

2020 - 2021


CITY OF IOWA CITY

DEER MANAGEMENT

ANNUAL REPORT

The Iowa City City Council adopted a Deer Management Plan in 2019. This plan was developed in collaboration with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and local public input and was approved through the Iowa Natural Resource Commission. The Plan includes one year of professional sharpshooting, four years of urban bow hunts, and ongoing public education. To learn more please visit www.icgov.org/deerprogram.

CONTENTS

- Executive Summary
 - Deer Collisions + Complaints
 - Non-Lethal Deer Management
 - Depredation & Urban Bow Hunt Results
 - DNR Aerial Survey Results (Attached)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Iowa City's Deer Management Plan was formed in response to resident concerns about deer in urban and suburban areas. A deer count survey conducted in 2018 revealed the urban deer population had tripled since the City ceased its deer management program in 2010. After coordinating with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and soliciting public input, the City Council adopted a [Deer Management Plan](#) in 2019. This plan was submitted to the Iowa Natural Resource Commission (NRC) and included one year of professional sharpshooting, four years of urban bow hunts, and ongoing public education. A full timeline and history of the City's deer management response is available at www.icgov.org/deerprogram.

Public Input

In 2018, a deer committee was formed which consisted of both City staff and community members. On August 14, 2018, approximately 60 members of the public attended a public input meeting held to discuss deer population management. Staff offered additional opportunities for providing input for those unable to attend the public forum.

In August 2020, City staff met with members of the Iowa City Deer Friends to receive feedback and incorporate their input into the rules for the 2020-2021 urban bow hunt. Members of the public also addressed the City Council during four City Council meetings at which the urban bow hunt rules and deer feeding ordinance were on the agendas. The City Council received 17 e-mails and one letter on the deer management plan and urban bow hunt in 2020. Additionally, staff received two e-mails requesting information.

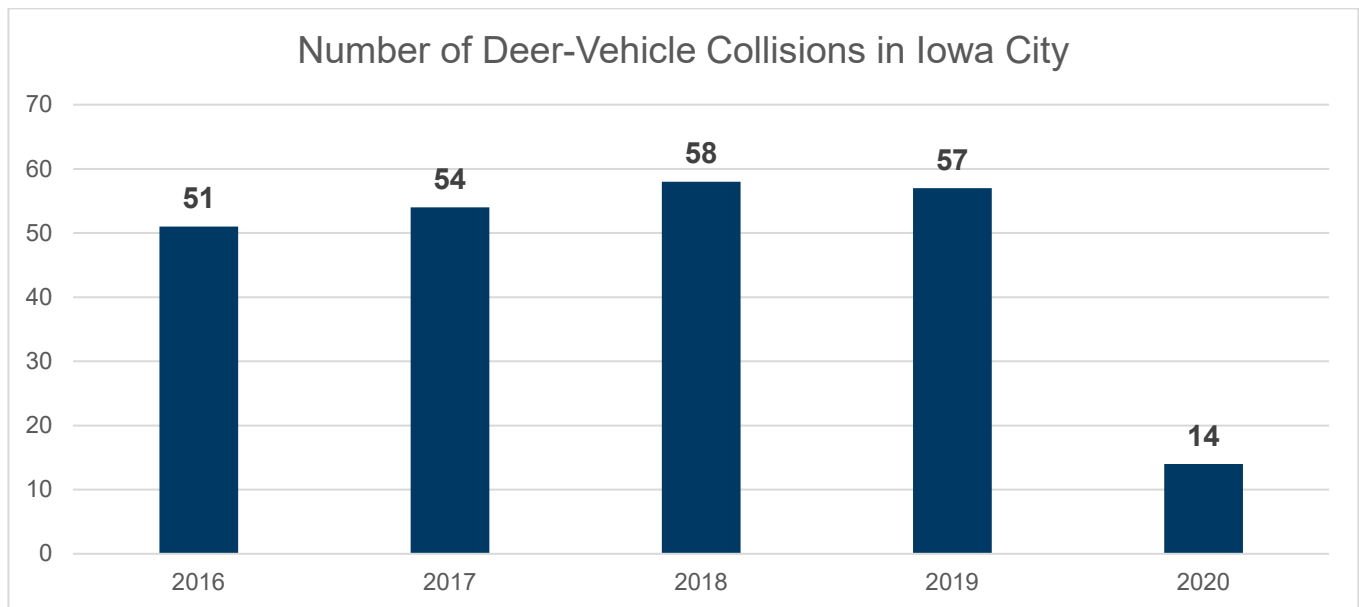
Members of the public are invited to provide ongoing input on the City's deer management activities by contacting City staff or City Council members. The City will report annually to City Council on deer management and population estimates for the remainder of the long-term deer management plan. Residents are invited to provide comments during this time or may address councilors during the public comment period at any regular City Council meeting.

