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December 10, 2007

Sanford J. Ungar
President
Goucher College
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By email to: sungar@goucher.edu

President Ungar,

On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States, I am writing in opposition to bowhunting of white tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) on the campus of Goucher College. The Humane Society of the United States is the nation's largest animal protection organization with 10 million members and constituents nationwide and 200,000 in the state of Maryland.

Human/ deer conflict situations arise due to cultural carrying capacity and very rarely to biological carrying capacity as is being argued in your statements to the Baltimore Sun. The percentage of deer actually starving to death is extremely low and based only upon evaluations by field biologists conducted on a few deer that have been killed during hunting seasons or killed on roadsides. Deer populations regulate their numbers through internal feedback mechanisms that are influenced by quality of habitat, availability of food sources and other environmental variables. When management of deer occurs through lethal methods, an opposite effect is often seen in population trends. The habitat becomes more favorable, food becomes more available and more offspring are born. An effect called twinning often occurs when deer herds are reduced. This enhanced reproduction can create an unnatural spike in population numbers and cause a larger deer population in the area.

Car/deer accidents can effectively be reduced by several options that work best when combined. First and foremost is speed reduction and careful driving. Reducing existing speed limits protects both the driver and passengers along with the deer crossing the roadway. Green bridges, wildlife underpasses and crossways allow wildlife to safely negotiate fragmented habitat without coming into contact with vehicles. These have been used effectively in several areas and wildlife will use them when available. This has been shown in several scientific studies on the subject. Streiter LITES are a series of reflectors that create an arc of light from an approaching vehicle's headlights. The deer are thereby alerted before venturing into the roadway. Studies exist proving the effectiveness of this system when maintained properly.

Celebrating Animals, Confronting Cruelty

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The Streiter LITE system can be installed at a reasonable per mile cost and transportation grant assistance is available for the system. Motion sensors now exist that provide a warning for motorists through flashing lights on deer crossing signs. When a deer enters the roadway ahead the sensors set off the lights alerting motorists to reduce speed and stop if necessary.

Protection of landscaping can be achieved through fencing, planting vegetation that is not attractive to deer, commercial or homemade deer repellants, mesh netting over plants to which deer are attracted, motion activated “scarecrow” sprinklers and a variety of other methods. We have a master gardener working with the HSUS who can provide those solutions to the college through her written materials or through presentations at the college. We would be happy to provide her services upon request.

Lyme disease is carried by the black legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) and not by deer at all. The disease is contracted from the white-footed mouse, or deer mouse, in the larval and pupal stages of the tick. The name deer tick came from the deer mouse, not from deer. Black legged ticks potentially live on 49 species of birds and all warm blooded mammals. They are hosted by deer in the adult stage only. Deer are not infected by Lyme disease and only are a host to the ticks. When deer are removed from the area the ticks seek another large host to replace the deer. No corresponding reduction in tick numbers or Lyme disease cases occurs when deer populations are reduced. Precautions for tick bites can be found at the CDC website or we would be happy to provide that information. Ticks must have direct contact to travel from one host to another. They do not fly or jump. They are generally contracted through contact with long grasses or weeds and transfer to the human host. The current Secretary of the Maryland DNR has stated that if drastic reductions were made in the Maryland deer population, it would have no effect on the occurrence of Lyme disease.

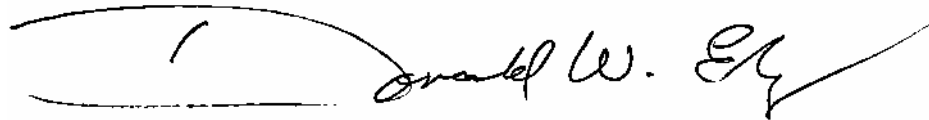
Bowhunting is an extremely inefficient and inhumane method of killing deer and we oppose the use of this method on your campus. Bowhunting has been shown through scientific studies to have a wounding rate of 50% or greater, which leaves animals to suffer before finally succumbing to an agonizing death. Many deer have been recorded with razor tipped arrows still lodged in their bodies for long periods after the original hunt. Bowhunters often miss their intended mark and instead hit areas of the animal that cause suffering due to prolonged bleeding to death over long periods of time.

The Humane Society of the United States would be pleased to work with Goucher College to resolve conflict situations through non lethal methods. Coexisting with deer is a much more effective and humane approach toward living with wildlife.

Goucher College has enjoyed a reputation for having an environmentally friendly campus which should include the wildlife in that environment. We hope that this reputation will lead you to conclude that there are environmentally friendly ways to solve these issues.

I look forward to working with you on this issue to benefit the human population and the deer population through conflict resolution. Please feel free to contact me for further information at your convenience.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald W. Elroy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D" and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Donald W. Elroy
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cc: kristen.keener@goucher.edu