



QDMA-NB NEWSLETTER

Volume 3 Number 2

Date: March 2010

This Newsletter is presented in both English and French by:
The New Brunswick Branch of the Quality Deer Management Association

Successful Meeting

By: Daniel Gautreau

On February 6th, QDMANB held a round table discussion at the Delta in Fredericton. The purpose of the discussion was to consult stakeholders on how to move forward with deer management in NB.

There were 57 persons that attended the event, with a majority of the participants being non-members. The Board of Directors of QDMANB was delighted with the turnout and the very constructive discussions that took place. Our association was encouraged to repeat the initiative in other communities, and to consider the formulation of an action plan to promote the development of a sustainable deer herd.

Based on the input received at this first consultation meeting, we decided to develop a discussion paper on the future of the whitetail deer in NB. Once this paper has been prepared and circulated to stakeholders throughout the Province, we will be pleased to hear the views of all those interested in offering their contribution. Our aim is to engage stakeholders in a dialogue. Subsequently, we want to collaborate with Government, industry and woodlot owners in pursuing a realistic strategic plan.

In pursuing our goals, we will need the support of all of our readers and stakeholders. Although your membership would be welcomed, our first objective is to get your support and participation. We will provide a copy of our discussion paper to all those on our distribution list. If you wish to be included, or to provide comments, write to us at qdmanb@nb.sympatico.ca.

Editor's note:

Daniel Gautreau is a professional forestry consultant and President of the New Brunswick Branch of the Quality Deer Management Association.

Contact him at: nburbanforest@live.ca

This issue includes:

Crossbows: The Great Debate

By: Richard Hooper (See Page 3)

Trying to make sense of scents for a beginner

By: Russ Henry (See page 5)

Looking Forward in 2010 A message from QDMA headquarters

By: Matt Ross (See page 6)

Why did our Deer Harvest Drop in 2009

By: Rod Cumberland (See page 7)

For more information on QDM, QDMA & QDMANB, contact a member of the Board listed on page 2.

français

Pour un exemplaire en français de ce Bulletin, veuillez nous écrire à :

QDMANB@nb.sympatico.ca

Mailing Address

QDMA New Brunswick
845 McLeod Ave. Suite 324
Fredericton, NB E3B 9Y4
Or by email
QDMANB@nb.sympatico.ca

National Mailing Address

QDMA-Canada
283 Rue Des Tilleuls,
Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-Lac, Québec
J0N 1P0

QDMANB Newsletter

The QDMANB Newsletter is published at least three times per year, by the New Brunswick Branch of the Quality Deer Management Association. News bulletins are also distributed to our mailing list throughout the year.

QDMANB extends to all of you an invitation to participate in our activities. We are also interested in your comments on this newsletter or any other matter that will serve the interests of the whitetail deer, deer management and hunters in general in New Brunswick.

Please take the time to invite those persons you believe may be interested in our newsletter to write to us by e-mail or regular mail, in order to be included on our mailing list. Our email: qdmnanb@nb.sympatico.ca

QDMA Membership

To renew your membership, or to join our growing association, drop us a line. A one year membership is \$40 or \$115 for a three year membership. Membership entitles you to a subscription to the popular Quality Whitetails magazine and opportunities to participate in QDMANB Deer Management Seminars and other activities. You will also receive our Newsletter and Members Bulletins.

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE AN APPLICATION FORM IS ATTACHED ON THE BACK PAGE.

Email us at:

QDMANB@nb.sympatico.ca

Or write to us at:

324-845 McLeod Ave.
Fredericton, NB E3B 9Y4

QDMA Web Sites

You can access information on Deer and Quality Deer Management by visiting the Web pages of the Quality Deer Management Association.

