

Subject: Public Hearing Comments

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From: DoNotReply@delaware.gov

To: HearingComments, DNREC (MailBox Resources)

Comments on Docket #2025-R-F-0011 -- Wildlife Regulations Amendments

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Organization:

Comments:

My name is Grier Stayton. I have a farm in Kent and one in Sussex County, comprising 300 acres - of which 100 acres are woodlands. My primary crops are corn, soybeans, and hay. These crops are significantly damaged every year by deer, in spite of my efforts which I will summarize below. Since coyotes are known to be a predator of deer - especially young or injured - I strongly oppose the proposed rule to allow year-round hunting. My efforts to reduce deer damage are summarized as follows: the lease of hunting rights and the use of DNREC Deer Damage Permits (thank you); the planting of feeding buffers around the woods (including plant species conducive to wildlife and pollinators); the use of deterrent sprays on the crops (sheep fat was used this year, applied by drone, was effective for about 2 weeks, but was very expensive); and, the planting of forage soybeans (a good "trap" crop that the deer seem to prefer over the grain crops). These measures are important in helping to deter some damage but I still lost about 1/2 of my first cutting of alfalfa to deer, and the soybeans were hit hard until I sprayed the sheep fat deterrent. DNREC and deer hunters are due a lot of credit for their harvest efforts and I encourage that to continue. However, even with the good harvest numbers and the good ratio of does to bucks taken, I have not seen any measurable drop in the population. 20-30 deer in my crops at night is not uncommon. It's unfortunate and ill-advised that DNREC is proposing the removal of what I consider a "bonus" deer control measure, i.e. coyotes. I have seen coyotes on my farm and can honestly report no problems with livestock or pets being harmed. My wife's farm in Prime Hook has had a coyote presence for maybe 5 years or more and, again, no harm to pets or livestock. Why there is this general opinion that coyotes are bad baffles me. When wolves were re-introduced into Yellowstone the "balance of nature" was restored. Why wouldn't the same occur here in Delaware with coyotes? Year-round hunting of coyotes should not be allowed. Of greater concern is the white tail deer population. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.