



House  
Legislative  
Analysis  
Section  
Olds Plaza Building, 10th Floor  
Lansing, Michigan 48909  
Phone: 517/373-6466

## STATE GAME MAMMAL: WHITE-TAILED DEER

### House Bill 4162 with committee amendment First Analysis (5-1-97)

**Sponsor: Rep. Jessie Dalman**  
**Committee: Conservation, Environment  
and Recreation**

#### ***THE APPARENT PROBLEM:***

The white-tailed deer, or *Odocoileus virginianus*, can be found all over Michigan and on its various offshore islands -- Drummond Island in Lake Huron, for example, and Beaver Island in Lake Michigan. Whether it is the subject of nature photographers or tourists, it greatly adds to the public's outdoor enjoyment. The stately animal is also prized by hunters, and its admirers, tourists and hunters alike, all contribute to local economies. In addition, many believe that it epitomizes and reflects the state's heritage of forest and wildlife resources more than other animals. For these reasons, some feel that this particular deer should be honored as the state's official game mammal.

#### ***THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:***

The bill would establish the white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) as the official game mammal of the state.

#### ***FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:***

According to the House Fiscal Agency, the bill would have no impact on state funds. (4-25-97)

#### ***ARGUMENTS:***

##### ***For:***

The white-tailed deer plays an important role in Michigan's economy, and deserves the distinction of being designated as the official state mammal. Photographers and nature lovers alike regard it as one of the most majestic mammals in Michigan, and those who come here to see it add to the state's tourism industry. In addition, the mammal attracts deer hunters, who, in addition to boosting local economies during hunting seasons, also support the acquisition of land for deer habitats.

##### ***Against:***

The white-tailed deer is one of the most destructive mammals in the state, and causes millions of dollars in crop damage. For this reason, it is important that deer populations be harvested each year by hunters. However, some would point out an inconsistency in designating as the official state mammal one that is so widely hunted. Furthermore, since several other states, including Ohio and Wisconsin, have designated the white-tailed deer as their official state mammal, Michigan should choose a different mammal.

##### ***POSITIONS:***

In testimony before the House committee, the fourth grade class of Borculo Christian School in Zeeland submitted signatures and letters of support from several organizations, including the following:

- U.P. Whitetails Assoc. Inc. Of Keweenaw Peninsula
- The Upper Peninsula Sportsmen's Alliance
- The Ted Nugent United Sportsmen of America and Adventure Outdoors Magazine
- The Ted Nugent Kamp for Kids
- Michigan's Whitetail
- Bay City Bowmen's Club
- The West Michigan Chapter of the Safari Club International Bow Hunters
- Commemorative Bucks of Michigan
- Chelsea Rod and Gun Inc.
- Bad River Bowhunters Inc.

- Michigan Bow Hunters

The Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) has no position on the bill. (4-30-97)

The Department of Natural Resources has no position on the bill. (4-30-97)

Analyst: R. Young

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.