03-03-14

Antler Point Restrictions

Deer hunting pressure is extremely high in the Barron and Polk County areas. Gun and bow hunting pressure intensifies each year on both public and private lands. Unlike counties to the north, there is a limited amount of public hunting land. In addition, smaller tracts of privately-owned land dominate the landscape. Successful voluntary deer harvest management by hunters is very challenging and hunter opportunities to harvest bucks of all age classes are reduced.

At present, state law allows the harvest of any buck with at least one antler which is 3 inches or longer. We feel that the WI DNR should consider implementing Antler Point Restrictions (APR) as a deer management practice to protect a certain percentage of yearling bucks in the Barron and Polk County areas.

Suggested criteria for Antler Point Restrictions in the Barron & Polk County areas:

1.) bucks legal for harvest shall have a minimum of 4 legal points on one side
2.) does not apply to youth or disabled hunters
3.) 3-year trial period
4.) county/area/unit specific

Ideally, results would:

1.) protect approximately ½ of yearling bucks from harvest.
2.) include a harvest shift to does thus aiding in the improvement of buck/doe ratios
3.) create an increase in the number of bucks seen by hunters
4.) provide more opportunities for all hunters to maybe get a chance at a larger, more mature buck.

Key Points:

* 22 other states have used APR hunting methods, including Minnesota.
* hunters shooting sub-legal bucks was not a problem with APR in Pennsylvania.
* hunter recruitment/retention rates increased after APR implementation in Missouri.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Conservation Congress at its annual meeting held in Barron County, WI on April 4th, 2014 recommends that the Department of Natural Resources take action to correct this situation by introducing Antler Point Restrictions to deer hunting rule changes for the Barron and Polk County areas.

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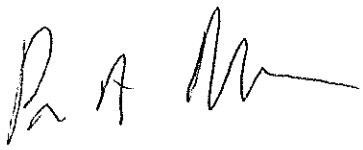

* Bestul, Scott (November 2012) "Antler Math" *North American Hunter,* p. 43-45