

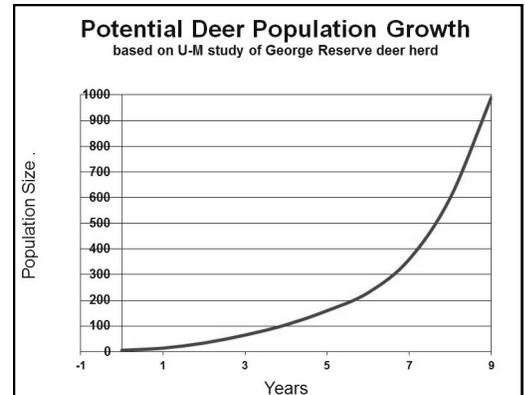
I. Deer in Ann Arbor: What's the Problem?

Deer Biology + No Predators + No Hunting in the City + A Good Habitat = Local Deer Population Doubles Every Other Year

Deer are appearing in larger numbers throughout the City and in neighborhoods where they were rarely or never seen.

Deer are a threat to the rest of the natural environment when allowed to reproduce without limit.

- A doe eats 10 lbs. of live greenery a day; a buck eats 20 lbs.
- Bucks destroy trees by "rubbing" the bark with their antlers.
- Deer "poop" renders some residential yards not usable.
- Deer are seriously damaging neighborhood landscaping: trees, shrubs and more.
- Over-abundant deer disrupt the natural balance of parks and woodlands, significantly reduce the diversity of plant and animal species.
- Deer destroy wildflowers and eliminate habitat for songbirds and pollinators.
- Deer prevent forest regeneration. They consume oak and other seedlings.
- Deer interfere with efforts to establish community gardens, to grow food locally and sustainably, and to promote native plant species and rain gardens.

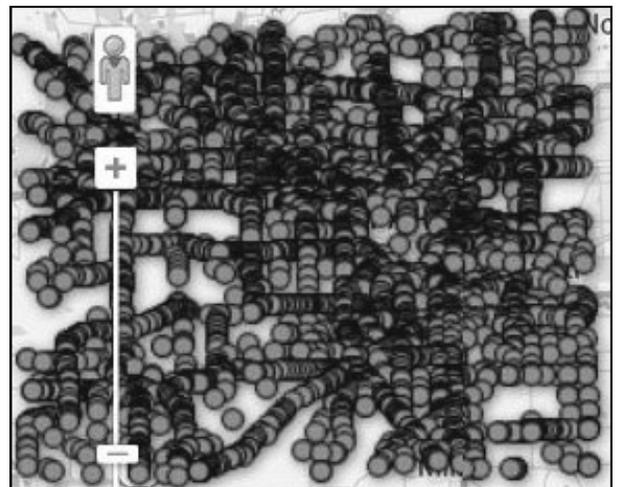


Over-abundant deer threaten human health and safety.

- **Deer-vehicle crashes** now occur everywhere around the city, not at just a few deer crossings.
- **Lyme disease**, a dangerous and debilitating health challenge, is advancing toward Washtenaw County from western Michigan. Deer population exceeding ten per square mile supports Lyme disease by providing a host for the deer tick in a stage of the tick's life cycle. The tick carries the bacterial disease.

There are **dollar costs and costs in pain and suffering inflicted by over-abundant deer**, and these costs will rise as the population increases unchecked. Doing nothing is not free of cost.

- **Ann Arbor already has suffered hundreds of thousands of dollars** in damage to landscape plantings and parks.
- **Property values drop** as trees and bushes are destroyed and replacement species are restricted to what deer won't eat.
- **Deer-vehicle crashes** generate painful injuries to people and deer and drive up health and auto insurance premiums. A typical crash generates a \$4,000 repair bill. **1,058 deer-vehicle collisions** were reported in Washtenaw County in 2013.



Ann Arbor Chronicle and michigantrafficroadcrashfacts.org
Deer-car crashes in Washtenaw Co. 2004-2013.

II. Deer in Ann Arbor: What's the Remedy?

Deer roam freely in Ann Arbor, eating green plants, rubbing tree bark, pooping anywhere, wandering in and across the roads, and breeding without limit. **They are uniquely privileged.** City ordinances do not give pets or farm animals such rights. **It is a status extended solely to deer, who have no predators and whose number doubles every other year.**

To protect Ann Arbor's homes, grounds, parks, vehicles, and citizens, the non-lethal, legal methods are damage control and prevention techniques, some of them quite costly. For example, citizens may

- Spray repellents on trees, shrubs, and gardens. And spray them again after every rain.
- Replace destroyed bushes with "deer resistant" plants.
- Put "deer whistles" on cars.
- Put up "deer crossing" signs.
- Install motion-sensing water sprayers.
- Hang bars of strongly-scented soap.
- Install fencing around yards and put trees in cages. Ten-foot tall fences can protect a garden, but City ordinances forbid these and severely limit where fences may be installed.

These methods have limited effectiveness at best, and merely "pass the buck" to neighbors, enabling deer to destroy their property. They do not solve the basic problem: Too many deer, population doubling every two years, no predators. **Ann Arbor must reduce its herd and limit deer population.**

Some promote other non-lethal ways to do this: Immunocontraceptives (non-hormonal deer birth control), surgical sterilization, or trap-and-relocate. **But NONE of these is approved for use in Michigan,** and it is likely that the regulations will not change because, after decades of study, these techniques have not been shown to be safe or effective for free-roaming populations of deer. Moreover, trapping and moving deer is illegal because most of the animals die within a year of relocation.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) controls deer population by regulated, recreational hunting in all non-urban areas of Michigan. Hunters harvest 350,000-400,000 deer in Michigan each year. For safety reasons, sport hunting is prohibited in our City, which, because of the absence of wolves and bears, now has resulted in the destructive and costly overabundance of deer. **The only remedies available now are lethal ones: managed culls or controlled hunts, requiring changes in City ordinances and approval by the DNR.** Such culls rely on vetted hunters or professional sharpshooters using firearms or bows-and-arrows, not upon increased sport hunting. **Deer culls effectively control the deer population. Initial deer culls and on-going maintenance hunts are conducted safely and inexpensively in many urban environments in Michigan and across the country. In fact, there is no documented evidence of any accidents or injury to citizens or pets from deer culls or managed hunts.**

For extensive documentation on all areas of deer biology and management, see
<http://wc4eb.org>

Washtenaw Citizens for Ecological Balance

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