

2015 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: White tailed Deer

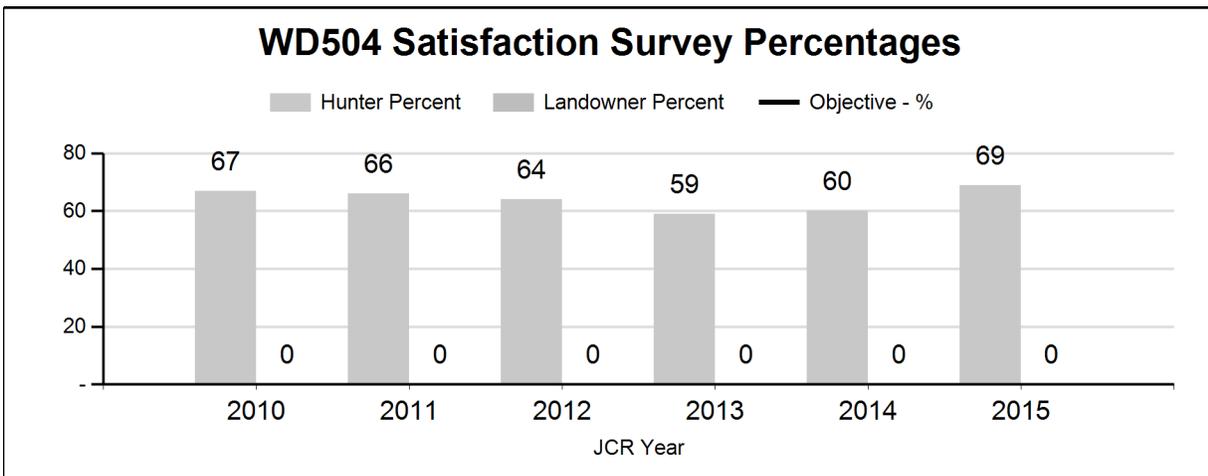
PERIOD: 6/1/2015 - 5/31/2016

HERD: WD504 - SOUTHEAST WYOMING

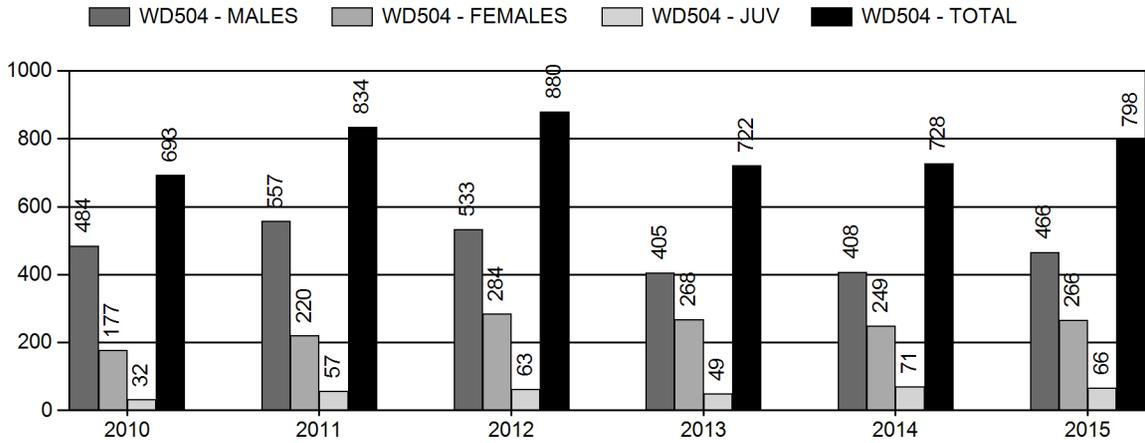
HUNT AREAS: 15, 59-64, 70, 73-81, 83, 161

