

Urban Deer Management – Process Overview

1. Increasing Complaints

Since 2016, the Town of Truro has received a growing number of complaints regarding nuisance deer in the urban areas of the Town.

2. Public Information Session 2017

In 2017, a public information session was held to provide residents with information on deer management and ways to minimize human and deer conflict. The session was well attended by people on both sides of the issue, some wanting action to be taken to reduce numbers and others felt the deer should be left alone.

3. Results of Survey 2017

In conjunction with the public information session, a survey was conducted to determine how residents felt about the urban deer population and the impact it was having on their daily lives. Survey results indicated that 50% of the respondents felt the growing population of deer was a problem, however, only 50% of those respondents (or 25% of the total) felt that lethal means should be used to reduce the number of urban deer.

4. Gathering of Data

The Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forestry has jurisdiction over wildlife related issues. Since 2017, the Town has worked closely with them to determine the size of our deer population and how it compares with other areas of the province. Between 2018-2020, data was collected through deer pellet counts and roadside surveys.

5. Results of the Data

The three (3) years of data collected by the Town indicates that the urban deer population has risen by approximately 70% over this period. Based on the data, deer numbers are two and a half (2.5) times higher than populations in the local surrounding area.

6. Options Considered

Once it was determined that the density of Truro's urban deer population was significantly higher than surrounding areas, several options were considered: 1) relocation of deer to rural areas; 2) contraception to reduce birth rates; 3) conduct a managed hunt to reduce and maintain numbers at an acceptable level; or 4) maintain the status quo. Lands and Forestry advised that if the goal is to reduce and control Truro's urban deer population, a managed bow/crossbow hunt is the only approach with consistent proven results.

The status quo is also a valid option if majority of residents believe that the deer situation does not justify using lethal means. With this option, the Town would continue with public education through social media, signage, and pamphlets on the negative consequences of feeding deer as well as bylaw enforcement prohibiting the feeding of wild animals.

7. Ongoing Requirement

If approved, a managed bow/crossbow hunt would occur annually from September to May. The population would be monitored on an annual basis with the goal of maintaining a population density consistent with the surrounding area.

8. Plebiscite on Election Ballot

Truro Town Council wants to ensure how we proceed is supported by majority of residents. Based on the results of recent deer population surveys conducted within the Town, and on the advice of Department of Lands and Forestry, the following question will appear on the 2020 municipal election ballot:

“Do you support a managed urban deer bow/crossbow hunt in the Town of Truro to control and reduce the urban deer population?”

PLEASE NOTE: Truro Town Council will review and consider the plebiscite results. The results will be an important piece of information for Council in making a final decision.