

WHITE-TAILED DEER

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2018 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: White tailed Deer

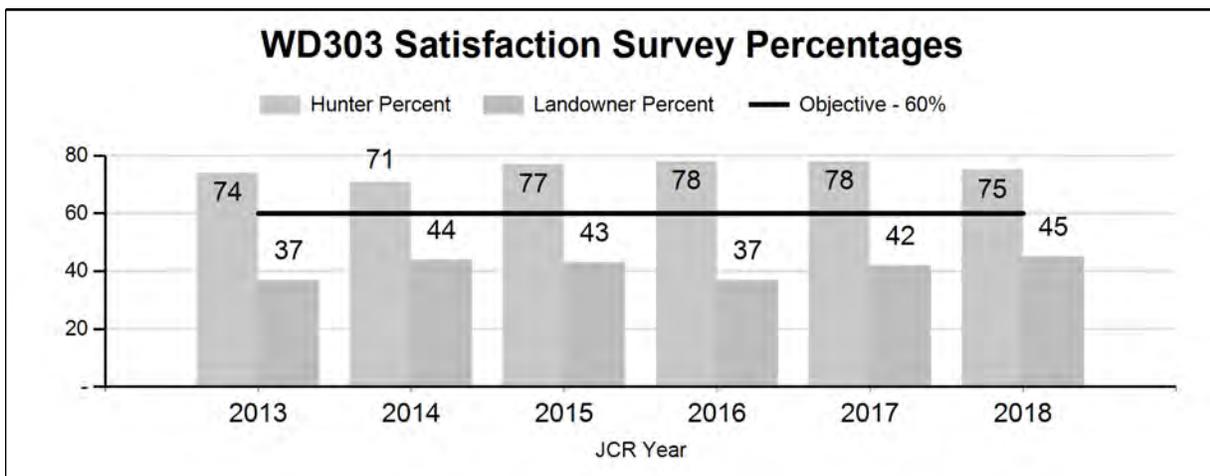
PERIOD: 6/1/2018 - 5/31/2019

HERD: WD303 - POWDER RIVER

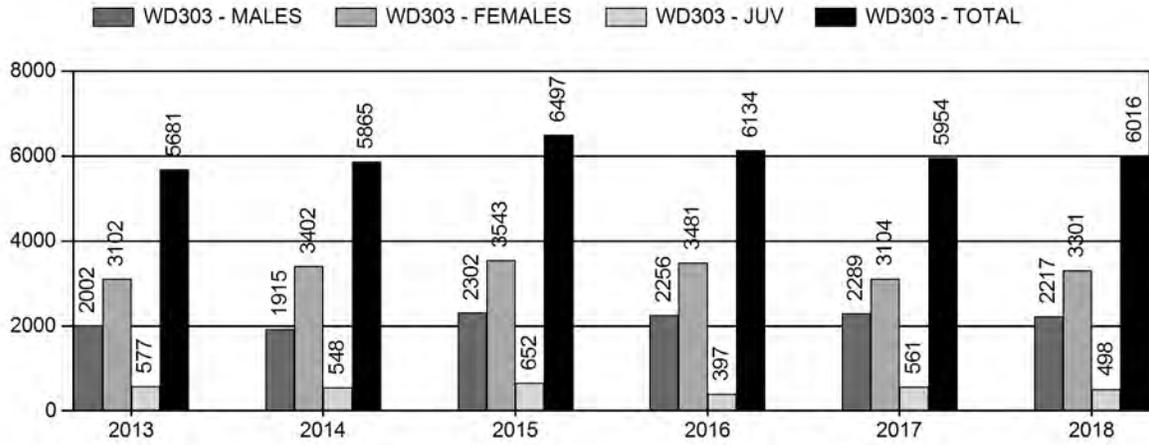
HUNT AREAS: 17-20, 23-33, 163, 169

PREPARED BY: TIM THOMAS

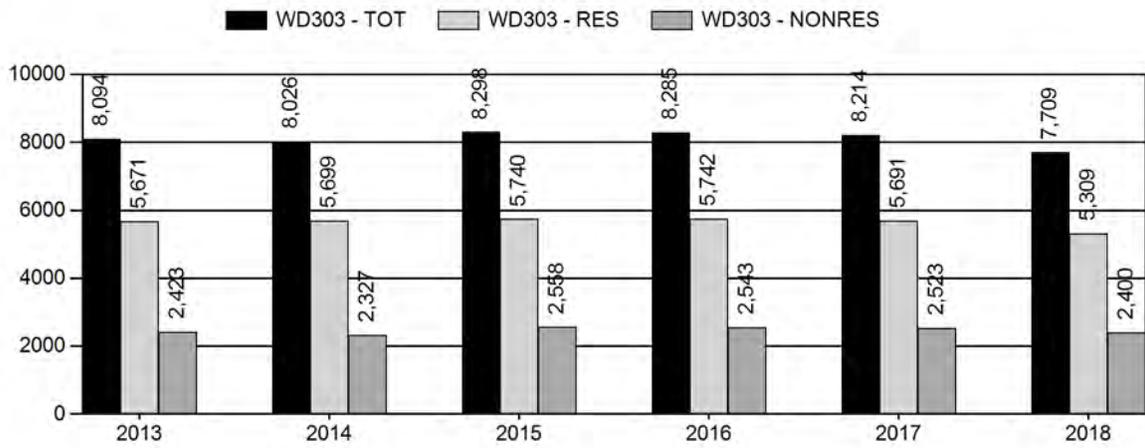
| | <u>2013 - 2017 Average</u> | <u>2018</u> | <u>2019 Proposed</u> |
|---|----------------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Hunter Satisfaction Percent | 75% | 75% | 75% |
| Landowner Satisfaction Percent | 41% | 45% | 60% |
| Harvest: | 6,026 | 6,016 | 6,000 |
| Hunters: | 8,183 | 7,709 | 7,900 |
| Hunter Success: | 74% | 78% | 76% |
| Active Licenses: | 9,459 | 9,143 | 9,250 |
| Active License Success: | 64% | 66% | 65% |
| Recreation Days: | 37,169 | 34,688 | 36,000 |
| Days Per Animal: | 6.2 | 5.8 | 6 |
| Males per 100 Females: | 37 | 39 | |
| Juveniles per 100 Females | 68 | 71 | |
| Satisfaction Based Objective | | | 60% |
| Management Strategy: | | | Private Land |
| Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective: | | | 0% |
| Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: | | | 6 |



