



INDIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

COMMON SENSE CONSERVATION SINCE 1938

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Let's can HB1265

Canned hunting, the practice of hunting animals living within fenced-in areas, 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, an American hunting tradition over a century old. Canned hunting 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.

Hunting ethics aside, canned hunting facilities pose significant threats to the health of Indiana's wildlife. These facilities keep wildlife in high densities. The denser a deer herd, the easier it becomes for catastrophic diseases, such as bovine tuberculosis and Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) to spread.

Despite best efforts of state agencies, Indiana has had outbreaks of bovine TB in deer and cattle in recent years. Further bovine TB outbreaks could jeopardize the Indiana beef producer industry.

A contagious neurological disease that infects deer and other cervids, CWD 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.

Though CWD has not been found in Indiana, it is in our backyard. Typically a concern for western states, CWD has been detected among wild white-tail deer in Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri and fifteen other states. CWD would quickly spread through Indiana's dense wild deer population.

If CWD hits Indiana's wild deer, Indiana would face enormous costs. DNR and the Board of Animal Health would have to dramatically increase their CWD surveillance programs in addition to organizing mandatory quarantines, depopulating herds, and disposing of carcasses. Federal funding for costly, yet essential, state disease surveillance programs was cut significantly this year, leaving local governments to foot the bill.

Wisconsin, for example, has spent over \$50 million trying to contain CWD, which continues to spread to new counties every year. They predict CWD will eventually affect 40% of all adult deer in the state.

The costs of containing CWD pale in comparison to the potential economic hit Indiana would take if our deer hunters could not carry out their pastime. Deer hunting contributes over \$400 million annually to Indiana's economy and supports more than 2300 jobs. Over a quarter of that money came in direct retail income to businesses. If we have to depopulate our deer herds because of a CWD outbreak, small, local businesses will suffer immensely.

And depopulation is the only option when CWD enters a population. There is no cure for the disease—death is always the result.

HB1265 would legalize canned hunting in Indiana and exempt patrons of these facilities from needing to obtain a hunting license to shoot captive deer. Other attempts to pass similar legislation have failed in the past, and there is nothing new in the bill that in any way makes canned hunting more palatable.

We need everyone, no matter how you feel about hunting, to educate your legislators about the dangers of canned hunting. Join the vast coalition of outdoors enthusiasts trying to put a stop to this reckless practice including the Indiana Wildlife Federation, Indiana Division of the Izaak Walton League of America, Indiana Sportsmen's Roundtable, Indiana Deer Hunters Association, and the dozens of IWF and ISR constituent groups.

Please take a stand against this unethical, reckless practice by calling or emailing your state Representatives and Senators, and tell them to vote "no" on HB1265 to protect Indiana's wildlife and economy.

Barbara Simpson
Executive Director, Indiana Wildlife Federation

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