

2014 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer

PERIOD: 6/1/2014 - 5/31/2015

HERD: MD541 - PLATTE VALLEY

HUNT AREAS: 78-81, 83, 161

PREPARED BY: WILL SCHULTZ

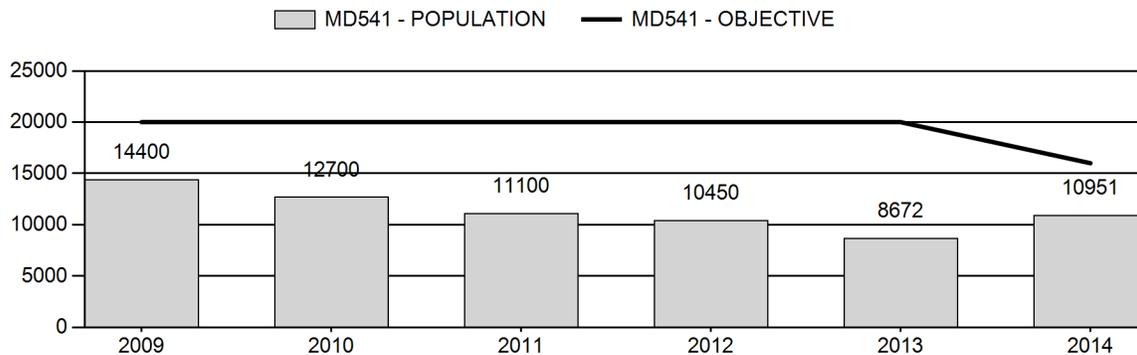
	<u>2009 - 2013 Average</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015 Proposed</u>
Population:	11,464	10,951	10,981
Harvest:	687	528	528
Hunters:	2,371	934	934
Hunter Success:	29%	57%	57 %
Active Licenses:	2,413	934	934
Active License Success:	28%	57%	57 %
Recreation Days:	12,876	5,388	5,388
Days Per Animal:	18.7	10.2	10.2
Males per 100 Females	28	36	
Juveniles per 100 Females	55	63	

Population Objective (± 20%) :	16000 (12800 - 19200)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-31.6%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	8
Model Date:	2/19/2015

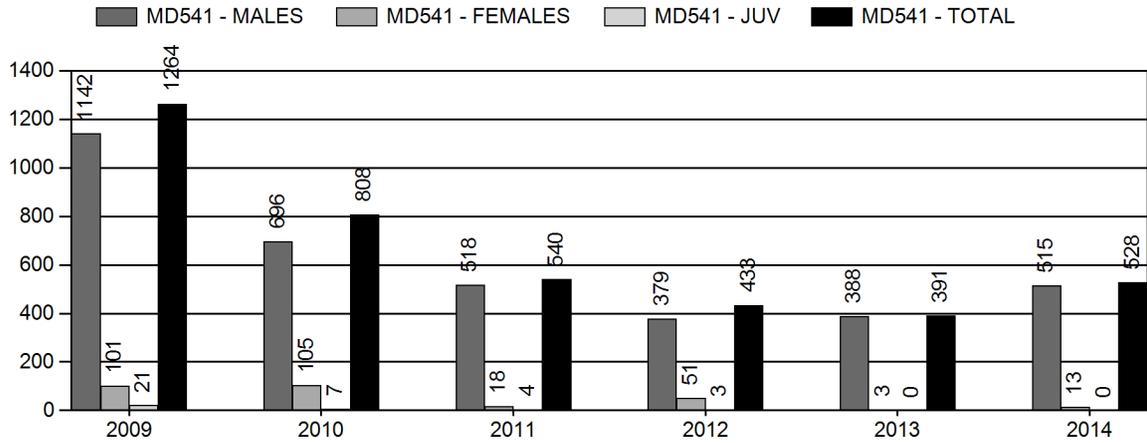
Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0.1%	0.1%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	26.4%	19%
Juveniles (< 1 year old):	0%	0%
Total:	4.6%	5%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-5.1%	0.03%

