

*(This information is provided by the Wildlife Subcommittee of the Town and Country Conservation Commission)*

## Results of Residents' Survey on Deer, Town & Country, Missouri, October 1998

**Background:** How should the deer population in Town & Country be managed? Considerable research has been done to discern the life patterns of wildlife that flow in and through Town & Country, Mo. The presence of deer and other wildlife is an indicator of the rural characteristic of our community. However, reduced wildlife habitat, plus an increase in the number of deer intensify deer-resident interaction, particularly in some localized areas of our city. Most residents agree some measures need to be taken to reduce this interaction. The question is what measures should be taken. To discern citizen attitudes toward the types of measures available, a survey was conducted in October, followed by a town forum for interested residents on Nov. 2. About 350 residents attended. The survey was sent to all residences in Town & Country, close to 4,000 households. There were 792 responses as of Nov. 2. What follows are the results of this survey with "yes" and "no" answers only included. Essay answers and comments are available upon citizen request. Survey and forum results will be utilized to form town policy and decision making. Permission will be sought from Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) to approve residents preferred options.

*1. The presence of wildlife is considered a community asset. Unfortunately, we are not living in the same environment that was here in Town & Country twenty or more years ago. Therefore, we must adjust to less availability of habitat for wildlife.*

***Do you see deer on your property?***

86 % Yes                      14% No

***Do you want to continue seeing deer in Town & Country?***

64 % Yes                      36% No

*2. MDC (Missouri Department of Conservation) is finalizing its suburban deer study which has gathered data on dispersal, movement, mortality and reproductive rates. MDC initially stated that their aerial census proposed for Winter 1997-98 was needed to determine the actual number of deer in T&C and adjacent communities. Insufficient snow made this aerial census no possible.*

***Do you want to wait until the Missouri Department of Conservation aerial census this winter (1998-99) is taken to determine the actual number of deer to guide control decisions?***

43 % Yes                      57% No

3. *Wildlife management can be a very divisive issue. Much thought has been given to use methods that can bring consensus, that are safe to citizens and also human to animals.*

***Would you support deer control efforts that are humane and within the standards of the American Veterinary Association?***

77 % Yes                      23% No

***Would you support deer control efforts that guarantee citizens' welfare and safety by excluding any weapon discharge?***

65% Yes                      35% No

4. *Translocation to similar rural release sites might be a viable option for healthy deer when appropriate trapping, transfer and release procedures are followed by skilled trappers..*

***Would you endorse translocation this winter?***

65 % Yes                      35% No

5. *The city hired a consultant, Dr. Anthony DeNicola, who made "estimates" of the number of deer in T&C and Queeny Park (Winter 1996-97) and recommended control of the population "in the near future."*

***Would you endorse non-lethal methods, (such as translocation or contraception) to control the deer population?***

72% Yes                      28% No

***Would you endorse lethal methods, such as trapping and euthanasia (killing by penetrating captive-bolt) to control the deer population?***

45 % Yes                      55% No

***Would you endorse trapping and euthanasia by lethal injection?***

39 % Yes                      61% No

***Would you sanction a combination of both lethal and non-lethal ways to control the deer population?***

47 % Yes      53% No

***Do you want to let Nature take its course and do nothing?***

16 % Yes      84% No

6. After analysis of various lethal options, MDC has recommended trapping and euthanasia (killing the deer by penetrating captive-bolt) and donating the meat to the food banks. MDC has suggested a number of around 75 does to keep the population steady. This MDC number is based on a population model computed with a census technique with "wide confidence intervals." \* (This survey question was confusing to respondents by failing to offer the option of reducing by 75 does.)

***Do you think there should be no reduction?***

18 % Yes      82% No

***Do you think there should be a greater reduction?***

43% Yes      57% No

***Do you think there should be less reduction?***

8% Yes      92% No

7. Immuno-contraception could be successfully done in small groups of localized does.

***Would you endorse immuno-contraception in specific areas with small herds if combined with other management efforts?***

62% Yes      38% No

***Would you be interested if financial assistance were available to the city to develop immuno-contraception experimental management alternatives as a look to our future?***

59% Yes      41% No

8. A list of plants that are less palatable to deer along with deer abatement techniques are available in the Municipal Center to our T&C residents.

**Do you have damage from deer eating your garden?**

66% Yes      34% No

**Would you like to receive additional information on how to protect your plantings from wildlife damage and receive free samples of deer abatement formulas from our city staff or volunteer commissioners?**

56% Yes      44% No

9. Deer-vehicle collisions which constitute 4% of all T&C accidents are a concern we want to see reduced. Wildlife corridor signs alert drivers when entering T&C. Free high frequency deer whistles for your automobiles are available at the Municipal Center to each resident in T&C.

**Have you installed a deer whistle on each of your automobiles?**

9% Yes      91% No

**Would you like to do so?**

56% Yes      44% No

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