



INDIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

COMMON SENSE CONSERVATION SINCE 1938

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Contact:
Barbara Simpson, Indiana Wildlife Federation, 317.875.9453, simpson@indianawildlife.org

Indiana Wildlife Federation comments on HB1265 Hunting preserves

Indianapolis, Ind. (Jan 26, 2012) — This year in the Indiana State Legislature, HB1265 has been introduced to legalize hunting deer in fenced enclosures. This is not a new story in Indiana. Hoosiers have joined together in the past to soundly and vocally reject “canned hunting.”

We are once again asking all citizens to join the Indiana Wildlife Federation (IWF), the Indiana Division of the Izaak Walton League of America, Indiana Sportsmen’s Round Table (ISR), Indiana Deer Hunters Association, and many other conservation organizations that make up IWF and ISR to express their opposition to “canned hunting” in Indiana by calling or emailing their state Representative or state Senator, asking them to vote “no” on HB1265.

Canned hunting violates important ethical standards, impairs wildlife health, and threatens Indiana’s economy:

- Hunting captive deer that cannot escape from enclosed pens is a **violation of fair chase**. Allowing the hunting of captive deer undermines the long held wildlife management philosophy in Indiana that all **wildlife are held in public trust and managed by the state for all citizens**.
- **The health of Indiana’s wild deer herd is threatened when deer are held in high density populations.** Once disease occurs, it is transmitted more rapidly in confined areas than in the wild. In particular, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a contagious neurological disease that infects deer and other cervids, quickly spreads among captive herds. CWD is transmitted by animal to animal contact or animal to soil contact. Soil contaminated with CWD carries the disease vector, called prions, for years, and deer must be excluded from the area to avoid spreading the disease. **There is no cure for CWD. Death is always the result.** Healthy deer densities are 10-20 deer per square mile. Indiana’s deer density in some areas exceeds this target. If CWD were to occur in Indiana, it would likely spread quickly through our dense deer population. Bovine tuberculosis is also a disease of concern.
The transportation of deer to hunting preserves also contributes to health concerns. Hunting preserves often import deer from out of state to meet the demand for trophy bucks. If the deer carries CWD, the disease can jump to the receiving state. It only takes one

diseased animal to eventually affect a whole state. We do not want CWD to do to the Indiana deer herd what the emerald ash borer is doing to our ash trees.

- **Anything threatening Indiana's wild deer population would have a significant negative economic impact.**
 - **Deer hunting in Indiana contributes over \$400 million annually and supports >2300 jobs.** Over a quarter of that money is direct retail income to businesses.
 - **Additionally, CWD would cost the state a lot of money.** Surveillance programs that are in place must be dramatically increased. New disease management steps must be taken, including mandatory quarantining, whole herd depopulation and carcass disposal, and fencing of contaminated land to exclude all cervids.
 - In the past, federal funds have been available to assist with costs. However, the 2012 **federal budget for both CWD surveillance activities and the study of prion disease were cut.** The federal government views CWD as a **local and regional disease-spread issue and financial responsibility.** The Indiana Board of Animal Health has already experienced a reduction of federal funding to assist with CWD surveillance.
- **CWD is spreading around the country. If CWD infects Indiana's wild deer population, eradication is impossible and control is the best hope.**
 - **Seventeen (17) states now have CWD in wild deer and 11 states in captive populations,** with the states of Missouri and Maryland being added to the list in 2011; North Dakota and Virginia were added in 2010. All of these states believed they had the proper regulations in place to prevent CWD from affecting their herds.
 - The 17 states that now have CWD in captive or wild herds have **spent literally millions of dollars** of their state's natural resources budget to combat CWD. Wisconsin has now spent more than 50 million dollars, and CWD is spreading into additional counties every few years. Wisconsin predicts that eventually CWD will affect 40% of all adult deer in that state.
 - The North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission predicts that if their state gets CWD, it will lose from 35 to 54 million dollars in recreational economic activity each year.

Indiana cannot afford to gamble on a risky venture like canned hunting.

There are significant biological and economic issues at stake. There is also something more fundamental at stake and worthy of re-emphasis. Fair chase and wildlife held in trust for all citizens are long held tenets of our Indiana hunting tradition and wildlife management approach. Now is not the time to step away from those values and traditions.

In a 2007 survey conducted by the Indiana DNR Fish and Wildlife Division, when **deer hunters were asked their views on canned hunting, 73% responded they were extremely concerned or very concerned** compared to only 27% not concerned. The vast majority of sportsmen and women in Indiana do not support canned deer hunting.

We ask that once again the citizens of Indiana reject "canned hunting" and ask their legislators to vote "NO" on HB1265.

The Indiana Wildlife Federation is a statewide conservation organization dedicated to the wise use of Indiana's natural resources. We have stood for "common sense conservation" for over 70 years, since our founding in 1938. We focus our actions on what's good for Indiana's wildlife and wildlife habitat.

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