www.QDMA.com OR
www.QDMACanada.com

QDMANB Board of Directors 2009-2010

Daniel Gautreau	President
Email:	Daniel@nbforestry.com
Tel: O. 736-6349	H. 737-8337
Tony Henderson	Vice President
Email:	t.henderson@rogers.com
Tel: O. 453-1995	H. 458-5919
Tom Byers	Secretary
Email:	byersfam@nb.sympatico.ca
Tel: H. 485-2535	
Sylvain Caron	Treasurer
Email:	sylcar@4bm.ca
Tel: H. 739-8666	
Yvon Chiasson	Director
Email:	yvon.chiasson@gnb.ca
Tel: H. 457-5523	
Roland Cormier	Director
Email:	suecor@nb.sympatico.ca
Tel: O. 444-2859	H. 459-5460
Jamie Floyd	Director
Email:	jfloyd@nbnet.nb.ca
Tel: O. 432-1278	H. 485-8085
Sean Moffett	Director
Email:	moffett@nbnet.nb.ca
Tel: H. 433-6132	
Robbie Ritchie	Director
Email:	Ritchie@nbnet.nb.ca
Tel: O. 737-5234	H. 737-8996
James Savoie	Director
Email:	sylviesavoie@rogers.com
Tel: O. 423-2654	H. 735-8193
Don Wolverton	Director
Email:	speckle@nb.sympatico.ca
Tel: H. 276-3242	

Note: Telephone area code is (506) for all numbers above

Newsletter contributors

Editorial Board and Revisers:

Daniel Gautreau Yvon Chiasson
Tom Byers Matt Ross
Roland Cormier

Contributors:

Tom Byers QDM and Food plots
Richard Hooper Education and Recruitment
Rod Cumberland Whitetail Management
Russ Henry Hunting Basics & Bow Hunting
Jamie Floyd Woodlot Management
Joseph LaBelle Orienteering & Safety
Matt Ross QDMA & QDMACanada
Sylvain Caron Forestry topics

Translation:

Yvon Chiasson Daniel Gautreau
James Savoie Sylvain Caron
Roland Cormier

Printing & Distribution:

Suzanne Cormier Melodie Cormier

Editor: Roland Cormier

QDMA is for all those that have an interest in the white-tailed deer and Quality Deer Management.

Crossbows: The Great Debate

By: Richard Hooper

The rumours are out there...but are they true? Is New Brunswick poised to accept crossbows as a legal means for hunting?

I recall hearing last spring there was a presentation to the NBWF by a crossbow manufacturer at their AGM and that a motion was passed to push "legalizing crossbows" upwards to DNR. Ironically, the crossbow presentation at their AGM was at the same time the New Brunswick Bowhunters Education Association was also having their AGM five miles down the road. I looked on the NBWF website and couldn't find anything on the minutes of the AGM, or resolutions that were passed. I did find the agenda and it verified there was indeed a crossbow demonstration. In mid-January, I sent an email to a DNR official (Mr. Cade Libby, Manager in the Allocation and Education Program, Fish and Wildlife) regarding "the crossbow rumours". His response to my curiosities was well received, providing some valuable insight to what lies ahead.

In essence, I asked three basic questions, with the DNR response included in quotations.

1) Are they going to be legal in NB in the next year or two?
"...The Department of Natural Resources recognizes the current interest in the use of crossbows by the hunting public, both within New Brunswick and throughout North America..."

"...The Department is investigating amendments to legislation and regulations for the 2011 hunting seasons that can accommodate crossbow hunting opportunities in the current hunting season structure while ensuring conservation and the safe, humane and sustainable harvesting of wildlife..."

2) If crossbows are deemed legal for hunting in NB, will they be included in early archery or rifle only?
"...The Department has not yet decided on which seasons crossbows will be permitted in..."

3) What training will be required and who will provide it?
"...Presently the Department is interested in including a crossbow component into the existing bowhunter education course. Department staff recently met with the New Brunswick Bowhunter Education Association regarding this issue..."

So what's the big deal and why all the fuss? The "fuss" is whether it's a bow, a rifle that shoots arrows or something in between. Across North America over the last few years, there have been heated debates over crossbows being introduced into new States and Provinces. Some rifle hunters are all for them so they can hunt more, providing they are included in early bow seasons. No early bow season and most won't bother buying one, they'll just

continue to hunt with their rifle or shotgun and save themselves a \$1000 bucks for a set-up. Bowhunters for the most part are against them, if crossbows are to be allowed in the early bow season, as they claim "it's not a bow". They fear the early bow season will be flooded with crossbow wielding amateur archers taking 60 yard shots, thus ruining the advantages that early bow season provides and giving archers a bad name in the public eye. Some archery organizations fought long and hard to convince government to allow "early" archery season such as in NB, and allowing less traditional archery gear into it seems to ruffle feathers. Put crossbows in the rifle season and most of those I've talked to are indifferent.

