

# Green Fire: Supports continuation of zone management for deer in Wisconsin

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Beginning April 13th, Wisconsin citizens once again can provide input to the Natural Resources Board for a variety of advisory questions concerning fish and wildlife conservation. Public input opens April 13 at 7:00 pm for 72 hours. Find information about the 2020 Wisconsin Conservation Congress hearing at <https://dnr.wi.gov/About/WCC/springhearing.html>.

The Natural Resources Board in Question 15 of the 2020 spring hearing questionnaire asks if residents favor eliminating Wisconsin's deer management zones. WGF strongly recommends keeping management zones (a "no" vote on Question 15) as they are important components of our state's deer management system.

"Deer management zones were established to recognize the significant variation in our state's landscape," said Adrian Wydeven, co-chair of WGF's Wildlife Work Group. "Our current four zones correspond to Wisconsin's northern forest, central forest, central farmland and southern farmland counties. Each of these zones have very different landscapes and as a result the deer herds perform differently as well. In addition, hunting conditions vary significantly in forest dominated landscapes compared to agricultural landscapes. You can see these differences reflected in the buck kill across the state," he added.

Deer management zones have been part of Wisconsin's deer management system since the 1950s. For the seven decades that they have existed, these zones have served as a useful

framework for establishing the deer hunting regulations across the state. For example, Holiday Hunts and Extended Archery Seasons are being used in Wisconsin's productive Farmland Zones where herds are above desired population objectives.

During the 2017 Deer Management Unit Review, the boundaries of 10 deer management units were modified to align with Management Zone boundaries. These changes were supported by the County Deer Advisory Councils (CDACs) because the new boundaries allowed them to better tailor deer herd management to landscapes found in their counties. Removing Management Zones would make it impossible for these CDACs to manage their county deer herds as desired. For all of these reasons, Wisconsin's Green Fire recommends citizens consider a "no vote" on Question 15.

## Characteristics of Wisconsin's Deer Management Zones

### Northern Forest Deer Herd

- Low fawn production
- Susceptible to severe winter losses
- Big forest landscape
- Forest browsing damage
- Large public land base
- Diverse predator complex
- ~ 44% of state's deer range
- 16% of 2020 deer harvest

### Central Farmland

- High fawn production
- Crop damage concerns
- Forest regeneration failures
- Interspersed farmland
- Predominately private land
- Metro & vehicle collision concerns
- ~30% of state's deer range
- 56% of 2020 deer harvest

### Central Forest

- Low fawn production
- Lowland forest landscape

- Sandy soils
- Large public land base
- Diverse predator complex
- ~ 7% of state's deer range
- 3% of 2020 deer harvest

#### Southern Farmland

- High fawn production
- Crop damage concerns
- Forest regeneration failures
- Interspersed farmland
- Predominately private land
- 98% of 2001-19 CWD+ detections
- ~19% of state's deer range
- 26% of 2020 deer harvest