

## Response to Deer Survey Report, No. 2

Written by Admin  
Monday, 13 December 2010 06:38 -

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From Glynn Harmon:

I have looked at Plateau Land and Wildlife Management's "Deer Survey Report and Management Recommendations for 78731 Zip Code, 2010" document. Although this survey is ostensibly thorough and rigorous and contains some sound data, the survey has a few flaws and appears to be based on some specious assumptions.

Here are some problems I have with the report:

1. Plateau Land and Wildlife Management appears to be located near Dripping Springs, which is much less urbanized than Austin and situated in the Hill country, where deer hunting is apparently more culturally acceptable. The report could thus be a bit biased in that regard, since Austin's culture seems to me (I am a 40 year resident) to be generally sympathetic to the plight of animals and an animal friendly city.
2. If deer murder is acceptable to the Austin City Council, the Humane Society of the US and the Society for the Prevention to Cruelty to Animals could make this more of a national issue. Companies considering relocating to Austin might thus be a bit discouraged about the area's "Red Neck" culture. The hard work of our Chamber of Commerce to attract business to Austin and to create jobs could be compromised. Can't we keep Austin weird by being deer friendly or at least enforce no feed, no kill policies?
3. The survey appears to have at least one major sampling bias in that deer migration could be a cyclical phenomenon. When deer populate Austin at the top of the cycle, it becomes all too easy to "manufacture" a crisis and to attempt to "manage" or "harvest" the deer population. Austin has recently experienced a drought, which can encourage deer to seek water and grass in places like 78731. Better time sampling could result in sounder statistical inferences from sample data about the overall situation through a longer time perspective.
4. Geographical statistical sampling appears to be another flaw in the Survey. For example, how are deer populations in Europe or elsewhere treated in a more humane fashion, I would hope, since Europe is an older civilization. As one who has lived all around the US and the Far East, and traveled extensively elsewhere, I have witnessed contrasting differences in how humanely animals are treated. It is the elephant poachers that Kenya authorities have had to arrest in recent years; elephants were not "over populating" human areas.
5. Are we setting a good example for our young children when we shoot or trap deer? Young children are vulnerable to cultural conditioning, and deer shooting can extend through as a custom through several generations. Do you want your children or grandchildren to kill or eat Bambi? I could not find where the report address this issue.

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6. If we shoot deer in one neighborhood, are we not chasing them into adjacent neighborhoods? This is analogous to blowing leaves from our yard onto a neighbor's yard.

7. The report asserts that deer can spread Lyme disease to justify shooting them. Lyme disease can be carried by several disease vectors--squirrels, cats, dogs, humans, etc. Does this logically mean that we should shoot these carriers? Is there sufficient data to demonstrate an increase in Lyme disease as a function of increased deer populations in 78731?

8. If the city of Austin wants to feed deer meat from "harvested" deer to needy humans, why should these needy people be given Lyme disease-infested meat if Lyme disease really constitutes a threat to human populations?

9. If there exists deer-human conflict, such as cars hitting deer, are the deer at fault or are humans at fault? Do we need more deer crossing signs or better driver education? Are some deer collisions the result of speeding or drunk car/pickup drivers?

10. Do deer serve a useful biological or ecological niche? To me they are beautiful works of art. Deer keep lawns mowed to some extent, despite the fact that they might feed on someone's tulips. Humans seem to me to be far more environmentally destructive than most animals.

11. Does the injunction "Thou shall not kill" or the Golden Rule apply only to humans?

12. Can sharp shooters who attempt to kill deer inadvertently miss or have a bullet ricochet into a car, yard, pet or human? Many of us exercise by walking in less populated areas during the day or at night. Although there might be a very low probability that a human or pet would be hit, who would be legally liable if this did occur?

13. Deer shooting does occur in 78731 already, especially late at night. Would the use of sharp shooters encourage such illegal deer shooting throughout Austin?

14. Are a majority of Austin tax payers willing to incur additional expenses to pay sharpshooters or to commission more studies like the survey discussed above? Are taxpayer funds better invested to solve more significant problems (e.g., drug gangs, crime, fire department funding, the homeless, streets, social services, animal shelters, parks, etc.)? {comments on}