



MIRRA:

Mayne Island Residents &
Ratepayers Association

Frequently asked questions about deer management and hunting on Mayne Island, 2013

Q1: Can the fallow deer and the black tail deer interbreed?

A1: No. Despite a similar appearance, fallow deer are more closely related to elk than they are to black tail deer, and the two species do not interbreed.

Q2: Why can't we just sterilize the deer instead of shooting them?

A2: Although chemical sterilization is a method of deer management, it is ineffective for a number of reasons. The current leading method of sterilization requires animals to be captured and administered an injection. In order to be effective the same animal must receive two injections at different times, therefore must be captured twice. Studies have shown that in order to effectively reduce a population using a sterilization method you must inoculate more than 50% of the females within a population. Resources are not available to catch and inject more than half the female deer on Mayne Island twice, while making sure the exact same individuals are captured twice.

Q3: Why can't we just introduce natural predators to control the deer?

A3: Naturally, cougars, wolves, and to a lesser degree bears would have helped maintain a smaller deer population on Mayne. These animals were hunted off the island by European settlers in order to protect livestock, pets, and people. The safety concerns of having cougars and wolves on Mayne Island still exist and therefore this is not seen as a feasible option.

Q4: Can we tranquilize the deer and relocate them to another area?

A4: This solution is prohibitively expensive when talking about large animals. Also, many animals do not survive relocation.

Q5: Why can't people just fence their yards and leave the deer alone?

A5: As each new area is fenced, the deer are left with a smaller and smaller habitat. This effectively adds to an already increasing population density, and causes negative effects on ecosystems outside of fences to become worse. Fences are expensive to install and maintain, and resources are not available to fence community parks and recreation areas.

Q6: Isn't Mayne Island too small and too populated by people to safely hunt?

A6: Existing firearm discharge regulations on Mayne Island prohibit the discharge of a firearm within 100m of a dwelling (occupied or unoccupied), and 150m from the boundary of a community, regional, or federal park as well as any place where people work or could congregate for work. These restrictions effectively limit the places on Mayne Island where a person could hunt to large privately owned properties. In order to hunt on private property a person requires prior written permission from the land owner. There is no public area on Mayne Island where hunting could be permitted.

Q7: What happens to deer that are shot?

A7: Current regulations in B.C. (B.C. Food Safety Act) require that wild game meat only be served to hunters and their immediate families. Meat and other products from deer killed on Mayne Island are well utilized by the hunters, and waste is minimized. One of the benefits of local hunting is access to a sustainable, local, healthy source of food.

Q8: What if I find hunters trespassing on my property?

A8: Non-permitted hunting (poaching) is illegal in B.C. and is considered a criminal offence. If you see someone you think is hunting illegally (at night or on land without permission) please phone 911.

Q9: The deer were here before us, what harm are they really doing?

A9: The natural balance of the ecosystem on Mayne Island was changed by European settlers when they removed large predators. Without large predators the population of black tail deer has drastically increased, especially since a hunting ban was introduced in 1973. Present levels of deer are changing the species composition of Mayne Island so that plants such as arbutus, red flowering currant, oceanspray, and many others will become rare over time. Deer eat all of the new seedlings of these species therefore there will be no new generation with which to replace existing mature plants. The understory structure of the forest is in an unnatural state resulting in a significant loss of habitat for many local bird species.

Q10: If there was hunting on Mayne Island I'd be worried about going for a walk in any of the local parks.

A10: Hunting is not allowed in any community, regional, or federal park. There are no B.C. parks or crown land on Mayne Island. Therefore there is no public land of any kind present on Mayne Island where hunting could be permitted. If the hunting ban was removed, Mayne Island would have a regular open hunting season from September 10th – December 10th just like the rest of the Southern Gulf Islands such as Pender, Galiano, Saturna, and Salt Spring Islands. Mayne Island could shorten the season through regulation, if residents decide this is appropriate following a public consultation process. Hunting would only occur on large private properties with the prior written permission of the land owner.