

Restoration & Management Notes

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A forum for the exchange of news, views and information among ecologists, land reclamationists, managers of parks, preserves and rights-of-way, naturalists, engineers, landscape architects, and others committed to the wise stewardship of plant and animal communities.

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135 Deer, Wolf Decline Leads to Intensive Behavior Study (Minnesota)

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USDA-Forest Service researchers are studying the influence of forestry practices on white-tailed deer following a drastic decline in deer numbers in the Superior National Forest in northeastern Minnesota. In parts of this area, deer numbers have declined more than 80 percent to less than one deer per square mile, and appear to be far below carrying capacity. Deer are the principal prey of the threatened timber wolf in the region, and the deer decline has resulted in a substantial, though less drastic, decline in wolf numbers. As part of a study of the boreal ecosystem, we have trained eight female deer to tolerate our presence while they eat, sleep, travel, give birth, raise young, and elude predators. Bottle-fed as fawns, the radio-collared adult deer apparently view researchers as friendly, noncompetitive members of the herd. The deer roam freely, herding with wild deer in winter and establishing square-mile home ranges in snowfree seasons. Scientists quietly move and rest with the deer, working in shifts around the clock to determine how the deer use their forest environment in all weather and all seasons, how much the deer eat in each season, and which food they prefer.

Reference;

- Rogers, L. L., J. J. Mooty, and D. K. Dawson. 1981. Foods of White-tailed Deer in the Upper Great Lakes Region—A Review. USDA-Forest Service General Technical Report NC-65, 24 pp. USDA-Forest Service, North Central Forest Experiment Station, St. Paul, MN.