

COMMENTS:

Signed
Title

STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
GAME & FISH DIVISION
SPECIAL SERVICES SECTION
270 Washington Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

APPLICATION FOR WHOLESALE OR RETAIL PET SHOP PERMIT

(A separate application must be filed for each location.)

Date 19

NAME OF BUSINESS

STREET ADDRESS

CITY

ZIP CODE

Owner

Name of Veterinarian

THE FOLLOWING WILD ANIMALS WILL BE HANDLED:

- Fish
 - Psittacine Birds
 - Other Birds
 - Mammals
 - Reptiles
 - All of above
- Signed

FEE: \$25 per shop

Return to above address

**METHODOLOGY AND BEHAVIORAL ASPECTS
OF THE ILLEGAL DEER HUNTER**

by

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ABSTRACT

An interview study of one hundred and forty-eight admitted illegal deer hunters was conducted to determine the behavioral aspects and methodology of deer jacking activity. Through structured interviews given at individual and group sessions, the characteristics of the violator and the methods of operation were determined. The results have immediate law enforcement and information and education implications.

INTRODUCTION

The prediction of the number of violations of the Fish and Game laws has become an important aspect in evaluating the effectiveness of wildlife law enforcement. Results obtained by Vilkitis (1968, 1970), Giles (1970), Morse (1971), and others prompted wider testing to better understand the violator before attempting to establish parameters for evaluation efforts.

William B. Morse (1971) described a fish and game violation as falling into one of three categories — the accidental, the opportunist, and the premeditated or criminal. Perhaps the best example of the criminal game violator is the “deer poacher” — locally known as the “jacker”. Due to the biological significance and the implications of premeditation, the deer jacker provided the background for this study.

The objective was to obtain an understanding of the violators' background, behavioral aspects and methodologies of the activity. Variables under consideration were designed to give insight into law enforcement methods and effectiveness, and to point out where preventive measures may be useful.

The information was obtained by interviewing one hundred and forty-eight admitted illegal deer hunters ranging in age from fourteen to sixty-six from nine counties of New Jersey. The names and credibility of individuals jacking deer who would be willing to anonymously discuss their activity were obtained from students, friends and associates.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks are expressed to the Conservation officers of New Jersey Division of Fish, Game and Shellfisheries; George Howard, Assistant Chief of Game Management; Robert C. Lund, Principle Biologist and Deer Project Leader; Robert McDowell, Information and Education; Chris Huston, Stockton College.

A special thanks to those who willingly cooperated — both in supplying the names and allowing us to interview them.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The interviews were held in person either individually or in small groups. Interviews were structured and presented along the guidelines of a questionnaire.

Results were analyzed according to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version of February 1, 1972, by individual questions and the cross tabulation of questions that were interrelated.

RESULTS

The majority of illegal deer activity takes place on any given day of the week between 12 to 2 a.m. during the winter months. Eighty-four percent of the time, the violation is committed by a group of two to three men who have a better than fifty percent chance of either being drunk on in the process of drinking. There is a 90% chance that the group will be made up of men who hunt together during the legal season.

This accounts for the fact that the majority jack deer on or bordering lands which they hunt. Fifty percent of those interviewed have at some time killed deer by spotlight on state game lands.

This figure is considered to be somewhat biased by those interviewed from the southern regions. The management practices on the poorer habitat of the South Jersey pine barrens has in many cases resulted in concentrations of deer. This should be tested further because of the law enforcement implications involved.

TYPE OF VEHICLES

The equipment and sophistication of the violation varied from the "typical group" involving a driver, spotlihter and gunner, to a multi-vehicle, radio dispatched team using the first car as search and kill team and the second car for the pick-up. Forty-seven percent of those interviewed used a four wheel drive vehicle at some time during the operation.

Ninety percent of those using a four-wheel drive vehicle while jacking have never been apprehended or pursued. This is compared to those using standard drive vehicles of which only sixty-seven percent have never been apprehended or pursued. Of those men that have been apprehended or pursued, all are still jacking deer.

The fact that Conservation Officers in New Jersey are issued standard policy-type vehicles may have a bearing on the difference in the percentages between vehicle classes. This may, however, be the result of characteristic or method of operation differences that the study failed to reveal. In either case, this point warrants further investigation.

The greatest percentage of the deer jackers initially began their activity between the ages of seventeen to twenty (seventeen is legal driving age in New Jersey). However, several of those interviewed began as early as twelve.

Those who began their activity before driving, normally started with members of their immediate family. Seventy-one percent of the jackers interviewed came from families whose relatives jacked deer, although they may or may not have started with them.

EDUCATION AND ARREST RECORD

A high percentage, forty-one, admitted not graduating from high school. (This figure is biased by the four percent of those interviewed of high school age). Nineteen percent have had some college.