PREPARED BY: MARTIN HICKS

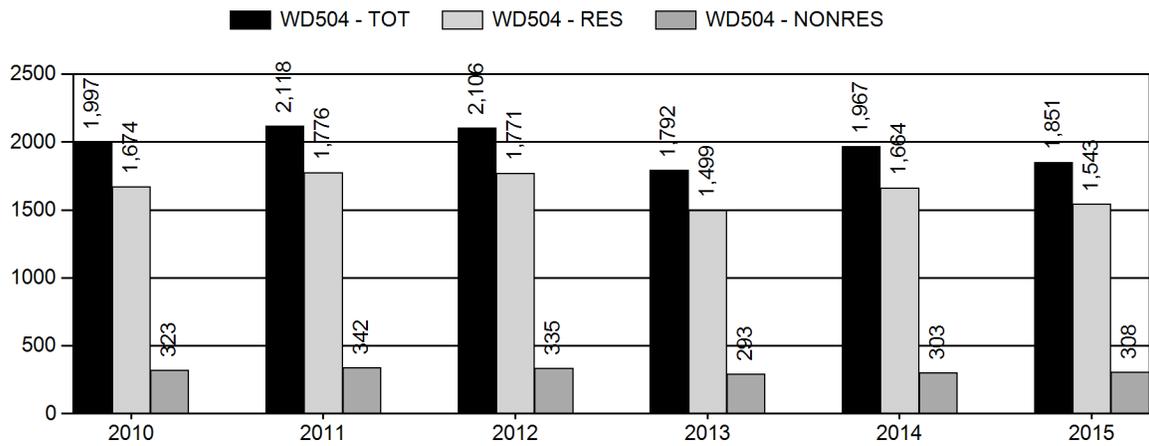
	<u>2010 - 2014 Average</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016 Proposed</u>
Hunter Satisfaction Percent	64%	69%	60%
Landowner Satisfaction Percent	0%	0%	0%
Harvest:	771	798	850
Hunters:	1,996	1,851	1,850
Hunter Success:	39%	43%	46%
Active Licenses:	2,192	2,104	2,100
Active License Success:	35%	38%	40 %
Recreation Days:	8,475	8,297	8,200
Days Per Animal:	11.0	10.4	9.6
Males per 100 Females:	39	0	
Juveniles per 100 Females	68	0	
Satisfaction Based Objective			60%
Management Strategy:			Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:			N/A%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:			1



