

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Steven M. Huffaker, Director

Project W-170-R-29

Progress Report



MULE DEER

Study I, Job 2

July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005

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**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>Mule Deer Surveys and</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-29</u>		<u>Inventories</u>
SUBPROJECT:	<u>1-7</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>1</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>2</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005</u>		

STATEWIDE

Summary

Mule deer are Idaho's most abundant and widely-distributed big game animal. They provide more recreational opportunity than any other big game species. Mule deer densities are highest in Idaho south of Salmon River. North of Salmon River, white-tailed deer are the dominant deer species, but mule deer populations are found scattered throughout northern Idaho where there is suitable habitat.

Mule deer are primarily browsers, so most of their diet is composed of the leaves and twigs of shrubs and trees, particularly during winter. Grasses and forbs can be important dietary components at certain times of the year, such as spring and early summer.

Winter range is a critical component of mule deer habitat. Mule deer are susceptible to high mortality during periods of prolonged deep snow and low temperatures. Winter range has long been recognized as an important habitat component, but our ideas about it have changed as we have learned more about how deer use it. In the 1950s and 1960s, most of our emphasis was on the food resources on winter range. This was reflected in plantings of bitterbrush and measurements of utilization of browse plants. It was obvious that the food resources of winter range were important, but it could not account for all the variation observed in winter range use.

Even under the best conditions, deer lose weight all winter long. The best "winter range" a mule deer has is the fat stored in the body during spring, summer, and fall. Therefore, the condition of a deer at the start of winter depends on the quality of habitat it occupies during the rest of the year. The main strategy of a mule deer in winter is to survive by minimizing energy loss and by eating enough to prolong fat reserves. Deer commonly seek winter ranges where there is good thermal cover to minimize energy loss. Deer often become very sedentary during winter, moving and feeding as little as possible to conserve energy.

Our view of winter range has changed, but not its importance. Cover, aspect, and elevation are recognized as crucial components, and during certain times, are more important than food. Human disturbance of deer on winter ranges causes them to move from favored sites and waste

precious energy. The size of winter range is important to allow for different snow conditions and fluctuations in deer populations.

Much of Idaho's historic mule deer winter range has been developed for other uses and is now occupied by man. Ranches, farms, subdivisions, and industry located in the foothills and at lower elevations have eliminated winter range. In many parts of Idaho, deer winter range is adequate for the "average" winter, but when severe winters occur, deer are forced to low elevations where they come into conflict with humans. Deer can damage standing and stored crops; most commonly hay, ornamental shrubs, trees, and orchards. Depredations by mule deer can be severe and, in many cases, is an important factor in determining the optimum size of a deer population.

Early spring is an important time of year for mule deer and spring range is a key component of year-round habitat. Most winter-related mortality actually occurs in early spring. Fawns and old bucks are most likely to die of winter stress. Mortality of does is usually light, but their condition is particularly critical because they are entering the third trimester of pregnancy and development of the fetus taxes their resources. The quality and quantity of nutritious forage in spring (Apr-Jul) has a major effect on production and survival of fawns. The timing of spring green-up is also important. A winter-stressed deer needs good forage as soon as possible. Cold, late spring weather with late green-up can increase mortality and reduce production.

Summer-fall ranges are obviously important because this is where deer produce fat reserves that will allow survival through winter. Quality of summer-fall forage directly influences pregnancy and ovulation rates and, therefore, fawn production. Late fall is the last opportunity for deer to forage and store fat before moving to winter range. High quality fall range is important for bucks because their body reserves are reduced by rutting.

Many of Idaho's mule deer are migratory. They commonly travel long distances (20-100 miles) from summer range to winter range. Mule deer are fairly traditional and return to the same summer and winter ranges each year. Tagging and radio telemetry studies indicate that deer summering in the same area may go to different winter ranges, often in different game management units or different states. We have also found that deer wintering together can move to entirely different summer ranges. The migratory behavior of deer and the differential distribution of bucks and does complicates the measurement and interpretation of population parameters.

Given mule deer's fidelity for winter ranges, many of man's activities can disrupt or even eliminate migrations, forcing deer to winter on sub-optimal ranges that may increase their mortality rates. Interstate highways, deer-proof fences, and urbanization represent examples of activities that can disrupt migration patterns. Survival through winter is a tenuous balance between energy conservation and energy expenditure. Activities that increase energy expense likely increase over-winter mortality.

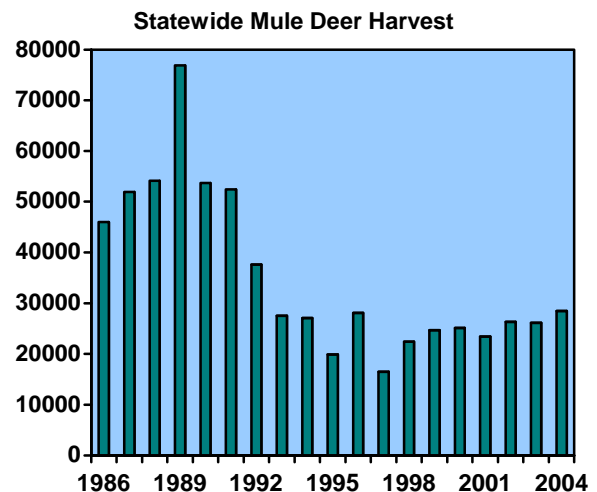
The structure of mule deer populations varies with habitat and population size. Populations at low density (below carrying capacity) tend to have high reproductive and turnover rates and are dominated by younger animals. Populations with these characteristics are capable of rapid

growth. Some populations stabilize at low density because they are susceptible to high mortality during unfavorable conditions. This is typical of populations in marginal habitat.

Populations at high density (near carrying capacity) tend to have low reproductive and turnover rates, and a stable age distribution. Population growth is slow, if it occurs at all. Annual production replaces annual mortality. This type of population is commonly found in stable, well established habitat types, particularly climax forests. A wide spectrum of population structures is found between these 2 extremes.

Overall, mule deer populations statewide have declined since the 1950s and 1960s. It is unlikely that populations will ever increase to those levels again. Mule deer are best adapted to seral, transitional habitat types. Habitat succession is a continual and dynamic process, and those habitats best suited for mule deer cannot be expected to remain indefinitely or even be managed for on a large enough scale to have significant population effects. Recent population declines in parts of southern Idaho that were marked by the 1992-1993 winters are a natural process in mule deer dynamics. Populations are expected to increase given favorable environmental conditions. However, the long-term outlook for mule deer statewide is that of slowly diminishing habitat quantity and quality over time. Maintaining healthy populations with harvestable surplus is expected and will continue; however, populations reminiscent of the “good-old-days” are unrealistic.

The effect of harvest mortality is highly variable in mule deer. Generally, the majority of annual mortality is not hunter-harvest related. Factors such as predation, malnourishment over winter, accidents, and disease are responsible for the majority of deaths in mule deer populations. Therefore, population response tends to be independent of harvest. Exceptions to this rule include antlerless opportunity designed to stabilize or reduce populations and effects of hunter harvest on buck survival and age structure. Hunting seasons designed to offer significantly more opportunity for antlered deer than antlerless deer, or during periods when bucks are vulnerable (rut, winter range), can reduce the proportion of bucks and particularly older bucks in the population. Buck-only seasons will not limit population growth; however, they can affect the number of older bucks. The Idaho Fish and Game Commission (Commission) established a statewide minimum of 15 bucks per 100 does post-season, primarily as the minimum ratio that hunters would accept. It is unknown what the lower threshold value for buck:doe ratio is where negative impacts on production parameters can occur. However, we believe that the statewide minimum is above that necessary for adequate reproduction.



Proper harvest management for mule deer, given their relative independence to harvest effects, is to adequately monitor populations annually and be responsive to population changes. Liberal seasons can be applied during periods when populations are expanding rapidly and conservative seasons applied when environmental factors are limiting population growth.

This plan represents a statewide change in how we monitor mule deer populations. Historically, harvest parameters and periodic unit-wide surveys were conducted to assess population status. Beginning with this plan, we have established a statewide, uniform approach to monitor mule deer populations on an annual basis, thus being more responsive to population changes. The state has been divided into 22 Analysis Areas (groupings of Game Management Units) that represent similar habitats, discrete mule deer populations, and/or similar management objectives. With little exception, each Analysis Area will have at least 1 trend area (winter range) that will be monitored annually. Trend areas have been chosen to be representative of the Analysis Area as a whole, and should reflect population parameters throughout the grouping of units. Information that will be collected for each trend area includes buck:doe:fawn ratios and abundance. Additionally, radio-collared fawns in several of the trend areas across the state will be monitored to determine over-winter survival and recruitment to spring.

Antlerless harvest thresholds have been established for each of the trend areas (with few exceptions). These thresholds represent trend area population “goals.” We recognize that mule deer populations are primarily a function of the environment rather than any direct Department action. These threshold values have been established to define optimum populations taking into account habitat potential, winter range conditions, harvest opportunity, and depredation concerns. As mule deer populations rise and fall, we will recommend harvest opportunity consistent with these population thresholds.

In addition to monitoring trend area populations, the Department will monitor harvest and the percentage of 4+ points in the harvest relative to minimum criterion established by the Commission (Figure 1). Prior to 1998, the telephone harvest survey provided information for harvest. Beginning in 1998, a statewide mandatory report card system was implemented. Given adequate compliance, more precise data on harvest and antler point class will be available.

Antlerless Harvest

General season antlerless harvest is an option that may allow managers to influence deer numbers and provide added hunting opportunity when population levels allow. Determining whether to have antlerless seasons or the length of a season often results in controversy among hunters and between hunters and wildlife managers. To help reduce disagreement and guide decisions about antlerless harvest, the following decision model was developed. This model was developed with the intent of an adaptive learning process; as new data become available and knowledge increases regarding deer population response to harvest, refinements will occur.

Three variables are considered in this decision model: population level relative to antlerless threshold values listed for each Analysis Area, animal physical condition, and winter severity. Population level is determined by annual aerial surveys of trend areas; animal condition is determined at Department check stations and/or through hunter interviews; and winter severity is

determined by a severity index or fawn mortality if radio-collared animals are available. Each variable is given a relative score and then these scores are summed and the maximum season framework can then be determined.

This decision model is not designed to dictate when the Department will offer general antlerless opportunity; rather, it is intended to guide discussion amongst all of Idaho's mule deer enthusiasts. Additionally, depredation decisions and subsequent actions are not intended to be influenced by the decision model.

DECISION MODEL

	Variable Score		
Population Level	Below Threshold	At Threshold	Above Threshold
	-5	5	15
Animal Condition	Poor	Good	
	0	5	
Winter Severity	Severe, >60% Fawn Mortality	Average, 40-60% Fawn Mortality	Mild, <40% Fawn Mortality
	-5	5	10
TOTAL SCORE		SEASON FRAMEWORK	
<10		No Antlerless Harvest	
10		Controlled Harvest	
15		7 Days	
20		14 Days	

DECISION MODEL EXAMPLES:

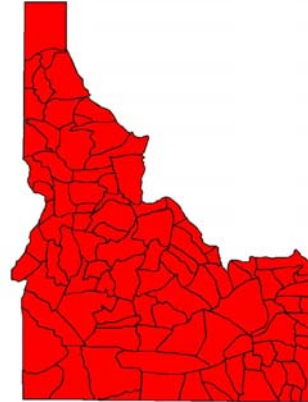
- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1) Antlerless Harvest Threshold Value = 2000
 Population Survey = 3000 deer observed
 Animal Condition = good
 Winter Severity = avg, 50% fawn mortality
 Total Score = 15 + 5 + 5 = 25
 Maximum Antlerless Framework = 21+ days</p> | <p>2) Antlerless Harvest Threshold Value = 2000
 Population Survey = 1500 deer observed
 Animal Condition = poor
 Winter Severity = severe, 75% fawn mortality
 Total Score = -5 + 0 + -5 = -10
 Maximum Antlerless Framework = 0 days</p> |
|---|--|

Mule Deer Status, Threshold, & Criterion Statewide

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
	Year	Total Deer	Total Deer
Statewide	2004	89890	72800
Total		89890	72800

Note: Estimates within parentheses are based on information other than sightability surveys.



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

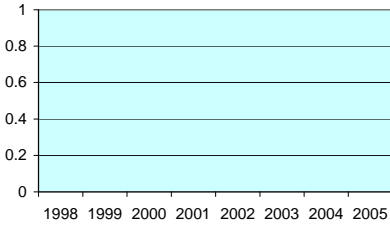
	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	2004	23	15
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-2004	37	15

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Statewide	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Comparable Surveys Total	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC

Note: NC = all surveys not comparable statewide.

Population Change Between Comparable Surveys

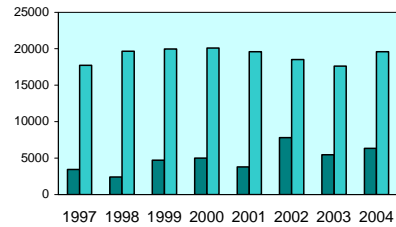


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	3437	2393	4695	5000	3800	7800	5463	6332
Antlered Harvest	17737	19656	19955	20100	19600	18500	17607	19605
% 4+ Points	38	38	33	41	26	33	33	42
Hunter Numbers	147244	116771	121364	ND	112320	124200	136200	146500

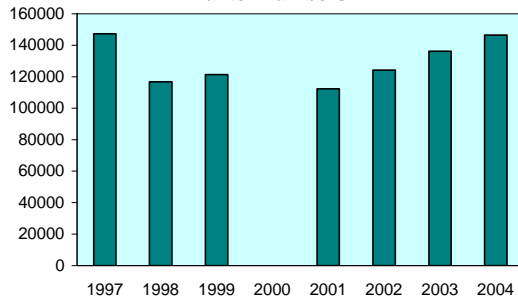
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.
Hunter numbers include all deer hunters.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 4+ Points

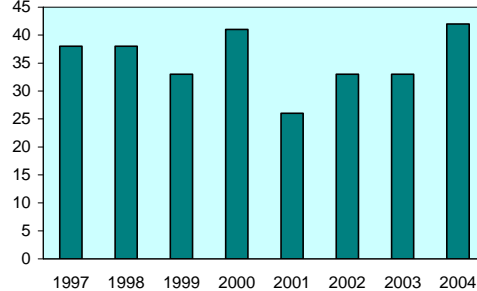


Figure 1. Mule Deer status, threshold, and criterion statewide.

**PROGRESS REPORT
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SUBPROJECT:	<u>1</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>1</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>2</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005</u>		

PANHANDLE REGION

Analysis Area 1 (Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 7, 9)

Management Objectives

The objective for Analysis Area 1 (Figure 2) is to maintain at least 30% 4-point bucks in the harvest on a 3-year, un-weighted running average. This management objective was met for 2002-2004 with 43%.

Historical Perspective

U.S. Forest Service (USFS) records and the memories of long-term residents both indicate big game, including mule deer, were relatively scarce in the early 1900s. Large-scale fires between 1910 and 1931 created large brush-fields favored by mule deer. This newly-created habitat, in combination with a major predator reduction program beginning in the early 1920s, allowed sustained growth of mule deer, as well as white-tailed deer and elk populations. Despite a series of severe winters, mule deer populations continued to increase and by the mid-1950s, mule deer were estimated by USFS and Fish and Game biologists to outnumber white-tailed deer in the central part of the Analysis Area.

Concern about over-browsed winter ranges and an overabundance of deer throughout the state, in general, led to aggressive management to reduce the deer population. By the early 1970s, this goal was accomplished and shorter seasons were authorized. Deer seasons in this Analysis Area have traditionally allowed hunters to take either mule deer or white-tailed deer under the same tag; however, antlerless harvest is restricted to white-tailed deer only.

Habitat Issues

Much of the land in these units is administered by USFS, with private lands mostly restricted to the valley bottoms. Recreation and timber management are the dominant human uses of the landscape in these units. This is in a generally moist region with nearly continuous canopy coverage. Mule deer mix with white-tailed deer during winter, although there is a tendency for mule deer to winter at slightly higher elevations. Mule deer depredations are nonexistent.

Much of mule deer habitat in this area is the result of large fires during the early 1900s, with some habitat created when large areas were block clear-cut during the 1960s. Currently, both influences have little effect on the landscape, and mule deer habitat can be expected to decline in quantity and quality as succession progresses, turning brush-fields back into timber.

Biological Issues

There is very little known about the ecology of mule deer in the heavily forested environments typical of this Analysis Area. The timbered nature of the landscape, combined with the relative scarcity of mule deer concentrations, does not allow aerial surveys to be used to monitor mule deer populations in this area. The influence of hunting on mule deer population dynamics is believed to be minor, based on the minor influence of hunting measured on white-tailed deer populations in the same areas. The relatively high proportion of ≥ 4 -point bucks within the antlered harvest is consistent with this hypothesis.

Inter-specific Issues

White-tailed deer, mule deer, and elk have sympatric ranges throughout the year in the Analysis Area. Mountain goat and moose distribution overlaps that of mule deer in some areas. The effects of inter-specific competition are unknown but are felt to be of minor consequence at existing population levels.

Predation Issues

Mountain lion, black bear, bobcat, and coyote exist throughout the area. Recently, a major increase in the mountain lion population has been detected leading to increased public concern over the impacts of predation of future mule deer populations. Predation is likely an important factor in the population dynamics of mule deer in this Analysis Area. Radio-telemetry studies conducted in the Priest River Basin during the late 1980s and early 1990s indicated this was the case with white-tailed deer.

Winter Feeding Issues

Winter feeding of mule deer has not occurred in these units in the past few years.

Information Requirements

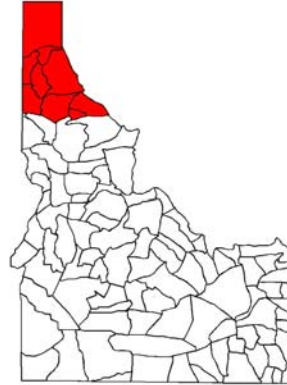
With the exception of check station information, the Department did not collect information specific to mule deer harvest in this Analysis Area from 1979 to 1995. Hunter effort has only been documented since 1996. Good harvest data is of utmost importance here because aerial surveys are impractical to conduct due to heavy tree cover and only small, scattered pockets of wintering mule deer. Basic ecological information is lacking on mule deer ecology in heavily timbered environments.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 1 (Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 7, 9)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
ND	ND	ND	NA
Total		ND	NA

Note : ND = no survey data available, NA = not applicable.



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	ND	ND	NA
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	45	30

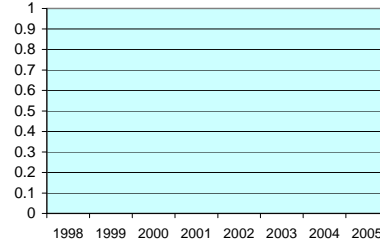
Note: ND = no survey data available, NA = not applicable.

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Comparable Surveys Total	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND

Note: ND = no survey data available.

**Population Change
Between Comparable Surveys**

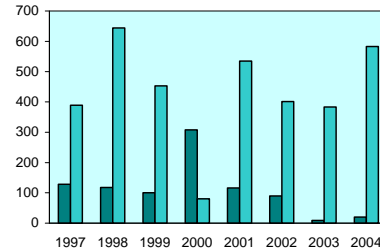


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	128	118	100	308	116	90	9	20
Antlered Harvest	389	644	453	80	535	401	383	583
% 4+ Points	39	29	32	42	42	45	42	49
Hunter Numbers	36893	30002	30805	ND	19140	19535	23566	25854

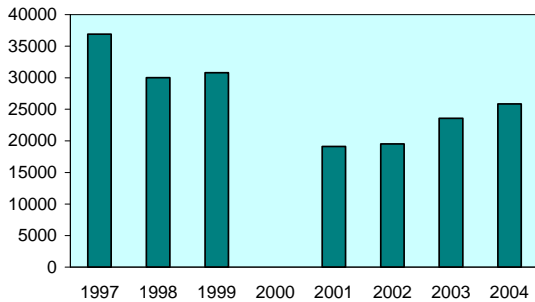
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. Hunter numbers include all deer hunters.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 4+ Points

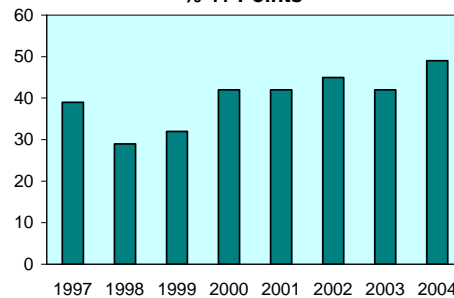


Figure 2. Mule Deer Analysis Area 1.

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PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-29</u>		<u>Inventories</u>
SUBPROJECT:	<u>2</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>1</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>2</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005</u>		

CLEARWATER REGION

Analysis Area 2 (Units 8, 8A, 10, 10A, 12, 15, 16)

Management Objectives

Given the relative lack of good mule deer habitat, low mule deer populations, and priorities placed on white-tailed deer and elk, no population trend areas nor antlerless harvest threshold levels will be established for Analysis Area 2 (Figure 3). The management objective will be limited to maintaining at least 30% 4-point bucks in the harvest.

Historical Perspective

Mule deer populations in this Analysis Area were historically low. Accounts from Lewis and Clark during the early 1800s suggested that very few animals were found throughout Clearwater River country. Populations probably did not change much until the large fires of the early 1900s that converted large expanses of unbroken forest into a mosaic of successional vegetation types. Populations probably peaked during the 1930s-1950s as a result of new, high-quality habitat and lack of competition by other ungulates. As elk and white-tailed deer populations increased and habitat changes including succession, development, and loss of key winter ranges occurred, mule deer populations likely decreased. Information derived from estimates made by Department wildlife managers suggested mule deer populations declined from around 2,000 in 1960 to about 600 in 1990.

Historically, white-tailed deer and mule deer have been managed as a “single species”; a single general season harvest framework was established for both species. In 1973, the Department began to offer some species-specific seasons in Clearwater Region. In 1998, the Clearwater Deer Tag was established and continued through the 2004 season.

Habitat Issues

This Analysis Area varies from the highly productive Palouse Prairie to the timbered ridges and mountainous terrain of upper Clearwater River. In Units 8 and 8A, dry-land agriculture began in the 1880s. Currently, non-forested land is tilled and only small patches of perennial vegetation

remain. Farmland in Units 8 and 8A has provided high-quality forage for deer. The flat terrain, low-elevation abundance of meadows and high productivity of the land make Units 8 and 8A highly productive for wildlife, but with a high likelihood of conflict with humans.

Units 10, 10A, 12, 15, and 16 are predominately timbered, with the majority of ownership being private timber companies, IDL, or USFS. Most private ownership is at lower elevations along the breaks of Clearwater River. Timber harvest began in Unit 10A during the early 1900s and increased dramatically in the 1970s. In 1971, Dworshak Reservoir flooded approximately 45 miles of North Fork Clearwater River in Unit 10A and permanently removed thousands of acres of prime low-elevation big game winter range. Until the 1930s, wildfire was the primary habitat disturbance mechanism in Units 10, 12, and 16. Between 1900 and 1934, approximately 70% of the Lochsa River drainage was burned by wildfires. From the 1920s to 1990, thousands of miles of road were built for timber harvest in Units 10A, 10, 12, 15, and 16. In 1964, most of the southern portion of Unit 12 was designated as part of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

Construction of new home-sites has decreased available mule deer winter range. This Analysis Area is characterized by high road densities in the western portion and backcountry and limited access except for trails in the eastern portions. Noxious weeds such as yellowstar thistle and spotted knapweed are out-competing native vegetation on mule deer spring and winter ranges.

Depredations have been rare in this area due to low mule deer populations. Mule deer densities within agricultural areas of Analysis Area 2 have rarely exceeded landowner tolerance levels. Currently, there is little depredation concern involving mule deer in this Analysis Area.

Biological Issues

Although mule deer have never been numerous in this area, small populations do still exist where good quality habitat is available. These units are managed mainly for elk and white-tailed deer populations. Since habitats within this Analysis Area have low potential for supporting substantial numbers of mule deer, management emphasis will be placed on maintaining populations.

Inter-specific Issues

A decline in cattle grazing and successive years of drought during the late 1980s and early 1990s may have contributed to rangeland changes. Intensive logging has created extensive brushy areas on winter ranges. These shifts in vegetation have resulted in increases in white-tailed deer and elk populations, creating possible competition with mule deer. Current research at Starkey suggests that elk may displace mule deer.

Predation Issues

Mountain lion numbers increased in this Analysis Area during the early and mid-1990s, but more recently have leveled off and or declined in most of these units. A likely reason for the initial increase was probably due to a dramatic increase in white-tailed deer numbers. Black bear numbers have remained relatively static throughout most of this area for the past decade. Coyote

numbers remain high and may contribute to some fawn mortality. Increases in road densities during the past several decades have contributed to increased predator hunting opportunities. Wolves have established themselves in Units 10, 10A, 12, and 15 due to reintroduction efforts by USFWS and likely contribute to deer mortality.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency winter feeding of mule deer has not occurred in recent history in this Analysis Area.

Harvest

Total harvest in Analysis Area 2 units in 2004 was estimated at 261 mule deer based on harvest report cards. This represents a 2% decrease in harvest from 2003. Total deer hunter numbers in Analysis Area 2 were estimated at 18,100 with an average success rate of 1% in 2004. Harvest statistics for Analysis Area 2 units tend to fluctuate, probably due to low sample sizes for mule deer harvest and the fact that most hunters target whitetails.

Information Requirements

Harvest and aerial survey information for this Analysis Area are limited. Low mule deer numbers make it difficult to assess population levels with aerial surveys. Incidental mule deer observations will continue to be recorded during aerial surveys for elk. Improved harvest information may be the best way to assess population trends in this area. Prior to 1994, all harvest data was for mule deer and white-tailed deer combined. Future data collection efforts should continue to be separated for both deer species.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 2 (Units 8, 8A, 10, 10A, 12, 15, 16)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
ND	ND	ND	NA
Total		ND	NA

Note: ND = no survey data available, NA = not applicable.



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	ND	ND	NA
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	51	30

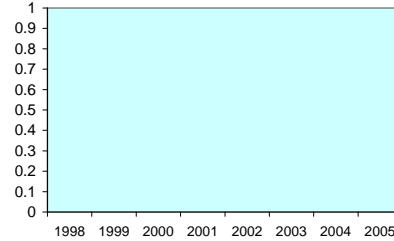
Note: ND = no survey data available. NA = not applicable.

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Comparable Surveys Total	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Population Change Between Comparable Surveys

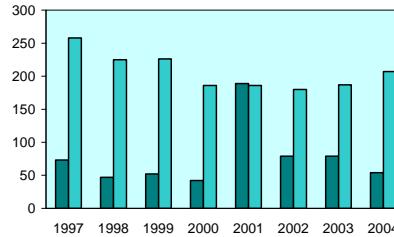


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	73	47	52	42	189	79	79	54
Antlered Harvest	258	225	226	186	186	180	187	207
% 4+ Points	21	27	22	39	54	41	49	55
Hunter Numbers	5521	3674	3949	ND	16133	16205	19439	18100

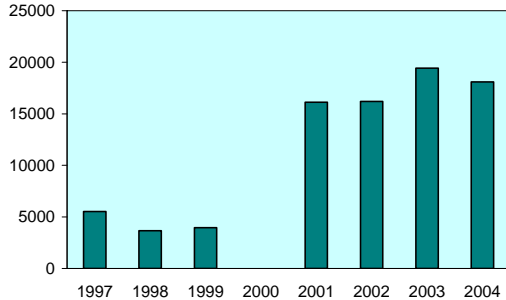
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.
Hunter numbers prior to 1997 include all deer hunters.
ND = no data available.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 4+ Points

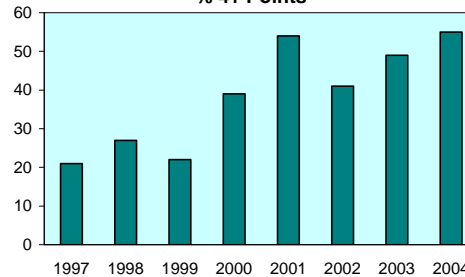


Figure 3. Mule deer Analysis Area 2.