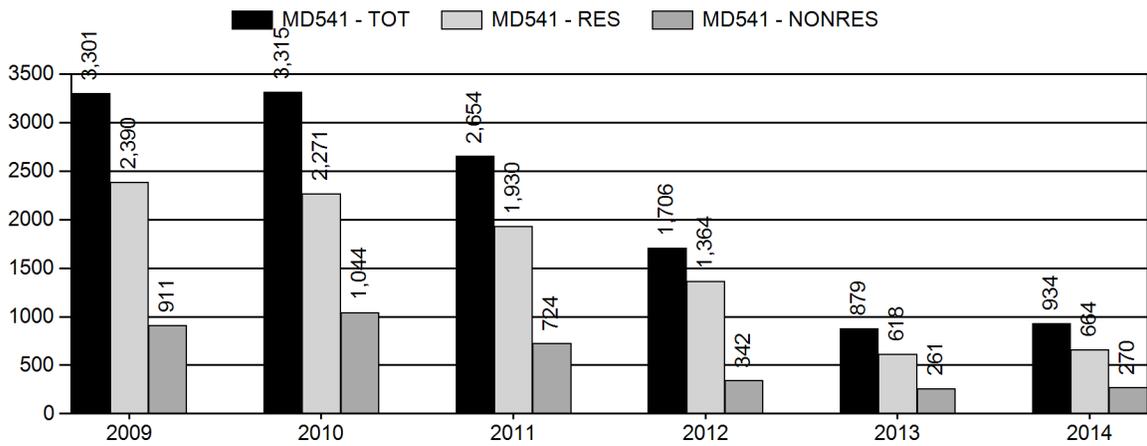
Population Size - Postseason



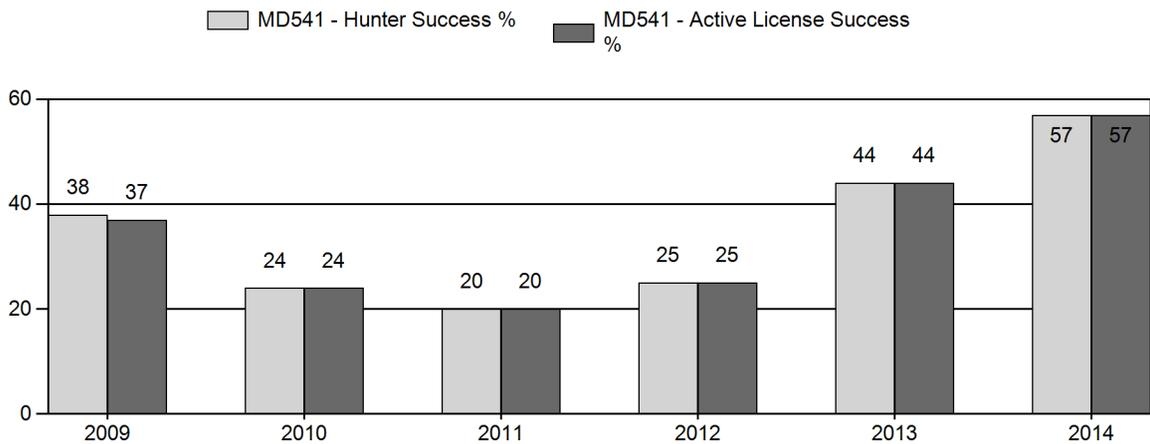
Harvest



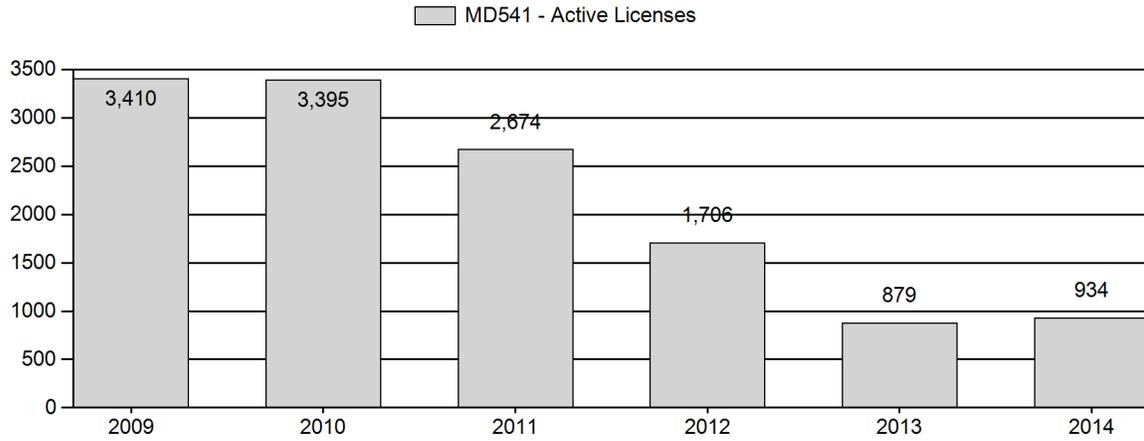
Number of Hunters



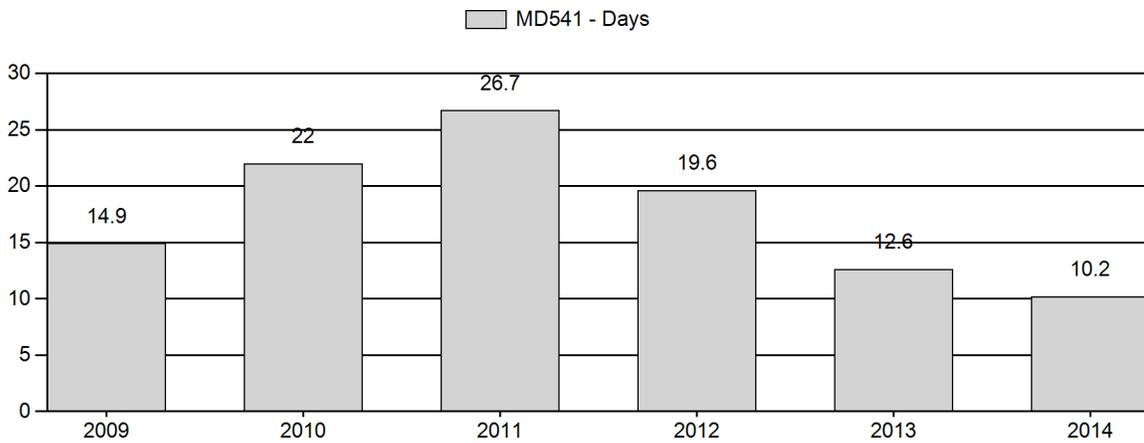
Harvest Success



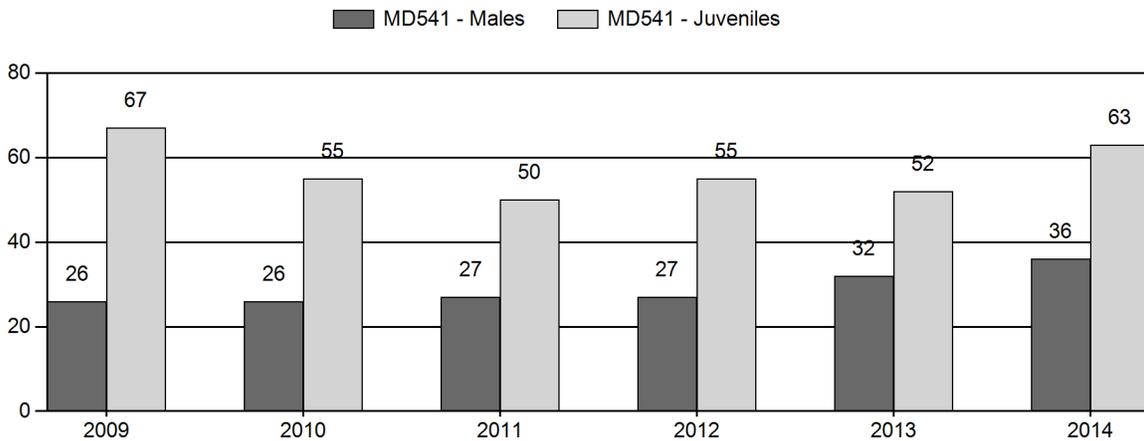
Active Licenses



Days per Animal Harvested



Postseason Animals per 100 Females



2009 - 2014 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD541 - PLATTE VALLEY

Year	Post Pop	MALES								FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot CIs	CIs Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	2+ CIs 1	2+ CIs 2	2+ CIs 3	2+ UnCIs	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Ylg			Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult	
2009	14,400	65	0	0	0	207	272	13%	1,047	52%	700	35%	2,019	1,053	6	20	26	± 2	67	± 4	53	
2010	12,700	111	0	0	0	222	333	14%	1,265	55%	701	30%	2,299	1,094	9	18	26	± 2	55	± 3	44	
2011	11,100	125	0	0	0	392	517	15%	1,895	56%	947	28%	3,359	999	7	21	27	± 1	50	± 2	39	
2012	10,450	70	0	0	0	143	213	15%	794	55%	438	30%	1,445	980	9	18	27	± 2	55	± 4	43	
2013	8,672	136	0	0	0	209	345	17%	1,092	55%	565	28%	2,002	937	12	19	32	± 2	52	± 3	39	
2014	10,951	85	549	448	151	0	319	18%	888	50%	560	32%	1,767	964	10	26	36	± 3	63	± 4	46	

**Platte Valley Mule Deer (MD541)
Hunt Areas 78-81, 83 & 161
2015 Hunting Seasons**

Hunt Area	Type	Dates of Seasons		Quota	License	Limitations
		Opens	Closes			
78	1	Oct. 1	Oct. 14	300	Limited quota	Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
79	1	Oct. 1	Oct. 14	300	Limited quota	Antlered mule deer or any white
80, 83	1	Oct. 1	Oct. 14	200	Limited quota	Antlered mule deer or any white
81	1	Oct. 1	Oct. 14	200	Limited quota	Antlered mule deer or any white
161	1	Oct. 1	Oct. 14	25	Limited quota	Antlered mule deer or any white

Hunt Area	Type	Quota change from 2014
Herd Unit Total		None

Management Evaluation

Current Management Objective: 16,000 (12,800 – 19,200)

Management Strategy: Recreational

2014 Postseason Population Estimate: 11,000

2015 Proposed Postseason Population Estimate: 11,000

2014 Hunter Satisfaction: 62% Satisfied, 21% Neutral, 17% Dissatisfied

Mule deer in the Platte Valley herd unit are managed toward a numeric objective of 16,000. The population was estimated using a spreadsheet model developed in 2012 and updated in 2014. The herd is managed for recreation opportunity. The objective was reviewed in 2014 and reduced to a postseason population estimate of 16,000 mule deer (Appendix A).

Herd Unit Issues

Fieldwork for several Platte Valley Habitat Partnership projects was initiated during this past year in this herd unit. The University of Wyoming Cooperative Unit continued to analyze data from the Platte Valley sightability survey evaluation and telemetry projects. A meeting was held in February, in Saratoga, to update the public about Platte Valley Mule Deer Mule Deer Plan accomplishments.

Efforts to reduce predators of mule deer in the Platte Valley were continued during this period. Carbon County Predator Management District completed the second year of a 3-year coyote removal project.

Weather

Weather in this herd unit was relatively normal during the past bio-year. Precipitation amounts were average, to slightly above average at all elevations throughout the herd unit. No significant prolonged periods of extreme heat or cold temperatures were observed or extreme snow loading in lower elevation winter ranges. Timing of precipitation and amounts received during key growth periods for cool season grasses and preferred transitional range and winter range shrub species was excellent. Weather patterns most likely had a positive influence on mule deer. Mild fall temperatures and lack of persistent snows allowed for mule deer to spend greater amounts of time on summer and fall transition ranges providing additional relief for winter ranges that have historically been over utilized. For specific meteorological information for the Platte Valley herd unit the reviewer is referred to the following link: <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cag/>

Habitat

Habitat conditions improved in 2014 with an increase in amounts of precipitation received and the timeliness of when it was received. Precipitation received in April and May resulted in excellent growth of cool season grasses and forbs, and above average leader growth on preferred key shrubs. 2012 has been recognized as one of the worst droughts on record, and annual growth of key forages monitored finally returned to levels seen prior to 2012. Utilization rates of key winter range shrubs documented in the spring of 2014 was within acceptable use limits in most areas. Shrub habitats receiving treatments thru prescribed fire or mowing continue to outperform areas not receiving treatment from an overall production standpoint.

The limited number of habitat transects that have been established throughout the Laramie Region have not provided sufficient data to make reliable assumptions of habitat quantity or quality and consequently heavily influence population management for any particular big game specie. The vast majority of shrub habitats are still in need of treatment to improve nutritive content and overall leader production potential.

Shrub communities within the Laramie Region that are annually assessed by game wardens, wildlife biologists, and terrestrial habitat biologists, include: true mountain mahogany, antelope bitterbrush, skunk brush sumac, big sagebrush, and four-wing saltbush. A majority of these transects were established approximately 12–13 years ago. Transects were established for several different reasons, including: measuring habitat response prior to or following treatments (i.e. prescribed fire, wildfire, mowing), concern over historic or current domestic livestock or wild ungulate utilization levels, selection of, “Representative habitats,” utilized by wildlife on identified winter ranges, and to compare present results with historic data sets.

Field Data

The 2013 Platte Valley Herd Unit postseason classification ratios were 36 bucks and 63 fawns/100 does; based on an adequate sample of 1,767 mule deer. The buck ratio increased 11% in 2014. This increase was attributed to the combination of both a conservative limited quota hunting season and greater over winter survival than in recent years. The observed fawn ratio at 63 fawns/100 does was 17% greater than the previous year. A mild winter and timely precipitation contributed to providing improved habitat conditions and increased nutrition for mule deer.