DEER COLLISIONS & COMPLAINTS

Vehicle & Deer Collisions

Between January 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020, the Iowa City Police Department received 14 calls for service involving vehicular collisions with deer:

2020 Vehicle-Deer Collisions (Iowa City Police Department)		
Date	Location of Deer Collision	Total Estimated Damage
1/2/2020	Melrose Avenue	\$2,000
1/4/2020	State 1/Iowa 1 & US 218	\$3,000
1/13/2020	N Scott Blvd	\$1,000
9/28/2020	Muscatine Ave	\$2,000
10/4/2020	US 218/93.2 MM	\$8,000
10/24/2020	Interstate 80/I 80	\$4,000
11/2/2020	Interstate 80/I 80	\$5,000
11/2/2020	Interstate 80/I 80	\$5,000
11/3/2020	Interstate 80/I 80	\$3,000
11/7/2020	McCollister Boulevard	\$1,000
11/8/2020	US 218	\$7,500
11/20/2020	State 1/Iowa 1	\$1,500
12/1/2020	Mormon Trek Boulevard	\$1,500
12/3/2020	HWY 6 E / S Scott Boulevard	\$1,500



Deer-Related Calls and Complaints

Animal Services reported receiving three calls from residents regarding deer in 2020. All three complaints were related to intentional deer feeding. The City Manager's Office and City Council received three complaints regarding deer in 2020; two related to deer browsing and one reporting several deer in the roadway

NON-LETHAL DEER MANAGEMENT

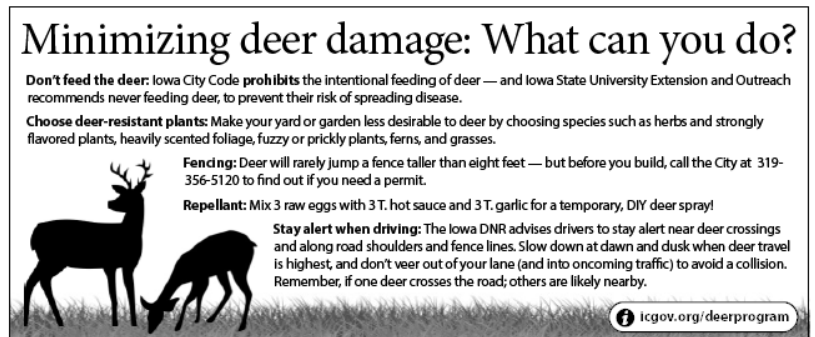
Iowa City's Long-Term Deer Management Plan includes a series of activities for the City to provide, consider, or develop. Below is a summary of non-lethal management activities implemented during 2020:

In August 2020, the City published comprehensive deer management related webpages at www.icgov.org/deerprogram, which includes:

- Background information and a historical timeline of deer-related issues in the community and the development and progress of the City's long-term deer management plan.
- Frequently asked questions
- Information on the 2020-2021 urban bow hunt
- Contact information for residents interested in submitting comments, complaints, or suggestions related to deer management.
- Links to harvest reports, aerial population surveys, related ordinances and other documents.
- A link to an Iowa DNR resource on tips for drivers to practice safe driving in areas populated by deer and avoid deer collisions.
- Guidance from the Iowa State University Extension recommending never feeding deer and tips on avoiding unintentionally feeding deer.
- Information on deer resistant plants and links to online resources providing lists, photos, and care information of deer resistant shrubs, plants, and flowers and a link to information and photos of landscaping design ideas to minimize deer damage.
- Information and links to photos of deer-resistant fencing and vegetative barriers.
- Information on using deer repellents and links to DIY homebrew deer deterrent recipes.
- Tips for living with deer and how to behave around deer.
- Information on deer scare tactics.

In September 2020, the City Council passed an ordinance which prohibits the feeding of deer, including both intentional feeding and placement of edible materials (including bird seed) which could be reasonably expected to result in deer feeding. The City issued a news release to notify residents after adoption of the ordinance.

