



Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer

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SUMMER IS officially in full swing and concentrating on work seems challenging for anyone with a window view. For biologists, most of whom are in the field because of their love for wildlife and the outdoors, it is especially taxing. With deer, most field work occurs in the winter. So, when the weather is the nicest, we are often imprisoned in the office, shackled to our computers, finishing or preparing projects that have been lingering. There is also lots of organizational planning to do. Preparing for CACs and deer aging activities takes months. The deer program is also very data dependant. Though the data has been collected, it must be analyzed.

Add to our To Do List that the deer program was recently called into court, then subject of an external audit, and you'll see we entertain many hazy and crazy days of summer, but very few lazy ones, between interrogatories, depositions, documentation requests, confirmatory factor analysis, news releases and email requests, minimum convex polygon home range analyses, aging team assignments, equipment inventories and orders . . .

Some of this is not the type of work I expected to be doing as a biologist. The possibility of being deposed as part of a lawsuit certainly never crossed my mind as a graduate student. Being a biologist certainly has been an eye-opening experience.

Other aspects of this summertime toiling may not be the type of work *you* expected a biologist to do. If you were asked to list my job duties I doubt that reconciling Visa purchases would make the list. In reality, preparation for a deer research project includes the likes of vehicle repairs, website maintenance, personnel scheduling and more.

But, without these dog days of summer, there would be no December deer aging, no winter deer wrestling, and nothing to write about in those pesky springtime annual reports. So we peer out the window watching the wildlife world from the confines of our cage; plotting our escape with every click of the send button, reshuffle of team members, and request fulfillment.