Harvest Data

2014 marked the second year for limited quota hunting in the Platte Valley herd unit. Each hunt area was prescribed a license quota specific to that hunt area. The same quotas from 2013 were retained in 2014 as they had permitted harvest success to attain the PVMDI Mule Deer Plan goal of at least 40%. A total of 934 active licensed hunters harvested 515 bucks and 13 does. Overall harvest success increased from 44% in 2013 to 57% in 2014 and buck harvest increased 11% to 55%. Similarly to the 2013 harvest rate, the 2014 harvest rate was attributed to the increased survival rates, a season length of 14-days, and perhaps most importantly, a reasonable alignment of hunter numbers with the current mule deer resource. The increased harvest success rate translated into an increase in the number hunters who selected a harvest survey satisfaction rating of satisfied, or very satisfied. Hunter satisfaction increased from 57% in 2013, to 62% in 2014.

Harvest rates of yearling bucks increased in 2014. Yearling bucks made up 26% of the buck harvest. This was an increase of 14% over 2013. Field checked harvest data from previous years indicated on average, greater than 25% of the buck harvest consisted of yearling bucks. The increased number of yearling bucks observed in 2014 harvest was attributed to more yearlings being conspicuously available due to increased survival for the 2013 fawn cohort due to the mild over-winter conditions.

Population

We continued the use of the TSJ,CA spreadsheet model in 2014. This model provided the balance of allowing juvenile survival rates to be optimized for alignment with observed population dynamics, while maintaining a constant survival rate for adult mule deer in model simulations. The TSJ,CA model also offered the best AICc score of the suite of spreadsheet models. TSJ,CA model aligned very well with abundance estimates for this herd unit and corroborated with the observations from field managers and the public.

We rated this model as fair, and biologically defensible in our evaluation. This rating was based on criteria identified in the user's guide for the WGFD spreadsheet model (Morrison 2012).

Management Summary

In 2015, the limited quota licenses numbers and season length will remain the same as in 2014. This hunting season framework will continue to support the goals identified in the Platte Valley Mule Deer Plan. Overall, hunters and other stakeholders appear to be very satisfied with the improvements we have made in mule deer management in this herd unit. Predator management and habitat improvement projects will also continue in 2015 as means to improve and sustain mule deer and their habitat in the Platte Valley herd unit. In 2016, we will conduct an in depth collaborative review and analysis of the Platte Valley Mule Deer Plan, including the limited quota hunting season framework.

Literature Cited

Morrison, T. 2012. User Guide: Spreadsheet Model for Ungulate Population data Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, University of Wyoming, Laramie. USA. 41 pp.

Bibliography of Herd Specific Studies

Newman, J. 1968. Deer Distribution and Movement Studies. Final Report. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Cheyenne.

Strickland, M. D. 1975. An investigation of the factors affecting the management of a migratory mule deer herd in southeastern Wyoming – the Snowy Range. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wyoming, Laramie. 171 pp.

Yost, J. 2009. North Park Deer Movement and Distribution Study Update - March, 2009. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Steamboat Springs. 4 pp.

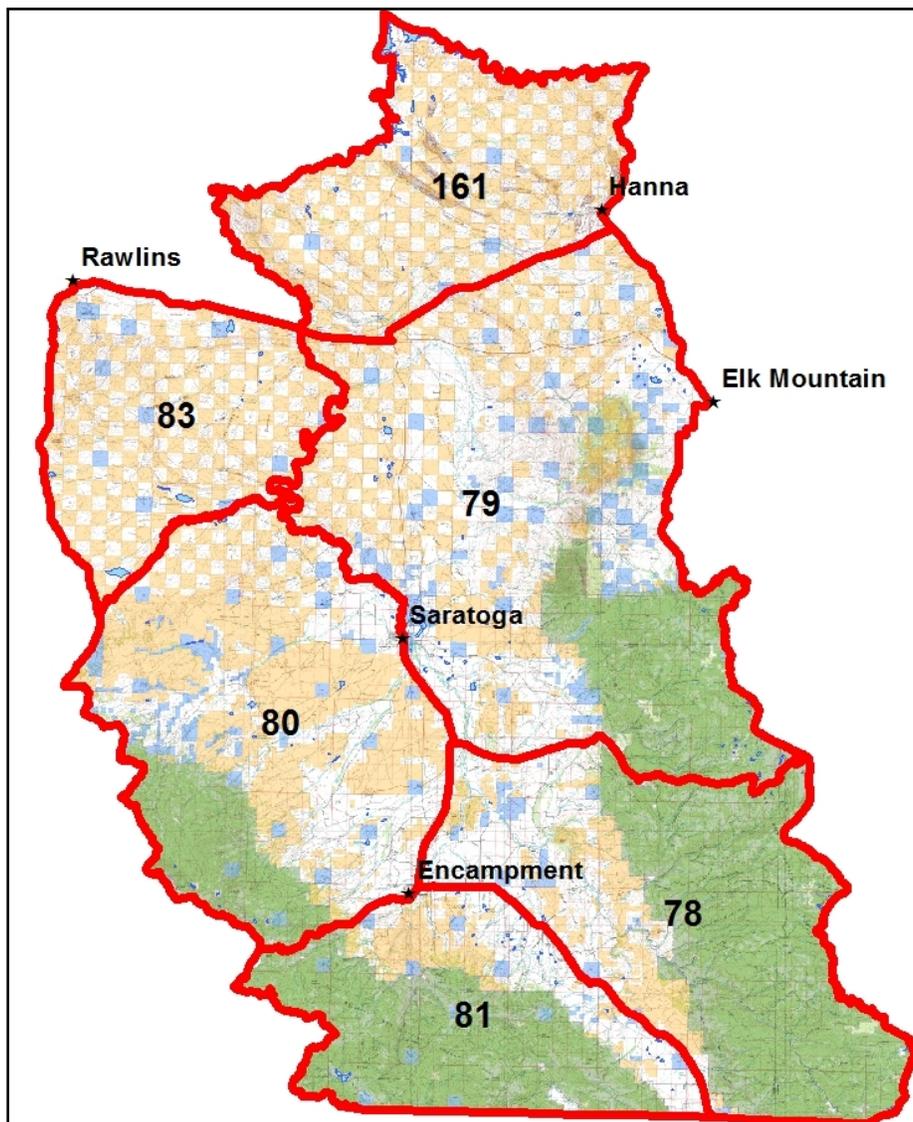
Wyoming Game and Fish Dept. 2012. 2012 v.110512 Platte Valley Mule Deer Plan. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Cheyenne. 90 pp.

2014 PLATTE VALLEY MULE DEER HERD UNIT AND POPULATION OBJECTIVE REVIEW

Prepared by: Will Schultz, Saratoga Wildlife Biologist

The Platte Valley mule deer herd unit is located in south central Wyoming and consists of deer Hunt Areas 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, and 161 (Figure 1). Hunt Areas 78 and 79 are located on the west slope of the Snowy Range, and Hunt Areas 80 and 81 are located on the east slope of the Sierra Madre Range, in the Medicine Bow Mountains. Hunt Areas 83 and 161 are located immediately adjacent in the northern portion of the herd unit and contain drier and less productive habitats. Hunt Areas 83 and 161 are included in the herd unit because mule deer that summer in high elevation mountain habitat in the southern portion of the herd unit migrate to winter ranges in these hunt areas during winter (Ward et al. 1976).

Figure 1. A map of the Platte Valley mule deer herd unit and hunt areas located in south central Wyoming.



The Platte Valley herd unit contains 7,045 km² of delineated seasonal mule deer range. Elevations range from 1,951 m along the North Platte River to just over 3,658 m at Medicine Bow Peak. Habitat types include alpine meadows, subalpine and montane forests, mountain shrub, sagebrush-grasslands, grasslands, cottonwood riparian, and agricultural croplands. Landownership in the herd unit is a mixture consisting of 41% private, 28% US Forest Service, 25% Bureau of Land Management, 5% State Land and Investment Board, and 1% Wyoming Game and Fish Commission.

POPULATION OBJECTIVE REVIEW

Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) uses postseason population objectives as a guide for mule deer management at the herd unit level. The postseason population objective is the desired number of mule deer remaining in the herd unit after the annual hunting season has been completed. Generally, if the population estimate is above the population objective, WGFD will propose changes to the herd unit's next hunting seasons which will increase harvest and reduce the number of mule deer toward the population objective. Conversely, if the population estimate is below the population objective, WGFD will propose changes to the herd unit's next hunting seasons which will decrease harvest and increase the number of mule deer toward the population objective.