In October 2020, a utility bill insert dedicated to minimizing deer damage was included with City water customers' utility bills. The insert included information on not feeding deer, the use of deer resistant plants, fencing, or repellants, and driving tips.



Minimizing deer damage: What can you do?

Don't feed the deer: Iowa City Code prohibits the intentional feeding of deer — and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach recommends never feeding deer, to prevent their risk of spreading disease.

Choose deer-resistant plants: Make your yard or garden less desirable to deer by choosing species such as herbs and strongly flavored plants, heavily scented foliage, fuzzy or prickly plants, ferns, and grasses.

Fencing: Deer will rarely jump a fence taller than eight feet — but before you build, call the City at 319-356-5120 to find out if you need a permit.

Repellant: Mix 3 raw eggs with 3 T. hot sauce and 3 T. garlic for a temporary, DIY deer spray!

Stay alert when driving: The Iowa DNR advises drivers to stay alert near deer crossings and along road shoulders and fence lines. Slow down at dawn and dusk when deer travel is highest, and don't veer out of your lane (and into oncoming traffic) to avoid a collision. Remember, if one deer crosses the road; others are likely nearby.

[icgov.org/deerprogram](https://www.icgov.org/deerprogram)

Currently, there are four Deer Crossing signs installed within Iowa City limits. These are located at Dubuque Street, north of Kimball Avenue; Dubuque Street, south of the I-80 bridge; Rochester Avenue, east of First Avenue; and Rochester Avenue, west of Scott Boulevard.

DEER DEPREDATION RESULTS

The [Long-Term Deer Management Plan](#) adopted by City Council and submitted to the Iowa NRC, included one year of professional sharpshooting a bow hunt in years 2020 – 2024.

2019 – 2020 Professional Sharpshooting

The City contracted with White Buffalo Inc., a wildlife management organization to conduct the 2019-2020 professional sharpshooting deer cull. White Buffalo Inc. provided a full report of the cull results in March 2020. Approximately 500 deer were harvested through the sharpshoot. The meat from the deer (estimated to be approximately 30,000 pounds) was tested for safety by the Iowa DNR and then processed and donated to local food banks.

2020 – 2021 Urban Bow Hunt

Iowa City's 2020 – 2021 bow hunt season began on October 1, 2020 and ended on January 10, 2021. The City of Iowa City accepted applications for bow hunters until October 20, 2020. Five hunters applied and were accepted for the hunt. All hunters held a valid DNR Hunting License, completed the required qualifications at Fin & Feather, and submitted the appropriate paperwork with the City regarding their hunt locations.

A total of 14 tags were purchased between the five approved hunters. Of those tags, three deer were harvested during the 2020-2021 urban bow hunt. All the deer were harvested on private property per the hunt rules.

DNR #	Doe	Button Buck	Total Harvest
48089628	1	1	2
670120278	1		1
3083128			0
1738095			0
4465621			0
Total deer harvested in 2020-2021 Iowa City urban bow hunt:			3

One reporting violation occurred in which two deer were reported to the state but did not get reported to the City. Contact was made with the hunter and it was determined to be a misunderstanding of the appropriate procedure. The forms were filled out when the mistake was identified for record-keeping purposes. No incentive buck tags were earned in Iowa City during this hunt. There were no complaints received regarding the deer hunt and no injuries reported.

The Iowa City Deer Friends filed a lawsuit against the City, alleging the urban bow hunt is illegal and requesting an immediate stay of the bow hunt program. The district court's initial ruling denied the stay and the final ruling rejected all claims of alleged illegality and dismissed the lawsuit.

AERIAL DEER SURVEY & DENSITY ESTIMATES

On January 27, 2021, the Iowa DNR conducted an aerial deer survey in Iowa City. The estimated average deer density is 14.04 deer per square mile in 2021, with 44.27 deer per

square mile the highest estimated density for any zone surveyed. The estimated deer density was 80 deer per square mile in 2018 with, based on a study conducted by White Buffalo Inc. The 2021 DNR Aerial Survey is attached.

