

## 2007 SHAREHOLDERS REPORT

The Lake Superior Area DNR wildlife management team would like to share some information with you about the things we have been working on and invite you to participate in enjoying and managing Wisconsin's wildlife resources.

### THE LAKE SUPERIOR AREA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT TEAM

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### Gray Wolf - UPDATE

In March 2007 the US Fish & Wildlife Service delisted the gray wolf in Wisconsin from the Federal Threatened/Endangered Species list. Wisconsin now has the responsibility for management of the wolf population in the State. The [Wisconsin Wolf Management Plan](#), approved in 1999, now directs wolf management in WI. While there is a petition in the Federal Courts seeking a re-listing of wolves in Wisconsin to the Federal Threatened/Endangered Species list, the courts have not suspended Wisconsin's management authority during the review of the petition.

The state will continue to reimburse livestock, pet, and bear dog owners for verified wolf depredations. Direct assistance in avoiding future problems, abatement, as well as lethal control will be used to minimize livestock losses.

In 2007, the DNR, in conjunction with USDA Wildlife Services, lethally removed 38 wolves from active depredation sites and issued 10



permits to landowners with problem wolves in the Lake Superior Area. In the future, pro-active control areas will be considered where there is a history of recurring depredations within specific geographical areas. Lethal control can be considered as long as the population remains above the minimum population goal of 350 wolves statewide.

The winter count of wolves is used to establish the status of the wolf population and direct management. It is compiled using aerial tracking of radio collared wolves, snow track surveys, and collections of public reports on wolf observations. This count of wolves has been conducted annually since the winter 1979-1980 when there were 25 wolves in the state. The most recent surveys over the winter of 2006-07 shows the population had grown to an estimated 540 to 577 [gray wolves](#) across Wisconsin. These wolves were comprised of 138 wolf packs. Estimates for winter of 2007-08 will be available sometime in mid-May.

## 2007 BEAR SEASON

The statewide harvest of 2,797 bears was slightly above desired harvest of 2,650. The harvest goal for 2008 is 2,900 bears statewide with about 4,660 permits available. There will be 720 permits issued for Zone D and 1440 in Zone A for 2008.

The results of the recent mark-recapture tetracycline study should be available this coming summer and will be useful in setting next years harvest objectives. This study is a cooperative effort of the WDNR, The Wisconsin Bears Hunters Association and the University of Wisconsin. This method of estimating bear abundance is potentially more precise than our current model, but is much more costly. Tetracycline marking is used periodically by the states of Michigan and Minnesota with good results. The objective is to provide an accurate estimate to calibrate our current model, thus allowing us to make better management decisions.

### New for 2008

Former sub-zone A1 became an independent Zone D for 2008 season. Zone A permit holders are now restricted to hunting only in Zone A as sub-zone A1 no-longer exists.