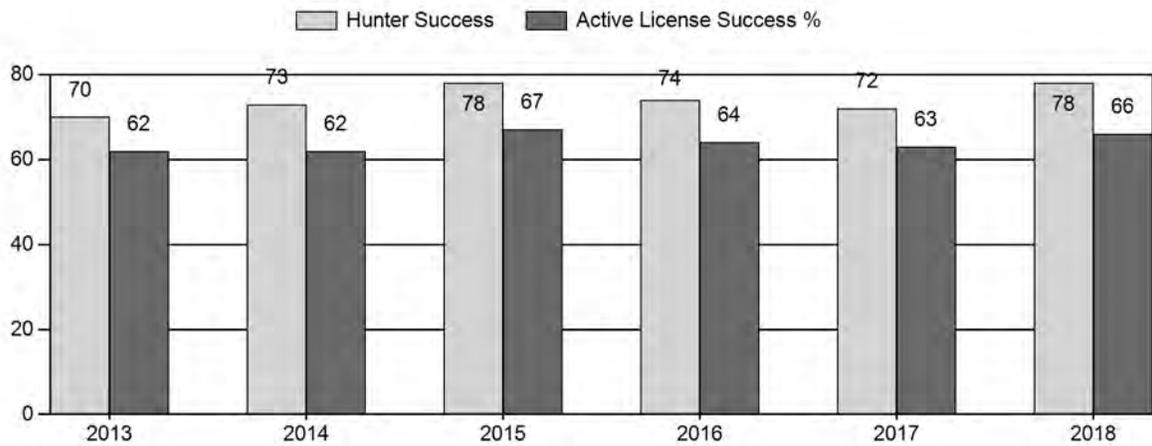
Harvest



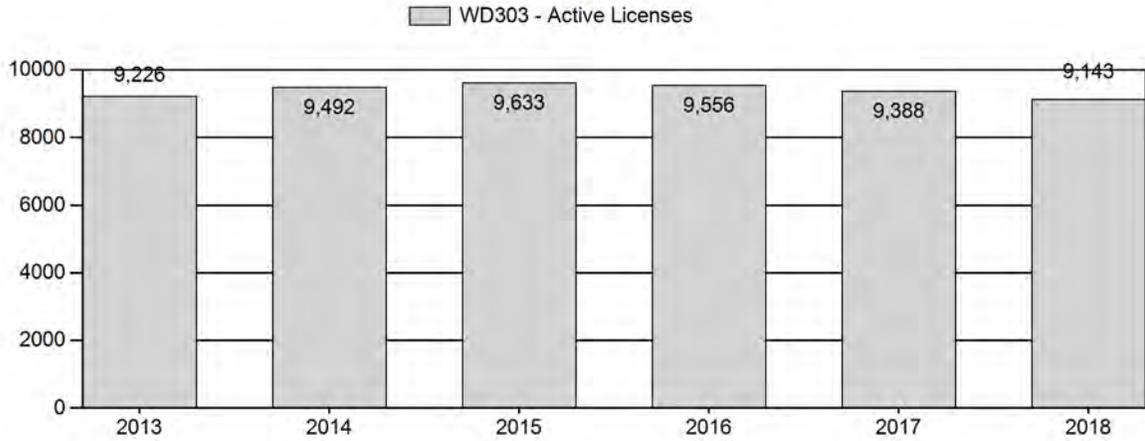
Number of Active Licenses



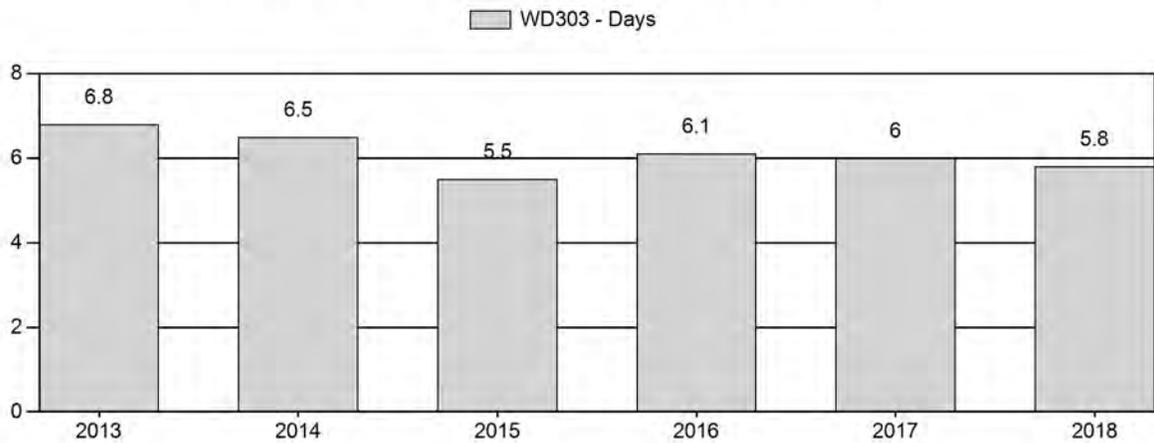
Harvest Success



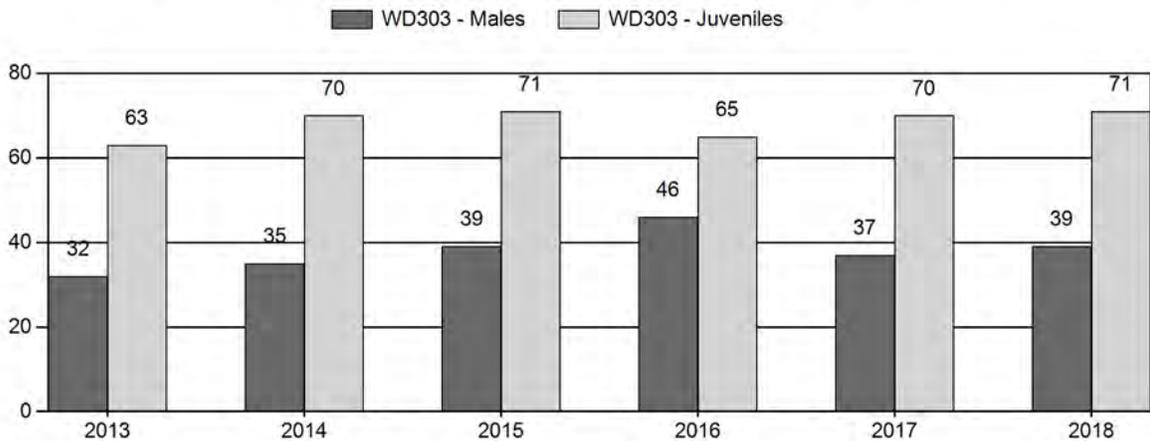
Active Licenses



Days per Animal Harvested



Postseason Animals per 100 Females



| 2013 - 2018 Postseason Classification Summary | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|-------|-------|-------|-----|---------|-----|-----------|-----|---------|---------|----------------------|-------|-------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| for White tailed Deer Herd WD303 - POWDER RIVER | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Year | Post Pop | MALES | | | | FEMALES | | JUVENILES | | | | Males to 100 Females | | | | Young to | | |
