

# Disappointed with coverage of Blue Hills deer hunt

## SPEAK OUT

PAUL JOHNSON

I attended the public meeting on the Blue Hills hunt in Milton on July 12. I am disappointed in the lack of balance in The Patriot Ledger article.

Many of the people who spoke against the controlled hunt were overwrought with emotion and some downright rude. One participant compared the data used by the Division of Fish and Wildlife to data collection of the Nazis during World War II. Her comments were inappropriate and insulting to the professional managers. Others were rude to Sen. Joyce, repeatedly interrupting him while he spoke. Others shouted out "killer" while I spoke in favor of the hunt. One can only imagine if sportsmen behaved like this what the coverage would have been.

A controlled hunt like the one conducted in 2015 and the one now proposed is a difficult proposition in an urban area without a culture that includes the traditions of hunting. Multiculturalism in society must include all cultures, even ones with whom you disagree. Respect for one another is a cornerstone of a functional society.

Hunting exists in most other areas of the commonwealth without public safety concerns or issues. The controlled hunt in 2015 was a textbook example of how to conduct such a hunt in an urban surrounding. Congratulations to the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife on a safe beginning with the 2015 controlled hunt and also for a well thought out approach to restoring ecological health and balance to the Blue Hills Reservation. The smaller-than-expected 2015 harvest was a direct result of the conservative, safety-conscious approach taken by both agencies, not a

failure of scientific population estimates.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Conservation and Recreation are to be commended for listening with respect and a dispassionate focus on healing the damage done to the Blue Hills Reservation by overpopulation or deer. Scientific wildlife management's record of success must not be abandoned for emotionalism. I wonder if Teddy Roosevelt and the proponents of the North American Conservation Model could ever have imagined that we would have to come to a point where an excess of wildlife in an area this close to a major city would be possible. Scientific management of wildlife resources is the principle that restored those populations and scientific management must be our guiding principle as we seek to restore balance to the Blue Hills.

*Paul Johnson is president of the Plymouth County League of Sportsmen.*

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