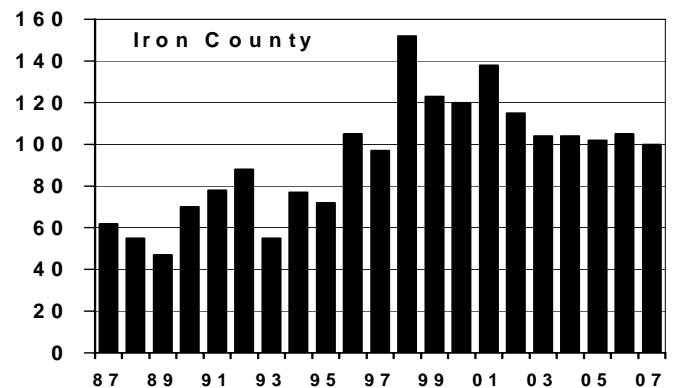
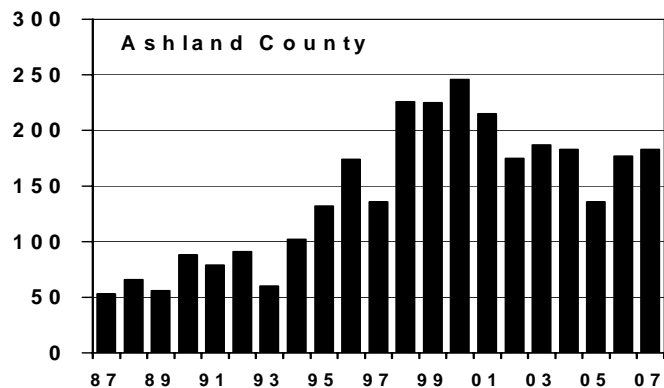
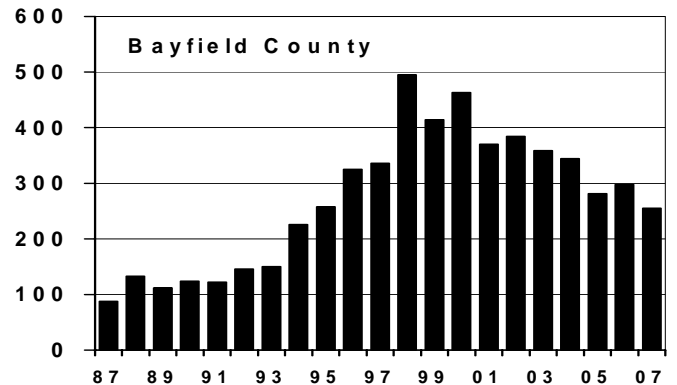
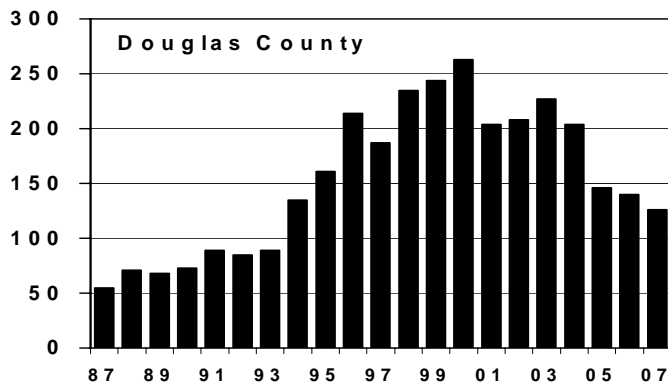
### 2008 Hunting Season Dates (Zones A and D)

September 3-9: Hunting with the aid of bait and other methods **not** utilizing dogs.

Sept. 10- Sept.30: All legal methods.

October 1-7: Hunting with the aid of dogs only.

Hunting applications for the 2009 season are due December 10, 2008.



## The 2007 Deer Seasons

Changes made for the 2006 [deer seasons](#) were continued in 2007 as part of a two year trial. These changes included suspension of the October antlerless gun season in Herd Control Units (HCUs). During the two year trial, if the average antlerless to antlered harvest ratio in HCUs does not meet or exceed 2 to 1 in individual Deer Management Regions, the October season would be reinstated. During the two trial seasons in the Northern Forest Region the antlerless to antlered harvest ratio was 1.7 and 1.6 to 1, failing to meet the 2 to 1 objective in the Northern Forest Region.

