

DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

June 8, 2026

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Background

- Ongoing discussion and monitoring since Feb. 2022
- Ordinance 47-23 was adopted by City Council at the Nov. 27, 2023, meeting
- ODNR presented to CSAC at the Nov. 25, 2024, CSAC meeting
- CSAC discussion at the February 11, 2025, meeting
- Data and benchmarking update at the Jan. 14, 2026, CSAC meeting
- February 10, 2026, review of the survey results and discussion with experts from Ohio State and Metro Parks
- March 9, 2026, comprehensive report from CSAC to City Council
- Council heard from local subject matter experts from Ohio State, Metro Parks and ODNR at its April 20 Work Session
- May 11, 2026, Council moved to direct staff to proceed with contract negotiations related to a deer management program

May 11, 2026, City Council Meeting

- Emphasized the need for transparency, education and a strong ethical foundation
- Noted the safety concerns and broader ecological impacts, such as damage to native plant species, effects on wildlife habitat and spread of ticks
- Stressed the importance of developing a clear public education and communications strategy
- Supported establishing a deer management program consisting of targeted removal by trained wildlife management professionals with the following goals:

Public Safety

- Reduce aggressive deer encounters
- Reduce deer/vehicle collisions or almost collisions
- Reduce the annual number of dead deer pick-ups

Environment

- Limit property and landscape damage

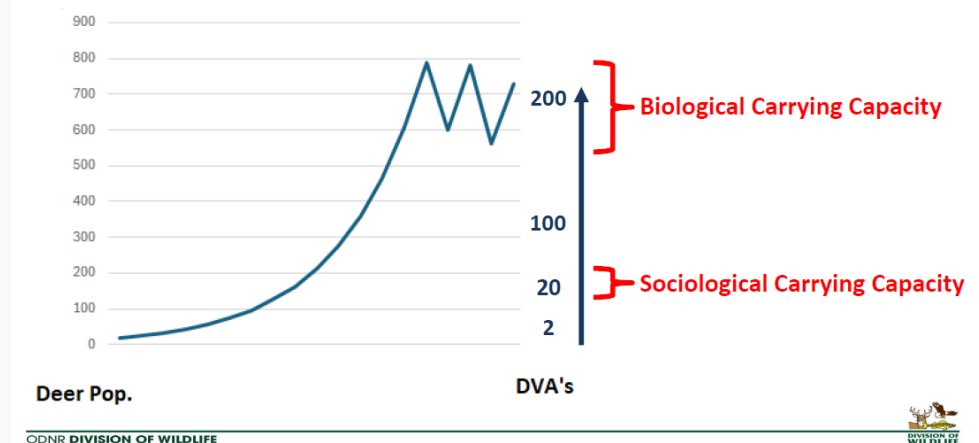
Ethics

- Reduce the number of resident complaints
- Reduce the deer population, as informed by an annual population index
- To advance this, Council unanimously moved to direct staff to proceed with contract negotiations related to a deer management program.

Defining Carrying Capacity

- Biological Carrying Capacity
 - Includes all elements, including food, water, cover and space required for a healthy wildlife population
 - When the number of deer exceeds what the landscape can support, the population will experience rapid reduction until it levels out
- Sociological Carrying Capacity
 - Occurs when residents and the community have reached their capacity for tolerating living with wildlife conflict
- Biological Benchmark
 - "A healthy population of deer is around 20-25 per square mile" (Capstone Report, 2023)
- Dublin – ODNR has advised that Dublin is not currently at biological carrying capacity
 - Absence of widespread disease, starvation, or a sustained rise in severe deer-vehicle collisions

How much is too much?



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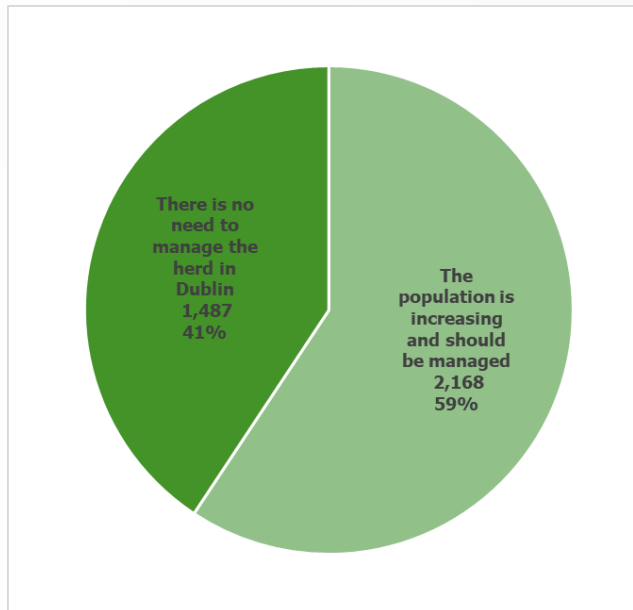
Aggressive Deer Incidents



