

To the Editor:

Enclosed is an article from a recent *National Wildlife* on whitetail deer. They are becoming incredibly prolific in the East. Just today there were articles in the *New York Times* about the inability of Maine hunters to keep up with the exploding population, and on the need to hunt deer in a reserve here in Massachusetts. Is this going on elsewhere?

The article on deer in Shenandoah in your last issue touched on it, but I wonder if they won't find

themselves so overwhelmed with deer down there in a few years that sophisticated management will have to yield to old-fashioned thinning.

Another interesting thing going on out here is the habituation of deer to civilization. Ditto for raccoons, fox, possums and lots of other small game. All seem to be adapting rapidly to the suburban/urban environment. Is this going on in other parks too, or am I just hallu-cinating?

I found the fall issue of *Park Science* most interesting reading. I'm intrigued by the "pulse" approach to

resource management, which is so thoroughly enlightened that it's hard to believe it can occur in a bureaucracy. It's reminiscent of the Wetherill Mesa project that took place at Mesa Verde in the 60s, where scientists from about 35 disciplines analyzed all the data available from one community. The cross pollination that occurred among them seems akin to what the pulse folks have had in their evening sessions. Why can't we do more managing that way? If we could get all the interpreters, law enforcement types and resource managers from a park to sit down and talk shop around a campfire, the result would be discovery of shared ideas, growth of consensus, and a more positive approach to park operations. Albright should have a course entitled "Holistic Management." Ah well, at any rate, I liked the article. The vulture piece came out nicely too. Godspeed,

Bill Halainen, Editor
NPS Ranger Newsletter

The Halainen letter included an article "Swamped with Deer" by Sam Iker from a recent issue of *National Wildlife* magazine. It describes the staggering explosion of deer population in U.S. urban areas, and then refers to a "forthcoming work" by Wildlife Ecologist Aaron Moen on the biology and management of white-tailed deer.

"Moen's work," writes Iker, "constitutes perhaps the cutting edge of revolutionary new management techniques that will allow authorities to balance deer populations with available habitat and thus maintain healthy, stable herds. Key to his approach is the enormous data-handling capability of modern computers. His goal . . . 'is to put this art of deer management on such a sophisticated, high level of understanding and analysis that it'll stand up in any court of law — in terms of recommendations of what should be done, and can be done.'"

Twenty years of research has enabled Moen to develop complex ratios and formulas covering everything from a herd's sex/age structure and metabolic cycles to the amount of metabolic forage energy contained in its habitat. A manager will be able to feed readily obtainable information into the computer and "by solving for the unknown" (as Moen puts it) a wide variety of critical answers can be obtained.