

# Deer denigrate Pennsylvania forests

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Pennsylvania natural resources officials say the state's forests aren't showing any new growth because of overgrazing by deer.

The state has been actively trying to cut down its herd of white-tail deer. But recent studies show nearly 45 percent of the areas surveyed didn't show any new, woody growth and less than one-quarter of the plots had a desirable level of woody plant regeneration, The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette said Monday. Michael DiBerardinis of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources called the situation "troubling."

"Like our past surveys from the air, this unprecedented study on the ground of what deer eat, or browse, is proving to be an invaluable tool in understanding deer densities and distribution in our state forestlands," DiBerardinis told the Post-Gazette. "And it is guiding future DCNR efforts to ensure forest regeneration and healthy habitat."

The Pennsylvania Game Commission reported that hunters killed about 361,560 deer last year, 2 percent more than in 2005. Of the total killed, 135,290 were bucks, which was a 12 percent higher figure than the previous year and an indication the population is growing.

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