Others argue that it's not the hunters at all, since hunters aren't even asking for them! Some claim that it's the manufacturers wanting to create a market, peddling their products and pitching ideas and proposals to hunters' groups. It is also argued that representation is being made to government agencies, such as in the case pointed out above, about the merits of safe hunting with crossbows and the benefits of increased licence sales and corresponding departmental revenue. Regardless of where you stand, whether you are for or against and who you think is right or wrong, crossbows have gained some popularity in the last few years due to marketing, legalizing and outright ease of use.

So what's the advantage and why now? Ask Nova Scotia why they legalized crossbows last year. What would cause the Nova Scotia MNR to finally allow crossbows after all this time of being an evil poaching weapon? Perhaps it's increasing problems with overabundant deer in developed areas which has brought to light the possible value of crossbows as a hunting tool that can safely be used in areas where rifles cannot be used. Perhaps it's to reduce deer numbers where they have become a public nuisance and hazard in our suburbs and roadways. It's unsafe to hunt in backyards and neighbourhoods with rifles, but a crossbow has a reduced legal distance requirement and is quiet, something the Smiths and Jones will tolerate in order to get rid of the shrub eating, tulip mangling, hostas munching pests that we hunters hold on such a high pedestal.

There is a catch to our Bluenosers' new weapon though! You can only hunt deer with it, and only during the regular firearms season. You also need to have successfully completed the Bow Education Course, and be Hunter Trained or Hunter Grandfathered to be qualified to hunt with a crossbow. Otherwise, you must provide proof of having completed a crossbow training course elsewhere or provide proof of having hunted with a crossbow in another jurisdiction. Interesting stuff really; legalize a new firearm and put in place lots of training requirements, yet limit it to only one type of animal to hunt. Sounds pretty target specific to me, a partial fix to urban deer explosions.

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3
Crossbows: The Great Debate

By: Richard Hooper

Whether New Brunswick follows suit and goes down the crossbow path as well remains to be seen officially. If they do, the existing bowhunters won't be happy if they allow it in the early Archery Only season. And the rifle hunters "who might give crossbows a try" won't be happy if they limit it to Rifle Season only.

What the argument always seems to boil down to is "coming to full draw!!". That is usually the make or break point for most archers. Do it too soon and you tire out if the deer holds up, then you have to let down and risk getting caught moving again. Do it too late and you get caught moving. Most botched bowhunting opportunities are draw/movement related. Crossbows however are always cocked, the same as a loaded rifle. The crossbow hunter can sit in a tree stand for hours with the unit laying on a 2X4 rest. Deer steps out and all he has to do is squeeze the trigger with little to no movement and no fatigue issues. More traditional archery gear requires the archer to get to full draw undetected, with most archers only able to hold at full draw for less than 1 minute. After that, fatigue sets in and accuracy goes south in a hurry. Some also argue the "out of the box into the woods" crossbow hunting requires virtually no practice after you have the unit's scope sighted it. If you can squeeze the trigger of a rifle, you can shoot one-inch groups with a scoped crossbow at 50+yards once it's tuned and sighted in. Again, that's essentially the arguments that take place in most hunting forums and websites, hunt clubs, associations, sportsmen's groups, etc across the nation.

Personally, I don't see it changing much here in NB even if it does get approved. It's not like all 50,000 deer hunters are going to run out and buy a crossbow. The last five years of new folks trained in archery, (i.e. Bowhunters Ed Course) showed a consistent rise and then a dramatic 25% decline. My theory, and it's just mine, is that if hunting is good and there's lots of game around (like 05-07), folks seem to challenge themselves a little more by taking up bowhunting because the chance of success and putting meat in the freezer is still good.

However, given the drop in overall deer harvest numbers in 2008 due largely to a severe winter, less people seemed inclined to run out and buy a bow and sign up for Bowhunters Ed. And what about 2009? Well it's no secret now that the deer numbers for 2009 were almost at a depressing all-time low, so I predict there will be even less folks switching over to archery because the chance of success is that much lower. If you got skunked in 09 and hardly even saw a deer, you're unlikely to run to the archery store and make hunting even harder next year. Again, just my personal theory.

Number of Bowhunter Ed registrations

Year	Registrations
2005	191
2006	206
2007	296
2008	412
2009	322

So I guess we'll have to wait and see what final decisions DNR has in store for us with respect to crossbows in 2011. If they do get approved, be sure you will need a course of some type. It might be approved for archery season, but maybe not.

In the meantime, start scouting your favourite suburbs for potential new set-ups close to home because there are some boomer bucks and world-class does hiding out in those little sanctuaries.