An actual count of all mule deer in a herd unit would be, for all practical purposes, impossible to complete. Therefore, WGFD develops herd unit population estimates using a computer-based population model. Data collected annually through hunter-harvest surveys and postseason mule deer sex and age classification surveys are incorporated into the population models. The population estimate produced by the computer-based population model is used to determine where the herd unit's mule deer population is at in relation to the established population objective.

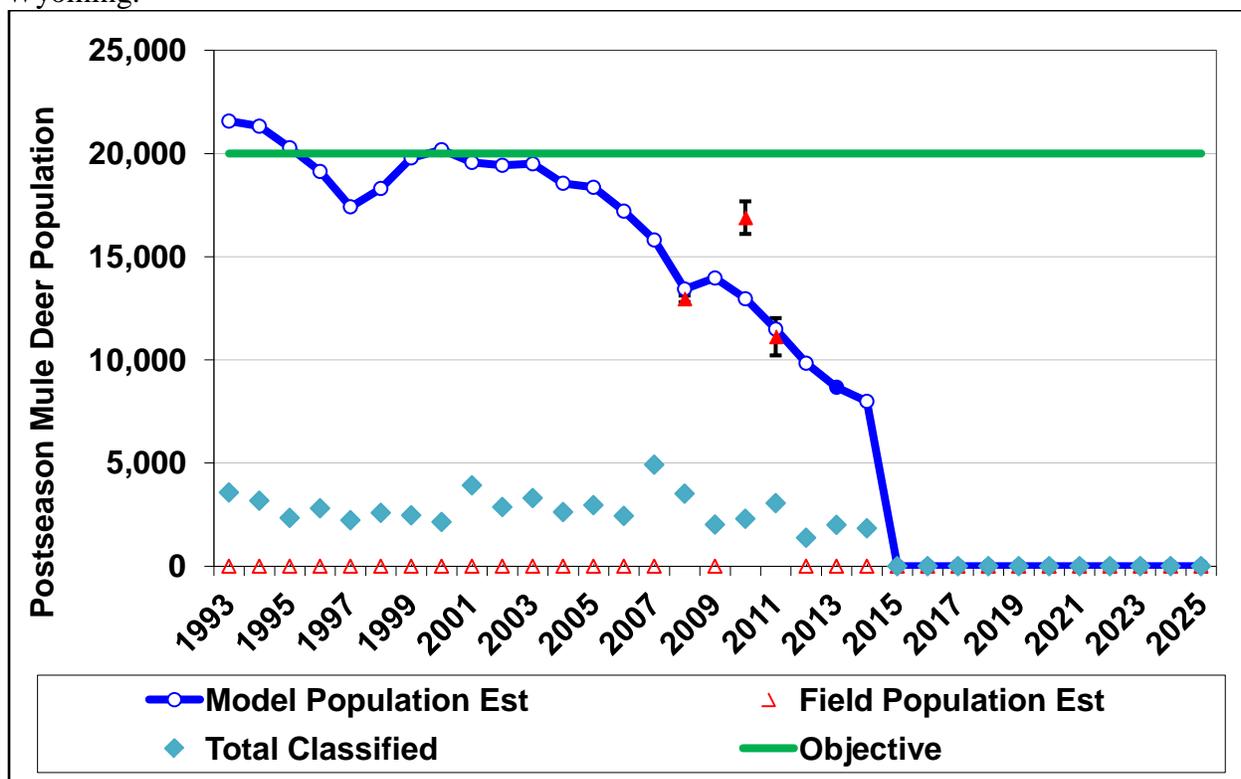
Annual population estimates for the Platte Valley herd unit are currently produced using a computer-based, spreadsheet population model (Morrison 2012). Hunter-harvest surveys and postseason mule deer sex and age classification survey sample sizes have been adequate for producing estimates with acceptable 80% confidence intervals. Retrospective comparisons of population estimates produced by the spreadsheet model are lower than those previously reported using the POP-II population model. Generally, the spreadsheet model's estimates are considered more accurate than the previous POP-II population model. Additionally, WGFD has conducted 3 mule deer sightability surveys (Unsworth et. al.1999) in this herd unit. Abundance estimates from these sightability surveys were incorporated into the spreadsheet model to improve the population estimate's accuracy.

Postseason mule deer population objectives for the Platte Valley herd unit have been adopted and subsequently changed following periodic reviews of both biological and social considerations. These considerations have included, but were not limited to: changes in the herd unit boundary delineation, changes in quantity and quality of habitat, sportsmen desires, and landowner desires/tolerance.

A postseason population objective of 20,000 mule deer was first established for the Platte Valley herd unit in the late 1970s. In 1982, the population objective was decreased to 15,000 mule deer due to the removal of the South Ferris area (Hunt Area 86) from the herd unit. It was returned to 20,000 again in 1987 because stakeholders desired seeing the population maintained at what was estimated at that time to be approximately 20,000 mule deer. The population objective has been retained at 20,000 since 1987.

The 2013 postseason population estimate was 8,700 mule deer. Since 2004, the annual population estimates have declined precipitously in trend (Figure 2). Although there are many factors believed to be contributing cumulatively to the decline, the direct and indirect impacts from severe winters and drought are considered to be the most significant factors.

Figure 2. 1993-2013 Platte Valley herd unit postseason mule deer population estimates, Wyoming.



CURRENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES BY HUNT AREA

All hunt areas in the Platte Valley herd unit are managed under the recreational management strategy. This strategy directs WGFD to manage harvest opportunity to maintain 20-29 bucks/100 does in the herd unit postseason.

In 2012, WGFD collaboratively developed the Platte Valley Mule Deer Plan (WGFD 2012) and subsequently began to implement additional strategies identified in this plan to improve the quality of the hunting experience in this herd unit. These strategies included: a.) changing

hunting season structure from traditional general seasons to limited quota seasons; b.) set a goal to achieve a buck harvest success rate of 40%; c.) set a goal of at least 20% of field-checked harvested bucks meeting an antler spread of 24" or more; and d.) set a goal of at least 60% of the harvest survey respondents replying they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their hunting experience. These additional management strategies will be reviewed collaboratively in 2016 to determine if they have improved the quality of the hunt to a satisfactory level, and whether or not to continue their use.

RECOMMENDED HERD UNIT OBJECTIVE AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES BY HUNT AREA

WGFD recommends the population objective for the Platte Valley herd unit be reduced to a level which is presently considered both biologically achievable, and sustainable. We recommend reducing the postseason population objective from 20,000 mule deer to 16,000 mule deer. We also recommend maintaining the recreational management strategy for all hunt areas in the Platte Valley herd unit.

Two years ago, WGFD began the long overdue task of reviewing objectives for all big game herd units in Wyoming, to be completed over the course of the next 5-years. At the root of this effort was a genuine need to update the objectives with goals which were both biologically achievable, and sustainable. Much has changed since many of these herd unit objectives were last reviewed. Most notably, changes in the ability of the habitat to sustain the population levels which had been previously met in many herd units.

An indicator of the habitat's inability to continue to support mule deer population levels previously observed in many herd units has been reduced recruitment rates for mule deer. A declining trend in recruitment has been documented in almost every herd unit in Wyoming, as well as in many areas across the west. This declining trend has been primarily attributed to changes in the ability of habitat to provide the specific forage, cover, and security required by mule deer. Changes in seral stages of vegetative communities to less productive stages, severe drought which has reduced annual forage production, and the conversion of habitat to residential and energy development, all have cumulatively reduced habitat for mule deer.

While the recommended population objective is 20% less than the current objective of 20,000 mule deer, 16,000 mule deer is 46% greater than the current population estimate of 8,700 mule deer. In an effort to halt the mule deer decline and reverse the population trend, WGFD has recently implemented several efforts which should enhance the ability of the Platte Valley herd unit to sustain mule deer. WGFD has begun to implement several landscape scale habitat improvement projects under the Platte Valley Habitat Partnership (WGFD 2013). WGFD has supported efforts to reduce large carnivore and predator populations in this herd unit in an attempt to increase mule deer recruitment. While the benefits of these and other efforts may not be immediately realized, we believe they will assist in the recovery of mule deer.

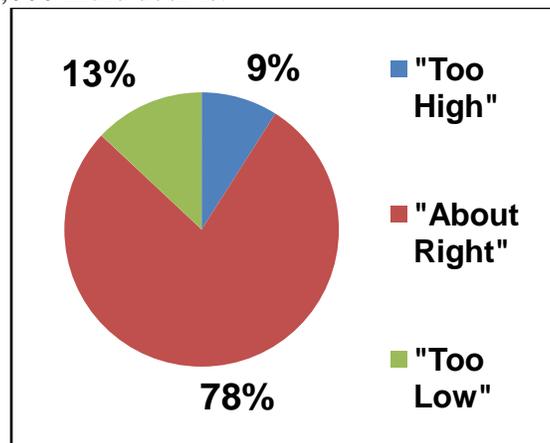
LANDOWNER, AGENCY, AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

WGFD made a concerted effort to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to be involved in the review of the Platte Valley mule deer herd unit population objective, and to provide comment on the recommendations. Mule deer are a species of great concern for many of the stakeholders who participated in the review process. There was almost a unanimous desire by all stakeholders during this process to see the current number of mule deer (estimate = 8,700) increased. However, opinions varied on what population objective should be recommended for a future management goal.

