

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Steven M. Huffaker, Director

Project W-170-R-27

Progress Report



WHITE-TAILED DEER

Study I, Job 3

July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003

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**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>White-tailed Deer Surveys and</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-27</u>		<u>Inventories</u>
SUBPROJECT:	<u>1-2</u>	STUDY NAME:	<u>Big Game Population Status,</u>
STUDY:	<u>1</u>		<u>Trends, Use, and Associated</u>
JOB:	<u>3</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED: <u>July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003</u>			

STATEWIDE

SUMMARY

White-tailed deer are found primarily in the ten northern counties of Idaho. This area corresponds roughly to that portion of the state north of the Salmon River and encompasses the Department's administrative Panhandle and Clearwater regions. A few small, localized populations are found throughout the remainder of the state. This plan establishes criteria and objectives for white-tailed deer populations in north-central and northern Idaho. Management efforts in the remainder of the state will be incidental to mule deer.

Whitetails are primarily browsers. The fall and winter diets consist primarily of shrubs and evergreens. Western red-cedar and western yew are often utilized. Preferred shrubs include red-osier dogwood, red-stem ceanothus, serviceberry, maple, and chokecherry. The spring and summer diets consist largely of grasses and forbs or agricultural crops if available.

Winter conditions in northern Idaho can be severe, especially in the Clearwater Region. Snow depths reach three feet on low elevation winter ranges, restricting whitetails to closed canopy timber stands where they are forced to concentrate in "deer yards" under mature forest canopies. In the best whitetail habitats, the major limiting factor on population growth appears to be the severity of the winter.

Due to their secretive behavior and ability to use dense cover for concealment, white-tailed deer often live close to human habitation. Consequently, whitetails may suffer a higher mortality rate from poaching, free-ranging dogs, and vehicle collisions than other big game species in Idaho.

White-tailed deer frequently inflict damage on vegetable gardens, orchards, nurseries, and field crops. Depredation control is, therefore, an important aspect of Idaho's white-tailed deer management program.

The effect of harvest mortality is highly variable in white-tailed deer. Generally, the majority of the 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 whitetail populations. Therefore, population response tends to be independent of harvest. Exceptions to

this rule include extremely liberal antlerless opportunity designed to reduce populations and effects of hunter harvest on buck age structure. Hunting seasons designed to offer much 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. Throughout much of Idaho, white-tailed deer habitat provides high amounts of security cover; thus, the effects of harvest tend to be extremely limited.

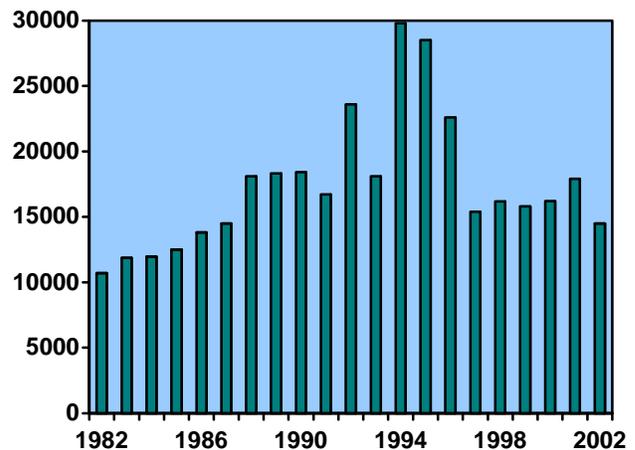
Proper harvest management for white-tailed deer, given their relative independence to harvest effects, is to adequately monitor populations annually and be responsive to population changes. Liberal seasons can be applied during most periods and conservative seasons applied when environmental factors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

Because of their secretive behavior and habitats used, management information on white-tailed deer is difficult to collect. Consequently, no population estimates are provided in this plan. Some limited aerial survey data have been collected periodically, but how that information relates to actual population size and herd composition cannot be determined at the present time.

Other data collection efforts have included tabulating numbers of harvested animals and collection of antler point and spread data at check stations, jaw collections for age analyses, obtaining reproductive information from road-killed does, determining habitat use and mortality rates, and the telephone harvest survey.

The telephone harvest survey provides management information available on whitetails. However, this information is limited to an estimate of total harvest by unit and corresponding antler point data of bucks harvested. These data will be monitored as indices of population status. Criterion for the minimum percent of bucks with 4+ and 5+ antler points in the harvest have been established for each of the seven Analysis Areas (grouping of Game Management Units). Antler point criteria were established as minimums the general public would accept, and are believed above that necessary to maintain healthy, productive populations. Minimum criteria do not ensure “trophy” animals.

Statewide White-Tailed Deer Harvest



Beginning in 1998, a statewide mandatory report card system was implemented. Given adequate compliance, more precise data on harvest and antler point information will be possible. The development of a technique to estimate population size and composition would allow for considerable refinement of whitetail management in Idaho.

Overall, white-tailed deer populations are healthy in Idaho and are probably near all-time highs for the state. Heavy snows during the 1996-1997 winter impacted most populations throughout northern Idaho. Given high quality habitat, populations impacted by the winter should rebound relatively quickly.

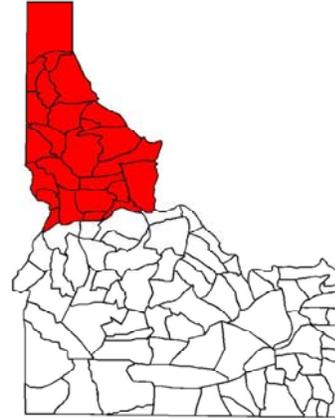
A differential change in hunting pressure has occurred between south and north Idaho since the early 1990s. While southern Idaho mule deer hunter numbers have remained relatively stable, hunter numbers in north-central and north Idaho have increased. It is unknown whether restrictive mule deer seasons, combined with a mule deer population decline in parts of southern Idaho following the 1992-1993 winter has shifted some pressure northward, or a change in human demographics has led to this differential change.

Concurrent with the increasing hunter numbers during the mid-1990s in northern Idaho was a general decline in both percent 4+ and percent 5+ points in the harvest since 1993. More recently, the percentage of 4+ and 5+ points in the harvest have been stable. Antler ratio data is not a direct reflection of harvest exploitation because it can be influenced by a broad array of factors including: population changes, changing age structures, differential cohort demographics, hunting season frameworks, and/or harvest exploitation. However, given the increasing hunter numbers and declining antler point count data, the Department will continue to monitor these parameters and recommend appropriate action to ensure that three-year-average antler point criteria do not fall below minimum.

White-Tailed Deer Status & Minimum Criterion Statewide

Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

	Survey Years	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
% 4+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	55	30
% 5+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	20	7

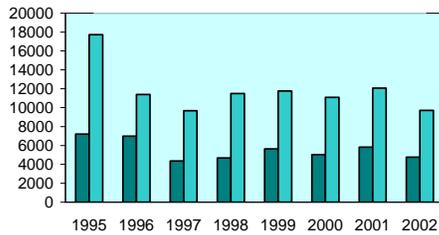


Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Antlerless Harvest	7204	6980	4352	4675	5623	5027	5822	4750
Antlered Harvest	17725	11401	9667	11484	11757	11091	12078	9724
% 4+ Points	52	57	49	49	46	57	57	58
% 5+ Points	20	22	19	19	15	22	21	22
Hunter Numbers	64662	57180	64303	55345	56761	ND	45000	58259

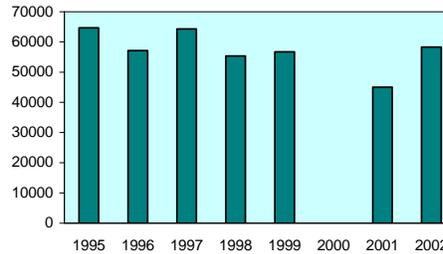
Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1998 does not include general primitive weapons season data. Hunter numbers include all deer hunters.

Harvest*



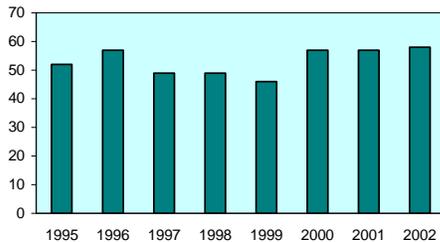
* Note: Harvest prior to 1998 data does not include general primitive weapons season data.

Hunter Numbers*



* Note: Hunter numbers include all deer hunters.