Hunt Safe and Be a Good Mentor,

Hoop

Editors Note: Richard Hooper is an avid bowhunter, Bowhunting Instructor with NBBEA and owns a small woodlot that operates under the Working Woodlot Program guided by SNB Wood Marketing Board. A member of the Canadian Armed Forces, he is currently a tactical helicopter pilot instructor at CFB Gagetown.

Drop in Harvest

The deer harvest in 2009 dropped for a second year in a row to 5060 deer taken during all seasons. This represents a drop of 35% compared to the previous year, and a decline of 52.1% over the past two years.

Deer Harvests in NB (Selected Years)

Year	TT Harvest	Difference With Previous Year
1987	26752	-----
1995	10944	-----
2000	8312	-----
2001	4314	- 48.1%
2002	6443	+ 49.3%
2003	5733	- 11.0%
2004	6878	+ 20.0%
2005	6881	+ 0.04%
2006	9570	+ 39.1%
2007	10570	+ 10.4%
2008	7780	- 26.4%
2009	5060	- 35.0%

Source: NB DNR

Trying to make some sense of scents for a beginner

By: Russ Henry

Every fall you go to your favourite sporting goods store, just before hunting season, and checkout the newest gimmicks to ensure that you have the right thing to lure that big buck of a lifetime. Chances are it's either a new call or a new deer attractant or scent.

If you read different articles, talk to different guides or biologists, watch one of many hunting videos in your favourite store, you will probably come away either a bit confused or convinced that you have the answer for this year. I must say that has been true for me.

Some people suggest it's better to hunt as scent free as possible. That includes not using scent products at all. There are others that suggest if you are not using scents, you are not using one of the best techniques to get you close to a deer. Some experts may go so far as to suggest that real trophy bucks are too smart to be tricked. So what is the true story?

Personally, I have seen an immediate and dramatic response to the latest mock scrape formulas, so I know they work. I was just not around when the buck came back! I have used several other lures and have had no response at all.

To be a successful hunter, you had better know your area well and know where the deer are in your hunting area. I am a firm believer in patterning deer in the area you plan to hunt. Then all your other tricks can come into play such as calling as well as the use of scents etc.

I recently read the book "*Radical Bowhunter*", *Serious Tactics for taking Trophy Whitetails*, by Dick Scorzafava. In his chapter, *Using Scents to Shrink the Playing field*, the author gives some very practical advice in the use of scents. The statistics that got my attention was that when the author and his fellow hunters used scents they recorded a success rate of 95% in harvesting big bucks, whereas the average success rate of the hunters without using scents was only 20%.

The two biggest mistakes that bowhunters make in hunting, is contaminating their hunting area and using the wrong attractant for the time of year. What is important to consider includes, personal cleanliness from head to toe, use of rubber gloves to handle and disperse scent, use of rubber boots when you enter your area and avoid touching things to prevent leaving human scent in the area. Use only scent free equipment and use scent eliminator on your clothes and footwear. I personally believe that the key factor in my mixed results has been my human scent contamination by me, and/or, my other hunter friends walking in and around my stand sites. People will even argue that the use of

rubber gloves and boots is not 100% effective in eliminating human scent, the key principle however to reduce the concentration of scent as much as possible.

A small tip that worked for me was to place a small scent container behind the base of a stump or tree. So while the deer is looking down to smell the scent, he is looking away from you, which allows you to draw your bow or prepare to shoot without being easily detected.

Select the best scent for use at the proper time of the year. There are several online guides that can help if you need advice. Make scent use a part of your hunting plan. It's not a guarantee or a silver bullet; it just increases your odds.

Editor's Note: Russ Henry is an avid Bowhunter and Biologist. He is currently employed as a Senior Policy Analyst with the Department of Fisheries, and the Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture. Russ is also a founding member of QDMANB.

2009 Raffle Winners

The New Brunswick Branch of the Quality Deer Management Association organised its second raffle last fall. The draw was held on December 15, 2009. Close to \$5,000 was raised through this raffle. Prize winners are listed below.