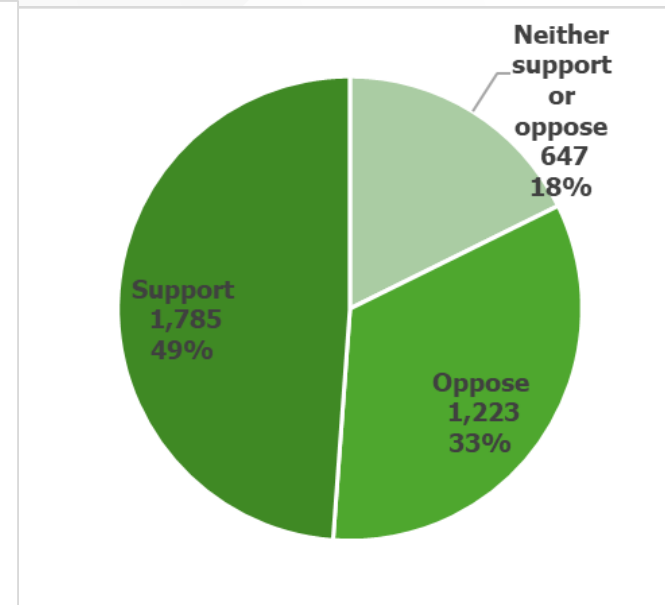
- Reported to the City
 - 20 reports of dog attacks and 35 reports of stalking/chasing in 2025
 - 3 reports in 2023; 4 in 2024
- Survey Results
 - 120 reports that a deer attacked, stomped, kicked, gored, head-butted, charged or otherwise injured a pet
 - 4 references to a pet being killed
 - 45 distinct references to deer chasing and/or stalking people
- Recent report of a deer striking a resident and chasing their dogs

Survey Results

4) Do you think the deer population in Dublin should be managed?



10) As the City of Dublin explores potential deer management options, what is your opinion about the use of lethal methods to regulate the local deer population, assuming regulations are established for safety?



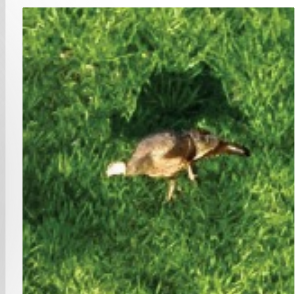
- Dublin survey launched on Jan. 6; open for approx. 7 weeks
 - 3,656 responses
 - Eleven contacts since the survey; nine support management

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Citywide Deer Population Index Survey

- Flew two drones in the evening from Friday, April 24 to Monday, April 27
- High-resolution thermal imaging drones flown in a systematic grid pattern
- Total of 528 deer counted, establishing a baseline population estimate
- Another data point to inform a decision and track progress
- Hotspots aligned with zones where DPD flew in February
 - Helps to inform removal location discussions



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Management Options – Non-Lethal

- Outdoor feeding prohibition (adopted by Dublin in 2023)
- Relocation program
 - ORC Chapter 1531: it is currently illegal to trap and relocate deer in Ohio
 - Causes potentially lethal levels of stress and can lead to disease spread
- Birth Control: surgical sterilization and contraceptives
 - Generally, only approved for research purposes
 - Limited effectiveness in an open herd
 - Do not reduce the existing population
 - Extends the lifespan of does

Management Options –Lethal



- Targeted removal
 - The City contracts with trained professionals
 - Professionals, in partnership with DPD, select removal sites
 - Operations conducted overnight
 - Quickest way to reduce the population
 - Deer can be picked up whole or field dressed and sent for processing
 - Processed venison can be donated to local food pantries
- Archery
 - Lower direct cost; high staff involvement
 - Oversight and permitting by DPD
 - Less effective at quickly reducing a population
 - Long-term, cost-effective management tool to complement a targeted removal program
- Food Pantry Support
 - Worthington - 4,200 pounds of venison donated
 - Dublin Food Pantry aware of ongoing discussions

Work Plan

USDA Responsibilities

- Coordination with the City of Dublin to inspect, propose and certify baiting and shooting zones to be used
- Acquire any necessary equipment
- Conduct removal of white-tailed deer from the City of Dublin using rifles equipped with noise-suppression devices
- Collect and transport intact deer carcasses to a predetermined facility to be processed by USDA staff
- Collect data; live weight, sex, age and/or fetus counts as requested
- Deliver deer to the processor/butcher the morning following removal efforts
- Conduct removal activities between November 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027. Every effort will be made to conduct removal activities during this time, but activities are contingent upon weather conditions and site availability. Up to 100 deer may be removed as part of the agreement. If 100 deer are reached before funds are expended, and USDA is available, an additional 25 deer may be removed. Any deer removal and the number of deer to be removed must be permitted by the Division of Wildlife prior to any action.

Dublin Responsibilities

- Obtain deer damage control permits issued by the Division of Wildlife and any other necessary authorization, naming USDA as the subpermittee
- Provide a project coordinator during all phases of the project that shall be present and reachable during removal activities
- Make available law enforcement during removal operations and in direct communications with USDA
- Obtain a processor for the processing and packaging of meat and provide USDA with its contact information
- Obtain a refuse company to collect and dispose of entrails resulting from USDA field dressing operations
- Arrange for the donation of the meat and provide USDA with that information
- Maintain records as required by the Division of Wildlife, reporting results to the Division of Wildlife and USDA upon completion of the program.

