

Acadia National Park
Hulls Cove, Maine 04644

N16

February 18, 1969

ACADIA NATIONAL PARK
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

**Problem - Overbrowsing of Winter Range
by White-tailed Deer**

Conditions resulting from the 1947 fire; protection afforded by the park; lack of legal hunting on adjacent lands outside of the park; lack of predators; and a prevailing sentiment locally against hunting; all converged in the mid-50's for abnormal increases in Acadia's deer population. Examinations have shown that the vegetation in certain areas, and especially the winter range, was overbrowsed by deer from 1956 to 1968. Deer populations on the island, un hunted since 1905, have gone through a series of build-ups and declines dating back to 1880. However, the recent build-up increased to the point where overbrowsing of winter food became so critical that during 1960 the park initiated a herd reduction program in an attempt to alleviate winter range deterioration in the park. From 1960 to the winter of 1967 and 1968, when the reduction was terminated approximately 900 animals were removed. In spite of this, browse surveys indicate that some of our winter range continues to be over-used.

Action - Acadia's deer management program is designed to

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Perpetuate the deer herd and the vegetation in a natural and healthy condition. Vegetation is checked annually to determine the degree of use sustained through deer browsing. Continue the present research project being conducted by the University of Maine on the ecological relationships of white-tailed deer and vegetation at Acadia National Park. We are attempting to improve our capability to live-trap deer. Some success in this regard was experienced during the past year with tranzuilizing drugs. Experimentation will continue and we have every reason to believe that the promise of this effort will become a practical reality. As a last resort, resume direct reduction by shooting when the deer are concentrated in the critical areas.

Research

R.S.P.'S, active

Service supported: ACAD-N-1.

Roy W. Stamey
Supervisory Park Ranger