- 1) Winchester .270 Bolt Action, a value of \$1,000.
Winner: Chris Connell
- 2) Painting, value of \$400.
Winner: Jamie Fowler
- 3) Ladder tree stand, value of \$280.
Winner: Brock Crawford
- 4) Range Finder, value of \$240.
Winner: Gaston Levesque
- 5) Food Plot kit, value of \$150.
Winner: John Steele
- 6) Trail Camera, value of \$125.
Winner: Jacob Scott
- 7) Scent elimination kit, value of \$50.
Winner: Brian Gauthier
- 8) Deer Clock, value of \$33.
Winner: David McCauley
- 9) Code Blue Scent Dispenser, value of \$30.
Winner: Dave Beaulieu
- 10) Bag of Biologic's Clover Plus, value of \$25.
Winner: John Henry

Looking forward in 2010

By: Matt Ross

New Brunswick QDMers,

Just a few short years after QDMA became incorporated in Canada in 2005, and today the phrases “Quality Deer Management” and “QDM” have truly found a place in many Canadian hunters vocabulary. This is a true testament to our growth over the past 5 years, is directly related to the bottomless passion from members like you, and is reflected in the fact that we now have active volunteer QDMA Branches in the provinces of New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec. Kudos to your great work, you should all be congratulated!

However, as many of you know, 2009 was a tough year financially for many Americans and Canadians alike. Unfortunately, the QDMA was not immune to this economic tightening. For all provinces combined, QDMA-Canada’s membership saw a first time decrease of almost 10 percent. This was not unexpected, as it was totally in-line with what we are experiencing south of the border as well; QDMA-USA also experienced our first national membership decline (7-8 percent) at the end of 2009. This has also been a common theme among other non-profit wildlife conservation organizations across all of North America.

The good news, however, is that although this “economic situation” has temporarily forced us to do more with less, it has certainly strengthened QDMA’s commitment to being a member-based organization. We have long understood that we, the QDMA Staff, are here to serve you and not the other way around. In fact, our future is clearly predicated on a sustainable base of loyal members. We will achieve this only by remaining steadfastly focused on our mission while providing the support, products and services our members like you value. So, please *always* know that as your QDMA representative - I’m just an email or phone call away!

Looking forward, we are genuinely optimistic about the QDMA-Canada’s future. One major accomplishment during the past year was that we officially added a forest industry great to our national corporate partnership team with the addition of Tremzac, a division of Tremzaction Machinery. Located in Ontario, Canada, Tremzaction Machinery is our very first Canadian-based corporate partner; they have been serving the forest product industry for over twenty-five years. For more info about this, see the sidebar below.

Finally, as we take the time to reflect on this singular amazing accomplishment, I think it’s also appropriate to take the time see what’s coming down the pipe for 2010. In the coming months, the QDMA will be updating the national US and Canada websites, will be forming even more new and innovative corporate relationships with Canadian-based companies, will be hosting booths at

various large sporting shows, has secured air time on two major Canadian television outdoor shows, and is determined to re-aim the membership growth rate pointed skyward again.

On behalf of QDMA, I truly thank each of you for your continued support and generosity.

Yours in whitetail conservation and stewardship,
Matt Ross
QDMA Certification Programs Director

Editor’s Note:

Matt is our QDMA representative and can be reached at: mross@qdma.com

SIDEBAR 1: **QDMA Welcomes Tremzac as a Corporate Partner!**

By: Matt Ross

As the demand for environmentally sound, low impact equipment increases, Tremzac is, and has been, a leader in offering products that meet the needs of the modern land manager. "For us here at Tremzac, having in our possession over 1,000 acres of QDM properties, we felt the need to support the QDMA and its efforts in North America for sound forest and wildlife management," said Shawn Bevins, Director of Business Development.

With its line of OXTRAC products, Tremzac is pleased to promote the goals of QDMA. "We are proud to support the QDMA in its efforts to better forests and deer herd management. We could not turn down the opportunity to align with a group whose goals and values coincide with Tremzac's own personal and business goals. We are looking forward to a long and prosperous relationship with the QDMA and its members as we combine our efforts to promote the responsible management of deer and habitat," said Bevins.

QDMA is honoured to welcome Tremzac to our team. For more information about Tremzac, visit www.tremzac.com.

SIDEBAR 2: **Some National Events in 2010**

By: Matt Ross

QDMA Canada will have a booth again this year at the Toronto Sportsman’s Show from March 17th -21st.

The Toronto Sportsman’s Show typically draws over 120,000 people and 450 exhibitors in a five day time span and is widely considered as Canada’s biggest fishing and outdoors show. Exhibitors here feature an extensive assortment of fishing equipment and outdoor gear.