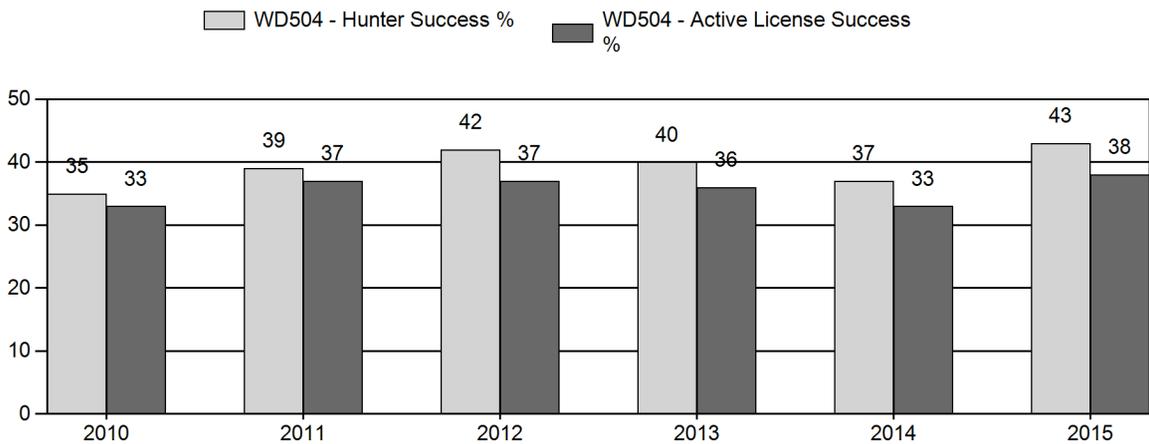
Harvest



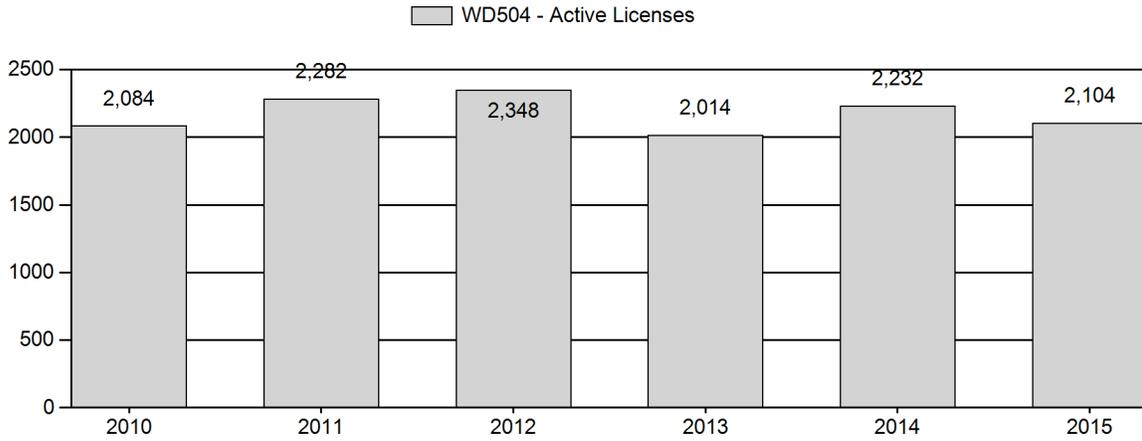
Number of Hunters



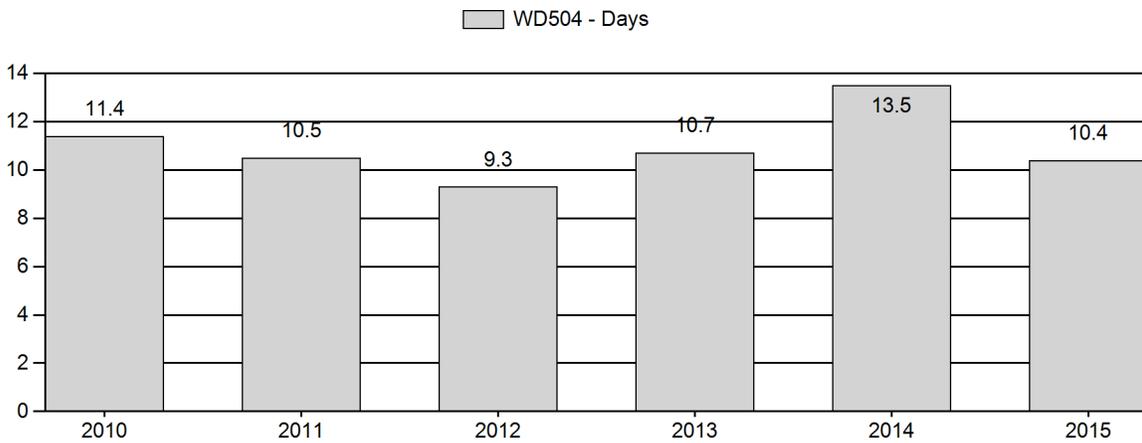
Harvest Success



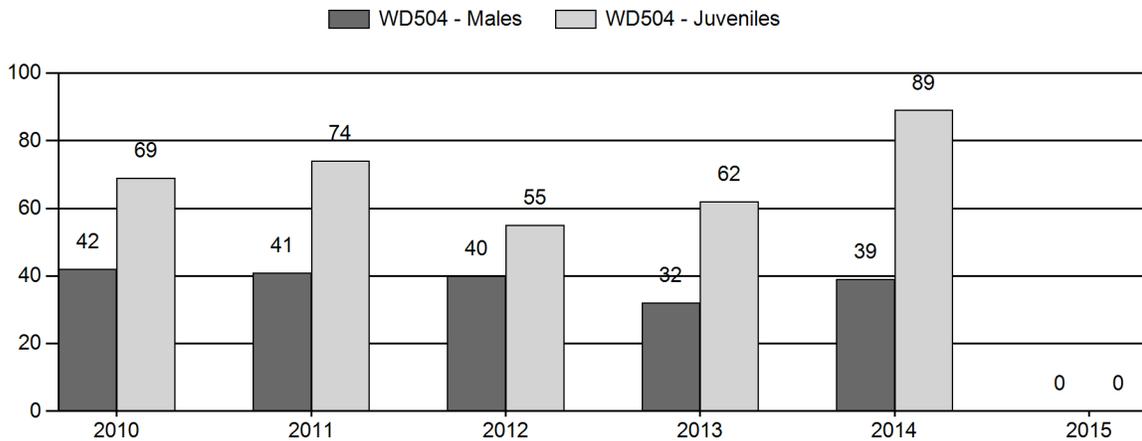
Active Licenses



Days per Animal Harvested



Postseason Animals per 100 Females



2016 HUNTING SEASONS
SOUTHEAST WYOMING WHITE-TAILED DEER HERD (WTD504)

Hunt Area	Type	Season Dates		Quota	License	Limitations
		Opens	Closes			
15	3	Oct. 1	Nov. 30	400	Limited quota	Any white-tailed deer
	3	Dec. 1	Dec. 31			Doe or fawn white-tailed deer
15	8	Oct. 1	Dec. 31	300	Limited quota	Doe or fawn white-tailed deer
59,60,64	3	Nov. 1	Nov. 30	150	Limited quota	Any white-tailed deer, all lands within Curt Gowdy State Park, archery only; the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission's Tom Thorne/Beth Williams Wildlife Research Center at Sybille (Sybille Wildlife Research Unit) south of Wyoming Highway 34 shall be closed
59,60,64	3	Dec. 1	Dec. 31			Doe or fawn white-tailed deer valid in Area 59 and Area 64
59,60,64	8	Nov. 1	Dec. 31	125	Limited quota	Doe or fawn white-tailed deer, except the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission's Tom Thorne/Beth Williams Wildlife Research Center at Sybille (Sybille Wildlife Research Unit) south of Wyoming Highway 34 shall be closed; all lands within Curt Gowdy State Park, archery only
70,74	3	Oct. 1	Nov. 30	50	Limited quota	Any white-tailed deer
70,74	8	Oct. 1	Dec. 15	25	Limited quota	Doe or fawn white-tailed deer
