



White-Tailed Deer in the Ardens

Frequently Asked Questions

Are Deer Really a Problem in the Ardens?

- Yes. The deer over-browsing in natural areas is extensive and limits vegetative growth as new seedlings do not mature. This leads to the loss of native plants which in turn causes soil erosion and allows invasive plants to take over.
- White-tailed deer serve as a host for the deer tick which is a carrier of Lyme Disease, which can spread to people and pets.
- Overpopulation is unhealthy for the deer themselves, as scarce food causes malnutrition that leads to health problems.
- Vehicle accidents involving deer are common and can result in injuries and damage.
- Deer frequently venture into residential yards to browse in gardens and landscape plants, which is frustrating and expensive for homeowners.

What is the Sunnyside Deer Management Plan?

- The purpose of the Plan is to provide an effective deer management strategy that supports long-term protection, preservation, and restoration of native vegetation, wildlife, and other natural features of our open space lands.
- The Plan calls for the removal of 12-15 deer from the Sunnyside Tract (located generally between the train tracks behind Sconset Road and I-95), in order to reduce the size of the herd. See the attached *2025 Ardentown Deer Management Plan* for more details.

Won't this be dangerous to residents?

- The controlled removal will take place over a two-day period in late fall 2025 and will be limited only to the Sunnyside Tract where there are no immediate residential neighbors. This will be archery only, led by experienced local Arden bowhunters working from elevated tree stands. *No firearms will be used at any time!* Notification of the event will be publicized to residents in advance. Entrances to the Sunnyside tract will be closed at the time of the event.

Can't the deer be controlled by non-lethal means?

- Deterrents such as fencing and repellents would be impractical and unmanageable in an area as widespread as the Ardens. Contraceptive measures have not been proven to be effective.

But I love the deer!

- Yes, of course! White tailed deer are a beautiful species and a fundamental part of the native fauna of this region and throughout the country. There is no thought of eliminating deer in the Ardens, only to reduce their numbers to balance the health of the herd with the health of the natural landscape. Overpopulation is not good for the deer themselves or the environment.



What happens to the deer that are harvested?

- The meat will be donated to local food banks, through an established network of participating butchers, food pantries and community centers across the region.

Has this type of deer removal been tried in other places?

- Yes, it is very common. Organized deer hunts are a routine and essential management practice in National Parks, State Parks, and other natural open spaces.
- There are many local examples, such as Bradywine Creek State Park, White Clay Creek State Park, Valley Forge National Park, and Rose Valley, (Delaware County), Pa, and numerous others. (See links below.)

For more information:

Delaware Dept. of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC):

Delaware's White-Tailed Deer

<https://dnrec.delaware.gov/fish-wildlife/hunting/white-tailed-deer/>

Delaware Deer Management Plan

<https://documents.dnrec.delaware.gov/fw/Hunting/Documents/Deer%20Plan%20-%20FINAL%2005212010.pdf>

Deer Hunting in Delaware State Parks

<https://destateparks.com/hunting/>

Delaware Hunters Against Hunger

<https://dnrec.delaware.gov/fish-wildlife/hunting/against-hunger/>

Audobon Society: *Surging Deer Populations Are a Crisis for Eastern Forests*

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/surging-deer-populations-are-crisis-eastern-forests>

Penn State University: *Issue: Deer Abundance*

<https://ecosystems.psu.edu/outreach/youth/sftrc/deer/issue-deer>

National Park Service: *How are White-tailed Deer Managed at Valley Forge?*

<https://www.nps.gov/vafo/learn/management/white-tailed-deer.htm>

Rose Valley Borough, Pa. Deer Management:

<https://www.delcotimes.com/2016/09/25/deer-bow-hunting-to-start-in-rose-valley/>

<https://www.rosevalleyborough.org/post/public-notice-rose-valley-deer-management-controlled-hunt>

NY State Dept. of Environmental Conservation: *Deer Overabundance and Impacts*

<https://dec.ny.gov/nature/animals-fish-plants/white-tailed-deer/deer-management-conflict-avoidance/overabundance>