



# Introduction to Quality Deer Management



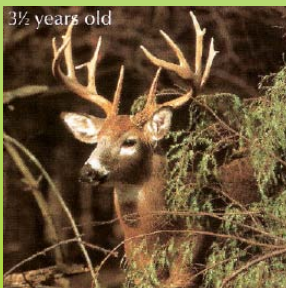
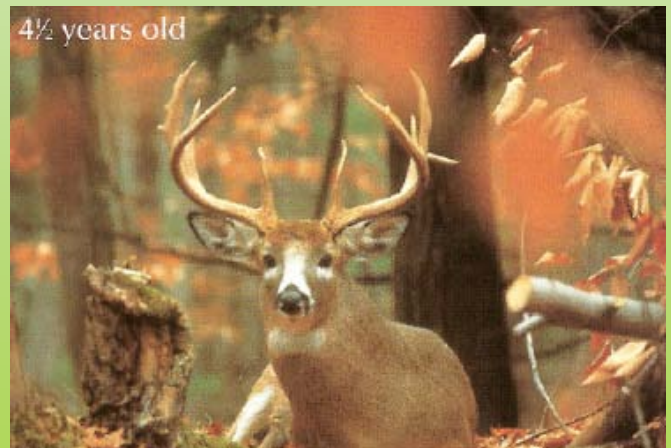
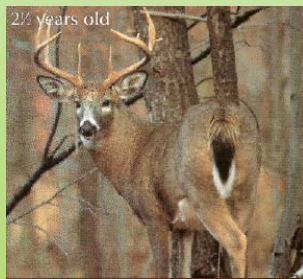
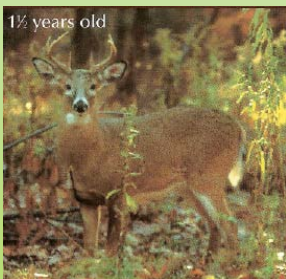
Beaver Island Conservation Club & Quality Deer Management Assoc.

## What is Quality Deer Management?

Quality Deer Management (QDM) is a management practice that unites landowners, hunters, and resource managers in a common goal of producing healthy deer herds with balanced adult sex ratios and age structure. This involves protecting young bucks while harvesting appropriate numbers of female deer to maintain herds within existing environmental and social constraints.

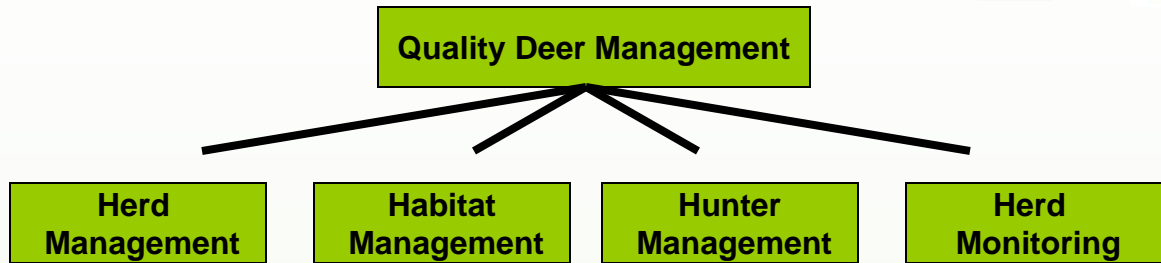
## What are the advantages of QDM?

Quality Deer Management (QDM) has several advantages that can be brought to Beaver Island. **First**, the herd ratio of bucks to does becomes more natural. In the wild, does and bucks are found in a nearly 1 to 1 ratio. Currently on the island, we have found that the ratio is 8-10 does for every buck. That means if we have a 1000 deer herd, only about 100 would be bucks. Through QDM we can move that ratio closer to 1 to 1 and have as many as 500 bucks on the island with the same size herd! **Second**, by protecting younger bucks we can create a herd with many older and larger bucks. Under normal hunting pressure only 5% of bucks make it to 4 1/2 years of age or older. However, deer don't reach their maximum antler size until at least 4 1/2 years. By protecting bucks until age 2 1/2 or older we allow more deer to grow and become true trophy animals. **Third**, with more mature bucks in the herd, less immature bucks breed. This results in less stress on them through the winter and it allows more of them to survive in a tough northern climate. **Fourth**, by better controlling the overall number of deer we keep the herd below carrying capacity. Carrying capacity is the maximum number of deer for a given geographical area based on the amount of food available. This helps to keep the deer bigger and healthier, enables fawn survival, and helps prevent the winter die offs that have plagued the island.



