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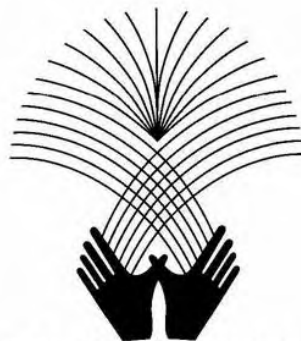


Longleaf Pine: *Making Dollar\$ and Sense*



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THE LONGLEAF ALLIANCE

www.longleafalliance.org



QUALITY WHITETAIL DEER MANAGEMENT IN THE LONGLEAF PINE WOODLANDS OF ICHAUWAY

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Abstract: Protection, reintroduction and recovery of whitetail deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) populations has created secure and, in many situations, ecologically destructive herds. Ichauway provides an example of a deer herd in longleaf pine woodland that has been managed to remain within its ecological bounds. The whitetail deer management goal is to safely maintain a deer herd to minimize negative ecological impact and maximize population health. Ichauway's management objectives are to maintain an even sex ratio with 10-15 deer/mile². Ichauway is dominated by 23,000 acres of longleaf pine grassland habitat and is bordered and bisected by the Flint River and Ichauway nochaway Creek, respectively. Deer densities were inherited from historic management and have been maintained by habitat and harvest management. Upland areas are managed with frequent prescribed fires and aggressive removal of hardwood fire shadows. Whitetail harvest on Ichauway allows each hunter one free choice harvest either buck or doe. Otherwise hunters are required to harvest 2 does before another buck is harvested. For a decade this management has maintained the deer herd at approximately 13 deer/mile² with an observed sex ratio of 1.88F:1M. On average 75 does are harvested each season with 1.5 and 2.5 year-old does comprising 40-50% of the harvest. Adult doe and buck body weights consistently average 120 lbs and 200 lbs, respectively. Lactation of yearling does approaches 40% and mature bucks typically have green Boone and Crocket scores above 120. Information from hunter effort, harvested animals, and population indices are used to monitor the herd's status and set harvest recommendations.