Landowner Involvement

In February of 2014, a letter describing objective review process and a survey were sent to all landowners (n=123) who owned at least 160 acres in the Platte Valley herd unit (ATTACHMENT A). We received completed surveys from 36 landowners; for a return rate of 29% (ATTACHMENT B). Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the landowners indicated they thought the current population objective was "About Right." Nine percent (9%) of the landowners indicated the population objective was, "Too High," (Figure 3.)

Figure 3. Platte Valley herd unit landowner survey responses to the question, "Do you think the population objective of 20,000 mule deer is:"



In May of 2014, WGFD sent a postcard to these same landowners describing the recommendation to reduce the population objective from 20,000 mule deer to 16,000 mule deer (ATTACHMENT C). The postcard included an invitation to the landowners to attend upcoming objective recommendation meetings. The postcard also listed an email address where landowners could send their comments electronically. No comments were received from the landowners.

Agency Involvement

In May of 2014, WGFD met with representatives from the US Forest Service (Wendy Haas - Medicine Bow/Routt National Forest); Bureau of Land Management (Heath Cline - Rawlins Field Office); USDA/Natural Resource Conservation Service (Mark Shirley - Saratoga District); and the Saratoga, Encampment, Rawlins Conservation District (Jack Berger and Joe Parsons). WGFD presented a review of the Platte Valley herd unit population objective and the

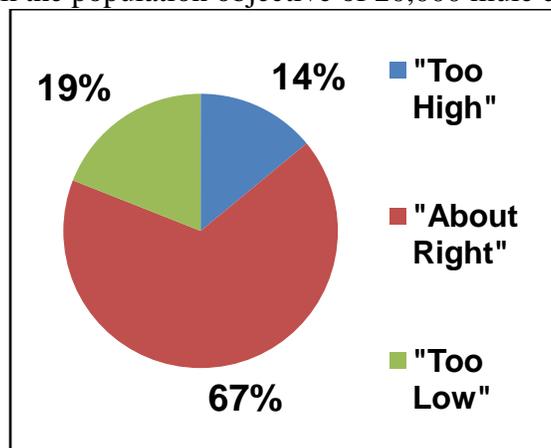
recommendation. This discussion lasted approximately 2 hours. Agency personnel appeared to be supportive of the recommendation.

A letter was received from the Carbon County Predator Management District Board expressing they did not support the recommendation to reduce the population objective from 20,000 mule deer to 16,000 mule deer (ATTACHMENT D).

Public Involvement

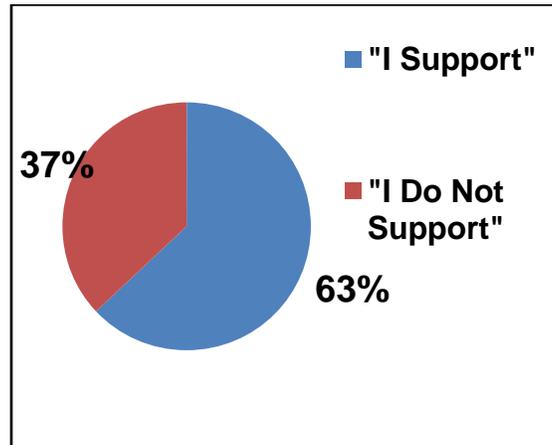
In March of 2014, population objective review meetings were held in conjunction with season-setting public information gathering meetings in Cheyenne, Laramie, and Saratoga. Meeting attendees were asked to fill out sportsperson surveys regarding their attitudes towards current mule deer numbers and the current population objective (ATTACHMENT E). A total of 110 people attended these meetings and we received 21 completed surveys, for a return rate of 19% (ATTACHMENT F). Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the survey respondents indicated they thought the current population objective was "About Right," and 14% thought the population objective was, "Too High," (Figure 4.)

Figure 4. Platte Valley herd unit public objective review meeting attendee survey responses to the question, "Do you think the population objective of 20,000 mule deer is:"



In May of 2014, population objective recommendation meetings were held in Cheyenne, Laramie, Saratoga, and Wheatland. Meeting attendees were asked to fill out surveys indicating whether or not they supported the proposed population objective recommendation. A total of 21 people attended these 4 meetings and we received 8 completed surveys; for a return rate of 38% (ATTACHMENT G). Sixty-three percent (63%) of the survey respondents indicated they supported the recommendation to reduce the population objective from 20,000 mule deer to 16,000 mule deer (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Platte Valley herd unit public objective recommendation meeting attendee survey responses to the statement, "Propose to decrease the population objective from 20,000 to 16,000 mule deer for the next 5-years."



LITERATURE CITED

- Morrison, T. 2012. User Guide: Spreadsheet Model for Ungulate Population data. Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, University of Wyoming, Laramie. USA. 41 pp.
- Unsworth, J. W., F. A. Leban, E. O. Garton, D. J. Leptich, and P. Zager. 1999. Aerial Survey: User's Manual. Electronic Edition. Idaho Department of Fish & Game, Boise, Idaho. USA.
- Ward, A. L., J. J. Cupal, G. A. Goodwin and H. D. Morris. 1976. Effects of highway construction and use on big game populations. Rept. No. FHWA-RD-76-174, Federal Highway Administration, Washington, D.C. USA.
- Wyoming Game and Fish Department [WGFD]. 2012. 2012 v.110512 Platte Valley Mule Deer Plan. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Cheyenne. USA. 90 pp.
- _____. 2013. Platte Valley Habitat Partnership's (PVHP) Mule Deer Habitat Plan, May 22, 2013. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Cheyenne. USA. 99 pp.

14 March 2014

Dear Landowner,

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) is seeking your assistance in the future management of big game wildlife in your area. During the spring of 2014, WGFD will review the herd unit management objectives for several big game herd units such as Platte Valley mule deer, Elk Mountain pronghorn, and Big Creek pronghorn. Enclosed in this letter you will find a short survey for each herd unit your property is located in, and postage-paid return envelope. Please complete the survey questions, provide additional comments if you desire, and mail the survey in the return envelope.

The herd unit management objective is the “benchmark” which WGFD manages big game wildlife towards. For most big game herd units in Wyoming, WGFD manages big game wildlife towards a numeric management objective, usually identified as a specific postseason population estimate.

Many of Wyoming’s big game wildlife rely on habitat located on private lands. Therefore, landowner opinions on herd unit management objectives are important to WGFD. The comments we receive from your completed surveys will be used in part to formulate WGFD recommendations for the future herd unit management objectives. Changes in the herd unit management objective could result in increasing harvest opportunities to decrease big game numbers, or conversely, changes could result in reducing harvest opportunities in order to increase big game numbers.

We also would like to invite you to one of the upcoming public meetings to discuss herd unit management objectives. Locations and dates are listed below:

- Saratoga Town Hall, March 26, 7:30 p.m.
- Laramie Fire Hall #3, March 27, 7:30 p.m.

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and opinions with us. We hope to see you at one of the upcoming meetings. If you have any questions please contact Will Schultz at 307-326-3020. We look forward to receiving your survey and working with you on the future management of Wyoming’s Wildlife.

Sincerely,



Will Schultz
Saratoga Wildlife Biologist
WS/ws

Platte Valley Mule Deer Herd Unit

Deer Hunt Areas: 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, & 161
Management Objective: 20,000 mule deer
2013 Postseason Population Estimate: 8,800 mule deer
Last Management Objective Review: 1987

1. Please circle the hunt area where the majority of your property is located (see map on back):

Hunt Area 78 79 80 81 83 161

2. How satisfied are you with the current number of mule deer wintering in the Platte Valley herd unit (current estimate is 8,800 mule deer):

Very Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

3. If you answered somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, please indicate why.

There are too many mule deer in the herd unit
 There are too few mule deer in the herd unit
 Other _____

4. Do you think the herd unit management objective of 20,000 mule deer is:

Too high
 Too low
 About right

5. Would you support combining Hunt Area 80 and Hunt Area 83 into one hunt area for future hunting seasons?

Yes
 No
 I am neither for or against

6. Would you support dividing Hunt Area 161 along the Big Ditch? This would result in the southern portion of Hunt Area 161 being combined into Hunt Area 79 and the northern portion of Hunt Area 161 being combined into Hunt Area 70, for future hunting seasons.

