

# WESTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:**

**FROM:** WESTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

**SUBJECT:** 2019 DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM SUMMARY

**DATE:** JUNE 1, 2020

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Weston Conservation Commission has completed the eighth year of its Deer Management Program. This multifaceted program includes studying the effects of deer on Weston's forests, educating residents on Lyme disease and deer tick prevention, and reducing the deer population to ecologically appropriate levels.

The Conservation Commission has established several vegetation monitoring programs to assess the long-term effects of deer browse on Weston's forests. With help from the Weston Garden Club, lady slipper abundance was assessed at several conservation lands. A total of ten deer exclosures are being monitored by Brandeis University students and Harvard Forest. Two high school teachers are utilizing a deer exclosure located near the Middle School to study, with their students, the effects of deer browse on vegetation.

Below, please find the summary from the 2018 hunting season, and our recommendations for 2019.

### **Results based on Hunter Log Database**

- The following ten properties were open to regulated hunting: Blaney Aquifer, Coburn Meadows, College Pond Conservation Area, Dickson Fields, Doublet Hill, Highland Forest, Ogilvie Town Forest, Jericho Town Forest, Old Road, Trailside, Norumbega Reservoir (new this year) and the Sears Land.
- A total of 40 deer were harvested from 40 hunters – 22 does and 18 bucks.
- Hunters donated a total of 118 hours of land management work clearing trails, installing and removing temporary hunting signage, looking for illegal deer stands, picking up trash and litter, and, weed-whacking invasive plants in fields and parking areas, and removing debris from the Hobbs Pond Dam.
- Hunters observed dogs running in the woods unattended.
- Other wildlife observed by hunters included red-tailed hawk, fisher, owl, coyotes, red fox, turkey, chipmunks, and squirrels.
- Hunter/resident interaction – Hunters reported numerous positive interactions with residents.

### **Other 2019 Deer Population Impacts**

- 21 deer-car collisions were reported to the Weston Police Dept. This is the third lowest number of deer-car collisions reported since 1995.
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- According to the MA Div. of Fisheries and Wildlife, 18 additional deer were harvested on private land in Weston.

Cause of Deer Mortality in Weston	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Deer/car collisions <sup>i</sup>	26	24	23	34	28	22	20	17	21
Deer harvested on conservation land	N/A	18	20	25	26	32	29	35	40
Deer harvested on private land	12	18	22	19	14	19	22	18	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>69</b>

Conservation Land	Huntable acres	# hunters	# deer harvested in 2019
Blaney Aquifer	23	3	3
Coburn Meadows	5	1	0
College Pond Conservation Area	70	2	0
Dickson Fields	23	2	3
Doublet Hill	24	2	0
Highland Forest	203	4	4
Jericho Town Forest	572	15	16
Ogilvie Town Forest	197	5	9
Old Road	5	1	1
Norumbega Reservoir (MWRA)	50	1	0
Sears Land	87	2	2
Trailside	13	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,220</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>

### **Conservation Commission Recommendation**

The Commission deems that the program, including preparation, implementation, and follow-up, continues to be successful. Over the course of eight years, 225 deer have been harvested on town conservation land (and an additional 140 on private land).

In addition to continuing the regulated deer hunting at the nine properties discussed above, on May 26, 2020, the Commission unanimously voted to expand the program as follows:

- Continue discussions with MWRA to increase the number of hunters at Norumbega Reservoir.
- Open Wellington Farm to bow hunting
- Assess various options the town can pursue regarding major deer damage experienced by Land's Sake Inc. at 40-acre field and other fields they farm in town.

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<sup>i</sup> Only collisions reported to the Weston Police Dept. are noted here. In general, car insurance companies don't require a police report to be filed and therefore, many deer-car collisions are not reported to the Police Dept.