



NEW HAMPSHIRE BIG GAME PLAN

Species Management Goals and Objectives

2006-2015

CONTENTS

Click to skip to a section

Introduction and Background	2
White-tailed Deer	5
Moose	9
Black Bear	12
Wild Turkey	14
Appendices	17
1. Public Working Group Members	
2. Deer map	
3. Moose map	
4. Bear map	
5. Turkey map	

Introduction

This Big Game Plan represents the stated goals and objectives of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department for deer, moose, black bear and wild turkey management for the period January 2006 through December 2015. Our ability to achieve these goals and objectives is influenced by a variety of factors including the availability of human and technical resources, the accuracy of the wildlife information we gather, the level of support we receive from our constituents, the decisions made by the Fish and Game Commission, health and available habitat and even weather variables that influence wildlife reproduction, survival, and hunting season harvest rates.

Authorities

From a general perspective the Department, under statute RSA 207:58, is given guidance which states: “The legislature finds it is in the best interests of the state and its citizens to regulate, protect, restore, and conserve the wildlife resources of the state under a uniform scheme of management through the fish and game department. The general court further finds that it is in the best interest of the state and its citizens that the fish and game department recognize, preserve, and promote our special heritage of hunting, fishing, trapping, and wildlife viewing by providing opportunities to hunt, fish, trap, and view wildlife in accordance with title XVIII.”

Statutory authority for setting deer seasons is found in RSA 208:2 which states in part: “The executive director, after consulting with the commission, shall have the authority to open and close the seasons for the taking of wild deer, to fix the number and sex limitation for wild deer, and any other conditions governing the methods and manner of taking and reporting of the same, subject to ...”

Statutory authority for setting moose season is found in RSA 208:1-a which states in part: “No person shall hunt, take, or possess any moose or any part of the carcass of a moose taken in this state without first, obtaining a valid license for such activities from the department of fish and game. The executive director of fish and game, with the consent of the commission, may establish, by rules adopted under RSA 541-A, a hunting season for moose in any county of the state, or any portion thereof.”

Statutory authority for setting bear seasons is found in RSA 208:22 which states in part: “The executive director, with the consent of the commission, shall adopt rules, pursuant to RSA 541-A, relative to opening and closing the seasons for the taking of wild black bear, fixing the number of wild black bear that may be taken and any other conditions governing the methods and manner of taking and reporting of the same. The authority of the executive director as granted by this section may be exercised with reference to the state as a whole or for any specified county or part of a county.”

Statutory authority for setting turkey seasons is found in RSA 209:12-a which states in part: “The executive director shall adopt rules, pursuant to RSA 541-A, relative to: (a) Establishing seasons and bag limits, and issuing wild turkey permits. (b) Establishing registration stations and registration agent fees for wild turkey. (c) Specifying the methods for taking and registering wild turkeys. (d) The enhancement, protections, and propagation of wild turkeys.”

Process

New Hampshire's wildlife resources are held in trust by the state for the benefit of our citizenry. Therefore, it is important that wildlife management plans incorporate public input and to the degree practicable are consistent with public desires. Our first big game management plan spanned the period 1997 through 2005. Information considered in the formulation of that plan included a comprehensive public survey, eight public listening sessions, questionnaires from attendees of three public hearings and results from two 1-day stakeholder meetings.

This Big Game Management Plan was formulated over the course of 10-months, by a group of approximately 30 key wildlife stakeholders identified by the Fish and Game Department and referred to as the Big Game Public Working Group (PWG) ([see appendix 1 for a list of Public Working Group members and their affiliations](#)). Baseline information used by the PWG included results from a comprehensive public survey of randomly selected New Hampshire citizens and the most comprehensive species assessment reports ever written by Fish and Game Department staff. The process entailed monthly daylong meetings during which staff presented species information and answered questions. The PWG then proceeded to identify and rank key management issues and to promulgate regional species goals and objectives. All PWG meetings were professionally facilitated. Upon completion of the draft plan, the PWG received and considered staff comments, considerations and concerns. The draft plan will be subject to 4 one and one-half hour open house sessions held in Concord and Lancaster. Following incorporation of public input, the final draft plan will be submitted to the Executive Director of the NH Fish and Game Department and the NH Fish and Game Commission for their final review and approval.