One of the answers that Conservation Officers were interested in learning was the past conviction record of illegal deer hunters. Thirty-five percent have been previously apprehended for violation of a fish and game law. Twenty percent have admitted being previously arrested for an indictable criminal offense. These figures could be validated by examining previous records of men apprehended by Conservation Officers for deer jacking.

REASONS CITED FOR DEER JACKING

Why do they do it? The immediate answer by most was that they kill deer "for the meat". When questioned to clarify their answer, few of the men were able to do so. However, an inexpensive supply of meat and the love for the taste of venison were the predominant justifications.

Although commercial sale of venison may not be the problem in New Jersey as it appears to be in states such as Pennsylvania and New York, twenty percent of those interviewed have illegally killed deer for profit. Prices for the animals ranged from five to thirty-five dollars.

Both the commercial venture and the problem of supplying meat for personal consumption appear to be influenced by market beef prices.

Perhaps the most alarming reason given for jacking deer was for "the hell of it". Eight percent admitted shooting deer just to see if they could hit it and have no interest in picking up the animal for any purpose.

The differences in the reasoning for their killing the animal appeared to group the men into a form of social classes. There appeared to be a close relationship among deer jackers using similar methodologies and reasoning and an antagonism for those who did not. This antagonism could potentially be exploited to obtain additional information which could be applicable or lead to apprehensions.

Table 1. Comparative Summary of Related Questions.

AGE (in years) Of Those Interviewed		AGE	
		Began Hunting	Began Jacking
14-18	8.1%	59.5%	2.7%
19-23	29.7%	32.4%	32.4%
24-35	40.5%	8.1%	59.5%
over 35	21.6%	—	5.4%

HOW OFTEN (TIMES/YEAR)		TIME OF YEAR (For Jacking)	
	Jack Deer		
Once	10.8%	Fall	10.8%
2-5	35.1%	During Hunting Season (only)	13.5%
6-10	27.0%	Winter	75.7%
over 10	27.0%		

REASON FOR JACKING		NO. OF COMPANIONS WHILE JACKING	
Mean	73%	Alone	10.8%
Commercial (money)	18.9%	1-2 others	83.8%
For "Kicks"	8.1%	Over 3	5.4%

DISTANCE (miles) TRAVELED TO JACK DEER		DOES ILLEGAL KILL DAMAGE THE POPULATION?	
		YES	NO
Less Than 5	13.5%	27%	73%
5-10	29.7%	89.2%	10.8%
10-15	29.7%	78.4%	21.6%
Over 15	27.0%	81.1%	18.9%

DO YOU KNOW THE PENALTIES?		DO YOU JACK DEER ON SAME AREA THAT YOU HUNT?	
		YES	NO
Do Penalties Concern You?	29.7%	35.1%	64.9%
Do You Know the Penalties?	29.7%	49.8%	50.2%
Do You Jack Deer on Same Area That You Hunt?	27.0%		
Jack On Posted Land			
Jack on State Game Land			

DISCUSSION

In attempting to solve the problem of illegal deer hunting it is necessary to understand the variables affecting the rates of violations. Dr. Aaron N. Moen (1973) from Cornell University described the information necessary to understand predator-prey relationship as follows:

- 1) The mechanism of predation
- 2) Factors regulating the amount of predation
- 3) The effect of predation on the population structure through time.

Replacing the word "predation" with "deer jacking" we have a perfect set of variables to understand the system.

However, the human element in the violation system makes the variables even more difficult to enumerate than those of the predator prey system.

We have attempted to establish an understanding of the "predator" in the system in hopes that better insight could be obtained for developing parameters for both the mechanisms of deer jacking and factors regulating the amount of deer jacking.

These results should in no way be construed as being critical of either the Bureau of Law Enforcement or of Game Management. The deer violation is a problem in every area where man and deer exist together. By providing a better understanding of the violator, a more systematic approach can be developed for the apprehension, and perhaps even more important, for the prevention. Preventing the potential violation may prove to be the most successful tool of minimizing the illegal killing of deer. Investigations should be initiated to develop a program as part of the hunter safety course illustrating the effects of illegal deer hunting on the deer population and the potential penalties for the violation of the "deer laws".

Experiments should be conducted to evaluate the effect of specially trained conservation officers and undercover agents on deer jacking activity. Additional research is also needed to measure the effect of a closely controlled system for revocation of hunting privileges, and greater publicity once a violator is convicted.

At present, the deer violator shows a general lack of perception of being apprehended. Only through a general awareness of efficient law enforcement efforts can we hope to develop a "respect" for the laws thus minimizing illegal activity.

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