| | | Ylg | Adult | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Tot Cls | Cls Obj | Ylng | Adult | Total | Conf Int | 100 Fem | Conf Int | 100 Adult |
| 2013 | 18,000 | 150 | 303 | 453 | 16% | 1,437 | 51% | 907 | 32% | 2,797 | 1,211 | 10 | 21 | 32 | ± 2 | 63 | ± 3 | 48 |
| 2014 | 20,000 | 235 | 401 | 636 | 17% | 1,839 | 49% | 1,296 | 34% | 3,771 | 1,484 | 13 | 22 | 35 | ± 2 | 70 | ± 3 | 52 |
| 2015 | 0 | 206 | 375 | 581 | 19% | 1,483 | 48% | 1,058 | 34% | 3,122 | 1,554 | 14 | 25 | 39 | ± 0 | 71 | ± 0 | 51 |
| 2016 | 0 | 247 | 379 | 626 | 22% | 1,364 | 47% | 884 | 31% | 2,874 | 1,429 | 18 | 28 | 46 | ± 0 | 65 | ± 0 | 44 |
| 2017 | 0 | 192 | 446 | 638 | 18% | 1,706 | 48% | 1,198 | 34% | 3,542 | 1,457 | 11 | 26 | 37 | ± 0 | 70 | ± 0 | 51 |
| 2018 | 0 | 244 | 536 | 780 | 18% | 2,019 | 48% | 1,426 | 34% | 4,225 | 1,579 | 12 | 27 | 39 | ± 0 | 71 | ± 0 | 51 |