Implementation

This plan will serve as the basis for deer, moose, bear and turkey management in New Hampshire for the next 10-years. Regional population objectives will serve as operational targets for Fish and Game biologists, as they strive to achieve desired population levels over the course of the 10-year period. It is important to note that strategies (e.g. the number of days of either-sex hunting for deer, the timing and length of bear seasons, the number of moose permits issued, and the turkey hunting season framework) will continue to be subject to public input through our biennial season-setting process as described in RSA 541-A. This process includes informal and ongoing dialogue with user groups and a very formal process which involves public hearings and the incorporation of verbal and written public comment. These strategies will be used to achieve our population objectives, as defined in this Big Game Plan. Readers should note that this approach is not new; we have been using the 1997-2005 plan for the past 7 years. Based on the statistical variability of the various indexes used to monitor population levels, it was determined that population levels at +/- 12.5% of the stated population objective would be considered "at goal", and not require a management action intended to make a population adjustment. This will help to stabilize season structure once the population objectives are reached. This approach reduces annual or biennial adjustments which might be needed to affect small adjustment, and will improve hunter satisfaction. Our intent is to review hunting season structure every two years through biennial season setting. However, if severe winter weather or other unpredictable events occur which require immediate action, seasons may be adjusted annually. In the worst case scenario, where conditions create a short-term vulnerability which is unacceptable, emergency closure will be implemented.

The primary advantage of long-term planning is that it provides consistency of mission. That is, it allows the Department to focus its limited resources on specific goals and objectives over an extended period of time. This approach preempts false starts, unscheduled reversals of direction, changes in data needs, and other unproductive resource expenditures that can result from unclear or changing management mandates. Generally speaking, big game management goals and objectives are best achieved through slow, steady, consistent movement. Thus, management plans serve the greater good by defining long-term goals and objectives, providing for management and data consistency, and minimizing resource waste.

Limitations

Wildlife diversity, viability and abundance depends on diverse and abundant wildlife habitat. Protection and/or management of wildlife habitat benefits a myriad of species, including moose, deer, bear and turkey. Management of game populations at levels identified in this plan will protect and achieve diverse cultural, recreational, economic and ecological values for the significant benefit of New Hampshire's citizenry. The effects moose and deer can have on habitat structure, and thereby suitability for other species and uses, was a major topic of discussion during the objective setting component of those species plans. The population goals set for those species reflect the group's best effort to balance the economic and recreational value of higher populations with the resulting economic and ecological consequences.

According to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, *“New Hampshire has been the fastest-growing state in New England – and in the entire nine-state Northeast region - for four straight decades.”* In addition *“New Hampshire has lost forest and cropland to development at a rate of more than 20,000 acres per year in the past five years”*.

Human population growth and development threatens New Hampshire's wildlife resources by diminishing and/or degrading our habitat base and in the case of big game species, by limiting (due to sprawl and fragmentation) our ability to effectively manage game populations. Thus, unbridled development threatens our ability to achieve the goals and objectives identified in this plan. While it is beyond the scope of this plan to resolve all the challenges posed by existing trends in New Hampshire's human population, it is important for us to acknowledge that these challenges are daunting, and that many of the wildlife goals, objectives and values we ascribe to in New Hampshire are imperiled by these trends. Despite and because of these challenges, the Fish and Game Department will continue to work in partnership with local, regional and statewide land conservation interests, by providing technical and financial assistance when possible, to protect significant wildlife habitat.

WHITE-TAILED DEER

New Hampshire’s statewide deer population estimate is approximately 77,000 animals. If the Department is successful in reaching all the Wildlife Management Unit objectives identified in this plan, the deer population will approach 98,000 deer (a statewide increase of 27%). The Department anticipates it will take from 5 to 10 years to achieve these objectives, and/or to determine whether they are achievable. If achieved, New Hampshire will still have one of the lowest density deer herds in the eastern United States. This is the result of balancing low soil productivity (and therefore potential to carry deer on the landscape), the public’s desire for a deer population with certain age and sex ratio characteristics, and known impacts deer can have on habitat for other species.

Goal 1: NH will regionally manage white-tailed deer populations by balancing and incorporating social, economic, ecological and public safety factors using the best available science/knowledge.

Objectives: Population objectives are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Deer population objectives by wildlife management unit (WMU) expressed in terms of adult (1 ½ years old and older) buck kill during the fall hunting seasons.

WMU*	CURRENT LEVEL ¹	1997-2005 OBJECTIVE	2006-2015 OBJECTIVE ²	MANAGEMENT ACTION REQUIRED ³
A	310	335	335	None
B	120	125	125	None
C1	52	99	100	Increase
C2	69	125	125	Increase
D	553	788	790	Increase
E	56	188	100	Increase
F	60	167	150	Increase
G	339	532	530	Increase
H1	362	464	460	Increase
H2	534	799	750	Increase
I1	165	331	330	Increase
I2	174	360	360	Increase
J1	241	487	375	Increase
J2	809	938	940	Increase
K	585	734	735	Increase
L	538	561	525	None
M	719	535	535	Decrease

* [See Appendix 2 for a map of Deer Wildlife Management Units](#)¹ – A 2-year average of adult buck kill during the hunting seasons is used as the index to deer populations. This “Current Level” is the average of 2003 and 2004 adult buck kills.

² – Population objectives will be achieved when the adult buck kill is within plus or minus 12.5% of the specified objective.