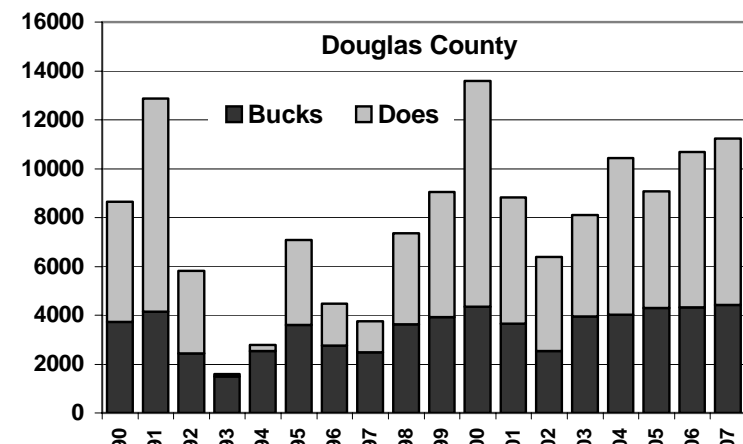
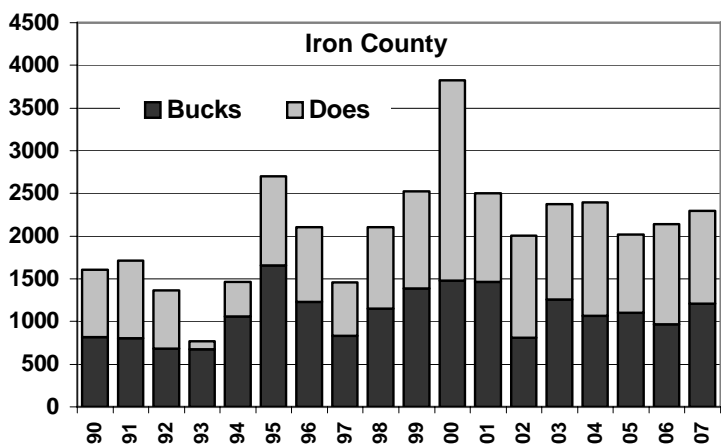
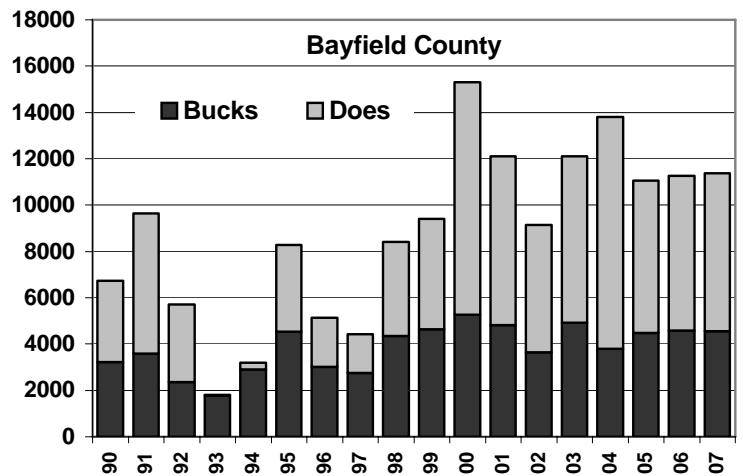
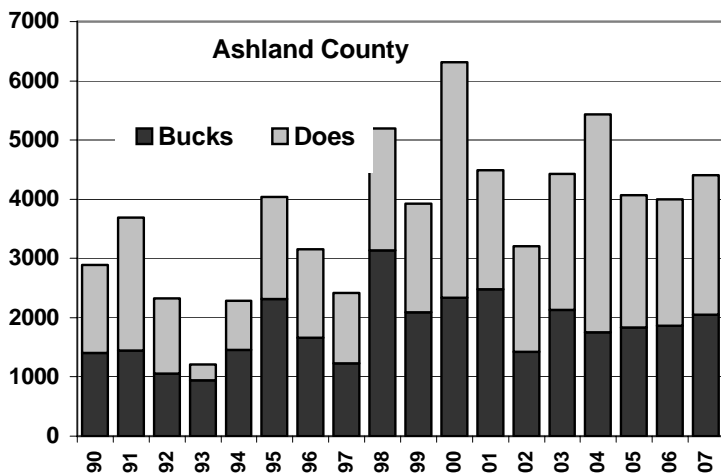
As a result of the past two trial seasons, the October antlerless season will be reinstated in 2008 with one minor change in that it will be held one week earlier than in the past years. Herd Control and Earn-a-Buck Units will have the antlerless only hunt from October 16 to 19. All units statewide will continue to have a December 11-14 antlerless only hunt.

