

GREEN RIVER REGION

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2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: PR401 - SUBLETTE

HUNT AREAS: 85-93, 96, 101, 107

PREPARED BY: PATRICK BURKE

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Population:	33,379	25,250	27,400
Harvest:	2,114	863	900
Hunters:	2,212	963	1,000
Hunter Success:	96%	90%	90%
Active Licenses:	2,410	983	1,000
Active License Success:	88%	88%	90%
Recreation Days:	6,855	2,953	3,000
Days Per Animal:	3.2	3.4	3.3
Males per 100 Females	56	48	
Juveniles per 100 Females	55	70	

Population Objective ($\pm 20\%$) : 48000 (38400 - 57600)

Management Strategy: Recreational

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -47.4%

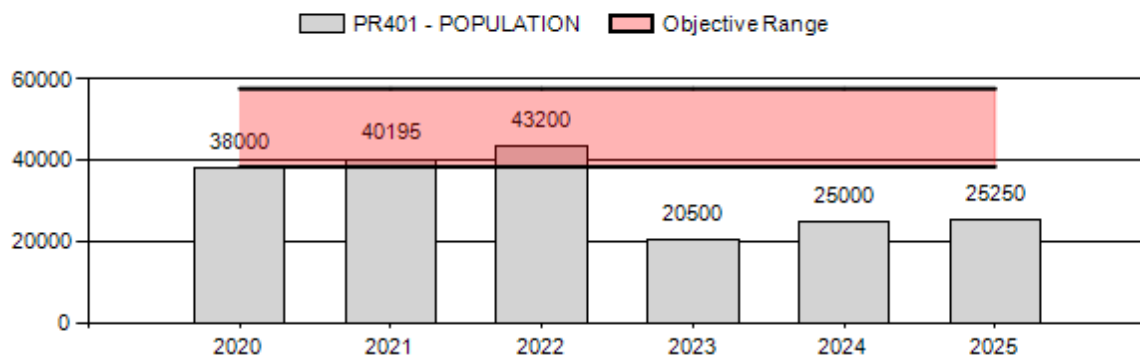
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 3

Model Date: 02/12/2026

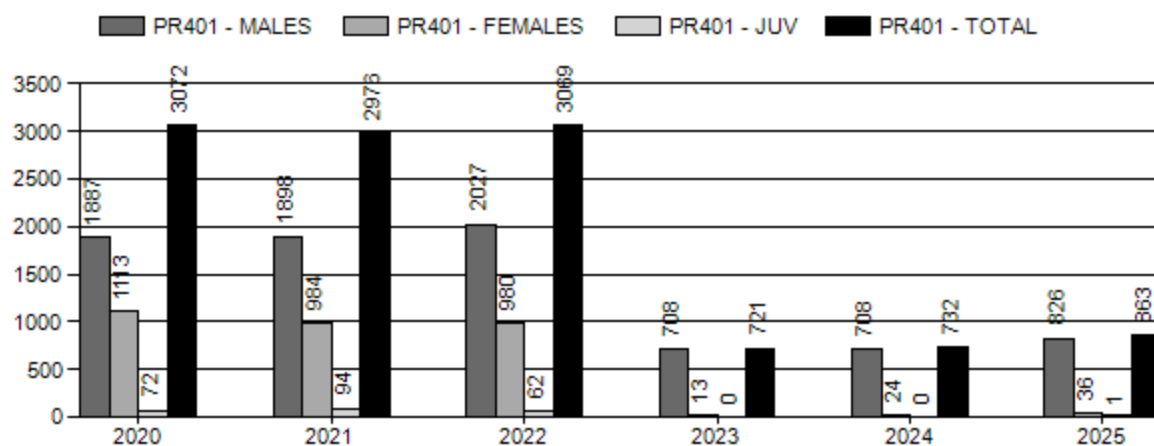
Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females ≥ 1 year old:	2%	2%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	16%	19%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-6%	9%

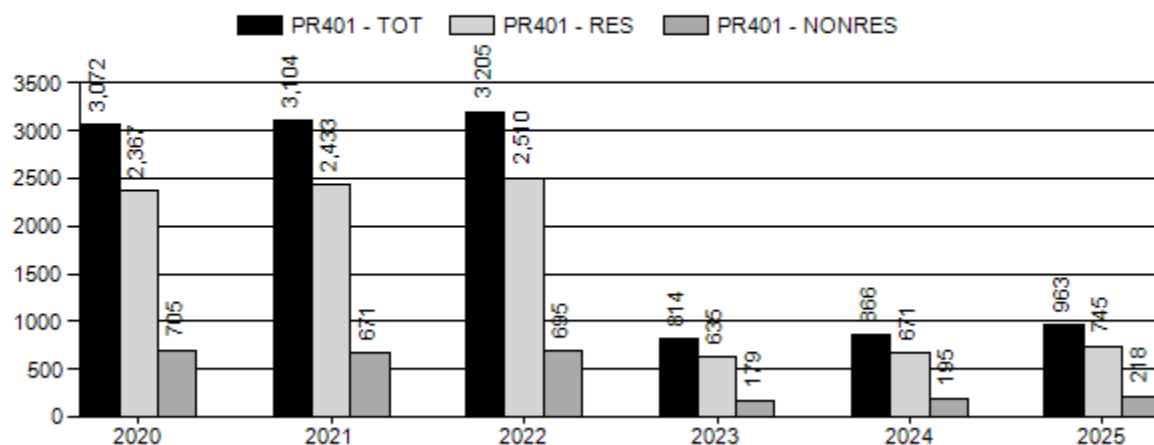
Population Size - Postseason



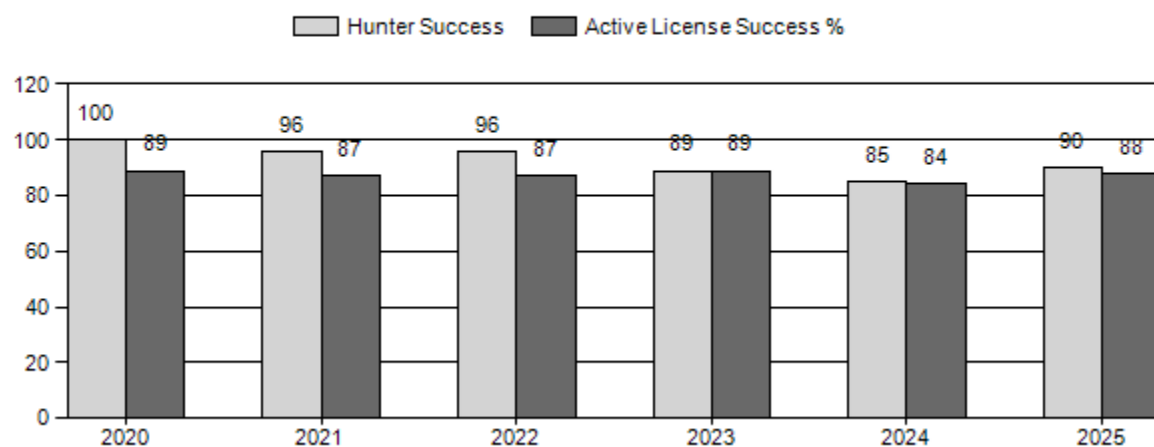
Harvest



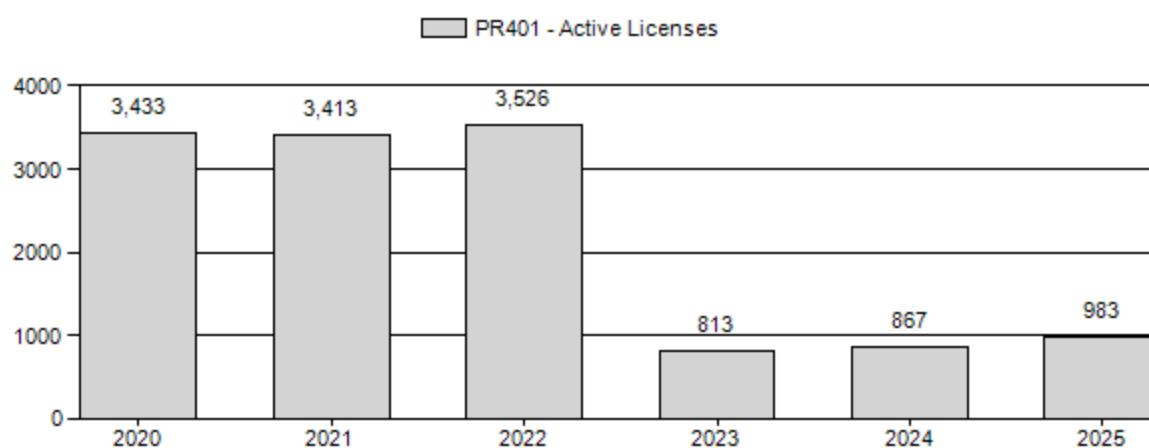
Number of Hunters



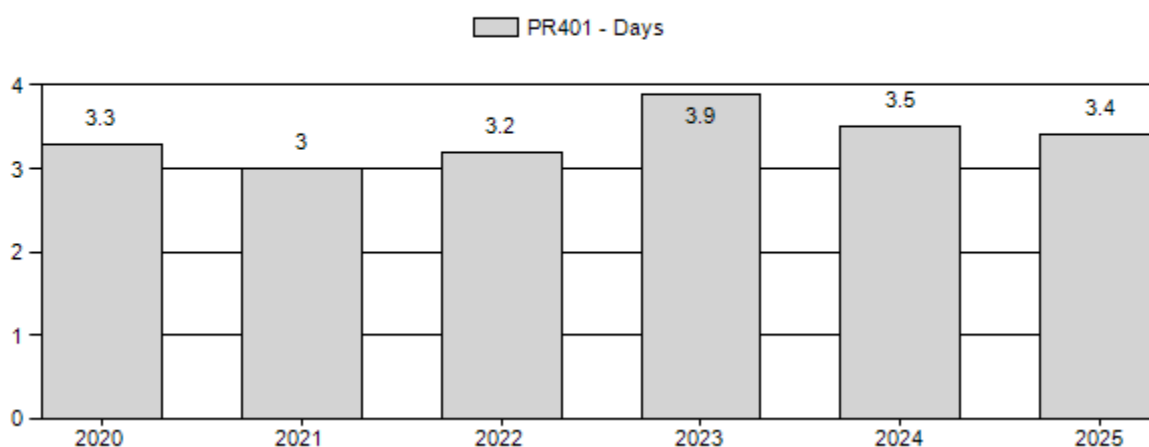
Harvest Success



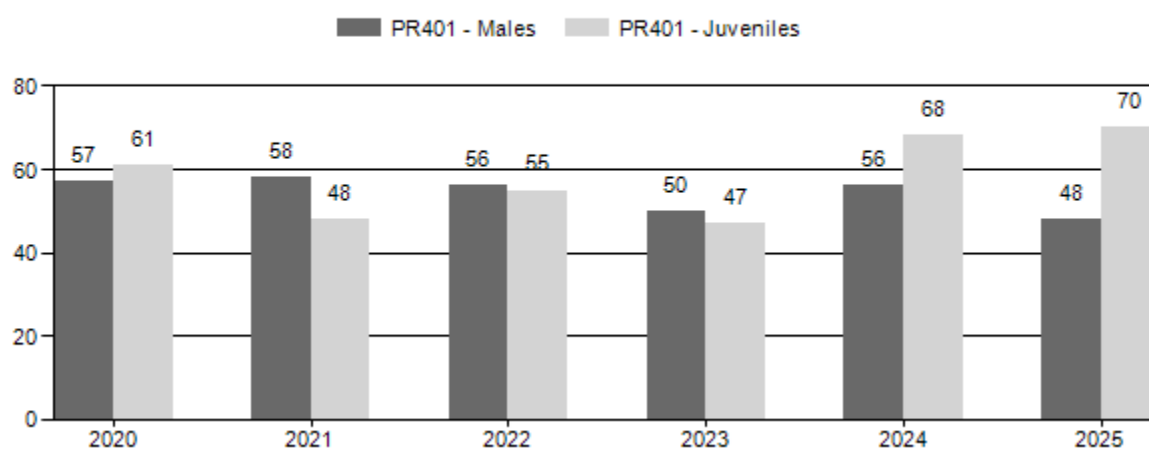
Active Licenses



Days Per Animal Harvested



Preseason Animals per 100 Females



2020 - 2025 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR401 - SUBLETTE

Year	Pre Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylg	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	41,000	801	2,348	3,149	26%	5,504	46%	3,351	28%	12,004	2,193	15	43	57	± 2	61	± 2	39
2021	43,469	717	2,675	3,392	28%	5,862	49%	2,822	23%	12,076	1,970	12	46	58	± 2	48	± 2	30
2022	48,300	649	2,337	2,986	26%	5,348	47%	2,949	26%	11,283	1,907	12	44	56	± 2	55	± 2	35
2023	22,600	355	1,003	1,358	25%	2,735	51%	1,281	24%	5,374	1,984	13	37	50	± 2	47	± 2	31
2024	27,500	356	1,194	1,550	25%	2,765	45%	1,891	30%	6,206	2,622	13	43	56	± 3	68	± 3	44
2025	27,700	470	1,007	1,477	22%	3,057	46%	2,133	32%	6,667	2,565	15	33	48	± 2	70	± 3	47

**2026 Hunting Seasons
Sublette Pronghorn Herd (PR401)**

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
85							Closed
86	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	10	Any antelope
87	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	45	Any antelope
87	2	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 25	Oct. 31	15	Any antelope
88	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	35	Any antelope
89	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	40	Any antelope
89	2	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Oct. 10	Oct. 31	25	Any antelope
90	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	60	Any antelope
90	7			Aug. 15	Oct. 31	50	Doe or fawn valid on private land
91	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	200	Any antelope
91	2	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	25	Any antelope valid on or within one-half (1/2) mile of irrigated land within Sweetwater County
91	7			Aug. 15	Oct. 31	50	Doe or fawn valid on or within one-half (1/2) mile of irrigated land within Sweetwater County
92	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	225	Any antelope
93	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	300	Any antelope
93	7			Aug. 15	Oct. 31	150	Doe or fawn valid on private irrigated land
96	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	125	Any antelope

101	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	50	Any antelope
107	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Oct. 31	100	Any antelope
107	0	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Aug. 20	Sept. 9	25	Any antelope, muzzleloading firearms and handguns only

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 90.5% Satisfied, 8.0% Neutral, 9.1% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation:

The 2026 hunting season for the Sublette pronghorn herd contained changes for most of the hunt areas in the herd unit. Following the severe winter of 2022-2023, all doe harvest was eliminated in the Sublette herd, and Type 1 licenses were reduced by at least 50% and up to 75% in every hunt area with some hunt areas being closed completely due to heavy losses in those areas from that winter. Now three years after that winter, better than average fawn ratios have let this herd start to recover and regain some of the ground that it lost during that winter. Because of this an increase in hunting opportunity was able to be offered in most of the hunt areas throughout the herd unit for the 2026 hunting season. The first change that was implemented for the 2026 season was that Hunt Area 86 was able to be opened again for a very limited amount of any antelope opportunity. Second, Type 1 license types were increased in Hunt Areas 87, 89, 90, 91, 92, 96, 101, and 107. In total 300 additional any antelope licenses were issues in 2026 compared to 2025. In addition to the increases in the number of any antelope licenses, 125 additional Type 7 licenses were added in 2026. These Type 7 licenses were put in place to address growing numbers of pronghorn on irrigated lands. These areas have had significant damage issues in the past and growing pronghorn numbers have landowners concerned about future damage in those areas. Even with these changes, the northern portions of the herd continue to offer more conservative seasons with a limited number of licenses compared to historic levels in order to help this herd recover from the losses it incurred during the 2022-2023 winter.

The modeled 2025 post-season population estimate for the Sublette herd was approximately 25,250 pronghorn; which is roughly 48% below its postseason objective of 48,000 pronghorn. While this number is still considerably below the herd's objective range, it is a significant improvement from the 20,500 pronghorn estimated to be left in the herd after the severe winter of 2022-2023; which caused this population to decline by roughly 50%, going from lower end of its objective range to being approximately 58% below objective in 2023.

Observed buck ratios in 2025 were 48 bucks per 100 does herd unit wide, which puts the observed ratios for this herd well within the recreational management criteria for pronghorn herds. Based on model estimates, the average proportion of preseason adult males harvested for the last three years is roughly 15% of the preseason population; with the 2025 estimated proportion of adult

bucks harvested being 13%. However, given the increases in licenses issued in 2026, the proportion of the adult male segment of the population harvest in 2026 will increase significantly.

The observed fawn ratio in the Sublette herd was 70 fawns per 100 does in 2025. This compares to only 47 fawns per 100 does seen in 2023, and to a long-term average for this herd of 64 fawns per 100 does. The low fawn ratio seen in 2023 was almost certainly a holdover from the impacts of the 2022-2023 winter, and the resulting poor body condition of doe pronghorn caused by the severe winter conditions. Given the observed fawn ratio seen in 2025, the model expects this herd to increase slightly in size in 2026. Even with consistently good fawn ratios, it will still take this herd many years to recover from the 2022-2023 winter, with it possibly taking up to a decade before this herd will again be within its population objective range.

Management Objective Review:

The objective and management strategy for the Sublette Pronghorn Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2022, and will not be reviewed again until 2027.

Population Modeling:

Given the drastic change in the size of the Sublette Pronghorn Herd following the 2022-2023 winter, a fixed effects model was chosen to model this population. Fixed effects models allow for more radical single year variation than standard models can accommodate, this flexibility in survival estimates was required for the model to be able to account for the significant losses suffered by this herd during that abnormally severe winter. Given the predictability of pronghorn harvest rates, licenses were used as the effort variable for the model, and the model structure allowed for both reproduction and survival to be fixed effects. Even with all of this flexibility, model convergence was only somewhat tolerable with only 51% of the resulting Rhat values being less than 1.1. The selected model does track reasonably well with the bio-year 2020 and 2022 line transect estimates, and with a slow population recovery following the 2022-2023 winter. However, the model did seem to have a harder time estimating this population following the 2025 hunting season than it did after the 2024 hunting season, with large variations from run to run with some runs producing simply unrealistically low population estimates. Following the 2025 hunting season, the model for the Sublette herd estimated the population to be a little over 25,250 pronghorn (CL = 16,397 – 32,526), and predicts that the herd may be over 27,000 after the 2026 hunting season.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: PR411 - UINTA-CEDAR MOUNTAIN

HUNT AREAS: 95, 99

PREPARED BY: CATRINA
JOHNSON

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Population:	6,082	5,687	6,138
Harvest:	498	457	460
Hunters:	570	477	480
Hunter Success:	87%	96%	96%
Active Licenses:	600	497	500
Active License Success:	83%	92%	92%
Recreation Days:	2,449	1,900	1,900
Days Per Animal:	4.9	4.2	4.1
Males per 100 Females	51	54	
Juveniles per 100 Females	48	61	

Population Objective ($\pm$ 20%) : 10000 (8000 - 12000)

Management Strategy: Recreational

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -43.1%

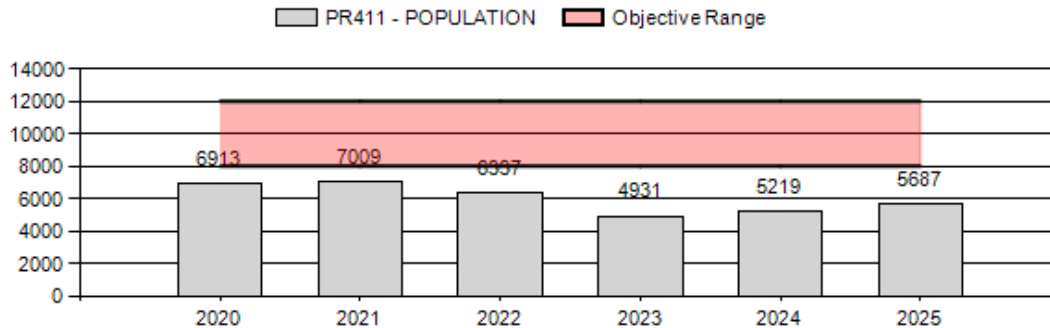
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 11

Model Date: 02/23/2026

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

	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females $\geq$ 1 year old:	2%	2%
Males $\geq$ 1 year old:	27%	24%
Proposed change in post-season population:	1.07%	1.08%

Population Size - Postseason



2020 - 2025 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR411 - UINTA-CEDAR MOUNTAIN

Year	Pre Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot CIs	CIs Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylg	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	7,687	80	381	461	29%	786	49%	361	22%	1,608	0	10	48	59	± 5	46	± 4	29
2021	7,576	109	374	483	25%	1,054	54%	422	22%	1,959	0	10	35	46	± 4	40	± 3	27
2022	7,186	124	125	249	27%	407	45%	258	28%	914	0	30	31	61	± 8	63	± 8	39
2023	5,574	119	234	353	24%	806	55%	314	21%	1,473	0	15	29	44	± 4	39	± 4	27
2024	5,831	44	100	144	21%	276	41%	253	38%	673	0	16	36	52	± 8	92	± 12	60
2025	6,396	142	236	378	25%	701	47%	428	28%	1,507	0	20	34	54	± 5	61	± 5	40

2026 HUNTING SEASONS
Uinta-Cedar Mountain Herd Unit (PR411)

Hunt Area	Type	Special Archery Dates		Regular Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
95	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sep. 10	Oct. 31	300	Any antelope
95	7			Aug. 15	Oct. 31	75	Doe or fawn valid on or within one-quarter (¼) mile of private irrigated land
99	1	Aug. 15	Sept. 9	Sep. 10	Oct. 31	150	Any antelope
99	2			Aug. 15	Nov. 30	25	Any antelope valid north and west of Wyoming Highway 410 and west of Uinta County Road 271

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 88.6% Satisfied, 8.7% Neutral, 2.7% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

Preseason classifications conducted in August of 2025 identified a sex ratio of 54 bucks per 100 does and an age ratio of 61 fawns per 100 does. This data suggests an increase in the population and were also higher than those documented during 2024 preseason classifications.

Population estimates with the Line Transect survey technique are very important for providing adequate data to model antelope herd populations. Without performing these surveys regularly, it is unlikely that the population models can perform reliably. We were able to fly a Line Transect survey in May of 2023. This is an end of bio year 2022 population estimate. Previously, we have not had the budget to conduct line transect surveys in this herd since 2014. In the future, we will need to fly these surveys more often to effectively model this herd. The most recent estimate was 7,727 (CL =5,363-10,936) pronghorn. The standard error and confidence interval on the estimate are high due to an effort to be efficient with survey money by reducing sampling intensity which resulted in a less precise estimate. In future surveys, it is advised that a more intense sampling scheme be utilized.

There have been four severe winter events in this herd in the last eight years (2016-17, 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2022-23). Weather related impacts to pronghorn are less in this area than they are for mule deer. Pronghorn in this herd generally have the ability to migrate to lower elevation flats during severe winters. This herd has experienced some large-scale mortality events involving motor vehicles especially during tough winters. Movements of pronghorn in this area have become more difficult as human development and disturbance impedes annual movements. Conservative seasons are warranted in this herd. Historical harvest pressure to alleviate landowner complaints, coupled with dry summers and difficult winters have resulted in low pronghorn numbers in this herd. The winter of 2022/23 was very severe in the western part of the herd, but was much better in the eastern portion. The winter was so severe that all additional doe/fawn licenses were eliminated for the 2023 season. This herd currently sits well below

objective. Limited doe/fawn harvest was added in 2024 on antelope causing damage on private irrigated lands in Hunt Area 95, but this is lower than what was offered historically due to much lower landowner complaints and lower numbers of antelope in those areas.