**2019 HUNTING SEASONS
POWDER RIVER WHITE-TAILED DEER HERD (WD303)**

| Hunt Area | Type | Season Dates | | Quota | License | Limitations |
|-----------|------|--------------|---------|-----------|---------------|--|
| | | Opens | Closes | | | |
| 17 | | Oct. 1 | Oct. 20 | | General | Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer |
| | | Nov. 1 | Nov. 30 | | General | Any white-tailed deer |
| | 7 | Oct. 1 | Oct. 20 | 50 | Limited quota | Doe or fawn valid on private land |
| | 8 | Oct. 1 | Nov. 30 | 250 | Limited quota | Doe or fawn white-tailed deer |
| 18 | | Oct. 1 | Oct. 20 | | General | Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer |
| | 7 | Oct. 1 | Oct. 20 | 100 | Limited quota | Doe or fawn valid on private land |
| | 8 | Oct. 1 | Oct. 31 | 50 | Limited quota | Doe or fawn white-tailed deer valid on private land |
| 19 | | Oct. 1 | Oct. 20 | | General | Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer |
| | | Nov. 1 | Nov. 15 | | General | Any white-tailed deer |
| | 7 | Oct. 1 | Oct. 20 | 50 | Limited quota | Doe or fawn valid on private land |
| | 8 | Nov. 1 | Nov.15 | 75 | Limited quota | Doe or fawn white-tailed deer |
| 23 | | Oct. 1 | Oct. 14 | | General | Antlered deer off private land; any deer on private land |
| | | Nov. 1 | Nov. 30 | | General | Any white-tailed deer |
| 23, 26 | 3 | Nov. 1 | Nov. 30 | 250 | Limited quota | Any white-tailed deer |
| | 7 | Oct. 1 | Dec. 15 | 2,000 | Limited quota | Doe or fawn valid on private land |
| 24 | | Oct. 15 | Oct. 31 | | General | Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer |
| | | Nov. 1 | Nov. 30 | | General | Any white-tailed deer |
| | 3 | Nov. 1 | Nov. 30 | 400 | Limited quota | Any white-tailed deer |
| | 7 | Sep. 1 | Dec. 15 | 250 | Limited quota | Doe or fawn valid on private land |
| | 8 | Sep. 1 | Dec. 15 | Unlimited | Limited quota | Doe or fawn white-tailed deer |
| 25 | | Oct. 15 | Oct. 24 | | General | Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer |

| Hunt Area | Type | Season Dates | | Quota | License | Limitations |
|-----------|------|--------------|---------|-------|---------------|--|
| | | Opens | Closes | | | |
| 26 | | Oct. 1 | Oct. 14 | | General | Antlered deer off private land; any deer on private land |
| | | Nov. 1 | Nov. 30 | | General | Any white-tailed deer |
| 27 | | Oct. 15 | Oct. 31 | | General | Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer |
| | | Nov. 1 | Nov. 30 | | General | Any white-tailed deer |
| | 8 | Sep. 1 | Sep. 30 | 1,200 | Limited quota | Doe or fawn white-tailed deer valid on private land |
| | 8 | Oct. 15 | Dec. 15 | | Limited quota | Doe or fawn white-tailed deer valid in the entire area |
| 28 | | Oct. 15 | Oct. 24 | | General | Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer |
| | | Oct. 25 | Nov. 30 | | General | Any white-tailed deer |
| 29 | | Oct. 1 | Oct. 14 | | General | Antlered deer off private land; any deer on private land |
| | | Nov. 1 | Nov. 30 | | General | Any white-tailed deer |
| | | Dec. 1 | Dec. 15 | | General | Antlerless white-tailed deer |
| | 8 | Sep. 1 | Sep. 30 | 700 | Limited quota | Doe or fawn white-tailed deer valid on private land |
| | 8 | Oct. 1 | Dec. 15 | | Limited quota | Doe or fawn white-tailed deer valid in the entire area |
| 30 | | Oct. 15 | Oct. 31 | | General | Antlered deer off private land; any deer on private land |
| | | Nov. 1 | Nov. 30 | | General | Any white-tailed deer |
| | | Dec. 1 | Dec. 15 | | General | Antlerless white-tailed deer |
| | 8 | Sep. 1 | Sep. 30 | 500 | Limited quota | Doe or fawn white-tailed deer valid on private land |
| | 8 | Oct. 15 | Dec. 15 | | Limited quota | Doe or fawn white-tailed deer valid in the entire area |
| 31 | | Oct. 1 | Oct. 10 | | General | Antlered deer |
| 32 | | Oct. 15 | Oct. 31 | | General | Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer |
| | | Nov. 1 | Nov. 15 | | General | Any white-tailed deer |
| 32, 163 | 8 | Oct. 15 | Nov. 15 | 50 | Limited quota | Doe or fawn white-tailed deer |

| Hunt Area | Type | Season Dates | | Quota | License | Limitations |
|-----------|------|--------------|---------|-------|---------------|--|
| | | Opens | Closes | | | |
| 33 | | Oct. 15 | Oct. 31 | | General | Antlered deer off private land; any deer on private land |
| | | Nov. 1 | Nov. 15 | | General | Any white-tailed deer |
| | | Nov. 16 | Dec. 15 | | General | Antlerless white-tailed deer |
| | 6 | Oct. 15 | Oct. 31 | 25 | Limited quota | Doe or fawn valid on private land |
| | 8 | Sep. 1 | Sep. 30 | 500 | Limited quota | Doe or fawn white-tailed deer valid on private land |
| | 8 | Oct. 15 | Dec. 15 | | Limited quota | Doe or fawn white-tailed deer valid in the entire area |
| 163 | | Oct. 15 | Oct. 21 | | General | Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer |
| | | Nov. 1 | Nov. 15 | | General | Any white-tailed deer |
| 169 | | Oct. 15 | Oct. 21 | | General | Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer |
| | | Nov. 1 | Nov. 15 | | General | Any white-tailed deer |

| Special Archery Season Hunt Areas | Season Dates | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| | Opens | Closes |
| 17-19, 23-33, 163, 169 | Sep. 1 | Sep. 30 |

| Region | Deer Hunt Areas | Quotas |
|--------|--------------------------------------|--------|
| C | 17-19, 23, 26, 29, 31 | 2,500 |
| Y | 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 163, 169 | 1,800 |

| Hunt Area | Type | Quota change from 2018 |
|------------------------|----------|------------------------|
| 23,26 | 3 | + 100 |
| 24 | 3 | + 100 |
| | | |
| Herd Unit Total | 3 | + 200 |
| | | |
| Region C | | + 200 |
| Region Y | | No Change |