% 4+ Points



% 5+ Points

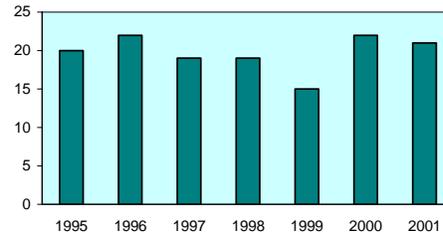


Figure 1. White-tailed Deer Status and Minimum Criterion Statewide

**PROGRESS REPORT
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JOB:	<u>3</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003</u>		

PANHANDLE REGION

ANALYSIS AREA 1 (UNIT 1)

Management Objectives

Buck survival will be managed to maintain a minimum of 30% of bucks with four or more antler points per side, and a minimum 7% with five or more antler points per side.

Historical Perspective

Prior to the 1900s, deer were apparently relatively scarce, existing along the rivers and edges of mature conifer stands and within younger stands created by fire, disease, and insects. As mining, logging, and the railroads entered the picture around the turn of the century, deer habitat began to change slowly. The period from 1910 to 1931 included five major fires, each creating hundreds of thousands of acres of younger forests beneficial to white-tailed deer. The newly-created habitat and a major predator control program allowed deer numbers to continue this growth, even through five major die-offs: 1927, 1932, 1946, 1948, and 1949.

Concern about “over-browsed winter ranges” and “too many deer” prompted liberal hunting seasons in an effort to reduce deer numbers in the early 1950s. Long seasons were the rule from 1954 through 1974.

By the early 1970s, deer numbers had come down substantially from the peak numbers in the 1950s and 1960s. Hunting seasons were shortened, but no major habitat-creating fires had occurred for over 40 years. Since shorter seasons began in the mid-1970s, the number of whitetails killed by hunters in the Panhandle rose from 3,000 per year to 10,000 per year.

Habitat Issues

This Analysis Area can be broadly described as heavily timbered, with very little agricultural land. Habitat security is high, with heavy vegetative cover, and access restrictions through mid-November to protect grizzly bears. Timber harvest in portions of this Analysis Area has improved whitetail summer range. However, research in this area has demonstrated the closed

canopies of low-elevation; mature timber is important to deer during severe winters. Loss of this habitat component to logging and development affecting winter range is probably the major habitat issue in the Analysis Area. Grazing is negligible.

Biological Issues

The management criteria are easily met in this Analysis Area. Research in the Priest River drainage from 1986 through 1995 indicated hunting-related mortality was 7% for does and 18% for bucks. Natural mortality was the major factor influencing total mortality rates of both sexes. In terms of effect, the 1996-1997 winter was probably one of the three or four most severe winters during the last century. Research adjacent to this Analysis Area in Montana indicated 99% of fawns died, as did 26% of adult females. Favorable environmental conditions since the winter of 1996-1997, particularly snow depth on winter range, have allowed substantial recovery of deer populations in this Analysis Area.

Interspecific Issues

Other wild ungulates within the Analysis Area include mule deer, elk, moose, mountain goats, and woodland caribou. None are believed to be limiting white-tailed deer numbers, and white-tailed deer are not believed to be in competition with any of these species for forage or space.

As the most abundant ungulate in the Analysis Area, white-tailed deer do have an indirect influence on other species in the ecosystem. In those years when white-tailed deer numbers change rapidly in response to environmental factors, the resultant effect of predation will be reflected within the population dynamics of alternate prey species. For example, it is hypothesized that whitetail numbers are maintaining enough mountain lions that caribou numbers may be affected.

Predation Issues

The Priest River research indicated natural causes, primarily predation, were the primary cause of mortality of adult deer. Twenty-three percent of adult males and 10% of adult females died annually to natural mortality, primarily predation. No information is available on the effect on fawn deer, or to the population as a whole.

White-tailed deer have the highest intrinsic rate of increase among Idaho's ungulates. Although predation may be a major influence in their population dynamics, predation has not been identified as limiting hunting opportunity for whitetails in northern Idaho. Between 1995 and 1998, mountain lion numbers are believed to have increased substantially, while white-tailed deer numbers dropped substantially due to the severe 1996-1997 winter. Mountain lion populations are believed to be considerably lower in 2002 than during the mid and late 1990s.

Winter Feeding Issues

The Department has undertaken emergency winter feeding about once every ten to 15 years in this Analysis Area. The most recent feeding occurred during the 1996-1997 winter, when about

3,000 whitetails were fed at Department-sanctioned sites, primarily in the Bonner's Ferry and Priest River locales. Extrapolating harvest and telemetry data to calculate a crude population estimate of 29,000 deer, it appears approximately 10% of the population in the Analysis Area was fed.

Information Requirements

Only harvest data are currently available for white-tailed deer management in Analysis Area 1. Success rates and the percentage of females in the harvest are used to index population trend, but the long seasons and variable weather influence makes interpretation difficult. Antler point summaries from harvested bucks index adult buck survival.

Spotlight surveys were conducted in this Analysis Area to assess herd composition. A total of 302 white-tailed deer were classified on 5, 18, & 23 September 2002. Ratios of 66 fawns and 34 bucks per 100 does were observed. Similar surveys were conducted on 11, 12, 17, & 19 September 2001 when 359 deer were classified with fawn:doe:buck ratios of 64:100:39. Additional surveys will be required over a number of years for us to understand the implications of these population parameters.

White-Tailed Deer Analysis Area 1 (Unit 1)

Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

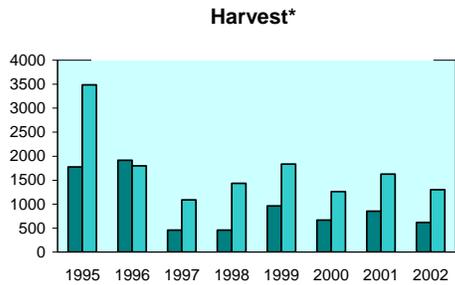
	Survey Years	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
% 4+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	49	30
% 5+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	20	7



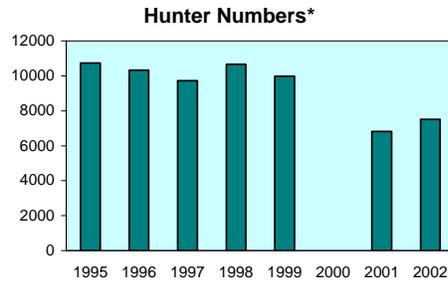
Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Antlerless Harvest	1778	1913	461	459	962	668	851	619
Antlered Harvest	3489	1801	1088	1431	1834	1258	1626	1298
% 4+ Points	52	52	56	51	41	52	52	52
% 5+ Points	25	26	21	23	17	20	21	22
Hunter Numbers	10741	10324	9733	10670	9984	ND	6815	7505

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 data does not include general primitive weapons season data.



* Note: Hunter numbers include all deer hunters.

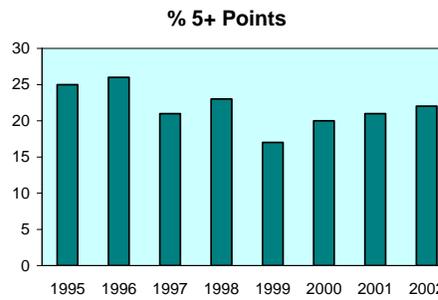
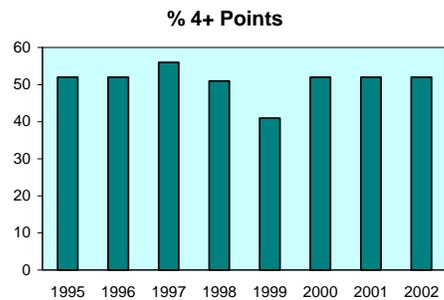


Figure 2. White-tailed Deer Analysis Area 1

ANALYSIS AREA 2 (UNITS 2, 3, 4A)

Management Objectives

Buck survival will be managed to maintain a minimum of 30% of bucks with four or more antler points per side, and a minimum 7% with five or more antler points per side.

Historical Perspective

Prior to the 1900s, deer were apparently relatively scarce, existing along the rivers and edges of mature conifer stands, and within younger stands created by fire, disease, and insects. As mining, logging, and the railroads entered the picture around the turn of the century, deer habitat began to change slowly.