Agreement Summary

Mutual Responsibilities

- Perform the services set forth in the work plan. At any point during the term of the agreement, both parties may agree to amend, modify, add or delete services from the work plan.
- No equipment purchased will exceed \$5,000 per unit
- Coordinate before responding to media requests

Cooperator Responsibilities

- Authorize USDA to conduct activities as defined in the work plan.
- Exercise reasonable care to warn USDA of dangerous conditions or activities in the project area
- Reimburse USDA for costs, not to exceed \$110,608.38
 - If costs are projected to exceed this, an amended work plan and financial plan will be signed by both parties
- Make all payments within 30 days of receiving an invoice
- Provide a project coordinator who is reachable during all phases of the project
- DPD will help to verify that the operational area is closed end empty of visitors a half hour before removal operations begin
- DPD will be available and in direct communication with USDA during the operations
- Identify a processor for meat packaging and arrange for the donation of the meat
- Provide information on the processor and packaging to USDA and the Division of Wildlife

Agreement Summary

USDA Responsibilities

- Conduct activities at designated sites by providing qualified personnel and other necessary resources to implement the work plan
- Ensure actions comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act and other applicable federal statutes

Liability

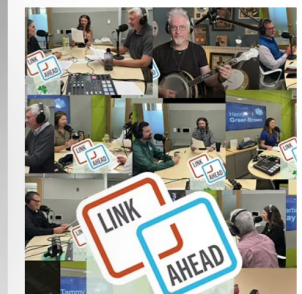
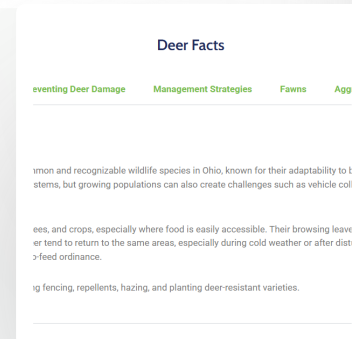
- USDA assumes no liability for actions or activities conducted under the agreement except to the extent that recourse or remedies are provided by Congress under the Federal Tort Claims Act
- Dublin assumes no liability for any actions or activities conducted under the agreement except to the extent that recourse or remedies are provided under the Political Subdivisions Tort Liability provisions of Chapter 2744 of the Ohio Revised Code

Duration, Revisions, Extensions and Terminations

- Agreement shall be effective from Nov. 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027
- Allows time for final invoicing to occur after operations end
- Changes must be agreed upon by both parties in writing
- Termination must be agreed upon by both parties, or by one party providing 30 days' written notice

Communications & Public Education

- C&M collaboration on a comprehensive public relations and information campaign
 - Three public education sessions
 - Proactive media outreach
 - City communications tools, including videos, podcasts, social media and handouts
- An ethics statement with input from Dr. Greg Hitzhusen, local expert



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Program Information



- Based on USDA staffing availability, they will remove 100 deer, with the option to remove an additional 25 if contract funds remain
 - Once a program begins, residents will experience deer differently
- Per the City's Code of Ordinances § 91.08(B) "no person shall hunt, kill or attempt to kill any animal or fowl by the use of firearms, air rifle or any other means within the corporate limits of the municipality."
- However, a codified exception exists via § 96.17(B)(1), which states, "no person in a park shall hunt.... Without a permit from the City Manager or designee other than by fishing."
- Given Dublin's extensive park system, it is anticipated that there are sufficient public locations available to meet the program's needs

Program Information (continued)

- Location selection – led by USDA
 - Ability to shoot from an elevated platform angled towards the ground or a “backstop” of terrain (i.e. hills), vegetation or other similar characteristics
 - Informed by drone survey results, crash data, dead deer pickups, and other data points
 - Staff will engage in conversations with Washington Township
- Baiting stations placed prior to operation start
- Removal operations occur after dark, when parks are already closed
- DPD assists with monitoring the area for pedestrian safety
- Operations may occur across multiple parks in a single evening
- For safety, exact dates/times/locations should not be made public
 - Signs will be posted several days in advance to remind parkgoers that operations may be occurring in the area
 - Notify nearby residents via a direct mailer

Program Information (continued)

- Processing – Thurn’s Specialty Meat
 - Processor for Metro Parks
 - \$130 per deer, estimated \$16,250 if 125 deer are removed
 - Located in South Franklinton neighborhood of Columbus - closer to Dublin, more efficient for transporting meat
 - Donations to the Dublin Food Pantry
- Total program cost is estimated to be \$168,263
- Includes DPD staffing, processing, USDA contract and entrail composting

Recommendation

Staff recommends adoption of Resolution 28-26 Authorizing the City Manager to Enter Into Contract with USDA APHIS-WS to Conduct a Deer Management Program.

Funding will be included in the Q3 Supplemental Request.