Management Evaluation

Current Hunter / Landowner Management Objective: 60% Landowner / Hunter Satisfaction

Secondary Management Objective: 20 bucks:100 does observed minimum

Management Strategy: Private Land

2018 Hunter Satisfaction Estimate: 75%

2018 Landowner Satisfaction Estimate: 45%

Most Recent 3-year Running Average Hunters Satisfaction Estimate: 77%

Most Recent 3-year Running Average Landowner Satisfaction Estimate: 41%

Herd Unit Issues

The Powder River White-tailed Deer Herd Unit is located in north central Wyoming. This herd unit contains 16 hunt areas; 17-19, 23-33, 163 and 169. Hunt areas 19 and 20 were combined into one (HA 19) in 2016. Area 20 still appears on the evaluation form so historic data are captured from the JCR database at the herd unit level. The herd unit overlaps all biologist and warden districts in the Sheridan Region. The Sheridan biologist has herd unit reporting responsibilities while each biologist and warden retains management authority in their respective hunt areas.

The primary management objective for the Powder River White-tailed Deer Herd Unit is Hunter and Landowner Satisfaction at 60% or above, with a secondary postseason classification objective of 20 or more bucks observed per 100 does. The management strategy is Private Land Management. We revised the objective and management strategy in 2014. We conducted a 5-year evaluation of the objective and management strategy in 2019, with no changes recommended.

We do not have a reliable population estimate at this time for this herd. The spreadsheet simulation model developed for white-tailed deer populations with postseason classification data does not function with the limited empirical data available.

Most white-tailed deer occur on private lands. There is substantial rural development in portions of this herd unit that act as refuges for white-tailed deer, allowing them to quickly repopulate surrounding areas that receive harvest. Our ability to control this deer population with hunting is limited and localized due to limited access to private lands, and the presence of refuges where harvest isn't allowed. Mortalities due to deer-vehicle collisions and disease (i.e. viral hemorrhagic diseases) help keep this population from being even higher than it is.

White-tailed deer depredation of standing and stored agricultural crops, especially alfalfa, is a significant problem in localized areas. Game wardens and damage technicians spend considerable amounts of time and effort to address damage concerns. The WGFD pays damage payments to some landowners to compensate them for damage caused by high numbers of white-tailed deer.

Weather

Temperature and precipitation data referenced in this section were collected at the Buffalo (#481165), Gillette 4SE (#483855) and Sheridan Airport (#488155) weather stations located within this herd unit. Data were reported by the Western Region Climate Center (www.wrcc.dri.edu).

The 2018 spring cool, with below normal temperatures in March and April, and near normal precipitation. May was warmer than normal and wet, with over an inch of precipitation above

normal. This allowed for a good start for grasses and forbes, providing high quality forage just prior to and during parturition. Temperatures remained near normal during the summer and early fall. Conditions were dry during June, but above average precipitation in July and August. September and November were near normal for temperature and precipitation, while October saw above normal precipitation and cooler temperatures. December and January was generally open, with slightly below average precipitation and above average temperatures. February turned cold, with average temperature ~14°F below normal. There were several periods of 0°F or below, with at least one -20°F day. March was generally colder with below average precipitation. April was about normal for both temperature and precipitation. May was about 5-8°F colder than average with precipitation ~1.5-2.5 times normal. Cool wet weather during parturition could adversely influence neonate survival.

While adult wildlife entered the winter in good condition, they faced prolonged severe weather conditions during February and early March. Fawns, being more susceptible to extremely cold temperatures, likely saw at least average over-winter survival.

Habitat

White-tailed deer in this herd unit occur primarily along river and stream corridors as well as the foothills of the Bighorn Mountains. Agricultural lands along drainages provide a high quality reliable food source for deer. Mountain shrub communities along the east face of the Bighorn Mountains in Hunt Area 24 provide excellent white-tailed deer habitat. White-tailed deer are occasionally found in more arid sage-brush steppe / short grass prairie habitats. White-tailed deer appear to be expanding into the Bighorn Mountains.

We do not have established habitat transects to monitor white-tailed deer use. Monitoring of other habitat programs, such as Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) riparian buffers, indicate high white-tailed deer populations have done extensive damage to native deciduous woodlands and riparian areas. Irrigated croplands and private land refuge areas allow these populations to be maintained at levels higher than native habitats would normally support. Woody species such as native plum and serviceberry, as well as desirable forbs such as sunflowers, are being severely suppressed or eliminated in some woody draw communities along the Bighorn Mountains due to excessively high browsing pressure.

Field Data

Field personnel conducted post-season classification surveys during mid-November through mid-December using ground survey techniques. Personnel classified a small number of white-tailed deer while conducting aerial surveys for mule deer. Personnel surveyed designated routes. We classified 4,225 white-tailed deer, a 19% increase from 2017 and the highest classification ever recorded.

Fawn production, as measured by the observed fawn to doe ratio, was 71 fawns:100 does, similar to 2017 (70 fawns:100 does). The long-term (n=37 years) average fawn to doe ratio is 75:100. Relatively low fawn production, especially for a prolific species like white-tailed deer, under favorable environmental conditions could be a density dependent response. Reduced fawn production could slow the growth of this herd, which has likely declined in recent years in response

to increased harvest. There may be a nutritional component to the low fawn production or another factor such as higher than usual predation.