Concern about “over-browsed winter ranges” and “too many deer” prompted liberal hunting seasons in an effort to reduce deer numbers in the early 1950s. Long seasons were the rule from 1954 through 1974.

By the early 1970s, deer numbers had come down substantially from the peak numbers in the 1950s and 1960s. Hunting seasons were shortened, but no major habitat-creating fires had occurred for over 40 years. Since shorter seasons began in the mid-1970s, the number of whitetails killed by hunters in the Panhandle rose from 3,000 per year to 10,000 per year.

Habitat Issues

This Analysis Area can be broadly described as heavily timbered, with very little agricultural land. Habitat security is good, with heavy vegetative cover. This Analysis Area includes substantial development associated with the Coeur d’Alene area. The primary impact with the one- to ten-acre parcels common in the areas surrounding urban development is the loss of range critical during severe snow accumulations. Timber harvest in portions of this Analysis Area has improved whitetail summer range substantially. Grazing is negligible.

Biological Issues

The management criteria are easily met in this Analysis Area. As indexed by antler point information from the harvest, buck survival is very good in this Analysis Area despite the human population of the area.

Interspecific Issues

Other wild ungulates within the Analysis Area include mule deer, elk, and moose. None are believed to be limiting white-tailed deer numbers, and white-tailed deer are not believed to be in competition with any of these species for forage or space. As the most abundant ungulate in the Analysis Area, white-tailed deer do have an indirect influence on other species in the ecosystem. In those years when white-tailed deer numbers change rapidly in response to environmental

factors, the resultant effect on predation will be reflected within the population dynamics of alternate prey species.

Predation Issues

White-tailed deer have the highest intrinsic rate of increase among Idaho's ungulates. Although predation may be a major influence in their population dynamics, predation has not been identified as limiting hunting opportunity for whitetails in northern Idaho. Between 1995 and 1998, mountain lion numbers are believed to have increased substantially, while white-tailed deer numbers dropped substantially due to the severe 1996-1997 winter. Mountain lion populations are believed to be considerably lower in 2002 than during the mid and late 1990s.

Winter Feeding Issues

The Department has undertaken emergency winter feeding about once every ten to 15 years in this Analysis Area. The most recent feeding occurred during the 1996-1997 winter, when about 200 whitetails were fed at Department-sanctioned sites, primarily in the Spirit Lake area. Many private individuals feed small herds of ten to 20 deer.

Information Requirements

Only harvest data are currently available for white-tailed deer management in Analysis Area 2. Success rates and the percentage of females in the harvest are used to index population trend, but the long seasons and variable weather influence makes interpretation difficult. Antler point summaries from harvested bucks index adult buck survival.

A white-tailed deer survival study is currently under way along the east side of Lake Coeur d'Alene in Game Management Unit 3. Survival estimates will be calculated for female deer when the study concludes in December 2003.

Spotlight surveys were conducted in GMUs 2 & 3 to assess herd composition. A total of 472 white-tailed deer were classified on 12 & 16 September 2002. Ratios of 50 fawns and 34 bucks per 100 does were observed. Similar surveys were conducted on 24 & 25 September and 1 October 2001 when 316 deer were classified with fawn:doe:buck ratios of 68:100:58. Additional surveys will be required over a number of years for us to understand the implications of these population parameters.

White-Tailed Deer Analysis Area 2 (Units 2, 3, 4A)

Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

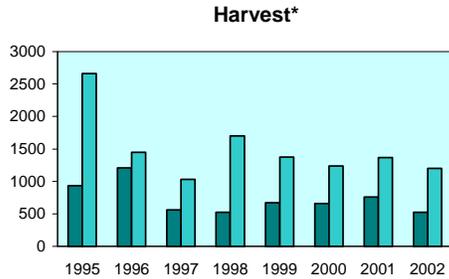
	Survey Years	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
% 4+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	52	30
% 5+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	22	7



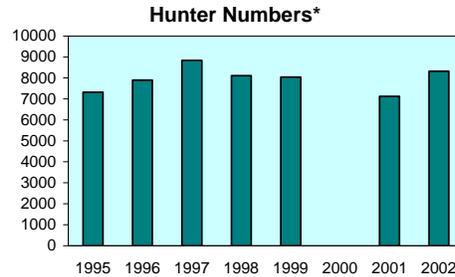
Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Antlerless Harvest	933	1207	562	525	674	661	761	526
Antlered Harvest	2662	1448	1033	1700	1374	1236	1369	1200
% 4+ Points	59	48	50	49	47	55	49	55
% 5+ Points	22	23	21	21	17	24	21	25
Hunter Numbers	7319	7901	8838	8111	8037	ND	7119	8326

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 data does not include general primitive weapons season data.



* Note: Hunter numbers include all deer hunters.

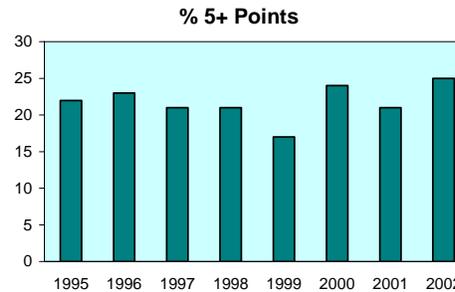
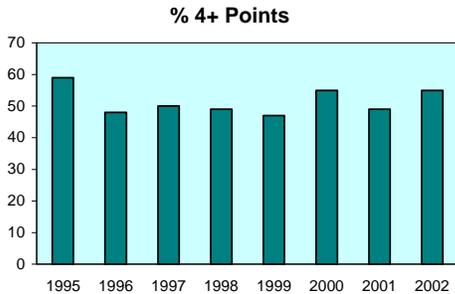


Figure 3. White-tailed Deer Analysis Area 2

ANALYSIS AREA 3 (UNITS 5, 6)

Management Objectives

Buck survival will be managed to maintain a minimum of 30% of bucks with four or more antler points per side, and a minimum 7% with five or more antler points per side.

Historical Perspective

Prior to the 1900s, deer were apparently relatively scarce, existing along the rivers and edges of mature conifer stands, and within younger stands created by fire, disease, and insects. As mining, logging, and the railroads entered the picture around the turn of the century, deer habitat began to change slowly.

Concern about “over-browsed winter ranges” and “too many deer” prompted liberal hunting seasons in an effort to reduce deer numbers in the early 1950s. Long seasons were the rule from 1954 through 1974.

By the early 1970s, deer numbers had come down substantially from the peak numbers in the 1950s and 1960s. Hunting seasons were shortened, but no major habitat-creating fires had occurred for over 40 years. Since shorter seasons began in the mid-1970s, the number of whitetails killed by hunters in the Panhandle rose from 3,000 per year to 10,000 per year.

Habitat Issues

This Analysis Area can be broadly described as heavily timbered to the east, but with abundant agricultural land to the west. Habitat security is variable. This Analysis Area includes most of the Coeur d’Alene Indian Reservation. Timber harvest in portions of this Analysis Area has improved whitetail summer range substantially. Loss of low elevation, closed canopy stands important during deep-snow winters, is the primary habitat issue in this Analysis Area. Grazing is negligible.

Biological Issues

The management criteria are easily met in this Analysis Area. As indexed by antler point information from the harvest, buck survival is very good in this Analysis Area. It did not experience high winter mortality during the 1996-1997 winter, as did the eastern portion of the Area.

Interspecific Issues

Other wild ungulates within the Analysis Area include mule deer, elk, and moose. None are believed to be limiting white-tailed deer numbers, and white-tailed deer are not believed to be in competition with any of these species for forage or space. As the most abundant ungulate in the Analysis Area, white-tailed deer do have an indirect influence on other species in the ecosystem. In those years when white-tailed deer numbers change rapidly in response to environmental

factors, the resultant effect on predation will be reflected within the population dynamics of alternate prey species.

Predation Issues

White-tailed deer have the highest intrinsic rate of increase among Idaho's ungulates. Although predation may be a major influence in their population dynamics, predation has not been identified as limiting hunting opportunity for whitetails in northern Idaho. Between 1995 and 1998, mountain lion numbers are believed to have increased substantially, while white-tailed deer numbers dropped substantially. Mountain lion populations are believed to be considerably lower in 2002 than during the mid and late 1990s.

Winter Feeding Issues

The Department has not fed deer in this Analysis Area in recent years. Many private individuals feed small herds of ten to 20 deer.

