

OFAH FILE: 406/452
January 10, 2013

FAX# (705) 755-1957

Ms. Deb Stetson
Manager, Wildlife Policy Section
Ministry of Natural Resources
300 Water Street
Peterborough, ON K9J8M5

Dear Ms. Stetson:

Subject: Changes to and Review of the Controlled Deer Hunt Program

Bowhunting During Controlled Deer Hunts

At a recent meeting of the OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee, the committee discussed a concern brought forth by an OFAH member. This member is seeking a change to the Controlled Deer Hunt in WMU 80, where currently the use of bowhunting equipment is prohibited in the shotgun/muzzleloader season (November 5th to November 11th, in 2012).

OFAH has previously recommended that MNR amend the hunting regulations to allow bowhunting to continue during shotgun/muzzleloader Controlled Deer Hunts.

This prohibition is not justified by sustainability concerns (hunter numbers are strictly controlled by MNR), hunter safety concerns (bowhunters would be required to abide by the same garment requirements as shotgun/muzzleloader users), or public safety concerns (the effective distance of shotguns and muzzleloaders far exceeds that of modern bows). If the prohibition exists for a reason other than those listed above, please provide me with justification for the continued prohibition.

Controlled Deer Hunt Application Date

OFAH has received several complaints concerning the application date for the Controlled Deer Hunt. Many hunters feel that the late application date does not afford them sufficient time to plan their deer hunting activities should they be successful in receiving a Controlled Deer Hunt Validation Tag. We respectfully request that the application deadline for the Controlled Deer Hunt be moved up to coincide with the application date for the antlerless deer hunt. This change would standardize the application dates for all deer draws and provide more time for hunters to plan their holidays.

Controlled Deer Hunt Review

The questions and concerns mentioned above generated an unintended but fervent discussion about the Controlled Deer Hunt Program at the recent OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee. On behalf of the OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee, I respectfully request that MNR engage key stakeholders, including OFAH, in a detailed review of the Controlled Deer Hunt Program to ensure that it is operating as designed and meeting the needs of hunters and wildlife managers alike. This review could include an analysis of WMUs that could be converted from Controlled Deer Hunts to regular open seasons and a review of eligible equipment types in each Controlled Deer Hunt season.

Yours in Conservation,

Mark Ryckman
Senior Wildlife Biologist

MR

cc: Honourable Michael Gravelle, Minister of Natural Resources
Eric Boysen, Director, MNR Biodiversity Branch
Angelo Lombardo, OFAH Executive Director
Terry Quinney, OFAH Provincial Manager of Fish & Wildlife Services
OFAH Fish & Wildlife Staff
OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee
OFAH Board of Directors