Field personnel observed 39 bucks:100 does, an increase from 2017 and similar to the previous five year average of 38 bucks:100 does. Due to the secretive nature of male white-tailed deer, we likely under observe bucks compared to does and fawns. We likely maintain a higher buck:doe ratio than observed due to the increased harvest of females and restricted access for harvesting bucks. We are observing sufficient males in this population to meet our secondary postseason classification management objective of a minimum of 20 bucks:100 does.

During the 2018 season, 75% of hunters ($n=1,596$) who completed a harvest survey indicated they were satisfied (32%) or very satisfied (47%) with their hunting experience. At the hunt area level, excluding Hunt Areas 31, 32, 163 and 169 due to low samples sizes (range=2-9), satisfaction levels varied from 57% (Hunt Area 25; $n=42$) to 83% (Hunt Area 18; $n=91$). Hunt areas with higher densities of white-tailed deer tended to have higher satisfaction levels, even in predominately private land hunt areas.

Nonresident hunters were generally more satisfied (80%) than resident hunters (73%). Access to private lands through trespass fees or outfitted hunts, which is common, cater more to nonresident than resident hunters.

We surveyed landowners to gauge their level of satisfaction with white-tailed deer numbers. One hundred forty eight landowners completed the white-tailed deer portion of their survey. Of these landowners, 43% ($n=63$) indicated white-tailed deer numbers were higher than desired and 45% ($n=66$) believed numbers were at or near desired levels (Fig. 1). Most respondents (53%, $n=78$) suggested similar or more liberal (35%, $n=52$) season strategies for 2019.

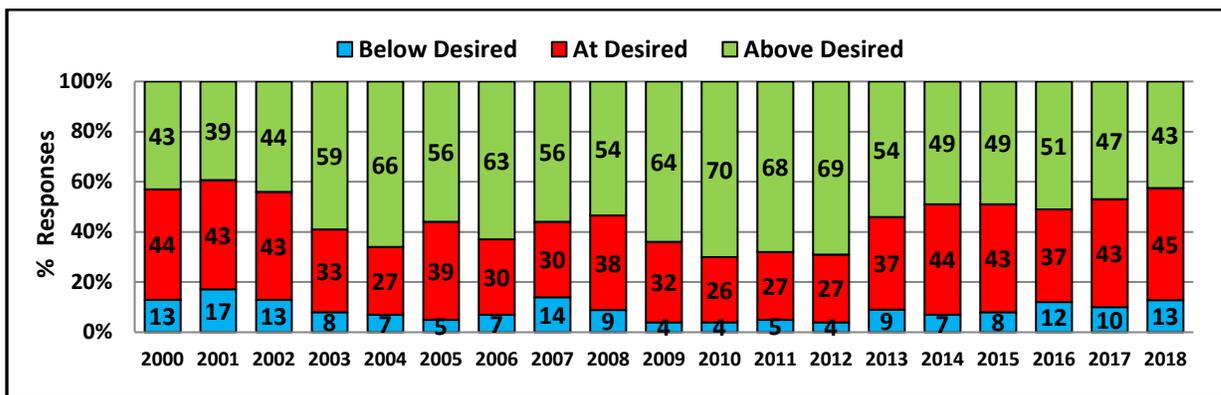


Figure 1. Relative landowner perceptions of white-tailed deer populations on their property in the Powder River White-tailed Deer Herd Unit, by percentage. Desired level is a subjective expression of individual landowner tolerance of white-tailed deer.

Harvest

An estimated 7,709 hunters (5,309 resident hunters; 2,400 nonresident hunters) harvested an estimated 6,016 white-tailed deer in 2018, an increase of ~1% from 2017 and similar to the previous 5-year mean (2013-2017; $n=6,026$). This is the fourth highest harvest ever. Hunters harvested an estimated 2,217 bucks (37%), 3,301 does (55%) and 498 fawns (8%). Buck harvest

decreased slightly (3%) compared to 2017 while doe harvest increased 6% and fawn harvest decreased 11%.

Of total hunters, 69% were resident and 31% were nonresident hunters. Resident hunters harvested 67% of the total deer harvested and 78% of the bucks harvested, a slight decrease in both total and buck harvest from 2017. Nonresident hunters harvest 32% of the total harvest and only 22% of the buck harvest.

Hunter success was 78%, an increase from 2017 (72%) and above the 5-year average of 73%. Hunter effort, as measured by days hunted per deer harvested, was 5.8 days/harvest, basically the same as in 2017 (6.0 days/harvest). Effort was slightly below the 5-year average of 6.2 days/harvest. Hunter effort seems high for the amount of antlerless animals harvested as well as the relatively high success rate. This could be a function of each harvest being considered independent of other harvest. Our survey protocol may not account for multiple harvests per day per hunter which would result in a higher than actual estimated effort rate.

In summary, fewer hunters were more successful and harvested more white-tailed deer with similar effort than the year before. This suggests deer in general were relatively available for harvest. Weather conditions during the hunting season were generally favorable and likely didn't hamper harvest efforts.

White-tailed deer harvest is a significant source of high quality protein for hunters. Statewide, this herd unit accounts for 31% of all white-tailed deer harvest. Assuming an average yield of 45 lbs. of meat from a buck, 30 lbs. from a doe and 12 lbs. from a fawn, hunters were able to harvest over 200,000 lbs. of deer meat from this herd unit alone in 2018 (Fig. 2). Statewide, hunters harvested almost 690,000 lbs. of meat from white-tailed deer hunting.