75,76,77	3	Oct. 1	Dec. 31	50	Limited quota	Any white-tailed deer
75,76,77	8	Oct. 1	Dec. 31	25	Limited quota	Doe or fawn white-tailed deer
78,79,80,81,161	3	Oct. 1	Dec. 15	25	Limited quota	Any white-tailed deer
78,79,80,81,161	8	Sept. 1	Dec. 15	25	Limited quota	Doe or fawn white-tailed deer

Special Archery Season Hunt Areas	Opening Date	Closing Date	Limitations
15,59,60,64,70,74,75,76,77,78,79,80, 81,161	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Refer to Section 2 of this Chapter

Hunt Area	Type	Quota change from 2015
15	3	+125
70, 74	8	+25
75,76,77	3	+25
75,76,77	8	+25
Total	3	+150
	8	+50
Total		+200

Management Evaluation

Current Hunter Satisfaction Management Objective: Hunter satisfaction; Target goal: $\geq 60\%$

Management Strategy: Private Land

2015 Hunter Satisfaction: 68% Satisfied, 18% Neutral, 14% Dissatisfied

Most Recent 3-year Running Average Hunter Satisfaction Estimate: 62%

The management objective for the Southeast Wyoming Herd Unit was reviewed in 2015 through the public objective review process. It was determined to abandon the numeric objective of 4,000 white-tailed deer and go with a sportsmen satisfaction survey with a satisfaction goal of $\geq 60\%$ and a private land management strategy. A landowner satisfaction survey will not be used in conjunction with the sportsmen survey. The sample size would be very low and the majority of occupied white-tailed deer habitat is on private land, which complicates management since there is little access opportunities.