Information Requirements

Only harvest data are currently available for white-tailed deer management in Analysis Area 3. Success rates and the percentage of females in the harvest are used to index population trend, but the long seasons and variable weather influence makes interpretation difficult. Antler point summaries from harvested bucks index adult buck survival.

Given the relatively minor effect of harvest measured in Analysis Area 1 whitetails and similar buck survival (as indexed by antler point data), detailed population information is not needed for setting hunting regulations.

Spotlight surveys were conducted in GMUs 5 & 6 to assess herd composition. A total of 132 white-tailed deer were classified on 10, 16, and 18 September 2002. Ratios of 41 fawns and 86 bucks per 100 does were observed. Similar surveys were conducted on 1 & 4 October 2001 when 260 deer were classified with fawn:doe:buck ratios of 41:100:31. Additional surveys will be required over a number of years for us to understand the implications of these population parameters.

White-Tailed Deer Analysis Area 3 (Units 5, 6)

Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

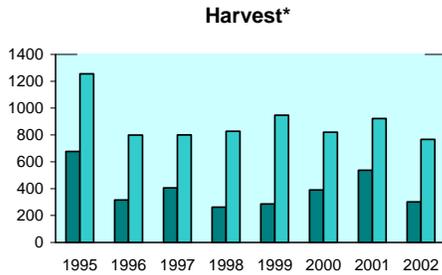
	Survey Years	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
% 4+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	58	30
% 5+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	22	7



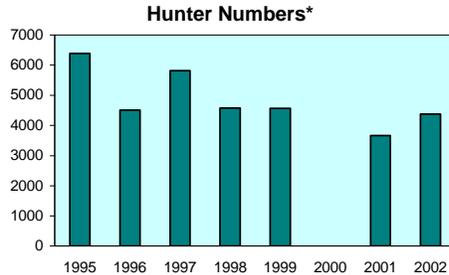
Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Antlerless Harvest	677	316	406	262	286	390	537	302
Antlered Harvest	1255	799	801	827	947	820	921	767
% 4+ Points	62	55	58	56	55	61	58	58
% 5+ Points	25	22	32	31	16	27	25	20
Hunter Numbers	6390	4513	5815	4580	4566	ND	3668	4379

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 data does not include general primitive weapons season data.



* Note: Hunter numbers include all deer hunters.

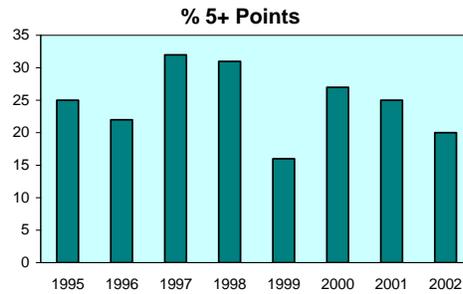
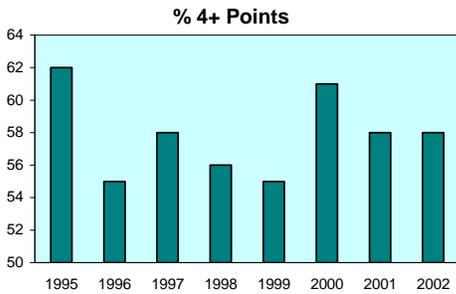


Figure 4. White-tailed Deer Analysis Area 3

ANALYSIS AREA 4 (UNITS 4, 7, 9)

Management Objectives

Buck survival will be managed to maintain a minimum of 30% of bucks with four or more antler points per side, and a minimum 7% with five or more antler points per side.

Historical Perspective

Prior to the 1900s, deer were apparently relatively scarce, existing along the rivers and edges of mature conifer stands, and within younger stands created by fire, disease, and insects. As mining, logging, and the railroads entered the picture around the turn of the century, deer habitat began to change slowly. The period from 1910 to 1931 included five major fires, each creating hundreds of thousands of acres of younger forests beneficial to white-tailed deer. The newly-created habitat, and a major predator control program, allowed deer numbers to continue this growth, even through five major die-offs: 1927, 1932, 1946, 1948, and 1949.

Concern about “over-browsed winter ranges” and “too many deer” prompted liberal hunting seasons in an effort to reduce deer numbers in the early 1950s. Long seasons were the rule from 1954 through 1974.

By the early 1970s, deer numbers had come down substantially from the peak numbers in the 1950s and 1960s. Hunting seasons were shortened, but no major habitat-creating fires had occurred for over 40 years. Since shorter seasons began in the mid-1970s, the number of whitetails killed by hunters in the Panhandle rose from 3,000 per year to 10,000 per year.

Habitat Issues

This Analysis Area can be broadly described as heavily timbered to the east, but with abundant agricultural land to the west. Habitat security is variable. Timber harvest in portions of this Analysis Area has improved whitetail summer range substantially. Loss of low elevation, closed canopy stands important during deep-snow winters, is the primary habitat issue in this Analysis Area. Grazing is negligible.

Biological Issues

The management criteria are easily met in this Analysis Area. As indexed by antler point information from the harvest, buck survival is very good in this Analysis Area. Deer densities appear lower in this Area than adjacent Areas, particularly at the southern end. The 1996-1997 winter was probably one of the three or four most severe winters during the last century in this Analysis Area. Favorable environmental conditions since the winter of 1996-1997, particularly snow depth on winter range, have allowed substantial recovery of deer populations in this Analysis Area.

Interspecific Issues

Other wild ungulates within the Analysis Area include mule deer, elk, moose, and mountain goats. None are believed to be limiting white-tailed deer numbers, and white-tailed deer are not believed to be in competition with any of these species for forage or space. As the most abundant ungulate in the Analysis Area, white-tailed deer do have an indirect influence on other species in the ecosystem. In those years when white-tailed deer numbers change rapidly in response to environmental factors, the resultant effect on predation will be reflected within the population dynamics of alternate prey species.

Predation Issues

White-tailed deer have the highest intrinsic rate of increase among Idaho's ungulates. Although predation may be a major influence in their population dynamics, predation has not been identified as limiting hunting opportunity for whitetails in northern Idaho. Between 1995 and 1998, mountain lion numbers are believed to have increased substantially, while white-tailed deer numbers dropped substantially due to the severe 1996-1997 winter. Mountain lion populations are believed to be considerably lower in 2002 than during the mid and late 1990s.

Winter Feeding Issues

The Department has fed deer about once every 20 years in this Analysis Area. Many private individuals feed small herds of ten to 20 deer.

Information Requirements

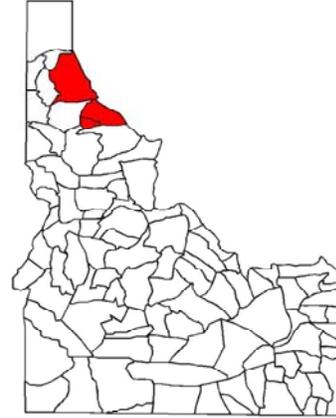
Only harvest data are currently available for white-tailed deer management in Analysis Area 4. Success rates and the percentage of females in the harvest are used to index population trend, but the long seasons and variable weather influence makes interpretation difficult. Antler point summaries from harvested bucks index adult buck survival.

Given the relatively minor effect of harvest measured in Analysis Area 1 whitetails and similar buck survival (as indexed by antler point data), detailed population information is not needed for setting hunting regulations. No spotlight surveys were conducted in this Analysis Area.

White-Tailed Deer Analysis Area 4 (Units 4, 7, 9)

Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

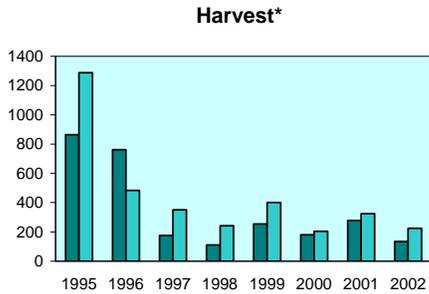
	Survey Years	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
% 4+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	50	30
% 5+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	20	7



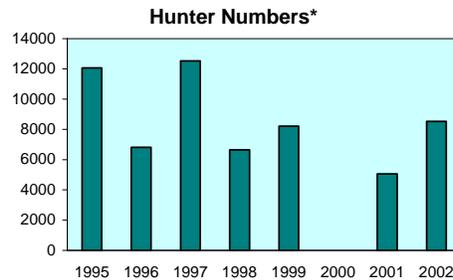
Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Antlerless Harvest	864	762	175	111	254	180	278	135
Antlered Harvest	1288	483	351	243	400	205	324	225
% 4+ Points	33	44	42	49	34	52	57	57
% 5+ Points	9	22	13	22	10	25	25	20
Hunter Numbers	12064	6810	12525	6641	8218	ND	5057	8531

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 data does not include general primitive weapons season data.