This is a very big event and I'm excited about this opportunity for QDMA-Canada. If you plan to attend, please stop by the booth and say “hello”!

Why did our Deer Harvest Drop in 2009?

By: Rod Cumberland

In January, I was invited to the Petitcodiac Sportsman's Club to present the results of last fall's deer season. The place was literally packed! Every chair was taken and some stood along the wall for over an hour. There were over 110 hunters on hand to hear the reasons for what may have gone wrong with the NB deer harvest.

Preliminary figures show that in the fall of 2009, the harvest dropped by 35% to 5,060 deer. In the past 2 years, harvest numbers have plummeted by over 50% from 10,570 in 2007. We had predicted that in 2008, the harvest would decline by 23%. It actually declined that year by 24%. However, while we predicted the decline would be 16% to 6,600 in 2009, the drop was much more significant.

Maybe to most readers, it is all a matter of semantics. But whenever I attempt to make a prediction of how the fall harvest will go, I always precede my comments with the statement: "Depending on the weather...". Some hunters get irate when I suggest that fall weather can affect the deer harvest dramatically. But I think if we take a moment to consider this, it may make a whole lot more sense than what you might first think.

When forecasting, we can not be perfect. Despite this, our predictions of harvest have been relatively accurate since we began to use our provincial deer population model in 2001 to set quotas. Part of this process involves both a prediction of how many deer will be available for harvest in the fall and how many deer will actually be taken.

In most years, our predictions have been good, considering that our predictions were made a full half a year in advance of the season. In 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2008, our predictions were off by less than 10% from the actual fall harvest. Only for three years have we been off by a greater proportion than 10%, namely in 2002, 2006 and 2009.

In 2002 we began to look at weather conditions to see if and how they affect harvest at all. We compared temperature, barometric pressure, sky conditions, precipitation and wind speed to the number of deer harvested each day. At present, we have eight years of this data and have done a few regression analysis to try and determine which of these most influences harvest. I'd like to say it's simple to see that factor "X" is the key to harvest. But unfortunately; such a relationship hasn't yet emerged. As some also know, hunter effort is "THE" primary influence on our daily fall harvest. Quite simply, most guys are out opening day, Saturdays and Remembrance Day. These five or six days each fall make up the lions share of the harvest. Therefore, unless weather conditions directly affect these days specifically, most weather effects get lost in the noise of all the other factors.

As we looked for an explanation for the lower than expected harvest last fall, we did notice some obvious trends. In 2002 we underestimated the harvest by 27.5%. In 2006 we were again under by 17% and in 2009, we were over by 28%. As we looked at these three years specifically, we focused on the factors that affect either hunter behaviour, or deer behaviour. I tested my idea with the Petitcodiac Sportsmen and they quickly agreed to my logic. If we receive some snow during the season, how many guys are calling in sick from work the next day, or if not, are telling the wife not to hold supper for them? The answer is many. We all know that a brown deer shows up incredibly well on a white background and we love to hunt on snow. To boot, hunters can see their tracks, follow their trails and conditions for retrieving shot deer are near perfect. Proof is in the pudding that our harvest jumps significantly on snowy days and the days following, as long as it persists.

Secondly, ask most hunters when deer are most active and they'll tell you deer move before a storm comes in, and after it blows through. So we also included the number of frontal systems during deer season.

The third positive effect is temperature. When things get cold, we like to hunt, but more importantly, when things are warm, few guys feel really motivated to go sit in a T-shirt to hunt the elusive whitetail.

On the negative side of the equation is wind. Gale force winds can really make deer skittish, and remove the hunters' ability to hear what's going on around them. I watched a doe on Grand Manan in a gale-force wind nearly shake out of her hide trying to sneak in and get a bit of an apple a few years back. One whiff of the swirling wind (which I'm sure my scent was in) and she was off on those wobbly legs as fast as she could run. I'd guess that wind would negatively affect both hunter effort and lower deer behaviour to lower success.

If we take these weather conditions and look at them for the years we had relatively good predictions, you will notice a very interesting trend. In 2002 and 2006, when harvest was higher, snow fell on seven occasions in 2002 and on two occasions in 2006. In 2009, there was absolutely no snow during the gun season.