Statewide and locally most hunters had great deer hunting in 2007. Archers set a new season

record of just over 116,000 deer harvested. This broke the previous record that was set in 2006. Gun hunters harvested over 402,000 deer, their third largest harvest. The combined harvest of 518,573 deer is the second largest harvest in state history.

The mild winter of 2006-07 resulted in above average winter survival of deer and an above average fawn crop in 2007. Deer populations remained very large in all of the units covering the Lake Superior area. In our counties, the antlerless harvest increased slightly over the previous year. The buck harvest increased in Iron and Ashland counties and it remained about the same in Douglas and Bayfield counties.

The winter severity for 2007-08 varied from east to west across the Lake Superior counties. Deer in Iron, Ashland, and northern Bayfield counties had a severe winter while the rest of our area had a mild to moderate winter. Deer populations in most of our units remain above their population goals and will be HCUs in 2008.



## Property Highlight: Inch Lake Natural Area

### [Inch Lake Natural Area](#)

is a 626 acre property located in Bayfield County approximately 5 miles south of Iron River on County Highway H. Walk-in lake access is available from a parking area on Scenic Drive, about 0.9 miles south of the junction of Scenic Drive and Highway H.



The footpath leads east to a carry-in canoe landing on the south shore of Inch Lake. [See map for other access points.](#)

Inch Lake Natural Area features two undeveloped lakes surrounded by wetlands and rolling upland forest. Inch Lake is a 31-acre soft-water seepage lake containing largemouth bass, yellow perch, and panfish. The 41-foot deep lake is classified as a “wild lake,” an increasingly uncommon feature as development continues in northern Wisconsin. No motors are allowed, including electric; fishing is catch-n-release only; and only artificial lures may be used. These special regulations will provide important research opportunities related to fishing. Northland College conducted [baseline surveys in 2007](#) to monitor changes in the fish community over time and will provide comparison data for surrounding lakes with traditional state regulations which allow regulated fish harvest. Surrounding the southern portion of Inch Lake is a diverse northern mesic forest dominated by red pine, red oak, and aspen. Canopy associates include white spruce, white pine, and paper birch. The shrub layer contains abundant American hazelnut and sugar maple saplings. Understory species include Indian pipe, sweet fern, interrupted fern, and blueberries. North of the lake is a northern dry-mesic forest dominated by large red pine and red oak with a diverse ground flora. Species include bracken fern, wood betony, big-leaved

aster, thimbleberry, American starflower, and wild sarsaparilla. The site also features scattered wetland depressions vegetated with wool grass, leather leaf, and sphagnum moss.

Hildur Lake is a 66-acre hard-water drainage lake on the lower end of the Pike

Lake chain. The lake and associated spring pond are the headwaters of the White River. The lake bottom is primarily gravel with a few scattered areas of sand and muck. Fish include northern pike, largemouth bass, muskie, yellow perch, bluegill, and crappie. Surrounding the lake is a narrow band of leatherleaf and alder with uplands comprised of mixed northern hardwoods. Rolling topography to the east supports a northern dry-mesic forest dominated by red pine with red oak and sugar maple. In addition, this area contains a diversity of other natural community types including a small wetland that supports nesting common loons. Bald eagles also occur here.

Recent management activities include the establishment of two public access sites, removal of a cabin, erosion control work at the former lake access site along Highway H, and removal of invasive plants, in particular [common buckthorn](#).

Inch Lake was donated to the DNR by Jill and Jerry Martin, their second donation to the State Natural Area program. In 2007, the adjacent Hildur Lake parcel was acquired by the [West Wisconsin Land Trust](#) and later donated to the DNR for incorporation into the State Natural Area Program. Acquisition was assisted by a partial donation from the Harris family. Inch Lake was designated a State Natural Area in 2006.

## Too Much of a Good Thing

While almost everyone likes wildlife, sometimes wild animals cause problems for the human animal. Sometimes the problem is caused by a large population of wildlife or it can be caused by a single individual.