Hunt Area 95 is the least productive area in the herd, but tends to produce better quality bucks. Hunt Area 99 is historically much more productive and had more private landowner complaints. License allocations proposed are an effort to help move this population toward objective while still addressing damage issues. However, we need more favorable weather conditions to boost this herd's fawn recruitment and growth. The male harvest goal of 20-30% has been met in this herd for several years. We provide a high amount of opportunity in this herd unit.

We continued moderate harvest for 2026 with slight changes to license quotas, but no change to season lengths or limitations for the Uinta-Cedar Mountain Pronghorn Herd, except for the removal of the HA 99 Type 0 license. The Hunt Area 99 Type 0 any antelope, muzzle-loading firearms only, license was originally put in place in 2008 to provide a hunt opportunity for participants at the Fort Bridger Mountain Man Rendezvous. The intent was for Rendezvous participants to have good drawing odds to partake in a traditional muzzleloader hunt with a September 1 start date that overlapped the rendezvous. It was initially believed that the limited range of the muzzleloader weapon type would result in lower success rates. However, since its inception, this license type has not been drawn by the intended group but instead by hunters with modern scoped muzzleloaders. Most antelope are being harvested at ranges very similar to any-weapon hunts. Harvest success on the Type 0 license have surpassed the Type 1 license type and drawing odds are similar between the two hunt types. For these reasons, we proposed to eliminate the Type 0 hunt and absorbed the licenses into the Type 1 hunt.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the Uinta-Cedar Mountain Pronghorn Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2024, and will not be reviewed again until 2029.

Population Modeling

The WGFD uses PopR integrated population models (IPMs) to estimate populations for pronghorn. The 2025 postseason population estimate for this herd unit from the PopR IPM was 5,687 (CL = 4,939 – 6,476) pronghorn. Although we are cautious of this model since the most recent Line Transect Survey had high variance, this estimate is comparable to last year's model prediction due to the improved sex/age ratios identified during classifications which infers an increase in the population. In the future, it will be imperative to obtain more precise line transect population estimates periodically to check the status of the herd and anchor the model.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: PR412 - SOUTH ROCK SPRINGS

HUNT AREAS: 59, 112

PREPARED BY: PATRICK BURKE

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Population:	5,170	6,000	6,200
Harvest:	228	178	200
Hunters:	267	204	225
Hunter Success:	85%	87%	89%
Active Licenses:	272	204	225
Active License Success:	84%	87%	89%
Recreation Days:	879	775	800
Days Per Animal:	3.9	4.4	4
Males per 100 Females	38	52	
Juveniles per 100 Females	48	60	

Population Objective ($\pm 20\%$) : 6500 (5200 - 7800)

Management Strategy: Recreational

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -7.7%

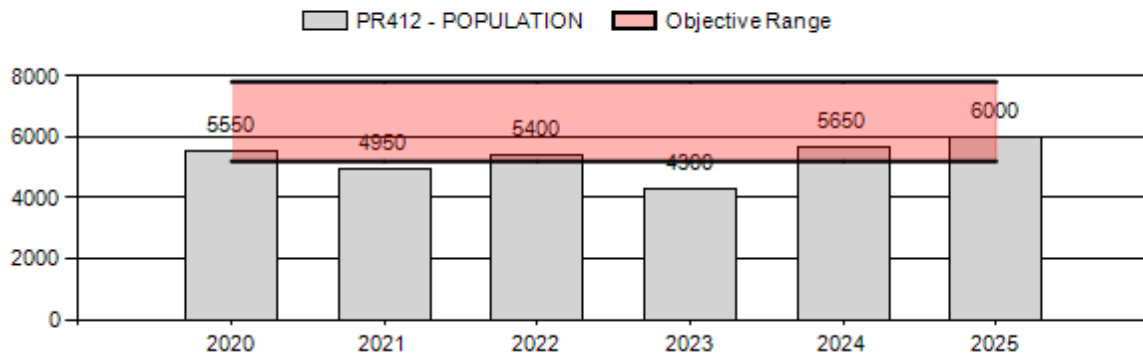
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 0

Model Date: 02/19/2026

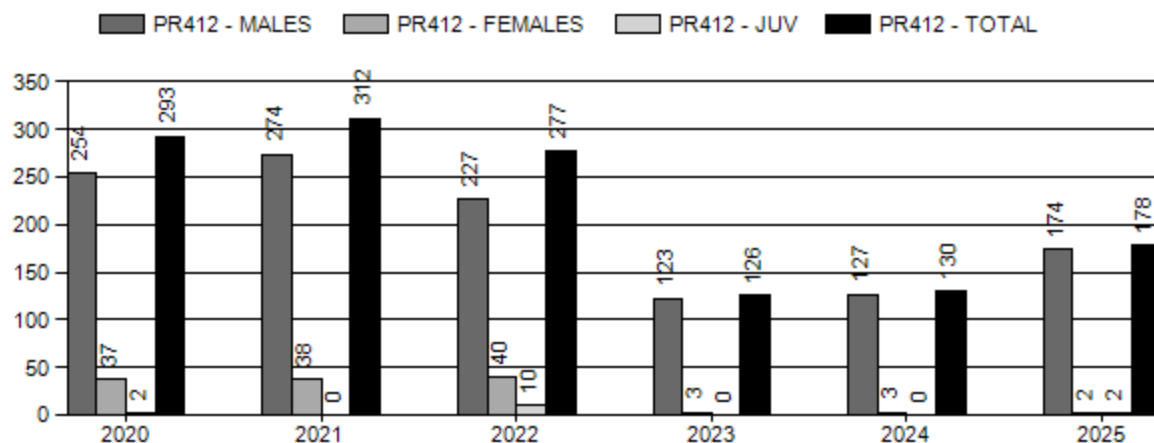
Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	15%	17%
Proposed change in post-season population:	5%	3%

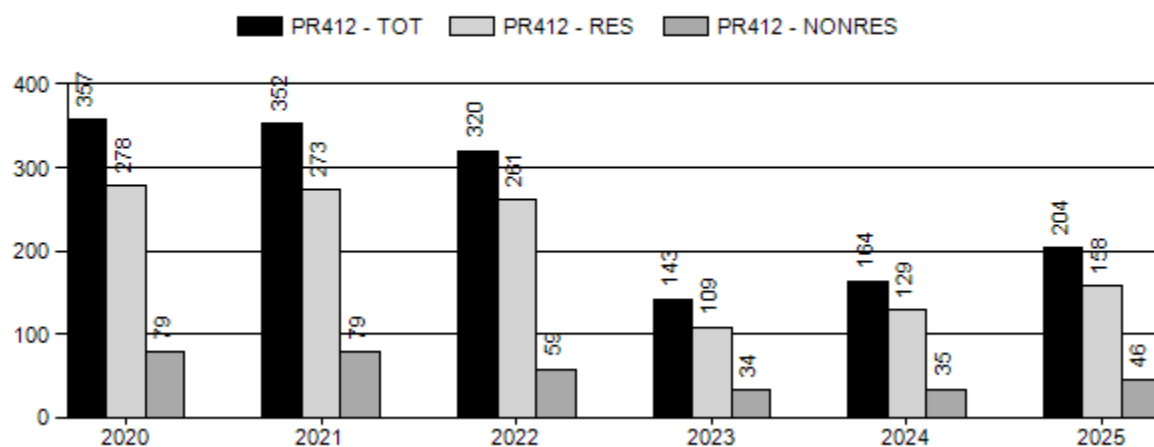
Population Size - Postseason



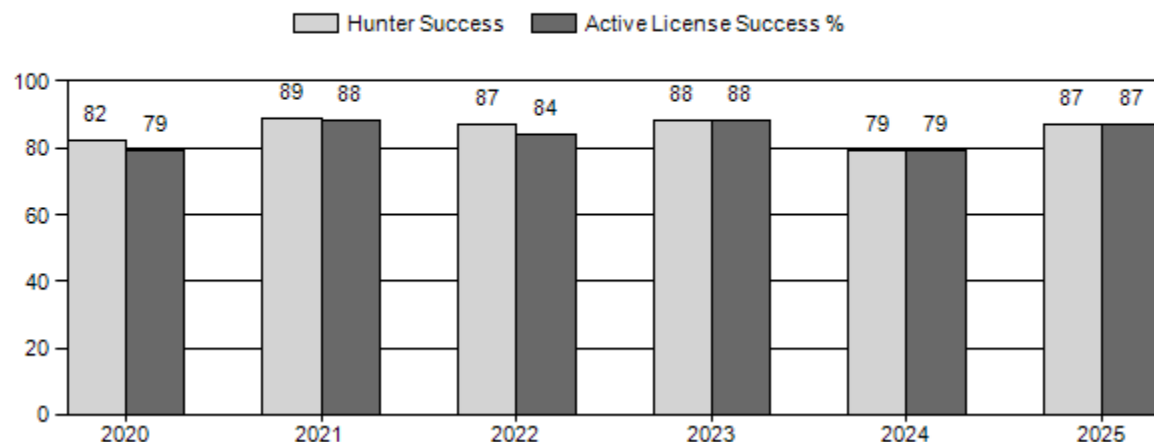
Harvest



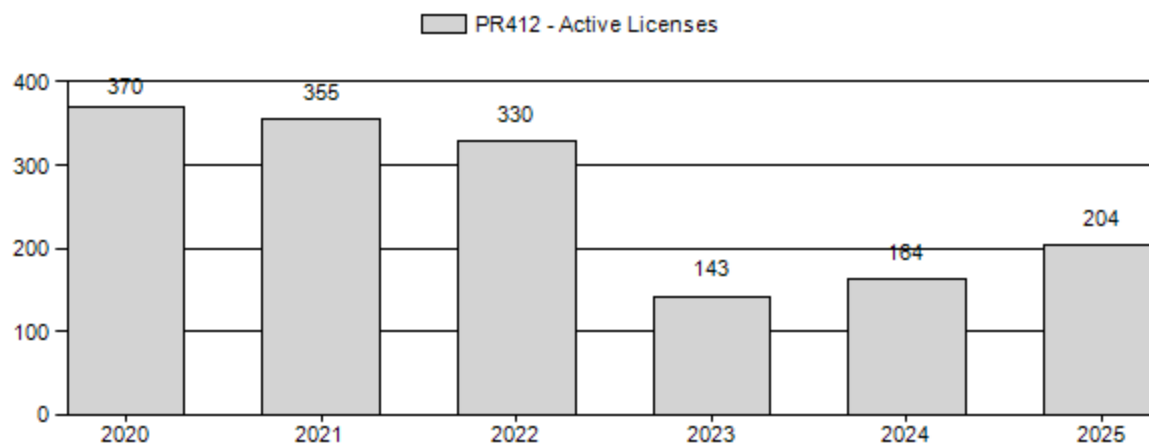
Number of Hunters



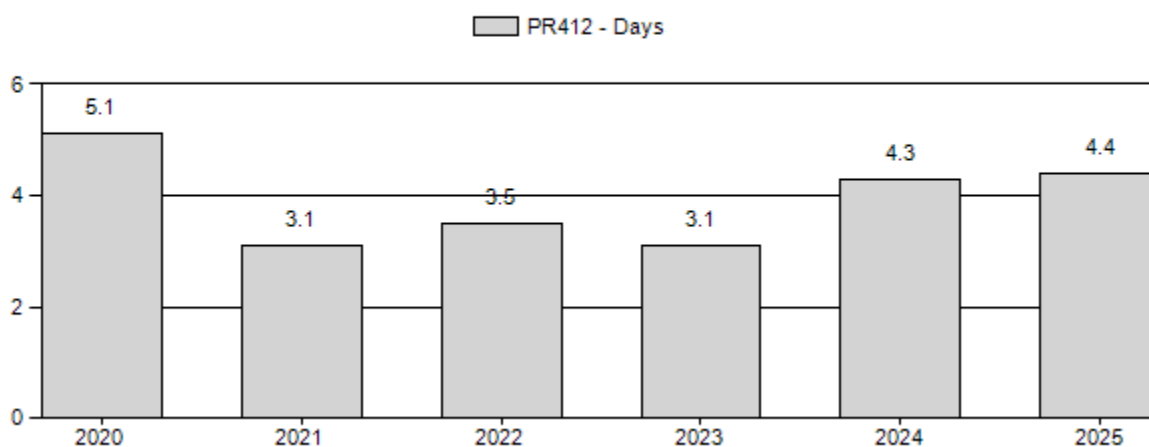
Harvest Success



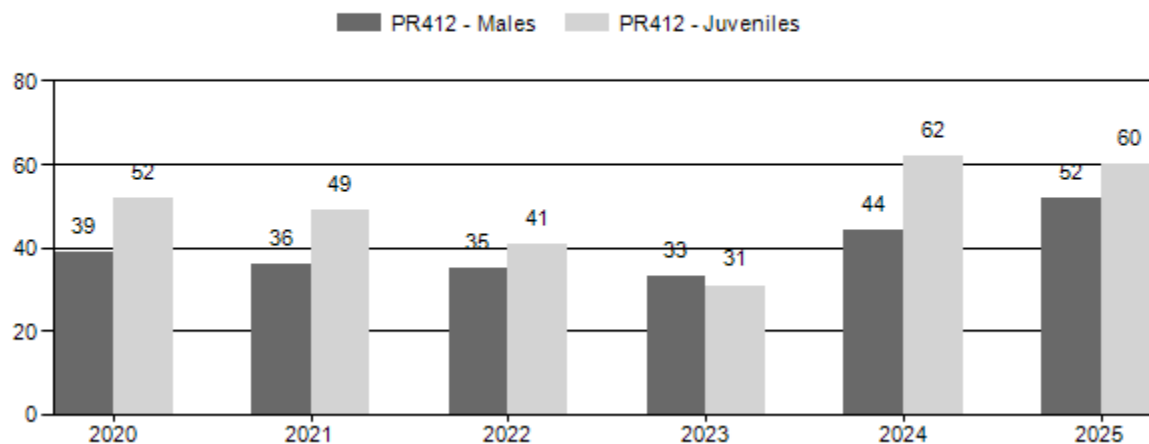
Active Licenses



Days Per Animal Harvested



Preseason Animals per 100 Females



2020 - 2025 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR412 - SOUTH ROCK SPRINGS

Year	Pre Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylg	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	5,850	22	189	211	20%	545	53%	281	27%	1,037	1,220	4	35	39	± 5	52	± 6	37
2021	5,300	63	199	262	20%	725	54%	353	26%	1,340	1,195	9	27	36	± 4	49	± 4	36
2022	6,100	21	105	126	20%	355	57%	145	23%	626	875	6	30	35	± 6	41	± 6	30
2023	4,600	50	127	177	20%	534	61%	168	19%	879	984	9	24	33	± 4	31	± 4	24
2024	6,100	80	212	292	22%	657	48%	408	30%	1,357	1,644	12	32	44	± 5	62	± 6	43
2025	6,700	86	279	365	24%	704	47%	421	28%	1,490	1,544	12	40	52	± 5	60	± 5	39

**2026 Hunting Seasons
South Rocks Springs Pronghorn Herd (PR412)**

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
59	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	200	Any antelope
112	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	50	Any antelope

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 90.8% Satisfied, 9.2% Neutral, 0% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation:

The 2026 hunting season for the South Rock Springs pronghorn herd maintained a very similar season structure to what has been offered in the herd unit for the last several years. The only change that was implemented for the 2026 season was an increase in Type 1 licenses in Hunt Area 59, going from 150 to 200 licenses. While herd unit wide buck to doe ratios for this herd are well within its objective range of between 30 and 59 bucks per 100 does, during the 2025 pre-season classifications, HA59 exhibited higher observed buck to doe ratios that were towards the upper end of the objective range. Increases in Type 1 licenses in HA112 were not implemented in 2026 due to significantly lower observed buck ratios in that hunt area compared to HA59, and due to continued lower overall pronghorn numbers in the southern hunt area of this herd unit. Harvest survey results from the 2025 hunting season indicate that it took hunters 55% longer to harvest a pronghorn in Hunt Area 112 than it did in Hunt Area 59, and hunters had a lower overall harvest success rate in Hunt Area 112 than what was documented in HA59. The continued notable decrease in the number of pronghorn west of US 191 in the Little Mountain area has been a cause of concern for managers in recent years, and indicates that this portion of the herd unit needs more time to recover before license issuance rates can return to their former levels in this portion of the herd.

Following extremely low fawn ratios documented in 2019, which caused the population estimate to dip below its objective range, doe harvest was reduced significantly in 2020 and then removed completely following the 2022-2023 winter. The significantly better fawn ratio of 62 fawns per 100 does observed in this herd in 2024 and 60 fawns per 100 does seen in 2025 should result in some population growth for this herd. Observed buck ratios in the South Rock Springs herd unit have been at the lower end of the recreational management range, and had been declining, especially during the period from 2020 to 2023, when buck harvest rates were estimated to be between 20% and 23% of the total male segment of the population. During that timeframe, the herd unit wide observed buck to doe ratio declined from 39 bucks per 100 does to only 33 bucks per 100 does. This trend was especially apparent in Hunt Area 112 which went from 43 bucks per 100 does in 2020, to only 32 bucks per 100 does in 2023. Fortunately, reduced Type 1 license issuance rates during the 2023 and 2024 hunting seasons appear to have halted this trend, with the 2025 pre-season observed buck ratio coming in at 52 bucks per 100 does for the herd unit as a whole, with HA59 showing higher buck ratios than HA112. The increase in the observed buck ratio in 2025, suggested that a modest increase in Type 1 licenses could be accommodated in HA59, which has shown a modestly increasing trend in buck ratios over the last two years.

Management Objective Review:

The objective and management strategy for the South Rock Springs Pronghorn Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2023, and will not be reviewed again until 2028.

Population Modeling:

Starting in 2021, this herd has been modeled using an integrated population model (IPM). For the 2025 biological year, that model produced a postseason population estimate for this herd of 6,038 (CL = 4,395 – 8,713) pronghorn. This is a slight increase from last year's estimate of 5,656 pronghorn. A line transect (LT) survey flown in late May 2024 resulted in an end of bio-year 2023 population estimate of 6,970 (CL = 4,572 – 9318), this LT estimate would suggest a larger population size than most of the IMP models ran could accommodate, however, given the patchy nature of pronghorn habitat and topography in the South Rock Springs herd unit, LT estimates almost certainly overestimate the true population size, so given that acknowledgement, the IMP modeled estimate may be reasonable. The IMP appeared to have a difficult time reconciling the higher line transect survey population estimate with the declining buck ratios that were observed in this population during 2020 through 2023. Some of the models would produce drastically different Rhat values from run to run, therefore the licenses effort variable was chosen with a structure that allowed reproduction, and both juvenile and adult survival to vary over time. Given the projected harvest and fawn recruitment rates, the model predicts that this herd should be near 6,200 pronghorn after the 2026 hunting season.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: PR414 - BITTER CREEK

HUNT AREAS: 57-58

PREPARED BY: PHILIP DAMM

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Population:	8,998	6,968	8,500
Harvest:	339	153	150
Hunters:	406	174	175
Hunter Success:	83%	88%	86 %
Active Licenses:	419	173	175
Active License Success:	81%	88%	86 %
Recreation Days:	1,426	628	650
Days Per Animal:	4.2	4.1	4.3
Males per 100 Females	57	51	
Juveniles per 100 Females	48	45	

Population Objective ($\pm$ 20%) : 13000 (10400 - 15600)

Management Strategy: Special

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -46.4%

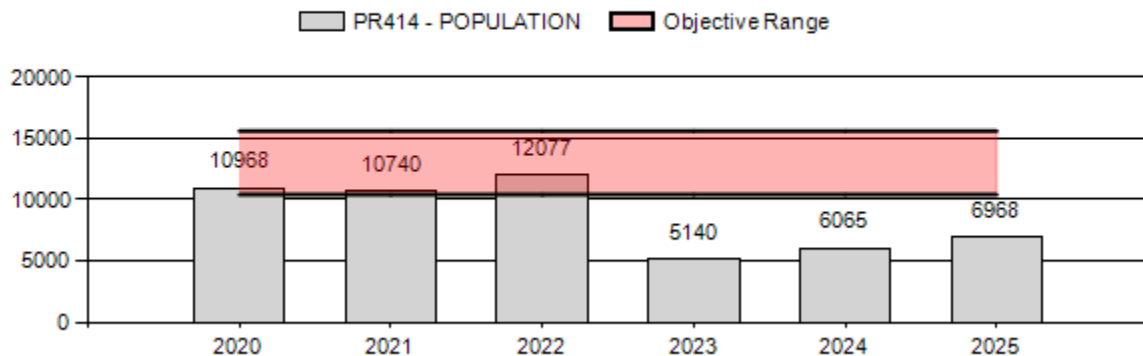
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 3

Model Date: 02/24/2026

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

	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females $\geq$ 1 year old:	0.1%	0.1%
Males $\geq$ 1 year old:	9%	10%
Proposed change in post-season population:	15%	10%

Population Size - Postseason



2020 - 2025 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR414 - BITTER CREEK

Year	Pre Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cts	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylg	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	11,449	50	395	445	27%	837	50%	383	23%	1,665	0	6	47	53	± 5	46	± 4	30
2021	11,223	91	495	586	30%	995	51%	355	18%	1,936	0	9	50	59	± 5	36	± 3	22
2022	13,072	94	452	546	28%	905	47%	477	25%	1,928	0	10	50	60	± 5	53	± 5	33
2023	5,612	61	192	253	33%	390	51%	128	17%	771	0	16	49	65	± 8	33	± 5	20
2024	6,735	57	256	313	22%	647	46%	454	32%	1,414	0	9	40	48	± 5	70	± 6	47
2025	7,656	106	269	375	26%	742	51%	337	23%	1,454	0	14	36	51	± 5	45	± 4	30

2026 Hunting Seasons Bitter Creek Pronghorn Herd Unit (PR414)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
57	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	100	Any antelope
57	2	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	25	Any antelope valid west of Sweetwater County Road 23S and B.L.M. Road 3310, and north and east of B.L.M. Roads 4411 and 4409
53, 57	7	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 1	Nov. 30	25	Doe or fawn valid south of Wyoming Highway 70 and west of Carbon County Road 601 in Area 53, and on private land within one (1) mile of Carbon County Road 603 in Area 57
58	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	50	Any antelope

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 85% Satisfied, 7% Neutral, 8% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

Harvest Data

After the severe winter of 2022-23, herd license quotas were reduced by about 60% and again in 2025 by an additional 40% due to buck ratios being below objective. Satisfaction and success rebounded slightly again for the herd, but HA57 Type 1 license holders were still less satisfied at 81% than HA58 hunters at 96%. This disparity was likely due to pronghorn in HA58 faring better than HA57 during winter 2022-23; pronghorn with traditional ranges in HA57 may have migrated west into HA58 during that winter to locate areas with lower snowpack. Very little field harvest data were collected in 2024 for the herd due to the low license quotas and difficulty in finding hunters to check. However, with a caveat of small sample sizes, average horn length of

harvested bucks in 2025 had still not returned to pre-winter 2022-23 levels. Prevailing comments in the hunter survey indicated a general lack of pronghorn, difficulty in finding desirable bucks to harvest, and high numbers of feral horses observed.

Buck and Fawn Ratio Data

Fallout from the winter of 2022-23 continued to be evident in buck ratios in 2025, but license quotas may be appropriate such as to not affect hunter satisfaction. The buck ratio increased from 48 to 51 bucks per 100 does from 2024 to 2025; however, it remains below objective. Over ¼ of bucks were 1.5 years old, which bodes well for recruitment into older age classes moving forward. Conversely, the adult buck ratio has decreased every year since the winter of 2022-23 and is currently at 36 bucks per 100 does and matched historic lows for the Bitter Creek Herd. Fawn ratios across the herd returned to near average, but still poor, in 2025 at 45 fawns per 100 does. Managers were concerned over fawn productivity at current levels not being able to offset buck harvest in future years when license quota increases were considered.

