

DMU 245

South Fox Island

Deer Management Unit

Area Description

South Fox Island is a small island 5.3 square miles in area, located in Lake Michigan, 30 miles northwest of the Leelanau Peninsula. Fifty-eight percent of its area is owned by a single landowner and managed as a hunting preserve, while the remainder is under public ownership. All but the southern tip of the island is open to hunting. It is a narrow, crescent-shaped island dominated by a high bluff and numerous sand-blown pockets on the west side. Northern hardwoods are the dominant cover type in the interior, while the sand-blown pockets contain small stands of white cedar and white spruce. Deer were introduced to the island in 1962 when 6 males and 11 females were released. As the population grew, its browsing of shrub and ground flora became excessive. Deer harvest off public land on South Fox Island is made difficult by its distance from the mainland, lack of docking facilities, and wilderness camping and hunting conditions. Deer harvest off the private land has been at the discretion of the landowner and his invited guests. Intensity and distribution of the deer harvest has historically been a function of the level of cooperation between the private landowner and the hunters of public land willing to hunt under wilderness hunting conditions.

Management Guidance

The Wildlife Conservation Order currently reads,

“The bow and arrow only deer hunting season shall be from October 1 to October 28 within the South Fox Island deer management unit. The firearm deer hunting season shall be from October 29 to November 26 within the South Fox Island deer management unit. Permissible firearms, crossbows, and bows and arrows shall be the same as those for zone 2 during the firearm deer season. A person shall not take a deer from November 27 to January 1 within the South Fox Island deer management unit.”

Recommendations are Private: Open, Public: Open.

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Legend

- Cities
- Highway
- Deer Management Units
- Open Water
- Developed
- Forested
- Herbaceous
- Hay/Pasture
- Cultivated Crops
- Wetlands



Figure 1: Area Map