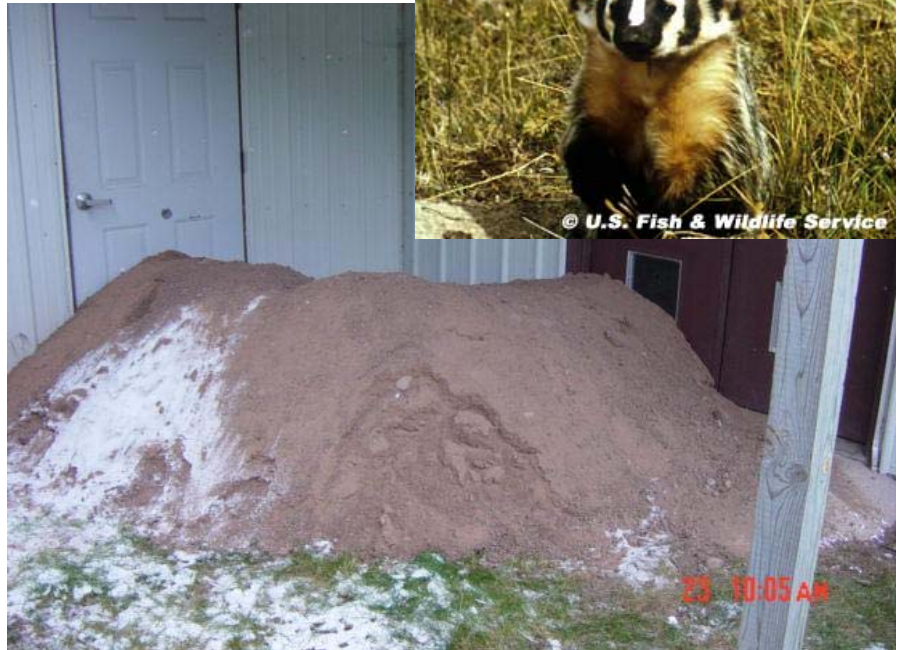
With a very large deer population across all of the State, deer are probably our biggest wildlife 'trouble maker'. But we are also a State of 'deer lovers'. While one person's pleasure can be another person's bane, for many people deer are both. Many deer hunters also experience problems caused by deer eating their flower or vegetable gardens, trees and shrubs, agricultural crops, or by deer-vehicle accidents.

There are many actions people can take to prevent or minimize wildlife problems as well as learning to live with wildlife, i.e. learning to share both natural resources and our 'human resources' such as our garden and agricultural plants with wildlife.

All animals need food, water, and shelter to live. An animal that is causing a problem is usually seeking or using one or more of these three basic life necessities. By knowing which of these necessities the animal is using and then either removing it or making it unavailable can usually solve the problem. Sometimes the solution can be simple and easy to implement. For example, if a bear is knocking down a bird feeder, removing the bird feeder usually solves the problem. Whereas trying to relocate the bird feeder so the bear can't get to it isn't as easy since bears can be very persistent.

At other times, it is not possible or practical to remove or make unavailable whatever it is that is attracting the wildlife. In these cases the animal may need to be removed. WI laws allow land owners or occupants to hunt or trap without a license on their own property coyotes, beavers, muskrats, foxes, raccoons, woodchucks, rabbits, squirrels, bats, skunks, and weasels year-round. They can also remove structures made by these animals, such as

beaver dams. Protected species such as badgers, fisher, bobcat, and flying squirrels require permits for removal. Any person which assists a landowner (the landowner's agent) must have an appropriate hunting or trapping license and written authorization from the landowner.



There are many resources to help solve wildlife problems, including information found at this website: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/damage/urbsub.htm>

### Additional resources and help:

For help with problems caused by bear, wolves, and birds contact the USDA Wildlife Services at 1-800-228-1368.

For help with problems caused by deer, bear, geese and turkeys to commercial agricultural crops contact the Land Conservation Department at 715-682-7187. Information about the Wildlife Damage Abatement and Compensation Program can be found at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/damage/contact.htm>

For help with any other wildlife problem contact your nearest Wildlife Management person.