Population Trend

The post-season model estimate was 6,968, which was well below the herd objective of 13,000. However, this estimate was an increase of nearly 2,000 since 2023's estimate. The fawn ratio of 45 per 100 does in 2025 limited population growth in the Herd, and these fawn numbers were surprising given the Herd being below objective as well as far below the habitat's carrying capacity. Even with relatively poor fawn production, the above average over winter survival may have led to greater increases to the population than the modeled estimate indicated. However, managers lacked confidence in model estimates, since no on-the-ground population estimates have been performed following the winter of 2022-23.

2026 Hunting Season

The good fawn ratio across the Bitter Creek Herd in 2024 resulted in an increase to the buck ratio in 2025 through the yearling buck cohort, which was encouraging for potential improvements to the adult portion of the buck ratio. However, additional years will be needed to improve the age class structure that the Herd is known for. For 2026, due to depressed populations, poor fawn productivity, below objective buck ratios with skewed age classes, and public sentiments in the Bitter Creek pronghorn herd, Type 1 license quotas were left unchanged.

Managers reduced the Type 7 license quota to 25 for the small areas at the southern end of HA53/HA57 where native habitats continued to be affected negatively by altered pronghorn distributions and concerns remained for potential damage to irrigated meadows. Classification samples and fawn productivity pre-season were significantly lower than 2024, although concern remained for this segment of the population if left unchecked. These HA57 pronghorn are isolated from the rest of the herd and have little chance at contributing to improvement in the herd's distribution and population in the future. This lack of past and future contribution is due to the woven wire fences across the river bottom that they refuse to navigate. They also have little desire to emigrate, as they have access to irrigated hay meadows during the growing season and adjacent upland sagebrush during winter.

Other Considerations

Precipitation during the growing season in 2025 was below average, which led to poor range conditions that could have contributed to the relatively low fawn production. Bitter Creek Herd winter ranges received below average snowfall in winter 2025-26, and warm temperatures kept the snow depths very low. As a result, overwinter survival was excellent, but buck horn growth may suffer leading into the hunting season of 2026.

Despite a round up in 2025 that removed nearly 1,700 feral horses in and around the Adobe Town HMA, numbers appeared high and hunters commented accordingly. Feral horses continued to be observed immediately adjacent to Highway 789, with a couple having attempted to cross recently. These feral horses affected pronghorn distribution and populations through exclusion from water and other resources and habitat degradation, and effectively reduced the carrying capacity of all wildlife across this area.

Management Objective Review

The current objective and management strategy for the Bitter Creek Pronghorn Herd was approved in 2015. For the 2025 (5-year) objective review, following an internal evaluation, no changes were proposed to the current objective and special management strategy for this herd. However, in 2026, managers in all pronghorn herds with special management criteria were considering buck ratio standards in conjunction with developing a hunter attitudes survey to determine whether new objectives should be proposed for these herds.

Population model

Since the severe winter and associated mortality of 2022-23, past line-transect estimates no longer provided grounding for the model (PopR integrated population model), so low harvest rates/effort were the main driver for the model to be able to account for that winter. Good fawn ratios in 2024 and average ones in 2025 along with extremely low over winter mortality contributed to increases to the population. A simpler model framework was selected in 2025, because it was difficult with more complex frameworks to attain favorable model diagnostics while still producing reasonable estimates. As has been the case, the model was unable to account for the steep decline in the herd in one year; as a result, past years' estimates were not particularly useful, nor were predictions for the next couple years. The model predicted this population to decline precipitously in future years, which was not consistent with managers' predictions. Because of this believed absence of prediction ability of the model, the "proposed" population estimate, harvest rates, and change in post-season population in the table above were calculated by hand.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: PR419 - CARTER LEASE

HUNT AREAS: 94, 98, 100

PREPARED BY: JEFF SHORT

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Population:	6,353	7,310	7,000
Harvest:	866	527	700
Hunters:	983	563	750
Hunter Success:	88%	94%	93 %
Active Licenses:	1,068	590	775
Active License Success:	81%	89%	90 %
Recreation Days:	3,712	1,658	2,000
Days Per Animal:	4.3	3.1	2.9
Males per 100 Females	51	55	
Juveniles per 100 Females	62	74	

Population Objective ($\pm$ 20%) : 6000 (4800 - 7200)

Management Strategy: Recreational

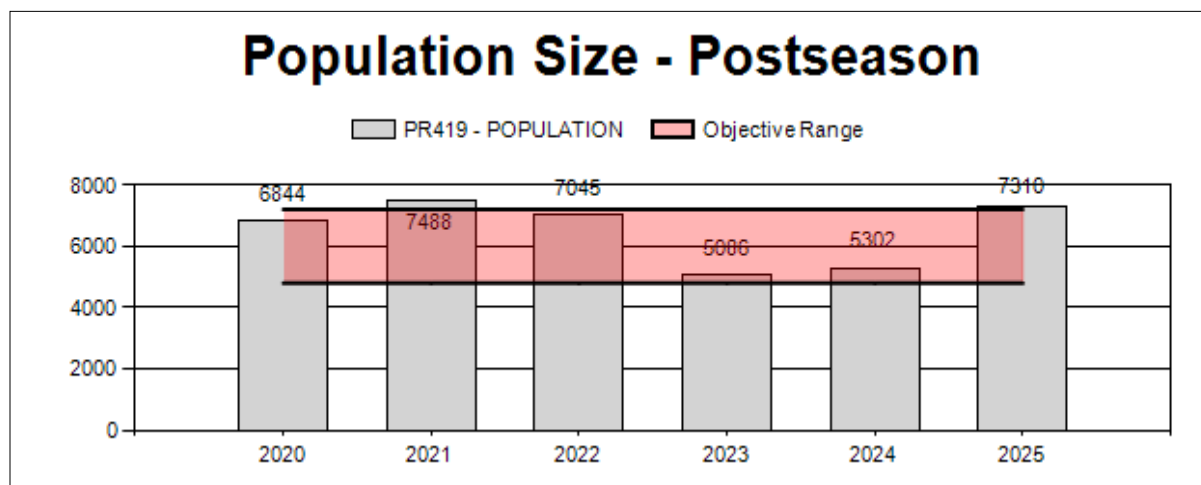
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: 22%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 1

Model Date: 2/21/2026

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

	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females $\geq$ 1 year old:	1.8%	5%
Males $\geq$ 1 year old:	23%	20%
Proposed change in post-season population:	5%	9%



2020 - 2025 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR419 - CARTER LEASE

Year	Pre Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	7,487	69	356	425	26%	792	48%	439	27%	1,656	0	9	45	54	± 5	55	± 5	36
2021	8,165	57	201	258	20%	654	51%	375	29%	1,287	0	9	31	39	± 4	57	± 6	41
2022	6,836	117	208	325	26%	573	45%	372	29%	1,270	0	20	36	57	± 6	65	± 6	41
2023	5,868	57	137	194	25%	399	51%	192	24%	785	0	14	34	49	± 7	48	± 6	32
2024	5,958	37	156	193	25%	294	38%	294	38%	781	0	13	53	66	± 9	100	± 13	60
2025	8,252	46	77	123	24%	223	44%	165	32%	511	0	21	35	55	± 10	74	± 12	48

2026 HUNTING SEASONS
Carter Lease Herd Unit (PR419)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
94	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 9	Sep. 10	Oct. 31	400	Any antelope
94	6	Aug. 15	Sep. 9	Sep. 10	Oct. 31	50	Doe or fawn
94	7			Aug. 15	Oct. 31	100	Doe or fawn valid on private irrigated land
98	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 9	Sep. 10	Oct. 31	50	Any antelope
98	6	Aug. 15	Sep. 9	Sep. 10	Oct. 31	50	Doe or fawn
100	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 9	Sep. 10	Oct. 31	100	Any antelope
100	6	Aug. 15	Sep. 9	Sep. 10	Oct. 31	50	Doe or fawn

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 87.1% Satisfied, 9.7% Neutral, 3.1% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

In this herd unit, we are typically able to provide a significant amount of hunting opportunity due to the productive nature of the habitat. According to a new line transect survey design and updated model; we are at the top end of the objective range. This information is hard to fully trust since recent difficult winters have resulted in low pronghorn numbers in this herd. The winter of 2022/23 was very severe. The winter was so severe that all additional doe/fawn licenses were eliminated for the 2023 season. We are adding more doe/fawn harvest in 2026 to address antelope causing damage on private irrigated lands. In addition, since doe:fawn ratios have been very high, and the model is showing us at the top end of the objective range we propose to add Type 6 doe or fawn harvest back into these hunt areas.

In Hunt Areas 98 and 100, we try to maintain low antelope densities. This is an effort to reduce browse competition for wintering mule deer. The area is an important winter range for the Wyoming Range mule deer herd. We hunt antelope very aggressively in these Hunt Areas to try and keep numbers low. We have to balance hunter success and hunter complaints in Hunt Areas 98 and 100 with trying to keep numbers low. The minimum male harvest goal of 25% has been easily met in this herd in the past but the new population estimates put us slightly below. Field personnel feel that we provide a very high amount of hunting opportunity in this herd unit relative to the population compared to other herds in the region. This causes us to question the new model results.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the Carter Lease Herd was last evaluated in 2025, and will not be reviewed again until 2030.

Winter Severity

This herd has experienced four severe winters over a seven-year period (2016-17, 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2022-23). Typically, pronghorn in this area are somewhat less affected by winter conditions than deer due to their ability to move to wintering areas with more moderate conditions. Pronghorn in the eastern part of this herd generally have the ability to migrate to lower elevation flats during severe winters, but this is increasingly challenging. These crucial winter movements become more difficult as human development and disturbance impedes these movements. Fencing and highways are particularly problematic especially in the western part of this population.

Line Transect Surveys

Population estimates with the Line Transect survey technique are very important for providing adequate data to model antelope herd populations. We were able to fly a Line Transect survey in May of 2025. This was an end of bio year 2024 population estimate. The estimate derived from the survey was 6,321. The SE and confidence interval on this estimate were reasonable (LCL: 5489, UCL: 7370). This is a difficult area to implement the line transect technique due to large differences in densities, habitat types and terrain limitations between the eastern and western parts of the herd unit. In the future, we will need to fly these surveys more often to effectively model this herd.

Population Modeling

We use PopR integrated population models (IPMs) to estimate pronghorn populations. Having a total Carter Lease Herd Unit model is problematic. This is due to much different harvest regimes and population parameters in Hunt Areas 98 and 100 compared to Hunt Area 94. Additionally, the line transect survey method does not fit well with the rugged terrain and very low animal densities found in Hunt Areas 98 and 100. The hunt areas are also separated by highways that are very restrictive to pronghorn movements. We also see significant movement between Hunt Area 98 and the Sublette Herd. For the first time in decades, we used a total herd unit population model in 2026. This is due to the inability to model the segments separately within the PopR model. The new model created a much higher population estimate than previous estimates. We have low confidence in the new model and plan to evaluate this model in the future to ensure we are representing the population appropriately. The IPM estimates a herd unit post-season population of 7,310 (CI=6,233 - 8,423) pronghorn for 2025. In the future it will be imperative that obtain reliable line transect population estimates periodically to check the status of the herd and inform the model.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn
 HERD: PR438 - BAGGS
 HUNT AREAS: 53, 55

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026
 PREPARED BY: PHILIP DAMM

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Population:	5,346	4,264	5,400
Harvest:	202	80	60
Hunters:	217	106	80
Hunter Success:	93%	75%	75 %
Active Licenses:	228	126	90
Active License Success:	89%	63%	67 %
Recreation Days:	696	407	300
Days Per Animal:	3.4	5.1	5
Males per 100 Females	54	46	
Juveniles per 100 Females	69	56	

Population Objective ($\pm$ 20%) : 9000 (7200 - 10800)

Management Strategy: Recreational

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -52.6%

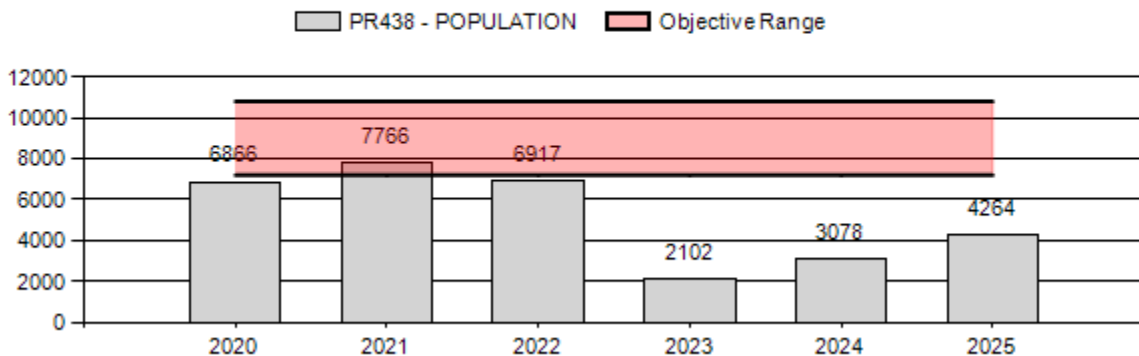
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 3

Model Date: 02/24/2026

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

	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females $\geq$ 1 year old:	0.1%	0.5%
Males $\geq$ 1 year old:	10%	5%
Proposed change in post-season population:	35%	30%

Population Size - Postseason



2020 - 2025 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR438 - BAGGS

Year	Pre Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot CIs	CIs Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylg	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	7,181	51	346	397	29%	611	45%	351	26%	1,359	0	8	57	65	± 6	57	± 6	35
2021	8,103	45	219	264	24%	496	45%	353	32%	1,113	0	9	44	53	± 6	71	± 8	46
2022	7,589	130	175	305	25%	538	44%	392	32%	1,235	0	24	33	57	± 6	73	± 7	47
2023	2,275	25	85	110	26%	230	53%	91	21%	431	0	11	37	48	± 8	40	± 7	27
2024	3,411	16	93	109	15%	313	43%	313	43%	735	0	5	30	35	± 6	100	± 12	74
2025	4,668	51	77	128	23%	281	50%	157	28%	566	0	18	27	46	± 7	56	± 9	38

2026 Hunting Seasons Baggs Pronghorn Herd Unit (PR438)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
53	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	25	Any antelope
53, 57	7	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 1	Nov. 30	25	Doe or fawn valid south of Wyoming Highway 70 and west of Carbon County Road 601 in Area 53, and on private land within one (1) mile of Carbon County Road 603 in Area 57
55	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	50	Any antelope

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 66% Satisfied, 17% Neutral, 17% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

Harvest Data

After the severe winter of 2022-23, the license quotas for HA53 and HA55 were reduced to 25 and 50, respectively. Given relatively low adult buck ratios and skewed pronghorn distribution across the Herd, satisfaction decreased again for the third year in a row in 2025. Hunter success on Type 1 licenses was uncharacteristically low for pronghorn at 64% and 69% for HA53 and HA55, respectively. Type 7 success was about 60%, and most of that harvest came from the HA53 side. Essentially no field harvest data were collected in 2025 for the herd due to the low license quotas and difficulty in finding hunters to check.

Buck and Fawn Ratio Data

Pronghorn distribution following winter 2022-23 was heavily skewed, and that continued into 2025 with only minor improvements. In 2024, over half of the pre-season classification sample in HA53 was observed along the Little Snake River corridor on mostly private lands, while that number decreased to about 42% in 2025. During winter 2019-20 when snow was deep and

crusted over, these pronghorn migrated across the river, over top of many fences, and across Highway 70 to seek areas with lower snowpack and never returned to traditional summer ranges. Densities remained higher than desired in that area in 2025, both in terms of summer range condition for livestock producers and for overlapping crucial mule deer winter ranges. Unlike 2024, fawn and buck ratios were similar between north and south HA53 in 2025, and similar between HA53 and HA55, but below average for the Herd's history. The buck ratio was 45 bucks per 100 does, which met the objective range for a recreational herd; however, 40% of the bucks in the Herd were 1.5 year olds. Managers were concerned over fawn productivity at current levels not being able to offset buck harvest in future years when license quota increases were considered.

Population Trend

The post-season model estimate was 4,264, which although about double 2023's estimate, was well below the herd objective of 9,000. The fawn ratio of 56 per 100 does in 2025 limited population growth in the Herd, and these fawn numbers were surprising given the Herd being below objective as well as far below the habitat's carrying capacity. Even with relatively poor fawn production, the above average over winter survival may have led to greater increases to the population than the modeled estimate indicated. However, managers lacked confidence in model estimates, since no on-the-ground population estimates have been performed following the winter of 2022-23.

2026 Hunting Season

The excellent fawn ratio in the Baggs Herd in 2024 resulted in a significant increase to the buck ratio in 2025. However, additional years will be needed to improve the age class structure and horn quality that hunters have come to expect in this Herd, despite it only being managed for recreational level buck ratios. As a result of poor hunter satisfaction and success, 40% of the current buck ratio being 1.5-year-old bucks, and the skewed pronghorn distribution on publicly accessible areas, Type 1 license quotas for 2025 were left unchanged.

Managers reduced the Type 7 license quota to 25 for the small areas at the southern end of HA53/HA57 where native habitats continued to be affected negatively by altered pronghorn distributions and concerns remained for potential damage to irrigated meadows. Classification samples and fawn productivity pre-season were significantly lower than 2024, although concern remains for this segment of the population if left unchecked. These HA53 pronghorn are isolated from the rest of the herd and have little chance at contributing to improvement in the herd's distribution and population in the future. This lack of past and future contribution is due to the woven wire fences across the river bottom that they refuse to navigate. They also have little desire to emigrate, as they have access to irrigated hay meadows during the growing season and adjacent upland sagebrush during winter.

Other Considerations

Precipitation during the growing season in 2025 was below average, which led to poor range conditions that could have contributed to the relatively low fawn production. Overall, the Baggs pronghorn herd winter ranges received below average snowfall in winter 2025-26, and warm temperatures kept the snow depths very low. As a result, overwinter survival was excellent, but buck horn growth may suffer leading into the hunting season of 2026.

Management Objective Review

The current objective and management strategy for the Baggs Pronghorn Herd was approved in 1994, last reviewed in 2025, and scheduled to be reviewed next in 2030.

Population modeling

Since the severe winter and associated mortality of 2022-23, past line-transect estimates no longer provided grounding for the model (PopR integrated population model), so low harvest rates/effort were the main driver for the model to be able to account for that winter. Good fawn ratios in 2024 and extremely low over winter mortality contributed to increases to the population. Allowing the model the freedom to estimate survival rates for both non-adult age classes seemed to align it better with managers' anecdotal observations of winter loss from 2022-23 and then a few years of fawn production and low severity winters. The model was unable to account for the steep decline in the herd in one year; as a result, past years' estimates were not particularly useful, nor were predictions for the next couple years. The model predicted this population to decline in future years, which was not consistent with managers' predictions. Because of this believed absence of prediction ability of the model, the "proposed" population estimate, harvest rates, and change in post-season population in the table above were calculated by hand.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: MD423 - UINTA

HUNT AREAS: 132-133, 168

PREPARED BY: JEFF SHORT

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Population:	7,608	6,219	7,847
Harvest:	365	648	600
Hunters:	1,344	1,676	1,600
Hunter Success:	27%	39%	1 %
Active Licenses:	1,347	1,694	1,625
Active License Success:	27%	38%	37 %
Recreation Days:	7,038	7,853	7,800
Days Per Animal:	19.3	12.1	13
Males per 100 Females	24	36	
Juveniles per 100 Females	65	81	

Population Objective ($\pm 20\%$) :

20000 (16000 - 24000)

Management Strategy:

Recreational

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:

-68.9%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:

12

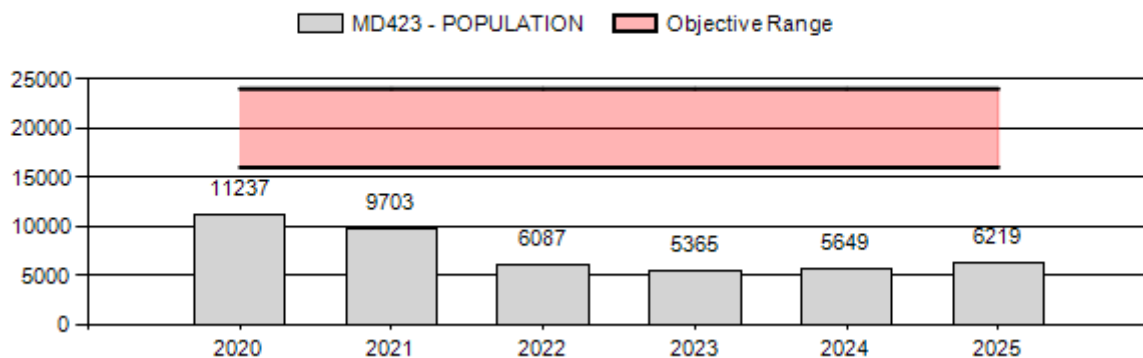
Model Date:

2/25/2026

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

	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females ≥ 1 year old:	1.2%	0.4%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	38%	32%
Proposed change in post-season population:	11%	26%

Population Size - Postseason



2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD423 - UINTA

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	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	11,237	27	66	59	38	0	190	11%	973	56%	586	34%	1,749	0	3	17	20	± 2	60	± 4	50
2021	9,703	60	25	29	8	0	122	13%	526	56%	297	31%	945	0	11	12	23	± 3	56	± 5	46
2022	6,087	143	102	47	10	0	302	15%	1,006	51%	676	34%	1,984	0	14	16	30	± 2	67	± 4	52
2023	5,365	5	24	17	2	0	48	14%	193	55%	111	32%	352	0	3	22	25	± 5	58	± 8	46
2024	5,649	36	24	22	7	0	89	11%	395	49%	326	40%	810	0	9	13	23	± 3	83	± 7	67
2025	6,142	74	30	36	10	0	150	17%	415	46%	336	37%	901	0	18	18	36	± 4	81	± 7	59

2026 HUNTING SEASONS
Uinta Mule Deer Herd Unit (MD423)

Hunt Area	Hunt Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
132	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 10		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
132	Gen – Youth only	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 14		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer; youth only
132	7	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	25	Doe or fawn valid on or within one (1) mile of irrigated land in Sweetwater County west of Wyoming Highway 530 and north of Sweetwater County Road 1 and BLM road 4315
133	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 10		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
133	Gen – Youth only	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 14		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer; youth only
168	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 10		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
168	Gen – Youth only	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 14		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer; youth only
132, 133, 134, 135, 168	3	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 30	25	Any white-tailed deer

2026 Region K nonresident quota: 200 licenses

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 52.7% Satisfied, 24.4% Neutral, 22.9% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

The deer population in the Uinta Herd has been rebounding nicely since the terrible winter of 2022/23. In 2024 and 2025 we saw very high fawn:doe ratios and significant population rebound. However, it will take more time to fully recover this herd. Hunter satisfaction has risen sharply from 37% in 2024 to 52.7% in 2025 and we are now meeting the buck:doe ratio objective.

In this herd we strive to offer a season that includes 2 weekends with 14 days of general deer hunting opportunity. These seasons have been largely buck only hunting over the last 20+ years. This season structure is very conservative and the population is not affected by this level of harvest. Continuing to offer this type of hunting opportunity in light of lower deer survival during tough

winters is still biologically appropriate. Changes in hunting seasons will not resurrect deer that died in past winters or improve population rebound. This type of season will not limit future growth of the herd. However, due to low deer numbers after harsh winters there has been a push from a vocal segment of the public for us to have a season length shorter than 14 days. In response to the social concern, the season was reduced to 6 days after the 2022-23 winter. That season was in place from 2023 to 2025. This was a very restrictive hunting season but did not aid in improving the deer herd. Only time and more favorable weather patterns creating fawn recruitment has helped this herd start to recover.