Analysis Area 3 (Units 11, 11A, 13, 14, 18, 23)

Management Objectives

Given the limited amount of aerial survey population information available for Analysis Area 3 (Figure 4), an antlerless harvest threshold has not been established. However, the Department will make efforts to annually monitor the newly established White Bird trend area and consider developing a threshold value. The current emphasis is to increase mule deer numbers and buck quality; therefore, the Department will recommend restrictive antlerless opportunity until improved population information is available and a threshold is established. Antlered controlled hunts were established in 1998 in order to improve buck numbers and quality. An additional objective is to maintain at least 30% 4-point bucks in the harvest.

Historical Perspective

Mule deer populations in this Analysis Area were historically low. Accounts from Lewis and Clark during the 1800s suggested that very few animals were found throughout Clearwater River country. Populations probably did not change much until the large fires of the early 1900s that converted large expanses of unbroken forest into a mosaic of successional vegetation types, and large numbers of domestic livestock altered grass-dominated habitats into greater amounts of shrub cover. Populations probably peaked during the 1930s-1960s as a result of new, high-quality habitat and lack of competition by other ungulates. As elk and white-tailed deer populations increased and habitat changes including succession, development, and loss of key winter ranges occurred, mule deer populations likely decreased. Information derived from estimates made by Department wildlife managers suggests mule deer numbers in this area declined from around 23,000 in 1960 to about 15,000 in 1990.

Historically, white-tailed deer and mule deer were managed as a “single species”; a single general season harvest framework was established for both species. In 1973, the Department began to offer some species-specific seasons in Clearwater Region. In 1998, the Clearwater Deer Tag was established and continued through the 2004 season.

Habitat Issues

Habitat productivity varies widely throughout the Analysis Area with steep, dry, river-canyon grasslands having low annual precipitation, to higher elevation forests having good habitat productivity and greater precipitation. Late successional forest cover types have become fragmented within the area. Various weeds and non-native grasses such as yellowstar thistle and cheat grass have disturbed expansive acreages of grassland cover types in this Analysis Area. Road density is moderate and access is restricted in many areas. This results in medium to low vulnerability of big game to hunters, especially within the Snake River and Salmon River canyons below White Bird.

Historically, sheep and cattle ranchers homesteaded the canyon lands in this Analysis Area, while farmers settled prairie land. Around the turn of the century, northern Unit 11 and the prairie land in Unit 11A was under intensive use for dry-land agriculture and numerous orchards

were planted in the Lewiston area. As settlement increased, the forested portions of the area were intensively logged, especially on private land. The forests were frequently high-graded, and the existing forests still show the scars. In addition, intensive-grazing practices degraded many meadow areas and canyons, allowing invasion of noxious weed species, especially in drier areas.

This Analysis Area contains large tracts of both privately- and publicly-owned lands. Units 11 and 11A are mostly private land except for the Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area (WMA) along the Snake and Salmon rivers. Most of Unit 13 has been under private ownership since settlement and is managed for agriculture and livestock. Historically, sheepherders ran their flocks in the canyons of Units 14, 18, and 23, and logging occurred in the forested areas of these units. Units 14 and 18 are two-thirds public lands with the remaining private land located at lower elevations along Salmon River. The majority of Hells Canyon Wilderness Area, designated in 1975, is in Unit 18. Unit 23 is mostly public land with some private land located at lower elevations along Little Salmon River.

Grazing by cattle is gradually decreasing in the Analysis Area due to reductions in USFS and BLM allotments, along with land ownership shifting from private to public. Several large ranches remain in private ownership with limited access. Available mule deer winter range is being encroached upon by construction of summer homes and resorts along Snake and Salmon rivers.

Landowners registered enough complaints of mule deer causing damage to small grain, legume, and hay crops during the 1980s that a special mule deer season was developed in the Waha and Maloney Creek areas of Unit 11. This season helped reduce damage complaints and the Maloney Creek portion of the hunt was eliminated in 1997 due to the decline of mule deer in southern Unit 11. This decline was also experienced in agricultural areas of Units 11A, 13, 14, 18, and 23. Landowner complaints in Unit 11A relate to damage caused to rapeseed, bluegrass, and winter wheat. Complaints in Units 13, 14, 18, and 23 involve damage to irrigated alfalfa, orchards, standing hay, and stored hay on agricultural land along the Salmon River breaks. Currently, there are only a few depredation concerns involving mule deer in Analysis Area 3. Since 1998, antlerless mule deer have increased in areas surrounding agricultural fields, especially in portions of Units 11A and 14.

During 2000, fire burned a large portion of Unit 11 along the Salmon and Snake rivers from Maloney Creek down to Dough Creek and all the way to the ridgeline in most places. This fire alteration on the landscape is just now being analyzed for impacts. Grasses and native vegetation are being replanted and many of the bulldozer lines recovered. Even so, it will be years before the shrub component fully recovers and decades before conifer regeneration provides thermal and hiding cover.

Biological Issues

Poor productivity and declining mature buck numbers as reflected in decreasing fawn:doe:buck ratios, a decrease in total numbers, and a 50% decrease in harvest from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, resulted in concerns for the mule deer herds in these units. In 1992, aerial surveys in Units 14 and 18 indicated buck:doe ratios at 7:100 and 13:100, respectively. These concerns led

to the implementation of antlered-only controlled hunts beginning in 1998 in Units 11, 11A, 13, 14 and 18.

A December 1999 sightability survey in Unit 14 resulted in an estimate of 2,622 mule deer with a buck:doe:fawn ratio of 18:100:50. Unit 14 was resurveyed in December 2004. The survey resulted in an estimate of 2,814 total mule deer with a buck:doe:fawn ratio of 34:100:61.

The White Bird Trend Area survey conducted in December 1999 indicated a total population of 1,725 mule deer. This represented a 26% decrease in total numbers from the same sub-units flown during the early 1990s. Subsequent White Bird trend area surveys conducted during the 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 winters indicated a stable population with increasing buck:doe (22:100 average) and fawn:doe (53:100 average) ratios. The survey conducted in 2003-2004 had similar buck:doe (23:100) and fawn:doe (47:100) ratios. However, the total estimate increased by 54 percent over the 2002-2003 count to 2,654 mule deer. It is likely that this increase can be attributed primarily to a change in deer distribution (due to a significant snowfall event just prior to the survey) rather than an increase in the deer population. The 2005 survey yielded results similar to pre-2004 levels with a total estimate of 1,937 with a buck:doe:fawn ratio of 20:100:63.

In 1990, controlled hunt permit numbers in Unit 11 were reduced significantly. Since then, fawn:doe:buck ratios have improved along with percent 4-point bucks and total buck numbers. Due to declines in mule deer populations, Units 11A, 13, 14, and 18 were changed from general hunts to controlled hunts in 1998. Unit 11A was surveyed specifically for mule deer for the first time during the 2003-2004 winter. A total of 1,798 mule deer were estimated with a buck:doe:fawn ratio of 20:100:52.

The deer population in Unit 23 increased dramatically in the late 1980s but subsequently declined in the severe winter of 1992-1993; it appears to be increasing since then. General hunting opportunities have been maintained in Unit 23.

Inter-specific Issues

A decline in cattle grazing and successive years of drought during the late 1980s and early 1990s may have contributed to rangeland shifting from forbs to grasses. Intensive logging has created extensive brushy areas on winter ranges. These shifts in vegetation have resulted in increases in white-tailed deer and elk populations, creating competition with mule deer on both winter and summer ranges.

Predation Issues

Mountain lion harvest has increased slightly in this area during the past several decades and most likely reflects an increase in mountain lion numbers, which may be contributing to lower deer densities. Bear populations and harvest have remained relatively stable in this Analysis Area. The semi-arid climate and sparse timber limit the extent of highly productive bear foods in Units 11, 11A, 13, 14, and 18 and does not allow for bears to reach the densities they do in more timbered habitats such as Unit 23. However, due to extensive old homestead sites in these units, numerous fruit trees and shrubs were planted and remain in the areas today, providing excellent

bear foods in autumn. Some of the largest bears in the state annually come from Unit 11. Bears are not thought to have an effect on deer recruitment in this Analysis Area. Wolves have not yet established themselves in this Analysis Area except in Units 14 and 18. They can be expected to establish more of a presence in the future.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency winter feeding of mule deer has not occurred in this Analysis Area in recent history.

Harvest

Total harvest in Analysis Area 3 in 2004 was estimated at 1,204 mule deer based on mandatory harvest report cards. This represents a 34% increase in harvest from 2003 (897) and is 20% higher than the previous 5-year average of 1,000. Total hunter numbers were estimated at 8,278.

Information Requirements

Harvest and aerial survey information for this Analysis Area are limited. Improved estimates are needed for yearly harvest data. Previous to 1994, all harvest data was for mule deer and white-tailed deer combined. Data should continue to be separated for both deer species. Initiation of controlled hunts in Units 11A, 13, 14, and 18 in 1998 is improving harvest information. Units 11 and 14 are the only units within this Analysis Area that have been flown for unit-wide winter-range surveys since 1994. The aerial survey of White Bird Trend Area was first flown in December 1999. The intent is to fly the White Bird Trend Area each December to obtain annual population estimates and more accurately establish trends in deer numbers and herd composition for this area.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 3 (Units 11, 11A, 13, 14, 18, 23)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
White Bird (13, 14, 18)	2005	1937	NA
Total		1937	NA

Note: NA = not applicable.



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

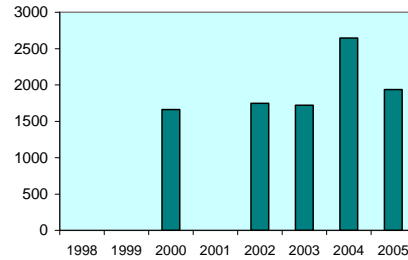
	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	2005	20	15
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	55	30

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
White Bird (13, 14, 18)	ND	ND	1662	ND	1747	1722	2645	1937
Comparable Surveys Total	ND	ND	1662	ND	1747	1722	2645	1937

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Population Change Between Comparable Surveys

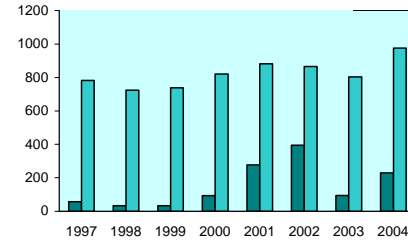


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	57	33	33	93	277	395	94	229
Antlered Harvest	782	724	739	821	882	865	803	975
% 4+ Points	32	51	52	48	52	55	50	55
Hunter Numbers	4123	2234	2119	ND	8375	3127	2726	8278

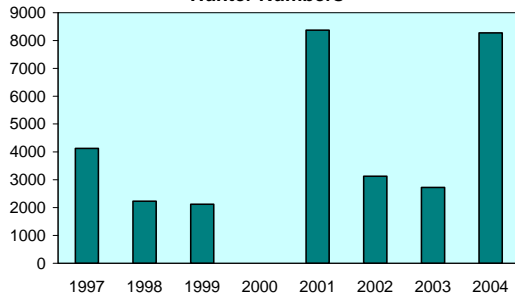
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.
Hunter numbers prior to 1997 include all deer hunters.
ND = no data available.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. Hunter numbers prior to 1997 include all deer hunters.

Hunter Numbers



% 4+ Points

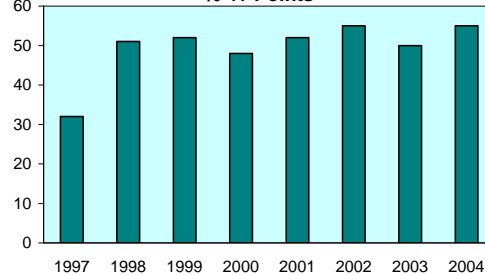


Figure 4. Mule deer Analysis Area 3.

**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>Mule Deer Surveys and</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-29</u>		<u>Inventories</u>
SUBPROJECT:	<u>3</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>1</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>2</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005</u>		

SOUTHWEST REGION

Analysis Area 6 (Units 22, 24, 31, 32, 32A, 33, 34, 35, 39)

Management Objectives

Objectives for Analysis Area 6 (Figure 5) are to maintain buck harvest above 30% 4+ points and maintain buck:doe ratios from herd composition surveys above the statewide minimum of 15 bucks per 100 does. Antlerless harvest will be restricted when trend area deer populations are below threshold levels of 3,700 deer in Unit 22, 3,400 in Unit 31, 2,000 in Unit 33, and 20,000 in Unit 39. Conversely, liberal antlerless harvest will be encouraged when deer numbers exceed these threshold values. These values represent intermediate populations between current status and numbers observed during the late 1980s when deer populations were considered higher than could be supported during a normal winter and presented depredation concerns for agri-businesses.

Historical Perspective

These units represent the major deer units in Southwest Region. In late 1800s, deer herds were reduced by extensive meat hunting throughout the area. Hunting was restricted in the early 1900s. The subsequent increase in deer herds led to large winter mortality in some areas, extensive winter feeding programs, and concern for the status of vegetation on deer winter range.

Over one-third of Idaho's population lives near these big game units. These units provide deer hunting opportunity, but that opportunity has to be closely regulated to prevent over-harvest. This is particularly true for does throughout the area and for bucks in the open sagebrush habitats where they are more vulnerable.

Habitat Issues

The habitats range from the Snake River breaks to sagebrush ranges in the Payette and Weiser River drainage to the Sawtooth Mountain Range. The majority of mule deer summer on land administered by USFS. Mule deer typically spend the summers in forest habitats and move to lower sagebrush/grass winter ranges. Low-elevation winter ranges consist of more private land

than summer ranges. Logging, grazing, and fires have substantially affected the condition of these ranges. Logging activity has increased shrub fields and provided increased forage for mule deer. The effect of fire on summer ranges has been positive, improving forage conditions for deer. Effects of fire on low-elevation winter ranges have been more negative. In many cases, fires have reduced the shrubs that deer are dependent on during winter. An exception has been some winter ranges burned with cooler spring fires to maintain important shrubs species such as bitterbrush and sagebrush. The proliferation of noxious weeds poses a threat to mule deer winter range.

In the Boise area, expansion of home developments onto mule deer winter range has been a significant problem. This urban development is impacting wintering areas of one-third of the mule deer herd in Unit 39.

Biological Issues

Population performance in this area is closely associated with winter severity and body condition of deer when entering the winter period. Buck harvest parameters are at 30% 4+ points. Aerial survey information indicates buck:doe ratios are near 15:100 or below in most places.

Inter-specific Issues

Elk densities are currently high throughout most of the area. These high elk densities may be limiting the ability of the area to support mule deer. There are some white-tailed deer in Units 22, 24, 32, 32A, and 33. White-tailed deer populations do not seem to be expanding their distribution. Intensive cattle and sheep grazing are present on much of the range. Competition among species is largely unknown.

Predation Issues

Bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions, and black bears are the large predators throughout the area. Wolves occur in Units 22, 24, 33, 34, 35, and 39. The impact of these large predators on mule deer is largely unknown.

Winter Feeding Issues

Winter feeding has been fairly common in these units. In the Garden Valley area, winter feeding occurs about 2 out of 5 years. In other areas, extensive winter feeding occurs less often, the most recent being winter 1992-1993.

Winter feeding operations have been widespread and controversial throughout these units. Early attempts to use hay to feed deer in winter were not very successful. The current pelletized ration can effectively support deer through tough winter conditions. During the last 10 years, winter feeding operations have centered around the Boise Front, Garden Valley, and the Weiser/Brownlee Reservoir areas.

Information Requirements

The large area in these units necessitates several trend areas. These trend areas need to be surveyed on an annual basis to determine the status of the herd. There is little information on herd composition in many of these units. This data collection effort needs to be increased. Information on inter-specific competition is also needed.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 6 (Units 22, 24, 31, 32, 32A, 33, 34, 35, 39)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
(22)	2004	4295	3700
(31)	2004	3834	3400
Garden Valley (33)	2004	1546	2000
Boise Front (39)	2005	26520	20000
Total		36195	29100



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

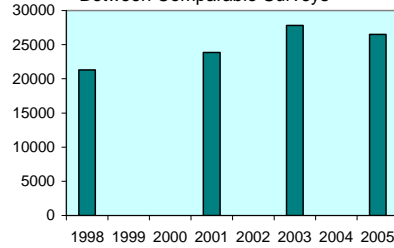
	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio (22)	2004	11	15
(32A)	2003	19	15
Boise Front (39)	2004	14	15
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	25	30

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
(22)	3687	ND	4091	4318	3725	3193	4295	ND
(31)	3433	ND	3826	4450	3732	3207	3834	ND
Garden Valley (33)	2050	1869	ND	ND	ND	ND	1546	ND
Boise Front (39)	21300	ND	ND	23861	ND	27800	ND	26520
Comparable Surveys Total	21300	0	0	23861	0	27800	0	26520

Note: ND = no survey data available, estimates within parenthesis are based on information other than sightability surveys

**Population Change
Between Comparable Surveys**

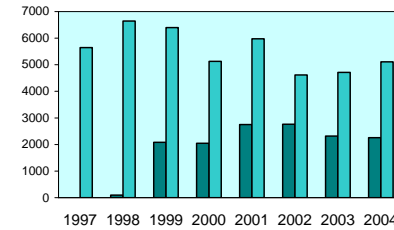


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	0	98	2081	2045	2746	2764	2317	2256
Antlered Harvest	5643	6638	6397	5127	5970	4611	4714	5109
% 4+ Points	27	26	18	25	21	21	21	32
Hunter Numbers	23296	23485	29021	ND	26365	26322	28216	27821

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

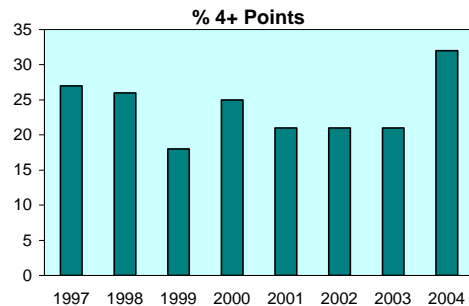
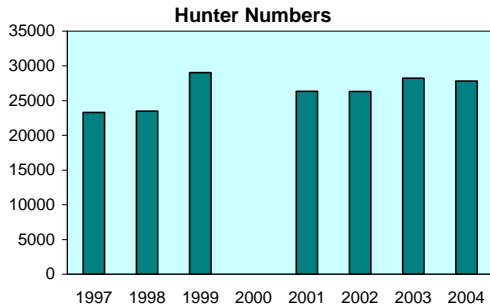


Figure 5. Mule deer Analysis Area 6.

Analysis Area 11 (Unit 38)

Management Objectives

The objective for Analysis Area 11 (Figure 6) is to maintain the deer population at or below its current level. The area is not likely to become a major deer hunting destination. With limited sportsman's desire for hunting in this unit, minimizing agricultural depredation is the major goal.

Historical Perspective

This unit contains the irrigated farmland and orchards in the Treasure Valley. There is some high desert habitat in the Snake River Birds of Prey Area. The majority of the deer are associated with the Boise, Snake, and Payette River corridors and nearby orchards and vineyards. With the density of residences and developed agricultural properties in the area, big game hunters have been restricted to short range weapons. The portion of Unit 32 in the Emmett Valley has similar characteristics to Unit 38 and is managed under the same management goals.

Relatively few hunters specifically plan their deer hunts for Unit 38. Most deer are harvested incidentally to upland bird or waterfowl hunting. The current season (Appendix A) is either-sex, short-range weapons only, for 50 days. The harvest has remained around 200 deer.

Habitat Issues

The majority of land is in private ownership. High value crops produced by agriculture make deer depredations a major factor. Deer depredation complaints are common. Depredation hunts and kill permits are used on a regular basis in this area.

Biological Issues

The agricultural nature of this unit provides excellent habitat for good deer production. Good deer production is not desired in this unit due to high incidence of deer depredation. Deer populations in this unit are managed with liberal seasons to maintain low densities.

Inter-specific Issues

Mule deer are the primary species in the unit. White-tailed deer were reintroduced onto the C.J. Strike and Fort Boise WMAs in the 1980s. Whitetails deer are well established and contribute to some depredation problems.

Predation Issues

Coyotes, bobcats, domestic dogs, and some mountain lions are the significant large predators in this area. There are no wolves or black bears in the area. The impact of predators on deer is largely unknown, but does not present a major management issue.

Winter Feeding Issues

Winter feeding has not been required in this area because of the mild climate in the Treasure Valley.

Information Requirements

This area will not be managed to provide a significant amount of deer hunting opportunity. The primary need for deer management in this area are techniques to limit damage to agricultural crops in an economically realistic way.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 11 (Unit 38)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest Threshold
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Total Deer
ND	ND	ND	NA
Total		ND	NA

Note: ND = no survey data available, NA = not applicable.



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	ND	ND	NA
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	21	25

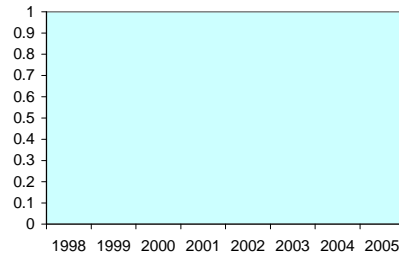
Note: ND = no survey data available, estimates within parenthesis are based on information other than sightability surveys.

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Comparable Surveys Total	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Population Change Between Comparable Surveys

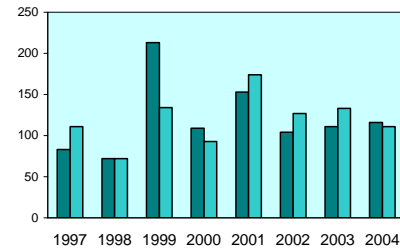


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	83	72	213	109	153	104	111	116
Antlered Harvest	111	72	134	93	174	127	133	111
% 4+ Points	55	36	14	22	20	24	20	19
Hunter Numbers	535	427	860	ND	1304	1068	1224	875

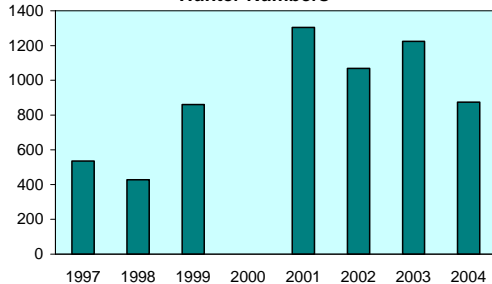
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 4+ Points

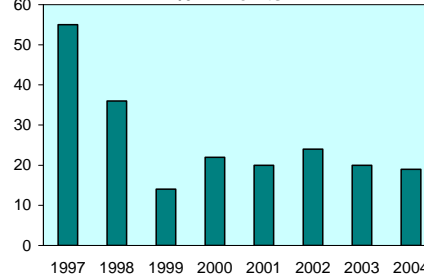


Figure 6. Mule deer Analysis Area 11.

Analysis Area 12 (Units 40, 41, 42, 46, 47)

Management Objectives

Post-season buck:doe ratios for Analysis Area 12 (Figure 7) will be maintained at a minimum of 25 bucks per 100 does and the percent 4+ points in the harvest will be maintained at no less than 35%. The lack of trend area surveys makes it difficult to set measurable population objectives for this area. Usually, the level of depredation complaints is the key indicator of the need to consider antlerless harvest.

Historical Perspective

Units 40, 41, 42, and 47 have traditionally supported substantial deer herds and provided hunting opportunity for southern Idaho hunters. Unit 46 has never supported a large resident deer herd, but nonetheless has provided important general hunting opportunity. During the 1930s and 1940s, deer populations were low and hunting opportunities were very limited in these units. By the 1950s and 1960s, deer numbers had increased to very high levels and depredation complaints were common. Deer seasons were liberalized and, in some years, extended to mid-December. Hunters who ventured into Owyhee County could take their pick of “a deer behind every bush.” In 1955, an either-sex deer hunt with a 2-deer bag limit was authorized in parts of Area 12 and 5,500 deer were harvested. Liberal hunting seasons continued into the early 1970s when an area-wide decline in deer populations resulted in more conservative hunting seasons. During the 1980s, harvest averaged 1,500 bucks and a few hundred does per year. Since 1991, hunters have been restricted to taking 2-point or smaller bucks during the general season in Units 40, 41, and 42. Unit 47 has been managed with controlled hunts since 1970, and general antlered-only seasons have been maintained in Unit 46. All Analysis Area 12 units have controlled hunts for any buck in November with a dozen or more applicants for each permit.

These deer herds use habitat in Oregon, Nevada, and Idaho. As much as 80% of the deer herd in western Owyhee County migrates to Oregon to winter. On the eastern side of Owyhee County, substantial numbers of deer migrate north from Nevada to winter in Idaho. This interstate mixing of deer populations makes evaluation of the status of Idaho’s herd very difficult.

Habitat Issues

About 90% of the land area is in public ownership. BLM manages the majority of the area, and IDL administers smaller segments. The area is primarily high-desert habitat dominated by sagebrush-grass and juniper cover types. Isolated mountain ranges and foothill areas include mixed mountain shrub and aspen types.

There have been several major changes in mule deer habitat over the last 30 years. Fires have destroyed large portions of winter ranges in Units 41 and 46. Burned areas are now dominated by planted crested wheatgrass or cheatgrass and have little browse to support wintering deer. In recent years, fire rehabilitation efforts have included sagebrush where deer habitat range was a concern. In Unit 42, there has been a substantial encroachment of juniper into former summer

and winter ranges. In several areas where juniper has replaced more important browse species, the number of wintering deer has been reduced from several thousand to a few hundred deer.

Biological Issues

Very little mule deer aerial survey data exists for this zone.

Inter-specific Issues

Currently, elk populations are relatively small in this area. There are fewer than a hundred elk east of Highway 51 and about 600 elk on the west side of Owyhee County. This elk herd will be managed to maintain the current population level, and it is not anticipated that elk populations will constitute a significant management concern for mule deer.

Livestock grazing is and has been the predominant land use in the area. In the early part of the century, excessive grazing by livestock combined with fire suppression severely altered plant communities to favor shrubs, and mule deer benefited. Extensive areas have burned during the past several decades and much of the sagebrush steppe was reseeded to crested wheatgrass to benefit livestock grazing or was invaded by cheatgrass. The reestablishment of sagebrush in many areas will likely conflict with livestock grazing interests. Livestock numbers are currently significantly less than during the early part of the century. Serious conflicts are localized on winter ranges and critical riparian areas rather than widespread.

Predation Issues

Coyotes, bobcats, and mountain lions are the large predators in this area. The mountain lion population increased during the late 1980s and early 1990s when deer numbers were high and remain healthy. In local areas, mountain lion and coyote predation could have some impact on the deer population, but the relationship is poorly understood. There are no wolves or black bears in the area.

Winter Feeding Issues

The remoteness of winter deer herds has limited the demand for and the ability to conduct supplemental winter feeding. No winter feeding has occurred for many years in these units. The Department will work with the Regional Winter Feeding Advisory Committee to discourage unsanctioned winter feeding and to identify any situations where feeding may be appropriate.

Information Requirements

The primary data need for these units is population information. Winter ranges contain some mixture of deer from Oregon/Idaho or Nevada/Idaho. Herds can be surveyed in winter, but status of these wintering animals needs to be allocated to the appropriate hunting season herds. This lack of population information on these important deer herds is a concern to managers.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 12 (Units 40, 41, 42, 46, 47)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
ND	ND	ND	NA
Total		ND	NA

Note: ND = no survey data available, NA = not applicable.



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	ND	ND	25
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	29	35

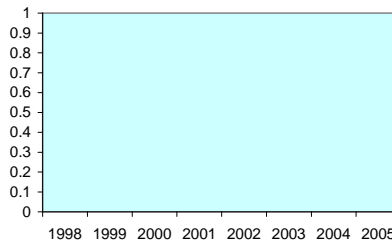
Note: ND = no survey data available.

