



QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Date: 15 April 2019
To: House Forestry, Parks and Outdoor Recreation Committee
From: Kip Adams, Director of Conservation
Re: Assembly Bill 39

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) I am writing to state our support for Assembly Bill 39 which would increase the penalties for the illegal taking of deer, by increasing the current 'wild animal protection surcharge' imposed by the court. The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. The QDMA has over 60,000 members nationwide and our membership includes hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals.

Wildlife is held in trust by the state for all of Wisconsin's citizens to enjoy. This public ownership of wildlife is an instrumental component of the successful North American Model for Wildlife Conservation. Ethical sportsmen created and have supported the North American Model for the past century. Unfortunately, unlawful activities with respect to wildlife contrast the Model, and illegally killing wildlife is nothing less than public theft.

Whitetails are the most popular big game animal in the U.S., and whitetail hunters are the foundation of the nearly \$67 billion hunting industry. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 9 of every 10 hunters (88%) pursue whitetails in Wisconsin, and over 895,000 hunters contribute more than \$4 billion annually to the state's economy.

Whether for viewing or hunting, white-tailed deer are captivating, and this is especially true for large-antlered bucks. Part of their appeal lies in their relative scarcity due to the difficulty of raising one to maturity. Many of these animals are taken prior to maturity by hunters, are involved in deer-vehicle collisions, or they succumb to disease or other mortality factors. Thus, the investment of time, sweat equity and monetary resources required to grow a mature deer is substantial. These resources are far greater than the current restitution value of a deer "stolen" by a poacher. The proposed increase in surcharge included in this legislation more closely resembles the fair market value of a white-tailed deer.

Assembly Bill 39 would help reduce the number of unlawful activities with respect to white-tailed deer poaching by allowing the court to assign an appropriate surcharge value based on the crime, and therefore will benefit the state, its wildlife and citizenry. We urge you to support Assembly Bill 39. Thank you for consideration of this matter and please contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Respectfully,

Kip Adams

Kip Adams
Director of Conservation