Season length and buck hunting management are truly social issues rather than biological issues. Season length changes in this herd unit have not affected harvest or hunter effort. In an analysis of variable season length data from 2010 to 2020 we found that season length did not correlate with average days hunted, harvest or hunter days. The average hunter hunted for 5.04 days over that period, regardless of season length. Shorter seasons do create more hunter crowding by forcing those hunters to participate in the hunt over a shorter time instead of spreading out in time when the season is longer. This has been even more evident since 2022 when we did not offer two weekends of hunting opportunity. Hunting seasons offered for mule deer in this area have no biological effect on the herd and many hunters have expressed a desire to go back to longer seasons.

For 2026 we propose to lengthen the general season to 10 days and the youth season to 14 days. This would give youth hunters the option of hunting two full weekends. We should lengthen the season to increase hunter opportunity since the population is growing and we are surpassing the buck:doe ratio objective in this herd.

The buck:doe ratio is dictated by previous years fawn recruitment and is also affected by hunting pressure. The ratio has rebounded from a low point in 2020. It is back up and exceeding the objective range (20-30) at 36:100. With the extremely high fawn:doe ratios in 2024 and 2025 the buck:doe ratio will continue to be good due to large numbers of buck fawns being recruited into the population, indicating that hunter opportunity can be increased.

The Region K nonresident license quota is at an all-time low. The quota was lowered several times in recent years and again in 2024 to 200. There is a history in this herd of significant public complaints about nonresident hunter numbers. It is very close to Utah and most nonresident hunters come from the Salt Lake City area. When they hunt, they come repeatedly throughout the season in groups. This is unpopular with local hunters. In recent years, several private ranches that allowed public hunting through the WGFD PLPW program have opted out and become inaccessible. This has reduced the amount of land we have for hunters to recreate in the herd unit. This, along with severe impacts to the deer herd from recent bad winters have led us to reduce the nonresident quota in the past but further cuts are not warranted. At some point, we should consider increasing the Region K nonresident quota as the population rebounds.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the Uinta Mule Deer Herd was last evaluated in 2024, and will not be reviewed again until 2029.

Chronic Wasting Disease Management

The Uinta herd was prioritized for CWD sampling in 2025. The five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). No positives were found during this surveillance period. Sample collection has been

low since 2020 as harvest was reduced due to more conservative hunting seasons and low deer populations. No positives have been found. Historically, the herd has had two positive test results from targeted samples both taken within the city limits of Green River on the extreme eastern edge of the herd unit. To date, no CWD management actions have occurred in this herd unit.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested mule deer in the Uinta Mule Deer Herd, 2020 - 2025.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (n) – <i>Hunter Harvest Only</i>			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2021	0% (n=6)	0% (1)	0% (1)	2%
2022	0% (n=3)	0% (0)	0% (3)	1%
2023	0% (n=4)	0% (0)	0% (0)	2%
2024	0% (n=0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0%
2025	0% (n=25)	0% (20)	0% (0)	4%
2021-2025	0% (n=38)	0% (21)	0% (4)	2%

Winter Severity

This herd has been commonly experiencing difficult winter conditions for deer survival over the past 9 years. Winter ranges are at high elevations and severe winters can be very detrimental to deer populations. Historically severe winters occurred around once every ten years. Prior to the 2016/17 winter, conditions were mild for five straight winters in this herd unit creating a situation where fawn and adult survival was high and populations were able to grow even with relatively low fawn production. The winter of 2016/17 was severe in most areas and the population in the western part of the herd unit declined drastically due to it. A mild winter followed in 2017/18. This helped the herd rebound slightly but in 2018/19 we had another very difficult winter. Then in the winter of 2019/20 we again had very tough winter conditions across the herd unit. Mortality surveys at the LeRoy winter range complex in spring showed high fawn and adult mortality over this period. It was also verified with poor yearling buck:doe ratios in the years following the bad winters. This was very harmful to the population to have three tough winters in the span of four years. Then, in the winter of 2022/23, we experienced a very severe winter and deer mortality that was incredibly high. Adult doe mortality estimates were over 60% in this herd. These conditions were record-breaking and we saw mortality levels that had never been documented before. In reviewing JCR data and old reports, it has not been documented where four bad winters occurred over seven year period, or any winter even close to as severe as 2022/23 in terms of deer survival. This has been an unprecedented impact to deer numbers in this herd.

Antler Point Restrictions

Antler point restrictions (APRs) had been used in Hunt Area 132 from 2007 to 2024, and in the entire herd unit from 2014 to 2024. This has been at the request of a highly vocal segment of the public. Other members of the public oppose the restriction. The use of APRs for limited periods can be warranted when an area is below the buck:doe ratio objective. This is often caused by a lack of buck security cover and low fawn productivity.

During times of good doe condition and fawn production we see a significant numbers of 3-point yearlings and 4-point 2 year olds. Those deer have the best genetics and antler growth potential. It may be detrimental to the trophy potential of the herd to use APRs that select against those genetics on a long-term basis. APRs should only be used in short duration to increase buck:doe

ratios and not long term. Antler point restrictions should not be used when conditions are favorable and we are meeting the buck:doe ratio objective. As buck ratios are currently above the objective range, we should not use APRs to avoid negative genetic influences and to provide more hunter harvest opportunity.

Aerial Surveys

An aerial survey to produce a population estimate had never been conducted in this herd prior to 2026. A sightability abundance survey was conducted in January of 2026. Survey dollars were tight and sampling intensity was impacted by lack of budget. The survey resulted in an estimate of 5,916 (95% CI = 4,480 - 8,292). This estimate was lower than recent modeling estimates. This is a common situation where mule deer population models without an independent population estimate create higher population estimates than sightability survey estimates. This is not a biological concern since management of the herd has been very conservative. Previous models had been used mostly for looking at potential growth and decline in the population.

Population Modeling

This herd has significant interchange with Utah to the south and west and with the Wyoming Range to the north. Modeling and population estimates should be used with that in mind. WGFD managers use PopR integrated population models (IPM) to estimate mule deer populations. We are seeing significant differences in IPM results in 2025 from the previous model estimates. This is due to the introduction of new data from the first sightability survey flown in this herd unit in January of 2026. The 2025 postseason population estimate for this herd unit from the PopR IPM is 6,219 (CI = 5,584 – 6,886). Although this is lower than previous model estimates it seems reasonable. Rhat values are slightly high and convergence is questionable. The new modeling estimates may introduce a need to reevaluate the population objective in the future but for now it will be prudent to see how the population performs in the coming years. Improving the model and tracking population growth will require flying sightability surveys in this herd every 5-7 years.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: MD424 - SOUTH ROCK SPRINGS

HUNT AREAS: 101-102

PREPARED BY: PATRICK BURKE

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Population:	2,830	5,000	5,600
Harvest:	154	157	160
Hunters:	183	177	180
Hunter Success:	84%	89%	89 %
Active Licenses:	183	177	180
Active License Success:	84%	89%	89 %
Recreation Days:	1,237	1,236	1,235
Days Per Animal:	8.0	7.9	7.7
Males per 100 Females	25	42	
Juveniles per 100 Females	48	68	

Population Objective ($\pm 20\%$): 8500 (6800 - 10200)

Management Strategy: Special

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -41.2%

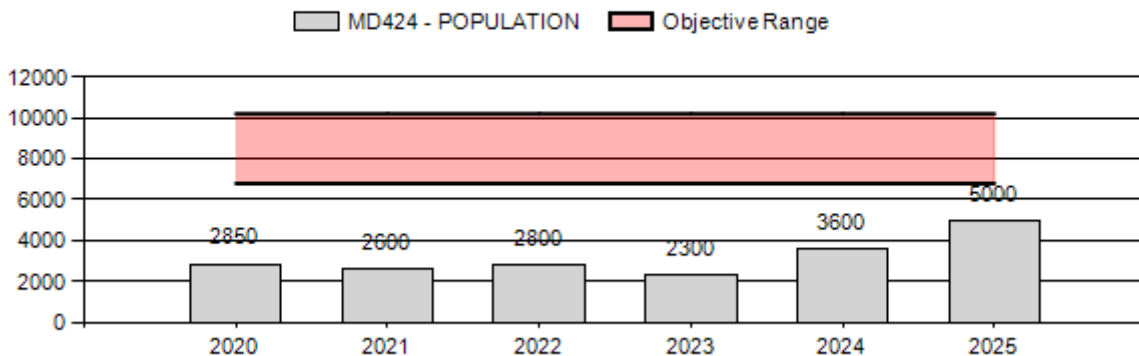
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 20

Model Date: 02/12/2026

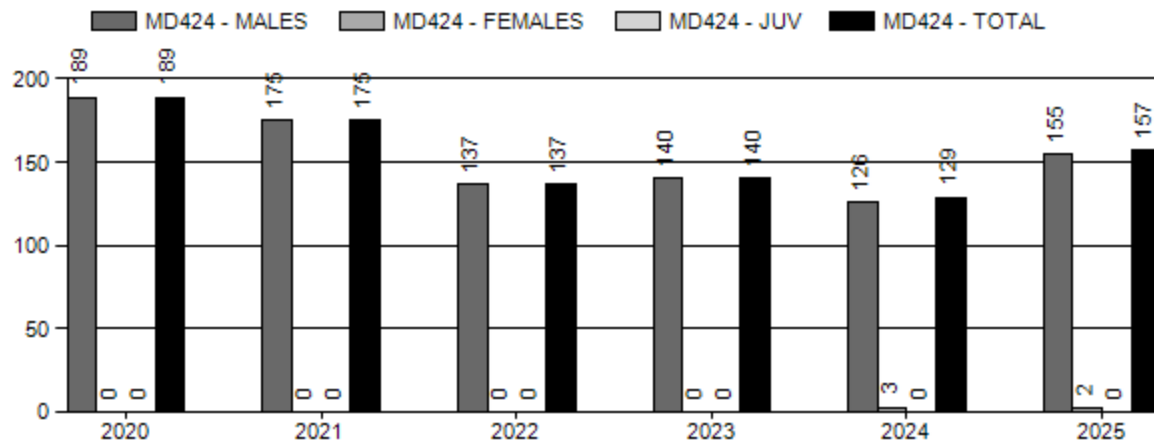
Proposed harvest rates (percent of pre-season estimate for each sex/age group):

	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	14%	11%
Proposed change in post-season population:	12%	13%

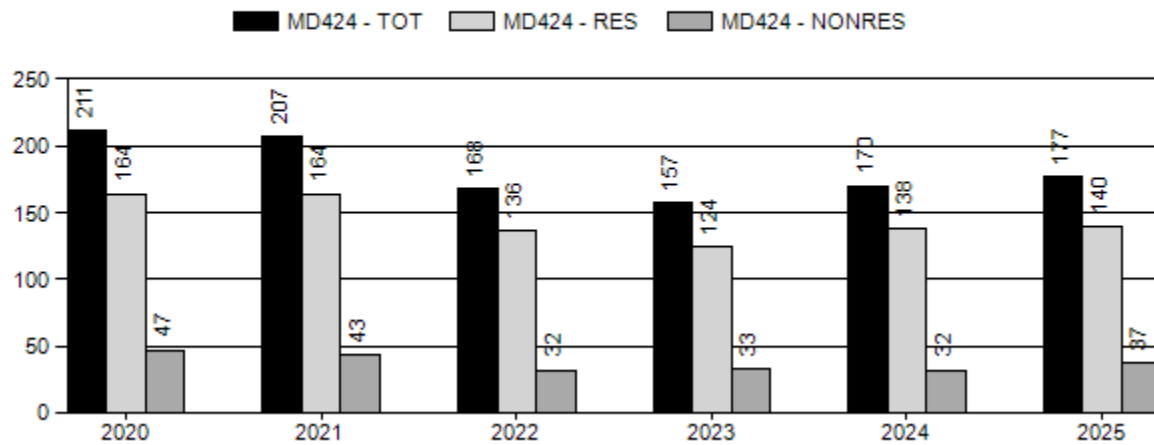
Population Size - Postseason



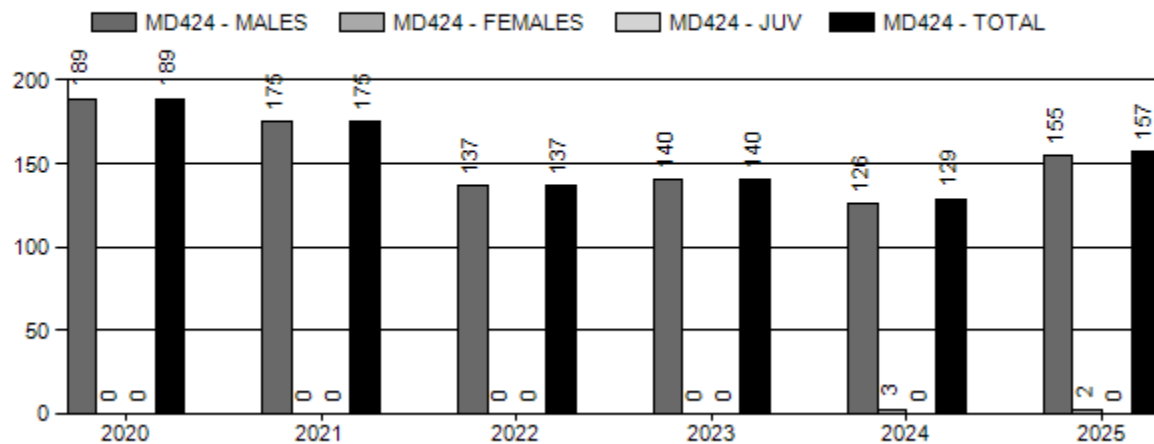
Harvest



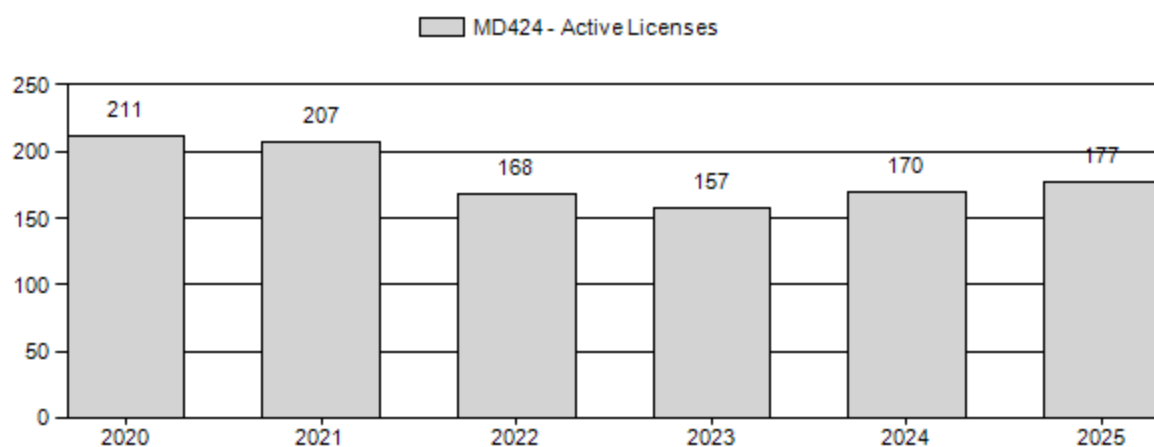
Number of Hunters



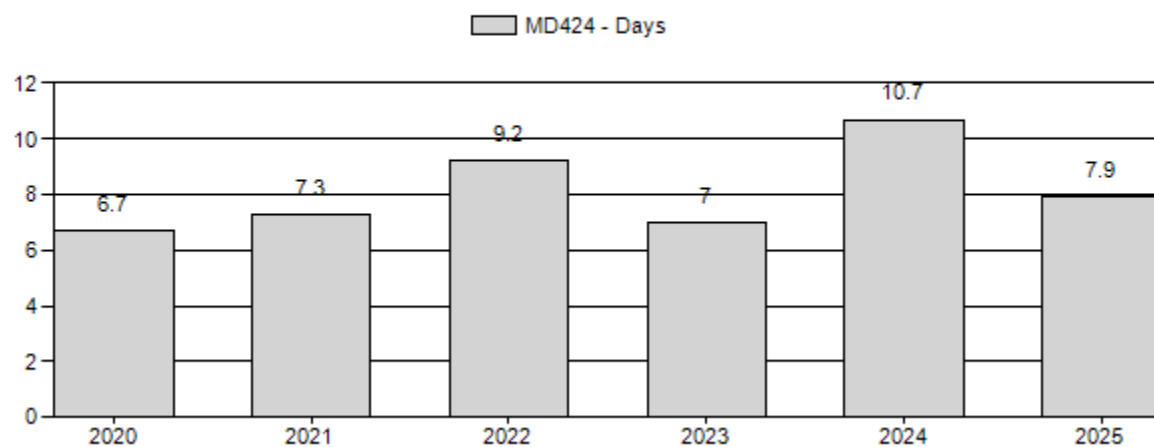
Harvest



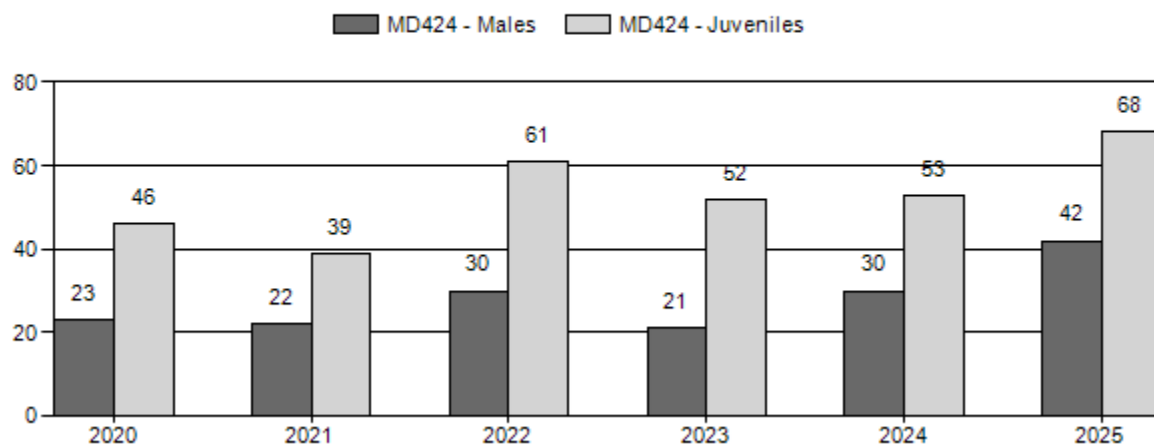
Active Licenses



Days per Animal Harvested



Postseason Animals per 100 Females



2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD424 - SOUTH ROCK SPRINGS

Year	Post Pop	MALES							FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot CIs Cls Obj		Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		2+ Ylg	2+ CIs 1	2+ CIs 2	2+ CIs 3	UnCls	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Yng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	2,850	41	90	54	4	0	189	13%	829	59%	383	27%	1,401	684	5	18	23	± 2	46	± 3	38
2021	2,600	30	40	29	3	0	102	14%	454	62%	178	24%	734	505	7	16	22	± 3	39	± 4	32
2022	2,800	16	43	15	1	0	75	16%	251	52%	153	32%	479	811	6	24	30	± 5	61	± 7	47
2023	2,300	13	5	10	2	0	30	12%	141	58%	73	30%	244	884	9	12	21	± 5	52	± 9	43
2024	3,600	25	49	35	4	0	113	17%	373	55%	196	29%	682	824	7	24	30	± 4	53	± 5	40
2025	5,000	13	18	13	1	0	45	20%	108	48%	73	32%	226	978	12	30	42	± 9	68	± 13	48

**2026 Hunting Seasons
South Rock Springs Mule Deer (MD424)**

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
101	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31	25	Antlered deer
102	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31	150	Any deer

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 77.2% Satisfied, 14.9% Neutral, 7.9% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation:

The 2026 hunting season for the South Rock Springs mule deer herd maintained the same hunting season that has been offered in the herd unit since 2022. Type 1 licenses were reduced that year because of several years of low fawn ratios preceding that season that resulted in lower overall buck ratios, and especially fewer bucks in the 4–5-year-old age range that are typically targeted by hunters in this herd unit. The last four years however, have seen a significant improvement in observed fawn ratios in this herd, with the last four observed fawn ratios being among the highest fawn ratios seen the last 10 years. The observed fawn ratio during the December classification flight was 68 fawns per 100 does, which is the highest fawn ratio observed in the herd since the early 2000's. It should be noted however that with the extremely mild and open winter that the South Rock Springs mule deer herd experienced in the 2025-2026 winter that deer were widely scattered. This, along with fewer hours spent flying in this herd due to other classification priorities in the region, the overall classification sample size was noticeably smaller than normal in 2025. However, fawn ratios in this range have not been seen consistently since 2015 and generally agree with the modeled increase in the overall population size.

The observed 2025 buck ratio from December classification flights was 42 bucks per 100 does. This observed buck to doe ratio should be viewed with the caveat mentioned above that deer were very spread out during the 2025 classification flight and that fewer hours were spent flying in the herd unit in 2025. The observed ratio of 42 bucks per 100 does is a significant departure from the roughly 30 bucks per 100 does that has been seen in the herd in recent years, and is probably an artifact of small sample size rather than biological reality. Given how this herd is still significantly below its population objective and how buck ratios are probably at the lower end of its objective range, there are no indications that license numbers should be changed until increases in the population size or buck segment of this herd increase.

While overall deer numbers are still significantly below objective, and are less than what's desired by the public; hunters were still able to select for older age class bucks during the 2025 season, with the average age of harvested bucks, based on hunter submitted tooth samples, in 2025 being 5.6 years old (median age of 5.5), which is the same average age that was observed in 2023 and 2024.

Management Objective Review:

The objective and management strategy for the South Rock Springs Mule Deer Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2023, and will not be reviewed again until 2028.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring & Management:

The South Rock Springs herd has limited CWD prevalence data available, and no CWD management actions have occurred. Despite limited data, the five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). This herd has not been prioritized for CWD surveillance because of the relatively small size of this herd, obtaining the necessary sample size to accurately determine prevalence would be unlikely.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested deer in the South Rock Springs Herd, 2021-2025

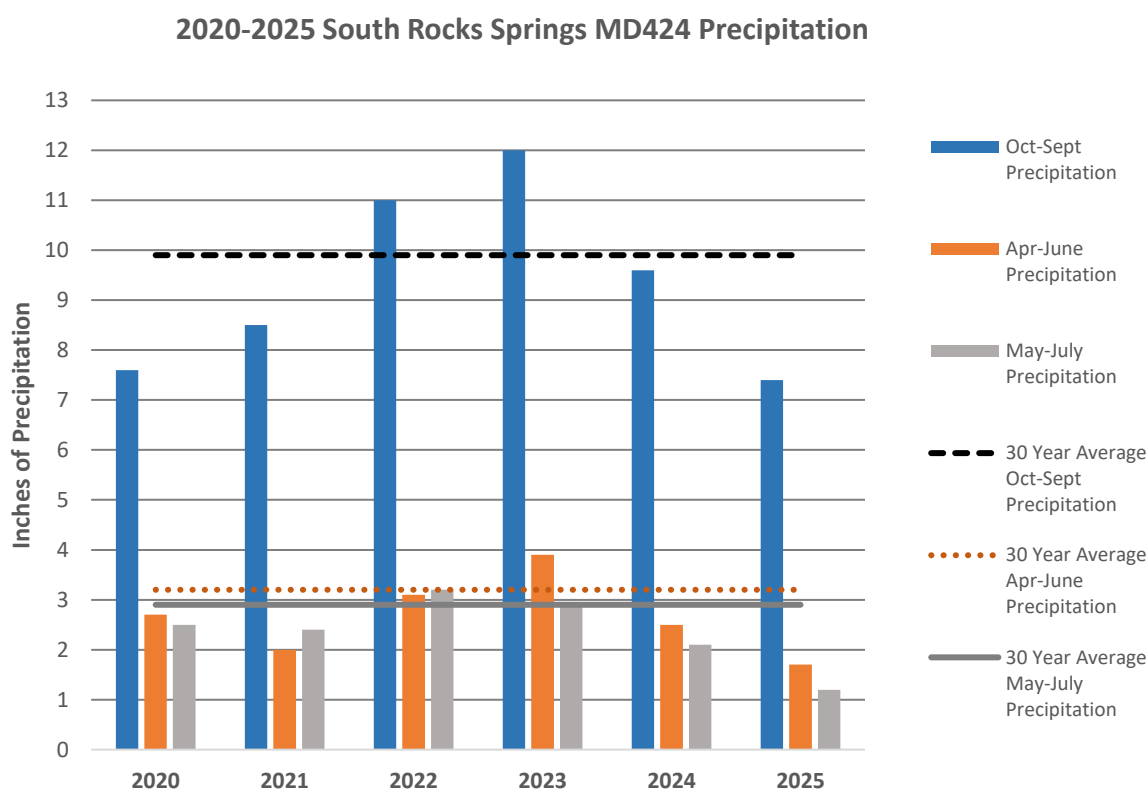
Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (n) - <i>Hunter Harvest Only</i>			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI=95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2021	0% (n=2)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	1.14%
2022	0% (n=3)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	2.19%
2023	0% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0.71%
2024	0% (n=3)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	2.38%
2025	0% (n=2)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	1.27%
2021-2025	0% (0-28.5%, n=11)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	1.49%

Population Modeling:

Since 2021, the South Rock Springs mule deer herd has been modeled using PopR integrated population models (IPM). Given the strong influence that license issuance rates have on the number of deer that get harvested in this herd, the license effort variable was used for modeling this population using the variable reproduction, as well as juvenile and adult survival structure. The 2025 post-season population estimate for the South Rock Springs deer herd produced by that model was 5,043 (CL = 2,922 – 7,742) mule deer. Model diagnostics suggest that the model had good convergence with the Rhat maximum point estimate being only 1.07, suggesting that the model was able to find an adequate fit for the available data. However, high variability in model diagnostic results and population size estimates from run to run suggest that the model has a difficult time aligning with observed data in this herd.