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Comparable Surveys Total	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Population Change Between Comparable Surveys

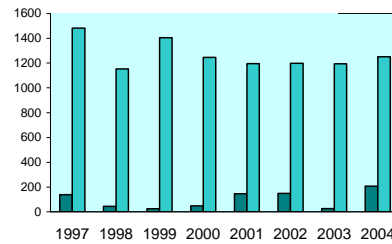


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	139	45	26	48	146	149	27	208
Antlered Harvest	1482	1152	1405	1247	1196	1199	1195	1251
% 4+ Points	48	36.8	28	19	21	21	18	49
Hunter Numbers	4450	3862	3937	ND	3935	4260	4038	4546

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.
%4+ points does not include 2-point only hunts.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

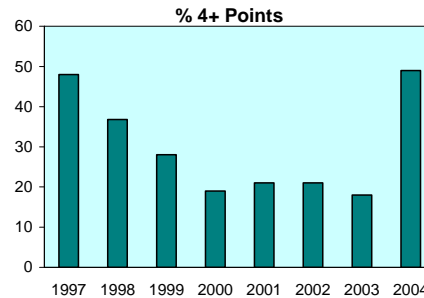
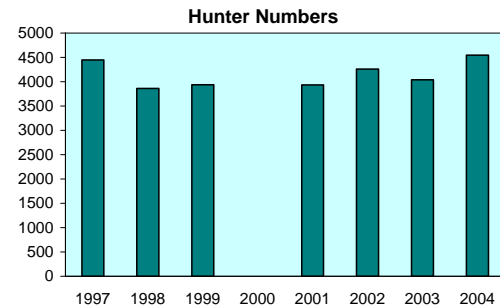


Figure 7. Mule deer Analysis Area 12.

**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>Mule Deer Surveys and</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-29</u>		<u>Inventories</u>
SUBPROJECT:	<u>4</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>1</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>2</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005</u>		

MAGIC VALLEY REGION

Analysis Area 7 (Units 43, 44, 45, 48, 52)

Management Objectives

An objective for Analysis Area 7 (Figure 8) is to restrict antlerless harvest when trend area populations are less than 5,000 deer; conversely, antlerless harvest will be considered when deer numbers exceed this threshold value. Additionally, deer populations will be managed to maintain or exceed 20 bucks per 100 does in the pre-winter population and >45% bucks with 4-point or larger antlers in the October harvest.

Historical Perspective

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, mule deer populations in Analysis Area 7 were reduced to very low levels by unregulated harvest. Miners, market hunters, and other inhabitants of the area relied heavily on deer and elk meat. Mule deer habitat was also greatly altered during this period by excessive livestock use. Dense shrubs fields, dominated by sagebrush and bitterbrush, replaced plant communities dominated by grasses. This pronounced change in habitat combined with restrictions on deer hunting prompted increases in deer numbers. Hunting seasons were closed or very conservative through 1940. At that time, winter ranges were considered to be over-browsed and in a downward trend, and hunting seasons were designed to reduce deer numbers. Deer numbers remained strong through the 1950s and 1960s. Following a significant decline in numbers during the mid-1970s, deer populations increased again during the late 1980s, a period of prolonged drought conditions and mild winters. During winter 1992-1993, deer populations declined by approximately 50%. Deer had entered the winter in poor physiological condition and high over-winter mortality of fawns and bucks occurred. Since 1993, deer numbers have increased in this area but remain below the population levels of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Harvest management includes both general (Units 43 and 48) and controlled (Units 44, 45, and 52) hunting seasons. The controlled hunts are very popular with sportsmen desiring quality, high hunter success, low hunter density, and the opportunity to observe many deer. The Bennett Hills (Unit 45) has had controlled hunting seasons since 1972 and has the most highly sought-

after mule deer permits in Idaho. Drawing odds for the November buck hunt have averaged 1:50. Since the 1993 decline, liberal antlerless hunts have been maintained in Units 43, 44, and 45 to slow the recovery of deer on deteriorated winter ranges in Unit 45.

Units 45 and 52 provide most of the winter habitat for deer in this Analysis Area. Important winter ranges include: Black Butte Hills (Unit 52), Picabo Hills (Unit 52), and King Hill (Unit 45).

Habitat Issues

This Analysis Area encompasses about 5,487 mi² of which 24% is managed by USFS, 49% by BLM, 5% by IDL, and 22% is private land.

Most of Unit 52 and the southern portion of Unit 45 is primarily arid semi-desert dominated by sagebrush-grass. The Mount Bennett Hills in the northern portion of Unit 45 is a low range of mountains or high plateaus consisting of sagebrush-grass and mixed mountain shrub communities with small pockets of aspen and Douglas fir on northern exposures and more mesic sites. Units 43, 44, and 48 include the Soldier, Boulder, and Smoky Mountains. Mountain shrub and mountain big sagebrush communities are common on south-facing exposures while northern exposures are timbered.

Grazing by cattle and domestic sheep is the primary land use on public and private lands. Conflicts tend to be localized rather than widespread and include excessive use of forage on winter ranges and riparian area degradation.

Overall habitat security for deer during the hunting season is good in Units 43 and 48. Seasonal road closures implemented primarily for elk security also benefit mule deer. Cover is relatively open and road densities are higher in Units 44, 45, and 52, necessitating controlled hunts to maintain the desired buck age structure.

Important habitat issues include: 1) Succession, and in some cases heavy livestock use, has caused a general decline in the health of aspen communities. Many stands have become decadent and/or are being replaced by conifers. 2) Winter ranges, primarily in Units 45 and 52, are considered to be limiting mule deer in this Analysis Area. Winter ranges are predominately sagebrush-grass and generally do not have a strong bitterbrush component. Much of the winter habitat has been used heavily by deer and livestock for many years and is considered in poor condition in many areas. Medusahead rye has invaded winter ranges following fires and is considered a serious concern to the long-term health of habitat. The prevalence of cheatgrass has also increased in deer winter habitats following fire and/or prolonged heavy grazing pressures that have depleted other understory species. Rehabilitation and protection of these very critical winter ranges will require careful long-term planning that will maintain adequate browse for wintering deer and improve understory vegetation. Conservation easements and/or acquisition of private lands in strategic locations would also help increase or maintain winter carrying capacity for deer. 3) Timber harvest and consequent road-building activities continue in portions of Unit 43. Access management will continue to be an important issue for deer and elk management. Increased access frequently leads to more conservative and restricted hunting

season frameworks. 4) Private interests own or control access to important summer and fall habitats in Units 44 and 45. This has been a subject of much concern by hunters unable to gain access to areas they wish to hunt. 5) Depredation problems can become acute during severe winters in the King Hill/Bliss areas of Unit 45. Private land used for growing crops and pasturing livestock occurs along the lower perimeter of deer winter range. On Camas Prairie (Units 44 and 45), summer depredation problems on growing alfalfa are common during drought years.

Biological Issues

Data from the King Hill trend area in Unit 45 suggest mule deer populations in the Analysis Area have increased substantially since 1994. Prior to the decline in deer in 1993, deer populations exceeded winter range carrying capacity and damage to private property was extreme in some years. The short-term management goal has been to maintain the population lower than 1988-1992 levels through liberal antlerless harvest. Despite the liberal antlerless harvest strategy, the estimated population in the trend area increased by 80% from 1994 to 1999. Since 1999, the trend area deer numbers have been stable at about 8,000 deer. Herd composition survey data suggest a decline in reproductive performance measured in December from 85 fawns:100 does (1973-1992) to 65 fawns:100 does (1993-2003). Observed recruitment rates since 1991 have ranged from 21% in 1993 to 42% in 1996 and have averaged 33%, sufficient to allow modest population increases. Low recruitment in 2002 (22%) resulted in an estimated 23% decline in the spring population. In 2003, observed recruitment increased to 31% and, combined with a 40% reduction in antlerless permits, resulted in a 24% increase in spring deer numbers. Observed recruitment in 2004 was 33%. Buck to doe ratios are currently at 29 bucks per 100 does, well above the objective of 20 bucks per 100 does.

Inter-specific Issues

The Analysis Area supports a substantial population of elk, a few moose, antelope, and at higher elevations, mountain goats. The relationship between deer and elk is presently unclear but is not believed to be a significant issue because there is little or no known overlap in winter use areas between deer and elk. On the Bennett Hills Front deer winter ranges, mule deer will maintain management priority over elk if there are competitive concerns during winter. The antelope population on the Camas Prairie and northern portion of Unit 52 is healthy and has been increasing (2004). Many of these antelope migrate to Bennett Hills Front winter ranges and co-occupy winter habitat with mule deer. Mule deer and antelope will receive equal management consideration on these winter ranges.

Cattle and domestic sheep have imposed the major forage demand in this Analysis Area since the 1870s. Excessive use by cattle and domestic sheep severely damaged soil and vegetation in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Today, livestock use has been reduced to less than 15% of the historic use and competitive concerns remain but tend to be more localized.

Predation Issues

Mountain lions, coyotes, black bears, and bobcats are potential predators on mule deer in the Analysis Area. In recent years, mountain lion populations have increased in these units,

presumably in response to the high deer populations in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Coyote numbers are believed to have increased in the past 30 years; however, they are subject to unregulated hunting and periodic control activities by USDA Wildlife Services. Black bear numbers have increased slightly in recent years but densities are considered relatively low. Because the management objective has been to slow the rate of increase in this deer herd, any effects that predators may have had on deer population dynamics is considered inconsequential.

Winter Feeding Issues

Supplemental winter feeding of deer has not occurred in the past few years and is not considered an important issue in this Analysis Area.

Information Requirements

The King Hill winter trend area will continue to be surveyed annually to monitor population status in relation to management objectives. Pre- and post-winter herd composition surveys will be conducted to monitor over-winter fawn mortality, recruitment rate, and the buck to doe ratio.

The Bennett Hills Front has some of the highest wintering deer densities in Idaho and winters a high proportion of the mule deer in Magic Valley Region. There is a need for improved monitoring of winter range condition and trend.

Antler shed hunting has become very popular on Bennett Hills winter ranges. There is concern that shed-antler hunters using motorized vehicles to travel cross-country are causing increased energy expenditures by deer during late winter and early spring when energy reserves are lowest.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 7 (Units 43, 44, 45, 48, 52)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
King Hill (45)	2005	7206	5000
Total		7206	5000



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

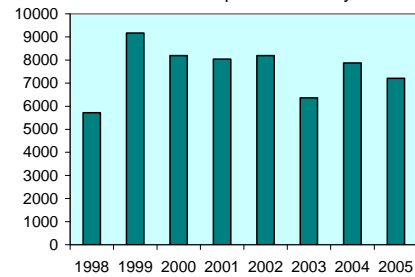
	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	2003	31	20
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	43	45

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
King Hill (45)	5720	9165	8198	8042	8195	6360	7878	7206
Comparable Surveys Total	5720	9165	8198	8042	8195	6360	7878	7206

Note: ND = no survey data available.

**Population Change
Between Comparable Surveys**

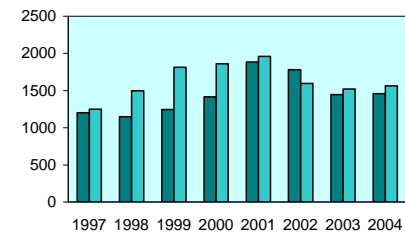


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	1203	1150	1247	1415	1886	1780	1446	1459
Antlered Harvest	1248	1496	1815	1861	1961	1598	1519	1563
% 4+ Points	42	37	48	48	40	45	43	41
Hunter Numbers	5966	6573	7006	ND	8630	8894	7725	8034

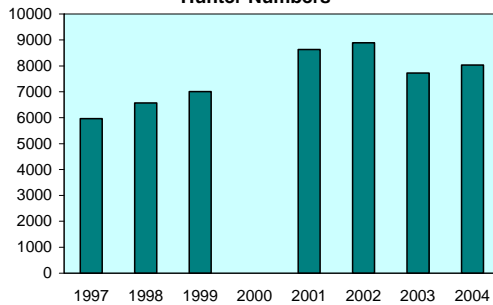
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 4+ Points

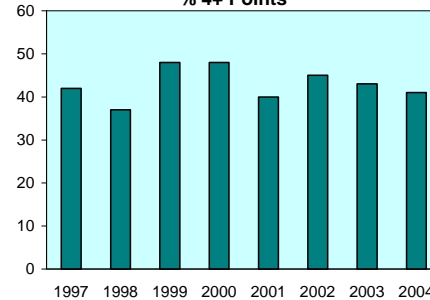


Figure 8. Mule deer Analysis Area 7.

Analysis Area 13 (Unit 53)

Management Objectives

The objective for Analysis Area 13 (Figure 9) is to maintain a small resident population of mule deer compatible with the area's agriculture. Current hunting season frameworks appear to be accomplishing this objective. Given the limited priority placed on managing for mule deer, no trend area will be established.

Historical Perspective

It has been reported that mule deer were relatively abundant in Unit 53 around 1900. However, deer habitat was substantially altered with human settlement, which brought an increase in range fires and the development of large-scale irrigation projects. Today, more than half of Unit 53 is irrigated farmland. The northern portion of the unit contains an extensive tract of land managed by BLM, primarily for livestock grazing. Much of BLM lands have been reseeded to crested wheatgrass, reducing their value for mule deer.

Unit 53 currently has a small resident deer population and cannot support many deer without unacceptable conflicts with agriculture. Depredation complaints from orchards in the Snake River Canyon are common. Unit 53 has some importance as winter range for mule deer from units to the north. Movement of deer into Unit 53 during winter was first noted in the early 1980s following extensive fires and loss of sagebrush habitat in Unit 52A. The number of wintering deer varies considerably depending on winter severity and snow depths. During the 1985-1986 winter, more than 3,000 mule deer moved into Unit 53 and resulted in 54 depredation complaints. During the severe winter of 2001-2002, large numbers of deer moved into Unit 53, primarily east of Jerome, and resulted in a substantial number of deer-vehicle collisions on Interstate 84.

Harvest management is currently designed to keep resident deer numbers low. Short-range weapon hunting on the west side of the unit has been successful in minimizing complaints from orchard owners. On the east side of the unit, a liberal 4-month archery season allows a substantial amount of hunting opportunity close to the Region's population centers. In 2001, the state record archery-harvested mule deer buck was taken in Unit 53.

Habitat Issues

Lands administered by BLM provide important winter habitat, especially during severe winters when large numbers of deer are present. Because of the potential for considerable depredation problems on private lands, BLM lands have added value for wintering deer. Sagebrush removal projects to maintain crested wheatgrass seeding for livestock grazing may become an issue on some grazing allotments. As sagebrush reestablishes on burned areas in Unit 52A, the need for maintaining winter habitat in Unit 53 may lessen.

Biological Issues

No population monitoring is conducted in this unit.

Inter-specific Issues

There are no competitive concerns with the few elk and antelope that occur in Unit 53.

Heavy livestock use in some areas has the potential to be a problem in those winters when large numbers of mule deer move into Unit 53.

Predation Issues

Coyotes are the only important predators of deer present in substantial numbers; a few mountain lions inhabit the unit primarily in the Snake River Canyon. Predation is not a major issue because the objective is to maintain only a small resident deer population and large numbers of wintering deer occur in the unit infrequently.

Winter Feeding Issues

Winter feeding was conducted during the 1985-1986 winter in an attempt to help reduce winter losses and keep deer away from roads where collisions with vehicles were common. The Department will work closely with the Regional Winter Feeding Advisory Committee to evaluate any future supplemental feeding issues.

Information Requirements

None.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 13 (Unit 53)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
ND	ND	ND	NA
Total		ND	NA

Note: ND = no survey data available, NA = not applicable.



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	ND	ND	NA
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	39	15

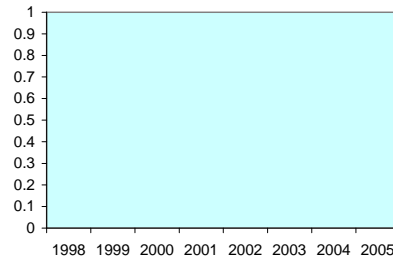
Note: ND = no survey data available, NA = not applicable.

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Comparable Surveys Total	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Population Change Between Comparable Surveys

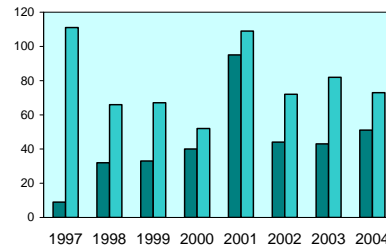


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	9	32	33	40	95	44	43	51
Antlered Harvest	111	66	67	52	109	72	82	73
% 4+ Points	33	39	40	37	41	42	42	32
Hunter Numbers	599	827	706	ND	863	725	742	698

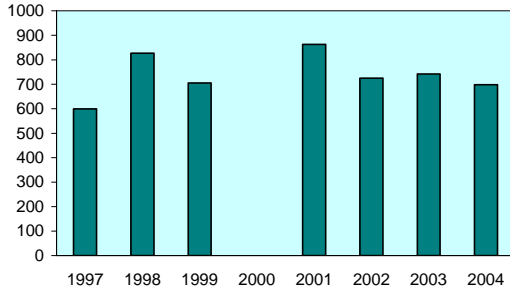
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 4+ Points

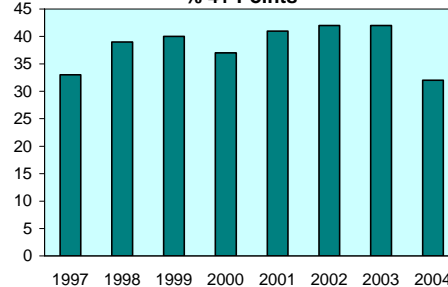


Figure 9. Mule deer Analysis Area 13.

Analysis Area 14 (Units 54, 55, 57)

Management Objectives

The objective for Analysis Area 14 (Figure 10) is to restrict antlerless harvest when trend area populations are less than 3,200 deer; conversely, antlerless harvest will be considered when deer numbers exceed this threshold value. This value represents an intermediate population size between current status and numbers observed during the late 1980s and early 1990s when deer populations were considered higher than could be sustained with existing habitat conditions and depredation levels. Deer populations will be managed to maintain or exceed 25 bucks per 100 does in the pre-winter population and >35% bucks with 4-point or larger antlers in the October harvest.

Historical Perspective

During the early 1900s, mule deer populations in Analysis Area 14 were very low, due in part to unregulated harvest. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, heavy use by domestic livestock greatly altered deer habitat. Dense shrubs fields, dominated by sagebrush and bitterbrush, replaced plant communities dominated by grasses. This change in habitat set the stage for dramatic increases in deer numbers. Closed hunting seasons from 1909-1935 and very conservative seasons through 1940 helped allow deer populations to increase. By 1950, deer numbers had reached an estimated 20,000 head in Unit 54 and winter ranges were considered severely over-browsed. Efforts were made to reduce deer populations with both general and controlled season frameworks. Following a significant decline in numbers during the mid-1970s, deer populations increased again during the late 1980s, a period of prolonged drought conditions and mild winters. During winter 1992-1993, deer populations declined by an estimated 35-40%. Deer had entered the winter in poor physiological condition and high over-winter fawn and buck mortality occurred. Deer numbers remained at relatively low levels from 1993-2003, despite favorable climatic conditions and conservative hunting seasons. In 2004, estimated deer numbers in trend areas increased substantially.

Since 1970, this area has been managed exclusively with controlled firearms seasons. These units are very popular with sportsmen desiring quality, high hunter success, low hunter density, and the opportunity to observe many deer. Since the 1993 population decline, antlerless hunts have been eliminated and antlered permits reduced.

Segments of the deer populations exhibit interstate movements. In Units 54 and 55, there are migrations south to winter ranges in Nevada and Utah, respectively. Harvest management in Utah and Nevada has been compatible with the Department's management objectives. Important winter ranges in this Analysis Area are: Eightmile (Unit 57), Jim Sage (Unit 55), Willow Creek (Unit 55), Dry Creek (Unit 54) and Sugarloaf (Unit 54).

Habitat Issues

This Analysis Area is characterized by isolated mountain ranges surrounded by farmland and sagebrush-grass semi-desert. At low to mid elevations, juniper woodlands are common with

mixed mountain shrub and aspen communities occurring along riparian areas and on some north- and east-facing slopes. At higher elevations, pockets of conifers (lodgepole pine, Douglas fir, and subalpine fir) and aspen occur on north- and east-facing aspects and more mesic sites. Primarily, USFS and BLM manage important summer and winter habitats. When deer populations are high, depredation complaints on growing alfalfa are common in Unit 55.

Important habitat issues include: 1) Succession, and in some cases heavy livestock use, has caused a general decline in the health of aspen communities. Many stands have become decadent and/or are being replaced by conifers. Where the vigor and size of aspen communities can be improved, prescribed fire should be considered. 2) The quality and quantity of winter habitat is considered to be limiting mule deer in this Analysis Area. During the past 30 years, fire has altered much of the critical habitat in Unit 54. The loss of extensive bitterbrush stands on the Dry Creek, Sugarloaf, and Buckbrush Flat winter ranges is expected to have long-term negative effects on deer populations. While sagebrush is beginning to reestablish on some of these winter ranges, bitterbrush recovery has been slow or nonexistent. In Unit 55, the distribution and density of juniper has increased on some winter ranges, replacing important browse for wintering deer. Management should favor the reestablishment and long-term maintenance of shrubs on winter ranges. Bitterbrush plantings should be undertaken in areas where natural recovery is not evident. In some areas, carefully designed projects to remove junipers by burning or chaining may have long-term benefits for mule deer. 3) Because of the open nature of the habitat and high road densities in some areas, habitat security for deer during hunting season is considered moderate, although some high security areas exist in all units. Road densities are considered high in Unit 54 and moderate in Units 55 and 57. Several motorized vehicle area closures have been implemented in Unit 54 to provide additional security habitat and non-motorized hunting opportunity. Additional motorized vehicle restrictions may be recommended to maintain quality hunting opportunity and desired buck age structures in Unit 54.

Biological Issues

After the 1993 winter die-off, deer populations in this Analysis Area continued to decline through about 1997, despite conservative harvest management. Deer populations remained relatively stable from 1998-2003 and increased substantially in Units 54 and 55 in 2004 and 2005. Deer numbers have remained low in Unit 57 since the 1993 decline. Causes for the lower reproductive performance are unknown. Winter fawn mortality has been average; however, the ratio of fawns entering the winter has been low. From 1974-1992, a pre-winter ratio averaged 83 fawns per 100 does compared to 64 fawns per 100 does from 1993-2003. Buck to doe ratios in the Analysis Area are meeting the objective of 25 bucks per 100 does.

Inter-specific Issues

Elk, black bears, and bighorn sheep were eliminated from these units during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Today, small numbers of elk occur, generally near the Nevada and Utah borders. There are currently no competitive concerns with deer and elk. A small population of California bighorn sheep inhabits the northeast portion of the Sawtooth National Forest in Unit 54 but poses no concern with mule deer management.

Livestock have imposed the major forage demand throughout these units for over a century. Currently, on public lands, livestock management is generally compatible with deer habitat management, although heavy livestock use in some localized areas has negative effects. In the past, conversion of large areas from native sagebrush/grass communities to crested wheatgrass seedings have had negative effects on deer habitat.

Predation Issues

Mountain lions, coyotes, and bobcats are potential predators on mule deer in the Analysis Area. Mountain lion populations increased markedly in these units, presumably in response to the high deer populations in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Mountain lion harvest doubled, depredations on domestic sheep increased, and the frequency of reported mountain lion observations increased substantially. While the relationship between deer and mountain lions is unclear, mountain lions may have played a role in slowing the recovery in deer herds. There are recent indications from mountain lion hunters and researchers that mountain lion populations have declined, probably in response to the reduced mule deer prey base. Coyote numbers are believed to have increased in the past 30 years; however, they are subject to unregulated hunting and periodic control activities by USDA Wildlife Services. The effect, if any, of coyote predation on mule deer population dynamics is unknown.

Winter Feeding Issues

Supplemental winter feeding of deer has not occurred in the past few years and is not considered an important issue in this Analysis Area.

Information Requirements

Annual aerial surveys of trend areas are needed to monitor population status in relation to management objectives. Periodic sightability surveys are needed to monitor changes in winter distribution.

A better understanding of the relationship between road densities and buck survival during hunting season would improve our ability to make sound decisions about access and harvest management.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 14 (Units 54, 55, 57)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
Sugarloaf (54)	2005	1171	1400
Dry Creek (54)	2005	856	1000
Jim Sage (55)	2005	2625	800
Total		4652	3200



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

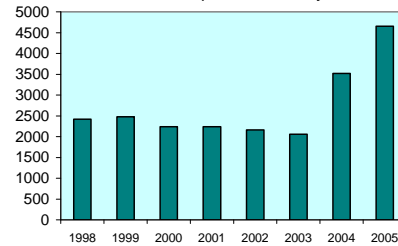
	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	2004	29	25
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	40	35

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Sugarloaf (54)	972	1031	737	742	685	662	1030	1171
Dry Creek (54)	773	647	480	564	548	471	988	856
Jim Sage (55)	675	796	1022	935	929	927	1504	2625
Comparable Surveys Total	2420	2474	2239	2241	2162	2060	3522	4652

Note: ND = no survey data available.

**Population Change
Between Comparable Surveys**

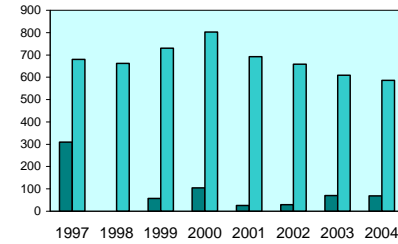


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	310	0	57	104	26	29	70	69
Antlered Harvest	680	662	730	802	692	658	609	586
% 4+ Points	52	33	30	40	40	40	34	47
Hunter Numbers	1865	1727	1718	ND	1828	1953	1174	1683

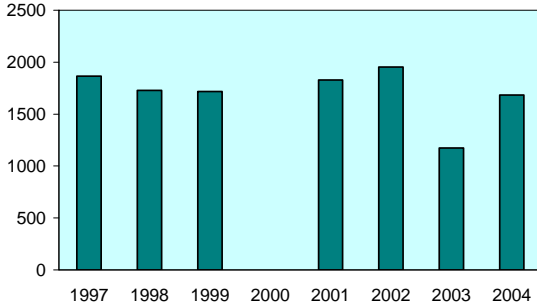
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Harvest



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 4+ Points

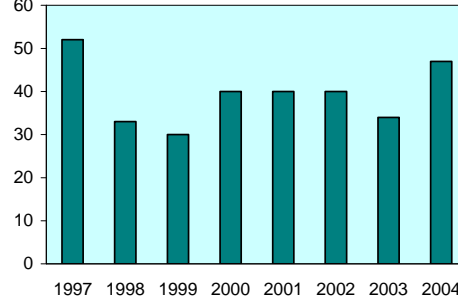


Figure 10. Mule deer Analysis Area 14.

**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>Mule Deer Surveys and</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-29</u>		<u>Inventories</u>
SUBPROJECT:	<u>5</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>1</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>2</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005</u>		

SOUTHEAST REGION

Analysis Area 20 (Units 56, 70, 73, 73A)

Management Objectives

Objectives for Analysis Area 20 (Figure 11) include restricting antlerless harvest when trend area populations are less than 5,700 deer; managed antlerless harvest will be encouraged when deer numbers exceed this threshold value. This value represents an intermediate population size between current status and numbers observed during the late 1980s and early 1990s when deer populations were considered higher than could be supported during a normal winter and presented depredation concerns for agricultural producers. Additional objectives include maintenance of greater than 15 bucks:100 does post-season and a minimum of 30% 4+ points in the harvest.

Historical Perspective

The mule deer population in Analysis Area 20 (Units 56, 70, 73, and 73A) has fluctuated widely since the mid-1800s. Deer numbers probably declined through the early 1900s, possibly due to unregulated harvest. By 1920, observations of deer were quite rare. Between 1920 and the early 1970s, deer numbers increased dramatically, interrupted briefly by significant winter mortality. Following a significant decline in numbers beginning in 1972, numbers again increased until the late 1980s. The population level attained during this second peak probably did not reach that attained during the 1950s-early 1970s. Overall, mule deer numbers in these units appear to be highly volatile with wide fluctuations over relatively short time periods.