³ – If the “Current Level” is $\pm 12.5\%$ of the 2006-2015 objective no management action is required, others are as indicated.

Table 2. Deer population objectives by wildlife management unit (WMU) expressed in terms of buck kill per square mile of habitat.

WMU	CURRENT LEVEL	1997-2005 OBJECTIVE	2006-2015 OBJECTIVE ¹	MANAGEMENT ACTION REQUIRED ³
A	0.56	0.61	0.61	None
B	0.37	0.38	0.38	None
C1	0.27	0.51	0.51	Increase
C2	0.30	0.55	0.55	Increase
D	0.84	1.20	1.20	Increase
E	0.08	0.27	0.15	Increase
F	0.13	0.37	0.33	Increase
G	0.55	0.86	0.86	Increase
H1	0.96	1.23	1.21	Increase
H2	0.82	1.23	1.16	Increase
I1	0.50	1.01	1.01	Increase
I2	0.49	1.01	1.01	Increase
J1	0.55	1.12	0.86	Increase
J2	1.09	1.26	1.27	Increase
K	1.00	1.26	1.26	Increase
L	1.30	1.35	1.26	None
M	1.35	1.00	1.00	Decrease

¹ – Population objectives will be achieved when the adult buck kill is within plus or minus 12.5% of the specified objective.

² – Change in Objective refers to the difference between the objective set in the 1997-2005 plan and this 2006-2015 plan.

³ – If the “Current Level” is $\pm 12.5\%$ of the 2006-2015 objective no management action is required, others are as indicated.

Objective for WMUs A and B: The objective for these units is to maintain deer populations at approximately the current level since the quantity and quality of available natural deer wintering habitat is such that it appears to be at it’s long-term ability to sustain the current population.

Objective for WMUs C1 and C2: The objective for these units is to increase deer numbers approximately 86% from current levels. Current densities are relatively low and winter habitat is capable of supporting higher deer numbers.

Objective for WMU D: The objective for this unit is to increase deer numbers 43% from current levels. Both summer and winter habitat is capable of supporting these densities and the potential for human/deer conflicts is relatively low.

Objective for WMU E: The objective for this unit is to increase deer numbers 79% from current levels. The unit comprises the central White Mountain area and while winters are severe and habitat productivity relatively low, current deer densities are also low and habitat is capable of sustaining higher deer numbers.

Objective for WMU F: The objective for this unit is to increase deer numbers 154% from current levels. While also including significant portions of the White Mountains, this unit also has areas with less severe winters and better habitat productivity than WMU-E.

Objective for WMUs G and J1: The objective for these units is to increase deer numbers 56% from current levels. These units lie in central NH south of the White Mountains and currently have similar deer densities with adequate habitat capabilities and low potential for human/deer conflicts.

Objective for WMU H1: The objective for this unit is to increase deer numbers 26% from current levels. The quality of the habitat, less severe winters, and low potential for deer/human conflicts indicate an increase of this magnitude is within the unit's long-term habitat carrying capacity.

Objective for WMU H2: The objective for this unit is to increase deer numbers 41% from current levels. The current population level is somewhat below that in WMU H1. Habitat quality and human population density in this region indicate that this increase will be socially acceptable and within the habitat's capability.

Objective for WMUs I1 and I2: The objective for these units is to increase deer numbers approximately 104% from current levels. Current deer densities are lower than other portions of central New Hampshire and the habitat is capable of supporting increased deer numbers.

Objective for WMUs J2 and K: The objective for these units is to increase deer numbers approximately 21% from current levels. While providing generally good habitat quality and with milder winters than areas further north, these units also have a higher potential for deer/human conflicts due to development and human population increases. Modest increases in deer numbers are believed acceptable.

Objective for WMU L: The objective for this unit is to maintain the population at approximately its current level. The habitat is capable of sustaining current deer numbers but in light of the increasing development and human population, increasing deer numbers above current levels could increase the potential for deer/human conflicts to unacceptable levels.

Objective for WMU M: The objective for this unit is to decrease deer numbers 26% from current levels. The southeast portion of New Hampshire continues to exhibit the highest levels of human population growth and development. The potential for deer/human conflicts and socially unacceptable high deer densities are greatest in this portion of the state.

Goal 2: The NH deer population will be managed to maintain a desirable age and sex composition.

Objective 2-1: Manage regional deer populations to ensure that yearling males don't exceed 50% of the adult male population.

Objective 2-2: To the extent this does not conflict with the male age distribution objective above, manage deer populations to achieve a balanced sex ratio of adult does to adult bucks.

Goal 3: NH deer will be managed at levels within the carrying capacity of suitable habitat without supplemental feeding programs, while maintaining animal and plant biodiversity.