In 2002, there were seven different frontal systems during the season, and in 2006, there were eight. Last fall there were only 3 systems. It only rained 3 times the entire season! As for temperatures, needless to say in 2002 when we hunted on snow for nearly 3 weeks of the season, there were eleven days when the mean daily temperature was below zero. In 2006, we had four days of below zero hunting. But last fall, only two days were close to zero, and these days were still slightly above for the daily mean. In actual fact, in 2009, October was a colder month than November! **Continued on page 8**

Continued from page 7 Why did our Deer Harvest Drop in 2009?

By: Rod Cumberland

Not saying that the mercury did not dip below zero a few nights, but the mean for the entire day never fell below zero once.

The final factor was gale force winds. In 2002 and in 2006 there was only one day each year with these high wind speeds. However in 2009, there were three days. What's more, two of these days fell on opening day, and the first Saturday of the season! That these days are high harvest days I believe is significant. Typically, over 15% of our entire fall harvest occurs on these two days combined. It is not too much of a stretch for me to think that with no snow, warm temperatures, only three occasions for weather systems and with two days of gale force winds that these factors could combine to further reduce the harvest by another 20% to give us the dismal showing in 2009.

Another reason we went back to look at weather was the results of our annual fall aerial surveys used to count and estimate deer numbers. After the fall harvest, we expected to see very few deer. Now I'm not saying I saw a load of deer, but we certainly saw more deer than we were expecting given the harvest. When we looked specifically at WMZ 22, our aerial estimates also suggested that the herd here has only declined by 20%, nearly identical to what our model predicted.

When we look next door to our neighbours, we see the same effect of last winter. Maine's harvest is down 14%, Quebec Gaspé down almost 40%, Nova Scotia is still tallying, but

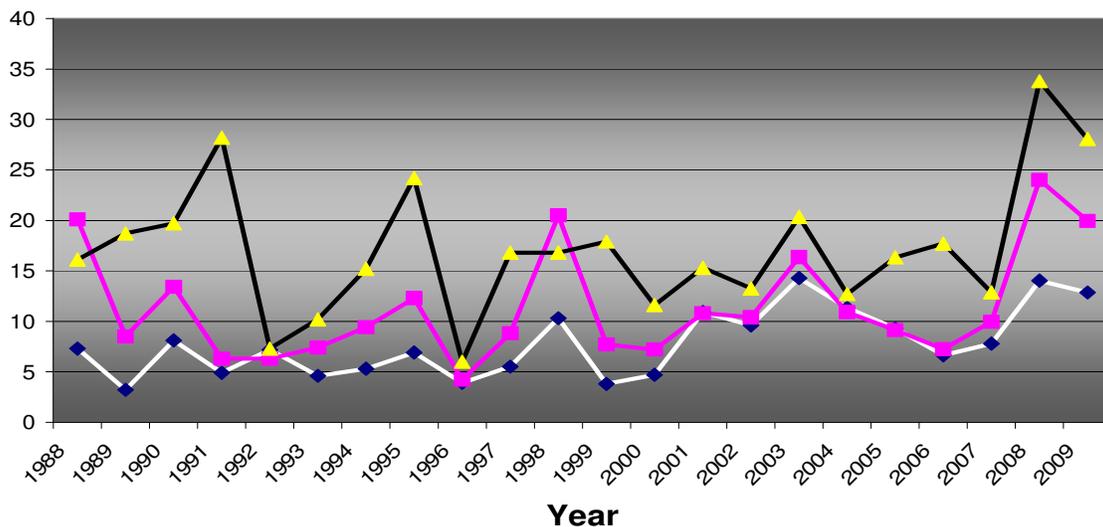
also suggest they will be lower than 2008. Other northern states that experienced a rough winter report harvests down from 20 to 30%, namely in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan. Most hunters will remember the dramatic decline of our deer herd in the late 1980's. We harvested over 30,000 deer in 1985, and five short years later, we were harvesting only 11,000 deer. If you compare the severity of the winters that caused that decline to the past two, you can readily see that the past two were even more severe than those in the late 1980's.

When we first dropped the antlerless permits in 2001, we predicted the herd would grow. Most times when we discussed our management changes, we would qualify these statements with: "If we have several good winters, we'll look like geniuses. However, if we have a couple of bad winters we'll look like bums!" Well in 2007, I was looking pretty intelligent. However, as we all know, following these past two winters, we may have quickly slid into another category.