Harvest management during the 1950s and 1960s was designed to maintain or reduce deer numbers in response to what was considered over-browsed winter ranges. Season frameworks in these units (Appendix A) have varied considerably more than elsewhere in southeastern Idaho. General seasons have been the rule, except in Unit 56, which had controlled hunts from 1970-1981. Season lengths have varied from 3 days to 5 weeks. Either-sex opportunity has ranged from none to extra antlerless-only tags available in 1989 and 1990 for Units 70, 73, and 73A. Following the winter of 1992-1993, when significant winter mortality occurred, harvest management has been conservative.

Research in the mid-1980s found very low survival of bucks in Unit 73. A 2-point only regulation, with short periods of any buck hunting, was enacted there in 1997 after the buck:doe ratio fell below 10:100. Hunter numbers decreased for several years, proportions of older bucks increased somewhat, until harvest of older bucks returned to earlier levels. In 2004, a 4-point or greater regulation was enacted in Units 70 and 73 in response to public suggestions.

Major wintering areas in this Analysis Area are: Pauline (Unit 70), Lead Draw to Walker Creek (Unit 70), Elkhorn Mountain (Unit 73), Malad Face (Unit 73), Samaria Mountain (Unit 73), Hansel Mountains (Unit 73), Rockland Valley (Unit 73A), Knox Canyon (Unit 73A), Juniper (Unit 56), the Hagler Canyon complex (Unit 56), and Sweetzer Pass (Unit 56).

Habitat Issues

This Analysis Area represents the least productive habitats in southeastern Idaho. Low productive habitats combined with variable winter conditions undoubtedly cause mule deer numbers to vary considerably over time. Three main vegetation types predominate: sagebrush-grassland, aspen, and conifer. Other variations of these 3 main types that are important to deer include: mixed shrub communities, Utah juniper, and curleaf mahogany. The current mix of vegetation cover types is a result of intensive grazing by livestock during the early 1900s and ongoing fire suppression efforts. These factors converted what was predominately perennial grass stands into shrublands with depleted or sparse understories. Given that current livestock grazing practices are much more conservative and designed to promote grass, and that the current shrublands are aging, it is believed that the quality of mule deer habitat probably peaked earlier in the century. The current conversion of aspen to conifer and replacement of mixed shrub and sagebrush communities by juniper probably will reduce habitat suitability for mule deer.

Approximately 41% of the land in this Analysis Area is publicly-owned. BLM and USFS administer the majority of public land. The Fort Hall Indian Reservation makes up approximately 7%, while the remaining 52% is private. Private land is predominately used for rangeland pasture, small grains, and hay production. A substantial amount of private land has been enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Depredation complaints are generally limited to periods of high deer populations. Predominant land uses of the publicly-owned ground include livestock grazing, timber management, and recreation. Of particular concern is the encroachment of human activity, either intense recreational efforts and/or structural developments, in mule deer winter range. Developments from the west side of Pocatello south to Walker Creek in Unit 70 have reduced the potential wintering area for deer.

Open habitat types combined with moderate to high road densities and, in some areas unrestricted ATV travel, result in a greater vulnerability of mule deer in this Analysis Area. Use of motorized vehicles for hunting is prohibited. For other than hunting, motorized travel on the Caribou National Forest within this Area is restricted to designated routes during the snow-free period of the year with the specific purpose of reducing impacts to wildlife habitat and reducing wildlife disturbance.

Biological Issues

Recruitment rates, as evidenced by December/January fawn:doe ratios, have ranged from 50-75 over the past few winters. It is believed that 66 fawns:100 does is adequate to maintain populations with normal winter mortality, while increased recruitment is necessary for population growth. Conversely, recruitment rates less than 66:100 are generally consistent with stable to declining populations.

Inter-specific Issues

Although livestock grazes much of the mule deer range in this Analysis Area, interactions of concern are relatively few and tend to be limited to localized areas. Of primary concern are livestock winter feedlot operations that concentrate deer during winter. Of minor concern are a few localized areas (riparian and winter range) of intense livestock pressure.

The current trend of elk occupying mule deer winter range is an area of major concern. Some winter range in this Analysis Area do not lend themselves to niche separation by the 2 species and, therefore, either direct resource competition and/or social intolerance will likely impact mule deer numbers. The Department will seek opportunities to minimize the occupancy by elk in key mule deer winter ranges.

Residential, recreational, and associated development has impacted available deer winter ranges, particularly in Unit 70. These impacts have likely had direct effects on numbers of deer, and will be impossible to mitigate. Continued growth of human populations will necessitate the acknowledgment of impacts to wildlife habitat and populations.

Predation Issues

Major predators of mule deer in this Analysis Area include mountain lions, coyotes, and bobcats. Mountain lion and coyote populations may have increased during the last 30 years. It is unknown specifically what impact these changing predator systems are having on mule deer population dynamics, although a multi-year investigation of the impact of manipulating predator populations indicated only small affects.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency supplemental feeding of deer occurs periodically; however, these units generally have milder winter conditions than elsewhere in southeastern Idaho. In many cases, emergency feeding is initiated after deer have been attracted to cattle feedlot operations or private citizens began feeding deer early in winter. Both of these circumstances probably short-stop deer from reaching more suitable winter range and generally result in high over-winter mortality rates. The Department, working in conjunction with the Winter Feeding Advisory Committee, will discourage livestock operators and other private citizens from encouraging deer use of non-traditional food sources.

Mule deer were provided supplemental winter feed at a Department-sanctioned, Commission-approved feed site east of Stone (Unit 56) during 12 of 15 winters between 1974 and 1988. An estimated 500-1,400 deer were fed annually. The feeding was initiated following the construction of Interstate 84 that blocked the traditional migration of deer from Unit 56 to winter ranges on the south end of Black Pine Mountain (Unit 57) and the east end of the Raft River range in Utah. In the early 1950s, it was estimated that more than 4,000 deer from Unit 56 made the migration. During the open winters associated with the prolonged drought of the late 1980s, deer did not concentrate near the state line for several consecutive years, and the feeding operation was permanently closed down. Unit 56 will be managed for the number of deer that can be supported on winter ranges without an annual winter feeding effort.

Private citizens, with and without Department assistance, have provided supplemental winter food for approximately 500 deer in several areas in Unit 73 for the past 3-5 years.

Information Requirements

The Department will explore various means of better quantifying over-winter mortality so that harvest recommendations are more responsive to changing populations.

Recent observed recruitment rates are consistent with either stable or slightly declining populations. A better understanding of factors affecting recruitment rates is needed.

Although habitat succession and change are occurring, it is unknown what specific impacts will occur to deer populations. Furthermore, it is unknown whether the aging of current mule deer habitat leads to ultimately less productive and nutritious vegetation.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 20 (Units 56, 70, 73, 73A)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
Heglar (56)	2005	1357	1800
Elkhorn (73)	2005	2079	1200
Malad Face (73)	2005	1090	1200
Rockland (73A)	2005	1168	1500
Total		5694	5700



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

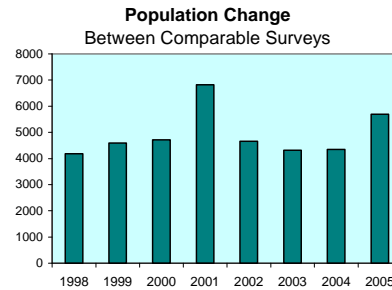
	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	2004	16	15
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	34	30

Note: Unit 56 has a minimum buck:doe ratio criterion of 25.
%4+ point criteria does not apply to 2-point only hunts.

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Heglar (56)	1325	1113	1318	1710	1133	700	1101	1357
Elkhorn (73)	787	958	980	1387	749	1163	1401	2079
Malad Face (73)	947	942	885	1622	761	717	729	1090
Rockland (73A)	1121	1578	1533	2100	2016	1734	1121	1168
Comparable Surveys Total	4180	4591	4716	6819	4659	4314	4352	5694

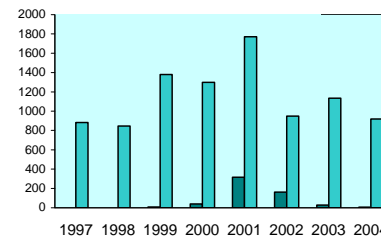
Note: ND = no survey data available.



Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	0	0	7	39	317	161	26	5
Antlered Harvest	883	847	1379	1298	1770	949	1135	919
% 4+ Points	50	45	35	31	31	37	34	32
Hunter Numbers	4504	3172	4465	ND	6109	6529	5392	5518

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.
%4+ points does not include 2-point only hunts.



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

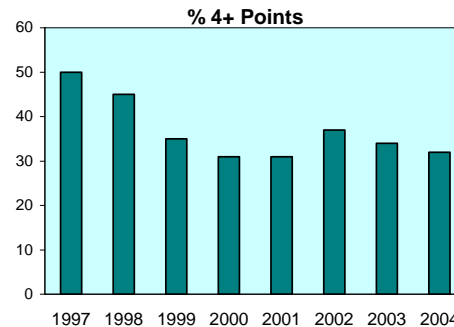
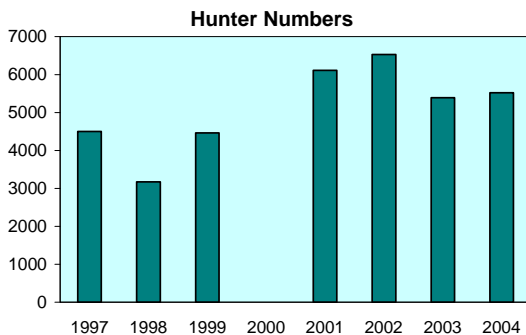


Figure 11. Mule deer Analysis Area 20.

Analysis Area 21 (Units 71, 74)

Management Objectives

Objectives for Analysis Area 21 (Figure 12) include restricting antlerless harvest when trend area populations are less than 2,000 deer; managed antlerless harvest will be encouraged when deer numbers exceed this threshold value. This value represents an intermediate population size between current status and numbers observed during the late 1980s and early 1990s when deer populations were considered higher than could be supported during a normal winter and presented depredation concerns for agricultural producers. Additional objectives include maintenance of greater than 15 bucks:100 does post-season and a minimum of 30% 4+ points in the harvest.

Historical Perspective

The mule deer population in Analysis Area 21 (Units 71 and 74) has fluctuated widely since the mid-1800s. Early accounts by trappers through the area suggested that deer were seen but were less numerous than buffalo, bighorn sheep, and elk. Deer numbers probably declined through the early 1900s, possibly due to unregulated harvest. By 1920, observations of deer were quite rare. Between 1920 and the early 1970s, deer numbers increased dramatically, interrupted briefly by significant winter mortality. Following a significant decline in numbers beginning in 1972, numbers again increased until the late 1980s. The population level attained during this second peak probably did not reach that attained during the 1950s - early 1970s.

Harvest management during the 1950s and 1960s was designed to maintain or reduce deer numbers in response to what was considered over-browsed winter ranges. Long general either-sex seasons (3-5 weeks) predominated. Following the decline in the early 1970s, harvest management became more conservative with 2-4 week general seasons with varying amounts of either-sex opportunity offered. By the late 1980s, the deer population had increased to a point that a population reduction was desired. The years 1989 and 1990 were marked by 4-week general either-sex seasons with extra deer tags available. Following the winter of 1992-1993 when significant winter mortality occurred, harvest management has been conservative.

Major wintering areas in this Analysis Area are: Blackrock Canyon (Unit 71), Portneuf Winter Range (Unit 71), the west facing slopes east of Downey (Unit 74), Hadley Canyon complex (Unit 74), Densmore Creek (Unit 74), and Treasureton (Unit 74).

Habitat Issues

This Analysis Area represents habitats that are intermediate in productivity between the highly productive units to the east and the less productive habitats to the west. Three main vegetation types predominate: sagebrush-grassland, aspen, and conifer. Other variations of these 3 main types that are important to deer include: mixed brush communities, juniper, and mahogany. The current mix of vegetation cover types is a result of intensive grazing by livestock during the early 1900s and ongoing fire suppression efforts. These factors converted what was predominately perennial grass stands into shrublands. Given that current livestock grazing practices are much

more conservative and designed to promote grass, and that current shrublands are aging, it is believed that the quality of mule deer habitat probably peaked earlier in the century. The current conversion of aspen to conifer and replacement of mixed shrub and sagebrush communities by juniper probably will reduce habitat suitability for mule deer.

Approximately 28% of the land in this Analysis Area is publicly-owned. USFS, BLM, and IDL administer nearly equal amounts of the public ground. The Fort Hall Indian Reservation makes up approximately 15%, while the remaining 57% is private ground. The private ground is predominately used for rangeland pasture, small grains, and hay production. Depredation complaints are generally limited to periods of high deer populations. Predominant land uses of the publicly-owned ground include livestock grazing, timber management, and recreation. Of particular concern is the encroachment of human activity, either intense recreational efforts and/or structural developments, in mule deer winter range. Development along the Portneuf, Hadley Canyon complex, and Treasureton winter ranges, in particular, will reduce the potential for wintering greater numbers of deer.

Open habitat types combined with moderate road densities, and in some cases unrestricted ATV travel, probably result in a greater vulnerability standard for mule deer in this Analysis Area. These 2 units receive high hunting pressure because of their close proximity to Pocatello.

Biological Issues

Recruitment rates in this Analysis Area, as evidenced by December/January fawn:doe ratios, have only been measured once: 74 fawns:100 does was observed in 1996. It is believed that 66 fawns:100 does is adequate to maintain populations with normal winter mortality, while increased recruitment is necessary for population growth. Conversely, recruitment rates less than 66:100 are generally consistent with stable to declining populations.

Inter-specific Issues

Although livestock grazes much of the mule deer range in this Analysis Area, interactions of concern are relatively few and tend to be limited to localized areas. Of primary concern are livestock winter feedlot operations that over-concentrate deer during winter. Of minor concern are a few localized areas (riparian and winter range) of intense livestock pressure.

Of greater concern than livestock interactions is the current trend of elk occupying mule deer winter ranges. Some winter areas in this Analysis Area do not lend themselves to niche separation by the 2 species and, therefore, either direct resource competition and/or social intolerance will likely impact mule deer numbers. Recent encroachment of elk into mule deer winter range will require immediate action. The Department will aggressively seek opportunities to minimize the occupancy by elk in key mule deer winter ranges.

Predation Issues

Major predators of mule deer in this Analysis Area include mountain lions, coyotes, and bobcats. Mountain lion and coyote populations are believed to have increased during the last 30 years. It

is unknown specifically what impact these changing predator systems are having on mule deer population dynamics.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency supplemental feeding of deer occurs approximately every 3 years. Primary areas include between Inkom and McCammon and the west-facing hills between McCammon and Downey. In many cases, emergency feeding is initiated after deer have been attracted to cattle feedlot operations or private citizens began feeding deer early in winter. Both of these circumstances probably short-stop deer from reaching more suitable winter range and generally result in high over-winter mortality rates. The Department, working in conjunction with the Winter Feeding Advisory Committee, will discourage livestock operators and other private citizens from encouraging deer use of non-traditional food sources.

Information Requirements

The Department will explore various means of better quantifying over-winter mortality so that harvest recommendations are more responsive to changing populations.

Annual monitoring of recruitment is needed along with a better understanding of factors affecting recruitment rates.

Although habitat succession and change are occurring, it is unknown specifically what quantitative impacts will occur with deer populations. Furthermore, it is unknown whether the aging of current mule deer habitat leads to ultimately less productive and nutritious vegetation.

Given that predator and elk populations and habitat have changed over time, a better understanding of the interrelationships and ecological processes governing mule deer population dynamics would greatly aid in management recommendation decisions.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 21 (Units 71, 74)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
Portneuf (71)	2005	731	1700
Unit 74 (74)	2001	4112	NA
Total		731	1700



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

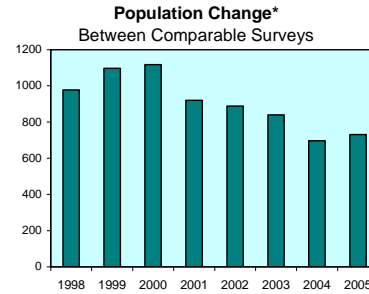
	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	2004	16	15
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	26	30

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Portneuf (71)	978	1097	1118	920	889	840	697	731
Unit 74 (74)	ND	ND	ND	4112	ND	ND	ND	ND
Comparable Surveys Total	978	1097	1118	920	889	840	697	731

Note: ND = no survey data available.

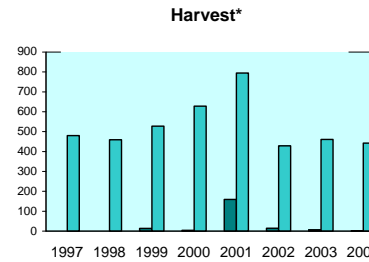
* Only the Portneuf Trend Area numbers appear in the Population Change chart



Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	0	0	13	4	159	14	6	1
Antlered Harvest	480	459	527	628	794	428	460	442
% 4+ Points	25	25	27	28	32	38	21	20
Hunter Numbers	2535	2185	2239	ND	3154	3119	2372	2402

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

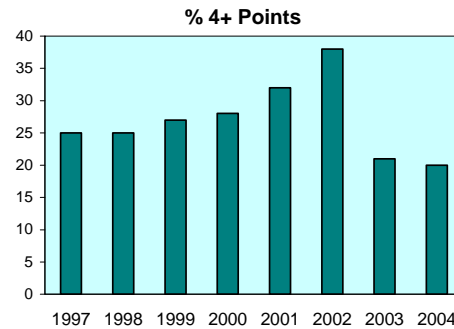
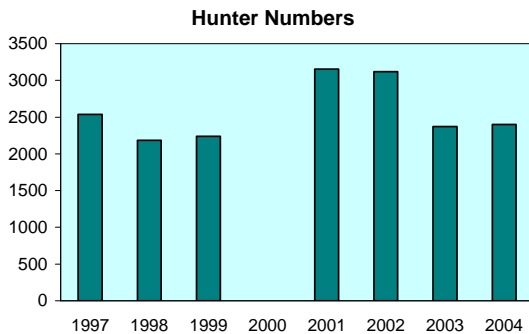


Figure 12. Mule deer Analysis Area 21.

Analysis Area 22 (Units 72, 75, 76, 77, 78)

Management Objectives

Objectives for Analysis Area 22 (Figure 13) include restricting antlerless harvest when trend area populations are less than 10,000 deer; managed antlerless harvest will be encouraged when deer numbers exceed this threshold value. This value represents an intermediate population size between current status and numbers observed during the late 1980s and early 1990s when deer populations were considered higher than could be supported during a normal winter and presented depredation concerns for agricultural producers. Additional objectives include maintenance of greater than 15 bucks:100 does post-season, and a minimum of 30% 4+ points in the harvest.

Historical Perspective

The mule deer population in Analysis Area 22 has fluctuated widely since the mid-1800s. Early accounts by trappers through the area suggested that deer were seen but were less numerous than buffalo, bighorn sheep, and elk. Deer numbers probably declined through the early 1900s, possibly due to unregulated harvest. By 1920, observations of deer were quite rare. Between 1920 and the early 1970s, deer numbers increased dramatically, interrupted briefly by significant winter mortality. Following a significant decline in numbers beginning in 1972, numbers again increased until the late 1980s. The population level attained during this second peak probably did not reach that attained during the 1950s - early 1970s.

Harvest management during the 1950s and 1960s was designed to reduce deer numbers in response to what was considered over-browsed winter ranges. Long general seasons with opportunity for extra deer tags predominated. Following the decline in the early 1970s, harvest management became more conservative with 2-4 week general seasons with varying amounts of either-sex opportunity offered. By the late 1980s, the deer population had increased to a point that a population reduction was desired. The years 1989 and 1990 were marked by 4-week general either-sex seasons with extra deer tags available. Following the winter of 1992-1993 when significant winter mortality occurred, harvest management has been conservative.

An apparent change in the winter distribution of mule deer has occurred, primarily in Unit 76. During the 1950s and 1960s, deer use of the Soda Front (Wood Canyon south to Montpelier) was extensive, while use of the Bear Lake Plateau and the Soda Hills (Unit 72) was minimal. Currently, the Bear Lake Plateau and the Soda Hills represent the 2 most significant winter ranges for mule deer in Unit 76.

Major wintering areas in this Analysis Area are: Soda Hills (Unit 72), Bear Lake Plateau (Unit 76), West Bear Lake (Unit 78), Grace Front (Unit 75), and the Oneida Narrows Complex (Unit 77). An unknown number of deer migrate to and winter in Wyoming and Utah.

Habitat Issues

This Analysis Area represents the most productive habitats for mule deer in southeastern Idaho. Three main vegetation types predominate: sagebrush-grassland, aspen, and conifer. Other variations of these 3 main types that are important to deer include: mixed brush communities, juniper, and mahogany. The current mix of vegetation cover types is a result of intensive grazing by livestock during the early 1900s and ongoing fire suppression efforts. These factors converted what was predominately perennial grass stands into shrublands. Given that current livestock grazing practices are much more conservative and designed to promote grass, and that current shrublands are aging, it is logical that quality mule deer habitat probably peaked earlier in the century. Additionally, the current conversion of aspen to conifer and replacement of mixed shrub and sagebrush communities by juniper probably will reduce habitat suitability for mule deer.

USFS owns approximately 54% of the land in this Analysis Area. The remaining 46% of private ground is predominately used for rangeland pasture, small grains, and hay production. Depredation complaints are generally limited to periods of high deer populations. Predominant land uses of the publicly-owned lands include livestock grazing, timber management, recreation, and phosphate mining. Of particular concern is the encroachment of human activity, either intense recreational efforts (i.e., over-snow machine travel) and/or structural developments, in mule deer winter range. Development in the Bear River Valley of Unit 77 and along the West Bear Lake winter range in Unit 78 will undoubtedly reduce the potential for wintering greater numbers of deer.

Open habitat types combined with moderate road densities, and in some cases unrestricted ATV travel, probably result in a greater vulnerability standard for mule deer in this Analysis Area.

Biological Issues

Recruitment rates, as evidenced by December/January fawn:doe ratios, have ranged from 60-85 over the past few years. It is believed that 66 fawns:100 does is adequate to maintain populations with normal winter mortality, while increased recruitment is necessary for population growth. Conversely, recruitment rates less than 66:100 are generally consistent with stable to declining populations.

Inter-specific Issues

Although livestock grazes much of the mule deer range in this Analysis Area, interactions of concern are relatively few and tend to be limited to localized areas. Of primary concern are livestock winter feedlot operations that over-concentrate deer during winter. Of minor concern are a few localized areas (riparian and winter range) of intense livestock pressure.

Of greater concern than livestock interactions is the current trend of elk occupying mule deer winter range. Some winter ranges in this Analysis Area do not lend themselves to niche separation by the 2 species and, therefore, either direct resource competition and/or social intolerance will likely impact mule deer numbers. Recent encroachment of elk into the Soda Hills will require immediate action in order to maintain this area as a significant mule deer

winter range. The Department will aggressively seek opportunities to minimize the occupancy by elk in key mule deer winter ranges.

Predation Issues

Potentially major predators of mule deer in this Analysis Area include black bears, mountain lions, coyotes, and bobcats. The black bear population is low, but appears to be increasing. Mountain lion and coyote populations are believed to have increased during the last 30 years. It is unknown specifically what impact these changing predator systems are having on mule deer population dynamics.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency supplemental feeding of deer occurs approximately every 3 years. Primary areas include Soda Springs, Georgetown Canyon, Montpelier Canyon, the east shore of Bear Lake, and St. Charles Canyon. Deer are fed by interested citizens every year in some areas. In many cases, emergency feeding is initiated after deer have been attracted to cattle feedlot operations or private citizens began feeding deer early in winter. Both of these circumstances probably short-stop deer from reaching more suitable winter range and generally result in high over-winter mortality rates. The Department, working in conjunction with the Winter Feeding Advisory Committee, will discourage livestock operators and other private citizens from encouraging deer use of non-traditional food sources.

Information Requirements

The Department will add another winter census trend area and explore various means of better quantifying over-winter mortality so that harvest recommendations are more responsive to changing populations.

Recent observed recruitment rates are consistent with either stable or slightly increasing populations. A better understanding of factors affecting recruitment rates is needed.

Although habitat succession and change are occurring, it is unknown specifically what quantitative impacts will occur with deer populations. Furthermore, it is unknown whether the aging of current mule deer habitat leads to ultimately less productive and nutritious vegetation.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 22 (Units 72, 75, 76, 77, 78)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
West Bear Lake (78)	2005	2368	3000
Soda Hills (72)	2005	2552	4000
Bear Lake Plateau (76)	2005	3531	3000
Total		8451	10000



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

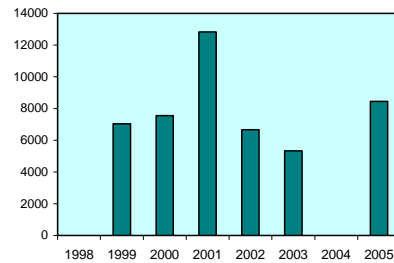
	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	2004	13	15
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	31	30

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
West Bear Lake (78)	2548	1790	1707	3150	1405	1449	2852	2368
Soda Hills (72)	3428	1826	2378	4576	2877	1124	1801	2552
Bear Lake Plateau (76)	ND	3427	3467	5106	2378	2766	ND	3531
Comparable Surveys Total	ND	7043	7552	12832	6660	5339	ND	8451

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Population Change Between Comparable Surveys

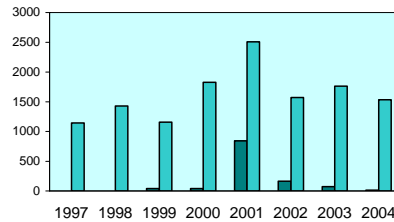


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	0	0	40	42	842	163	74	14
Antlered Harvest	1143	1431	1160	1828	2506	1574	1761	1534
% 4+ Points	43	40	30	31	30	37	25	24
Hunter Numbers	6588	6767	4812	ND	7928	9951	8223	7545

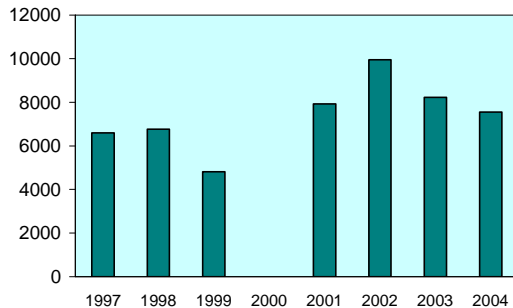
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 4+ Points

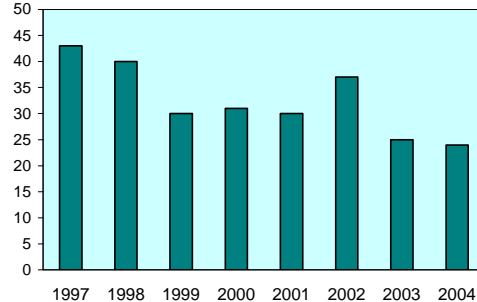


Figure 13. Mule deer Analysis Area 22.

**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>Mule Deer Surveys and</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-29</u>		<u>Inventories</u>
SUBPROJECT:	<u>6</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>1</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>2</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005</u>		

UPPER SNAKE REGION

Analysis Area 8 (Units 36, 36A, 49, 50)

Management Objectives

Objectives for Analysis Area 8 (Figure 14) are to maintain a minimum of 15 bucks:100 does in post-season surveys and 30% \geq 4-point bucks in the harvest. When estimated deer numbers exceed 4,100 in the Unit 50 trend area, antlerless seasons will be considered.

