
Deer Live-trapping History on the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, Oklahoma

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A record of deer live-trapping on the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in southwestern Oklahoma is presented. This cooperative work of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and the Division of Wildlife Refuges, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife has been part of a state-wide deer trapping and releasing project under the supervision of Cy Curtis, Big Game Supervisor for the state.

From the start of the program through 1958, Federal Aid funds were used to support the state's part of the project. These funds are administered by the Division of Federal Aid, Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior under the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act. Since 1959 the Oklahoma deer release program has been entirely state-supported.

Although state records reveal that the deer project was started in 1943 (Lindzey, ca. 1951), the first Wichita deer was live-trapped 3 March 1945. This young doe was released in the Honey Creek Deer Pen, Delaware County, Oklahoma. Much negotiation had preceded this as evidenced by a permit to capture 25 deer on the refuge, signed 18 January 1943 by the Secretary of the Interior. In all, state personnel removed 81 deer from the refuge in 1945.

The total live take from the Wichita Refuge herd from the spring of 1945 through the spring of 1965, when the program was brought to a temporary close, was 4309 deer. All deer were trapped by a modified form of the Pisgah deer trap (Anon. 1945). Cottonseed cake was used as bait. No trapping was done by state personnel during the 1953-54 winter season. In addition, during the winter of 1954-55 the Fort Sill Fish and Game Association trapped some deer. Army personnel secured a few during the period 29 to 31 December 1955.

The listing below, adopted from state and federal reports, outlines Wichita deer live releases in Oklahoma and other locations during the period 1945 to 1965, inclusive:

Oklahoma Dept. Wildl. Cons. Release 4222
in Oklahoma (see map)

Other Oklahoma Dept. Releases during
same period:

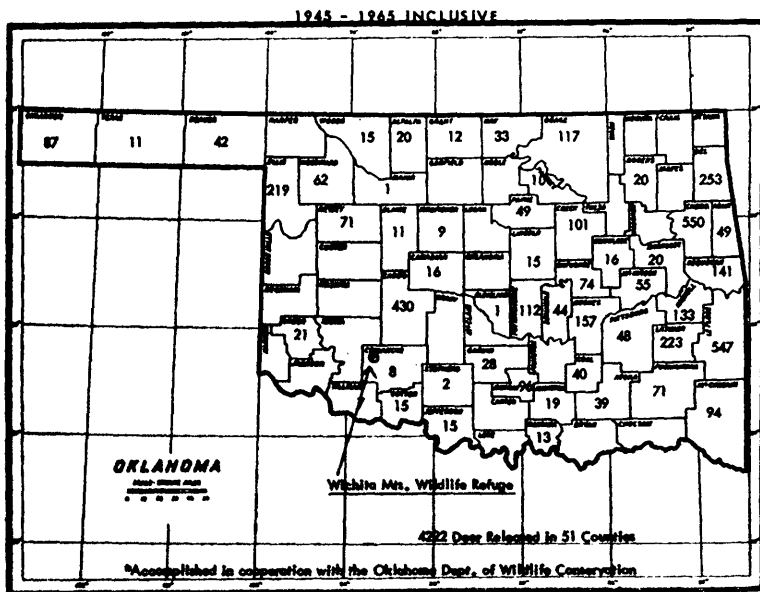
A Kansas refuge	8
Independence, Kansas	2
Fort Knox, Kentucky	1
New Mexico	2
Colorado	21
Oklahoma Dept. Transit Losses	6
Fort Bill Fish & Game Club & Army Personal Releases (Shipped to Ft. Knox & Ft. Campbell, Ky.)	47

Total 4309

The listed releases represent the complete release record from the Wichita Refuge. In addition, state personnel have released deer from other areas. Although the Wichita segment of the project was brought to a temporary close in 1965, the project continues elsewhere in Oklahoma. The available record (Curtis, 1966) shows that releases for the entire state from 1945 through the 1966-67 season total 8375. This figure includes the 4307 released from the Wichita Refuge.

This program was instituted on the Wichita Refuge to maintain the deer herd at or below range carrying-capacity. The releases, therefore, served a dual purpose: to reduce deer numbers on the refuge and to restock depleted areas elsewhere. Both objectives were realized. As a result of this program and related management the opportunities for deer hunting in Oklahoma continued to improve.

WICHITA REFUGE LIVE DEER RELEASES BY COUNTIES*



LITERATURE CITED

- Anon. 1945. Principal game birds and mammals of Texas. Tex. Game Fish & Oyster Comm. 149 p.

Curtis, Cy. 1966. Deer season report. Okla. Dept. of Wildl. Cons., Okla. City.

Lindzey, James S. ca. 1951. The white-tailed deer in Oklahoma. Okla. Game & Fish Dept., Okla. City, 105 p.