* Note: Hunter numbers include all deer hunters.

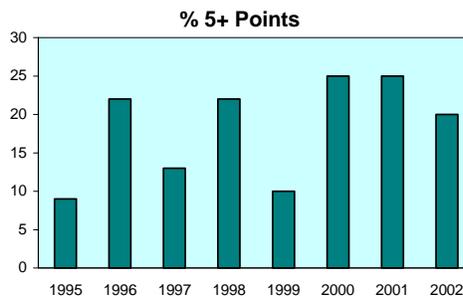
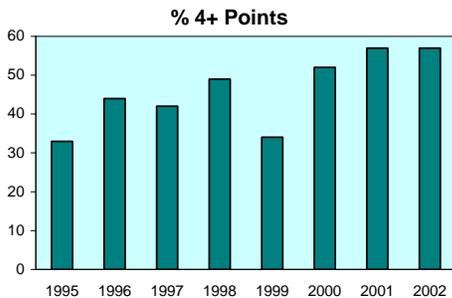


Figure 5. White-tailed Deer Analysis Area 4

**PROGRESS REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVENTORIES**

STATE:	<u>Idaho</u>	JOB TITLE:	<u>White-tailed Deer Surveys and</u>
PROJECT:	<u>W-170-R-27</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>3</u>		<u>Habitat Studies</u>
PERIOD COVERED:	<u>July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2003</u>		

CLEARWATER REGION

ANALYSIS AREA 5 (UNITS 8, 8A, 10A, 11, 11A, 13)

Management Objectives

Given the current inability to efficiently census population parameters of white-tailed deer, management objectives will be limited to not falling below 50% ≥ 4 points and 17% ≥ 5 points in the harvest. Although the population size is unknown, efforts will be made to maintain current status.

Historical Perspective

White-tailed 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 the Clearwater River country. Populations probably did not change much until the early 1900s when large fires and settlement by humans, including grazing of domestic livestock and clearing of land for agricultural purposes, changed the landscape. Logging also converted dense coniferous forests into a mosaic of vegetation-succession types and intensified throughout the late 20th century. Currently, populations are at historic highs.

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 species-specific seasons in the Clearwater Region.

These units have either-sex hunting seasons in October. During the mid-1980s most units extended the antlered white-tailed deer hunting season into mid-November. In 1990 most November white-tailed deer seasons were changed to either-sex hunts. In 1997 an extra doe tag was established in the southern portion of Unit 10A and the southeastern portion of 11A. The 11A hunt was expanded to include the entire unit in 2000 and to include antlerless mule deer. In 1998 the Clearwater Deer Tag was established.

Habitat Issues

This Analysis Area includes the highly productive Palouse and Camas prairies, the timbered mountainous terrain of the Lower North Fork Clearwater River, and the drier ponderosa pine uplands and deep canyons along the Snake and Salmon Rivers. In Units 8 and 8A, dryland agriculture began in the 1880s and currently nonforested land is tilled and only small patches of perennial vegetation remain. 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 the North Fork Clearwater River in Unit 10A and permanently removed thousands of acres of prime low elevation big game winter range. Historically, sheep and cattle ranchers homesteaded the canyon lands in Units 11, 11A, and 13, while prairie farmers settled land. Around the turn of the century, northern Unit 11 and the prairie land in Unit 11A were under intensive use for dryland 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. In addition, past improper grazing practices degraded many meadow areas and canyons, allowing invasion of noxious weed species in drier areas.

This Analysis Area contains large tracts of privately owned land. Units 8, 11, and 11A are mostly private lands except for the Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area along the Snake and Salmon Rivers. Unit 13 has been mostly under private ownership since settlement, and is managed for agriculture and livestock. Units 8A and 10A contain a mixed ownership of private acreage, private timber companies, and public land owned by either the Idaho Department of Lands or the US Forest Service (USFS).

Farmland in Units 8 and 8A has provided high-quality forage for deer. Depredations have occurred mostly along timbered edges and canyon lands. The flat, low elevation areas, 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. Cash crops that receive damage from white-tailed deer include wheat, barley, oats, peas, lentils, rapeseed, organic vegetables, bluegrass, and hay. Landowners establishing tree plantations, tree farms, and orchards also experience damage by white-tailed deer.

Units 8A and 10A have both been heavily logged with large tracts of land in seedtree cuts or clearcuts. This early successional forest intermixed with meadows and thousands of acres of brush fields has created excellent white-tailed deer summer and winter range. The habitat in this Analysis Area can support high white-tailed deer populations. Habitat productivity varies widely throughout 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. Many grassland cover types have been disturbed by various weeds and nonnative grasses including cheat grass and yellowstar thistle. Open road densities are high within the Analysis Area except along the Snake River and Salmon River below White Bird. Construction of new home-sites have decreased available white-tailed deer winter ranges and limited hunter access.

Biological Issues

White-tailed deer numbers have increased dramatically in this Analysis Area during the past several decades. The increase was not as dramatic during the mid-1990s, although in some areas, such as Unit 11, the herd is still expanding. As deer herds have expanded and white-tailed deer hunting in Idaho has become more popular, hunter numbers increased 24% in this Analysis Area from 1991 to 1996. Similarly, harvest increased 37% during the same time period. Due to increased hunter densities in Units 8A, 10A, and 11A, there are concerns about hunter interactions, landowner trespass, and mature buck survival. Percent of bucks with ≥ 4 points averaged 59% from 1993 to 1996. Since 1998 harvest has stabilized and hunter numbers have decreased slightly. Some units, such as Unit 10A, have high doe densities surrounding agricultural fields and town sites.

Interspecific Issues

Increasing white-tailed deer populations within this Analysis Area may have had a negative impact on mule deer populations. Mountain lion populations tend to fluctuate in response to changes in white-tailed deer populations due to deer being a major food source for mountain lions.

Predation Issues

Mountain lion numbers have increased in this Analysis Area during the past decade and seemingly peaked during 1997, especially in Unit 10A, probably due to the dramatic increase in white-tailed deer populations. Black bear numbers have remained static throughout most of this area for the past decade. Increases in road densities during the past several decades due to logging have contributed to increased predator hunting opportunities. Wolves have recently begun to establish themselves in Unit 10A due to reintroduction efforts by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency winter feeding of white-tailed deer has not occurred in recent years.

Information Requirements

Population statistics are needed for white-tailed deer. An improved telephone harvest survey and/or the mandatory harvest report should help improve harvest data. Better harvest information is needed concerning mature buck status. There is currently no aerial survey technique perfected for white-tailed deer in North Idaho. Census methodologies are needed to assess population parameters such as fawn:doe:buck ratios, total numbers, and mature buck status.

Harvest

Total harvest in Analysis Area 5 units during 2000 was estimated at 6,657 white-tailed deer according to the 2000 mandatory harvest reports. This represents a 6% decrease in harvest from 1999. The Analysis Area 5 harvest accounted for 73% of the white-tailed deer taken in the Clearwater Region during 2000. Hunter numbers in the Analysis Area 5 units was estimated at 17,834 hunters with an average success rate of 40% in 1999. Hunter numbers in 1999 increased 8% from 1998 while success rates decreased by 4%. Hunter numbers were not estimated for 2000. These trends indicate relatively stable harvest and stable hunter numbers for the past few years. Hunter numbers in Analysis Area 5 units have decreased 9% since the mid-1990s (1996), while harvest has remained relatively stable.

Controlled hunts were offered in Units 10A and 11A to alleviate depredations and increase harvest opportunities for antlerless deer. According to the 2000 mandatory reports, 71 does were harvested in Unit 10A . In Unit 11A, 43 does were harvested.

According to mandatory report information, buck quality has remained stable in all units for the past 7 years. Using 2000 mandatory harvest report information, all Analysis Area 5 units except 8A exceeded the ≥ 4 -point buck objective of 50%. All Analysis Area 5 units except Unit 13 exceeded the ≥ 5 -point buck objective of 17%.