Historical Perspective

Mule deer were scarce and harvests low for much of the early part of the 20th century. By mid-century, mule deer had become the predominant big game animal. Once known for strong mule deer populations, particularly in Unit 36A, these units produced very high mule deer harvests in the 1950s and 1960s. By the 1970s, harvests had dropped by two-thirds as more conservative management strategies were implemented. Despite 2 decades of very conservative antlerless harvests and increasingly conservative buck seasons, mule deer populations have failed to return to their previous high densities and may yet be declining. Although deer herds declined well before any significant increase in elk numbers, current high elk densities may well be helping to suppress deer populations.

Habitat Issues

Cattle ranching, livestock grazing, and recreation are dominant human uses of the landscape in these units. This is in a generally arid region where forage production and deer populations can be strongly influenced by growing season precipitation. Deer depredations on agricultural crops are common and are especially pronounced in dry years.

Habitat ultimately determines deer densities and productivity. However, specific limiting factors within the habitat are poorly understood. In some areas, deer winter in mature stands of mountain mahogany that appear relatively stagnant and unproductive. Elk may have removed much of the mountain mahogany forage within reach of deer. Forests are slowly encroaching into shrub and

grassland communities. Spread of noxious weeds such as knapweed and leafy spurge could ultimately have significant impacts on winter range productivity.

Biological Issues

Buck harvest in the late 1980s in this Analysis Area reached the highest levels since at least 1970. In the 1990s, harvest dropped to near average levels, except in Unit 49, which remained well above the long-term average. Since seasons were shifted earlier in 1991, comparatively more of the Unit 36/36A buck harvest has come from Unit 36.

Inter-specific Issues

Current high elk densities may be having some impact on the area's capacity to produce deer. Pronghorn antelope, mountain goat, and bighorn sheep also share the range but generally overlap little with mule deer. Livestock rangeland grazing, another potential source of competition, has generally been reduced in recent years.

Predation Issues

Black bear densities appear to be low to moderate and stable. Mountain lion densities are low to moderate and appear to have increased in recent years, probably at least in part due to increased elk densities. Coyotes are common and have an unknown impact on deer populations. Bobcats, red fox, and golden eagles also occur in the area but are not thought to account for significant predation on deer. Wolves recently reintroduced by USFWS in central Idaho are now established in Area 8, which may have some effect on other predators and on deer. The addition of wolves will likely have an impact on black bear, mountain lion, and coyote populations. At some level, predation could benefit deer herds to the extent that it reduces elk competition and keeps deer herds below carrying capacity, where they can be more productive. However, excessive levels of predation can also suppress deer populations to undesirably low levels. At this point, it is unclear what the net impact of predation will be with the new mix of predators.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency winter feeding of deer occurs infrequently, only during critical winter conditions. In Unit 50, mild winters with low snow accumulation has precluded the need for supplemental feeding. Winter 2004-2005 started out with 2 large storms putting down heavy snows, but the winter tapered off and ended up fairly mild overall. Small-scale private feeding operations may occur throughout the Analysis Area.

Information Requirements

Expanded survey data on mule deer herd sex and age composition and trends in deer numbers would be beneficial. Impacts of elk on mule deer production and survival are suspected but unknown. The most productive deer herds are those maintained at a level well below carrying capacity. Better information is needed to identify appropriate deer densities that will maintain

optimum productivity and harvest. Recent studies of deer survival and migratory patterns are providing valuable information.

Unit 50 has a complex situation in which over 9,000 deer come there to winter but, very few stay in the unit year-round. The high number of deer currently wintering in Unit 50 is of concern since mountain mahogany stands appear to be declining and the drought has reduced total winter range forage available. With a large elk population encroaching onto deer winter range, it is possible that this deer herd is at risk of a large die-off if a hard winter were to come. From recent radio-collar studies, we have learned that nearly every deer collared in Unit 50 on winter range leaves the unit to summer. This creates a problem when trying to use antlerless harvest to reduce the likelihood or severity of a large die-off in the future. Local sportsmen oppose antlerless hunts since, during the general season, they do not observe many deer in Unit 50. In 2004, the antlerless controlled hunt (Appendix A) was pushed back to try and harvest more migrant deer and take pressure off local deer. In 2005, the antlerless hunt will include Unit 49 to allow hunters to go where most of the deer herd spend fall.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 8 (Units 36, 36A, 49, 50)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
(50)	2004	7983	4100
Total		7983	4100



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	2004	16	15
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	28	30

Note: ND = no survey data available.

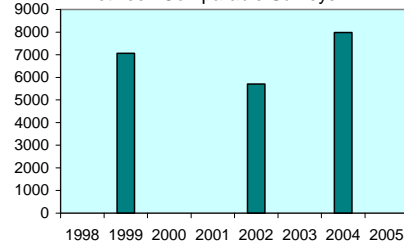
Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
(50)	ND	7063	ND	ND	5703	ND	7983	ND
Comparable Surveys Total	ND	7063	ND	ND	5703	ND	7983	ND

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Population Change

Between Comparable Surveys

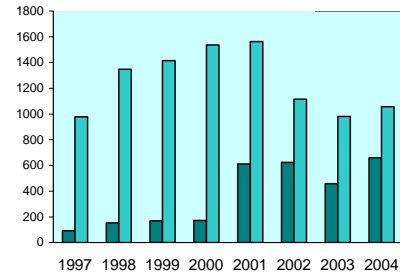


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	92	153	170	172	611	624	459	660
Antlered Harvest	978	1348	1415	1537	1563	1116	981	1057
% 4+ Points	34	36	22	31	23	26	27	32
Hunter Numbers	5310	5961	5821	ND	6593	6864	6096	6414

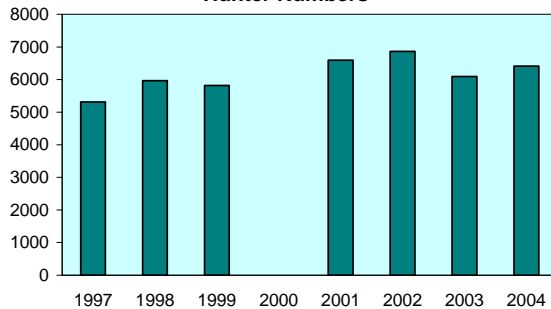
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 4+ Points

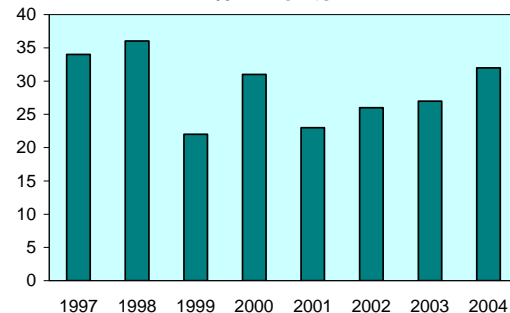


Figure 14. Mule deer Analysis Area 8.

Analysis Area 15 (Units 52A, 63, 63A, 68, 68A)

Management Objectives

Given the low habitat potential for Analysis Area 15 (Figure 15) to support high densities of deer and the limited ability to collect reliable population information, the management objective will be to maintain deer and not fall below 30% 4+ points in the antlered deer harvest. No trend area will be established in this Analysis Area.

Historical Perspective

The deer population probably has changed very little since historic times in this Analysis Area. Accounts of trappers through this area in the mid-1800s indicated that buffalo, elk, antelope, and bighorn sheep were far more common than mule deer. Given the low densities of deer and low priority for deer in this Analysis Area, little data is available to indicate what population trends have occurred through time.

Harvest management has been a general hunt format, except for Units 63A and 68A, where human safety issues have warranted either archery or short-range weapon hunts (Appendix A).

Habitat Issues

This Analysis Area primarily is comprised of dry desert shrub types, thus representing a low productivity area. Potential to support high numbers of mule deer is extremely limited. However, agriculture combined with riparian habitats along the Snake River in Units 63A and 68A can provide for higher populations.

BLM administers the majority of public ground (54% of total area) in Analysis Area 15. Private ground makes up 33% and the Idaho National Laboratory, Fort Hall Indian Reservation, and Craters of the Moon National Park combine for the remaining 12%. Most private ground is used for production of row crops and is situated along the Snake River floodplain. Both mule deer and white-tailed deer periodically create depredation concerns within agricultural zones.

Wildfires continue to play a big role with habitat throughout the Analysis Area. In many cases, fire has replaced climax sagebrush stands with annual and perennial grasses.

Biological Issues

The majority of this Analysis Area lacks potential to support good numbers of mule deer. No reliable population information is available to determine changes and/or trends in populations. Mule deer probably increase somewhat during favorable environmental conditions but can be drastically reduced during significant winter events. White-tailed deer comprise a small percentage of total deer in this area and are primarily restricted to riparian/agriculture habitats of the Snake River floodplain. No information exists as to trends in composition of mule deer versus white-tailed deer. The little movement information we have indicates deer have some rather complicated migration patterns within and in and out of this area.

Inter-specific Issues

Mule deer share the habitat with livestock, elk, antelope, and white-tailed deer. It is unknown what impacts an increasing elk population or sympatric whitetails may have on mule deer. It is doubtful that antelope have any impact on mule deer population parameters. Much of the Snake River floodplain is used to winter livestock and, in many cases, riparian shrub communities have been significantly degraded. Additionally, a social intolerance for livestock may make much of the riparian habitats unavailable to mule deer during winter months.

Predation Issues

Coyotes and bobcats are the predominate potential predators of mule deer in this Analysis Area. Trends in bobcat numbers are unknown; it is believed that coyotes have increased over the last 30 years. It is unknown whether coyotes are significantly impacting mule deer population dynamics.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency supplemental feeding has not been conducted in the past few years. However, private feeding operations probably occur periodically.

Information Requirements

Given the low potential for supporting high numbers of mule deer throughout this Analysis Area, little population information would be warranted. However, some information would be valuable.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 15 (Units 52A, 63, 63A, 68, 68A)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
ND	ND	ND	NA
Total		ND	NA

Note: ND = no survey data available, NA = not applicable.



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	ND	ND	NA
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	39	30

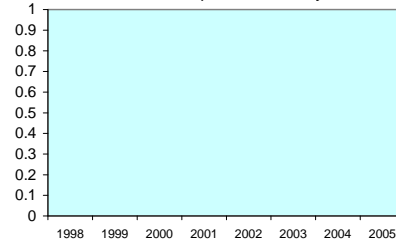
Note: ND = no survey data available, NA = not applicable.

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Comparable Surveys Total	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Population Change Between Comparable Surveys

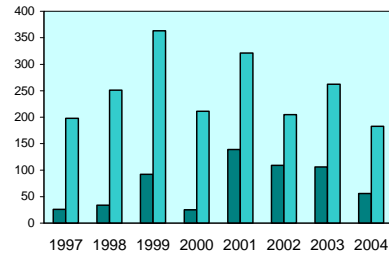


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	26	34	92	25	139	109	106	56
Antlered Harvest	198	251	363	211	321	205	262	183
% 4+ Points	37	48	23	38	36	52	29	32
Hunter Numbers	1732	1460	2566	ND	2428	2273	2549	2118

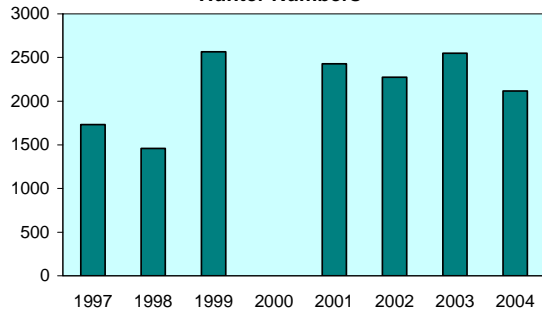
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 4+ Points

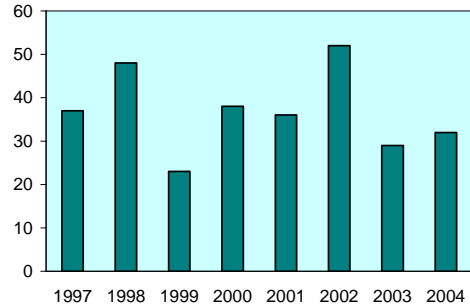


Figure 15. Mule deer Analysis Area 15.

Analysis Area 16 (Units 60, 60A, 61, 62A)

Management Objectives

Objectives for Analysis Area 16 (Figure 16) are to maintain a minimum of 15 bucks:100 does in post-season surveys and maintain at least 30% 4+ bucks in the general season harvest. Additionally, general antlerless harvest opportunity will be encouraged when trend area populations exceed 1,500 deer. Attempts to reduce populations to a level more in balance with available winter range have met with very limited success to date. Conservative antlerless hunting opportunity in general hunts has limited management options. Controlled hunts have thus far influenced this population only slightly.

Historical Perspective

Since the early to mid-1980s, raw counts on Sand Creek winter range (Unit 60A) indicate that deer populations have at least doubled, steadily increasing from just over 1,300 deer in 1984 to 3,000 or more in 1996, 1997, and 2000. This population has historically been very susceptible to hard winters but is very productive and rebounds quickly. Populations have been built rapidly during periods without severe winter conditions only to crash with the next hard winter. Historically, these population reductions have occurred about every 4-6 years. The most recent winter that resulted in significant mortality was 2001-2002. Due to this, populations were down from the high levels of the late 1990s to an estimate of 1,492 deer in 2003 but in 2004 had already bounced up to 2,123.

Deer that winter on the Sand Creek winter range summer throughout Units 60, 61, and 62A, resulting in a low deer density. Consequently, hunting pressure in these units is low and dispersed. The only time hunting pressure is significant on this population is when early snow forces deer down onto their high-desert winter range during the general hunt.

Habitat Issues

The gentle topography lodgepole pine communities of the Island Park caldera and the moderate to steeply-sloped Centennial Mountain Range with lodgepole pine and Douglas-fir communities dominate most deer summer range for this group of units. Most of this summer range occurs on lands administered by USFS.

Sand Creek winter range supports a vegetative complex typical of high-desert shrub-steppe dominated by sagebrush. Bitterbrush and chokecherry are prominent on areas of stabilized sand; Rocky Mountain juniper is locally abundant. Land ownership consists of a checkerboard of state, BLM, and private property. Cooperative use-trade agreements have benefited big game populations on this winter range.

A new 5,000 acre captive elk operation on Siddoway property has fenced off the majority of the South Juniper Hills. Some of that fenced-in property is historic mule deer winter range and is now unavailable to deer. No severe die-off occurred in response to the fence, but long-term effects remain to be seen.

Biological Issues

Winter deer populations have been very high in Unit 60A. In the late 1990s, populations of 3,000-4,500 deer are the highest levels documented for this herd and are over double the antlerless harvest threshold of 1,500 total deer. The absence of a severe winter over nearly a decade during that time has undoubtedly contributed to this increase.

In 2001, the Sand Creek trend area flown was a green-up survey in late March. This green-up timed survey was a departure from historical counts that were conducted while deer were on winter range. The 2001 trend count resulted in an estimate of 1,332 deer, down from the 2,866 estimated the previous winter. It is believed that the 2001 estimate was not an accurate reflection of the status of this population, but an artifact of the timing of this survey. Deer were already widely dispersed and a significant component of the population was undoubtedly not accounted for on this survey. More recent surveys have been conducted when deer are still on winter range.

Recruitment data for this trend area indicate the productive nature of this herd with fawn:doe ratios typically in the 80-90 range. The fawn:doe ratios for the 2004 survey resulted in an estimate of 75 fawns per 100 does.

Deer were radio-collared in this Analysis Area for the first time recently. In late December 2003, 17 does and 26 fawns were captured and fitted with radio collars by drive-netting on the Sand Creek winter range. Fawn survival was very high at 88%. Dispersal was monitored and distribution was very widespread with animals summering from the Centennial Valley in Montana to the other side of Jackson Lake in Wyoming. Collars were put on 17 more does in January 2005, and we will continue to monitor these deer.

Inter-specific Issues

Although deer-elk interactions are not well understood, little evidence exists to support the notion of a negative relationship between mule deer, elk, and moose, as all 3 presently occur at historical high population levels in this group of units. White-tailed deer are found throughout most of the zone but are relatively uncommon.

The new domestic elk operation within the deer winter range has created a situation where wild elk have been attracted to the operation and started using deer winter range.

Sheep and cattle grazing occurs throughout this group of units, which could pose some competitive concerns, especially on winter range during drought years.

Predation Issues

Black bear densities appear to be low and stable in this group of units. Mountain lions are extremely rare. Coyotes are common, especially on Sand Creek Desert winter range. Wolves recently introduced in Yellowstone National Park have become established in this group of units, which could affect other predators and mule deer.

Winter Feeding Issues

No Department-sponsored feeding activities occur in this group of units except under emergency situations. However, social pressure to feed deer arises during any winter of average or greater severity.

Information Requirements

Survey protocol was revised beginning in 2000-2001. Future plans include the continuation of composition and trend surveys utilizing sightability methodology, as specified by the current mule deer management plan.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 16 (Units 60, 60A, 61, 62A)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
Sand Creek (60A)	2004	2123	1500
Total		2123	1500



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

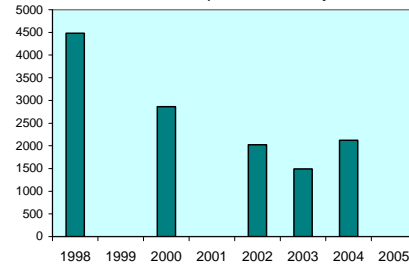
	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	2004	21	15
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	29	30

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Sand Creek (60A)	4484	ND	2866	ND	2025	1492	2123	ND
Comparable Surveys Total	4484	ND	2866	ND	2025	1492	2123	ND

Note: ND = no survey data available.

**Population Change
Between Comparable Surveys**

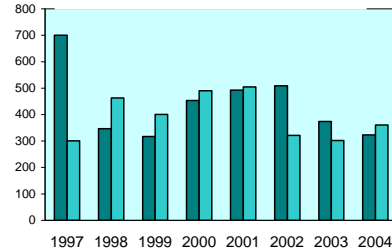


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	700	347	317	453	492	509	374	323
Antlered Harvest	301	463	401	490	505	321	302	361
% 4+ Points	35	38	43	36	27	30	28	28
Hunter Numbers	4267	4559	4748	ND	4086	3920	3603	4272

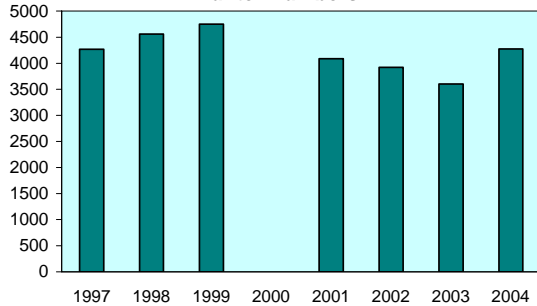
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 4+ Points

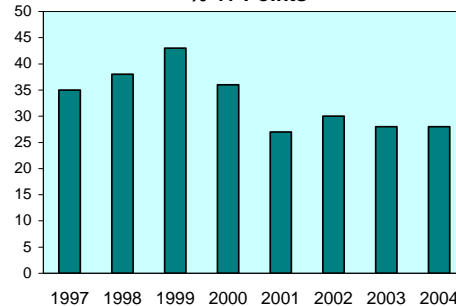


Figure 16. Mule deer Analysis Area 16.

Analysis Area 17 (Units 62, 65)

Management Objectives

Objectives for Analysis Area 17 (Figure 17) are to maintain a minimum of 15 bucks:100 does in post-season surveys and maintain a minimum of 30% 4+ bucks in the harvest. Additionally, general antlerless harvest will be encouraged when trend area sightability estimates exceed 400 deer. Maintaining this population at a level where it doesn't cause chronic depredations and subsequent spontaneous deer-feeding by private citizens is an ongoing priority, particularly in Unit 65.

Historical Perspective

Old records of mule deer in this Analysis Area are sketchy and inconclusive; however, it is probable that they have always been present in unknown density. Early homesteaders reported that deer were scarce. Mule deer populations throughout the Region increased in the 1940s and 1950s and remained high through the 1980s. Severe winters in 1988-1989 and 1992-1993 probably took much of the recruitment for those years. The population has since remained low, with the exception of 1 segment, which winters in the Teton River Canyon. Teton River Canyon deer are most likely primarily winter migrants from Wyoming and their population level is highly subject to the vagaries of winter severity, periodically suffering significant winter kill.

Habitat Issues

Summer habitat for Analysis Area 17 mule deer is relatively secure and capable of supporting far more animals than available winter range. In Unit 65, elevation and associated snow depths have always limited winter range. Additionally, what little winter range existed on private land is currently being developed into home-sites. The best winter range in Unit 62 was first inundated by the Teton Dam and then more was destroyed by its failure. Some of the area has shown some slow recovery.

Biological Issues

Regional personnel believe that approximately half of the mule deer that winter in this Analysis Area spend spring, summer, and fall in Wyoming. This confounds management because the deer often do not enter Idaho until after normal hunting seasons (Appendix A). Keeping this population below a level where they cause depredations to ornamental shrubs in winter or where people are providing them food requires cooperative management with Wyoming.

Mule deer in this Analysis Area are currently meeting all management objectives, including those required to allow general antlerless hunting. Management objectives for this Analysis Area are to maintain a minimum of 15 bucks:100 does post-season and 30% ≥ 4 points in the buck harvest. A 2005 composition survey resulted in an estimate of 41 bucks:100 does and the percent ≥ 4 points in the buck harvest for 2001-2003 was 38.

A trend count was conducted in late March and early April 2001 and resulted in an estimate of 614 total deer. This estimate was down significantly from the 1,626 deer estimated the previous winter (2000); however, it is believed that the 2001 estimate is not an accurate reflection of the status of this population. It is likely that mild winter/early spring conditions resulted in either deer not coming all the way to the Teton River Canyon winter range or leaving early, prior to the trend survey. A subsequent survey in 2002 resulted in an estimate of 1,257 deer. A winter trend area count in 2005 resulted in an estimate of 1,775 deer.

Inter-specific Issues

Mule deer share habitat in this Analysis Area with elk, moose, white-tailed deer, and high numbers of domestic livestock. Inter-specific relationships are not monitored and are poorly understood. White-tailed deer have increased dramatically in the Teton Basin over the past 10-15 years and have undoubtedly replaced mule deer in riverine habitats. Elk have also increased over the same time period that mule deer have declined; however, there is no information to demonstrate this represents a cause and effect relationship.

Predation Issues

There are no known unique or unusual predator issues affecting mule deer populations in this Analysis Area.

Winter Feeding Issues

Authentic winter range is limited in this Analysis Area, particularly in Unit 65. The lowest spot in the unit is above 6,000 feet in elevation. The area has few steep south and west facing slopes. Consequently, winters can be harsh on mule deer and, since home-sites and ranches also occupy winter range, calls to feed the deer are common and private efforts occur frequently. Feeding, either intentionally or incidentally to livestock operations, has produced a rapid growth in the area's white-tailed deer population. Discouraging the start of winter feeding operations in this area requires constant effort. During the winter of 2003-2004, the Department and the Winter Feeding Advisory Committee sponsored emergency feeding of deer in Unit 65 due to harsh winter conditions.

Information Requirements

Survey protocol was revised beginning in 2000-2001. Future plans include the continuation of annual composition and trend surveys utilizing sightability methodology, as specified by the current mule deer management plan.

Migration patterns are largely unknown for deer wintering in this Analysis Area. It is assumed that most of these deer migrate into Wyoming for summer but it is likely that a significant number of deer may stay in Idaho and summer in the Warm River area or Big Hole Mountains.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 17 (Units 62, 65)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
Teton River (62)	2005	1775	400
Total		1775	400



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	2005	41	15
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	38	30

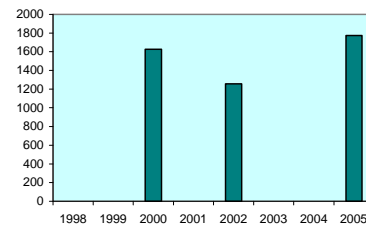
Note: ND = no survey data available.

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
(62)	ND	ND	1626	ND	1257	ND	ND	1775
Comparable Surveys Total	ND	ND	1626	ND	1257	ND	ND	1775

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Population Change Between Comparable Surveys

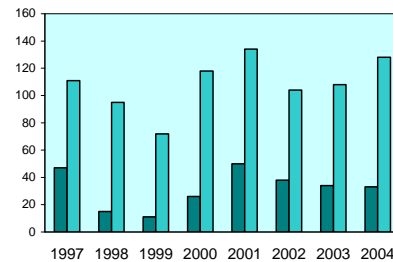


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	47	15	11	26	50	38	34	33
Antlered Harvest	111	95	72	118	134	104	108	128
% 4+ Points	32	70	35	34	32	41	26	46
Hunter Numbers	2302	1071	1013	ND	910	869	782	982

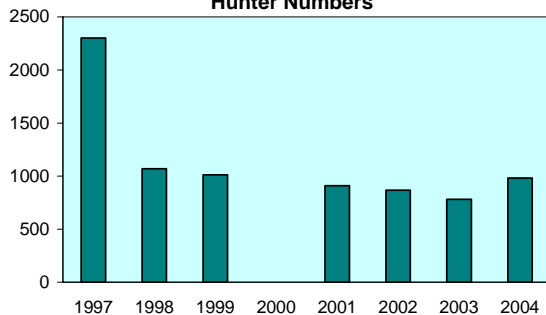
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 4+ Points

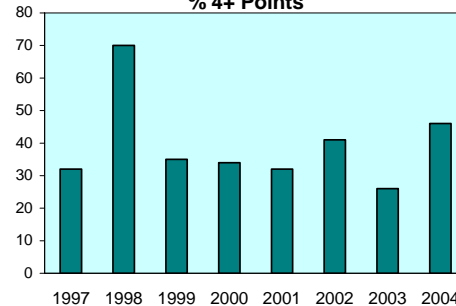


Figure 17. Mule deer Analysis Area 17.

Analysis Area 18 (Units 64, 67)

Management Objectives

Objectives for Analysis Area 18 (Figure 18) are to maintain a minimum of 15 bucks:100 does in post-season surveys and maintain a minimum of 30% 4-point and larger bucks in the general season harvest. Additionally, antlerless harvest will be encouraged when trend area sightability estimates exceed 1,500 deer. Maintaining this population at a level where it does not cause depredations and require winter feeding, particularly in Swan Valley, is an ongoing priority.

Historical Perspective

Old records of mule deer in this Analysis Area are sketchy and inconclusive; however, it is probable that they have always been present in unknown density. Early homesteaders reported that deer were scarce. Mule deer populations throughout the Region increased in the 1940s and 1950s and remained high through the 1980s. Severe winters in 1988-1989 and 1992-1993 probably took much of the recruitment for those years. The population has rebounded to levels at or above the long-term average. A liberal general season extending 10 days into November was offered in these units until 1990. The recent philosophy has been to move seasons (Appendix A) into October to reduce vulnerability of adult males during the rut. This has been successful in reducing deer harvest and also hunter satisfaction. This Analysis Area offers most of what little backcountry hunting opportunity remains in southeast Idaho.

Habitat Issues

Abundant spring, summer, and fall habitat exists in this area. Winter range is limited and is more characteristic of mule deer habitat than elk habitat. Winter range has been lost to agriculture and is currently threatened by proposed home-sites. Efforts are underway to inventory both occupied and potential winter range in the zone as part of a strategy to reduce the need for winter feeding. Opportunities to preserve or enhance winter range will be pursued. Winter range on slopes in the vicinity of the mouth of Rainey Creek appears to have suffered from years of overgrazing by elk and mule deer. The area between Table Rock Canyon and Kelly Canyon currently winters high concentrations of mule deer. Mature mountain mahogany stands throughout the zone may be providing only limited forage in addition to precluding all but a sparse understory of other species. Some bench areas in the Black Canyon to Wolverine Canyon stretch appear to be converting from shrub-dominated to grass-dominated or a conifer community. Most winter range in Swan Valley has been lost to agriculture, brush removal, or development.

