

40. WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

We believe agriculture maintains a vital role in ensuring a safe food supply for future generations. The role of farmers in this system is to be responsible managers of the land and the business operations. In order to achieve these goals, effective wildlife management is essential.

The following basic principles are key to effectively implementing wildlife management:

1. Programs that strengthen a landowner's and operator's ability to control wildlife that cause damage on property they own or operate.
2. Educational and informational programs for landowners and operators that promote wildlife management and provide additional income opportunities.

Hunting and Trapping

We support:

1. Quality wildlife management based on economic, biological, and sociological practices.
2. Hunting and trapping because we recognize their vital role in wildlife management, their economic benefit to the state and its citizens, and that they are a legitimate form of recreation that provides positive influences in our society.
3. Streamlining the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) licensing and permitting process to make it more efficient and beneficial for the landowner.
4. Programs to control wildlife populations on public lands and in urban areas, including agricultural land within urban areas, where problems exist.
5. Expanded access, with the landowner's permission, to public and private lands to allow more hunting opportunities.
6. Efforts to extend all firearm, muzzle loading, and late winter antlerless-only deer seasons.
7. The IDNR issuing combination permits consisting of one antlered and two antlerless deer and bonus doe-only permits to hunters to control over-population of deer and reduce health and safety concerns.
8. Encouraging the IDNR to pursue enterprising methods, such as youth or handicap hunts, to control wildlife in areas where problems exist.
9. The opportunity for agricultural landowner participation in the initial decision-making process to release wildlife that would have potential impact on agriculture. We also support the requirement for public notification and public hearings in the proposed release area 90 days prior to the final decision concerning this wildlife release. Landowners should have the right to stop a release on their property.
10. Encouraging IDNR to allow landowners/tenants to purchase additional firearm deer and turkey permits without having to surrender their landowner/tenant free permits.
11. Encouraging the IDNR to allow the harvest of both hens and toms during any turkey season in those counties where population control is necessary.
12. The establishment of an additional fall firearm season for hen-only after the regulation turkey season is complete in those counties where population control is necessary.
13. Legislation or administrative rule to allow landowners to assign free landowner/tenant permits for deer or turkey to family members outside of the household.
14. The IDNR providing landowner's extra free doe permits for firearm and archery seasons.
15. Legislation requiring the IDNR to amend the permitting process allowing for fair, non-preferential access and earlier permit acquisition (February or March) at reasonable fees to non-resident hunters. We also support requiring the IDNR to eliminate the cap on non-resident archery permits and to issue all permits allowed by law. We will aggressively pursue legislation to eliminate the cap on non-resident archery permits.
16. The ability of landowners to lease their land for hunting. Landowners should not be required to have a minimum number of acres or be required to become an outfitter.
17. Programs that encourage and educate youth on hunting and retain hunters in order to enhance the economic viability of agriculture.
18. Eliminating the law requiring landowner(s) and immediate family members to purchase habitat stamps to hunt on property they own or operate.

19. Legislation to allow individual members of farm partnerships and non-resident landowners to obtain free landowner deer and turkey permits.
20. The ability of landowners to obtain a muzzleloader permit without going through the lottery system.
21. An increase in the number of resident and non-resident firearm permits issued in each county.
22. An increase in bag limits for the turkey season and also support an extension of the paid permit season.
23. A year-round season for Illinois residents to hunt, trap, or dispatch resident Canada geese.
24. The removal of resident geese from protection under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1916.
25. Assisting the University of Illinois Extension to develop a basic fee hunting lease agreement.
26. Requiring that deer and turkey hunting permits be issued without charge to the lineal descendants of an Illinois resident who owns at least 40 acres of Illinois land, provided that the lineal descendants hunt only upon that landowner's land.
27. The late winter antlerless-only deer season shall be open in those counties with a firearm or muzzleloader season.
28. Amending the rules for issuance of firearm deer and turkey hunting permits to allow landowners/tenants the ability to buy a hunting permit and be eligible for the first drawing of hunting permits
29. Continue to work with IDNR and others to monitor and fine tune the definition of outfitters, the registration program, and the guidelines for outfitters.

Nuisance Programs

We support:

1. A wildlife nuisance permit program that embodies three elements to control nuisance animals causing damage to crops and property. Those elements are:
 - A. Harvest time and management flexibility.
 - B. Transferability of permits.
 - C. Sufficient permits to reduce property damage.
2. Assisting members in utilizing the law which provides for an IDNR permit to control wildlife where it is causing damage to crops or property.
3. The American Farm Bureau Federation in seeking landowner authority to control federally regulated wildlife that is creating a nuisance.

Assistance/Incentives for Landowners

We support:

1. Assistance for landowners and operators in implementing management practices that enhance wildlife populations conducive to the economic well-being of landowners and operators. We support legislation or administrative rule changes, including those that govern controls in urban/adjacent agricultural areas, in order to achieve these goals.
2. Incentive programs to enhance wildlife habitat, especially on environmentally-sensitive areas.
3. Efforts to compensate landowners and operators for damage to agricultural crops, property, and livestock arising from wildlife especially on private property near areas managed by IDNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and acknowledgement by IDNR as well as FWS in the vital role of farm owners and operators in the feeding of the various forms of wildlife present on lands under our control. This should include compensation to owners/operators for the value added to wildlife community present on our lands.
4. Providing incentives to hunters through the Sportsmen for Hunger program and various other means to help manage the doe population.
5. Serving as a source of information for landowners on how they can benefit from voluntary, fee-based programs for recreational activities on their land, how landowners can participate in these voluntary programs, what programs (such as Access Illinois Outdoors) currently exist, and further investigate other possibilities.

Trespassing

We support:

1. Efforts to protect rights of farmers and farm owners with problems of trespassing or unauthorized entry by individuals and to require potential users to ask for written permission from landowners or tenants before using the land.
2. Legislation that would make trespassing, when associated with deer driving, a class C misdemeanor.

We oppose the release of elk in Illinois.