

Local deer hunt volunteers are dwindling; inspection station may no longer be at club

By **ROBIN DOWNTON-POIRIER**
Special to The Champion

As the annual Shotgun Controlled Deer Hunt in Halton approaches, many people believe this may be the last year having the inspection station open at the Halton Sportsman's Club on Steeles Avenue.

The check station is run by volunteers each year, but a guarantee that volunteers will be available in future years can't be made.

"Hunters who participate in controlled hunts are required to submit a mandatory report after the season which provides information about their hunting activities in the controlled hunt. These reports provide us with information including hunter effort, success rates and the number of deer harvested by age and sex," said John Almond, fish and wildlife technical specialist for the Ministry of Natural Resources (Aurora District).

"The information collected by actually seeing the harvested deer is beneficial but not absolutely necessary to manage the deer population. We will be having discussions with the club and volunteers to determine if the check station will be operated in the future."

The controlled deer hunt, set for November 1 to 5, is an annual event to provide hunters the opportunity to hunt for deer. Having set dates allows the Ministry of Natural Resources to control the number of hunters on the landscape and control the number of deer harvested. Halton is divided into two Wildlife Management Units, WMU 79C (Halton north of Hwy. 401) and 79D (Halton south of Hwy. 401), each with a specific number of tags permitted to be issued to hunters. WMU 79C has been allotted 400 tags (therefore 400 deer can be harvested) and WMU 79D has been allotted 175. Hunters had to apply by the August deadline and their names were entered into a random draw. The applications for these seals have been down in recent years allowing hunters to apply for more than one tag per season.

"Deer populations are increasing in many areas of southern Ontario. In response to this, we are trying to increase harvests to keep populations at sustainable levels that are also acceptable to other stakeholders on the landscape such as the agricultural industry," said Mr. Almond. "If deer populations are allowed to get too high, farmers, fruit growers, and nursery operators can sustain significant economic losses due to damage by deer. There can also be an increase in the incidence of deer/motor vehicle collisions on the roads causing motorist safety concerns."

Although most hunters must apply for the hunting tags, landowners and their immediate family have a separate option.

"Landowners or members of their immediate family do not have to apply in the draw if they own a minimum of 50 acres of land within the WMU they wish to hunt in," said Mr. Almond. "They can obtain a landowner controlled hunt validation tag from the MNR office in Aurora."

Hunters must obtain a controlled hunt validation tag for the wildlife management unit of their choice as well as an Ontario hunting licence. To obtain a hunting licence, a person must be at least 16 years of age, as well as either have completed a Hunter Safety Course (after January 1, 1968) or have held an Ontario resident hunter's licence since that date. An exception to this rule is a person that is 15 years old with written permission from his or her parents.

Hunters also need to follow guidelines

regarding possession and ownership of firearms as stated under the Criminal Code.

To help ensure the safety of all hunters and the general public, firearms allowed in the controlled hunt are restricted to shot-guns and muzzle loading guns only as they

are short-range firearms.

Once a deer is shot, the hunter can bring it to the Halton Sportsman's Club at 5155 Steeles Ave. W. in Milton to have statistics such as weight, sex, body fat measurements, and area of kill recorded by the volunteers (usually two or three). The check

station will be open from November 1 to 4 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and November 5 from 9 a.m. to noon.

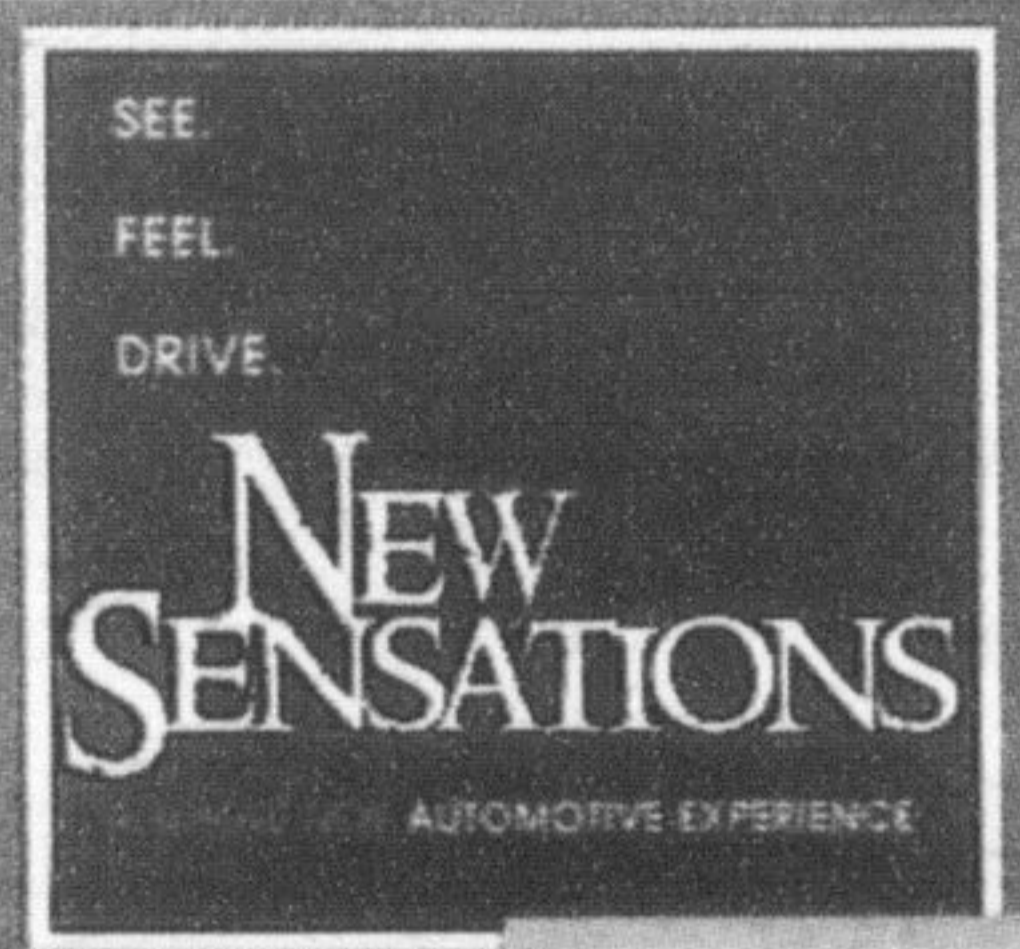
For more information on the Shotgun Controlled Deer Hunt, contact John Almond at the Ministry of Natural Resources at (905) 713-7707.