Biological Issues

Mule deer in this Analysis Area are currently meeting management objectives, including those required to allow general antlerless harvest. Populations were at or near all-time highs prior to the severe 1988-1989 and 1992-1993 winters. Following a decline of unmeasured magnitude, they have recovered to at or above long-term average levels. Distribution has changed, particularly at Rainey Creek, where it was common to feed up to 500 deer through the 1987-1988 winter. Recently, there have been fewer than 200 fed at this location. Strategies designed to

increase wintering elk in some parts of the area to offset elimination of the Rainey Creek feed-site will need to be carefully monitored to protect existing mule deer populations. Snowmobile activity may be precluding the use of traditional winter range in Canyon Creek.

Management objectives for this Analysis Area are to maintain a minimum of 15 bucks:100 does post-season and 30% ≥ 4 points in the buck harvest. A 2004 composition survey resulted in an estimate of 32 bucks:100 does. The percent ≥ 4 points in the buck harvest for 2002-2004 was 49. A trend count in 2004 resulted in an estimate of 2,503 total deer, which meets the antlerless harvest threshold of 1,500 total deer.

Although the Heise trend area population within this Analysis Area is meeting objectives and appears to be performing very well, the loss of winter range in Swan Valley outside of the trend area has most likely resulted in a one-third overall reduction of the mule deer population in this Analysis Area. Peripheral populations like these need to be monitored to determine the overall status of mule deer in the area.

Inter-specific Issues

In addition to mule deer, this Analysis Area supports an elk population and numerous moose. Domestic livestock extensively grazes portions of it. Inter-specific relationships are not monitored and are poorly understood. If the elk population is not carefully managed, conflicts with deer on winter range could develop.

Predation Issues

There are no known unique or unusual predator issues affecting mule deer populations in this Analysis Area.

Winter Feeding Issues

Mule deer have been fed during severe winters on an emergency basis below the Palisades Bench, near Heise, and in Canyon Creek. They have been fed on a regular basis at the mouth of Rainey Creek along with elk. Plans to eliminate feeding of elk at that site will remove the site's strong attraction to deer and should result in the end of deer feeding as well. With new and planned home-site developments occurring in Swan Valley will come new residents tempted to bait or feed deer and elk. All such efforts will be discouraged.

Information Requirements

Survey protocol was revised beginning in 2000-2001. Future plans include the continuation of annual composition and trend surveys utilizing sightability methodology, as specified by the current mule deer management plan. Information on peripheral deer winter ranges is needed.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 18 (Units 64, 67)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
Heise (67)	2004	2503	1500
Total		2503	1500



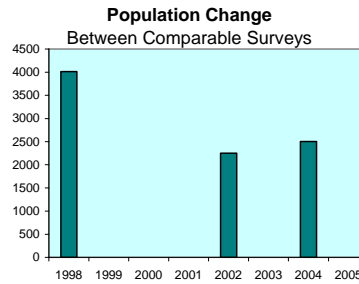
Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	2004	33	15
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	49	30

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Heise (67)	4014	ND	ND	ND	2252	ND	2503	ND
Comparable Surveys Total	4014	ND	ND	ND	2252	ND	2503	ND

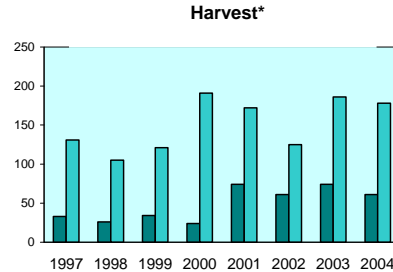
Note: ND = no survey data available.



Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	33	26	34	24	74	61	74	61
Antlered Harvest	131	105	121	191	172	125	186	178
% 4+ Points	19	28	42	40	40	56	46	48
Hunter Numbers	1666	1377	1165	ND	1430	1489	1503	1672

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

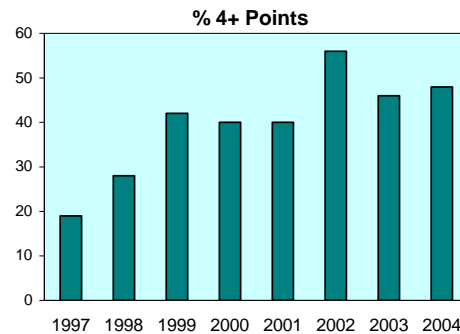
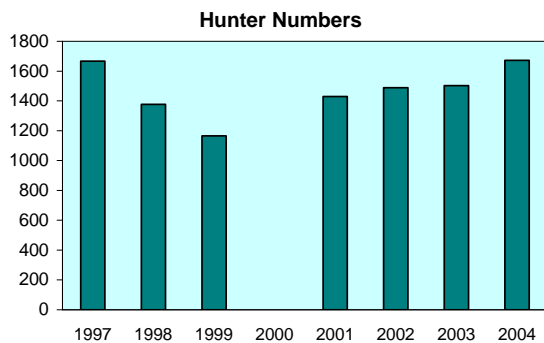


Figure 18. Mule deer Analysis Area 18.

Analysis Area 19 (Units 66, 66A, 69)

Management Objectives

Objectives for Analysis Area 19 (Figure 19) are to maintain a minimum of 15 bucks:100 does in post-season surveys and maintain a minimum of 30% 4-point and larger bucks in the general season harvest. Additionally, general antlerless harvest will be encouraged when trend area sightability estimates exceed 3,000 deer.

Historical Perspective

Osborne Russell (1848) did not mention mule deer in this area in the 1840s. Since he liked to hunt deer and noted the presence of other big game in the general area, it is likely deer were not common. Early homesteaders reported that deer were scarce. Mule deer apparently increased during the 1940s and 1950s, perhaps in response to overgrazing by domestic livestock, which encourages shrubs over grasses. Deer numbers peaked during the late 1960s and then declined dramatically. They peaked again during the late 1980s and early 1990s, then declined again following a severe winter in 1992-1993. Recently, the population has not recovered to the level of the long-term average. Hunting seasons over the years have been adjusted in an attempt to respond to obvious fluctuations in the population. Units 66 and 69 have supported one of the longest running late-season controlled buck hunts in the state (Appendix A). Permits for this hunt have extremely high appeal but permit numbers have been reduced from a high of 200 permits in the 1980s to only 10 permits in 2005.

Habitat Issues

Habitat throughout Analysis Area 19 is or has the potential to be highly productive. The fertile, mineral-rich soils of the area produce diverse plant communities including sagebrush-grasslands, extensive aspen patches, and cool moist conifer stands primarily on north and east facing slopes. The terrain is generally mild and much of the private land of the area was historically dry-farmed with cereal grains. Over half of the zone is private land with the balance of public lands administered by USFS, BLM, IDL, and IDFG. Approximately 250 square miles of the southwest corner of the area is Fort Hall Indian Reservation land. A significant portion of private land is now enrolled in CRP. When CRP was new, it was contributing substantially to the area's carrying capacity for deer during all seasons. Since the early 1990s, CRP has become a decadent monoculture of grass and is very undesirable deer habitat. Aspen communities provide valuable fawning habitat for mule deer and have declined in area and quality throughout the Analysis Area. The Tex Creek WMA, partially owned and totally managed by IDFG, provides 30,000 acres of prime winter habitat for mule deer, elk, and moose. This land was purchased to mitigate for habitat inundated or destroyed by Ririe, Palisades, and Teton Dams.

Biological Issues

The management objective for bucks in the harvest (at least 30% of the buck harvest being ≥ 4 points) and buck:doe ratios (minimum of 15 bucks:100 does post-season) was met in this

Analysis Area. The percent ≥ 4 points in the buck harvest for 2002-2004 was 33, and composition counts resulted in an estimate of 21 bucks:100 does.

A trend count flown in late 2003 resulted in an estimate of 2,475 total deer, which is well below the 3,340 estimated on the 1999 survey and the antlerless harvest threshold of 3,000. The trend area was flown most recently in 2005 resulting in an estimate of 1,532 total deer. This continued downward trend is of great concern.

Mule deer populations were at a historical high in this Analysis Area when surveyed in February 1991. The winter of 1992-1993 was severe and significant mortality occurred, especially to fawns. The population rebounded rapidly to long-term average levels but has not approached the extreme highs of the late 1980s and early 1990s. If the current series of mild winters continues, this highly productive population should respond positively but so far does not seem to be responding.

Inter-specific Issues

In addition to mule deer, this Analysis Area supports a large elk population and numerous moose. Domestic livestock extensively graze the area. Inter-specific relationships are not monitored and are poorly understood. If the elk population is not kept in check, conflicts with deer on winter range could develop. This deer population has slowly declined to a low in 2005 of 1,532 concurrent with an all-time high of 5,200 elk. Currently, agricultural practices, particularly management of CRP lands, are more beneficial to elk than deer.

Predation Issues

There are no known unique or unusual predator issues affecting mule deer populations in this Analysis Area.

Winter Feeding Issues

Mule deer have not been fed in this Analysis Area. Feeding should be discouraged in all but extreme emergency conditions.

Information Requirements

Sightability surveys and harvest reports are needed to monitor status of the population relative to objectives. A comprehensive inventory of winter range quality and quantity, including the status and terms of enrollment of CRP lands, would be valuable for long-range planning and management. CRP is particularly important because such a large percentage of this Analysis Area is privately owned. A large-scale conversion from CRP back to cultivated crops could result in significant depredation problems by both mule deer and elk under current population objectives for both species. Deer and elk competition is poorly understood and information on this subject would be valuable to better manage mule deer in this area. Information on peripheral deer winter ranges is needed.

Literature Cited

Russell, O. 1848. Journal of a Trapper. Syms-York, Boise, Idaho.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 19 (Units 66, 66A, 69)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
Tex Creek (69)	2005	1532	3000
Fall Creek (66)	2005	351	NA
Total		1883	3000



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

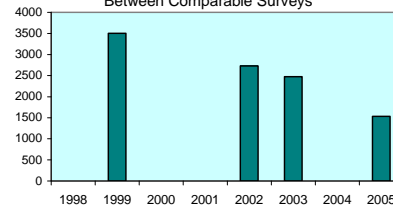
	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio (69)	2005	21	15
Buck:Doe Ratio (66)	2005	43	15
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	33	30

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Tex Creek (69)	ND	3508	ND	ND	2730	2475	ND	1532
Comparable Surveys Total	ND	3508	ND	ND	2730	2475	ND	1532

Note: ND = no survey data available, estimates within parenthesis are based on information other than sightability surveys.

**Population Change
Between Comparable Surveys**

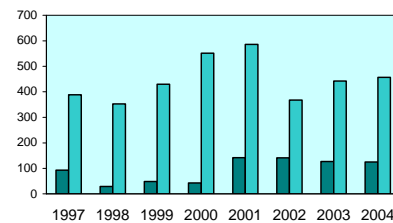


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	93	29	49	43	142	141	127	125
Antlered Harvest	389	353	430	552	586	368	442	457
% 4+ Points	56	48	52	42	37	39	28	32
Hunter Numbers	4351	3038	3340	ND	3994	4163	3876	4044

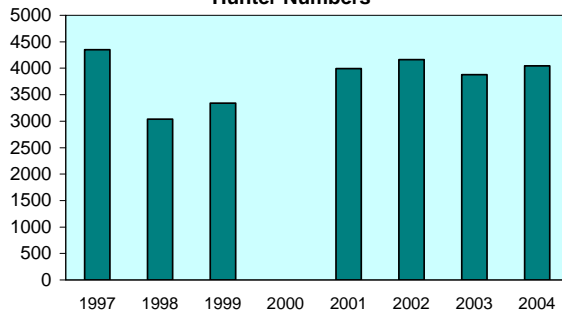
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 4+ Points

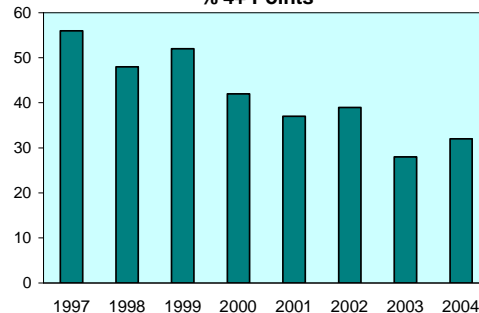


Figure 19. Mule deer Analysis Area 19.

**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>Mule Deer Surveys and</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-29</u>		<u>Inventories</u>
SUBPROJECT:	<u>7</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>1</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>2</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005</u>		

SALMON REGION

Analysis Area 4 (Units 16A, 17, 19, 19A, 20, 20A, 25, 26, 27)

Management Objectives

Objectives for Analysis Area 4 (Figure 20) are to maintain ≥ 25 bucks:100 does in post-season surveys and $\geq 50\%$ ≥ 4 -point bucks in the harvest. When estimated deer numbers exceed 2,700 in the Unit 27 trend area, antlerless seasons will be considered.

Historical Perspective

These units represent the core of Idaho's backcountry; much of the area is designated wilderness. With the rugged, remote terrain and difficult access, management control of deer herds has been difficult at best. The forces of weather, fire, and plant succession have ultimately played a much larger role in deer populations than efforts of wildlife managers. In the late 1800s, human populations reached their peak as gold seekers poured into the area and established mining boom towns. With the miners came year-round big game hunting for meat, followed shortly by intensive livestock grazing. Depleted game herds plus heavy grazing of grass ranges set the stage for a shrub explosion in the early 1900s. At the same time, the mining boom collapsed and deer management emphasized protection from harvest; large "game preserves" were created.

By the 1930s, managers were recognizing that deer herds had grown to levels that were damaging winter ranges. Management emphasis shifted from protection to trying to achieve enough harvest to maintain winter range condition. Seasons were extended from mid-September through November to mid-December. Second and third deer tags were offered in some areas from the 1940s through the 1960s. A mid-September to late November season (Appendix A) has been standard in the backcountry units since the 1950s. Even today, much of the deer harvest is localized around access points such as roads and airstrips.

Ultimately, the shrub winter ranges could not be sustained. More controlled livestock grazing and fire suppression allowed grasses and conifers to out-compete shrub seedlings; shrub ranges began to revert to grasslands and forests. As the habitat went, so went the deer; long-term trend counts in Unit 27 show a steady decline in deer numbers from the 1920s to the mid-1960s. Since

that time, the trend in deer numbers and harvest has been relatively flat. For example, 2,900 deer were counted during a 1968 helicopter deer survey of Unit 27. During helicopter elk surveys in Unit 27 in 1995, 1999, and 2002, staff counted 2,625-2,911 deer incidental to elk counts.

Habitat Issues

Habitat ultimately determines deer densities and productivity. In these units where hunter harvest has historically been light, particularly for females, deer herds could be expected to exist much of the time at densities approaching carrying capacity (unless suppressed by predators or temporarily set back by severe winters). Deer herds at or near carrying capacity can be expected to be relatively unproductive, recruiting few fawns, thus few bucks into the population, and these herds can be expected to produce bucks with small antlers. Unit 27 does produce relatively small-antlered bucks for their age, but this has not been definitively tied to deer densities or habitat. Continued shrub-land deterioration, conifer encroachment, and booming elk populations will probably continue to further erode habitat capacity for deer. Fire may enhance summer ranges and winter ranges in the more moist northern units, but fire is not likely to benefit the more arid southern winter ranges. Already established in some areas, the spread of noxious weeds such as knapweed, rush skeletonweed, and leafy spurge could ultimately have significant impacts on winter range productivity.

Biological Issues

Very little mule deer aerial survey data has been collected in these units since the 1960s. What data has been collected suggests a fairly stable number of deer since that time. For example, a 1965 helicopter trend count in Unit 27 resulted in a tally of 1,963 deer. The same area flown in 1968 resulted in 2,929 deer observed, while 2,133 deer were counted incidental to elk surveys in 1995. Buck harvests since the mid-1970s in Unit 27 are variable, but indicate no definite upward or downward trend. Similarly, there is no evident trend in percent 4-point bucks in the harvest, which varies annually, but averages approximately 55%. Since large fires in 2000 in the southern portion of the Analysis Area, some outfitters have reported increased deer numbers and antler development.

Inter-specific Issues

Current high elk densities may be having some impact on the area's capacity to produce deer. White-tailed deer, a potentially strong competitor, are rare south of Salmon River but occur at greater densities in the more northern units. In some limited areas, mountain goats and mule deer may be competing for the same mountain mahogany winter ranges. Bighorn sheep also share some ranges but generally overlap little with deer. Livestock rangeland grazing, another potential source of competition, is generally a very minor activity in most of these units.

Predation Issues

Black bear densities appear to be low to moderate in the southern units and increasing towards the north. Mountain lion densities are at least moderate, perhaps high, and appear to have increased in recent years, probably at least in part due to increased elk densities. Coyotes are

common and have an unknown impact on deer populations. Bobcats and golden eagles are present, but are not thought to cause significant predation on deer. Wolves reintroduced by USFWS have become well established in these units. The addition of wolves will likely have an impact on black bear, mountain lion, and coyote populations. At some level, predation could benefit deer herds to the extent that it reduces elk competition and keeps deer herds below carrying capacity where they can be more productive. However, excessive levels of predation can also suppress prey populations to undesirably low levels. At this point, it is unclear what the net impact of predation will be with the new mix of large predators.

Winter Feeding Issues

Winter feeding has not occurred in these remote big game units.

Information Requirements

Impacts of elk on mule deer production and survival are suspected but unknown. The most productive deer herds are those maintained at a level well below carrying capacity. Better information is needed to identify appropriate deer densities that will maintain optimum productivity and harvest. The potential impact of the new mix of large predators is unknown. Migratory patterns are largely unknown.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 4 (Units 16A, 17, 19, 19A, 20, 20A, 25, 26, 27)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest Threshold
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Total Deer
Middle Fork (27)	2005	2540	2700
Total		2540	2700



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

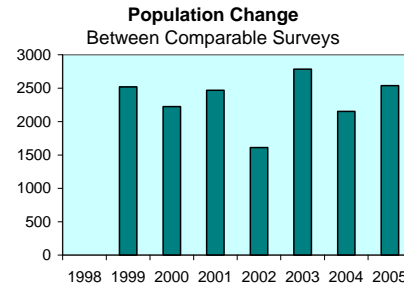
	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	2005	31	25
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	60	50

Note: ND = no survey data available.

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Middle Fork (27)	ND	2519	2225	2468	1610	2785	2154	2540
Comparable Surveys Total	ND	2519	2225	2468	1610	2785	2154	2540

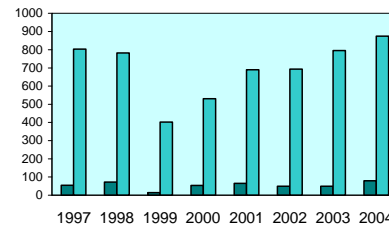
Note: ND = no survey data available, estimates within parenthesis are based on information other than sightability surveys.



Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	55	72	14	54	65	50	50	79
Antlered Harvest	803	782	402	530	689	693	796	874
% 4+ Points	47	64	55	58	55	61	58	61
Hunter Numbers	4287	5661	3424	ND	3555	4007	4106	3946

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.
Hunter numbers include all deer hunters.



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

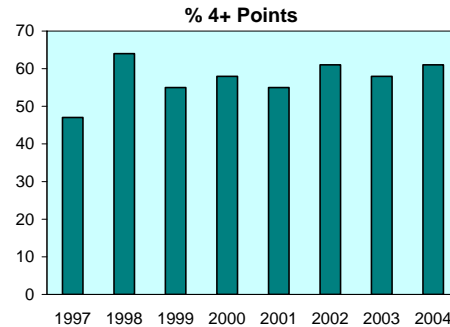
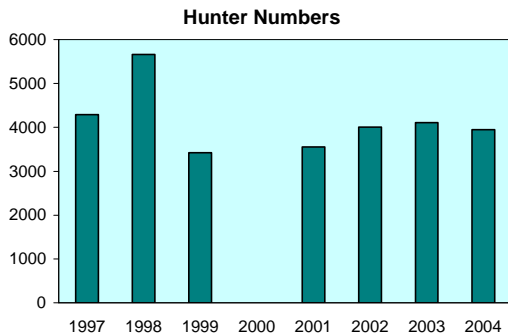


Figure 20. Mule deer Analysis Area 4.

Analysis Area 5 (Units 21, 21A, 28, 36B)

Management Objectives

Objectives for Analysis Area 5 (Figure 21) are to maintain ≥ 15 bucks:100 does in post-season surveys and $\geq 30\%$ ≥ 4 -point bucks in the harvest. When estimated deer numbers exceed 1,800 in North Fork trend area and 2,500 in Challis trend area, antlerless seasons will be considered.

Historical Perspective

Mule deer were scarce and harvest low for much of the early part of the 20th century. From 1917 until the 1940s, parts of Units 28 and 36B were designated as no hunting “game preserves.” By the early 1940s, deer herds had expanded to the point that long, either-sex seasons were being offered (early Oct to mid-Nov). This pattern continued into the 1970s, when the antlerless portion of the season began to be shortened and total season length was shortened to include mid-October to mid-November. In 1991, concerns for mature buck escapement led to shifting the deer season earlier so that it ended in October before the rut began. Since 1991, the deer season framework (Appendix A) has been the most conservative these units have seen in at least 50 years.

Hunter numbers have dropped from 4,000-5,000 people harvesting 700-1,600 bucks annually to 2,700-3,700 people harvesting 800-950 bucks. Antlerless deer harvest was eliminated in 1998 and buck harvest declined in subsequent years. This decline may be attributable to increased competition between does and bucks for limited forage resources and/or decreases in hunter numbers.

Habitat Issues

Cattle ranching, livestock grazing, mining, timber harvest, and recreation are dominant human uses of the landscape in Analysis Area 5. Deer depredations on agricultural crops are minor. Intrusion of human development into winter ranges is accelerating.

Habitat ultimately determines deer densities and productivity. However, specific limiting factors within the habitat are poorly understood. Deer herds at or near carrying capacity can be expected to be relatively unproductive, recruiting few fawns, thus few bucks into the population; antlers will be relatively small for the age of the buck; and antler drop will occur relatively early in winter. Deer herds in this group of units exhibit all these traits to some degree, but this has not been definitively tied to deer densities or habitat. In some areas, deer winter in mature stands of mountain mahogany that are relatively stagnant and unproductive. Elk may have removed much of the mountain mahogany forage within reach of deer. Forests are slowly encroaching into shrub and grassland communities. Spread of noxious weeds, such as knapweed and leafy spurge, could ultimately have significant impacts on winter range productivity.

Biological Issues

A trend area in Unit 21 near North Fork has been surveyed annually since December 1990 and a similar trend area has been surveyed in Unit 36B south of Challis since December 1994.

However, the value of these surveys as indicators of total deer numbers is questionable; strong variations, including biological impossibilities, occur from one year to the next. These flights do provide insights into herd productivity and sex/age structure. Fawn production has apparently declined since 2000, with average fawn ratios in early winter decreasing (13-16:100 does).

Buck:doe ratios in Unit 21 increased after the 1991 season change, and have since generally stabilized at 15-19 bucks:100 does with 2 years of higher (28-32) ratios since 2002. Buck:doe ratios historically were higher in Unit 36B, generally closer to 20 bucks:100 does. However, ratios declined to 11 bucks:100 does between 1999 and 2003. During the last 2 surveys, buck ratios increased and now exceed management objectives.

Inter-specific Issues

Area 5 contains the majority of the most productive deer units in Salmon Region; parts of Units 21, 21A, and 36B contain high densities of wintering deer. Current high elk densities may be having some impact on the area's capacity to produce deer. This impact may be particularly pronounced during severe winters when deep snow moves elk down onto deer winter ranges. White-tailed deer, a potentially strong competitor, are mostly restricted to private lands along major riparian areas between Salmon and Gibbonsville. Pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat share some ranges but generally overlap little with mule deer. Livestock rangeland grazing, another potential source of competition, has generally been reduced in recent years.

Predation Issues

Black bear densities appear to be moderate in Analysis Area 5. Mountain lion densities are at least moderate, perhaps high in some areas, and appear to have increased in recent years, probably at least in part due to increased elk densities. Coyotes are common and have an unknown impact on deer populations. Bobcats, red fox, and golden eagles also occur in the area but are not thought to account for significant predation on deer. Reintroduction of gray wolves by USFWS has resulted in establishment of ≥ 7 packs in the Analysis Area: ≥ 2 in Unit 28, 2 each in Units 21 and 36B, and ≥ 1 in Unit 21A. The addition of wolves will likely have an impact on black bear, mountain lion, and coyote populations. At some level, predation could benefit deer herds to the extent that it reduces elk competition and keeps deer herds below habitat carrying capacity where they can be more productive. However, excessive levels of predation can also suppress prey populations to undesirably low levels. At this point, the net impact of predation with the new mix of large predators is unclear.

Winter Feeding Issues

Limited amounts of deer feeding occur about once per decade in the North Fork area. Minor private feeding activities also occur from time to time.

Information Requirements

Surveys have been conducted since 1990 in Unit 21 and 1994 in Unit 36B, providing some long-term data on mule deer herd sex and age composition and trends in deer numbers. However, knowledge of deer population characteristics is limited to these areas and may not adequately reflect the entire Analysis Area. Impacts of elk on mule deer production and survival are suspected but not quantified. The most productive deer herds are those maintained at a level well below carrying capacity. Better information is needed to identify appropriate deer densities that will maintain optimum productivity and harvest. Migratory patterns are largely unknown. Potential impact of the new mix of large predators is unknown.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 5 (Units 21, 21A, 28, 36B)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
North Fork (21)	2005	1218	1800
Challis (36B)	2005	2272	2500
Total		3490	4300



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

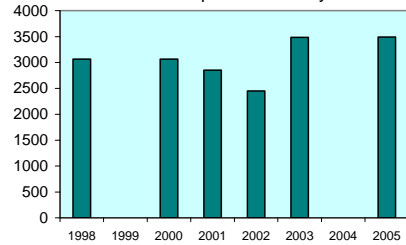
	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	2005	26	15
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	31	30

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
North Fork (21)	1226	ND	1104	1284	459	1273	ND	1218
Challis (36B)	1840	2163	1963	1568	1993	2210	1721	2272
Comparable Surveys Total	3066	ND	3067	2852	2452	3483	ND	3490

Note: ND = no survey data available.

**Population Change
Between Comparable Surveys**

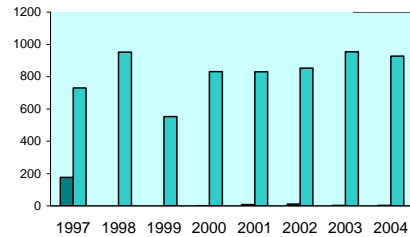


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	176	0	0	1	8	10	3	4
Antlered Harvest	730	952	553	832	830	852	954	927
% 4+ Points	35	27	28	34	23	30	32	33
Hunter Numbers	3907	4082	2660	ND	2786	3127	3683	3280

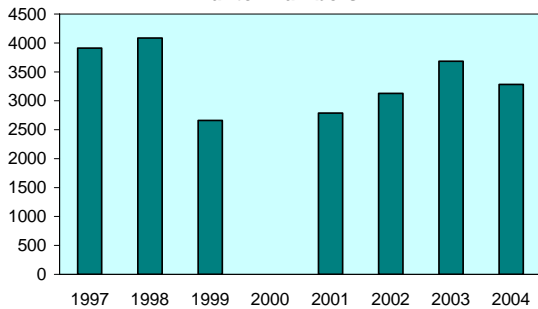
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Harvest*



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers



% 4+ Points

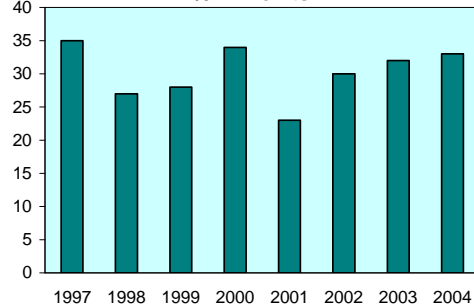


Figure 21. Mule deer Analysis Area 5.

Analysis Area 9 (Units 29, 37, 37A, 51)

Management Objectives

Objectives for Analysis Area 9 (Figure 22) are to maintain ≥ 15 bucks:100 does in post-season surveys and $\geq 30\%$ ≥ 4 -point bucks in the harvest. When estimated deer numbers exceed 1,300 in the Unit 51/58W trend area and 1,000 in the Unit 29 trend area, antlerless seasons will be considered.

