Factors Influencing Hunter Participation, Harvest, Satisfaction, and Landscape Preference in an Urban Archery Deer Program

Nathan Weber

Dr. Charles Nilon, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

This case study utilized an ongoing urban deer management program and determined the demographics and backgrounds of participants. We also determined motivations, participation, harvest, and satisfaction. We defined hunters’ landscape scene preferences, effects of landscape preference on harvest, and whether hunter backgrounds and motivations influence landscape scene preferences. Our methods included mail surveys that were completed following the 2008 urban archery season for the City of Columbia, Missouri’s Deer Management Program. Hunters participated at a 61.1% rate (N=103) and, of those who participated, 15 hunters harvested a total of 28 deer. We found that Columbia’s program had more males, was younger, had lower incomes, and was more highly educated than Missouri’s typical hunters. The top ranked motivations for participating were expanded opportunity (42.3%), nature (23.4%), and meat (18.9%) and we found that backgrounds had little influence. We also found that motivations and typologies were not typically good determinants of participation and harvest. We determined that place of residence and prior experience in the program had the most influence on participation. The number of “days afield” had the most influence on harvest. Preferred landscape scenes were closed forests having a minimal understory and the least preferred scene depicted a mowed field. Conventional context analysis indicated three major groups of reasons behind scene selection. These were hunter utility, quality of deer habitat, and general familiarity or aesthetic values of a scene. For both the most preferred (45%, N=100) and least preferred (64.3%, N=98) hunter utility was indicated as the primary reason for preference.