Iowa City Aerial Deer Survey and Hunt Results 2021

Prepared by Andy Kellner, Iowa Department of Natural Resources

The table below shows results of deer observed by helicopter survey on January 27th, 2021 using a Hughes OH-6 helicopter operated by Bachman Aero. Observers were Steve Woodruff and Dave Nicholson with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Bureau. Conditions for the survey were very good in all habitat types flown. Snow depth was approximately 7” from fresh snowfall within 48 hours and few deer beds were observed. The sky was fair and there were light winds out of the north. Temperatures were between 18 and 20 degrees Fahrenheit. Some shadows were present but light conditions became more favorable as the survey progressed. The areas surveyed were flown along the contour or with transects and areas were circled if necessary when deer were spotted.

Results from this year’s aerial survey were compiled with results from historical survey data. This will help provide a baseline amount of information for the deer numbers in Iowa City and allow for observing trends in population in subsequent years. Additional survey methods or data sources are encouraged to help provide more information for deer trends going forward including tracking deer complaints, analyzing deer-vehicle collisions, and camera trap studies.

In the Iowa City Deer Management Zone (Zone 101), 14 of 75 or less than 19% of licenses were sold. Of those 14 licenses 3 antlerless deer were registered which is about a 21% success rate for hunters.

In the neighboring Coralville Deer Management Zone (Zone 10) 133 out of 200 urban archery licenses were sold. From those tags, 41 does were harvested as well as 3 button bucks. In the adjacent Coralville Perimeter Zone (Zone 25), 462 of 600 licenses were sold. From those, 140 does, 21 button bucks, 2 spike bucks, and 3 shed antlered bucks were reported to the DNR. This perimeter zone is a separate pool of antlerless tags that are good for a zone that encompasses land outside of Coralville and Iowa City limits. Those tags may be purchased for any of the regular statewide hunting seasons. A few more deer may have been harvested on regular season deer licenses, which cannot be separated at this level.

The continued annual harvest of does, in both the urban and perimeter zones, reduces potential deer numbers directly and indirectly through abated recruitment of fawns. It is likely that not all of these deer in the outside perimeter would have been permanently associated with Iowa City, but this reduction can keep deer numbers down and reduce the growth of the herd. There is a strong likelihood that deer are moving between Iowa City, Coralville, and areas outside of city limits. Increased use of the urban archery program in Iowa City will be required if it is desired to maintain deer numbers at the present level or lower. Recruiting, educating, and encouraging additional hunters for the urban program would help increase the harvest which would help the population remain near the present level.

Iowa City Aerial Surveys Deer Observed

Zone	Acres	Sq Miles	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2005	2007	2008	2021
A	1,398	2.18	37	60	74	64	29	76	71	170	80	15
B	669	1.05	69	154	81	33	30	30	19	5	2	3
C	808	1.26	78	90	99	39	36	60	43	46	33	30
D	1,489	2.33	65	127	140	38	25	100	88	65	36	103
E	958	1.50	0	0	7	12	0	12	9	41	19	21
F	1,594	2.49	11	15	48	42	15	74	65	80	32	19
G	993	1.55	3	0	4	0	0	0	5	43	35	13
H	1,187	1.85	6	31	48	24	23	42	6	53	26	20
I	1,239	1.94	49	79	197	99	43	169	109	101	39	15
Total			318	556	698	351	201	563	415	604	302	239

Iowa City Aerial Surveys Estimated Deer Density for Survey Zones

Zone	Acres	Sq Miles	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2005	2007	2008	2021
A	1,398	2.18	16.94	27.47	33.88	29.30	13.28	34.79	32.50	77.83	36.62	6.87
B	669	1.05	66.01	147.32	77.49	31.57	28.70	28.70	18.18	4.78	1.91	2.87
C	808	1.26	61.78	71.29	78.42	30.89	28.51	47.52	34.06	36.44	26.14	23.76
D	1,489	2.33	27.94	54.59	60.17	16.33	10.75	42.98	37.82	27.94	15.47	44.27
E	958	1.50	0.00	0.00	4.68	8.02	0.00	8.02	6.01	27.39	12.69	14.03
F	1,594	2.49	4.42	6.02	19.27	16.86	6.02	29.71	26.10	32.12	12.85	7.63
G	993	1.55	1.93	0.00	2.58	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.22	27.71	22.56	8.38
H	1,187	1.85	3.24	16.71	25.88	12.94	12.40	22.65	3.24	28.58	14.02	10.78
I	1,239	1.94	25.31	40.81	101.76	51.14	22.21	87.30	56.30	52.17	20.15	7.75
Average			23.06	40.47	44.90	21.89	13.54	33.52	24.16	34.99	18.05	14.04

Iowa City Aerial Survey Zone Map

