

WILDLIFE TRENDS

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Enclosure Management — How to Get What You Want

By Dr. Harry A. Jacobson

Because a number of my clients have properties with deer-proof enclosures ranging in size from several hundred acres to several thousand acres, I am often asked how different is wildlife management within an enclosure from management of free-ranging wildlife populations. Essentially, there is no difference. The management basics are the same whether within an enclosure or outside of one. In both cases you must first ask, What are your management objectives? This question encompasses more than just wildlife management, and includes, among other issues, forest, crop land, livestock, and recreational uses of the land in question. Each and every piece of property and its owners are unique. Only after determining the characteristics of the property and the owner's objectives can a plan be developed to achieve the maximum benefits from the wildlife on the property.

The one thing that sets wildlife management within an enclosure apart from management outside of an enclosure is the property owners do have greater control of the property and of the wildlife within the property than those with the unfenced property. This does carry with it responsibilities. Once a high fence is erected, it then becomes the property owner's decisions which will be the primary factors influencing the welfare of the wildlife within the enclosure. As in a marriage, a caring, loving relationship should develop rather than an abusive one.

The basic considerations of managing game within an enclosure can be treated under the headings of nutrition, predator control, population management, and genetic management.

Nutrition

Nutritional considerations in enclosure management will be governed by management objectives, the size of the population to be managed, and on production of native forages. Depending on the diversity of the habitat, soil qualities, and weather conditions, a given class of nutrients may be limited during certain periods of the year. For example, an enclosure may contain a limited amount of bottomland hardwood because the potential for periodic flooding there may have prevented fence construction in that area. Under such a condition it may be desirable to provide supplemental energy-rich foods during periods of



Nutrition of deer within an enclosure is easy to improve.

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