Historical Perspective

Mule deer were scarce and harvests low for much of the early part of the 20th century. By mid-century mule deer had become the predominant big game animal. Once known for productive mule deer populations, particularly in the Pahsimeroi and Little Lost valleys, these units yielded very large mule deer harvests in the 1950s and 1960s. By the 1970s, harvests had dropped by two-thirds as more conservative management strategies were implemented. Despite 2 decades of very conservative antlerless harvest and increasingly conservative buck seasons, mule deer populations have failed to return to their previous high densities and are stable at moderate levels. Although deer herds declined well before any significant increase in elk numbers, current high elk densities may be contributing to suppressed deer populations.

Habitat Issues

Much of the land in these units is administered by BLM or USFS, with private lands mostly restricted to valley bottoms. Cattle ranching, livestock grazing, and recreation are dominant human uses of the landscape. The Analysis Area is generally arid; forage production and deer harvest can be strongly influenced by growing-season precipitation. Deer depredations on agricultural crops are common in Units 29, 37, and 37A and are especially pronounced in dry years. Depredations in Unit 51 are limited.

Habitat ultimately determines deer densities and productivity. However, specific limiting factors within the habitat are poorly understood. In some areas, deer winter in mature stands of mountain mahogany that appear relatively stagnant and unproductive. Winter range shrub stands, specifically mountain mahogany, in parts of Little Lost Valley have been lost or degraded. Elk and livestock may have removed much of the mountain mahogany forage within reach of deer. Forests are slowly encroaching into shrub and grassland communities. Spread of noxious weeds, such as knapweed and leafy spurge, could ultimately have significant impacts on winter range productivity.

Biological Issues

Very little aerial survey data has been collected in these units in recent years. There is a contrast in harvest trends within this group of units. Buck harvest in the southern unit (51) averaged 184 from 1981-1985, increased 80% to average 331 during 1986-1990, then dropped back to 211 during 1991-1995 and 178 during 1996-2000. In contrast, buck harvest in the northern units (29,

37, 37A) averaged 618 during 1981-1985, increased only 6% to 653 during 1986-1990, and then declined to an average 412 bucks during 1991-1995 and 309 bucks during 1996-2000.

Inter-specific Issues

Current high elk densities may be having some impact on the area's capacity to produce deer. White-tailed deer, a potentially strong competitor, are mostly restricted to private agricultural lands along major riparian areas. In some limited areas, mountain goats and mule deer may be competing for the same mountain mahogany winter ranges. Pronghorn antelope and bighorn sheep also share the range but generally overlap little with mule deer. Livestock rangeland grazing, another potential source of competition, has generally been reduced in recent years, but some competition probably still exists, particularly in the moister summer range habitats.

Predation Issues

Black bear densities appear to be low and stable. Mountain lion densities are low to moderate and appear to have increased in Units 29, 37, and 37A in recent years, probably at least in part due to increased elk densities. Coyotes are common and have an unknown impact on deer populations. Bobcats, red fox, and golden eagles also occur in the area but are not thought to account for significant predation on deer. Wolves were observed in parts of the Analysis Area but appeared to be primarily transient.

Winter Feeding Issues

Because this is an arid area with relatively little snowfall, winter feeding has not occurred in these units in recent years.

Information Requirements

Survey data on mule deer herd sex and age composition and trends in deer numbers have not been consistently collected in the past, but this situation is improving somewhat. Impacts of elk on mule deer production and survival are suspected but not quantified. The most productive deer herds are those maintained at a level well below carrying capacity. Better information is needed to identify appropriate deer densities that will maintain optimum productivity and harvest. Migratory patterns are largely unknown.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 9 (Units 29, 37, 37A, 51)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
Tendoy (29)	2004	685	1000
Total		685	1000



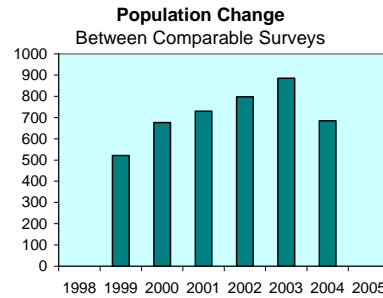
Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	2004	5	15
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	34	30

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Tendoy (29)	(592)	521	676	730	798	885	685	ND
Comparable Surveys Total	(592)	521	676	730	798	885	685	ND

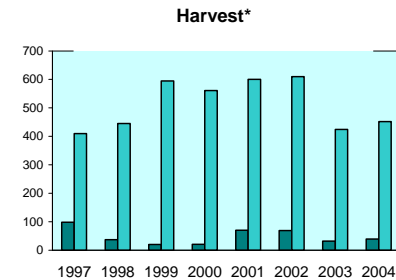
Note: ND = no survey data available, estimates within parenthesis are based on information other than sightability surveys.



Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	98	37	20	21	70	69	32	39
Antlered Harvest	410	445	595	561	600	610	424	452
% 4+ Points	46	38	29	36	30	31	31	39
Hunter Numbers	2156	2299	2567	ND	2810	3172	2396	2225

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

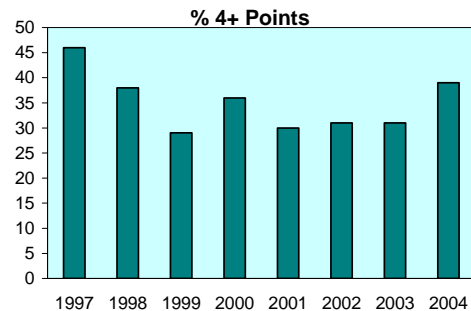
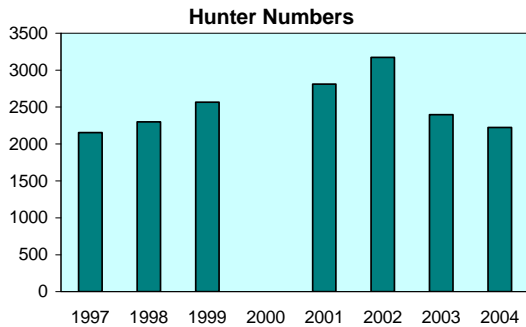


Figure 22. Mule deer Analysis Area 9.

Analysis Area 10 (Units 30, 30A, 58, 59, 59A)

Management Objectives

Objectives for Analysis Area 10 (Figure 23) are to maintain ≥ 15 bucks:100 does in post-season surveys and to maintain $\geq 30\%$ ≥ 4 -point bucks in the harvest. When estimated deer numbers exceed 1,400 in the Unit 58/59A trend area and 1,200 in the Unit 30/30A trend area, general antlerless seasons will be considered.

Historical Perspective

Mule deer were scarce and harvests low for much of the early part of the 20th century. Parts of some units were designated as no hunting “game preserves.” By mid-century, mule deer had become the predominant big game animal. These units produced high mule deer harvests in the 1950s and 1960s. By the 1970s, harvests had dropped by 50% as more conservative management strategies were implemented. Despite 2 decades of very conservative antlerless harvests and increasingly conservative buck seasons, mule deer harvests have remained relatively stable since the early 1970s in Units 30 and 30A and since the early 1980s in Units 58, 59, and 59A. Although deer herds declined well before any significant increase in elk numbers, current high elk densities may well be helping to suppress deer populations in Units 30 and 30A. Further south in Units 58, 59, and 59A where elk densities have also increased substantially, trend counts suggest that deer populations are now at or slightly above late 1960s levels.

Many of these deer, particularly in Lemhi Valley, migrate to higher-quality summer ranges in Montana, returning to Idaho winter ranges in November.

Habitat Issues

BLM or USFS administers much of the land in these units, with private lands mostly restricted to valley bottoms. Cattle ranching, livestock grazing, and recreation are the dominant human uses of the landscape in these units. This is in a generally arid region where forage production and deer harvest can be strongly influenced by growing season precipitation. Deer depredations on agricultural crops are common and are especially pronounced in dry years in Units 30 and 30A, but have not been a problem in Units 58, 59, and 59A.

Habitat ultimately determines deer densities and productivity. However, specific limiting factors within the habitat are poorly understood. In some areas, deer winter in mature stands of mountain mahogany which appear to have become relatively stagnant and unproductive. Elk and livestock may have removed much of the mahogany canopy within reach of deer. Forests are slowly encroaching into shrub and grassland communities. The spread of noxious weeds, such as knapweed and leafy spurge, could ultimately have significant impacts on winter range productivity.

Traditionally, deer in Units 58, 59, and 59A concentrate on winter ranges at the south end of the Beaverhead Range. Heavy snows in the late 1960s placed tremendous pressure on very narrow portions of these units, killing many browse plants. Winter range habitat condition is still poor to

fair for many of the bitterbrush and mountain mahogany stands important to wintering deer. Mountain mahogany, the primary winter browse species, is still heavily hedged with little regeneration. Winter domestic sheep grazing is contributing to this overuse.

Biological Issues

This Analysis Area contains 2 trend areas: Leadore (Units 30/30A) in Salmon Region and Reno Point (Units 58/59A) in Upper Snake Region. Total deer estimated in 2003 for both areas combined (2,563) fell slightly below the antlerless harvest threshold of 2,600 for the first time in several years, but rebounded to over 3,100 deer in 2005. Deer numbers in the Leadore survey area declined approximately 40% after 3 years of above-threshold levels from 1999 to 2001.

Buck ratios have improved in recent years and now meet the management objective (minimum of 15 bucks:100 does post-season). However, percent of the buck harvest ≥ 4 points has remained below objective ($\geq 30\%$) since 1997.

Inter-specific Issues

Current high elk densities in Units 30 and 30A may be having some impact on the area's capacity to produce deer. However, this is not believed to be a problem in Units 58, 59, and 59A because deer and elk appear to use different winter and summer ranges. It should be noted, however, that deer-elk interactions are not well understood. White-tailed deer, a potentially strong competitor, are mostly restricted to private agricultural lands along major riparian areas. In some limited areas, mountain goats and mule deer may be competing for the same mountain mahogany winter ranges. Antelope and bighorn sheep also share the range but generally overlap little with mule deer. Livestock rangeland grazing, another potential source of competition, has generally been reduced in recent years, but is still a concern on the southern winter ranges.

Predation Issues

Black bear densities appear to be low and stable. Mountain lion densities are low to moderate and appear to have increased in recent years in Units 30 and 30A, probably at least in part due to increased elk densities. Coyotes are common and have an unknown impact on deer populations. Bobcats, red fox, and golden eagles also occur in the area but are not thought to cause significant predation on deer.

Winter Feeding Issues

Winter feeding has not occurred in these units in the past few years.

Information Requirements

Survey data on mule deer herd sex and age composition and trends in deer numbers have been inadequate in this Analysis Area but are improving. Impacts of elk on mule deer production and survival are suspected but not quantified. The most productive deer herds are those maintained at a level below carrying capacity (at which point recruitment equals mortality and there is no

harvestable surplus). Better information is needed to identify appropriate deer densities to maintain optimum productivity and harvest. Although strong interstate movements have been suspected, very little information exists on migration patterns. The Reno Point trend area was included in Upper Snake Region's fawn mortality work starting in 2000-2001, providing information on movement patterns of deer from this winter range.

Deer in Unit 30 were radio-marked in December 2003 and 2004 as part of the fawn-monitoring project in Salmon Region. As suspected, some deer migrated to Montana summer ranges. In some cases, migration distances were significant. One collar was shed approximately 96 km north of the animal's winter range near the Continental Divide in the Anaconda-Pintlar Wilderness.

Mule Deer Analysis Area 10 (Units 30, 30A, 58, 59, 59A)

Trend Area Status & Antlerless Harvest Threshold

Trend Area (Unit)	Current Status		Antlerless Harvest
	Survey Year	Total Deer	Threshold Total Deer
Reno Gulch (58/59A)	2005	2323	1400
Leadore (30/30A)	2005	805	1200
Total		3128	2600



Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

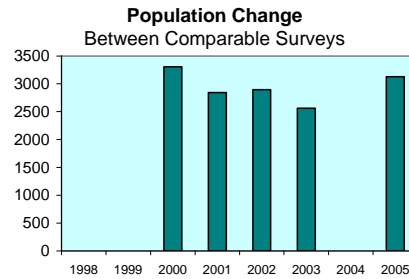
	Survey Year(s)	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
Buck:Doe Ratio	2005	23	15
%4+ Pts in the Harvest	2002-04	28	30

Leadore: Buck:Doe Ratio=16, 58 bucks:355 does

Trend Area Surveys

Trend Area (Unit)	Deer Numbers							
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Reno Point (58/59A)	ND	ND	1514	1391	1900	1407	ND	2323
Leadore (30/30A)	ND	1411	1792	1453	996	1156	734	805
Comparable Surveys Total	ND	ND	3306	2844	2896	2563	ND	3128

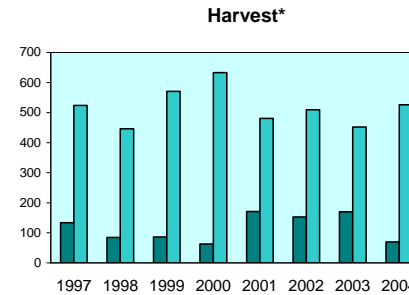
Note: ND = no survey data available, estimates within parenthesis are based on information other than sightability surveys.



Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Antlerless Harvest	134	85	86	63	171	153	170	70
Antlered Harvest	524	446	571	633	481	510	452	526
% 4+ Points	23	25	18	27	24	24	29	30
Hunter Numbers	2928	2328	2423	ND	2171	2560	2788	2748

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.



* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data.

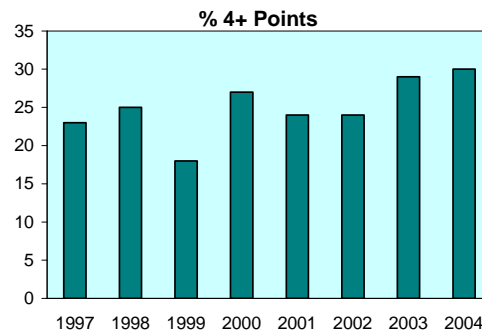
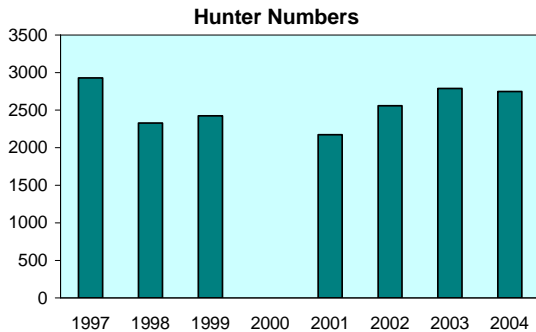


Figure 23. Mule deer Analysis Area 10.

APPENDIX A
IDAHO
2004 SEASON
MULE DEER RULES

2004 DEER HUNTING SEASONS

HOW MANY DEER CAN I HARVEST? In general, the answer is one deer per hunter per year. But a few controlled hunts and depredation hunts offer the opportunity for hunters to harvest another deer. In addition, deer hunters may purchase leftover nonresident deer tags at the non-resident price to get an opportunity to harvest a second deer in 2004. See below.

ANTLERED DEER: Only deer with at least one antler longer than 3 inches may be taken in any season which is open for antlered deer only. In antlered-only seasons, antlers must accompany the carcass while in transit.

ANTLERLESS DEER: Only deer without antlers or with antlers shorter than 3 inches may be taken in any season which is open for antlerless deer only.

TWO-POINT DEER: Only deer with *not more than two points* on one side, not including brow point, and at least one antler longer than 3 inches may be taken in any season which is open for two-point deer only. A point is an antler projection that is at least one inch long and longer than the width of the projection.

THREE-POINT DEER: Only deer having at least one antler with three or more points, not including the brow point or tine, may be taken in any season which is open for three-point or larger deer only.

FOUR-POINT DEER: Only deer having at least one antler with four or more points, not including the brow point or tine, may be taken in any season which is open for four-point or larger deer only.

TRANSIT: In any hunt with point restrictions, the antlers must accompany the carcass while in transit.

SPECIES IDENTIFICATION: In seasons restricted to mule deer only or white-tailed deer only, if the head is removed, the fully-haired tail must be left naturally attached to the carcass.

Any person who receives a controlled hunt permit for deer is prohibited from hunting in any other deer hunt, EXCEPT extra deer tag hunts or by purchasing a leftover nonresident deer tag when available. See below.

EXTRA DEER HUNTS: All controlled deer hunt areas designated by an "X" are extra deer hunts, usually for antlerless deer. Hunters may apply for a regular controlled hunt and a controlled hunt designated for extra deer tags. For example, you may apply for Controlled Hunt No. 1003, and send in a second controlled hunt application for Hunt No. 1048 in area 8X. Hunters also may buy a general deer tag, and apply for Hunt No. 1048. If you draw a permit for Hunt No. 1047, you could harvest a deer during the general season and then harvest a second deer in Controlled Hunt Area 8X.

BAG LIMIT: No person may take more deer than the number for which he possesses legal tags.

EVIDENCE OF SEX — See page 11.

LEGAL DEER IN TWO-POINT HUNTS



SPIKE MULE DEER

Legal buck under 2-point regulations if at least one antler is 3 inches or longer.



1 X 2 POINT MULE DEER

Legal buck under 2-point regulations.



2 X 2 POINT MULE DEER

Legal buck under 2-point regulations. Not legal in 3-point or 4-point hunts.



2 X 3 POINT MULE DEER

Legal buck under 2-point regulations. Also legal under 3-point regulations.



Point must be one inch or longer.

MANDATORY REPORT REQUIREMENTS: All deer hunters are required to fill out a Harvest Report within 10 days after harvest or within 10 days after the close of the hunting season.

NONRESIDENT DEER TAG - USE FOR BLACK BEAR OR MOUNTAIN LION

Nonresident deer tags, **EXCLUDING Nonresident Junior Mentored deer tags**, are valid to take a black bear or mountain lion instead of a deer where and when the deer tag is valid, and there is an open deer season in that unit; and there is also an open bear season if taking a bear or open mountain lion season if taking a lion in that same unit. Hunters may buy other bear or lion tags, but after the deer tag is used to harvest a deer, black bear, or mountain lion, a second deer tag may not be purchased, except to hunt in an area where the harvest of two deer is allowed, or by purchasing a leftover nonresident deer tag when available.

NOTE: Residents or nonresidents may purchase unsold nonresident deer or elk tags at the nonresident price starting Aug 28, to be used as a second tag. The nonresident deer tag may also be used to tag a black bear or mountain lion.

Clearwater Deer Tag: Required for residents and nonresidents to hunt deer in Units 8, 8A, 10, 10A, 11, 11A, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 16A, 17, 18, 19, 20.

ATTENTION HUNTERS!

DEER TAG TYPES: A Regular deer tag is required for all other units, EXCEPT, nonresidents must purchase a nonresident Southeast Idaho deer tag to hunt in units 75, 76, 77, 78.

Southeast Idaho Deer Tag: Required for nonresidents to hunt for deer during the general season in Units 75, 76, 77, 78. Not valid in other units. See page 6. NOTE: Because of high demand, these tags are issued through a limited entry drawing. Applications for 2005 tags will be accepted from December 1, 2004 through January 31, 2005. For more information or an application, contact the Licensing Section at (208) 334-3717 or visit the IDFG website at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov>

DEER

Lolo Motorway Permits: A Forest Service permit is required to travel the section of the Lolo Motorway (Road 500) between Parachute Road 569 and Weitas Butte Road 557 from July 15 - October 1. Permits are not required from October 2 through July 14. No permit is needed to cross into Gravey Creek on Road 107. The permits will be required during the Lewis & Clark commemoration years (2003-2006). To apply for a permit or for more information, visit www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater, or call the Lochsa Ranger District at (208) 926-4274.

2004 GENERAL ANY WEAPON DEER SEASONS

Unit(s)	Antlered	Antlerless	Notes
1, 2, 3, 4A, 5, 6,	Nov 1 - Dec 1	Nov 1 - Dec 1 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	
4, 7, 9	Oct 9 - Nov 3	Oct 9 - Nov 3 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	
8, 8A	Oct 9 - Nov 9	Oct 9 - Nov 9	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
	Nov 10 - Dec 1 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	Nov 10 - Dec 1 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
10, 10A	Oct 9 - Nov 9	Oct 9 - Nov 9	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
	Nov 10 - Nov 20 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	Nov 10 - Nov 20 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
11	Oct 9 - Nov 20 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	Oct 9 - Nov 9 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
11A	Oct 9 - Nov 20 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	Oct 9 - Nov 20 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
12, 15, 16	Oct 9 - Nov 9	Oct 9 - Nov 9	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
	Nov 10 - Nov 20 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	Nov 10 - Nov 20 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
13	Oct 9 - Nov 3 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	Oct 9 - Oct 16 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	<i>Limited access, Clearwater deer tag required</i>
14	Oct 9 - Nov 20 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	Oct 9 - Oct 16 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
16A, 17, 19, 20	Sep 15 - Nov 18	Sep 15 - Nov 18	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
18	Oct 9 - Nov 20 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	Oct 9 - Oct 16 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>

(continued)

2004 GENERAL ANY WEAPON DEER SEASONS

DEER

Unit(s)	Antlered	Antlerless	Notes
19A	Oct 5 - Oct 31	Oct 5 - Oct 31 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See note 1, Page 21
20A, 26	Sep 15 - Oct 31	None	
21, 21A, 28	Oct 5 - Oct 22	None	
22	Oct 5 - Oct 24	Oct 5 - Oct 24 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See note 1, Page 21
23, 24, 25	Oct 5 - Oct 31	Oct 5 - Oct 31 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See notes 1 & 2, Page 21
27	Sep 15 - Oct 22	None	
29, 30, 30A	Oct 5 - Oct 22	None	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 10, Page 21
31	Oct 5 - Oct 24	Oct 5 - Oct 24 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See notes 1 & 3, Page 21
32	Oct 5 - Oct 24	Oct 5 - Oct 24 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See notes 1 & 3, Page 21 Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 10, Page 21
		Oct 5 - Nov 24	MOSTLY PRIVATE PROPERTY, ONLY a small portion of unit is open to Antlerless hunting, See note 4, Page 21 Short-Range weapons ONLY, Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 10, Page 21
32A	Oct 5 - Oct 24	Oct 5 - Oct 24 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See note 1, Page 21 Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 10, Page 21
33, 34, 35	Oct 5 - Oct 31	Oct 5 - Oct 31 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See note 1, Page 21
36, 36A, 36B, 37, 37A	Oct 5 - Oct 22	None	Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 36A, 37A, See note 10, Page 21
38	Oct 5 - Oct 31	Oct 5 - Nov 24	See note 5, Page 21
39	Oct 5 - Oct 31	Oct 5 - Oct 31 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See note 1, Page 21
40, 41	Oct 5 - Oct 18 <i>(Two-point deer ONLY)</i>	Oct 5 - Nov 24 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	Youth Hunt ONLY in a small portion of Units 40 & 41, see note 11. See notes 1 & 6, page 21
42	Oct 5 - Oct 18 <i>(Two-point deer ONLY)</i>	None	
43	Oct 5 - Oct 31	Oct 5 - Oct 31 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See note 1, Page 21
46	Oct 5 - Oct 31	None	See note 3, Page 21
48, 49	Oct 5 - Oct 24	Oct 5 - Oct 24 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See note 1, Page 21 Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 10, Page 21
50, 51	Oct 5 - Oct 24	Oct 5 - Oct 19 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See note 1, Page 21 Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 10, Page 21
52A	Oct 5 - Oct 31	Oct 5 - Oct 31 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See note 1, Page 21
53	Oct 5 - Oct 31	Oct 5 - Oct 31	See note 7, Page 21 Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 10, Page 21
56	Oct 5 - Oct 9	None	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 10, Page 21
	Oct 10 - Oct 19 <i>(Two-point deer ONLY)</i>		
58, 59, 59A	Oct 5 - Oct 24	Oct 5 - Oct 19 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See note 1, Page 21 Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 10, Page 21

(continued)

2004 GENERAL ANY WEAPON DEER SEASONS

Unit(s)	Antlered	Antlerless	Notes
60, 61, 62, 62A, 63	Oct 5 - Oct 24	Oct 5 - Oct 19 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See notes 1 & 6, Page 21
60A	Oct 5 - Oct 24	Oct 5 - Oct 19 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See notes 1 & 8, Page 21
63A	Oct 5 - Oct 24	Oct 5 - Oct 19 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	Short-range weapons ONLY See note 1, Page 21
64, 65, 66	Oct 5 - Oct 24	Oct 5 - Oct 19 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See note 1, Page 21, Motorized Vehicle Restriction Unit 66, See note 10, Page 21
66A	Oct 5 - Oct 19	None	
67	Oct 5 - Oct 24	Oct 5 - Oct 19 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY)</i>	See notes 1 & 9, Page 21
68	Oct 5 - Oct 19	None	
69	Oct 5 - Oct 19	Oct 5 - Oct 19 <i>(Youth Hunt ONLY.)</i>	See note 1, Page 21
70, 73	Oct 5 - Oct 9 <i>(4-point or larger deer ONLY)</i>	None	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 10, Page 21
71, 72, 73A, 74, 76,	Oct 5 - Oct 19	None	
75, 77, 78	Oct 5 - Oct 19	None	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 10, Page 21

DEER

Notes:

- 1 — YOUTH HUNTS: ONLY hunters 12 - 17 years of age with a valid license and tag may hunt either sex deer in this hunt.
- 2 — Short-range weapons ONLY in that portion of Unit 24 within the following boundary: Beginning in McCall at the junction of State Highway 55 and Boydstun Street, then south on Boydstun Street to West Valley Road, then west and south along West Valley Road and West Mountain Road to Cabarton Road, then north on Cabarton Road to State Highway 55, then north on State Highway 55 to Farm-To-Market Road, then north on Farm-To-Market Road to Elo Road, then west on Elo Road to State Highway 55, then north on State Highway 55 to the point of beginning.
- 3 — Short-range weapons ONLY on the islands in the Snake River.
- 4 — ONLY that portion of Unit 32 within the following boundary is open to hunt for antlerless deer: Beginning at the intersection of State Highway 52 and the Montour Road, south on the Montour Road to Shalerock Road, west on Shalerock Road to the Black Canyon Canal, south on the Black Canyon Canal to State Highway 16, west on State Highway 16 to State Highway 52, north on State Highway 52 to the Payette River in the city of Emmett, then west on the Payette River to where the North Side Canal drains into the Payette River, then east along the North Side Canal to Black Canyon Dam, then east along State Highway 52 to the point of beginning. SHORT-RANGE WEAPONS ONLY.
- 5 — Short-range weapons ONLY. EXCEPT that portion of Unit 38 within the Lake Lowell Sector of the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge is CLOSED.
- 6 — Short-range weapons ONLY on CJ Strike, Mud Lake, and Chester Wetlands Wildlife Management Areas.
- 7 — Short-range weapons ONLY in that portion of Unit 53 west of U. S. Highway 93. Archery ONLY east of U.S. Highway 93.
- 8 — Short-range weapons ONLY in that portion of Unit 60A south and east of the North (Henrys) Fork Snake River, and that portion within one mile north and west of the North Fork Snake River.
- 9 — Short-range weapons ONLY in that portion of Unit 67 south and west of State Highway 26.
- 10 — Motorized vehicle use as an aid to hunting for wildlife is restricted to established roadways open to motorized vehicle traffic capable of travel by full-sized automobiles. A full-sized automobile shall be defined as any motorized vehicle with a gross vehicle weight in excess of 1500 pounds. See page 28.
- 11 — Only that portion of Units 40 and 41 within the following boundary are open to youth antlerless hunting: starting at the Oregon border on the Snake River then upstream to the C.J. Strike Dam Road then south on C.J. Strike Dam Road to Highway 78 at Rim Rock High School, then east on Highway 78 to Highway 51, then south on Highway 51 to the Shoofly Cut-off Road, then west on the Shoofly Cut-off Road to the Mudflat Road, then north on the Mudflat Road to Highway 78, continue west on Highway 78 to the powerline that crosses Noble Island, then west along the powerline to the Oregon border, then north along the Oregon border to the Snake River, the point of beginning.