Goal 4: The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department will work alone and in partnership with state, federal, and public and private partners to minimize the loss of critical deer habitat and to conserve, protect and enhance deer habitat on state, federal and private lands, through education and through the expenditure of technical and financial resources.

Objective 4-1: Identify critical deer habitat to facilitate protection and to educate landowners and other land stewards.

Objective 4-2: Promote use of the Department GIS Coarse Filter habitat identification capabilities.

Objective 4-3: Assist local, state, federal and private conservation groups and organizations to protect, conserve and manage critical deer habitat.

MOOSE

As of 2005, the estimated statewide moose population was 6,400 animals. If all the population objectives in this plan are achieved (including the proposed reduction of up to 30% in the new Connecticut Lakes Region) approximately 6,100 moose will reside in New Hampshire. This represents a net state-wide reduction of approximately 5%. Because the proposed reduction in moose numbers in the Connecticut Lakes region will be implemented in incremental steps, achievement of that specific objective will occur earlier than the tail-end of this 10-year plan.

Goal 1: New Hampshire will regionally manage moose populations by balancing and incorporating social, economic, public safety and ecological factors, using the best available science.

Objectives: Population objectives are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Moose population objectives by management region expressed in terms of moose seen per 100 hunter hours from the deer hunter mail survey.

REGION ¹	CURRENT LEVEL ²	1997-2005 OBJECTIVE	2006-2015 OBJECTIVE	MANAGEMENT ACTION REQUIRED ³
Conn. Lakes (A1, A2)	10.59	8.63	7.4 ⁴	Decrease
North (B, C2, D1)	6.35		6.0	None
White Mtn. (C1, D2, E1, E2, E3, F)	2.39	3.94	3.0	Increase
Central (G, H1, I1, I2, J1, J2)	1.64	1.50	1.5	None
South West (H2, K)	0.95	1.34	1.3	Increase
South East (L, M)	0.60	0.50	0.5	Decrease

¹ – Note that in the 1997-2005 management plan, Units A1, A2, B, C2, and D1 were combined as the North region. [See Appendix 3 for moose units and regions.](#)

² – A 3-year average of moose observation rates is used as the index to moose populations. This “Current Level” is the average of 2002-2004 moose observation rates.

³ – If the “Current Level” is $\pm 12.5\%$ of the 2006-2015 objective no management action is required, others are as indicated.

⁴ – This represents the full 30% reduction, see objective 1-1 below.

Objective 1-1: In the Connecticut Lakes Region (WMUs A1 and A2), reduce the population by up to 30% by 2015 to obtain a population density of 7.4 moose seen per 100 hunter hours. It is felt that a population reduction would help reduce browse impacts without significantly impacting viewing or hunting opportunities.

The reduction should occur in 10% increments at three-year intervals. It is anticipated that implementation of the Connecticut Lakes Timber Company Stewardship Plan will result in enhanced moose habitat carrying capacity in the region. Implementation of the Stewardship Plan and its affect on moose habitat will be monitored at each 3-year interval to help assess subsequent moose population objectives in this region. At each 3-year interval, public input will also be sought to assist moose management decision-making.

Objective 1-2: In the North Region (WMUs B, C2 and D1), maintain the moose population at a density of 6.0 moose seen per 100 hunter hours. This moose population will maintain satisfactory viewing and hunting opportunities without impacting regeneration or causing an increase in vehicle collision rates.

Objective 1-3: In the White Mountains region (WMUs C1, E, F and D2), reduce the population density objective to 3.0 moose seen per 100 hunter hours. This reduction will help reduce vehicle collision rates without causing a serious reduction in viewing or hunting opportunities.

Objective 1-4: In the Central region (WMUs H1, I1, I2, J1, J2 and G), retain the current objective of keeping the moose density at 1.5 moose seen per 100 hunter hours. The current density provides good hunting and viewing opportunities without causing high vehicle collision rates or browse levels.

Objective 1-5: In the Southwest region (WMUs H2 and K), meet the 1995 objective of increasing the moose population to 1.3 moose seen per 100 hunter hours. It's anticipated that this population increase will increase viewing and hunting opportunities without adversely impacting vehicle collision rates. Brain worm and relatively high ambient temperatures may complicate efforts to reach this objective.

Objective 1-6: In the Southeast region (WMUs L and M), maintain the moose density at 0.5 moose seen per 100 hunter hours. The high human population densities in this region are considered to be incompatible with a higher moose population due to increased opportunities for human/moose interactions.

Objective 1-7: The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department will Cooperatively work with the Department of Transportation, the Department of Safety, local law enforcement interests and other organizations, on laws, road design and educational programs designed to reduce wildlife/vehicle collisions.

Goal 2: New Hampshire residents and visitors will understand, appreciate and value moose in New Hampshire.

Objective 2-1: The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department will continue to use the educational and communication tools at its disposal to encourage people to drive safely in moose country, to view moose safely and to value and live with moose.