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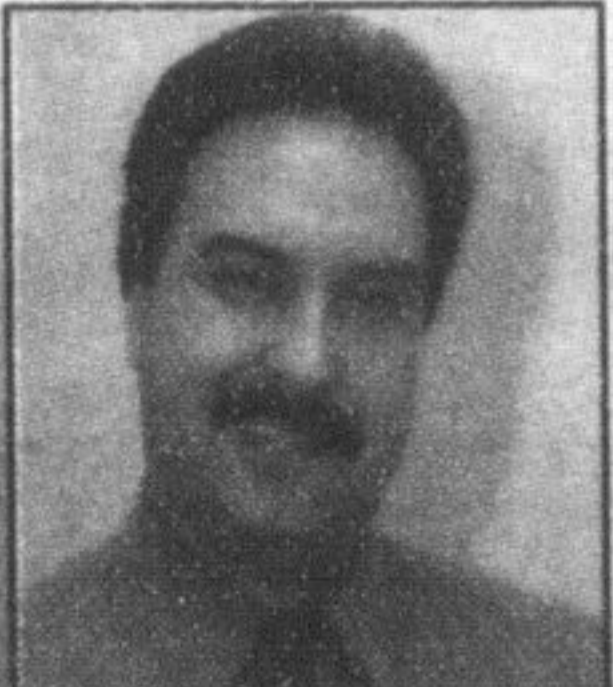





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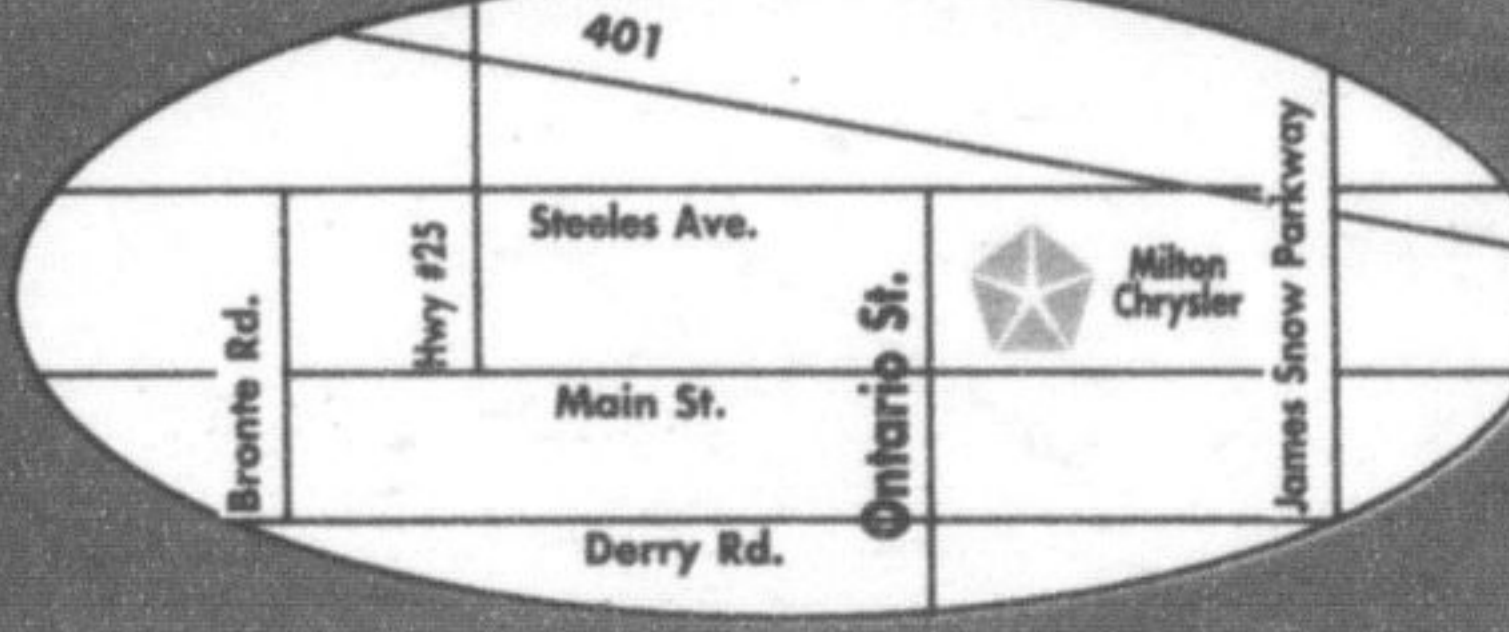
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