Aerial Surveys

There are currently no aerial survey techniques developed for white-tailed deer in Idaho. Observed white-tailed deer are recorded while performing sightability surveys for mule deer and elk. In Unit 10A, 1,192 white-tailed deer were observed while performing elk sightability surveys during January 1999. While performing sightability surveys for mule deer and elk on Craig Mountain in Unit 11 during December 1999, 257 white-tailed deer were observed.

Climatic Conditions

During the 2000 hunting season, snowfall was light with warmer than average temperatures throughout the fall until late November. Clearwater Region snowpack was 50% of average, while dry snow conditions resulted in 52% of average snow water equivalent. Winter conditions for big game were favorable throughout the region. Low snowpack and a cooler than normal spring initiated early green-up in low elevations but delayed green-up at higher elevations.

White-Tailed Deer Analysis Area 5 (Units 8, 8A, 10A, 11, 11A, 13)

Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

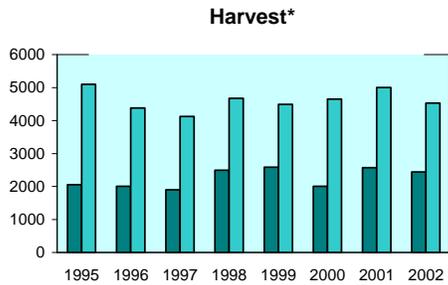
	Survey Years	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
% 4+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	60	50
% 5+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	22	17



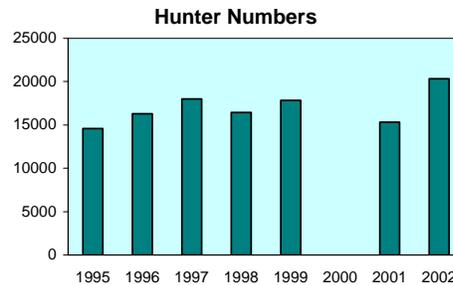
Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Antlerless Harvest	2054	2006	1900	2498	2584	2005	2571	2436
Antlered Harvest	5097	4379	4119	4673	4490	4652	5001	4526
% 4+ Points	57	66	49	53	52	62	62	62
% 5+ Points	24	22	19	19	18	24	23	23
Hunter Numbers	14584	16300	18007	16438	17834	ND	15321	20331

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1997 does not include general primitive weapons season data.
Hunter numbers prior to 1996 include all deer hunters.
Antlered and antlerless data does not include primitive weapons.



* Note: Harvest prior to 1997 data does not include general primitive weapons season data.



* Note: Hunter numbers prior to 1996 include all deer hunters.

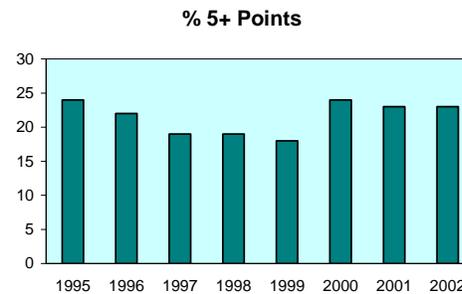
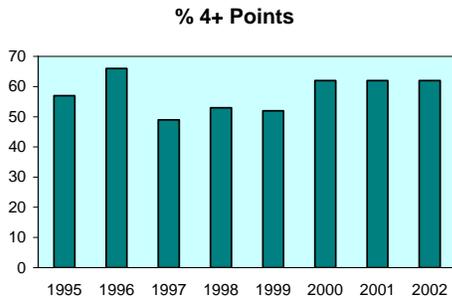


Figure 6. White-tailed Deer Analysis Area 5

ANALYSIS AREA 6 (UNITS 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18)

Management Objectives

Given the current inability to efficiently census population parameters of white-tailed deer, management objectives will be limited to not falling below 50% ≥ 4 points and 17% ≥ 5 points in the harvest. Although the population size is unknown, efforts will be made to maintain current status.

Historical Perspective

White-tailed 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 the Clearwater River country. Populations probably did not change much until the early 1900s when fires converted large expanses of dense coniferous forest into a mosaic of vegetation succession types. Logging also contributed to creating a mosaic of brush fields and uneven-aged forest stands. Populations probably peaked around the 1940-1950s, followed by a slight decline. Currently, populations are high.

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 species-specific seasons in the Clearwater Region.

These units have either-sex hunting seasons in October. During the mid-1980s the white-tailed deer hunting season was extended into mid-November. In 1990 most November white-tailed deer seasons became either-sex hunts. In 1997 an extra doe tag was established in Unit 16 south of the Selway River. In 1998 the Clearwater Deer Tag was established.

Habitat Issues

Units 10, 12, 15, and 16 are predominately timber intermixed with brush or grass. The majority of land is public in USFS ownership. Most private ownership is on lower elevation ground located along the Clearwater River. Units 14 and 18 are mixed ownership with private land being located at lower elevations along the Salmon River and mostly USFS-owned ground at higher elevations. Private land in Units 14 and 18 consists of summer resort homes and large cattle ranches with limited access. Past logging activities have created high road densities and young successional forests in the western portions of the Analysis Area and throughout most of Unit 15. These areas provide excellent white-tailed deer habitat along with high vulnerability to hunters. The eastern portion of this Analysis Area is characterized by rough terrain and limited access except for trails and a few major roads and is generally too high in elevation to sustain good white-tailed deer populations. In general, the western portions of the Analysis Area provide good white-tailed deer habitat, especially at lower elevations along the Clearwater and Salmon Rivers. Construction of new home-sites has increased white-tailed deer depredation problems and limited hunter access. Noxious weeds such as yellowstar thistle and spotted knapweed are out-competing native vegetation on white-tailed deer spring and winter ranges.

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 10, 12, 14, 15, and 16. In 1964 most of the southern portion of Unit 12 was designated as part of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Historically, sheepherders ran their flocks in the canyons of Units 14 and 18 and logging occurred in the forested areas. Units 14 and 18 are two-thirds public lands with the remaining private land at lower elevations along the Salmon River. The majority of the Hells Canyon Wilderness Area, designated in 1975, is in Unit 18.

Cash crops that receive damage from white-tailed deer include wheat, barley, oats, and irrigated alfalfa and hay. Unfenced orchards along the Salmon River in Units 14 and 18 experience damage from white-tailed deer.

Biological Issues

White-tailed deer numbers have increased dramatically in this Analysis Area during the past several decades. The increase was not as dramatic during the mid-1990s. Due to increased hunter densities since the late-1980s in the southern units such as 14, 15, and 18, some sportsmen and landowners have been concerned about hunter interactions, landowner trespass, and mature buck survival. From 1991 through 1995 white-tailed deer numbers and hunter numbers stabilized within this Analysis Area. Percent of bucks with ≥ 4 points averaged 51% from 1993 to 1996. Since 1998 this Analysis Area has been below the 50% objective for percent of bucks ≥ 4 points or better.

Interspecific Issues

Increasing white-tailed deer populations within this Analysis Area may have a negative impact on mule deer populations. Mountain lion populations tend to fluctuate in response to changes in white-tailed deer populations due to deer being a major food source for mountain lions.

Predation Issues

Mountain lion numbers have increased in this Analysis Area during the past decade, probably due to a dramatic increase in white-tailed deer numbers. Black bear numbers have remained static throughout most of this area for the past decade, with Units 10, 12, and 16 having an increase within the past 5 years due to reductions in season length limiting backcountry access. Increases in road densities during the past several decades have contributed to increased predator hunting opportunities. Wolves have established themselves in Units 10, 12, and 15 due to reintroduction efforts by the USFWS.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency winter feeding of white-tailed deer has not occurred in recent years.

Information Requirements

Population statistics are needed for white-tailed deer. An improved telephone harvest survey and/or the mandatory harvest report should help improve harvest data. Better harvest information is needed concerning mature buck status. There is currently no aerial survey technique perfected for white-tailed deer in north Idaho. Census methodologies are needed to assess population parameters such as fawn:doe:buck ratios, total numbers, and mature buck status.

Harvest

Total harvest in Analysis Area 6 units during 2000 was estimated at 2,304 white-tailed deer according to the 2000 mandatory harvest reports. This represents an 3% increase in harvest from 1999. The Analysis Area 6 harvest accounted for 24% of the white-tailed deer taken in the Clearwater Region during 2000. Hunter numbers in Analysis Area 6 units were estimated at 6,854 hunters with an average success rate of 35% in 1999. Hunter numbers in 1999 increased 2% from 1998 while success rates decreased by 5%. Hunter numbers and total harvest in Analysis Area 6 units have remained stable since 1996; however, they have both decreased dramatically when compared to 1993-1995. Hunter numbers were not estimated in 2000.