Appendix A : 2025 Habitat Summary

- 1.) **Precipitation:** The Parameter-Elevation Relationships on Independent Slopes Model (PRISM) was utilized to estimate precipitation by calculating a climate-elevation regressions for each Digital Elevation Model grid cell (4km resolution) for the South Rock Springs Mule Deer Herd Unit during the period from October 2024 through September 2025 (water year). Annual precipitation was lower than the 30-year (Oct-Sept) average, and the lowest observed over the past 4 years. Precipitation during the growing season (April-June) was below the 30-year average, and precipitation during the spring-summer period (May-July) was also well below the 30-year average. Spring and early summer 2025 moisture was the lowest recorded during the past decade.



- 2.) **Winter Severity:** Winter conditions on most winter ranges were very mild and have remained generally open. Shrubs have consistently been available and snow depths have not impacted movement or accessibility. Snow accumulation recorded in Green River, WY and Flaming Gorge, UT during the winter of 2025-2026 was well below the long-term average during all five winter months. Average 2025-2026 monthly winter temperatures (November-March) recorded in Green River and Flaming Gorge were warmer than the long-term average each month throughout the winter. Given the combination of a low precipitation year in 2024-2025, little to no snow accumulation during the 2025-2026 winter, and unseasonably dry conditions experienced in early spring 2026, a summer drought situation is anticipated which may negatively affect fawn fitness and survival.

3.) Significant Events: Contracted crews hand cut and piled juniper trees on 289 acres of encroached shrub habitat in the eastern Iron Mountain area during November. These piled trees will be allowed time to adequately dry, and BLM fire crews will then conduct prescribed slash pile burns during winter months to complete the project. This was a collaborative effort between the BLM, Muley Fanatic Foundation (MFF), WWNRT, and the Department. The project addresses vegetative succession to maintain the integrity and value of sagebrush-grassland and mixed mountain shrub habitats for mule deer and other wildlife by removing encroaching juniper trees. Treatment results are expected to maintain a blend of quality deer feeding areas in proximity to bedding, thermal, and security cover provided by established juniper woodlands.

Sweetwater County Weed and Pest District treated 11,546 acres of BLM and state lands to control cheatgrass in the landscape surrounding Little Mountain during 2025. Rejuvra (Indaziflam) was used to aerially treat for cheatgrass at the Laney Rim burn scar, Richard's Mountain burn scar, Greasewood Draw, and the south Current Creek area near Flaming Gorge. Funding for treatments was provided by BLM Fire Fuels, Muley Fanatic Foundation, WWNRT, the Department's Local Sage Grouse Working Groups and Invasive Annual Grass funds. This is the first year Rejuvra has been allowed for treatment on BLM lands in Southwest Wyoming, and more effective control of cheatgrass is anticipated.

4.) Habitat Monitoring: Department personnel also conducted monitoring associated with past and future cheatgrass control in the Laney Rim burn scar, Greasewood Draw, and south Currant Creek areas.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: MD427 - BAGGS

HUNT AREAS: 82, 84, 100

PREPARED BY: PHILIP DAMM

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Population:	16,970	18,108	20,000
Harvest:	858	600	600
Hunters:	2,324	1,871	1,900
Hunter Success:	37%	32%	32 %
Active Licenses:	2,353	1,870	1,900
Active License Success:	36%	32%	32 %
Recreation Days:	12,631	9,415	9,000
Days Per Animal:	14.7	15.7	15
Males per 100 Females	25	29	
Juveniles per 100 Females	64	73	

Population Objective ($\pm$ 20%) : 19000 (15200 - 22800)

Management Strategy: Special

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -4.7%

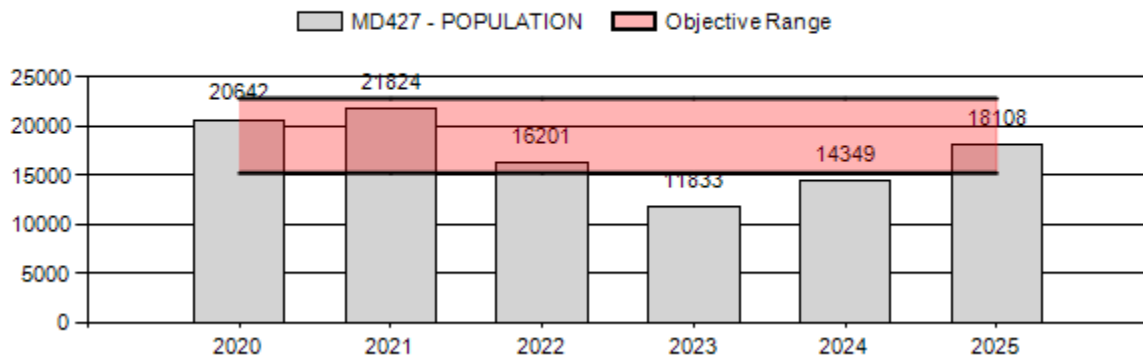
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 3

Model Date: 02/24/2026

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

	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females $\geq$ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males $\geq$ 1 year old:	23%	16%
Proposed change in post-season population:	26%	15%

Population Size - Postseason



2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD427 - BAGGS

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
2020	20,642	135	263	111	20	0	529	13%	2,107	50%	1,550	37%	4,186	0	6	19	25	± 1	74	± 3	59
2021	21,824	509	276	264	92	0	1,141	14%	4,251	54%	2,549	32%	7,941	0	12	15	27	± 1	60	± 2	47
2022	16,201	401	199	168	100	0	868	14%	3,165	52%	2,065	34%	6,098	0	13	15	27	± 1	65	± 2	51
2023	11,833	34	79	69	22	0	204	11%	1,151	63%	473	26%	1,828	0	3	15	18	± 2	41	± 3	35
2024	14,349	101	50	67	31	0	249	10%	1,223	49%	1,030	41%	2,502	0	8	12	20	± 2	84	± 4	70
2025	18,108	265	110	57	26	0	458	14%	1,604	50%	1,174	36%	3,236	0	17	12	29	± 2	73	± 3	57

2026 Hunting Seasons Baggs Mule Deer Herd Unit (MD427)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
82	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 10		Antlered mule deer four (4) points or more on either antler or any white-tailed deer
82	Gen-Youth only	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 12		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer; youth only
82, 100	3	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 30	25	Any white-tailed deer
82, 100	8	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Nov. 1	Jan. 15	25	Doe or fawn white-tailed deer valid on private land
84	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 14	25	Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
100	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 6		Antlered mule deer four (4) points or more on either antler or any white-tailed deer
100	Gen-Youth only	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 12		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer; youth only

Region	Deer Hunt Areas	Quotas
W	82, 100, 131	600

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 51% Satisfied, 25% Neutral, 24% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

Harvest Data

After the severe winter of 2022-23 and the subsequent extreme reductions in mule deer hunting opportunity in the Baggs herd, hunter participation, total harvest, success, and satisfaction dropped to the lowest recorded for the herd in 2023. Removal of the antler point restriction in 2024 while maintaining limited season dates led to modest increases to these metrics. Reinstating the 4-point antler restriction in 2025 only led to an incremental drop in success (35% to 32%), with a similar number of hunters harvesting a similar number of bucks. Satisfaction increased slightly from 46% to 51%. Counter to 2024 when about 1/3 of harvested bucks were 1.5-year-olds, only a few were in 2025. Similarly, only 11% of tooth-aged bucks were 2.5-year-olds. The proportion of Class III bucks in the harvest of 2024 dropped to the lowest since managers started separating bucks into classes about a decade ago. Inversely, nearly 15% of adult bucks checked in 2025 met that size threshold; the last comparable year this occurred was 2017. The average antler configuration of adult bucks harvested in 2025 was a 20" wide 4x4, and average age was 4.8; the last comparable year for these metrics also was 2017. These improvements were partially due to the 4-point antler restriction, which increases harvest pressure on older age classes of bucks; however, not all years with a 4-point antler restriction have yielded such good metrics. While these metrics are encouraging, harvest was still 36% lower in 2025 (600) compared to 2017 (937).

Despite increases in most harvest metrics, managers received many complaints, and satisfaction and success were still lower than what hunters have come to expect in the herd. However, due to knowledge of the severe winter in 2022-23, hunters were generally more understanding of the hunting conditions than they normally might be. A prevailing comment from the harvest survey was seeing too many hunters, both resident and non-resident. Other similar comments included seeing too few mule deer, not enough mature bucks, interest in limited quota, and noting large numbers of road hunters/driving on closed roads. Many hunters expressed interest in maintaining APRs long term. Counter to those comments, many other hunters suggested that mule deer numbers were good, supported General season structures, expressed desires to not have APRs.

Hunters participating in the HA100 season numbered about 270 and observed a 4-point antler restriction along with a 6-day duration. With very low deer densities and no migration inducing weather, all harvest metrics were much lower than HA82. As a result, comments on limited quota in HA100 have increased in the last two years, and more outreach is likely necessary for hunters to understand the impacts of limited quota hunt areas to hunt frequency and the lack of positive impact to the deer numbers in those areas. In HA84, a limited quota area in the checkerboard with only 25 licenses, reported success climbed from 14% in 2024 to 50% in 2025, which indicated hunters' ability to find more mature bucks has improved.

Buck and Fawn Ratios

The buck ratio observed in the December 2025 classification (29 bucks per 100 does) was a significant improvement over 2024 (20). However, the adult buck (>1.5 years old) component

was stagnant at 12, meaning the excellent fawn crop in 2024 resulting in high numbers of yearling bucks (17) was the sole contributor to the increase in buck ratio. The lack of increase in the adult buck ratio was expected, due in part to the 4-point antler restriction in 2025. This consistent adult buck ratio was also due to presumed high winter mortality and resulting low numbers of the age classes of winter 2022-23 yearling, fawn, and *in utero* bucks, which were 4.5, 3.5, and 2.5 years old in 2025, respectively. The proportion of Class III bucks (>25" spread) was 6%, which was an expected decrease due to such high yearling buck ratios along with the 4-point antler restriction during hunting season 2025. The fawn ratio observed during the flight was 73 fawns per 100 does, which was exceptionally high given the severe winter was already three years prior. Fawn ratios were consistently high in both northern and southern crucial winter ranges in 2025.

Population Trend

The post-season model estimate was 18,108, which was a 26% increase over 2024 and slightly below the herd objective of 19,000. With phenomenal fawn productivity and above average over winter survival in each of the last 3 years, the objective may have been reached in 2025. This 2025 model derived estimate was easily within the confidence intervals of the on-the-ground, flight-based estimate from early December 2025 (~20,000), although as expected its interval was wide. The increase in the 2025 on-the-ground estimate over 2024 was about 35%, and the on-the-ground estimate matches more closely with the probably high over-winter survival over the last 3 years.

2026 Hunting Season

Given that the condition of a doe when a fawn is *in utero* plays the largest role in the size of a buck's body and antlers for its entire life, light winter conditions and good animal body condition meant the fawn crop in 2025 had very high potential to produce quality bucks from that cohort. Because of that potential for quality and because fawn productivity was still very high for the herd at 73 fawns per 100 does, the 4-point antler restriction was maintained in HA82 for 2026 to reduce pressure on this presumed high quality yearling buck cohort. Since a 4-point antler restriction is a significant decrease in the amount of hunting opportunity, the duration of the HA82 season was increased by two days, to include the 9th and 10th of October. Adding two days to the hunting season would not be likely to impact buck ratios since harvest later in the season has historically been relatively low. However, the 4-point antler restriction would be likely to affect the adult buck ratio, as it increases harvest pressure on older age classes of bucks. The "youth only" portion of the general season was October 11-12 in 2025; in 2026 it was maintained in HA82, and in HA100 it was modified to include October 7-12 to simplify regulations and keep season dates standardized. This addition of days would be unlikely to result in much additional harvest, since populations are low and most of these days fall during the week when most youth are unable to participate. These dates in HA82 matched the "youth only" General elk season in HA21. This timing allowed for that opportunity to occur on one weekend day and a Monday holiday when youth might be more able to participate.

The 4-point antler restriction was maintained for HA100 due to long term drought, hunter dissatisfaction, and low productivity of mule deer in that HA. This segment of the herd lacks the fawn productivity necessary for these off-and-on APRs to be effective; however, typical concerns over long term APRs remained. A four-point antler restriction and relatively short

season was the only feasible way to reasonably maintain a general license structure in HA100. For similar reasons, the HA84 quota was maintained at 25 licenses.

The Type 3 and Type 8 white-tailed deer only season for HA82 and HA100 was maintained for 2026. White-tailed deer in this area are essentially limited to the Little Snake River corridor on mostly private lands and are currently managed for low numbers to reduce potential for damage and the potential for competition with mule deer.

Other Considerations

The Baggs Mule Deer Herd-wide growing season precipitation data was modeled well below average for 2025 (only 40-50% of average), and anecdotal observations matched that. Low precipitation zones (desert areas; crucial winter ranges) experienced little to no growth, and higher elevations were more insulated to the drought effects. Mule deer forage shrubs crucial for winter survival exhibited poor leader growth, and winter range forage conditions through the 2024-25 winter were marginal. Overall, the Baggs herd winter ranges received below average snowfall in winter 2025-26, and warm temperatures kept the snow depths very low. As a result of these two factors, overwinter survival was very good, but mule deer body condition may have suffered because of the poor growing season precipitation in 2025. Please see *Appendix A* for additional weather and habitat information.

Management Objective Review

The current objective and management strategy for the Baggs Mule Deer Herd was approved in 2015, last reviewed in 2025, and scheduled to be reviewed next in 2030.

Population Model

Abundance Estimate

Additional funding was supplied to the Baggs herd back in 2023 to complete a sightability flight population estimate, the first estimate of its kind in herd history. With a return to the normal flight budget in 2024 and 2025, the classification flight was structured as a pseudo-sightability flight with a composition/abundance survey structure. As a result, an on-the-ground population estimate was produced, but with much wider confidence intervals due to a much lower sampling rate compared to 2023. Over 3,200 mule deer were observed across about 25% of the crucial winter range and 5% of intermediate winter ranges. After accounting for remaining areas not surveyed and for mule deer that were missed within areas that were surveyed, an estimate of about 20,000 resulted. This year's estimate of 20,000 seemed appropriate, after accounting for some modest adult mortality since 2023's and 2024's estimates, and after including another impressive year of fawn productivity in 2025. The increases to the estimate also made sense because although similar but slightly less area was surveyed relative to 2024, 30% more mule deer were observed in 2025.

The sightability estimate in 2023 was extremely timely, not just in providing additional information to managers on numbers and distribution, but also in grounding the IPM (PopR integrated population model) directly after the severe winter of 2022-23. In addition, even with very high confidence intervals, the 2024 and 2025 abundance estimates helped model performance. In addition to the on-the-ground estimates, the model was informed by high fawn ratios, low harvest, and relatively high effort. Allowing the model to estimate both non-adult

survival rates seemed to align it better with managers’ anecdotal observations and most importantly, the three on-the-ground population estimates. The model was unable to account for the steep decline in the herd in just 2023; as a result, past years’ estimates weren’t meaningful.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring & Management

The Baggs Mule Deer Herd was prioritized for CWD sampling in 2023 and carried into 2024 to achieve large enough sample. Managers collected 99 and 121 adult buck CWD samples in those respective years for a prevalence of about 16%. As of 2025, the five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). This prevalence has been cause for some alarm since it was a considerable increase from the last time the herd was monitored for CWD in 2018, when prevalence was 8% out of a sample of 263 adult mule deer bucks. CWD positive mule deer were harvested in nearly all portions of the herd where deer occur during hunting seasons, although lower densities of CWD were apparent in northern portions of HA82 compared to areas closer to the state line. This distribution was logical since CWD has been present in immediately adjacent mule deer herds in Colorado for longer than the Baggs Herd, and since the disease and its prevalence have progressed northward over the last couple decades. To date, no meaningful CWD management actions have occurred in this herd unit. Targeting late season migratory mule deer bucks was proposed but not implemented in 2018 due to lack of public support. At the southern end of HA82 where CWD prevalence is higher, doe harvest was implemented for several years leading up to the severe winter of 2022-23, but those seasons were removed entirely after that winter. Public support for doe harvest in the Baggs herd has been decreasing for years, and has hit an all-time low since that winter.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested mule deer in the Baggs Mule Herd, 2021 - 2025.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive Hunter Harvested Mule Deer, 95%CI, and Sample Size			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2021	19%(n=26)	0%(n=2)	14%(n=7)	5%
2022	22%(n=32)	50%(n=2)	0%(n=2)	3%
2023	16%(n=99)	0%(n=4)	0%(n=0)	31%
2024	16%(n=121)	0%(n=18)	0%(n=0)	19%
2025	15%(n=27)	0%(n=4)	0%(n=0)	5%
2021-2025	17%(11-22%, n=305)	3.3%(n=30)	9%(n=9)	10%

Appendix A

Precipitation

We used the Derived Environmental Variability Indices Spatial Extractor (DEVISE) interface to extract precipitation metrics for the Baggs mule deer herd unit. We selected monthly temporal precipitation data using Parameter-Elevation Relationships on Independent Slopes Model (PRISM) data to estimate annual, growing season, and high elevation (spring/summer/fall; SSF) precipitation (PRISM Climate Group, Oregon State University, <http://prism.oregonstate.edu>, created 4 Feb 2004). Within the 6-year review period of 2020-2025, annual precipitation only exceeded the 30-year average once in 2022 (Figure 1), and 2024 was close to average. During the review period, the largest deficit in growing season and SSF precipitation occurred in 2025. Precipitation during the 2025 water year (October 2024 through September 2025) was below the 30-year average of 13.90 inches.

In addition to a 25% deficit in annual precipitation from the 30-year average, moisture events in the critical growing months for herbaceous and woody vegetation were below normal in 2025. Growing season and SSF precipitation were 50.5% and 63.8% below their respective 30-year average. Limited spring precipitation occurred in April and May but diminished to almost nothing by early June. Precipitation falling during these months is essential for plant growth at high elevations in this herd unit. Lack of summer precipitation in 2025 led to earlier senescence of herbaceous forages across all seasonal ranges. Higher than normal amounts of precipitation occurred in September (0.96 inches) and October (1.53 inches).

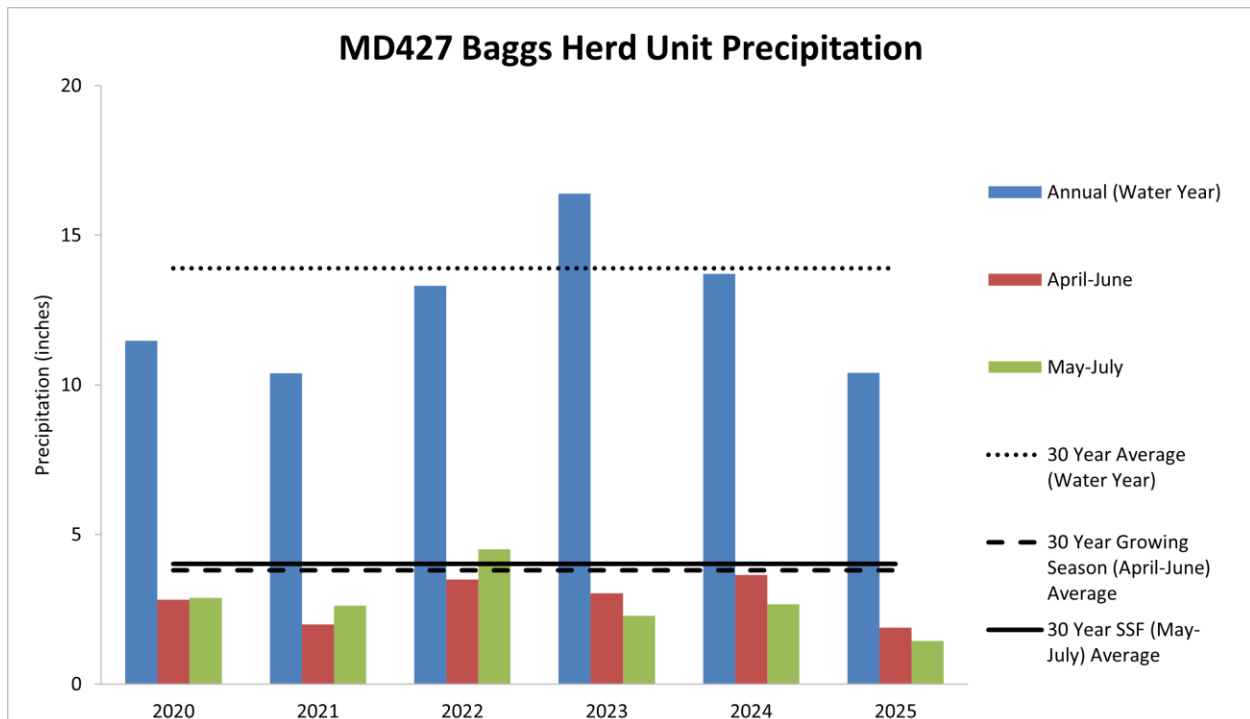


Figure 1. Parameter-Elevation Relationships on Independent Slopes Model (PRISM) estimate of annual, growing season, and spring/summer/fall (SSF) precipitation from 2020-2025 for the Baggs mule deer herd unit in Carbon County, Wyoming.

Winter Severity

The majority of precipitation in the Baggs herd unit occurs outside of the primary growing season, generally in the form of snow. The 2025-2026 winter was mild, with no persistent snow accumulations through fall and early winter. SNOTEL sites at higher elevations in the Sierra Madres reported above-average snowpack for November and December 2025 and below-average to slightly above average from January to March 2026. Spring began early in 2026, which resulted in snowpacks dwindling to about 30% of normal by May. The relatively mild temperatures and snowpack for the 2025-2026 winter likely resulted in high overwinter survival; however, minimal precipitation and snowpack were concerning for habitat and mule deer productivity moving into 2026.

