

INSTRUCTIONS

DAYLIGHT FIELD OBSERVATIONS OF DEER

Daylight field observations of deer in addition to those made on spotlight surveys are necessary to determine herd composition (doe/buck and fawn/doe ratios) and buck antler quality. This additional data greatly improves the information needed to evaluate changes in your deer population relating to management practices.

- Conduct surveys **during August and early September** (the period when fawns are active but still small enough to be identified, and bucks have neared the end of antler growth).
- It is most productive to conduct surveys during times when deer are most active (early morning and late evening). However, deer observed and positively identified at other times of the day can be recorded.
- Use binoculars to classify deer in one of three categories: antlered buck (by approximate number of antler points), adult doe, or current-year fawn (fawns are a separate category - do not lump them with does). DO NOT GUESS – if a deer cannot be positively identified, either do not record it or place it in the “Unidentified” column.**
- Observations should be random to minimize biasing herd composition estimates – for example, avoiding focusing on bucks only while ignoring nearby does and fawns.
- Observations can be made by slowly and systematically driving pasture roads, sitting in areas where deer congregate (around feeders, food plots), etc.
- If working with large acreages, try to collect observations throughout the area to get a representative sampling of the total deer population.
- Attempt to record observations of at least 100 total **identified deer** over a several weeks time period. The larger the sample size of identified deer, the more accurate the herd composition estimates will be.
- Submit this information to the biologist along with the data from the spotlight deer surveys by September 10th.**

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