately owned game husbandry facilities, as a method of controlling deer numbers, will not be permitted.

Live capture and euthanasia will be permitted only if the method of euthanasia is deemed acceptable and/or conditionally acceptable by the most recent American Veterinary Medical Association Panel on Humane Euthanasia and does not render the carcass unsuitable for human consumption.

Wildlife and Heritage Service Actions

The Wildlife and Heritage Service or Natural Resources Police may conduct an evaluation of the area where the deer control procedure will take place prior to approving or denying the operational plan. If the Service approves the operational plan, it shall issue an approval document in writing to the Deer Cooperator after the 30-day review period.

The Wildlife and Heritage Service shall provide the appropriate reporting requirements and tags if the operational plan requires the possession or handling of deer carcasses.

Permittee Actions

A Deer Cooperator shall contact the Service directly before undertaking the operational plan in accordance with the instructions on the approval document. The permittee will file a report on the operation no later than 30 days after completion of the deer control operation. The report shall include a brief summary of the actions taken during the operation to include: the number of deer removed, the date collected, sex and age (fawn or adult) by tag number, and the ultimate disposition of each deer. The report shall also contain the amount of venison processed or donated to charity and a list of the recipient charities.

Appeal Procedure

An individual who has applied to the Department for a Deer Cooperator Permit, or submitted an operational plan proposal as an approved Deer Cooperator Permit holder, and has been denied a permit or operational plan approval, may file, within 15 days after the decision was mailed, a petition for a hearing with the Director of the Service. The Director of the Service shall render a decision in writing to the complainant within 15 days after the date of the hearing. If the complainant is further aggrieved, the complainant may initiate proceedings for an appeal to the Assistant Secretary of the Resource Management Service, Tawes State Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland 21401.

Revocation or Suspension of a Permit

The Service may revoke or suspend the Deer Cooperator Permit if the Service finds that the permittee has violated: the terms and conditions of the permit; the terms and conditions of the approval document; or any state or federal wildlife law or regulation. A violation of any provision or restriction on the approval document constitutes a violation of the Deer Cooperator Permit Regulation (COMAR 08.03.09.11).

For more information on the Deer Cooperator program, contact:

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