Significant Events

In 2025, the Little Snake River Conservation District, NRCS, BLM, and WGFD began Phase IV of the Valleys and Headwaters Restoration project. Habitat treatments were designed to increase age-class diversity, improve shrub health, and increase species diversity by removing juniper from crucial winter ranges, enhancing aspen communities, and improving mixed mountain shrub communities. Over 2,700 acres of juniper, aspen, serviceberry, oak, and sagebrush were treated in 2025 on all land ownerships. Efforts to improve habitat for Baggs mule deer will continue in 2026 with a focus on treating mixed mountain shrub on BLM land on the Grizzly WHMA and then moving towards foothills/transitional range habitats on the western slope of the Sierra Madres. Additionally, Carbon County Weed and Pest aurally treated approximately 54,000 acres of cheatgrass within the Baggs mule deer herd unit. Approximately 24,000 acres will be treated in 2026.

Habitat Monitoring

In 2015, Department personnel initiated the Rapid Habitat Assessment (RHA) methodology to survey important mule deer habitats. This method strives to capture large-scale habitat quality metrics to better understand how the habitat is providing for the current population of mule deer. The overall result of this effort is to provide a standardized habitat component for discussions about how mule deer objectives should or should not be adjusted based on the general concept of carrying capacity. The Baggs mule deer herd objective review occurred in 2025 and habitat monitoring data, including RHAs, from 2020-2024 were summarized in that report. Two rangeland RHAs were completed in the Baggs herd unit in 2025, totaling 265 acres. Fewer RHAs were done in 2025 than in past years due to priority monitoring on several other habitat treatments. These data will provide population managers and the public with documentation of the current state of mule deer habitat conditions in Baggs.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: EL423 - UINTA

HUNT AREAS: 106-107

PREPARED BY: JEFF SHORT

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Population:	536	2,477	2,282
Harvest:	705	791	750
Hunters:	1,690	2,055	2,100
Hunter Success:	42%	38%	36%
Active Licenses:	1,830	2,227	2,300
Active License Success:	39%	36%	33%
Recreation Days:	13,073	16,757	15,000
Days Per Animal:	18.5	21.2	20
Males per 100 Females	20	0	
Juveniles per 100 Females	52	0	

Population Objective ($\pm 20\%$) :

2500 (2000 - 3000)

Management Strategy:

Recreational

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:

-0.9%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:

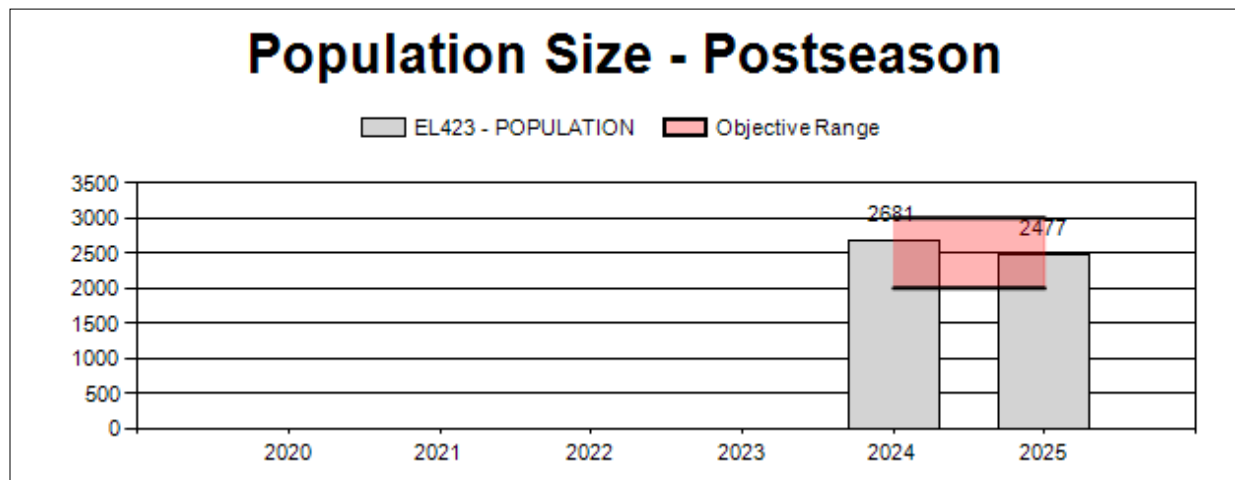
0

Model Date:

02/27/2026

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

	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females ≥ 1 year old:	25%	28%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	45%	46%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-8%	-8%



2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL423 - UINTA

Year	Post Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ying	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2021	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2022	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2023	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2024	2,681	204	101	305	12%	1,543	58%	796	30%	2,644	0	13	7	20	± 0	52	± 0	43
2025	2,477	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0

**2026 HUNTING SEASON
Uinta Herd Unit (EL423)**

Hunt	Hunt	Archery Dates		Season Dates			
Area	Type	Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes	Quota	Limitations
106	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31		Any elk
106	Gen			Nov. 1	Nov. 30		Antlerless elk
106	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Nov. 15	Jan. 31	50	Any elk valid west of the Black's Fork River or north of Wyoming Highway 410; also valid in Area 105 west of the Bear River
106	4	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Dec. 31	150	Antlerless elk
106	4			Jan. 1	Jan. 31		Antlerless elk valid on private land or west of the Black's Fork River or north of Wyoming Highway 410
106	7			Aug. 15	Jan. 31	800	Cow or calf valid on private land or west of the Black's Fork River or north of Wyoming Highway 410,
107	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31		Any elk
107	Gen			Nov. 1	Nov. 30		Antlerless elk
107	4	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Dec. 31	200	Antlerless elk
107	4			Jan. 1	Jan. 31		Antlerless elk valid off national forest within the Henry's Fork River drainage
107	7			Aug. 15	Aug. 31	50	Cow or calf valid in Sweetwater County
107	7	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Dec. 15	Jan. 31		Cow or calf valid off national forest within the Henry's Fork River drainage

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 57.0% Satisfied, 26.4% Neutral, 16.6% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

After 10 years of using a satisfaction-based objective, we switched to a more appropriate post-season population estimate based objective in 2025. Modeled population estimates put the population within the new objective range. Hunter satisfaction remains good with 57% hunter satisfaction. Hunter satisfaction is highly correlated to hunter harvest success.

The Wyoming segment of this interstate herd has increased in size over the past 20 years. The primary reason is that a large portion of elk habitat is on private land and is closed to public hunting and/or outfitted. Private landowners control access to most of the elk. This has created sanctuaries for elk to evade harvest. In the future we would like to see more private land open to elk hunting.

We have significant elk hunting general seasons and limited quota licenses available in this herd to manage this population at objective.

Hunters would like to see more elk in accessible public land areas in HA 106 and 107, so late antlerless hunts are designed to put less pressure on these areas. We attempt to focus most cow/calf harvest outside of those areas. This targets elk causing problems and landowner complaints. The August 15 – 31 portion of the area 106 and 107 type 7 hunts is to address specific damage issues on private lands. Hunt Area 107 Type 7 hunts have high success rates but the limitation area is small and mostly private land where overcrowding and difficult access occurs if too many licenses are given.

The area 106 type 7 licenses are to try to reduce overall elk numbers in a very specific area of mostly private land. Increases of those licenses in 2026 is to put even more harvest on that population segment. The area 107 antlerless licenses are used to put pressure on elk with potential to cause private property damage. Damage complaints in 107 are typically less than 106, even during severe winters. We will maintain general license and limited quota cow hunting opportunity for 2025 to address these potential issues and keep the population under check.

The Area 106 Type 1 hunt had 54% hunter success in 2025. Hunter success is influenced yearly on this hunt by winter severity. The hunt is in addition to general season bull hunts in September, October and November, so significant bull elk hunting opportunity is offered. This hunt is in place to help deal with late damage caused by bulls where Utah elk are migrating into Wyoming and damaging hay. The area is mostly private land and hunters have very limited places to hunt.

Management Objective Review

This herd underwent an objective review and significant change in 2025. The Department went through an extensive public involvement process. The old satisfaction-based objective was replaced with a postseason population objective of 2,500 elk and a recreational management strategy. The change was approved by the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission at the September 2025 meeting.

Chronic Wasting Disease

To date, no meaningful CWD prevalence data is available within this herd unit, no positives have been found and no CWD management actions have occurred. This herd has not been prioritized for CWD surveillance.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested elk in the Uinta Elk Herd, 2021-2025.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (n) – <i>Hunter Harvest Only</i>	Percent of Harvested Adult elk Sampled
	All Adult Elk (CI = 95%)	
2021	0% (n=8)	1%
2022	0% (n=8)	1%
2023	0% (n=4)	1%
2024	0% (n=2)	0%
2025	0% (n=4)	1%
2021-2025	0% (n=26)	1%

Aerial Surveys

In preparation for the objective review in 2025 we conducted the first ever extensive aerial survey in this elk herd. The survey was flown the first week of January 2025. We flew all habitat considered to contain wintering elk with conditions present. We coordinated survey timing with Utah and they flew their side of the border on the North Slope and Summit/West Daggett Units. They did not fly the Chalk Creek Unit due to conditions. There were likely some elk missed in Wyoming due to not flying Chalk Creek elk that can cross the border into Wyoming just south of Evanston. The survey resulted in a raw count of 2,644 elk and an estimate of 2,678 (CI = 2,646 – 2,710). This is a very small sightability correction and is not realistic for this type of survey. We likely missed more elk than estimated and underestimated the population. On this survey we saw ratios of 13 bulls per 100 cows and 52 calves per 100 cows. This was a very high calf ratio indicating a very productive herd. The bull ratio and bull quality observed were poor.

Population Modeling:

There is a new PopR Integrated Population Model (IPM) available for elk. It appears to function okay in this herd unit with acceptable Rhat values and likely convergence. This is due to the availability of a recent sightability based aerial survey population estimate in 2025. However, the sightability estimate had a very small correction that was not realistic. We likely missed more elk and therefore the model is underestimating the population. New aerial survey data will be needed approximately every five years to inform the model and help manage this herd appropriately. The model predicts population collapse due to current levels of harvest. This has been a common problem with modeling elk populations over multiple modeling platforms. This herd also has significant interchange with Utah to the south and west. This violates the assumption of a closed population in the model. Elk GPS collar studies should be conducted to evaluate the extent of the interchange. Modeling and population estimates should be used with these issues in mind.

Damage Concerns

This is an interstate herd shared with Utah. There are elk that summer in Wyoming and in the Uinta Mountains in Utah that come to Wyoming to winter. Limited public land winter range is an issue for this herd. With winter range in short supply, conflict with agriculture producers can become an issue. Damage complaints occur on bad winters. Summer damage also occurs on crops in limited areas. Significant efforts have been made by field personnel to alleviate these problems. The strategy in this herd unit has been to minimize elk damage problems through harvest and hunting season structure.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: EL424 - SOUTH ROCK SPRINGS

HUNT AREAS: 30-32

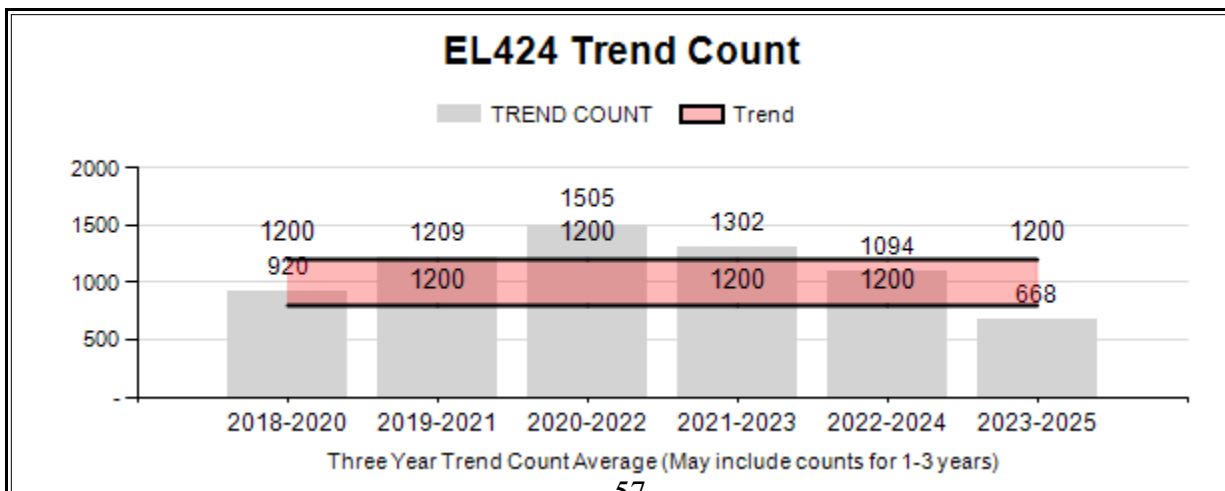
PREPARED BY: PATRICK BURKE

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Trend Count:	1,262	209	1,000
Harvest:	337	303	300
Hunters:	511	488	450
Hunter Success:	66%	62%	67 %
Active Licenses:	511	489	450
Active License Success	66%	62%	67 %
Recreation Days:	3,881	3,962	4,000
Days Per Animal:	11.5	13.1	13.3
Males per 100 Females:	25	52	
Juveniles per 100 Females	38	54	

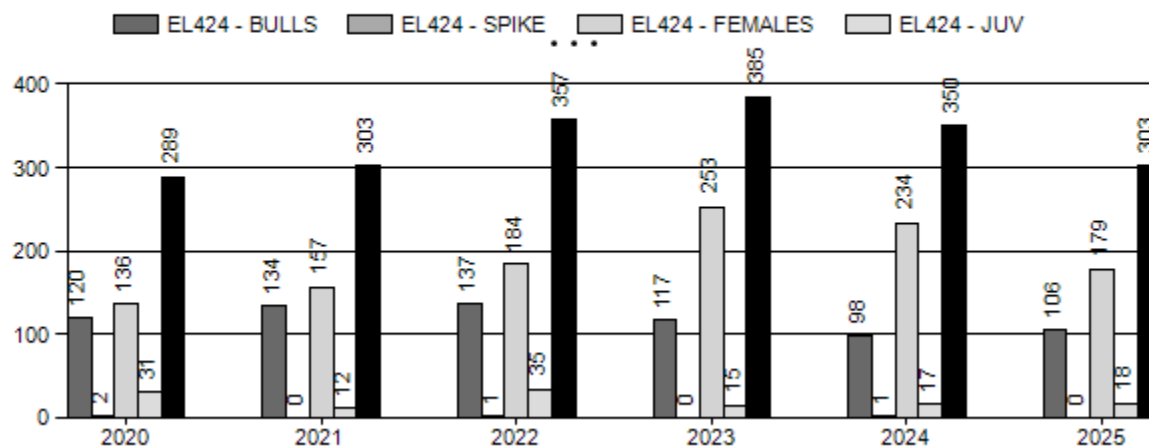
Trend Based Objective ($\pm 20\%$)	1,000 (800 - 1200)
Management Strategy:	Special
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	-79.1%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	1

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

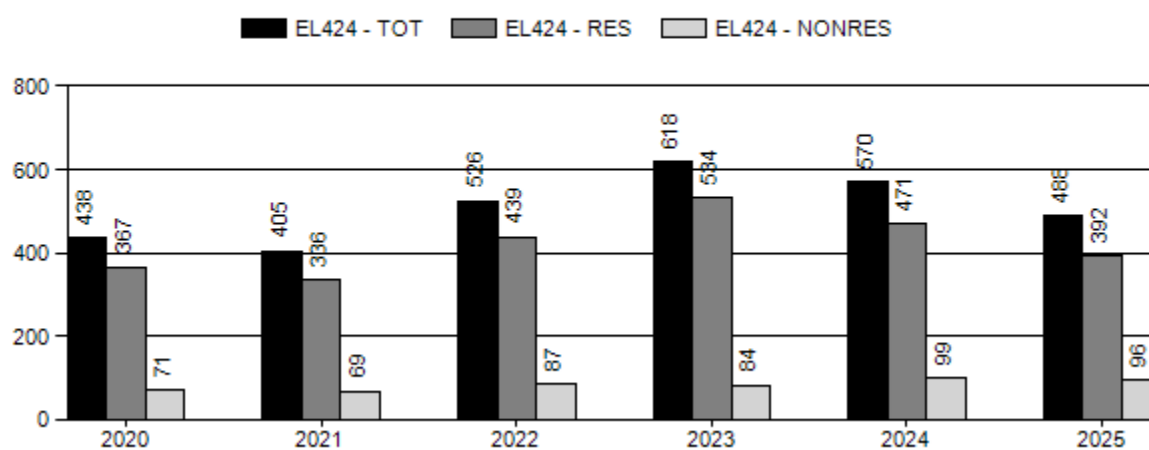
	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Juveniles (< 1 year old):	0%	0%
Total:	0%	0%
Proposed change in post-season population:	0%	0%



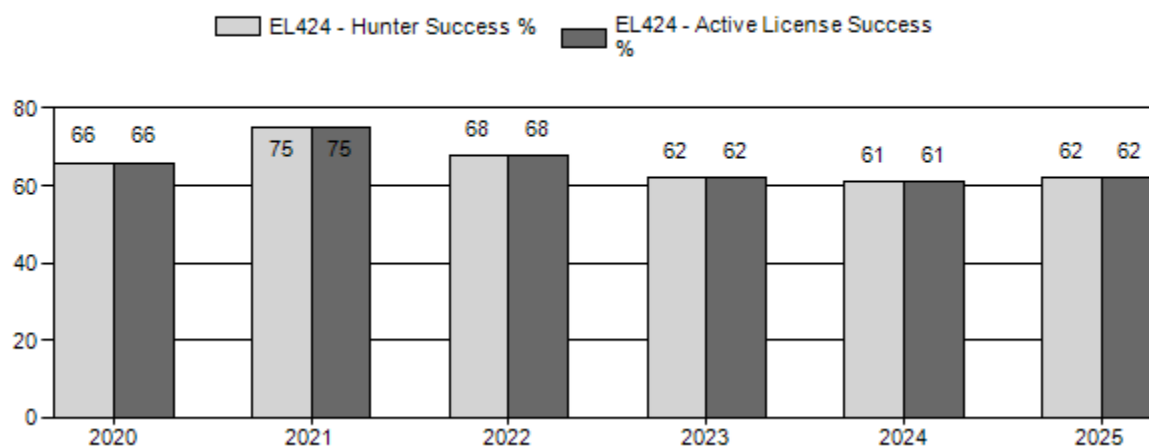
Harvest



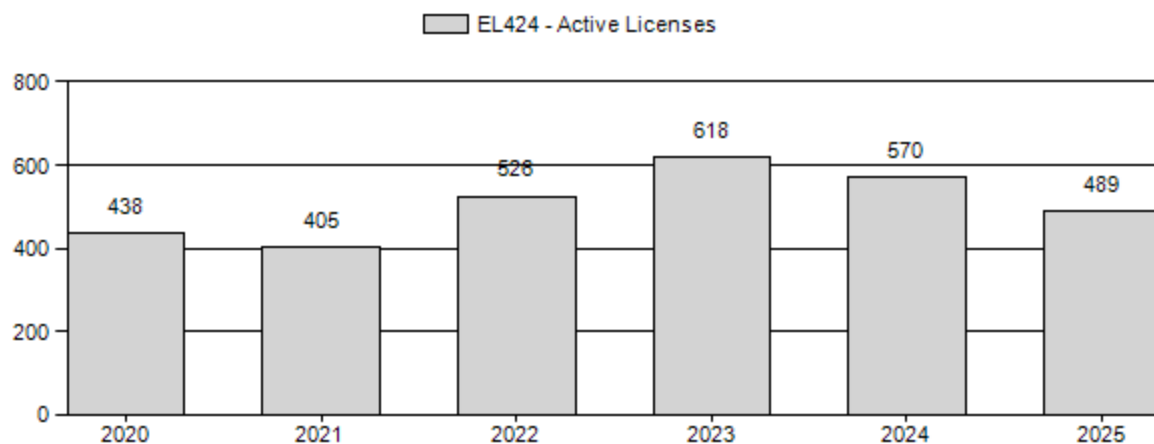
Number of Hunters



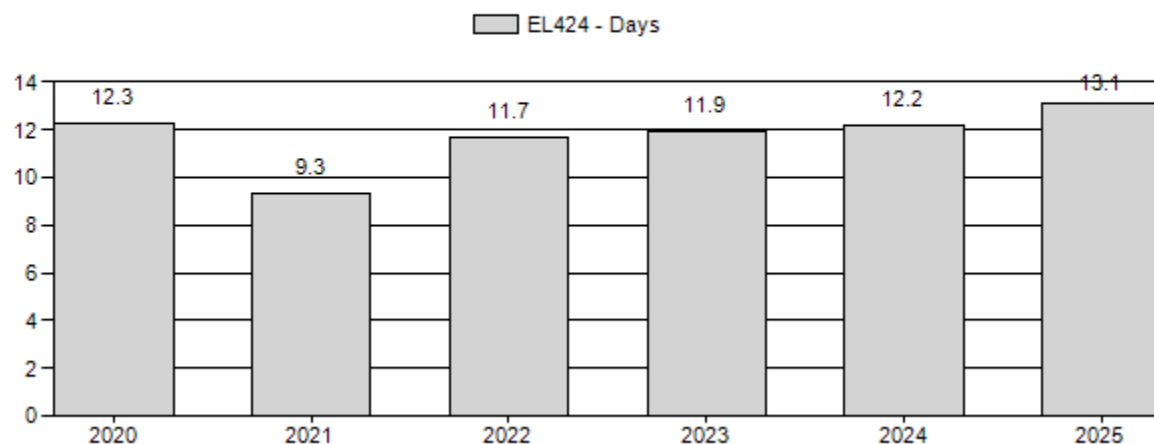
Harvest Success



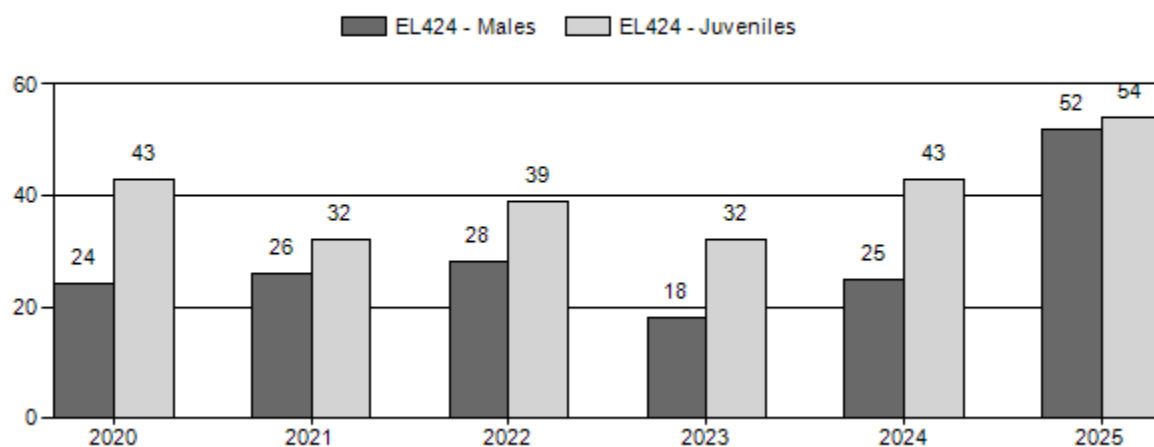
Active Licenses



Days per Animal Harvested



Postseason Animals per 100 Females



2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL424 - SOUTH ROCK SPRINGS

Year	Post Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot CIs	CIs Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylg	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	0	112	126	238	14%	987	60%	429	26%	1,654	521	11	13	24	± 0	43	± 0	35
2021	0	144	80	224	17%	846	63%	273	20%	1,343	383	17	9	26	± 0	32	± 0	26
2022	0	151	101	252	17%	888	60%	346	23%	1,486	501	17	11	28	± 0	39	± 0	30
2023	0	64	64	128	12%	694	66%	225	21%	1,047	423	9	9	18	± 0	32	± 0	27
2024	0	46	65	111	15%	445	59%	192	26%	748	437	10	15	25	± 0	43	± 0	35
2025	0	19	34	53	25%	101	48%	55	26%	209	345	19	34	52	± 0	54	± 0	36

**2026 Hunting Seasons
South Rock Springs Elk Herd (EL424)**

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
30	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	40	Any elk
30	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 6	Nov. 15	75	Antlerless elk
31	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	40	Any elk
31	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 6	Nov. 15	50	Antlerless elk
32	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	40	Any elk
32	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 6	Dec. 31	100	Antlerless elk

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 77.5% Satisfied, 13.7% Neutral, 8.9% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation:

The 2026 hunting season saw changes in license numbers across all three hunt areas in South Rock Spring elk herd unit, with reductions in Type 4 licenses being implemented across the herd unit, as well as the removal of the archery only antlerless Type 9 license in HA32.