## Osprey in Iron County

Since 1980, DNR personnel and volunteers have surveyed the breeding population of [osprey](#) in Iron County. Starting in 1984 young osprey have been leg banded to determine their survival and dispersal from their birth location. Since 1988, plastic colored leg bands have also been placed on the young birds which allow individuals to be identified without having to recapture them.

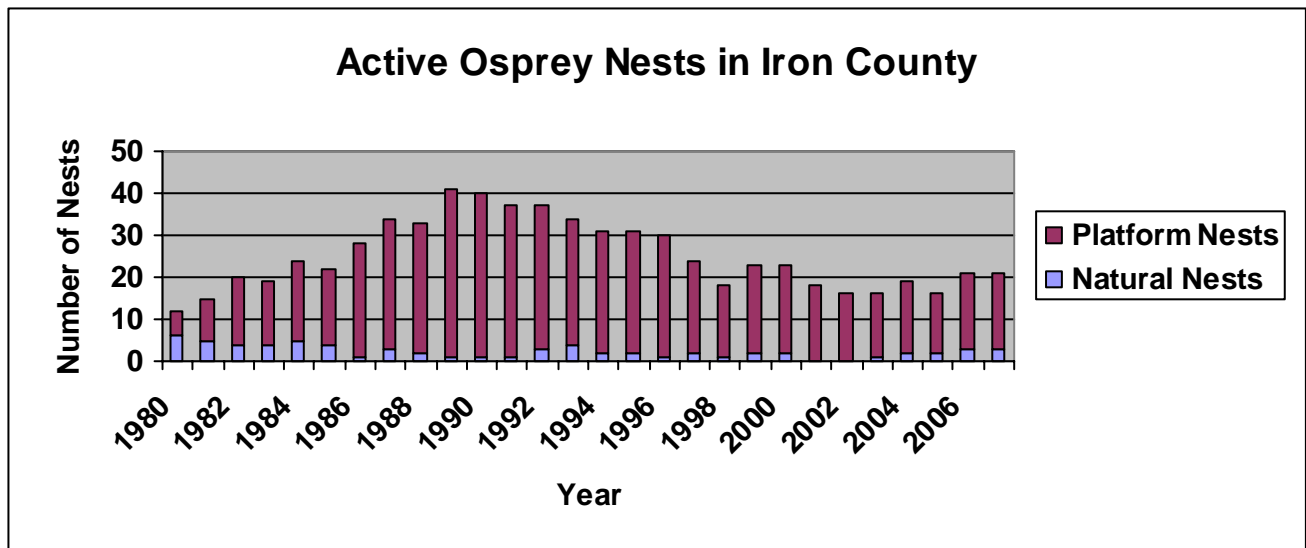
Banding is done when the osprey chicks are approximately five weeks old. A person climbs up to the nest and lowers the young to a banding crew on the ground. Each bird is banded with two bands: an aluminum US Fish & Wildlife Service band (with a unique identification number) on its right leg and a colored plastic band with a unique number and/or letter combination on its left leg. The young are then returned to their nest.



No birds that were color-banded as chicks have been re-observed as adults in the area prior to 2007. We don't know if the young osprey are dying prior to breeding age (usually 3 to 4 years old) or if they survive and disperse to nest elsewhere. The local population of osprey has been declining since late 1980's apparently due to this lack of recruitment of new breeding birds into the population.

In 2007 observations were made on Osprey nests on the [Turtle Flambeau Flowage \(TFF\)](#) and other lakes in Iron County to determine the banding status of breeding osprey. Of the 40 adults that were observed, seven had leg bands but only 2 were color-marked birds. A female on Echo Lake had a yellow leg band (#77). She had been banded in 2000 on the TFF as a breeding adult. An adult male at Lake Bastine on the TFF had a blue leg band ("V0"). This bird was banded in 2000 as a chick in a nest at Grant Creek (TFF), about 11 km from his 2007 nest. This is the first returning colored leg banded chick found in Iron County as a breeding adult.