There is not a reliable post-season population estimate. This is an open herd with Colorado and Nebraska so trying to model this herd would violate the assumption that it is closed. Seasons are designed to provide opportunity during the mating period when male deer are more vulnerable to harvest. Management is driven primarily by local Department personnel perception of population trend and landowner tolerance for this species.

Weather

Weather in this herd unit was relatively normal during the past bio-year. Precipitation amounts were above average at all elevations throughout southeast Wyoming. No significant prolonged periods of extreme heat or cold temperatures were observed, or extreme or prolonged periods of 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. While early season growing conditions were optimal, late summer and fall precipitation were lacking. Weather patterns most likely had a positive influence on all big game species. 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

Forage availability continued to improve in 2015 with an increase in amounts of precipitation received and the timeliness of when it was received. Precipitation received in April, May, and early June resulted in excellent growth of cool season grasses and forbs, and above average leader growth on preferred key shrubs. 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 species.

Many riparian areas within the herd unit experienced some level of springtime flooding in 2015. With favorable land management post-flooding, the potential does exist for cottonwood and willow regeneration in many stream systems. Establishment of these species may aid in reversing negative trends in woody species composition and age classes of important understory browse species and woody species that provide thermal and hiding cover values. White-tailed deer inhabit areas that are supported by agriculture, including dryland and irrigated croplands.

Field/Harvest Data

This herd will grow rapidly until densities become too high, then seasons are adjusted to try and bring the population down or an EHD outbreak occurs that reduces densities. Hunter success is typically around 35% with hunter effort running about 11 days per harvest. Hunting opportunity is limited to private land. Low success and high effort rates were contributed to hunters trying to find a white-tailed deer on public land or trying to harvest a deer during the general season when they are less vulnerable to harvest. Chronic wasting disease is found throughout the herd unit but to what extent it has on this herd unit is unknown. The long-term prevalence rate average is around 20%, but with a small sample size. There are a limited number of tooth samples so a reliable inference into population performance is not available.

The hunter satisfaction level was 69% for the 2015 season, which was higher than the five-year average of 64%. White-tailed deer appear to be rebounding from the 2012 EHD outbreak which could explain a slightly higher satisfaction level.