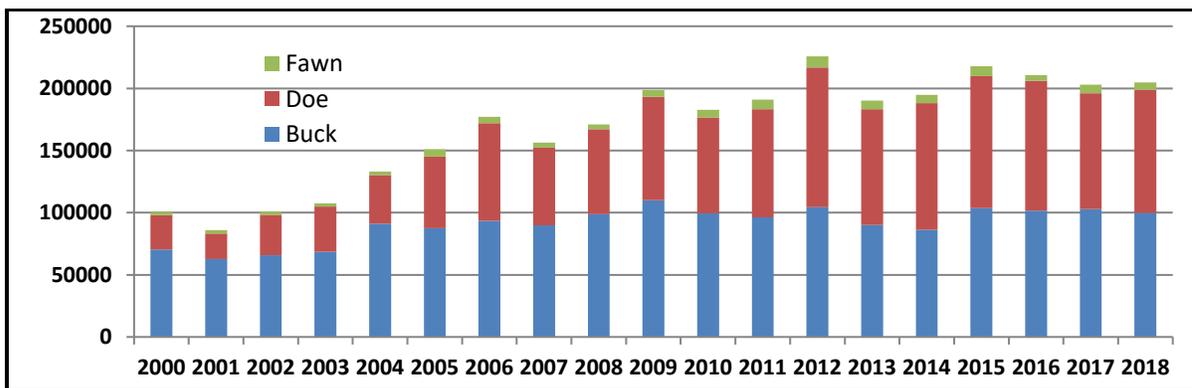


Figure 2. Estimated amount of deer meat harvested from this herd unit from 2000-2018. Assumes an average yield of 45 lbs. of meat per buck, 30 lbs. per doe and 12 lbs. fawn harvested.

Population

High white-tailed deer harvest in recent years (2014-2018; 5-year mean=6,093) suggests this population continues to be robust. The integrated population spreadsheet models developed for white-tailed deer populations with postseason classification data does not work with the available data. Under all three possible model scenarios, it simulates a negative population. As such, we don't have a functioning population simulation model.

Assuming hunters harvest approximately 30% of the total population in recent years, this population would be near 20,000 deer postseason (Fig. 3). Assuming hunters harvested 10% of the available bucks, this population would be about 22,200 white-tailed deer postseason based on 2018 buck harvest (Fig. 3). These are relatively broad, generic harvest based estimates but demonstrate that this white-tailed deer population is doing very well.

We believe we have at least stabilized this population through increased harvest over the past decade. Hunters harvested almost 60,000 white-tailed deer over the past 10 years, with an average of 5,959 white-tailed deer annually (mean = 2,210 bucks; 3,192 does; 557 fawns) during the 2009-2018 hunting seasons. Statewide, this herd unit accounts for 31% of all white-tailed deer harvest.

Periodic outbreaks of viral hemorrhagic diseases have also contributed to reduced numbers. We documented a significant outbreak of epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) in 2013, resulting in white-tailed deer mortality across the herd unit. Based on landowner and hunter reports, the level of mortality was localized, and likely varied from ~10% - 70% of local populations. This is supported by the 17% decrease in the 2013 harvest under similar hunting seasons.

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is present in this herd unit. With high deer densities, CWD may have population level effects in the relatively near future. We believe adult (age 4+) bucks will be the cohort most adversely affected.

Other mortality factors influencing population dynamics include deer-vehicle collisions, predation, fences and weather.

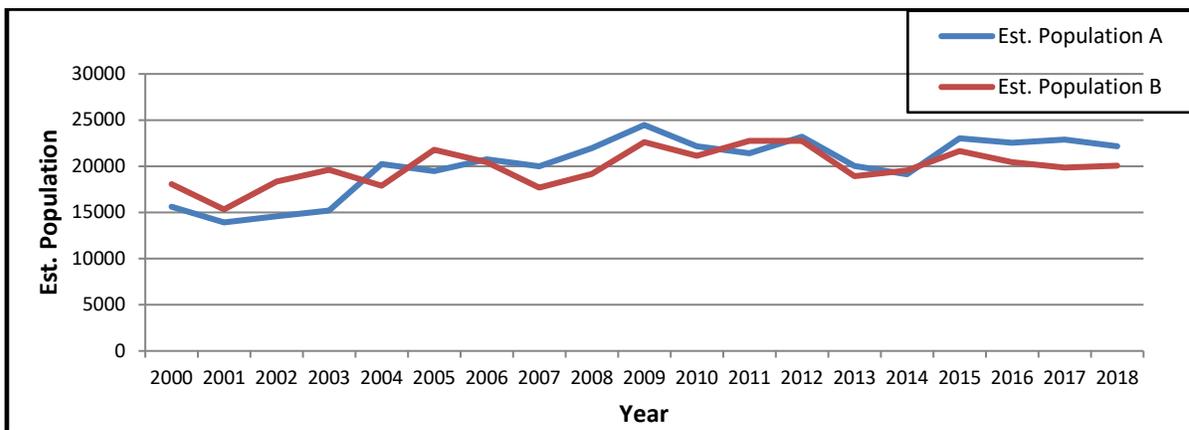


Figure 3. Estimated Powder River white-tailed deer population based on estimated harvest rates during the 2000-2018 hunting seasons. The estimated Population A (blue line) is based on harvesting 10% of available bucks. The estimated Population B (red line) is based on total harvest being 15-30% of total population.

