

Comparing Survival and Mortality Rates of White-Tailed Deer Fawns

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Introduction

- Survival and mortality rates in white-tailed deer fawns have been studied frequently throughout North America.
- Very few of those studies have assessed the effects intrinsic factors (e.g., weight, age) and habitats have on survival/mortality rates.
- SIU Carbondale has conducted research on this topic for decades, but this study has gone on for the last few years in order to understand the effects these variables have on fawns.
- The purpose of this project based on the research is to assess what increases as well as decreases a fawn's chance of survival when it comes to habitat factors (forest, field, agricultural land, etc.)

Methodology



Research Questions

- Which types of habitat increase a fawn's chance of survival and which habitats decrease chances of survival?



Study Sites



Conclusions/Further Directions

- In conclusion, based on findings and supporting evidence so far, survival/mortality rates are roughly the same for both types of habitat (richer woodland and field habitat with less human interaction in Carbondale; woodland and fields along with more agricultural land as well as more human interference in Shelbyville). The major differences comes from the causes of death which vary between the two zones. Carbondale with more protected land with more naturalistic habitat had a higher predation rate whereas Shelbyville with more anthropogenic features (features changed by humans) as well as natural habitat shows a higher rate of abandonment and starvation.
- Further directions can investigate the age of the fawn's mother as it is suggested that some mother does are in fact yearlings themselves, therefore are not mature enough to fully care for a fawn.

Results

- Currently the results for the study are incomplete, however there is evidence to support a conclusion for this project.
- Survival rates are about the same in both the Carbondale locations and the Shelbyville locations. However, causes of death vary differently between the two field sites most likely because of the different habitats.
- Most fawn fatalities in the Carbondale site have been due to high predation rates (death by coyote, bobcat, domestic dog, etc.). Shelbyville site, fawn mortalities that have been recorded were mostly due to starvation or abandonment due to the lack of food with the high amount of agricultural land in the area.



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