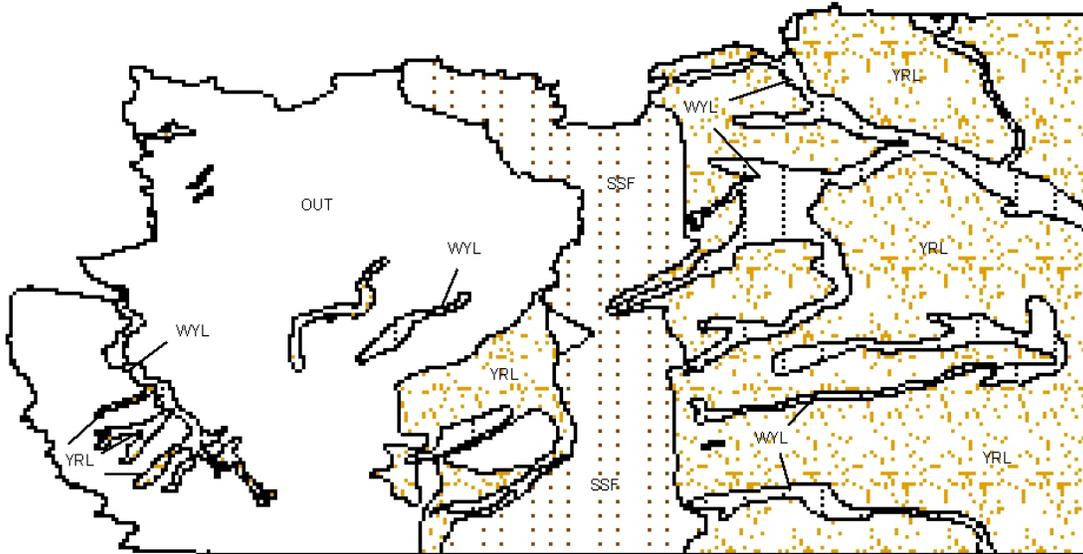
Population

There is not a reliable post-season population estimate. This is an open herd with Colorado and Nebraska so trying to model this herd would violate the assumption that it is closed. Seasons are designed to provide opportunity during the mating period when male deer are more vulnerable to harvest. Management is driven primarily by local Department personnel perception of population trend and landowner tolerance for this species. There is not enough tooth samples collected in the field to infer any population dynamics.

Management Summary

Population trend varies on weather conditions and disease outbreaks. As densities become too high, the population will typically crash from an EHD outbreak. Severe winter conditions will also reduce white-tailed deer numbers if they go into the winter in poor condition. There have been no reports of winter mortalities. There was an EHD outbreak in 2012 that prompted a decrease in Type 8 licenses for hunt areas in southeast Wyoming. It does appear white-tailed deer are recovering from the 2012 outbreak in hunt area 15 so for the 2016 season the Type 3 licenses will increase by 125 and move the opening date back from November 1 to October 1. In addition there will be 25 Type 8 licenses in Hunt Areas 75-77 and 25 Type 8 licenses in Hunt Areas 70,74. Type 1 licenses in Hunt Areas 75-77 will increase by 25.

For the 2016 season we will try to attain a harvest of around 850 white-tailed deer. Our objective is to provide opportunity and minimize damage and maintain a hunter satisfaction level greater than 60%.



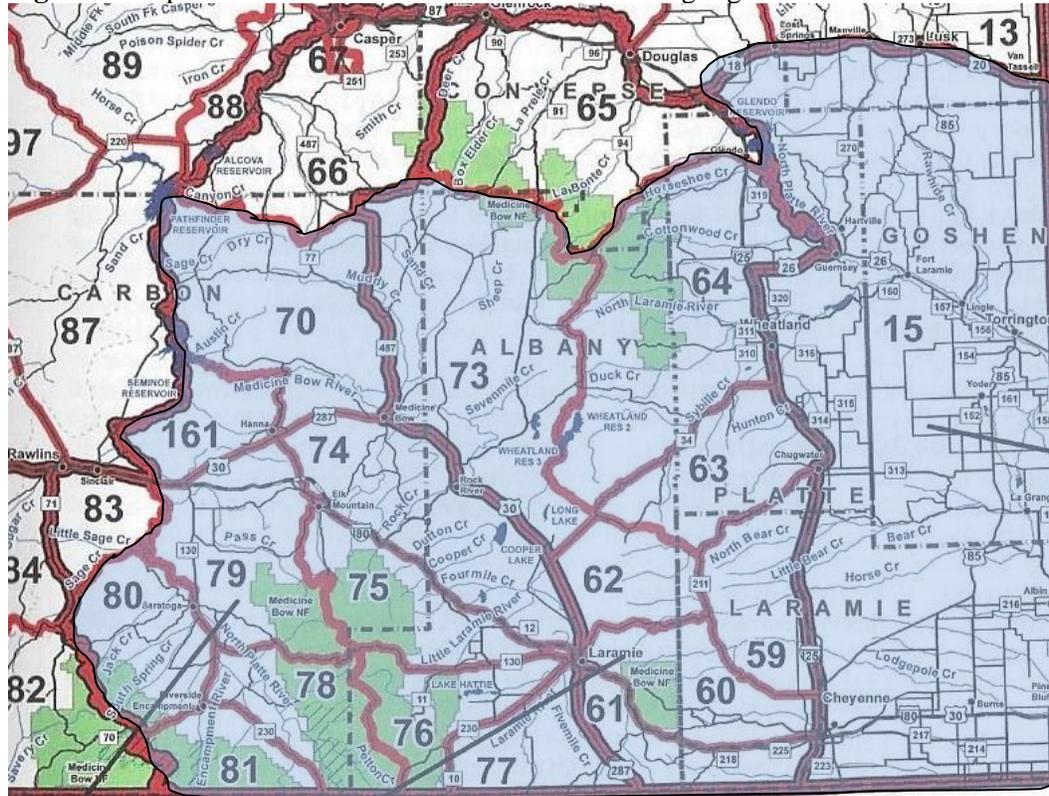
White-tailed Deer (WT504) - Southeast Wyoming
 HA 16, 55, 57, 59-64, 70, 73-81, 83, 161
 Revised 10/99