As no dedicated mid-winter trend count flight has been conducted in recent years, the number of elk classified during the December classification flight has been used as a surrogate trend count number for this herd. During that flight in 2025, a total of 209 elk were classified, with 114 of those elk being observed in HA30, 82 elk being documented in HA31, and 13 elk were seen in HA32. This number brings the three-year trend count average for this herd to 668 elk, which is below its objective range of between 800 and 1,200 elk. It should be noted though that due to other classification priorities in the region, notably the data collection efforts in the Petition elk herd, that fewer hours were spent flying in the South Rock Springs herd unit than what has spent there in the past. In total a little less than half the normal amount of time was spent conducting classification flights in 2025 as had been spent in previous years.

The observed bull to cow ratio for the South Rock Springs herd from the December classification flight was 52 bulls per 100 cows. The observed bull to cow ratio in 2025 was a significant departure from recent bull to cow ratios in this herd, which averaged only 24.2 bulls per 100 cows for the period from 2020 to 2024, and is probably an artifact of the small number of elk classified in 2025 rather than an accurate representation of the actual number of bulls in the population. Based on hunter submitted tooth samples, the average age of harvested bulls in 2025 was 6.4 years old, which is up slightly from the 6.2-year-old average reported for this herd in 2024. Also, during that December flight, 101 cows and 55 calves were observed, which resulted in an observed calf to cow ratio of 54 calves per 100 cows. All of the observed ratios from 2025 should be taken with a grain of salt given the small number of elk classified that year.

After several years of increased harvest designed to reduce the number of elk in the South Rock Springs herd, all indications are that elk numbers have indeed been reduced in the herd unit to the point that this elk herd is now at or below its objective and where cow elk hunters are having an increasingly hard time locating elk in the herd unit. Because of how successful the last several

hunting seasons have been at reducing elk densities in the South Rock Springs herd unit, reductions in all antlerless license types were implemented for the 2026 hunting season. Along with the notable decrease in the number of elk in the population, the 2025 hunting season saw a significant decrease in hunter success for Type 4 licenses across the herd unit. The overall success rate for Type 4 license holders in HA31 was only 51% with over 13 days of hunting for every cow harvested. Given the open nature of the landscape and abundance of public lands where this elk herd lives, these harvest success rates are significantly below what is typically reported for this herd. Along with this reduction in the reported success rates for hunters hunting especially in HA31, a consistent trend in comments from the public has been that hunters have been having an increasingly difficult time locating elk in this hunt area over the last several years. After several years of increased harvest designed to reduce elk populations in the South Rock Springs herd, indications are that the elk herd has been reduced to the point that the herd is again within or below its objective range and therefore, antlerless licenses were reduced across the herd.

Management Objective Review:

The objective and management strategy for the South Rock Springs Elk Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2023, and will not be reviewed again until 2028.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring & Management:

The South Rock Springs herd has limited CWD prevalence data available, and no CWD management actions have occurred. Despite limited data, the five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). This herd has not been prioritized for CWD surveillance because of the relatively small size of this herd, obtaining the necessary sample size to accurately determine prevalence would be unlikely.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested elk in the South Rock Springs Elk Herd, 2021-2025

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (n)	Percent of Harvested Elk Sampled
	All Elk (CI=95%)	
2021	0% (n=1)	0.33%
2022	0% (n=2)	0.56%
2023	0% (n=3)	0.78%
2024	0% (n=0)	0.00%
2025	0% (0-36.9% n=4)	0.94%
2021-2025	0% (0-30.8% n=10)	0.28%

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: EL425 - SIERRA MADRE

HUNT AREAS: 13, 15, 21, 108, 130

PREPARED BY: PHILIP DAMM

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Trend Count:	5,528	0*	5,000
Harvest:	2,210	2,361	2,250
Hunters:	5,285	5,138	5,200
Hunter Success:	42%	46%	43 %
Active Licenses:	5,629	5,550	5,500
Active License Success	39%	43%	41 %
Recreation Days:	40,691	39,513	40,000
Days Per Animal:	18.4	16.7	17.8
Males per 100 Females:	31	0	
Juveniles per 100 Females	33	0	

Trend Based Objective (± 20%)

5,000 (4000 - 6000)

Management Strategy:

Recreational

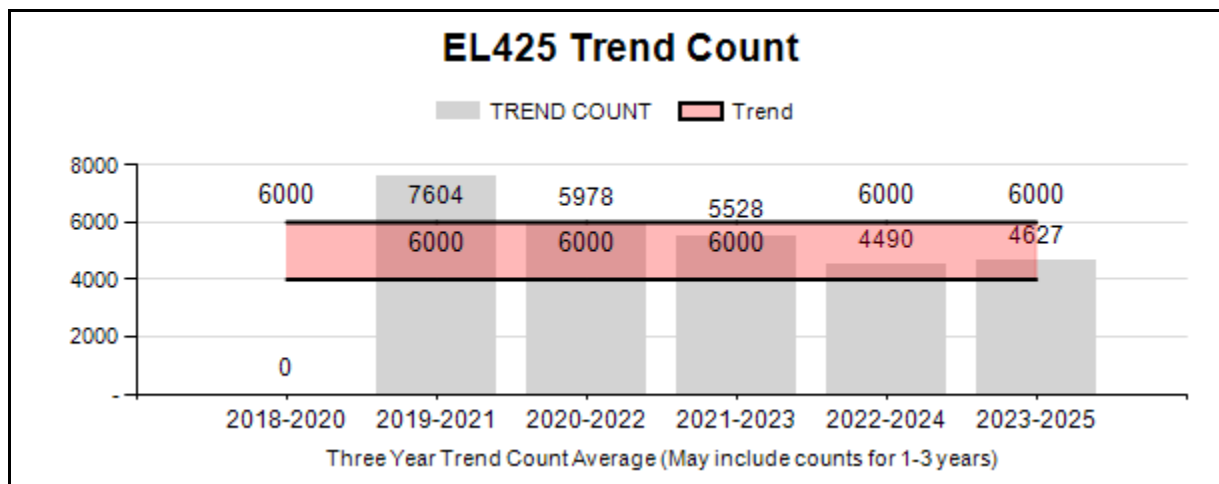
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:

N/A%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:

0

*The Sierra Madre Elk Herd trend count was not evaluated in 2024 or 2025 due to budget constraints.



*The Sierra Madre Elk Herd trend count was not evaluated in 2024 or 2025 due to budget constraints.

2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL425 - SIERRA MADRE

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot CIs		CIs Obj		Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ying	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult		
Year	Post Pop																			
2020	0	22	37	59	17%	193	56%	92	27%	344	0	11	19	31	± 0	48	± 0	37		
2021	0	501	513	1,073	24%	2,670	59%	797	18%	4,540	0	19	19	40	± 0	30	± 0	21		
2022	0	234	256	490	16%	1,939	61%	730	23%	3,159	0	12	13	25	± 0	38	± 0	30		
2023	0	269	419	688	16%	2,707	63%	893	21%	4,288	0	10	15	25	± 0	33	± 0	26		
2024	0	60	137	197	21%	603	63%	157	16%	957	0	10	23	33	± 0	26	± 0	20		
2025	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0		

2026 Hunting Seasons Sierra Madre Elk Herd Unit (EL425)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
12, 13, 15, 110	7			Aug. 15	Jan. 31	400	Cow or calf valid on private land
13	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31		Any elk
13	6	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Dec. 31	150	Cow or calf
15	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31		Any elk
15	6	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Dec. 31	200	Cow or calf

21	Gen-Youth only	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 11	Oct. 12		Any elk; youth only
21	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31		Any elk
21	6	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Nov. 20	200	Cow or calf
21	7			Aug. 15	Dec. 31	100	Cow or calf valid on private land
108	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	150	Any elk
108	1			Nov. 1	Jan. 31		Antlerless elk
108	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Jan. 31	100	Antlerless elk
108	6	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Dec. 31	300	Cow or calf
108	6			Jan. 1	Jan. 31		Cow or calf valid west of the Twentymile Road (Carbon County Rd 605 N)
130	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31		Any elk

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 64% Satisfied, 23% Neutral, 13% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

Harvest Data

Participation in the Sierra Madre Elk Herd hunts decreased slightly in 2025, although harvest increased slightly. Bull harvest exceeded pre-2023 levels for the second year and approached matching the high in 2021, while cow/calf harvest remained steady. General season success was dissimilar between hunt areas, with HAs 13 and 15 at about 25% and HA21 at about 40%. Success on Type 6 licenses was also disparate, with HAs 15 and 21 at about 50% and HA13 at about 37%. Archery seasons continued to be popular, with a trend emerging in terms of the proportion of harvest coming prior to the rifle seasons. Non-resident Region S license holders in both 2024 and 2025 did not seem to be result in higher hunter numbers, as pooled non-resident participation across all license types in this herd's hunting seasons was consistent with previous years. For the second year in a row, a lower proportion of cow elk (higher proportion of bull elk) was harvested compared to preceding years, and this occurred despite the lack of "bull only" opener in HA21. These harvest proportions could have been due to fewer available cow elk, improved bull ratios, and/or hunter selectivity. Success in HA108 for all license types was higher than in past years and reached 89%, 61%, and 71% for Type 1s, 4s, and 6s, respectively. This high success on active licenses has been atypical for Type 4s and 6s in recent past, 2024

notwithstanding. High success on active licenses may be partly attributed to the late onset of winter weather conditions, which allowed for increased access in HA108 throughout the entirety of the season.

A prevailing comment from the harvest survey was seeing too many hunters, both resident and non-resident. These comments often included secondary issues like seeing too few elk, suggesting “choose your weapon” seasons or limited quota, and noting large numbers of road hunters/driving on closed roads. Counter to those comments, other hunters suggested that elk numbers were good and the HAs were not too crowded. Hunters also commonly mentioned the trend of warm weather during the General seasons, and some suggested later seasons to mitigate that issue. A common thought among hunters using the National Forest was that deadfall was a major inhibitor to access.

Trend Count

The mid-winter trend count objective for Sierra Madre Elk Herd (SMEH) was not assessed during the 2025 biological year due to budget constraints. The last trend count totaled 4,627 elk in January 2024. This flight made the assessment of the three-year average objective possible for the first time. The three-year average in 2023 was 5,528, which was within the objective range of 4,000 to 6,000 elk. Managers planned a sightability flight to occur in spring of 2026, which would be an on-the-ground estimate for the SMEH. With that estimate, the future intent would be to inform a potential new population objective using the new integrated population model in place of the current trend objective. This effort would lead to significantly reduced cost when compared to the trend count objective, which is required to be assessed on an annual basis. A sightability estimate would be used every few years to inform the population models for years in between flights.

2026 Hunting Season

No changes were implemented in 2026 to HAs 13, 15, or 21 that would drastically affect harvest, with the expectation that similar harvest to 2024 and 2025 would occur again. The “youth only” portion of the HA21 general season was maintained on October 11-12 in 2026, which matched the “youth only” General mule deer season in HA82. This timing allowed for that opportunity to occur on one weekend day and a Monday holiday when youth might be more able to participate, and it also provided for a two-day break for elk to redistribute prior to the regular General season opener. Managers increased the HA21 Type 7 “private land only” quota to 100 to provide landowners a tool necessary to manage elk on the Little Snake River without having to add a license type or another area limitation. Finally, managers changed the season close date for the General season in HA130 from Oct. 23 to Oct. 31 to standardize that date with neighboring hunt areas.

Quotas in HA108 were increased for all license types in 2025 to provide additional opportunity perceived by high levels of hunter success. However, managers, hunters, and landowners have continued concerns with the extremely limited access in HA108 due to true checkerboard land ownership. Quota increases in HA108 potentially lead to increased trespass issues for landowners. As such, significant increases have not been a palatable way for managers to increase hunting opportunity within HA108. Additionally, increased quotas may eventually lead to decreased harvest with pressured elk finding refuge on private lands within HA108. Quotas

need to be scaled according to the number of elk available for harvest, with the goal of retaining reasonable numbers of elk and hunting opportunity on public lands. That said, managers did add 25 Type 1 licenses to offer increased opportunity there. Due to continued limitations in access and concern regarding hunter saturation in publicly accessible areas, no increases were made to Type 4 and 6 licenses. Finally, in response to building hunting pressure and hunter comments, managers adjusted the rifle opening date for Type 1 licenses to Oct. 1, and the opening date for Type 4 and 6 licenses to Oct. 15. These date changes would allow for standardization with neighboring hunt areas and provide increased harvest opportunity for Type 1 licenses prior to the arrival of cow/calf hunters. Type 4 and 6 seasons remain over 3 months long and should not be affected much, as much of that harvest occurs later in the season.

Brucellosis Testing

Blood samples from freshly harvested elk were collected in 2024 for brucellosis testing, mostly from HAs 13 and 15. None of the 26 samples that were collected in 2024 tested positive for brucellosis. Samples were also collected in 2023 from HAs 21 and 108; none of those 78 testable samples were positive for brucellosis either.

Management Objective Review

The current objective and management strategy for the Sierra Madre Elk Herd was approved in 2019, last reviewed in 2024, and is scheduled to be reviewed again in 2029. However, managers planned a sightability estimate in spring of 2026 with the future intent of informing a potential new population objective using the new integrated population model in place of the current trend objective. Therefore, managers may choose to review it sooner than scheduled in 2029.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Monitoring & Management

The Sierra Madre Elk Herd was last prioritized for CWD sampling in 2021. In 2021, managers for this herd across three administrative regions sampled 264 adult elk for CWD to estimate prevalence, and well over 300 total elk were sampled. Of those 264 adults, only one was positive for CWD for a prevalence estimate of 0.4% and a 95% confidence interval of 0.1%-2.3%. The five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). To date, no meaningful CWD management actions have occurred in this herd unit. Although, high harvest rates, and thus high turnover in all sex and age classes, inherently has helped maintain low CWD prevalence.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive Hunter Harvested Adult Elk, 95% CI, and Sample Size	Percent of Harvested Adult Elk Sampled
2021	0.4% (n=264)	15%
2022	0% (n=36)	2%
2023	0% (n=24)	1%
2024	0% (n=46)	3%
2025	0% (n=36)	2%
2021-2025	0.2% (0.0-1.4%, n=406)	4%

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: EL426 - STEAMBOAT

HUNT AREAS: 100

PREPARED BY: PATRICK BURKE

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Population:	1,748	1,400	1,200
Harvest:	629	425	400
Hunters:	825	569	550
Hunter Success:	76%	75%	73%
Active Licenses:	837	573	550
Active License Success:	75%	74%	73%
Recreation Days:	4,188	3,021	3,000
Days Per Animal:	6.7	7.1	7.5
Males per 100 Females	51	54	
Juveniles per 100 Females	36	28	

Population Objective ($\pm$ 20%): 1200 (960 - 1440)

Management Strategy: Special

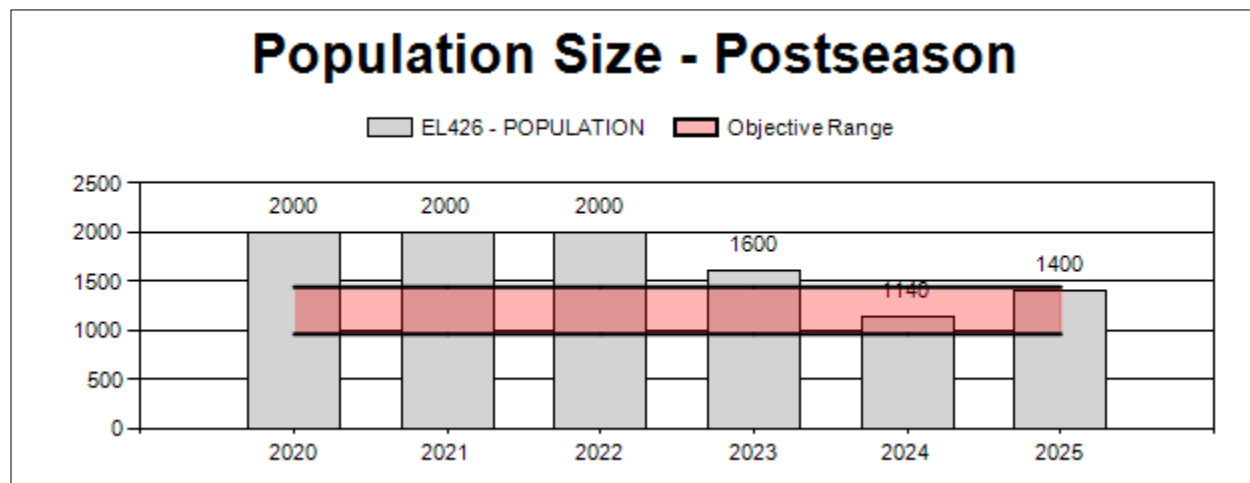
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: 17%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 10

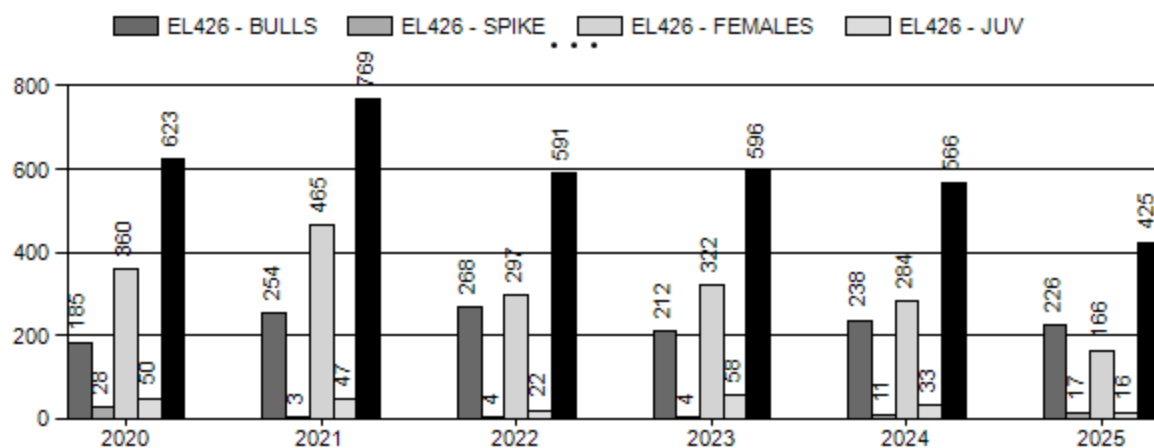
Model Date: 02/20/2026

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

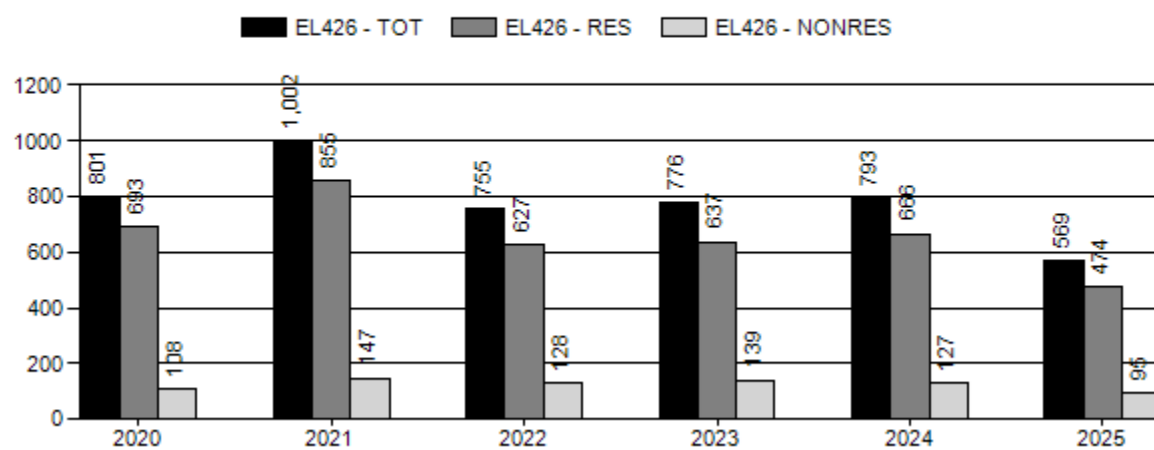
	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females $\geq$ 1 year old:	30%	15%
Males $\geq$ 1 year old:	25%	50%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-50%	-15%