Objective 2-2: The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department will seek to educate and inform the motoring public about the risks, causes, and avoidance of moose/vehicle collisions to make our roads safer for wildlife and people.

Goal 3: New Hampshire residents and visitors will understand the role of Moose in New Hampshire's ecosystems.

Objective 3-1: The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department will continue to use the educational and communication tools at its disposal to help people learn how to: live with moose, view moose safely, drive safely in moose country, and value, protect and manage moose habitat.

Goal 4: The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department will work alone and in partnership with state, federal, and public and private partners to minimize the loss of critical moose habitat and to conserve, protect and enhance moose habitat on state, federal and private lands, through education and through the expenditure of technical and financial resources.

Objective 4-1: Identify critical moose habitat to facilitate protection and to educate landowners and other land stewards.

Objective 4-2: Promote use of the Department GIS Coarse Filter habitat identification capabilities.

Objective 4-3: Assist local, state, federal and private conservation groups and organizations to protect, conserve and manage critical moose habitat.

BLACK BEAR

Upon conclusion of 2004 bear season, there was an estimated 5,100 black bears in the state of New Hampshire. This represents a 33% increase over the 1990 bear population estimate of 4,000 bears. If the objectives of this plan are achieved, there will still be roughly 5,100 bears (no net change) in New Hampshire, although the regional density of bears will have changed. Past experience suggests that it will take from 5 to 10 years to achieve the objectives specified in this plan.

Goal 1: New Hampshire will regionally manage bear populations by balancing and incorporating social, economic, public safety and ecological factors, using the best available science.

Objectives: Population objectives are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Black bear population objectives by management region expressed in terms of estimated bear density in number per square mile.

REGION*	CURRENT LEVEL ¹	1997-2005 OBJECTIVE	2006-2015 OBJECTIVE	MANAGEMENT ACTION REQUIRED ²
North (A, B, C2, D1)	0.63	0.56	0.6	None
White Mtn. (C1, D2, E, F)	0.95	0.72	0.8	Decrease
Central (G, I1, J1, J2)	0.48	0.31	0.6	Increase
South West-1 (H1, I2)	0.70	0.30	0.5	Decrease
South West-2 (H2, K)	0.37	0.30	0.5	Increase
South East (L, M)	0.15	Low	0.2	Increase

*[See Appendix 4 for map of bear Wildlife Management Units and regions.](#)

¹ – Five-year age/sex data averages and 3-year deer hunter mail survey observation rate averages are used as the index to bear populations. This Current Level is the estimated 2004 bear density from model using 2000-2004 age/sex data and 2002-2004 observation rates from the deer hunter mail survey.

² – If the “Current Level” is $\pm 12.5\%$ of the 2006-2015 objective no management action is required, others are as indicated.

Objective for the North Region: The bear population objective in the North Region will remain relatively consistent and represents an effort to stabilize the population at current levels.

Objective for the White Mountains Region: This objective represents a modest (16%) reduction in the current estimated density.

Objective for the Central Region: This objective represents a 25% increase from the current estimated density based on the view that habitat quality and public interest warrant expanded bear numbers.

Objective for the Southwest-1 Region: The population objective in the Southwest-1 Region represents a 29% reduction from the current estimated density.

Objective for the Southwest-2 Region: The population objective in this region represents a 35% increase in the current density. This objective reflects the expressed desire of the PWG to have more bears in the region because of high quality habitat and strong public interest.

Objective for the Southeast Region: This objective represents a 33% increase from the current density estimate but continues to reflect a desire to maintain a low density in this urban region of the state.

Goal 2: The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department will implement public education efforts so that residents and visitors understand and appreciate black bears, and are familiar with methods to minimize bear/human conflicts.

Objective 2-1: To communicate critical messages to residents and visitors using mass media and face-to-face interaction.

Goal 3: New Hampshire residents and visitors will strive to minimize conflicts between bears and humans, using widely recognized practices endorsed and recommended by the Fish and Game Department.

Objective 3-1: To minimize bear complaints with success measured in the context of increased human population growth and on the basis of a reduced need to respond to complaints or invest in mitigation.

Goal 4: The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department will work alone and in partnership with state, federal, and public and private partners to minimize the loss of critical bear habitat and to conserve, protect and enhance bear habitat on state, federal and private lands, through education and through the expenditure of technical and financial resources.

Objective 4-1: Work with NH Dept. of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration to identify, maintain and improve connectivity across major roads that intersect important and extensive documented bear habitat.

Objective 4-2: Promote use of the Department GIS Coarse Filter habitat identification capabilities.

Objective 4-3: Assist local, state, federal and private conservation groups and organizations to protect, conserve and manage critical bear habitat.

