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Reports & More

REMEMBER BACK in October when I said, “It would be great if I could just do the fun and fabulous parts of my job . . .”? Well, this is the time of year I wish that were true. Deer biologists are responsible for producing no fewer than 11 *Game News* articles (one of which you are reading now), 8 annual reports, 2 issues of the “Deer Chronicle” newsletter, and a slew of brochures, scripts and handouts on deer related topics each year. It is definitely not the fun and fabulous part of the job, but, nonetheless, necessary.

White-tailed deer are the state animal and the Commonwealth’s most beloved and most popular big game species. They demand a lot of the Game Commission’s time. Deer are the only species that has two full-time biologists and a supervising biologist that spends more than half his time on deer-related tasks.

Annual reports cover the technical aspects of our work — research projects, annual harvest estimates, population trends, program updates, surveys, etc. Our reports must be submitted for review and eventual web posting by June 30 each year. These reports share the nuts and bolts of the deer program with those who are willing to delve into the scientific writing. Tables, figures, t-tests, chi-squared tests, the Lincoln-Peterson estimator and Mann-Kendall test — this is the language of our annual reports; many find it cumbersome and confusing.

Pieces that can be read without referring to a techniques manual are also available. These *Game News* tidbits, the “Deer Chronicle” newsletter, brochures and handouts serve a different purpose. They relay important information on a variety of topics in a form that is more understandable to most people. Not everyone has the time or patience to comb through an annual report, but that doesn’t mean they are uninterested in deer or the deer program.

What good is all the work we do as biologists if we don’t share it with others? And if you want the best, most up-to-date information, you should be able to get it from the source. So we spend a lot of time at our computers in the spring. They may be warm, but they definitely don’t have big, brown eyes.