Yes
 No
 I am neither for or against

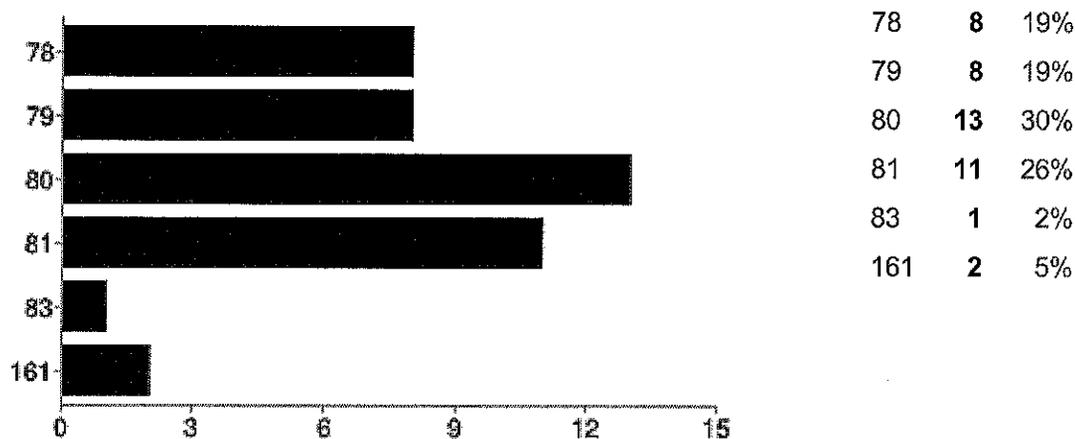
SURVEY IS CONTINUED ON BACK

36 responses *Platte Valley MD*

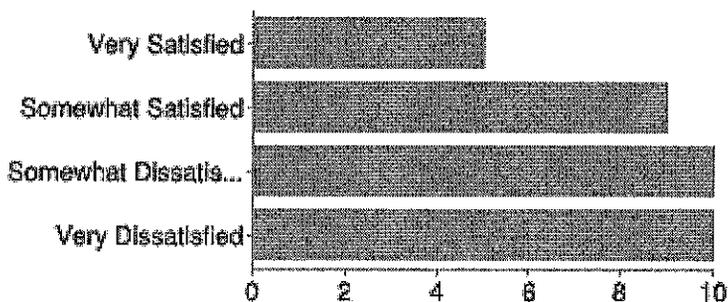
[View all responses](#) [Publish analytics](#)

Summary

Please circle the hunt area where the majority of your property is located



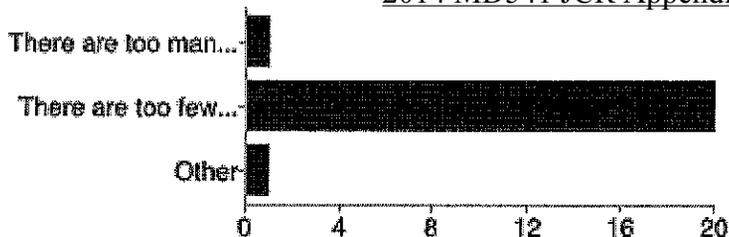
How satisfied are you with the current number of mule deer wintering in the Platte Valley herd unit



Very Satisfied	5	15%
Somewhat Satisfied	9	26%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	10	29%
Very Dissatisfied	10	29%

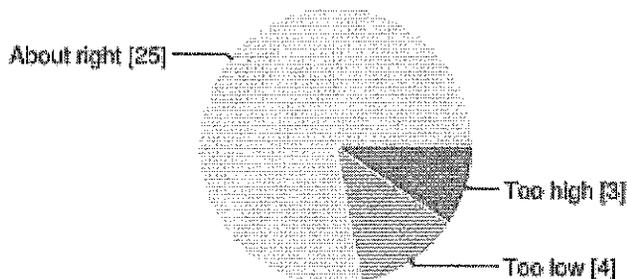
3. If you answered somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, please indicate why

2014 MD541 JCR Appendix A.



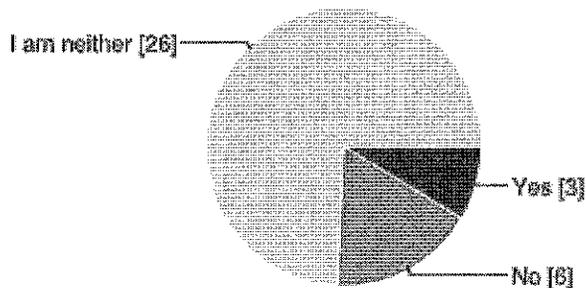
There are too many mule deer in the herd unit	1	5%
There are too few mule deer in the herd unit	20	91%
Other	1	5%

Do you think the herd unit management objective of 20,000 mule deer is



Too high	3	9%
Too low	4	13%
About right	25	78%

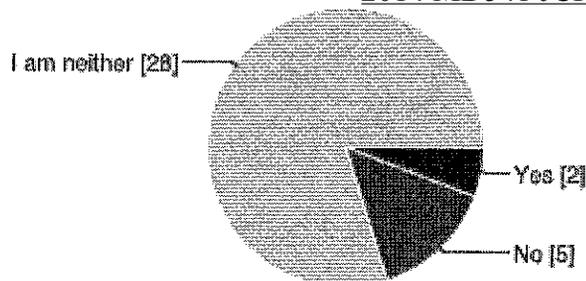
Would you support combining Hunt Area 80 and Hunt Area 83 into one hunt area for future hunting seasons



Yes	3	9%
No	6	17%
I am neither for or against	26	74%

Would you support dividing Hunt Area 161 along the Big Ditch? This would result in the southern portion of Hunt Area 161 being combined into Hunt Area 79 and the northern portion of Hunt Area 161 being combined into Hunt Area 70, for future hunting seasons.

2014 MD541 JCR Appendix A.

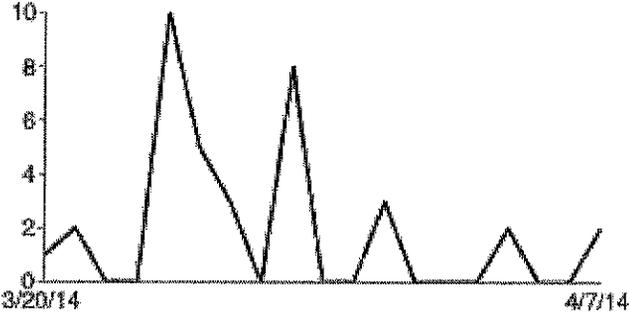


Yes	2	6%
No	5	14%
I am neither for or against	28	80%

Comments

We trust your judgement on this! **I hope the G&F continues to search for the reasons for the deer population decline.**
In reference to question 5 & 6: Why? For what reason?: And why was the last management objective review done in 1987?!?! Why are you always 5-10 years behind in your management goals! This may be the reason why WY G&F needs to be more pro-active on their management and in a more timely fashion. By the time G&F reacts it is usually too late. Poor game management!
Probably better to keep 79 separate.
**As an out of state property owner (the property was a family homestead) Conservation of water is my primary concern. Thank you. -Shirlee Bumpass
I believe at the present time you(G&F) are trying to improve these herd numbers & quality, Keep up the good work!
Like to see the white tail different than mule deer so numbers are not completely destroyed.
Will: We had quite a few nice bucks in the yard in November. Not any where near the numbers during the winter that we had 10 years ago. We do not see as many but we will have 6-8 pairs during the summer. -Dick Gray PS-Back in May
Too many hunter's and Mountain Lions.
I think the G&F does a good job managing all our wildlife.
I think hunting pressure is too high quota system would provide a better hunting experience and allow for more trophy animals. The lower county north of Sage Creek is better winter habitat and should not be managed the same as higher elevation areas. Good Luck
How do wintering numbers of mule deer in Platte Valley translate to summer numbers in the higher elevations of hunt areas 80 & 81? (The summer numbers on our property seem very low)
Don't understand your antelope policy. Have resident herd of 75+or- at all times and I have no say in who I can allow in to hunt them. -DHanson PO Box 388 Saratoga
The mule deer are being out-competed by the elk. Reduce the elk population & the mule deer population will increase.

Number of daily responses



Meeting Dates

Cheyenne, May 6th, 6:00 p.m., 2014 Wyoming Game Appendix A
WGFD Office Building, Elk Room
Laramie, May 8th, 6:00 p.m.,
Fire Hall #3
Saratoga, May 22th, 6:00 p.m.,
Town Hall

Herds Covered

Big Creek Pronghorn
(Hunt Area 51)
Elk Mountain Pronghorn
(Hunt Area 50)
Platte Valley Mule Deer
(Hunt Areas 78,79,80,81,83,161)

WGFD Public Meeting

The Wyoming Game Appendix A Department wants to invite you to attend one of the upcoming meetings to discuss herd unit management objective proposals. Earlier this year, we held meetings in these communities asking for your input. Now, we would like to present to you the proposals we developed with the help of your earlier input:

- Recommend increasing the management objective to 800 pronghorn from 600 pronghorn for the Big Creek Pronghorn Herd Unit.
- Recommend maintaining the current management objective of 5,000 pronghorn for the Elk Mountain Pronghorn Herd Unit.
- Recommend decreasing the management objective to 16,000 mule deer from 20,000 mule deer for the Platte Valley Mule Deer Herd Unit.