WILD TURKEY

There are significant differences in the population attributes of deer, bears and moose, as compared to wild turkeys. Large mammals have relatively modest reproductive rates and relatively high survival rates, as compared to turkeys. From a population dynamics perspective they are referred to as k-selected species. Unlike large mammals, wild turkeys are prone to dramatic fluctuations in reproduction and survival, and are referred to as r-selected species. Because of these characteristics, managers have less control over turkey populations than over large mammals. Simply stated, factors other than hunting heavily influence the rate and direction of turkey population change. As a result, wildlife managers can facilitate turkey population change, but don't precisely control it over the short-term. Our general posture is to facilitate turkey population growth by establishing conservative hunting frameworks. When turkey populations reach certain threshold values, we are then afforded the opportunity to liberalize turkey hunting seasons to take advantage of additional recreational and economic value.

During the fall of 2004, there were an estimated 26,000 turkeys in New Hampshire. This reflects a 10-fold increase in statewide turkey population since 1989. While it is impossible to quantify at this point in time, the department anticipates continued slow growth in our statewide population over the next 10-year period. This plan facilitates turkey population growth in 11 Wildlife Management Units, which have not yet met the threshold for liberalized seasons (the Department has set that threshold at 0.5 spring birds harvested per square mile of turkey habitat). The capacity for continued turkey population growth in these units is unknown. Six other units are identified as candidates for liberalized seasons due to their strong existing populations.

Goal 1. NH will regionally manage turkey populations by balancing and incorporating social, economic and ecological factors using the best science available.

Table 1. Wild turkey population status by wildlife management unit (WMU), expressed in terms of spring kill per square mile of forested land below 2,500 feet in elevation.

WMU*	CURRENT LEVEL ¹	1997-2005 OBJECTIVE	2006-2015 OBJECTIVE	HUNTING STRATEGY ²
A	N/A	None		None
B	0.07	None	≥0.07	Maintain
C1	0.09	None	≥0.09	Maintain
C2	0.14	None	≥0.14	Maintain
D1	0.53	None	≥0.50	Liberalize
D2	0.68	None	≥0.50	Liberalize
E	0.09	None	≥0.09	Maintain
F	0.19	None	≥0.19	Maintain
G	0.41	None	≥0.41	Maintain
H1	0.88	None	≥0.50	Liberalize
H2	0.60	None	≥0.50	Liberalize
I1	0.50	None	≥0.50	Liberalize
I2	0.49	None	≥0.49	Maintain
J1	0.34	None	≥0.34	Maintain
J2	0.29	None	≥0.29	Maintain
K	0.56	None	≥0.50	Liberalize
L	0.25	None	≥0.25	Maintain
M	0.18	None	≥0.18	Maintain

*See Appendix 5 for map of turkey Wildlife Management Units.

¹ – A 2-year average of spring kills per square mile is used as the index to turkey population.

This “Current Level” is the average of 2003 and 2004 spring kill per square mile.

² – If the “Current Level” is less than 0.50 birds killed /square mile the strategy is to Maintain current hunting seasons designed to allow potential growth. If the “Current Level” is at or above 0.50 birds killed/square mile hunting seasons could be Liberalized to increase take.

Objective 1-1: (WMUs A, B, C1, C2, E, F, G, I2, J1, J2, L and M): Accommodate turkey population growth. If populations reach or exceed spring harvest densities of 0.50, then consider liberalizing seasons to maximize recreational values and to stabilize population growth.

Objective 1- 2: (WMUs D1, D2, G, H1, H2, I1 and K): Sustain spring harvest rates at or above 0.5 birds per square mile. These are our most productive turkey management units. They have the immediate potential for sustained high turkey populations, and provide the best opportunity for additional harvest.

Goal 2: The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department will work alone and in partnership with state, federal, public, private or other conservation partners to minimize the loss of critical turkey habitat and to conserve, protect and enhance turkey habitat on state,

federal and private lands, through education and through the expenditure of technical and financial resources.

Objective 2-1: Encourage active turkey habitat management on state, federal and private lands, by the provision of information, technical services, and financial resources and by partnering with other land management interests and turkey stakeholders.

Objective 2-2: Reduce mowing impacts on turkeys and other ground nesting birds through targeted education, and the development of techniques designed to minimize mowing losses.

Goal 3. New Hampshire residents and visitors will understand, appreciate and value wild turkeys in New Hampshire.

Objective 3-1: Provide information by way of multiple outreach methods, to educate and inform the public regarding turkey ecology, behavior, habitat needs, recreational opportunities, social values including public viewing and population management.

APPENDIX 1.