**By allowing bucks to mature, keeping the herd ratio as close to natural as possible, and by providing proper nutrition to deer these are the kind of results that are possible. Deer mature at 4 ½ years of age.**

# How does QDM work?



## Herd Management

Quality Deer Management uses Herd Management to control the number and type of bucks and does harvested. This is done to achieve the sex and age balance within the herd. The most common methods used to achieve herd management are antler restriction for bucks, and the use of doe permits / cull hunts for does. By holding the deer herd to its carrying capacity, and harvesting the correct amount of bucks and does we create a healthy, balanced, and mature herd.

## Habitat Management

Quality Deer Management uses Habitat Management to maximize the nutrition available to the deer herd. Two common methods exist and both would be a huge benefit to the island. First, QDM uses food plots to provide both summer and winter forage for the deer. A food plot can provide as much as 10 tons of additional food per acre! Imagine what 100 acres of food plots could do for island wildlife! Second, proper forest management can provide both food and cover for deer. By conducting limited and responsible forest harvest it allows new growth to be generated that can provide food and bedding habitat for not only deer, but turkey, rabbit, other small game, and countless songbirds. Only 1-3% of land needs to be developed for habitat management to have a dramatic positive result.

**Only 1-3% of land needs to be developed to have a dramatic positive result on the deer herd.**



## Hunter Management

Hunter management includes educating all hunters on the different aspects of QDM, proper aging and sexing of deer, respect for established regulations, and participation in the overall QDM program.

## Herd Monitoring

Herd monitoring refers to the collection of data needed to sustain a QDM program. By monitoring the size, age, ratio, and health of the herd the island can make adjustments to QDM policy to improve our results. This data is what allows us to scientifically establish the best policies for the island maximizing both the deer herd and the hunting experience.

# Quality Deer Management in Action

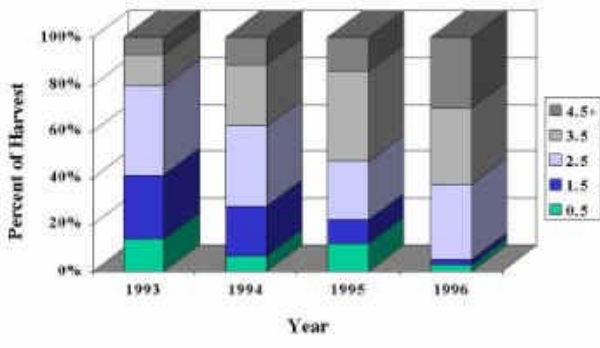


## Fairchild Creek Cooperative – Case Study

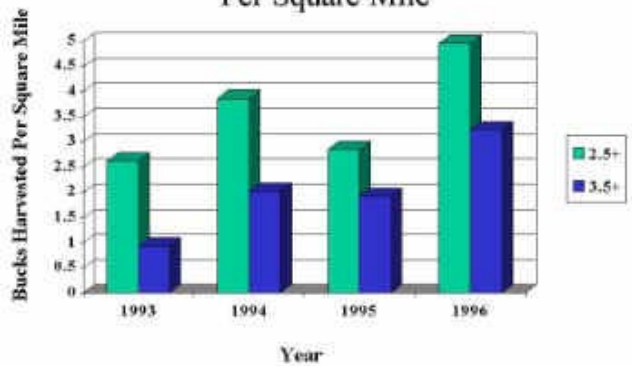
### Background

The Fairchild Creek QDM Cooperative is located in SW Missouri and was founded in 1992 by several dedicated Sportsman. In the first year they monitored the herd and Recorded accurate age and sex ratio data. They implemented QDM with buck age / Antler restrictions and harvested adequate numbers of does. The below two graphs Show the age and sex structure before after the first four years of QDM.

Buck Age Structure



Buck Harvest  
Per Square Mile



*The percentage of mature bucks (3.5+) in the harvest increased from 21 percent in 1993 to 67 percent in 1996. The percentage of fawns and yearling bucks in the harvest dropped from 41 percent to only 5 percent*

*In 1993, the group harvested only 0.9 mature bucks per square mile. By 1996, that number had increased to 3.3 mature bucks per square mile.*

### Results

After a couple of years, the data began to reveal some positive trends (Figures 1 and 2). Herd health, reproduction and recruitment were excellent and older bucks began showing up in the harvest with increasing regularity. Through commitment and hard work, the members of this cooperative attained their goal of creating a quality hunting experience. Mature bucks are present now in huntable numbers, which makes it even easier for hunters to pass young bucks. Big rubs and scrapes have become commonplace and hunters have noticed increased rutting activity. Some courtship chases witnessed by hunters have involved as many as five bucks in pursuit of one doe. As you might expect, each hunting season results in a large number of bucks being taken to the taxidermist.