Your input at these upcoming meetings is important to us! Recommendations, and your input from these meetings, will be presented to the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission in July

For more information please contact:

Saratoga Wildlife Biologist, Will Schultz, 307-326-3020

OR

Contact us via email at wgflaramiecomments@wyo.gov

May 21, 2014

Carbon County Predator Management District

814 Illinois Street

Rawlins, WY 82301

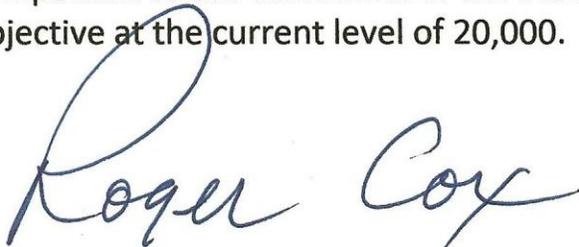
Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Laramie Regional Office

528 S. Adams

Laramie, WY 82070

Today at our regular board meeting we discussed the proposal to decrease the Platte Valley Mule Deer objective from 20,000 to 16,000. In light of the predator control work we have done on the Big Creek antelope project, and the ongoing Platte Valley mule deer fawning area project we are not in favor of the reduction. The Big Creek project has had very favorable results (in fact allowing for a proposed increase of the area 51 antelope objective) and we are hoping that the mule deer project will also be successful enough that it can be expanded. We feel that it is pre-mature to reduce the objective on mule deer at this time. There has been a huge effort to increase this population and a decrease in the objective does not send the proper message. The mule deer is a very important component to the economics of the Platte Valley and we would like to keep the objective at the current level of 20,000.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roger Cox". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "R".

Roger Cox, President

2014 MD541 JCR Appendix A.
Sportsperson Survey

Platte Valley Mule Deer Herd Unit

1. Please circle the hunt area where you spend the majority of your time hunting mule deer:
Hunt Area 78 79 80 81 83 161 elsewhere

2. How satisfied are you with the current number of mule deer wintering in the Platte Valley herd unit (current estimate is 8,800 mule deer):
 Very Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

3. If you answered somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, please indicate why.
 There are too many mule deer in the herd unit
 There are too few mule deer in the herd unit
 Other _____

4. Do you think the herd unit management objective of 20,000 mule deer is:
 Too high
 Too low
 About right

5. Would you support combining Hunt Area 80 and Hunt Area 83 into one hunt area for future hunting seasons?
 Yes
 No
 I am neither for or against

6. Would you support dividing Hunt Area 161 along the Big Ditch? This would result in the southern portion of Hunt Area 161 being combined into Hunt Area 79 and the northern portion of Hunt Area 161 being combined into Hunt Area 70, for future hunting seasons.
 Yes
 No
 I am neither for or against

Elk Mountain and Big Creek Pronghorn Herd Unit

7. Please circle the hunt area where you spend the majority of your time hunting pronghorn:
Hunt Areas 50 51 elsewhere

8. How satisfied are you with the current number of pronghorn in the **Elk Mountain herd unit** (current estimate is 3,800 pronghorn):
 Very Satisfied Somewhat Satisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

SURVEY IS CONTINUED ON BACK

2014 MD541 JCR Appendix A.

9. If you answered somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, please indicate why.

- There are too many pronghorn in the herd unit
- There are too few pronghorn in the herd unit
- Other _____

10. Do you think the herd unit management objective of 5,000 pronghorn in the **Elk Mountain herd unit** is:

- Too high
- Too low
- About right

11. How satisfied are you with the current number of pronghorn in the **Big Creek herd unit** (current estimate is 800 pronghorn):

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

12. If you answered somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, please indicate why.

- There are too many pronghorn in the herd unit
- There are too few pronghorn in the herd unit
- Other _____

13. Do you think the herd unit management objective of 600 pronghorn in the **Big Creek herd unit** is:

- Too high
- Too low
- About right

Comments - If you have additional comments, please share them in the space below:

If, in the future, you would like to be contacted through email please provide your name and email address below.

THANK YOU for your participation!

2014 MD541 JCR Appendix A.

SPORTSPERSON SURVEY	9 Surveys Saratoga PIGM	12 Surveys Lar & Chey PIGMs	21 Surveys ALL PIGMs
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1. Please circle the hunt area where you spend the majority of your time hunting mule deer:

78	4	4	8
79	4	4	8
80	4	4	8
81	2	3	5
83			0
161			0
Elsewhere	1	3	4

2. How satisfied are you with the current number of mule deer wintering in the Platte Valley herd unit (8,800 mule deer):

Very Satisfied			
Somewhat Satisfied		1	1
Somewhat Dissatisfied	3	4	7
Very Dissatisfied	4	7	11

3. If you answered somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, please indicate why.

Too Many			0
Too Few	8	12	20
Other			0

4. Do you think the herd unit management objective of 20,000 mule deer is:

Too High	0	3	3
Too Low	1	2	3
About Right	7	7	14

5. Would you support combining Hunt Area 80 and Hunt Area 83 into one hunt area for future hunting seasons?

Yes	2	4	6
No	2	2	4
Neither	4	6	10

2014 MD541 JCR Appendix A.

SPORTSPERSON SURVEY	9 Surveys Saratoga PIGM	12 Surveys Lar & Chey PIGMs	21 Surveys ALL PIGMs
6. Would you support dividing Hunt Area 161 along the Big Ditch?			
Yes	3	6	9
No	0		0
Neither	5	6	11

Herd Unit Management Objective Proposal Meeting
Saratoga Town Hall – 6:00 PM, 22 May 2014

Platte Valley Mule Deer

Current population estimate = 8,800 mule deer

Propose to decrease the management objective from 20,000 to 16,000 mule deer for the next 5-years.

_____ **I support this proposal**

_____ **I do not support this proposal**

Elk Mountain Pronghorn

Current population estimate = 3,800 pronghorn

Propose to maintain the management objective of 5,000 pronghorn for the next 5-years.

_____ **I support this proposal**

_____ **I do not support this proposal**

Big Creek Pronghorn

Current population estimate = 800 pronghorn

Propose to increase the management objective from 600 to 800 pronghorn for the next 5-years.