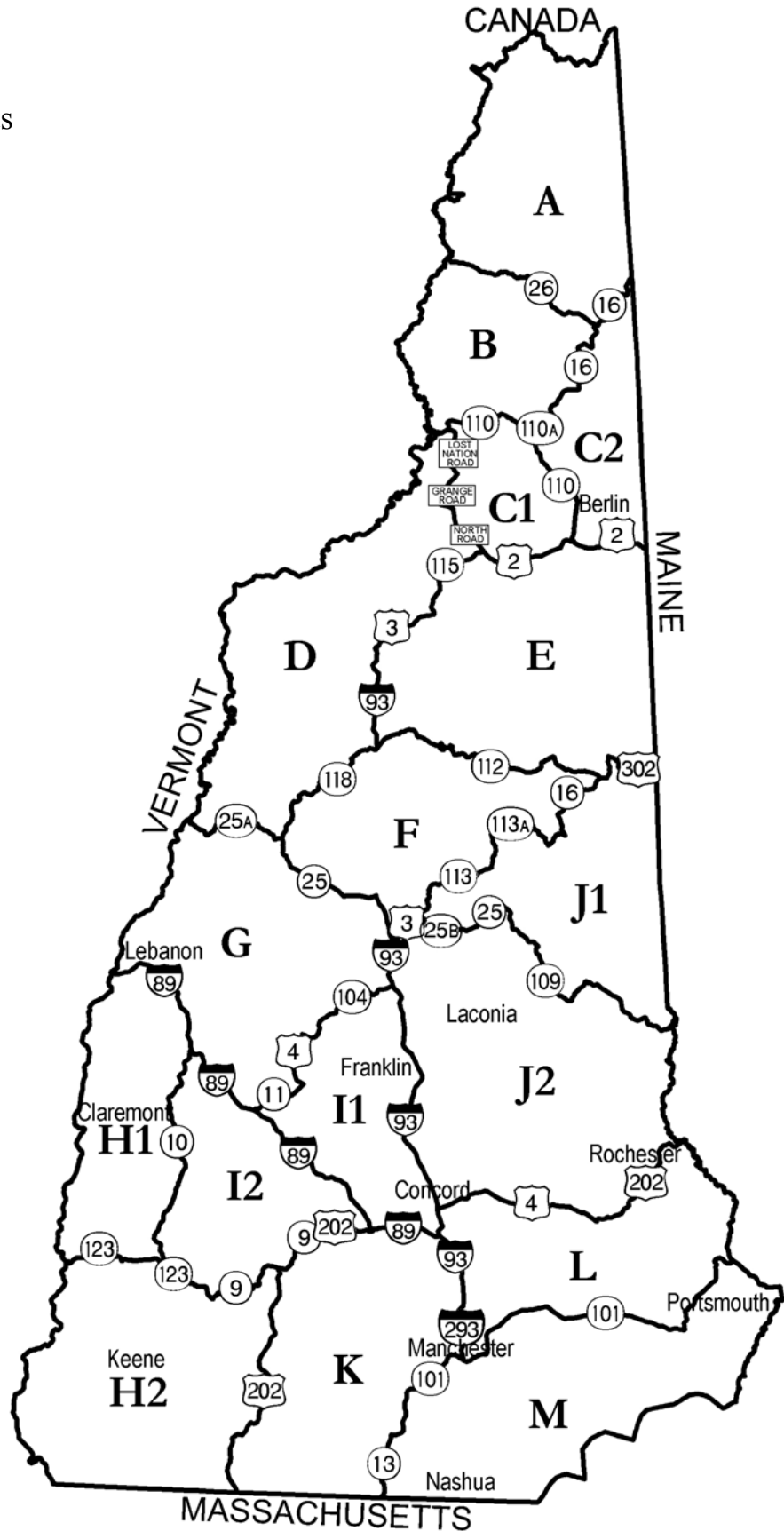
Public Working Group Members For The 2004/2005 Big Game Planning Effort

1. Roscoe Blaisdell NH Antler and Skull Club
2. Meade Cadot Harris Center For Environmental Education
3. Bill Carney Outdoor Writer/NHF&G Commissioner
4. Billy Dodd Hunting Enthusiast
5. Bob Elwell Farm Bureau
6. Rick Evans NH Timberland Owners Ass./Forester
7. Carol Foss NH Audubon/Ecologist
8. Suzanne Fournier Speaking For Animals
9. Senator Gallus New Hampshire State Senator
10. Raymond Grace Granite State Bow Hunters
11. Rick Graham NH Bear Hunters Association
12. Paul Karczmarczyk Ruffed Grouse Society Regional Biologist
13. Ken Kreis, Sr NH Wildlife Federation
14. Susan Mansfield Graduate Student - Antioch
15. John McConnell USDA Wildlife Services
16. Rep. McKinney New Hampshire State Legislator
17. Buck Mercier Registered Hunting Guide
18. Tom Morrow CT Lakes Timber Company
19. Jim Morse Retail Sporting Goods Store
20. Jim Neal NH Farm Bureau/Deer Farmer
21. Glenn Normandeau NHF&G Commissioner
22. Barry Parrish USF&WS Refuge Biologist
23. Robert Phillipson, Jr. NHF&G Commissioner
24. Robert Potter Private Landowner/Conservationist
25. Scott Rolfe NH DRED Forester
26. Bruce Schwegler Private Landowner/Conservationist
27. Fred Shepard NH Trappers Association
28. Kathy Starke White Mountain National Forest Biologist
29. Matt Tarr UNH Extension Forester
30. Edith Tucker Reporter – Coos County Democrat
31. Keith Weaver USF&WS Refuge Biologist
32. Charlie Williams NH Chapter, National Wild Turkey Fed.
33. Scot Williamson Wildlife Management Institute

APPENDIX 2.