The number of osprey nesting in Iron County has declined, but now appears to be increasing off the TFF. On the TFF the number of nesting osprey continues to decline and few have successfully nested in recent years. Eagle harassment of osprey may be a factor. From banding and aerial flight data, 2007 was a fairly successful year for osprey nesting compared to other years, fledging 1.10 young per active nest and 1.70 young per successful nest.



## American Marten Update (*Martes americana*)

The [American Marten](#) (Pine Marten to most folks) is Wisconsin's only state endangered mammal species. Marten are a medium sized weasel that disappeared from the WI landscape after extensive logging removed its habitat and uncontrolled trapping took a heavy toll. Marten are somewhat tame acting and when located are relatively easy to trap.

Marten are light brown (tawny) to dark brown and about the size of a mink with longer hair and a bushy tail. They often have a cream to orange colored throat patch. Marten are good tree climbers and also often go underground after prey. They feed mostly on small mammals up to the size of a red squirrel. Females weigh 1 to 1.5 pounds and males weigh 1.3 to 2.5 pounds.

Marten were reintroduced on the Nicolet National Forest in 1975-1983 and the Chequamegon National Forest (CNF) in 1987-1990. Both of these populations exist today, however the CNF populations appears to be declining. Minnesota and Michigan both have well established marten populations. Some marten from MN have moved into western Douglas County, and some from MI have moved into WI. Marten near the Underwood Wildlife Area in Iron County likely came from MI. Another population of marten is located in the center of Iron County. We do not know the origin of this population.

The Woods and Waters Program from the [North Lakeland Discovery Center](#) (NLDC) with Hurley and Mercer High School students are radio tracking three marten near Pleasant Lake. When captured and fitted with radio collars, DNA samples were taken from these marten for analysis. The students are also using a Cuddeback trail camera and venison hung in a tree to find marten. This work will provide information on population distribution,



habitat use, and home range sizes of martens.

Beginning in 2006 we have been surveying for the presence of marten across northern Wisconsin using hair catchers. Hair catchers collect a sample of hair from animals which enter the catchers. The collected hair is identified to the species that it came from. DNA analysis of collected marten hair can determine the source or origin of the marten.

Future plans include capturing of 60 marten in MN in the fall of 2008 for release on the CNF to augment this population. Two females will be released for every male released. Many groups have contributed to this marten program

including the WDNR, Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission, US Forest Service, NLDC, Mercer & Hurley Schools, Cuddeback, Iron County Forestry Department and the Northwoods Wildlife & Wetlands Club.



## Forest Openings

Small grassy openings within blocks of public forestlands provide necessary habitat for many animals such as flickers, cedar waxwings, chestnut-sided warblers, mourning warblers, broad-winged hawks, smooth green snakes, leopard frogs, badgers, and bear. They also provide critical feeding areas to deer after severe winters. Encroachment of trees and shrubs into forest openings is a constant threat. Maintaining forest openings helps keep this important habitat on our public forests. This is a high priority wildlife management program.

The four Lake Superior Area counties have approximately 2,000 openings on State and County Forest lands that are maintained by the DNR and County Forest Departments. Openings are maintained by a variety of methods including mowing, hand cutting, and herbicide treatment of woody vegetation. Access trails, used as hunter walking trails, are maintained along with the openings. There is approximately ½ mile of

hunter walking trails maintained for every mowable opening.

**Bayfield County Forest:** Eighty-five openings containing 74 acres were maintained by hand cutting and 30 openings, totaling 37 acres were mowed.

**Brule River State Forest:** Fifty-nine openings were maintained, 51 by mowing with an all-surface vehicle and 8 were hand-cut. A total of 60 acres were treated.

**Douglas County Forest:** Sixty-nine openings were maintained, 65 by mowing and 4 by hand cutting. A total of 73 acres were treated.

**Iron County Forest:** Fifty seven openings were maintained by mowing and hand cutting was used to maintain 45 openings. These openings contained 177 acres.