_____ **I support this proposal**

_____ **I do not support this proposal**

Comments: _____

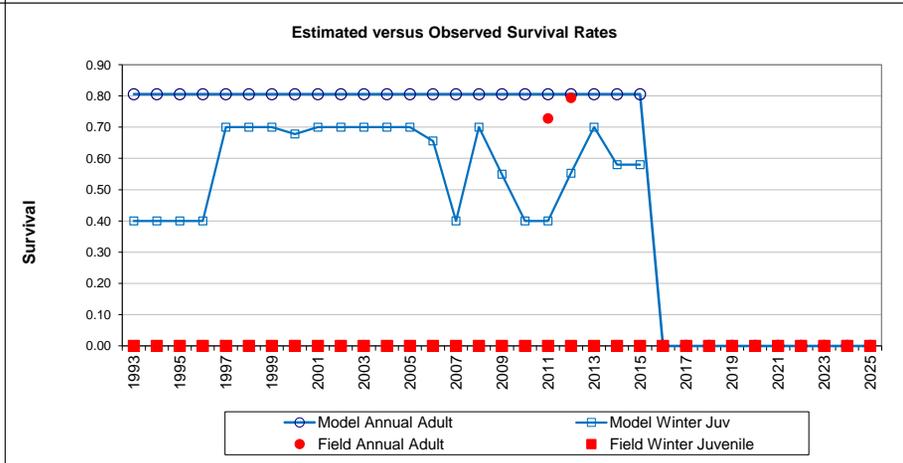
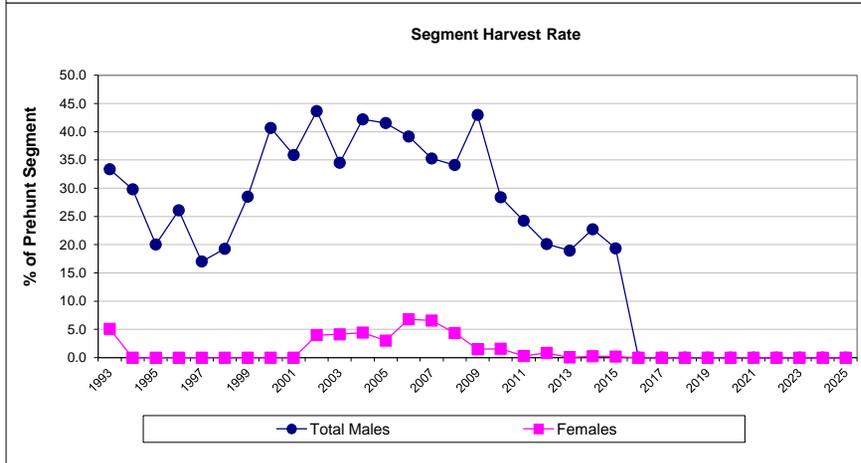
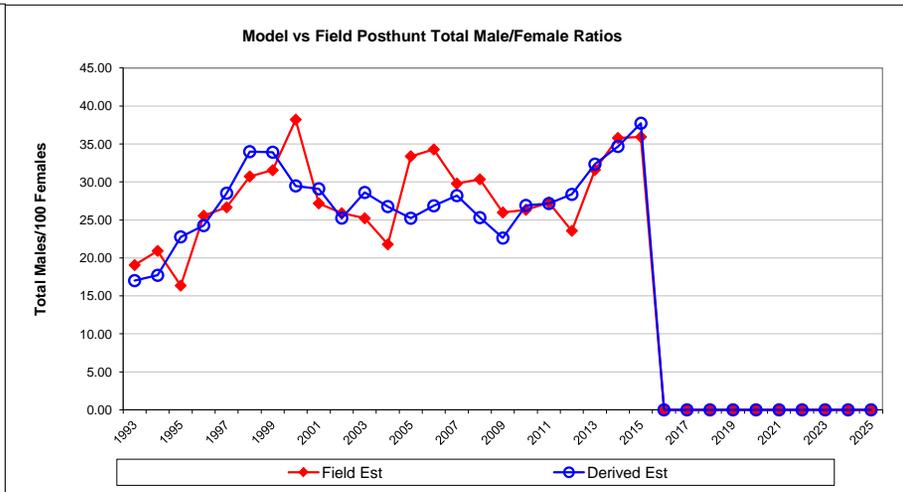
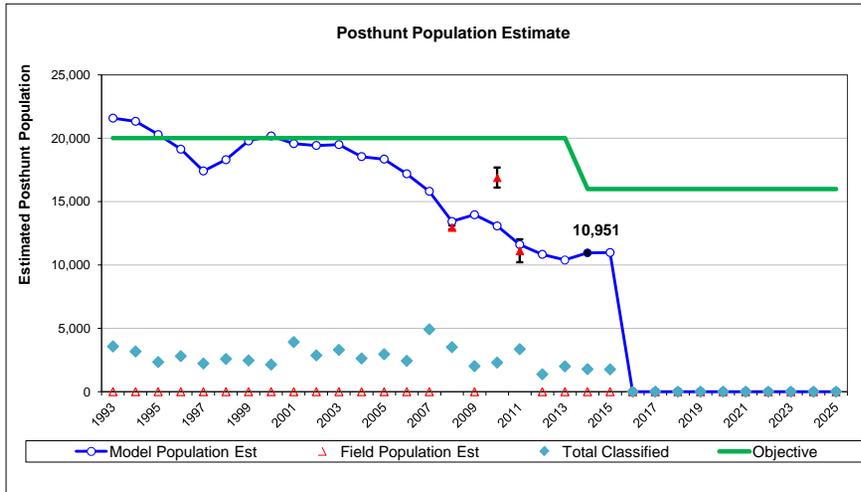
Survival and Initial Population Estimates

Year	Annual Juvenile Survival Rates			Annual Adult Survival Rates		
	Model Est	Field Est	SE	Model Est	Field Est	SE
1993	0.40			0.81		
1994	0.40			0.81		
1995	0.40			0.81		
1996	0.40			0.81		
1997	0.70			0.81		
1998	0.70			0.81		
1999	0.70			0.81		
2000	0.68			0.81		
2001	0.70			0.81		
2002	0.70			0.81		
2003	0.70			0.81		
2004	0.70			0.81		
2005	0.70			0.81		
2006	0.66			0.81		
2007	0.40			0.81		
2008	0.70			0.81		
2009	0.55			0.81		
2010	0.40			0.81		
2011	0.40			0.81	0.73	0.06
2012	0.55			0.81	0.79	0.05
2013	0.70			0.81		
2014	0.58			0.81		
2015	0.58			0.81		
2016						
2017						
2018						
2019						
2020						
2021						
2022						
2023						
2024						
2025						

Parameters:	Optim cells
Adult Survival =	0.805
Initial Total Male Pop/10,000 =	0.228
Initial Female Pop/10,000 =	1.338

MODEL ASSUMPTIONS	
Sex Ratio (% Males) =	50%
Wounding Loss (total males) =	10%
Wounding Loss (females) =	10%
Wounding Loss (juveniles) =	10%

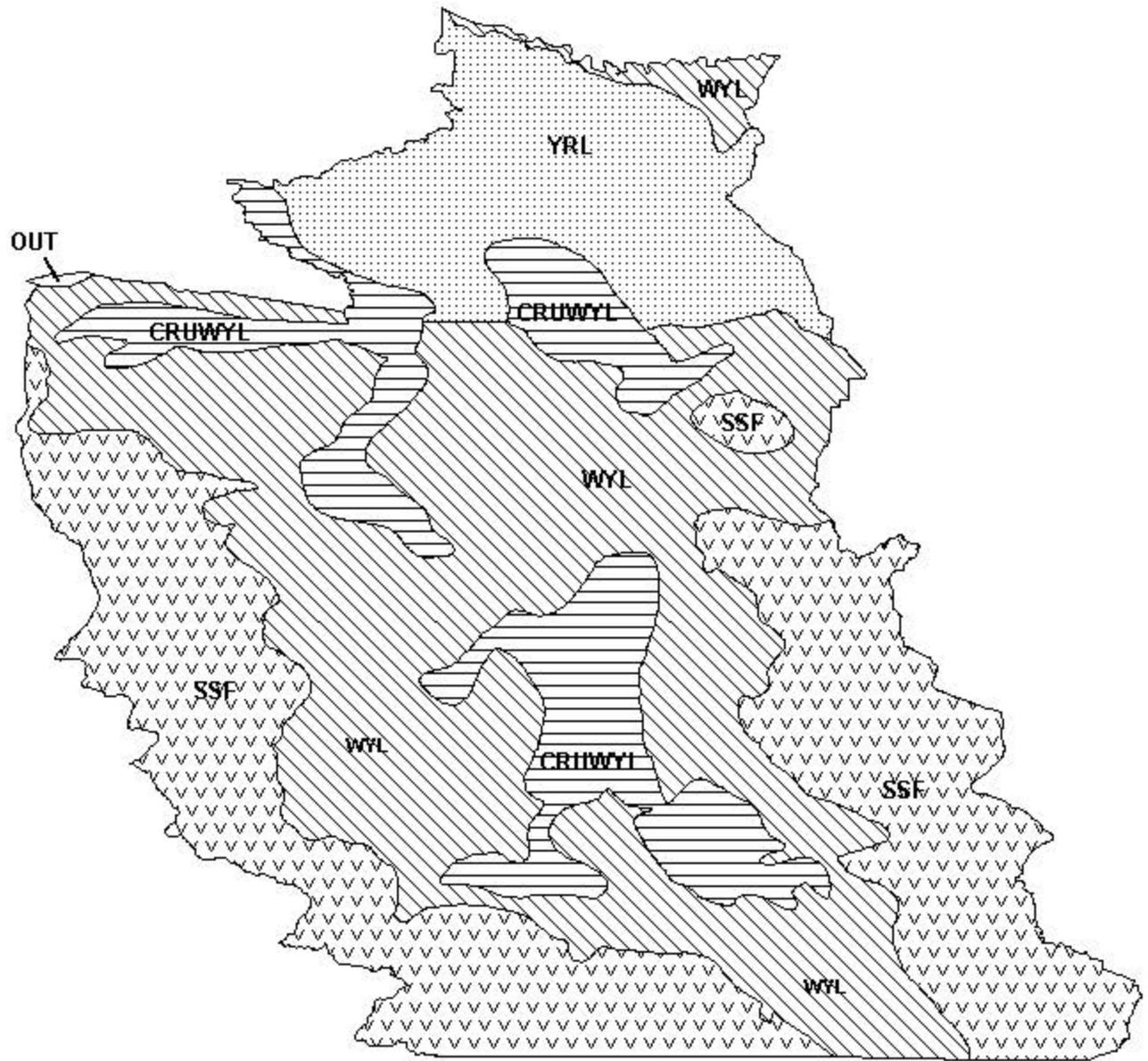
FIGURES



Comments:

The TSJ,CA model was selected to produce the 2014 postseason population estimate. TSJ,SC model aligns very well with the abundance estimates for this herd unit and provides for an excellent "anchor" for future model development.

END



Mule Deer (MD541) - Platte Valley
HA 78-81, 83, 161
Revised - 12/87

