



MICHIGAN UNITED *Since 1937* CONSERVATION CLUBS

Uniting Citizens to Conserve, Protect and Enhance Michigan's Natural Resources and Outdoor Heritage
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DEER BAITING AND RECREATIONAL FEEDING

Deer hunting is an outdoor tradition enjoyed by more than 600,000 Michigan residents. Further, this industry contributes billions of dollars to Michigan's economy and to the conservation of all fish and wildlife through the license revenue it generates. Because deer and elk are an integral part of Michigan's ecosystem and economy, the conveyance of disease among deer and elk, other wildlife and humans should not be taken lightly.

Dozens of studies can be cited that reinforce the regulatory approach taken here in Michigan to contain and reduce the spread of disease among the wild deer herd:

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/emergingdiseases/mi_dnr_cwd_scientific_references_633867_7.pdf

The act of baiting and feeding whitetail deer is a man-made factor that poses a high risk for disease transmission, including Bovine Tuberculosis and Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). The best available scientific research indicates that bait stations become gathering spots that help facilitate the transmission of communicable diseases.

In 2017, Michigan's CWD Working Group prepared a set of recommendations for the Natural Resources Commission to stem the spread of this disease. These recommendations were hallmarked by a recommendation that "The Natural Resources Commission should continue to employ science-based strategy for the regulatory framework of CWD management." The first line in this subsection references a statewide ban on the baiting and feeding of deer, first proposed in 2002.

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/emergingdiseases/cwd_workgroup_recommendations_610752_7.pdf

These recommendations are based on a collection of peer-reviewed, scientific articles assembled by the Department of Natural Resources. In this review, over 42 articles are cited suggesting that the baiting of deer play a role in disease dispersal. This constitutes a near-unanimous consensus among researchers throughout the nation.



Bait piles like the one seen here concentrate deer to very small areas for feeding

Since 2000, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) has stood in opposition to the baiting and feeding of whitetail deer based on the best available science in disease ecology.

Baiting remains a divisive topic among hunters and even our members, despite our organization's position since 2000, when MUCC's voting delegates voted for the first time to **oppose the use of bait** as a means to harvest deer in the Lower Peninsula, solely because of the concerns of disease transmission among wildlife. This policy was reaffirmed and expanded to include the whole state by votes taken in 2003 and again in 2007. In 2018, once again, the policy was discussed within the context of CWD and not amended or reversed.

It is important to note that MUCC also has a grassroots policy supporting the allowance of supplemental feeding in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, subject to certain conditions of a permit, where harsh winters can decimate the deer herd.