A controlled hunt was offered in Unit 16 during 1999 to alleviate depredations and increase harvest opportunities for antlerless deer. According to the 2000 mandatory harvest reports, 59 does were harvested.

According to telephone harvest survey information, buck quality has declined in this Analysis Area during the past 5 years. Analysis Area 6 units are currently below the ≥ 4 -point buck objective of 50%. Specific units that are below include Units 12, 16, and 18. No Analysis Area 5 units except Unit 10 met the ≥ 5 -point buck objective of 17%.

A check station is conducted in Unit 15 each year during the November white-tailed deer season. Check station data in 2000 indicated a total white-tailed deer harvest of 189. This harvest was a 34% increase since 1999. Previous to 1998 the majority of the deer hunters stopping at the check station were residents from outside the region. Since 1998 the majority of the deer hunters have been from within the region.

Aerial Surveys

There is currently no aerial survey technique developed for white-tailed deer in Idaho. Observed white-tailed deer are recorded while performing sightability surveys for mule deer and elk. In Unit 14, 325 white-tailed deer were observed while performing elk and mule deer sightability surveys during December 1999. In Unit 15, 633 white-tailed deer were observed during elk surveys in January 2000 compared to 803 in January 1998. In Unit 16, 141 white-tailed deer were observed during elk surveys in January 2000.

Climatic Conditions

During the 2000 hunting season, snowfall was light with warmer than average temperatures throughout the fall until late November. Snowpack was 50% of average, while dry snow conditions resulted in 52% of average snow water equivalent. Winter conditions for big game were favorable throughout the region. A cooler than normal spring initiated later snow melt and green-up in higher elevations.

White-Tailed Deer Analysis Area 6 (Units 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18)

Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

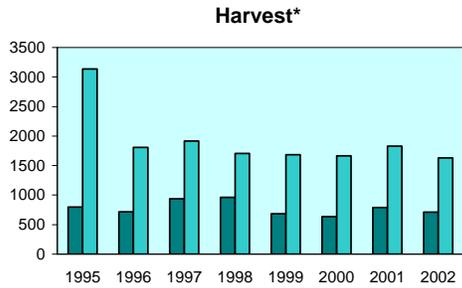
	Survey Years	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
% 4+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	52	50
% 5+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	15	17



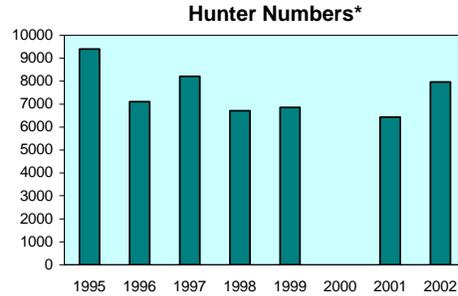
Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Antlerless Harvest	796	717	937	961	686	637	790	709
Antlered Harvest	3138	1808	1916	1704	1683	1667	1832	1629
% 4+ Points	45	55	43	48	46	55	55	53
% 5+ Points	13	16	11	18	14	16	16	16
Hunter Numbers	9396	7107	8208	6707	6854	ND	6437	7968

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1997 does not include general primitive weapons season data.
Hunter numbers prior to 1996 include all deer hunters.
Antlered and antlerless data does not include primitive weapons.



* Note: Harvest prior to 1997 data does not include general primitive weapons season data.



* Note: Hunter numbers prior to 1996 include all deer hunters.

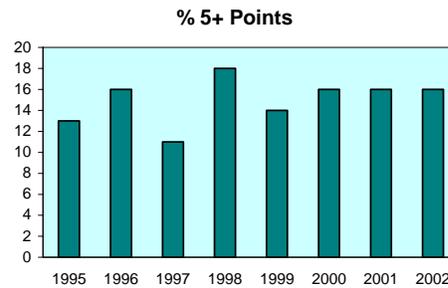
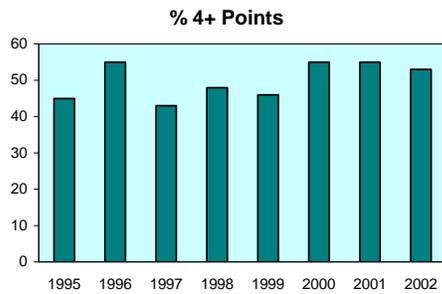


Figure 7. White-tailed Deer Analysis Area 6

ANALYSIS AREA 7 (UNITS 16A, 17, 19, 20)

Management Objectives

Given the current inability to efficiently census population parameters of white-tailed deer, management objectives will be limited to not falling below 30% ≥ 4 points and 7% ≥ 5 points in the harvest. Although the population size is unknown, efforts will be made to maintain current status.

Historical Perspective

White-tailed deer populations in this Analysis Area were probably historically low. Accounts from Lewis and Clark during the 1800s suggested that very few animals were found throughout the Clearwater River country. Populations probably did not change much until the early 1900s, when fires converted large expanses of dense coniferous forest into a mosaic of vegetation succession types. Logging also contributed to creating a mosaic of brush fields and uneven-aged forest stands. Populations probably peaked around the 1940-1950s, followed by a slight decline. Currently, populations are high.

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 species-specific seasons in the Clearwater Region. Deer seasons in these units have historically been general season, either-sex, and either species. In 1998 the Clearwater Deer Tag was established.

Habitat Issues

Habitat productivity varies throughout the Analysis Area from high precipitation forested areas along the Lower Selway River to dry, steep, south-facing ponderosa pine and grassland habitat along the Salmon River. Many areas along the Salmon River have a good mixture of successional stages due to frequent fires within the wilderness areas. Fire suppression within portions of the Selway River drainage has led to decreasing forage production for deer. Road densities are low, contributing to low vulnerability for deer. Noxious weeds such as spotted knapweed are out-competing native grasses and vegetation throughout deer habitat, especially on drier sites at lower elevations. Large fires have burned much of the wilderness over the last few years and will likely improve habitat for most game in the near future.

Due to the rugged and remote nature of this area, human impacts have been very limited. In 1964 almost all of Unit 17 and a small portion of Unit 16A were included in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Most of Unit 19 became part of the Gospel Hump Wilderness in 1978, and, in 1980, part of Unit 20 was included in the Frank Church River-of-No-Return Wilderness.

Biological Issues

White-tailed deer numbers are believed to be increasing within this Analysis Area, especially at lower elevations where they can better survive severe winter weather. As deer have expanded

and white-tailed deer hunting in Idaho has become more popular, hunter numbers in this Analysis Area have increased 38% from 1991 to 1996. Similarly, harvest increased 36% during the same time period. Percent of bucks with ≥ 4 points averaged 52% from 1993 to 2000.

Interspecific Issues

Increasing white-tailed deer populations within this Analysis Area may have a negative impact on mule deer populations. Mountain lion populations tend to fluctuate in response to changes in white-tailed deer populations due to deer being a major food source for mountain lions.

Predation Issues

Mountain lion harvest has remained static in this area for several decades, but has increased since the 1970s. Harvest is usually between ten and 20 mountain lions per year. Bear numbers are also stable, as the small amount of harvest on these species has little impact on populations. Harvest rates of bears and mountain lions are probably reflective of access difficulty due to snow accumulation and few roads. Mountain lion numbers may impact white-tailed deer densities; however, bears have limited impact on deer populations. Wolves have established themselves in this area and grizzly bears may be reintroduced within the next decade into some of these units.

Winter Feeding Issues

Emergency winter feeding of white-tailed deer has not occurred in recent years.

Information Requirements

As white-tailed deer densities increase within this Analysis Area, reliable population statistics will become more important for management purposes. Currently, without an estimate for the total white-tailed deer population and improved harvest estimates, it is difficult to assess whether or not to manage these units specifically for white-tailed deer. An improved telephone harvest survey and/or the mandatory harvest report should help improve harvest data. Better harvest information is needed concerning mature buck status. There is currently no aerial survey technique perfected for white-tailed deer in north Idaho. Census methodologies are needed to assess population parameters such as fawn:doe:buck ratios, total numbers, and mature buck status.

