



PEACEFUL
PARKS
COALITION

For Immediate Release - June 25, 2004

Ontario Deer To Be Killed En Masse

Minister of Natural Resources, David Ramsay has removed all restrictions on killing deer by farmers in Ontario. Gone are requirements by farmers to take preventative measures to avoid crop damage by deer. In southern Ontario, where very little public land remains, this policy means a free-for-all killing spree of deer.

While the policy limits deer removal to 1-10 deer per permit, several consecutive permits can be issued. For example, last year one Lanark area farmer from the Ottawa Valley was allowed to kill 72 deer over a four month period. Deer can also be killed just for being in the area - if their habitat use patterns cross and/or are in the vicinity of a farm that could experience crop damage.

Inspection of farms prior to issuing kill permits may or may not be required. The language in the policy is wide open.

In addition, Ramsay will expand the deer hunting season and allow regional managers to issue additional deer seals at their discretion across the province. 75,000 deer were reported killed last year.

"Minister Ramsay has proven to be an unsophisticated Minister of Natural Resources," says AnnaMaria Valastro of the Peaceful Parks Coalition. "He lacks the basic fundamentals to understand ecological principles and instead supports simplistic policies that kill wildlife."

Deer management, which has increased deer numbers throughout most of Ontario, has proven to be one of the few successful government programs. Initially designed to produce deer for the sport hunting industry, these practices have increased the deer population beyond what is desirable to farmers. But The Ministry refuses to acknowledge that their management practices have caused the problem in the first place.

"Hunting only perpetuates the problem," says Gus Zylstra. "It is well known that whenever deer numbers are substantially reduced through hunting, deer will accelerate their birth rate." The Ministry is well aware of this and intentionally keeps deer populations below natural carrying capacity to ensure a "good bumper" crop for each hunting season. Sport hunters will benefit from this policy because, as agents for the farmers, they will be able to hunt for deer year around.

Contact: AnnaMaria Valastro at 416.537.3212 or Gus Zylstra at 613.332.3651

Note To The Editor and Our Members:

The complete policy can be reviewed at the following link.

<http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/ebr/deer/>

Appendix A has a chart that shows the level of crop damage caused by wildlife farmers are willing to tolerate in dollars. It ranges from \$1800 to under \$2800. In January 2004, The Peaceful Parks Coalition contacted AGRICORP, the branch of the Ministry of Agriculture that issues crop damage insurance. In Lanark County, only three farmers reported crop damage in 2002. The Lanark Landowners Association spearheaded a campaign to remove all barriers to killing "nuisance" deer.

press release

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press release

For such little damage to agriculture, Minister Ramsay has opened the flood gates for an all out slaughter of deer.

The Peaceful Parks insisted that they be part of any consultations in developing this policy. All of our major concerns were ignored.

The Peaceful Parks Coalition is asking that our members send any comments regarding this policy directly to Premier Dalton McGuinty. Here's why.

Minister Ramsay has made recent comments in the press - Ottawa Sun and the CBC - that demonstrate he has little respect for wildlife and the EBR comment process. To the Ottawa Sun, Ramsay stated that only a "stroke of the pen" is required after the 30 day comment period to implement this policy. This means the decision has been made.

To the CBC, Ramsay stated "We have to base our regulations on science and the economic damage that is happening with this population," he said. "This is not an endangered population by any stretch of the imagination."

Science is rarely a considering factor in making political decisions regarding wildlife. And deer are not dispensable just because they are not endangered. They have an ecological role in the greater landscape including as a prey base for wolves and other predators and scavengers. Comments such as these prove Minister Ramsay is not qualified to manage our resources ecologically, only politically.

The correspondence unit in the Premier's office read all comments written to the Premier. Contact information is as follows:

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