Any credible deer management program will be based on solid and reliable data. It should be explainable, and there should be a level of predictability to it. To this point, we have been fortunate that our system has served us relatively well. Tough winters present their challenges. Coyotes love them. Skiers and snowmobilers love them, but they wreak havoc on our deer herd. Let's hope we revert back to another series of milder winters so that the herd can respond and numbers jump back to where we'd like to see them. There are other "BIG" challenges at present, but that's for subsequent issues of our newsletter.

Editor's note: Rod Cumberland is NB's Deer Wildlife Biologist with The Department of Natural Resources.

New Brunswick Winter Severity



Note: Line with triangles is Northern NB, line with squares is Central NB, and line with diamonds is Southern NB.

What is QDMA?

The Quality Deer Management Association's (QDMA) mission is to promote sustainable, high quality white-tailed deer populations, wildlife habitats, and ethical hunting experiences through education, research, and management in partnership with hunters, landowners, natural resource professionals, and the public.

Objectives

- To serve as a collective and responsible voice for white-tailed deer hunters and managers.
- To improve the quality of deer herds and hunting experiences through sound deer management.
- To promote hunter education and participation through the conducting of meetings, seminars, and demonstrations, and through the production of educational materials such as books, videos, and the QDMA's journal, Quality Whitetails.
- To promote and financially support deer research and management projects relating to white-tailed deer management and/or recreational hunting.
- To enhance the public image of deer hunters and deer hunting by providing a code of ethics for members to follow.

What is QDM?

Quality Deer Management (QDM) is a management philosophy or practice that unites landowners, hunters, and managers in a common goal of producing biologically and socially balanced deer herds within existing environmental, social, and legal constraints.

The approach typically involves the protection of young bucks (yearlings and some 2.5 year-olds) if they are being over harvested, combined with an adequate harvest of female deer to maintain a healthy population in balance with existing habitat conditions and landowner desires.

This level of deer management involves the production of:

- Quality deer (bucks, does, and fawns),
- Quality habitat,
- Quality hunting experiences, and
- Quality hunters.

You can obtain more information by visiting the QDMA and QDMA Canada web pages.

What is QDMANB?

The New Brunswick Branch of the Quality Deer Management Association was created in May 2007, and at the time, was only the second Branch to be created in Canada. We are building on over two decades of work by QDMA in the US. QDMA-Canada was created in 2006.

The purpose of a Branch is:

- To promote ethical hunting, sound deer management, and the preservation of our deer-hunting heritage.
- To raise funds through activities in order to assist with projects on the local, provincial and national levels that promotes the mission of QDMA and QDMA-Canada.
- To educate existing hunters, future hunters, landowners, and the general public on the concept of and the need for Quality Deer Management and ethical hunting practices.

QDMANB has pursued several activities since its inception. These activities include:

- Several deer symposiums and presentations throughout the Province,
- Annual field days at QDM food plots,
- An infrared camera deer density survey project which received a grant from the NB Wildlife Trust Fund in 2009, and,
- The publication of a Newsletter which is distributed at least three times a year in both English and French.

QDMANB extends to all interested persons an invitation to participate in our activities. We are also interested in your comments on any matter that will serve the interests of the whitetail deer, deer management and hunters in general in New Brunswick. Please take the time to invite those persons you believe may be interested in our newsletter and other mail outs to write to us by e-mail or regular mail, in order to be included on our distribution list.

**QDMANB is the proud winner of the
2008 New Branch of the Year Award
in North America.**



QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

QDMA – CANADA

Membership Application

QDMA New Membership Benefits

- A subscription to Quality Whitetails (six issues per year).
- Discounts on QDMA merchandise and deer management equipment.
- Opportunities to participate in a QDMA-Canada Branch and attend deer management seminars and short courses.
- New 1 year members receive “A Basic Guide to Quality Deer Management” booklet and “Developing Successful QDM Cooperatives” booklet and a vehicle decal.
- New 3 year members receive an exclusive Primos grunt call with QDMA logo and a vehicle decal.

Name: _____	Membership Categories (Canadian Funds)
Address: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$33 for 1 year junior (15 and under)
City: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35 for 1 year student
Province: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40 for 1 year Adult
Postal code: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$105 for a 3 year adult
Telephone: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$315 for a sponsor
E-Mail: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Donations \$_____

Method of payment

Cheque# _____ Money Order # _____ Master Card Visa American Express

Card number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Mail Application to:

**QDMA-Canada
283 Des Tilleuls
Sainte-Marthe-Sur-Le-Lac, Québec
J0N 1P0**