Harvest

Total harvest in Analysis Area 7 units during 2000 was estimated at 147 white-tailed deer. This represents a 43% decrease in harvest from 1998. Harvest estimates and success rates tend to fluctuate for this Analysis Area, probably due to low sample sizes for white-tailed deer harvest. The Analysis Area 7 harvest accounted for 1% of the white-tailed deer taken in the Clearwater Region during 2000. Hunter numbers in the Analysis Area 7 units were estimated at 759 hunters with an average success rate of 18% during 1999. Hunter numbers in 1999 decreased 35% from 1998 while success rates decreased by 4%. White-tailed deer hunter numbers in Analysis Area 7 units have decreased 61% since the mid-1990s (1996), and harvest has decreased 65%. Hunter

numbers for 2000 were not available. There are no controlled hunts offered for white-tailed deer in these units.

Estimates for management objectives in Analysis Area 7 are difficult to obtain due to low sample sizes.

Aerial Surveys

There is currently no aerial survey technique developed for white-tailed deer in Idaho. Observed white-tailed deer are recorded while performing sightability surveys for mule deer and elk; however, to date the observed numbers are extremely low for this group of units.

Climatic Conditions

During the 2000 hunting season, snowfall was light with warmer than average temperatures throughout the fall until late November. Snowpack was 50% of average, while dry snow conditions resulted in 52% of average snow water equivalent. Winter conditions for big game were favorable throughout the region. A cooler than normal spring delayed snow melt and green-up at higher elevations.

White-Tailed Deer Analysis Area 7 (Units 16A, 17, 19, 20)

Buck Status & Minimum Criterion

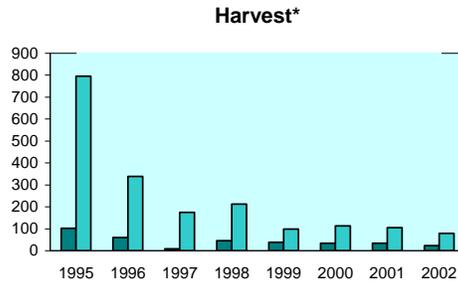
	Survey Years	Current Status	Minimum Criterion
% 4+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	61	30
% 5+ Points In The Harvest	1999-02	26	7



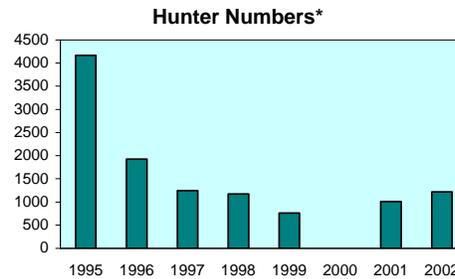
Analysis Area Harvest Statistics

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Antlerless Harvest	102	60	9	45	39	34	34	23
Antlered Harvest	796	338	175	213	99	113	105	79
% 4+ Points	38	46	58	37	61	62	60	61
% 5+ Points	12	29	21	9	27	29	24	24
Hunter Numbers	4168	1926	1244	1172	759	ND	1008	1219

Note: Telephone survey harvest data prior to 1997 does not include general primitive weapons season data.
Hunter numbers prior to 1996 include all deer hunters.
Antlered and antlerless data does not include primitive weapons.



* Note: Harvest prior to 1997 data does not include general primitive weapons season data.



* Note: Hunter numbers prior to 1996 include all deer hunters.

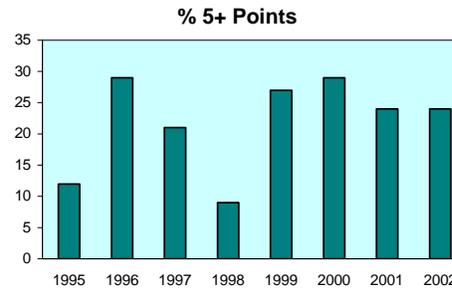
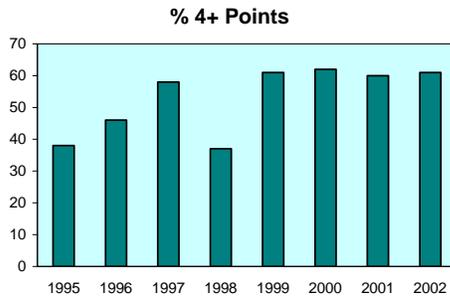


Figure 8. White-tailed Deer Analysis Area 7

Submitted by:

Jim Hayden

Regional Wildlife Manager

Jay Crenshaw

Regional Wildlife Manager

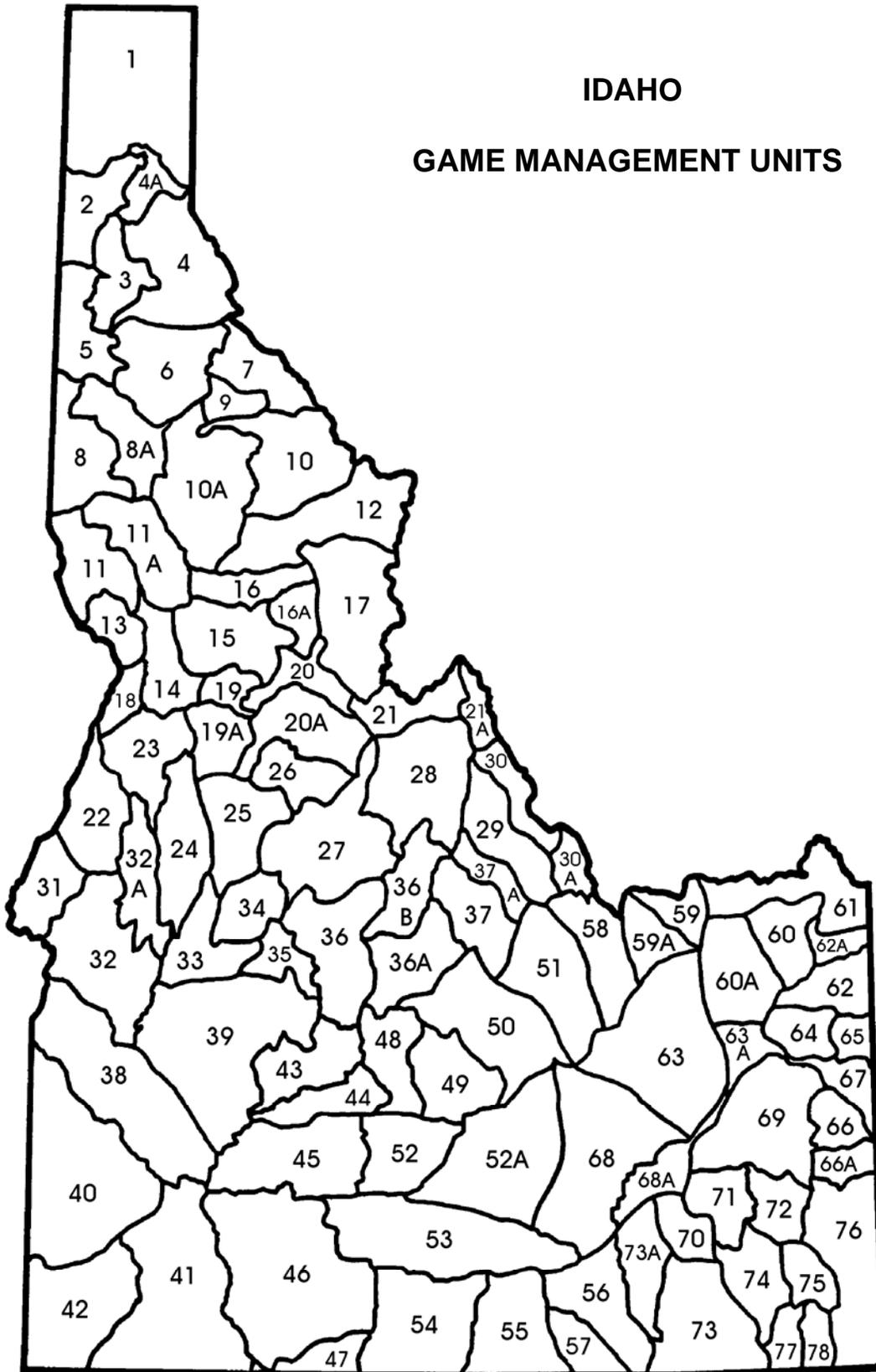
Approved by: IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Dale E. Towell
Wildlife Program Coordinator
Federal Aid Coordinator

James W. Unsworth, Chief
Bureau of Wildlife

IDAHO

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.