Management Summary

The regular hunting season for white-tailed deer has generally been concurrent with mule deer seasons during October, as well as continuing for white-tailed deer through November. An archery pre-season runs the month of September in all hunt areas. Firearm seasons for antlerless white-tailed deer have been extended as early as September 1 and as late as December 15 to provide additional opportunities to harvest deer as well as address damage concerns of landowners.

Most white-tailed deer hunting is on private land. Access for antlered harvest is generally through payment of a trespass fee or outfitted hunts, especially for nonresident hunters. Access for antlerless harvest is generally easier, with several landowners on a publically available list allowing free access. Resident hunters seem to rely on various personal relationships (e.g., work, church, family) with landowners to gain access. Many landowners have developed a group of trusted hunters who return annually. This limits opportunities for new hunters looking to harvest deer.

We increased doe/fawn licenses (Type 7 or 8) in Areas 17, 18, and 19 for the 2018 season to address landowner concerns about deer numbers on private lands. This level of licenses, and subsequent harvest, has seemed to satisfied landowners. There were no changes in doe/fawn license quotas for 2019.

We increased Type 3 licenses in Areas 23,26 and Area 24 by 100 each. Whitetail buck numbers have recovered from the last EHD outbreak (2013). Whitetail deer hunting in these hunt areas has become popular in recent years and there is relatively high demand for these licenses. By encouraging hunters targeting white-tailed deer to apply for this license type, we will also reduce competition for Region C and Region Y non-resident licenses.

We estimate a harvest of about 6,000 white-tailed deer in 2019, similar to recent years. Buck deer have recovered well following the 2013 EHD outbreak. Landowners and hunters report a lot of m mature bucks in the population. Antlerless harvest continues to be strong. We may be near our maximum harvest level. Several landowners have developed a core group of hunters and are not taking new hunters. Hunters new to this region are having a harder time finding access, even for antlerless hunts. Increasing CWD prevalence may discourage hunters from harvesting deer.

We are likely lowering this population in some areas through harvest, but with the numerous private land refuges that do not allow hunting, it will be difficult to bring the overall population down to desired levels though hunting. Managers will continue to work with individuals and subdivisions to develop safe hunting opportunities.

We increased the nonresident Region C deer quota by 200 to 2,500 licenses for the 2019 season. Region C contains Hunt Areas 17-19, 23, 26, 29 and 31. Nonresident deer hunters often target mule deer as most can hunt white-tailed deer in their home state. White-tailed deer harvest ($n=1,984$) in Region C hunt areas accounted for about 33% of the total harvest in this herd unit in 2017.

We maintained the nonresident Region Y general license deer quota at 1,800 licenses for 2019. Region Y contains Hunt Areas 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 163 and 169. These hunt areas accounted for 67% of the white-tailed deer harvest ($n=4,032$) in this herd unit during 2018. Hunt Area 24 alone accounted for 72% ($n=2,886$) of the white-tailed deer harvest (Fig. 4) in Region Y. Hunt Area 24 had the second highest white-tailed deer harvest in Wyoming. Only Hunt Area 2 in the Black Hills Herd Unit had more white-tailed deer harvest.

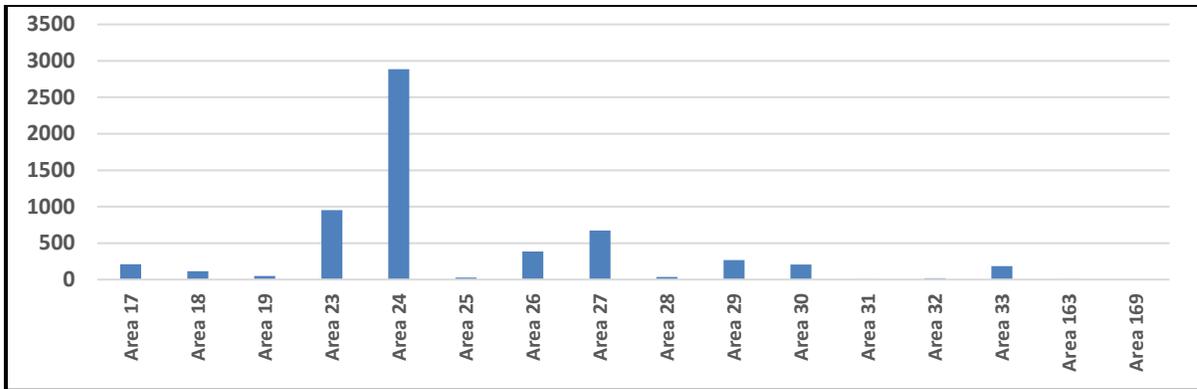


Figure 4. Estimated 2018 harvest by hunt area in the Powder River white-tailed deer herd unit.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was first detected in this herd unit in 2002. In 2018, 101 white-tailed deer were tested with 23 positives (22.8%) and 158 mule deer were tested with 19 positives (12%). CWD prevalence appears to be increasing in both deer species in the Sheridan Region. This could have population level affects in coming years.

The Department proposes to designate focus herds annually, in which to emphasize CWD monitoring. This will result in each deer and elk herd being intensively sample every four or five years. Increased sample sizes should give us a better idea of current distribution and prevalence rates for CWD within sampled populations.