

Heart attack, not gun, more deadly to deer hunter

Each year at this time we read about deer hunters who, unfortunately, are shot to death. However, few people realize that heart attacks are really the hunter's worst enemy.

It is well known that deer hunting involves high levels of energy expenditure, imposing excessive demands on the heart.

Several years ago, physiologists in Minnesota conducted a series of experiments designed to stimulate the energy cost of deer hunting.

Healthy men between 40 and 65 years of age were subjected to dragging a 100-pound sack of sand

through loose gravel over varied grades. The experiment yielded startling results.

Researchers estimated that the activity required between six and 15 times the resting energy expenditure. For those who were out-of-shape and unaccustomed to vigorous physical activity, such levels of energy expenditure required maximal exertion.

HEART RATES during the dragging often ranged between 140 and 200 beats per minute. In addition, more than 10 percent of the men



fitness
Barry Franklin

demonstrated electrocardiograms suggesting inadequate oxygen supply to the heart muscle and/or potentially dangerous rhythm disturbances. Many factors probably contribute to the disproportionate metabolic

and cardiac demands of deer hunting. These include climbing hilly terrain, wearing extra clothing, coping with extremes in environmental conditions, and dragging or carrying heavy loads. Such stressors can be further exaggerated by the ingestion of heavy meals, alcohol, and/or tobacco use before or after hunting.

Excessive hormonal responses, namely adrenalin release, can also contribute to the stress of deer hunting. For example, merely "sighting a deer" can, in some people, evoke a heart rate of 150 beats per minute! In summary, research suggests

that deer hunting may evoke excessive physical demands — even among "healthy" individuals. It is probably no coincidence that heart attacks and sudden death during deer hunting season occur three times as frequently as "accidental" deaths.

Barry A. Franklin, Ph.D., is director, Cardiac Rehabilitation and Exercise Laboratories, William Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, and associate professor of physiology, Wayne State University School of Medicine.



nature

Timothy Nowicki

A student recently asked me the life span of some species of birds. She was surprised, as most people are, that small birds like chickadees average only one to two years. Banding birds have been recorded as old as 10 years, but that is not the norm. Slightly larger birds like robins live a couple of years longer.

The next question was, if wild animals have such a short life span, why don't we find more dead animals around? This is a very good question and allows us to think about the small, forgotten animals that answer this question.

If the natural world did not have the decomposers, as they are called, we would be up to our armpits in waste and dead bodies. Several different kinds of animals help to prevent this.

First, most wild animals are eaten by other animals as food. The atoms and elements from one body are recycled into the predator. What little may be left of the prey animal will be decomposed by bacteria or insects.

Waste material from the multitude of animals is either a source of nutrients for fungus and bacteria, or it is buried by dung beetles. Dung beetles use it as a place in which to lay their eggs. Larva feed on the remaining foodstuffs while protected underground from many predators.

Bodies of animals that may die of old age may be buried by carrion beetles. They undermine the carcass and bury the body so it is protected from other scavengers. I happened to see a common carrion beetle on the trail just the other day.

Ants, beetles, flies, bacteria, fungi and scavengers such as shrews, crows, skunk, opossum and raccoon are all part of nature's cleanup crew. If they were not around, I suspect that there would be many more diseases. Their impact can be seen in winter when an animal killed by a vehicle on the road is observed over time. When insects and bacteria are not around, a carcass may persist until warm weather returns.

A corollary of this subject is why are deer antlers rarely found? Deer shed their antlers in mid-winter, but small rodents active all year eat the antlers for their minerals and calcium.

Because they are small, though actually quite numerous, decomposers go unnoticed, except for their noticeable effects.

Tim Nowicki is a naturalist at Independence Oaks County Park. He lives in Livonia.

OCC sets '40s dinner dance

Oakland Community College's Smith Theatre will present the fourth annual edition of its popular 1940s Dinner Dance at the Orchard Ridge Campus, Friday, Dec. 14.

The evening's fare includes a dinner prepared by the prize-winning Orchard Ridge culinary arts department, followed by dancing to the sounds of the Swing Era played by the OCC Jazz Band.

Dinner begins at 6:30 p.m., dancing at 8 p.m. Admission price for the dinner/dance package is \$18 per person.

Tickets are also available at \$6 for those interested only in the dance portion of the evening.

Reservations for the dinner/dance package had to be paid by Dec. 7. However, dance-only reservations may be made up to 3 p.m. Friday.

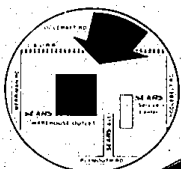
For further information and reservations, call the Smith Theatre at 471-7700.

The Smith Theatre is on the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College, Orchard Lake Road and I-696 in Farmington Hills.

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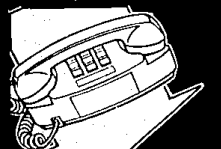
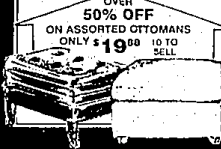
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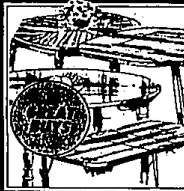
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