2004 GENERAL DEER ARCHERY SEASONS
Archery Permit Required

DEER

Unit(s)	Antlered	Antlerless	Notes
1	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	
	Dec 10 - Dec 23	Dec 10 - Dec 23	
2	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	<i>See note 1, Page 23</i>
	Nov 1 - Dec 1	Nov 1 - Dec 1	<i>See note 2, Page 23</i>
	Dec 10 - Dec 23	Dec 10 - Dec 23	<i>See note 1, Page 23</i>
3, 4, 4A, 5, 6, 7, 9	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	
	Dec 10 - Dec 23	Dec 10 - Dec 23	
8, 8A, 10, 10A, 11A, 12	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
15	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
	Dec 5 - Dec 20	Dec 5 - Dec 20	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
19A	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	
21, 21A	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30 <i>(White-tailed deer only)</i>	
22, 23, 24, 25	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	
28	Dec 1 - Dec 31	Dec 1 - Dec 31 <i>(White-tailed deer only)</i>	
29, 30, 30A	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30 <i>(White-tailed deer only)</i>	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 5, Page 23</i>
31	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	
32, 32A	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 5, Page 23</i>
33, 34, 35	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	
36, 36A, 36B, 37, 37A	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30 <i>(White-tailed deer only)</i>	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 36A, 37A, See note 5, Page 23</i>
38	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	<i>See note 3, Page 23</i>
39	Nov 10 - Nov 30	Nov 10 - Nov 30	<i>See note 6, Page 23</i>
40, 41, 42	Aug 30 - Sep 30 <i>(Two-point deer ONLY)</i>	Aug 30 - Sep 30	
43, 46	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	
47	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep30	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 5, Page 23</i>
48, 49 50, 51	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 5, Page 23</i>
52A	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	
53	Aug 30 - Dec 19	Aug 30 - Dec 19	<i>See note 4, Page 23 Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 5, Page 23</i>
54	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	
55	Nov 25 - Dec 19	Nov 25 - Dec 19	
56	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 5, Page 23</i>
57	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	
58, 59, 59A	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 5, Page 23</i>
60, 60A, 62, 63A, 64, 65, 67, 69	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	
	Nov 1 - Dec 19 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	Nov 1 - Dec 19 <i>(White-tailed deer ONLY)</i>	
61, 62A	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	
63	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	
	Nov 1 - Dec 19	Nov 1 - Dec 19	

(continued)

2004 GENERAL DEER ARCHERY SEASONS - continued
Archery Permit Required

Unit(s)	Antlered	Antlerless	Notes
66	Aug 30 - Sep 30	Aug 30 - Sep 30	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 5, Page 23</i>
66A, 68, 71, 72, 73A, 74, 76	Aug 30 - Sep 30	None	
70, 73	Aug 30 - Sep 30 <i>(4-point or larger deer ONLY)</i>	None	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 5, Page 23</i>
75, 77, 78	Aug 30 - Sep 30	None	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units, See note 5, Page 23</i>

Notes:

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| <p>1 — Farragut State Park and Farragut Wildlife Management Area are CLOSED.</p> <p>2 — Farragut State Park and Farragut Wildlife Management Area ONLY.</p> <p>3 — That portion of Unit 38 within the Lake Lowell Sector of the Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge is CLOSED.</p> <p>4 — That portion of Unit 53 east of U.S. Highway 93.</p> <p>5 — Motorized vehicle use as an aid to hunting for wildlife is restricted to established roadways open to motorized vehicle traffic capable of travel by full-sized automobiles. A full-sized automobile shall be defined as any motorized vehicle with a gross vehicle weight in excess of 1500 pounds. See page 28.</p> | <p>6 — EXCEPT that portion of Unit 39 within Ada County and that portion of Unit 39 within the following boundary: Beginning at the intersection of state highway 21 and the Middle Fork Boise River road (Forest Rd 268), east on Forest Rd 268 to Cottonwood Creek-Thorn Creek Road (Forest Rd 377), north and west on Forest Road 377 to State Highway 21, south and west on Highway 21 to the point of beginning is CLOSED.</p> <p>7 — That portion of Unit 8A east of State Highway 6 and State Highway 9 and north of the following line: Beginning at the boundary of Unit 8A at its junction with State Highway 8 at Deary, then east on Highway 8 to Forest Service Road 1963 at Helmer, then south and east on Forest Service Road 1963 to Long Meadow Creek, then southeast on Long Meadow Creek to Dworshak Reservoir, then east along the shoreline of Dworshak Reservoir to the Unit 8A boundary at Dent Bridge.</p> |
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DEER

2004 GENERAL DEER MUZZLELOADER SEASONS
(See also General Any Weapon Seasons - Muzzleloader Permit Required)

Unit(s)	Antlered	Antlerless	Notes
4, 7	Nov 10 - Nov 29	Nov 10 - Nov 29	
8A	None	Dec 2 - Dec 14	<i>See note 7, Page 23 Clearwater deer tag required</i>
10A	None	Nov 21 - Dec 9	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
16	Nov 21 - Dec 9	Nov 21 - Dec 9	<i>Clearwater deer tag required</i>
39	None	Sep 8 - Sep 30	<i>Traditional Muzzleloader ONLY Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 5, Page 23</i>

**2004 CONTROLLED DEER HUNTS (12,917 Permits Plus Unlimited Permits)
ANTLERED DEER**

DEER

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
1001	Aug 30 - Oct 31	1	50	
1002	Oct 9 - Nov 3	11	74	<i>Mule deer ONLY</i>
1003	Nov 10 - Nov 24	11	35	<i>Mule deer ONLY</i>
1004	Oct 9 - Nov 3	11A	63	<i>Mule deer ONLY</i>
1005	Oct 9 - Nov 3	13	200	<i>See note 1, Page 27, Mule deer ONLY</i>
1006	Oct 9 - Nov 3	14	180	<i>Mule deer ONLY</i>
1007	Oct 9 - Nov 3	18	120	<i>Mule deer ONLY</i>
1008	Nov 10 - Nov 24	19A	10	
1009	Nov 1 - Nov 18	20A	Unlimited	
1010	Nov 10 - Nov 24	22	40	
1011	Nov 10 - Nov 24	23	25	
1012	Nov 10 - Nov 24	23	25	<i>White-tailed deer ONLY</i>
1013	Nov 10 - Nov 24	25	10	
1014	Nov 1 - Nov 18	26	Unlimited	
1015	Oct 23 - Nov 18	27	Unlimited	<i>3-point or larger deer ONLY</i>
1016	Nov 10 - Nov 24	31	30	
1017	Nov 10 - Nov 24	32	40	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27</i>
1018	Nov 10 - Nov 24	32A	30	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27</i>
1019	Aug 15 - Sep 24	39-1	199	
1020	Nov 10 - Nov 24	40-1	195	
1021	Nov 10 - Nov 24	41	100	<i>Short-range weapons ONLY on CJ Strike WMA</i>
1022	Nov 10 - Nov 24	42	74	
1023	Oct 5 - Oct 31	44-1	200	
1024	Nov 10 - Nov 24	44-1	25	
1025	Oct 5 - Oct 31	45	75	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27</i>
1026	Nov 10 - Nov 24	45	50	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27</i>
1027	Oct 5 - Oct 31	47-1	90	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27</i>
1028	Nov 10 - Nov 24	47-2* (see pg 27)	10	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27</i>
1029	Nov 10 - Nov 24	48	10	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27</i>
1030	Nov 10 - Nov 24	49	10	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27</i>
1031	Nov 1 - Nov 30	50-1	10	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27</i>
1032	Oct 5 - Oct 31	52-1	75	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27</i>
1033	Nov 10 - Nov 24	52-3	10	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27</i>
1034	Nov 10 - Nov 24	52A	10	
1035	Oct 5 - Oct 31	54	450	
1036	Nov 10 - Nov 24	54	20	
1037	Aug 15 - Sep 24	55	25	
1038	Oct 5 - Oct 31	55	350	
1039	Oct 5 - Oct 31	57	109	
1040	Nov 10 - Nov 24	57	10	
1041	Nov 1 - Nov 30	58* (see pg 27)	10	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27</i>
1042	Nov 1 - Nov 30	60-1* (see pg 27)	50	
1043	Nov 1 - Nov 30	62	30	
1044	Nov 1 - Nov 30	64* (see pg 28)	50	
1045	Nov 1 - Nov 30	66	25	<i>Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27</i>
1046	Nov 1 - Nov 30	69	25	

* See controlled hunt area descriptions. This hunt includes other units or parts of other units.

**2004 CONTROLLED HUNTS
ANTLERLESS DEER**

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
1047	Aug 30 - Dec 1 (See note 2, Page 27)	8X	300	White-tailed deer ONLY
1048	Aug 30 - Dec 14 (See note 2, Page 27)	8AX	300	White-tailed deer ONLY
1049	Aug 30 - Dec 9 (See note 2, Page 27)	10AX	400	White-tailed deer ONLY
1050	Aug 30 - Nov 20 (See note 2, Page 27)	11AX* (see pg 27)	450	
1051	Aug 30 - Dec 20 (See note 2, Page 27)	15X* (see pg 27)	200	White-tailed deer ONLY
1052	Oct 5 - Oct 24	22	100	
1053	Aug 15 - Sep 30	23X	200	Short-range weapons ONLY Aug 15 - Sep 30
	Oct 5 - Nov 3			White-tailed deer ONLY
1054	Oct 5 - Oct 24	31	100	
1055	Oct 5 - Oct 24	32	350	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27
1056	Oct 5 - Oct 24	32A	150	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27
1057	Oct 5 - Oct 31	39-2	900	
1058	Oct 5 - Oct 31	43	700	
1059	Oct 15 - Nov 9	44-1	700	
1060	Oct 25 - Nov 9	45	450	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27
1061	Oct 5 - Oct 24	48	50	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27
1062	Oct 5 - Oct 24	49	300	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27
1063	Nov 15 - Nov 30	50-2	600	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27
1064	Oct 25 - Nov 9	52-1	200	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27
1065	Aug 30 - Dec 19 (See note 2, Page 27)	60X* (see pg 28)	1,000	White-tailed deer ONLY Motorized Vehicle Restriction Unit 66, See note 4, Page 27
1066	Nov 1 - Nov 30	60-1* (see pg 27)	300	

DEER

**2004 CONTROLLED HUNTS
EITHER SEX DEER**

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
1067	Oct 5 - Nov 17 Nov 18 - Nov 30	60-2* (see pg 28)	800	Antlerless ONLY - Nov 18 - Nov 30
1068	Oct 5 - Nov 8	62	100	
1069	Oct 5 - Nov 8	64* (see pg 28)	100	

**2004 CONTROLLED HUNTS
ARCHERY DEER - Archery Permit Required**

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
1070	Nov 16 - Dec 16	39-3	125	Either sex, See note 5, Page 27 Roads on Boise River WMA closed to Motorized Travel
1071	Aug 15 - Sep 30	40-2* (see pg 27)	25	Either sex
1072	Aug 30 - Dec 19	68A	Unlimited	Antlered ONLY
	Dec 1 - Dec 19	72	Unlimited	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27, Antlered ONLY

* See controlled hunt area descriptions. This hunt includes other units or parts of other units.

**2004 CONTROLLED HUNTS
MUZZLELOADER DEER - Muzzleloader Permit Required**

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
1073	Nov 25 - Dec 9	29* (see pg 27)	121	Antlered ONLY
1074	Nov 10 - Nov 30	33* (see pg 27)	149	Antlered ONLY
1075	Oct 5 - Oct 31	45	30	Antlered ONLY Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27
1076	Nov 25 - Dec 9	51* (see pg 27)	100	Either sex Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27
1077	Oct 5 - Nov 9	52-2	Unlimited	Traditional Muzzleloader ONLY, Either sex Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27
1078	Nov 11 - Dec 9	61	Unlimited	Either sex
1079	Nov 16 - Nov 30	75* (see pg 28)	194	Traditional Muzzleloader ONLY, Antlered ONLY, Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27

**2004 CONTROLLED HUNTS
SHORT-RANGE WEAPON DEER**

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
1080	Nov 10 - Dec 9	21* (see pg 27)	Unlimited	White-tailed deer ONLY, See note 1, Page 27 Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 29, 30, 30A, 37A, 50, 51, 58, 59, 59A, See note 4, Page 27.

**2004 CONTROLLED HUNTS
YOUTH DEER**

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
1081	Oct 25 - Nov 9	44-2* (see pg 27)	400	Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 45 & 52, See notes 3 & 4, Page 27, antlerless ONLY
1082	Oct 5 - Oct 31	46* (see pg 27)	400	Motorized Vehicle Restriction Unit 47 See notes 3 & 4, Page 27, either sex

**2004 CONTROLLED HUNTS
OUTFITTER ALLOCATION DEER - Antlered Deer Only**

Hunt No.	Season Dates	Controlled Hunt Areas	Permits	Notes
1083	Sep 1 - Oct 31	1	2	
1084	Oct 9 - Nov 3	11	1	Antlered Mule deer ONLY
1085	Oct 9 - Nov 3	11A	2	Antlered Mule deer ONLY
1086	Oct 9 - Nov 3	13	37	Antlered Mule deer ONLY
1087	Oct 9 - Nov 3	14	22	Antlered Mule deer ONLY
1088	Oct 9 - Nov 3	18	9	Antlered Mule deer ONLY
1089	Nov 25 - Dec 9	29* (see pg 27)	4	Muzzleloader ONLY, Antlered ONLY, Motorized Vehicle Restriction Units 29 & 37A, See note 4, Page 27
1090	Nov 10 - Nov 24	33	1	Muzzleloader ONLY
1091	Aug 15 - Sep 24	39-1	1	
1092	Nov 10 - Nov 24	40-1	5	
1093	Nov 10 - Nov 24	42	1	
1094	Nov 10 - Nov 30	50-1	1	Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27
1095	Oct 5 - Oct 31	55	1	
1096	Oct 5 - Oct 31	57	1	
1097	Nov 16 - Nov 30	75* (see pg 28)	6	Traditional Muzzleloader ONLY, Antlered ONLY, Motorized Vehicle Restriction, See note 4, Page 27

All successful outfitter allocation applicants must hunt with a licensed outfitter and purchase their permit and tag by Aug 20, 2004. Unsold permits and tags after Aug 20, will be considered leftover and sold on a first-come first-served basis. Applicants who apply for an outfitter controlled hunt, by their application, authorize the Department to provide names and addresses of successful applicants to the outfitter licensed for that controlled hunt. Contact the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board by calling (208) 327-7380 (or e-mail at licensing@ogib.state.id.us) to obtain a list of eligible licensed outfitters in the applicable controlled hunt area or unit.

* See controlled hunt area descriptions. This hunt includes other units or parts of other units.

Notes:

- 1 — This hunt has very limited access.
- 2 — All holders of this permit/tag may only hunt during dates that the individual unit is open to general tag holders. Hunters are also limited to the weapon type that the general tag holder must use for the given dates.
- 3 — Youth Hunt: ONLY hunters 12 - 17 years of age with a valid license may apply for this hunt.
- 4 — Motorized vehicle use as an aid to hunting for wildlife is

restricted to established roadways open to motorized vehicle traffic capable of travel by full-sized automobiles. A full-sized automobile shall be defined as any motorized vehicle with a gross vehicle weight in excess of 1500 pounds. See page 28.

- 5 — Mandatory class required - Anyone drawing a deer controlled archery-only hunt permit for this hunt must satisfactorily complete a mandatory hunter education course. The course will be administered by the southwest region and will include the hunt boundaries and legal restrictions, and will emphasize proper hunter ethics.

DEER CONTROLLED HUNT AREA DESCRIPTIONS

Hunt Area 1 — All of Unit 1 excluding the Kootenai River drainage.

Hunt Area 8X — All of Unit 8.

Hunt Area 8AX — That portion of Unit 8A within one mile of private land. (For the purpose of this hunt, 'private land' does not include corporate timberlands).

Hunt Area 10AX — That portion of 10A within one mile of private land. (For the purpose of this hunt, 'private land' does not include corporate timberlands)

Hunt Area 11 — All of Unit 11.

Hunt Area 11A — All of Unit 11A.

Hunt Areas 11AX — All of Unit 11A and that portion of Unit 14 north and west of U.S. Highway 95 and Whitebird Creek.

Hunt Area 13 — All of Unit 13.

Hunt Area 14 — All of Unit 14.

Hunt Area 15X — That portion of Units 15 and 16 outside of and up to one mile inside the National Forest System Boundary. The National Forest System Boundary is a legislatively set boundary - it is not necessarily the boundary of Forest Service property. Please refer to a US Forest Service travel plan map for the location of this boundary.

Hunt Area 18 — All of Unit 18.

Hunt Area 19A — All of Unit 19A.

Hunt Area 20A — All of Unit 20A.

Hunt Area 21 — All of Units 21, 21A, 28, 29, 30, 30A, 37, 37A, 50, 51, 58, 59, 59A, 61 and 62A.

Hunt Area 22 — All of Unit 22.

Hunt Area 23 — All of Unit 23.

Hunt Area 23X — That area of Unit 23 outside the National Forest System Boundary and within the Little Salmon River drainage, upstream from and including the Boulder Creek drainage on the west side of the Little Salmon River; and upstream from but excluding the Hazard Creek drainage on the east side of the Little Salmon River.

Hunt Area 25 — All of Unit 25.

Hunt Area 26 — All of Unit 26.

Hunt Area 27 — All of Unit 27.

Hunt Area 29 — All of Units 29, 37, and 37A.

Hunt Area 31 — All of Unit 31.

Hunt Area 32 — All of Unit 32.

Hunt Area 32A — All of Unit 32A.

Hunt Area 33 — All of Units 33 and 35, and that portion of Unit 34 south and west of the Landmark-Stanley Road.

Hunt Area 39-1 — All of Unit 39.

Hunt Area 39-2 — All of Unit 39 EXCEPT that portion of Unit 39 south and east of the Blacks Creek Road and south of the South Fork of the Boise River.

Hunt Area 39-3 — That portion of Unit 39 within the following boundary: Beginning at a point 400 yards north of State Highway 21 at the Ada County Line, south and west on a line 400 yards north of State Highway 21 to Warm Springs Avenue, and west on a line 400 yards north of Warm Springs Avenue to the Highlands-Table Rock powerline, north and west on the Highlands-Table Rock powerline to State Highway 55, north on Highway 55 to the Ada County Line, and southeast on the Ada County Line to the point of beginning.

Hunt Area 40-1 — All of Unit 40.

Hunt Area 40-2 — All of Units 40, 41, and 42.

Hunt Area 41 — All of Unit 41.

Hunt Area 42 — All of Unit 42.

Hunt Area 43 — All of Unit 43.

Hunt Area 44-1 — All of Unit 44.

Hunt Area 44-2 — All Units of 44, 45, and that portion of Unit 52 west of State Highway 75.

Hunt Area 45 — All of Unit 45.

Hunt Area 46 — All of Units 46, 47, 54, 55, and 57.

Hunt Area 47-1 — All of Unit 47.

Hunt Area 47-2 — All of Units 46 and 47.

Hunt Area 48 — All of Unit 48.

Hunt Area 49 — All of Unit 49.

Hunt Area 50-1 — That portion of Unit 50 west of U.S. 93.

Hunt Area 50-2 — All of Unit 50.

Hunt Area 51 — All of Unit 51 and that portion of Unit 50 east of U.S. Highway 93.

Hunt Area 52-1 — That portion of Unit 52 west of State Highway 75.

Hunt Area 52-2 — That portion of Unit 52 east of State Highway 75.

Hunt Area 52-3 — All of Unit 52.

Hunt Area 52A — All of Unit 52A. (Caution: See Craters of the Moon closure, page 9)

Hunt Area 54 — All of Unit 54.

Hunt Area 55 — All of Unit 55. Most of the City of Rocks National Reserve is open to hunting. Information about hunting within the Reserve is available to permittees at IDFG offices and at the National Park Service office in Almo.

Hunt Area 56 — All of Unit 56.

Hunt Area 57 — All of Unit 57.

Hunt Area 58 — All of Units 58, 59, and 59A.

Hunt Area 60-1 — All of Units 60, 62A and that portion of Unit 60A beyond one mile north and west of the North (Henry) Fork of the Snake River.

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(continued)

Hunt Area 60-2 — All of Units 60, 61, and 62A.

Hunt Area 60X — All of Units 60, 60A, 62, 63, 63A, 64, 65, 66, 67 and 69.

Hunt Area 61 — All of Unit 61.

Hunt Area 62 — All of Unit 62.

Hunt Area 64 — All of Unit 64 and that portion of Unit 67 north and east of State Highway 26.

Hunt Area 66 — All of Unit 66.

Hunt Area 68A — All of Unit 68A.

Hunt Area 69 — All of Unit 69.

Hunt Area 72 — All of Unit 72.

Hunt Area 75 — All of Units 75, 77, and 78 EXCEPT private land in that portion of Unit 75 between U.S. Highway 30 and the Bear River is CLOSED.

BIG GAME MOTORIZED VEHICLE RESTRICTION RULE

Over the past two years, the Fish and Game Commission has implemented restrictions for motor vehicle use while hunting big game to address many sportsmen's concerns about off-road travel. The Commission has added more units this year in response to public comments. The restricted units are marked in the lists of hunts.

The rule is found at IDAPA 13.01.08.411. The rule reads:

411. Motorized Vehicle Use Restrictions.

The use of motorized vehicles by hunters as an aid to hunting big game is restricted in certain areas. This use restriction is in addition to all federal, state and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances and orders; including, but not limited to, any motorized vehicle licensing, registration, and permitting requirements and traffic laws. Hunters must comply with all motorized vehicle limits or prohibitions instituted by the landowner or land manager. Also, this use restriction rule is not an exception from, and is in addition to, the statutory prohibition against hunting from or by the use of any motorized vehicle set forth in Idaho Code Section 36-1101(b)(1).

01. Use Restriction. In designated areas and hunts, hunters may only use motorized vehicles on established roadways which are open to motorized traffic and capable of being traveled by full-sized automobiles. Any other use by hunters is prohibited. All off-road use by hunters is prohibited.

02. Exceptions. This use restriction rule shall not apply to the following permissible motorized vehicle uses:

- a. Holders of a valid Handicapped Persons Motor Vehicle Hunting Permit may use a motorized vehicle as allowed by the land owner or manager.
- b. Hunters may use a motorized vehicle to retrieve downed game if such travel is allowed by the land owner or manager.

- c. Hunters may use a motorized vehicle to pack camping equipment in or out if such travel is allowed by the land owner or manager; however, hunters shall not hunt while packing camping equipment.
- d. Private landowners, their authorized agents and persons with written landowner permission may use a motorized vehicle on their private land; however, they may not hunt from or by the use of any motorized vehicle as prohibited by Idaho Code Section 36-1101(b)(1).

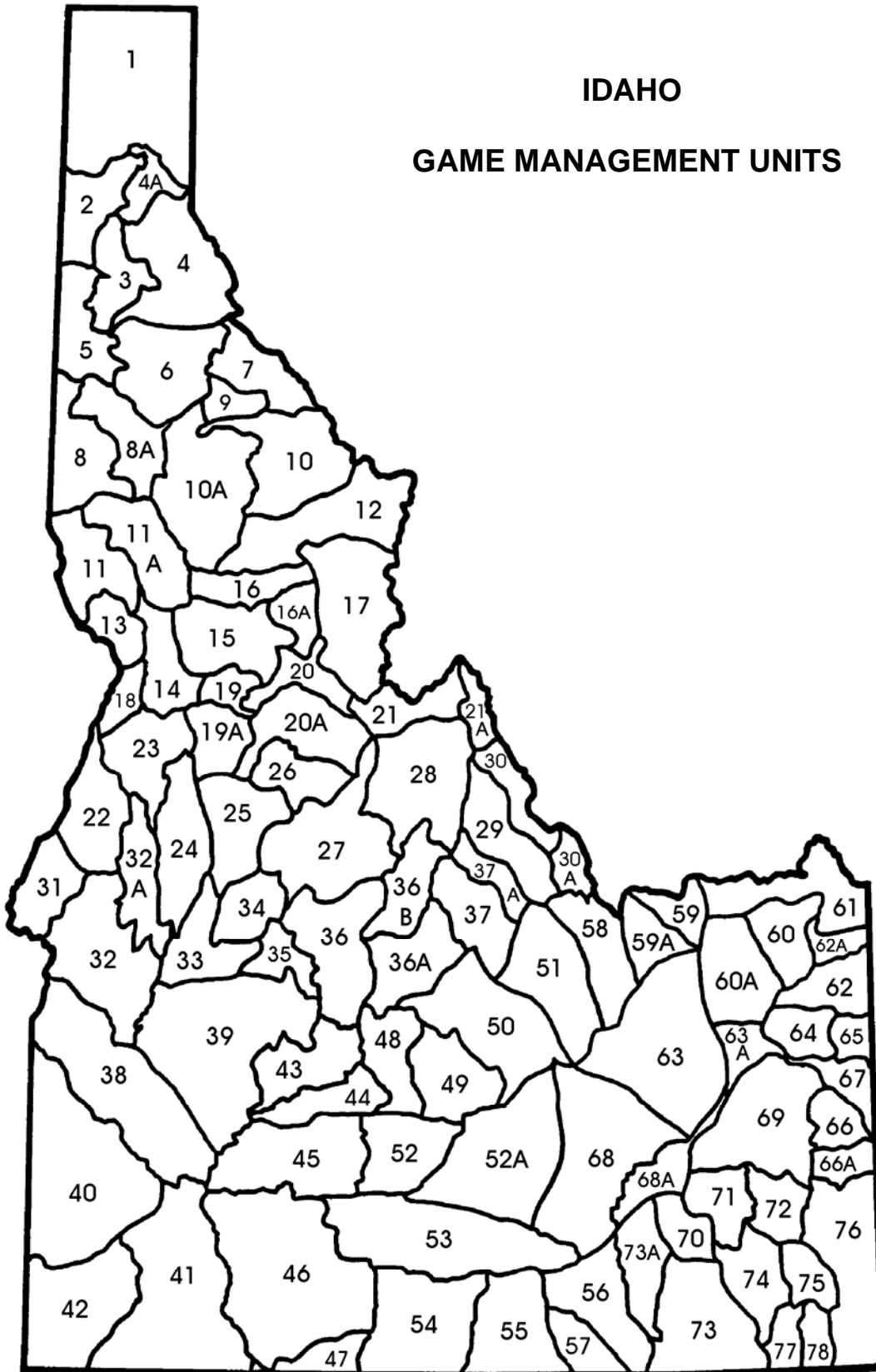
03. Restricted Areas and Hunts. This motorized vehicle use restriction shall apply to identified areas and hunts in all Big Game Management Units. The hunts and areas with a motorized vehicle use restriction are identified in the Commission's Big Game Season Proclamation, which is published in a brochure available at department offices and license vendors.

04. Defined Terms.

- a. A full-sized automobile shall be defined as any motorized vehicle with a gross weight in excess of one thousand five hundred (1,500) pounds.
- b. An established roadway shall be defined as any road that is established, built, maintained, approved or designated by any governmental entity or private landowner for the purpose of travel by full-sized automobiles. An established roadway shows evidence of repeated use by full-sized automobiles, and may include a traveled way of natural earth with depressed wheel tracks and little or no vegetation in the wheel tracks.
- c. A hunter shall be defined as a person engaged in the activity of hunting as defined in Idaho Code Section 36-202(j).

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GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS



FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program consists of funds from a 10% to 11% manufacturer's excise tax collected from the sale of handguns, sporting rifles, shotguns, ammunition, and archery equipment. The Federal Aid program then allots the funds back to states through a formula based on each state's geographic area and the number of paid hunting license holders in the state. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game uses the funds to help restore, conserve, manage, and enhance wild birds and mammals for the public benefit. These funds are also used to educate hunters to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to be responsible, ethical hunters. Seventy-five percent of the funds for this project are from Federal Aid. The other 25% comes from license-generated funds.