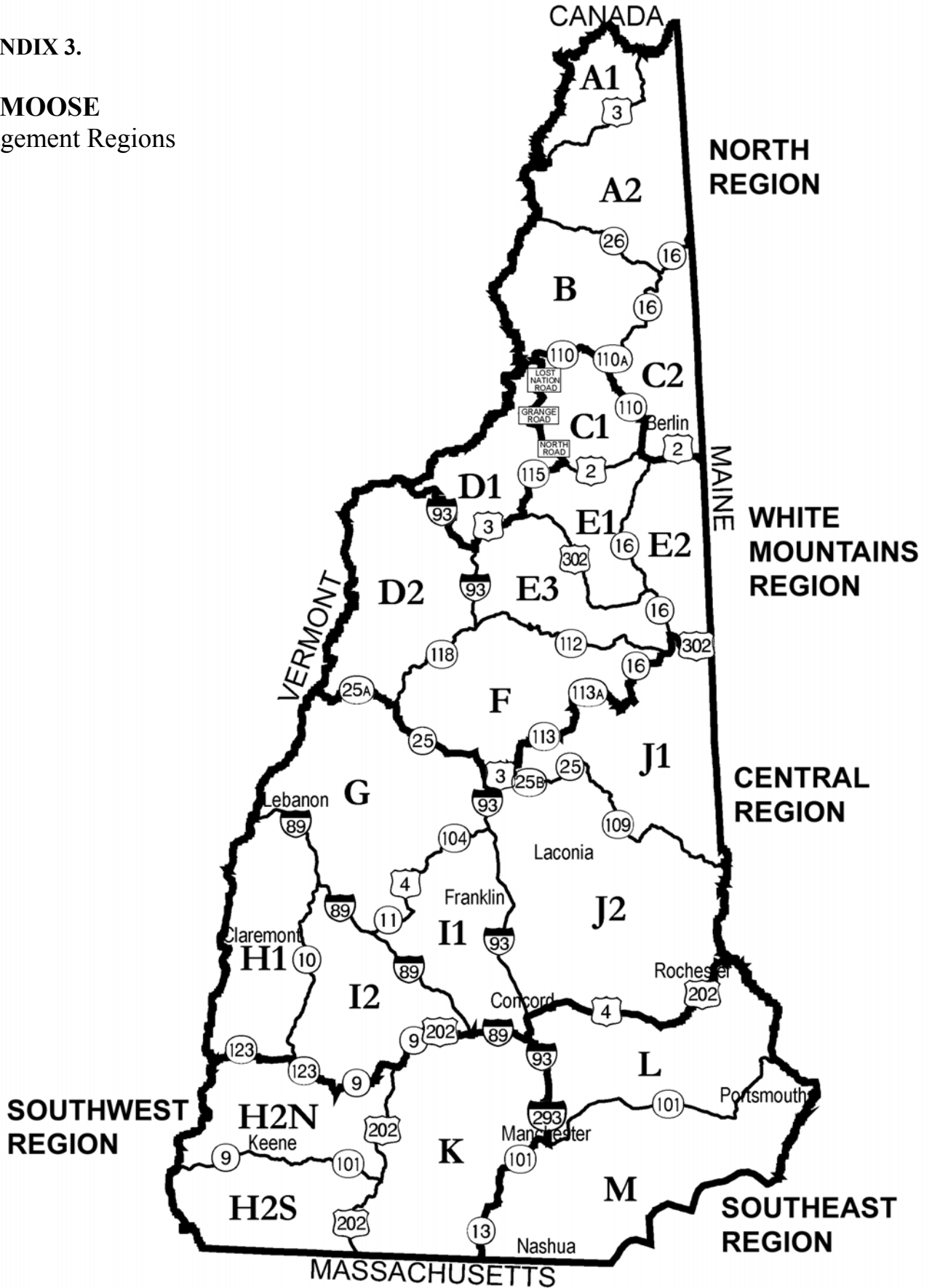
N.H. DEER

Wildlife Management Units



APPENDIX 3.

**N.H. MOOSE
Management Regions**



APPENDIX 5.

N.H. TURKEY

Wildlife Management Units

