

# CONSERVATION AFFAIRS

By Larry Witte

The SCI-Michigan Involvement Committee (SCI-MIC) is comprised of representatives of the 11 Michigan SCI Chapters. Pledges provided by Michigan SCI chapters along with matching grants from SCI Foundation enable SCI-MIC to participate with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to provide funding support for a number of important wildlife activities and research projects.

## DNR WILDLIFE PROJECTS

### Predator-Prey Project

The purpose of this continuing research project is to assess the role of predation on newborn white-tailed deer fawns to estimate their survival and determine the cause of predation.

During the winter of 2010-2011 wildlife biologists captured, collared, and implanted 30 does and placed GPS collars on additional predators. Forty seven fawns were collared this spring. The project study is now moving from the "low snowfall zone" into the "mid snowfall zone" of the UP in the Crystal Falls area.

The following are some of the highlights of data collection to date:

- Of the 230 deer captured during 3 winter trapping sessions, 100 pregnant adult and yearling does were radio-collared and implanted
- 139 fawns were captured and radio-collared during 3 spring fawning seasons.
- Fawn birth weights were very different during the first two years of the project. Low birth rates were observed following a moderately severe winter and higher fawn weights following a mild winter.
- 92 fawn mortalities were investigated. This includes radio-collared fawns and kills made

*by GPS collared animals. Evidence suggests that coyotes and bobcats are important predators of fawns.*

- As of March 2011 researchers handled 52 black bear, 6 bobcats, 23 coyotes and 7 wolves.

Project partners include SCI-MIC, SCIE, Mississippi State University, Michigan Tech and DNR Wildlife Division.

## WOLF POPULATION PROJECT

The purpose of this continuing project is to monitor wolf population growth and expansion in order to defend removal of the wolf from the endangered list and provide for state management.

The DNR is optimistic wolves will be removed from the federal endangered list by the end of the year. This will provide the state with "lethal" control involving livestock predation. Hunting is not an option as wolves will be designated "NONGAME PROTECTED" by the State. In 2010 58 cattle, 9 sheep and a guinea hen were killed in confirmed wolf attacks. Animal rights groups could sue again. It took action by Congress as a rider in a budget bill to bar court room challenges involving wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains.

The northern Lower Peninsula wolf family (mother and 3 cubs) has provided a surprise. Mom is a wolf but apparently Dad was not. DNR will be able to manage these populations if the cubs are truly hybrids.

Project partners include SCI-MIC, Michigan Tech and DNR Wildlife Division.

## MOOSE HUNTING

The Moose Hunting Advisory Council established by the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) will recommend establishing a moose hunting season in the Upper Penin-

sula. The Council has agreed to file a report with the NRC endorsing a season in which 10 bull moose could be harvested. The objective of the hunt would be to allow a minimal harvest that would not damage the herd and would raise funds for more moose research. The hunt could take place in late October or early November in parts of Marquette, Baraga and Iron Counties which have a combined moose population of approximately 430 animals. Licenses would be awarded by lottery and expected to cost \$100.00.

## HUNTER HERITAGE LEGISLATION

This legislation signed on the 20th of July by Governor Rick Snyder allows children younger than 10 to hunt some types of game in Michigan under the supervision of an adult mentor. A mentor must be at least 21 with a hunting license and past experience. This new legislation will allow parents to decide when their kids are ready to enjoy the hunting experience. It provides another avenue for kids to get active in the outdoors while learning safety, ethics, conservation principles and natural resources values. Family hunting is expected to support hunter recruitment and retention.

## VOLUNTEER LEGISLATION

This legislation signed by Governor Rick Snyder on June 28 authorizes the DNR to appoint willing volunteers to help further improve the value of Michigan's natural resources and their recreational opportunities. The legislation expands DNR's ability to form working partnerships involving activities like wildlife habitat improvement, deer check stations, fish stocking, stream bank restoration, and etc. It provides the mechanism for hunting and outdoor recreationists to help with activities which otherwise may be neglected due to the states funding problems.

# NOTICE TROPHY RECORDS COMPETITION

## DEADLINE FOR AWARDS SELECTION

The deadline for submitting score sheets to be included in this year's Hunter's Convention Awards Program is **THURSDAY DECEMBER 1, 2011**

The period covered for the Awards is December 1, 2009 to December 1, 2011.

Remember! You must be a member when you shot the animal to be eligible for a major award. Once you are a member any animal you harvested can be entered in the cumulative record book. Spouses must have their own local membership to enter animals in the competition.

The only exception to the above rule is that children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews (under age 18) of active members may enter animals in the awards competition without being members themselves.

Send your entries to

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