Prepared by: Martin Hicks, Wheatland Wildlife Biologist

The Southeast Wyoming White-Tailed Deer Herd Unit contains Hunt Areas 15,59,60,64,70,73-81,161 is located in southeastern Wyoming (Figure 1.). The management objective for the Southeast Wyoming Herd Unit is a post-season population objective of 4,000 white-tailed deer. The management strategy is recreational management with a post-season male:female range of 20-29 bucks:100 does. The objective and management strategy were last revisited in 1998.

Figure 1. Map of SE WY White-tailed Deer Herd Unit highlighted



Population Objective Review:

The postseason population objective is developed based upon both biological and social factors, including, but not limited to: winter range carrying capacity, hunter desires, landowner desires and tolerance, land status, and competition with other wild and domestic animals. From 1976-1996 this herd unit was labeled the Laramie River White-tailed Deer Herd Unit, comprised of Hunt Areas 70-81,83,161 with a initial objective of 200, then increased to 1,000 in 1986. In 1998 Hunt Areas 15,16,55,57 (combined into Hunt Area 15 in 2014) 59-64 were added to create the SE WY WTD Herd Unit with a new objective of 4,000.

Current Management Strategy:

There is not a reliable post-season population estimate. This is an open herd with Colorado and Nebraska so trying to model this herd would violate the assumption that it is closed. Seasons are designed to provide opportunity during the mating period when male deer are more vulnerable to harvest. Management is driven primarily by local Department personnel perception of population trend and landowner tolerance for this species.

Recommended Hunt Unit Objective and Management Strategies by Herd Unit:

Due to our inability to manage this herd unit and lack of adequate population data to derive a post-season population objective we recommend to abandon the numeric objective of 4,000 white-tailed deer and use a sportsmen/landowner survey with a target goal of 60% or greater satisfaction level.

Landowner, Agency, and Public Involvement:

A power point presentation was prepared on the background of the Southeast Wyoming White-tailed Deer Herd Unit and presented at the following public meetings: Wheatland, Torrington, Laramie and Cheyenne in January 2015. In addition a survey requesting input on the future management of this herd was handed out to the attendees. There were a total of 17 people in attendance at the four public meetings. There was very little interest or concern in the future management of the SE WY WTD Herd Unit gathered from the crowd at the meetings and no surveys were returned. At these meetings the public was informed about herd objectives and the alternative and secondary objectives available as provided by Wildlife Administration. Department personnel preferred to abandon the current objective of 4,000 white-tailed deer and adopt an alternative objective of sportsmen/landowner satisfaction survey. No federal or state agencies were involved because the majority of occupied habitat is on private land. A copy of comments, public meeting attendants and the survey can be found in Appendix A.

Landowner/Sportsmen Survey:

A public service announcement was sent to all local newspapers along with posters distributed throughout the different communities inviting the public to attend one of four public meetings that were held in January. No surveys were returned.

Recommendation:

In summary we propose to eliminate the numeric objective of 4,000 white-tailed deer and go with an alternative objective of a landowner/sportsmen survey. Surveys will be mailed to landowners that have larger acres (>160 acres) of contiguous white-tailed deer habitat in Platte, Goshen, Laramie, Albany and Carbon counties.

This recommendation is based upon the department's inability to collect adequate population data to derive a population estimation. Based on the outreach effort and past comments from landowners and sportsmen there is less interest/concern placed on white-tailed deer compared to other big game species in southeast Wyoming.