



ANIMAL
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OF CANADA

*Animal
Protection
Through
Education &
Advocacy*

Sifton Bog Deer

Cruelty of Bow Hunting 50% Wounding Rate

Conservation Authority's Assessment of Bow Hunting: Here's what the Conservation Authority says about culling the Sifton Bog deer by bow hunting .

“(ii) Benefits: *Although not as effective at reducing deer herd as sharpshooting, an archery deer hunt can contribute substantially to population reduction or maintenance goals. This method is often used to remove deer in suburban areas when firearm discharge is not permitted since it is relatively safe because of the limited shooting range for archery equipment. Bow hunting is a relatively discreet and silent activity.*

“(ii) Disadvantages: *There is strong opposition to the shooting of deer by local animal welfare advocates and the influence of animal welfare and animal rights groups on local political decisions through litigation or disruptive activities. On its own, this method is not as effective at reducing the deer herd as sharpshooting. Constraints on season length and hunting hours as well as restrictions on types and numbers of deer to hunt reduces the effectiveness of bowhunting. It is difficult to consistently attract large numbers of bowhunters when there are other more suitable areas to hunt. As well, it is difficult to secure cost-effective liability insurance coverage for bow hunting activities. Highly skilled marksmen are needed to ensure public safety in a heavily populated urban area. There is a chance that some animals will be wounded. These animals will either die slowly, become permanently disabled or fully recover. Deer that are mortally wounded with an arrow can travel 100 yards or more before succumbing and in developed suburban areas this could result in fatally struck deer dying on adjacent properties.”*

*(Approaches and Options to Deer Management, 2.Lethal Methods To Manage Deer Populations, Management Strategies; White-tailed Deer, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
http://www.thamesriver.on.ca/Wetlands_and_Natural_Areas/white-tailed_deer_mgmt_pg4.htm#2.%20LETHAL%20METHODS)*

In summary, problems highlighted by the conservation authority about bow hunting include the following:

- bow hunting is not as effective as sharpshooting;

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- there are problems with acquiring cost-effective liability insurance for bow hunting activities;
- mortally wounded deer can travel 100 yards or more before collapsing in public view;
- other wounded deer may die over a longer period of time, may be permanently disabled or may recover; and
- there is strong opposition from animal welfare advocates.

Wounding Rates in Bow Hunting: There is considerable debate about the wounding rate of animals who are bow hunted. We did an extensive literature search regarding this issue and found that most of the articles were discussion and debate, not proper research studies.

In our search, we found a study conducted by wildlife researchers and managers in the State of Oklahoma between 1995 and 1997. This study was done to determine the deer wounding rates in bow hunting and to determine how many of the wounded deer die. This information assists in determining how many deer tags to issue during hunting season.

As the researchers state, “Our goal was to quantify wounding rates (proportion of deer shot by hunters but never recovered) of whitetailed deer with traditional archery equipment and to determine the proportion of wounded deer that actually die from their wounds.” The report goes on to say, “Funding and support were provided by the U.S. Army and the Oklahoma Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit (Okla. Dep. Wildl. Conserv., Okla. State Univ., Wildl. Manage. Inst., U.S. Geol. Surv. Biol. Resour. Div., cooperating). B. J. Farrar, D. E. Townsend II, and S. Grubbs provided assistance in the field.”

This study is important because it was conducted by wildlife managers and researchers with radio-collared deer in a controlled setting. The wounded animals were tracked and in some cases necropsied to determine the extent of wounding. The following is an abstract of that study which appears in its entirety at Appendix #1.

*Abstract: We captured and affixed radio collars to 80 male white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) during 1995-1997 to ascertain the wounding rate and proportion of deer that die from hunter-inflicted wounds. Our study population was hunted only with traditional archery equipment (recurve and longbows). Of the 22 deer shot by archers, 11 were recovered by the hunter, resulting in a 50% wounding rate (deer shot but not recovered). Only 3 (14%) of the 22 deer shot by hunters died and were not recovered. Based upon demographic and harvest statistics, these estimates indicate that approximately 4% of adult males in the population die from archery related wounds annually and are never recovered. (Proc. Annu. Conf. Southeast. Assoc. Fish and Wildl. Agencies 52:244-248)*

Observations from the study: Approximately 27% of the deer were shot, supporting the Conservation Authority's assertion that bow hunting is not as effective as sharpshooting. Of the twenty-two deer were shot, 11, or 50%, were wounded and not recovered. Because of the radio collars the wounded animals were tracked. Of the 3 deer who died from their wounds, 2 died within 24 hours and 1 remained alive for 5 to 7 days before succumbing to injuries. Eight deer sustained flesh wound injuries and survived.

As the study indicates "The 50% wounding rate from our data is similar to data reported from other studies. Downing (1971) and Boydston and Gore (1987) reported wounding rates of 50% with archery equipment for white-tailed deer in Georgia and Texas. Similar wounding rates have been reported in Georgia (44%; Croft 1963), Indiana (58%; Stormer et al. 1979), New Jersey (55%; Lohfield 1980), Wisconsin (31-37%; Herron 1984), South Dakota (48% McPhillips et al. 1985), and Michigan (43%; Langenau 1986)."

Issues to be considered: In deciding how to move forward on this issue London City Council needs to weigh the pressures of those in the community who want the population controlled against the ongoing cost of culling, including the cruelty of wounding 50% of the animals culled, insurance for the activity, the effects of having wounded animals at large, concerns about driving deer out of the bog and into neighbouring properties and onto adjacent roads.