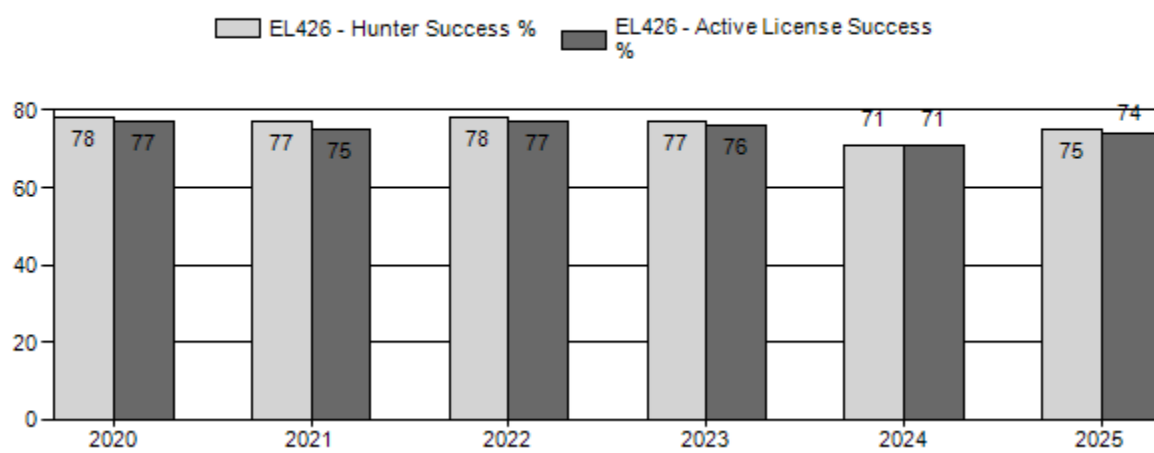
Harvest



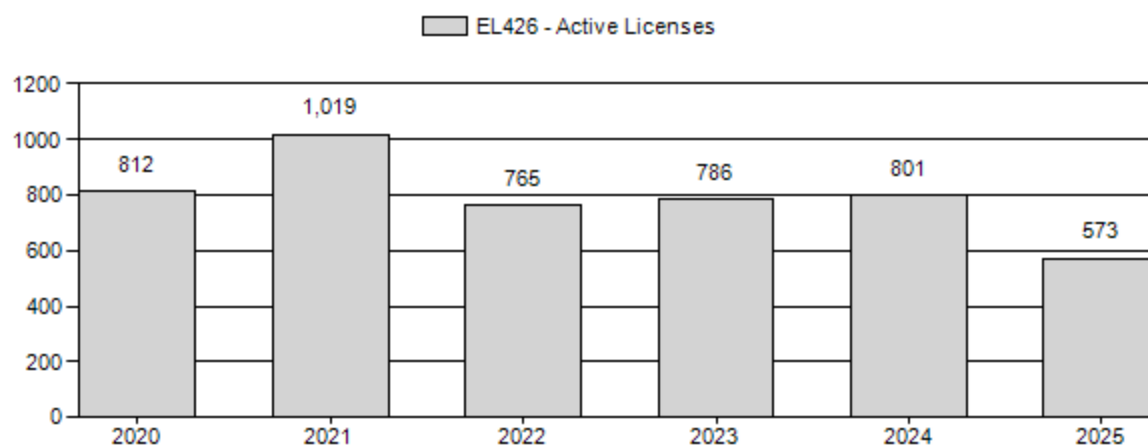
Number of Hunters



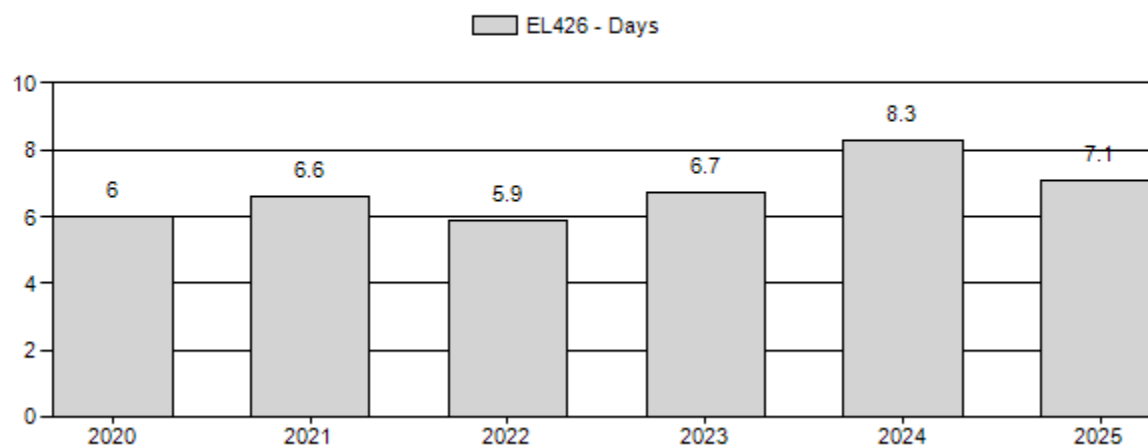
Harvest Success



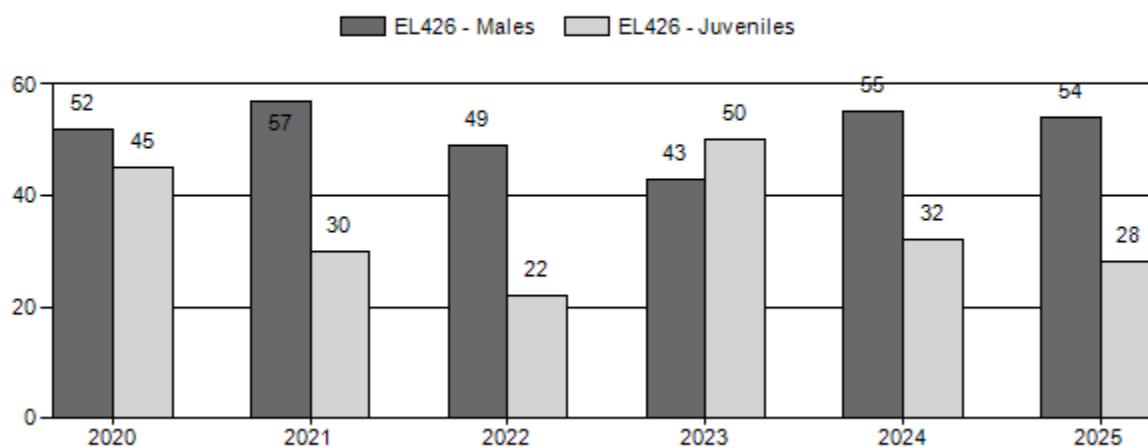
Active Licenses



Days per Animal Harvested



Postseason Animals per 100 Females



2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL426 - STEAMBOAT

Year	Post Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot CIs	CIs Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ying	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	2,000	142	310	452	27%	861	51%	385	23%	1,698	616	16	36	52	± 2	45	± 1	29
2021	2,000	50	153	203	31%	356	54%	106	16%	665	750	14	43	57	± 5	30	± 3	19
2022	2,000	88	258	346	29%	703	58%	156	13%	1,205	590	13	37	49	± 3	22	± 2	15
2023	1,600	55	157	212	22%	498	52%	250	26%	960	519	11	32	43	± 3	50	± 3	35
2024	1,140	89	185	274	29%	502	53%	163	17%	939	557	18	37	55	± 2	32	± 2	21
2025	1,400	87	219	306	30%	562	55%	157	15%	1,025	455	15	39	54	± 3	28	± 2	18

2026 Steamboat Elk Herd (EL426)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
100	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 9	Oct. 31	200	Any elk
100	2			Sep. 1	Oct. 19	100	Any elk valid within two (2) miles of the Farson-Eden Irrigation Project
100	2	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 20	Nov. 9		Antlered elk four (4) points or less on either antler; any elk valid within two (2) miles of the Farson-Eden Irrigation Project
100	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 16	Nov. 9	75	Antlerless elk
100	5	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Nov. 10	Dec. 31	75	Antlerless elk
100	7	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	25	Cow or calf valid east of U.S. Highway 191, south of Sweetwater County Road 17 and Sweetwater County Road 15, and west of Sweetwater County Road 19

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 82.4% Satisfied, 9.5% Neutral, 8.1% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation:

After many years of significantly increased harvest in the Steamboat elk herd, the 2026 hunting season saw reductions in both the Type 4 and Type 5 licenses, taking the number of those licenses from a total of 250 licenses to 150 licenses. Starting in 2016, license numbers across the herd unit were significantly increased after data from classification flights indicated that this herd was significantly above its objective of 1,200 elk. During that population reduction phase, over 5,500 elk were removed from the herd unit. After nearly a decade of increased harvest, data from classification flights, along with field observations, comments from hunters and landowners, as well as model estimates indicate that this herd is nearing its population objective. Over the last couple of years, comments from cow hunters in particular, both from field contacts made during hunting season and from the harvest survey, increasing indicate that cow elk hunters are having a difficult time even locating cow elk. Along with this, the harvest survey has shown a decrease in harvest success rates for the Type 4, 5, and 7 licenses, with the 2025 success rates being in the mid 60% range for the full price licenses, and only 32% success for the Type 7 licenses. While at first glance, those success rates do not seem shockingly low for an elk herd, given the open nature and

abundant public land found in the Steamboat herd unit, success statistics for this herd are typically more similar to what you would see in a pronghorn herd with success rates usually running higher than what is seen in other elk herds where animals are living in mountainous and timbered country. Because of this, license types targeting the female segment of the population were reduced across the herd unit to start to transition the management of this herd from population reduction to population maintenance. The 2026 season also included changes in the starting dates for the Type 1 and 4 licenses, moving the starting date for the Type 1 license to October 9th and moved the opening date for the Type 4 license to October 16th. This allowed for the hunting seasons to start on a weekend day and maintained a week separation in the starting dates to prevent conflicts with crowding, while still keeping the opening dates for those two license types as close as possible to their traditional October 15th opening date as possible. No changes were made to the Type 2 license for the 2026 season. A detailed description of why a four point or less restriction was implemented for the Type 2 license in this herd unit as opposed to a five point or less restriction as is offered in some other herd around Wyoming is covered in the 2022 Job Completion Report for this herd.

During a postseason classification flight conducted in December 2025, a total of 1,025 elk were classified, this compares with 939 elk classified in 2025 and 960 elk classified in 2023. Of those 1,025 elk classified in 2025, 562 of those were adult cows, 157 were calves, and 306 of the classified elk were bulls. Of those 306 bulls, 87 were yearlings and 219 of them were two-year-old or older bulls. The resulting ratios from that flight were 54 bulls per 100 cows, and 28 calves per 100 cows. It should be noted that the bulls in this herd tend to be more predictable in where they winter, compared to the cow/calf groups. While the bulls typically winter in the same general area each year, the cows tend to get in large groups that wander around the large sagebrush flats in the herd unit, making them sometimes difficult to locate. During some years this can result in higher than actual observed bull to cow ratios as missing one or two large cow groups results in biased observed ratios.

Based on hunter submitted tooth samples, the average age of bulls harvested by Type 1 license holders in the Steamboat elk herd in 2025 was 7.2 years old, which is up slightly from last years reported average age of 6.6 years old, but is generally in line with reported average age of harvested bulls over the last several years.

The modeled post-season population estimate for this herd was around 1,400 elk after the 2025 hunting season. Assuming that harvest rates remain consistent with what has been observed in the past, the 2026 season should harvest somewhere near 350 elk. This level of harvest should keep this population near its population objective and may even further reduce this elk herd.

Management Objective Review:

The objective and management strategy for the Steamboat Elk Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2024, and will not be reviewed again until 2029.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring & Management:

The Steamboat herd has limited CWD prevalence data available, and no CWD management actions have occurred. Despite limited data, the five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). This herd has not been prioritized for CWD surveillance because of the relatively small size of this herd, obtaining the necessary sample size to accurately determine prevalence would be unlikely.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested elk in the Steamboat Elk Herd, 2021-2025

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (n)	Percent of Harvested Elk Sampled
	All Elk (CI=95%)	
2021	0% (n=27)	3.51%
2022	0% (n=11)	1.86%
2023	0% (n=14)	2.35%
2024	0% (n=17)	3.00%
2025	0% (n=9)	2.12%
2021-2025	0% (0-4.6%, n=78)	2.18%

Population Modeling

The modeled post-season population estimate for the Steamboat elk herd is approximately 1,400 elk. However, the model for this population has an extremely difficult time producing reliable estimates for this herd, with significant tweaks being necessary to prevent the population estimate from going negative. Even with those tweaks, the model is unable to accommodate for the level of bull harvest that has occurred in the herd unit over the last decade, with the model actually estimating a negative bull population following the 2025 hunting season. The most likely explanation for this is that one of the fundamental assumptions for population modeling is that the population is closed, meaning that no animals immigrate into or emigrate out of the population. This assumption does not appear to be met in the Steamboat elk herd. Given the open country of the Steamboat elk herd and the elk herds that neighbor it, with not real barriers to movement, there appears to be significant interchange across herd unit boundaries. Also, in order to attempt to fit the data, the model puts calf survival at an unrealistically low level and would probably put that value even lower if the constraints would allow for it. This unrealistically low calf survival rate along with the model's poor correlation with observed bull ratios suggests that its functionality is low.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: EL428 - WEST GREEN RIVER

HUNT AREAS: 102-105

PREPARED BY: JEFF SHORT

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Population:	3,491	4,152	3,288
Harvest:	1,476	1,669	1,670
Hunters:	3,821	4,258	4,250
Hunter Success:	39%	39%	39 %
Active Licenses:	4,194	4,735	4,750
Active License Success:	35%	35%	35 %
Recreation Days:	28,630	34,203	34,200
Days Per Animal:	19.4	20.5	20.5
Males per 100 Females	18	0	
Juveniles per 100 Females	39	0	

Population Objective ($\pm 20\%$) : 3100 (2480 - 3720)

Management Strategy:

Recreational

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:

34%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:

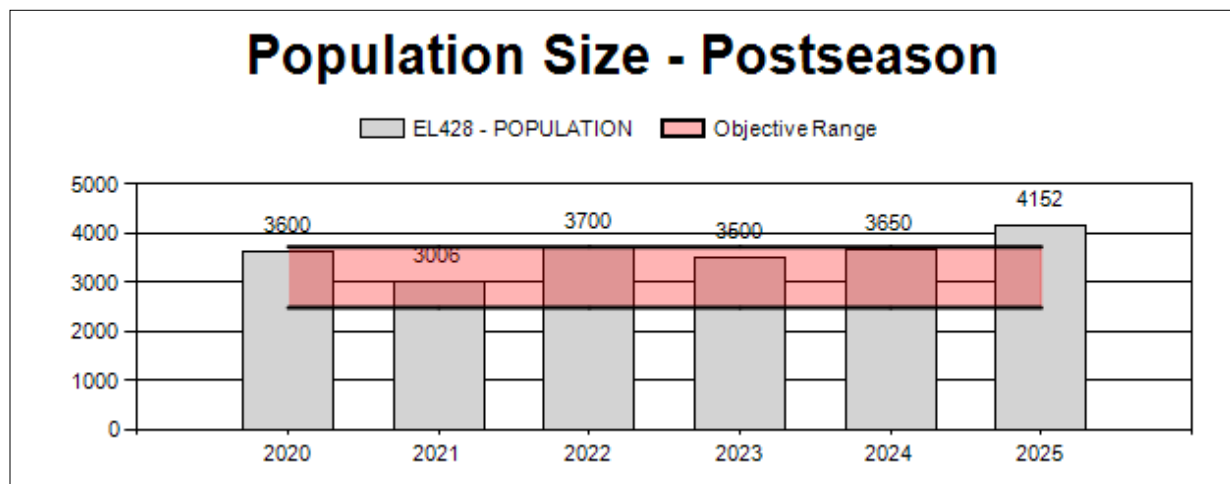
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Model Date:

02/25/2026

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

	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females ≥ 1 year old:	24%	30%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	45%	59%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-15%	-21%



2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL428 - WEST GREEN RIVER

Year	Post Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	3,600	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2021	3,006	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2022	3,700	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2023	3,500	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2024	3,650	97	102	199	12%	1,091	64%	427	25%	1,717	0	9	9	18	± 1	39	± 2	33
2025	4,152	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0

2026 HUNTING SEASON
West Green River Herd Unit (EL428)

Hunt	Hunt	Archery Dates		Season Dates			
Area	Type	Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes	Quota	Limitations
102	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 24		Any elk
102	Gen			Oct. 25	Nov. 30		Antlerless elk
102	6	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Dec. 7	300	Cow or calf
102	7	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Dec. 15	Jan. 31	150	Cow or calf
103	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 24		Any elk
103	Gen			Oct. 25	Nov. 30		Antlerless elk
103	6			Aug. 15	Aug. 31	250	Cow or calf valid on or within one-half (1/2) mile of irrigated land
103	6	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Dec. 7		Cow or calf
103	6			Dec. 15	Jan. 31		Cow or calf
104	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 24		Any elk
104	Gen			Oct. 25	Nov. 30		Antlerless elk
104	6	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 15	Dec. 7	500	Cow or calf, also valid in Area 105 in Lincoln County
104	7			Aug. 15	Aug. 31	200	Cow or calf valid on or within one-half (1/2) mile of irrigated land
104	7	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Dec. 15	Dec. 31		Cow or calf, also valid in Area 105 in Lincoln County
104	7			Jan. 1	Jan. 31		Cow or calf valid on private land or west of U.S. Highway 30 or east of Rock Creek within the Twin Creek drainage
105	Gen	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31		Any elk
105	Gen			Nov. 1	Nov. 30		Antlerless elk
105	6	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Dec. 31	50	Cow or calf

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 62.4% Satisfied, 24.9% Neutral, 12.7% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

After flying elk classification surveys in January of 2025, we found high calf ratios indicating high growth potential. This information prompted us to increase antlerless harvest in 2025. We have evaluated harvest strategies and will continue to offer the higher quotas and longer seasons for 2026 to manage the population towards objective. We will reevaluate our harvest plan after we get new aerial survey population estimate data in the future.

Elk damage situations exist on irrigated land in Hunt Areas 103 and 104. To address this, we have Type 7 licenses valid in August. These licenses are only good on or within 1/2 mile of irrigated lands. Considerable numbers of elk have been wintering close to Highway 30 in Nugget Canyon. Several groups of elk have crossed into Hunt Area 105. There is concern that more elk may get pushed across the highway during late season hunts. When they do cross, they can end up in an unintended sanctuary from hunting in Hunt Area 105. To address this, we allow segments of 104 type 6 and type 7 seasons to also be valid in the northern portion (within Lincoln County) of Hunt area 105

In Hunt Area 105 we open the either sex general season on October 1st. This allows general hunting during the second half of the rut and provides a long season of 31 days. This season overlaps the general deer hunt allowing combination hunts. This intentionally puts more hunting pressure on elk in the area to address landowner complaints and increasing elk numbers there. We also have a November antlerless elk season on the general hunt and a type 6 hunt with 50 licenses to further address this situation.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the West Green River Elk Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2023, and will not be reviewed again until 2028.

Chronic Wasting Disease Management

This herd was last prioritized for CWD sampling in 2020/21. A good number of samples were collected at that time. Prevalence estimates and sample sizes for the most recent 5-year period are presented below (Table1). It is difficult to get samples from elk in this herd as many harvested elk are quartered or deboned in the field. This results in a low sample size and a wide 95% confidence interval. No positives have been found in this herd.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested elk in the West Green River Elk Herd, 2021-2025.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (n) – <i>Hunter Harvest Only</i>	Percent of Harvested Adult elk Sampled
	All Adult Elk (CI = 95%)	
2021	0% (n=72)	6%
2022	0% (n=36)	2%
2023	0% (n=11)	1%
2024	0% (n=7)	1%
2025	0% (n=20)	1%
2021-2025	0% (n=146)	2%

Fossil Butte National Monument

In recent years, the number of elk moving onto Fossil Butte National Monument (FBNM) during the fall has increased, and is estimated to be around 600-800 animals. Radio collar data suggests a significant number of animals move onto the Monument in early September, immediately after the opener of the archery season. As with most lands administered by the National Park Service, FBNM is closed to hunting. As the number of elk on FBNM has increased, it has become increasingly difficult to manage this herd to objective while providing huntable numbers of elk for sportsmen.

Aerial Surveys

In the past, elk aerial surveys were scheduled to be conducted every three years in the West Green River Elk Herd. Classification data was also collected during these flights. All known occupied elk winter range is flown in Hunt Areas 102, 103 and 104. Some small parts of Area 105 are flown but not all of Area 105 is flown due to the large geographic area and very low elk densities. The survey was most recently flown in January 2020. Total numbers of elk observed were 4,647. The Idaho sightability model was used to estimate a total population for the area flown. That estimate was 4,721 elk with a standard error of 21.12. Good coverage of occupied elk winter habitat was achieved in the survey. This is a very low sightability correction. A low sightability correction on these surveys is normal and is due to large groups of elk in high snow cover and open environments. This creates survey conditions where very few elk are missed during helicopter surveys. We have not had the budget available to fly this survey since 2020 and hence we do not have a good population estimate for this herd. We hope to fly this as soon as possible in the future. We did fly a short classification flight in January of 2025 with two fuel tanks flown. On this survey we saw a ratio of 18.24 bulls per 100 cows and 39.14 calves per 100 cows. Sample size was 1,717.

Population Modeling

There is a new Integrated Population Model (IPM) available for elk. It appears to function adequately in this herd unit with slightly high Rhat values and pretty likely convergence. This is due to the past availability of sightability based aerial survey population estimate data. However, since it has been six years since the last aerial survey was conducted, we have only moderate confidence in the model at this time. The model does show population decline in the last two years, which matches with our field observations and hunter comments. The projected decrease of 21% in postseason population is unlikely in magnitude, and is likely an artifact of a new IPM with outdated abundance estimates. New aerial survey data is needed in the near future to inform the model and help manage this herd appropriately.

Comingling with Livestock and Brucellosis Monitoring

Conflict with agriculture producers can be an issue for this elk herd. Damage complaints occur during bad winters, but are less common during “normal” winters. Unfortunately, four of the past eight winters have been much worse than average in regards to snowfall and temperatures. Elk comingling with livestock during winter is uncommon, and only in limited areas, but is an issue we take very seriously. Past problems have typically been dealt with successfully if the Department was notified. The herd is in the brucellosis surveillance area. There is extremely low brucellosis prevalence, and the herd has never had a positive brucellosis test in elk near wintering livestock. However, measures to reduce elk/cattle interaction are still taken and will continue. The 2024 seropositive brucellosis prevalence was 0%, with a sample size of 35 testable samples.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: EL430 - PETITION

HUNT AREAS: 124

PREPARED BY: PHILIP DAMM

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Population:	0	1,830	2,000
Harvest:	113	220	270
Hunters:	170	270	330
Hunter Success:	66%	81%	82 %
Active Licenses:	170	275	330
Active License Success:	66%	80%	82 %
Recreation Days:	1,180	1,864	2,250
Days Per Animal:	10.4	8.5	8.3
Males per 100 Females	0	0	
Juveniles per 100 Females	0	0	

Population Objective ($\pm$ 20%): 2000 (1600 - 2400)

Management Strategy: Special

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -8.5%

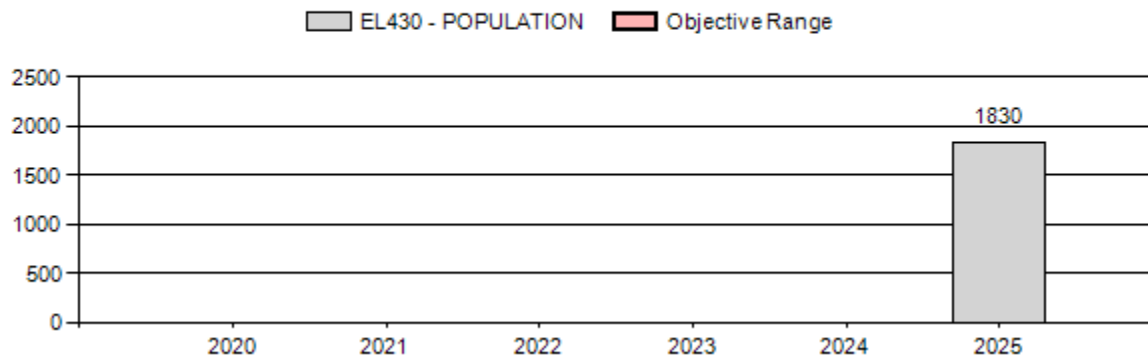
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 0

Model Date: 02/25/2026

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

	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females $\geq$ 1 year old:	10%	10%
Males $\geq$ 1 year old:	15%	15%
Proposed change in post-season population:	0%	10%

Population Size - Postseason



**2026 Hunting Seasons
Petition Elk Herd Unit (EL425)**

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes				
124	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Nov. 30	100	Any elk
124	2			Aug. 15	Oct. 24	50	Antlered elk four (4) points or less on either antler valid on private land south of Sand Creek Road (B.L.M. Road 3318) and Poison Buttes Road (Carbon County Road 700) within Carbon County
124	2			Oct. 25	Nov. 30		Antlered elk four (4) points or less on either antler
124	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 25	Nov. 30	200	Antlerless elk
124	4			Dec. 1	Dec. 31		Antlerless elk valid east of Sweetwater County Road 19, and north and east of B.L.M. roads 4409 and 4411, and west of B.L.M. Road 3310 and Sweetwater County Road 23S
124	4			Dec. 1	Jan. 31		Antlerless elk valid south and east of Standard Road/West Hangout Road (B.L.M. Road 3315) within Carbon County
124	7			Oct. 25	Jan. 31	75	Cow or calf valid south and east of Standard Road/West Hangout Road (B.L.M. Road 3315) within Carbon County

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 85% Satisfied, 10% Neutral, 5% Dissatisfied

2025 3-year Average Age of Harvested Bull Elk: 6.7

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

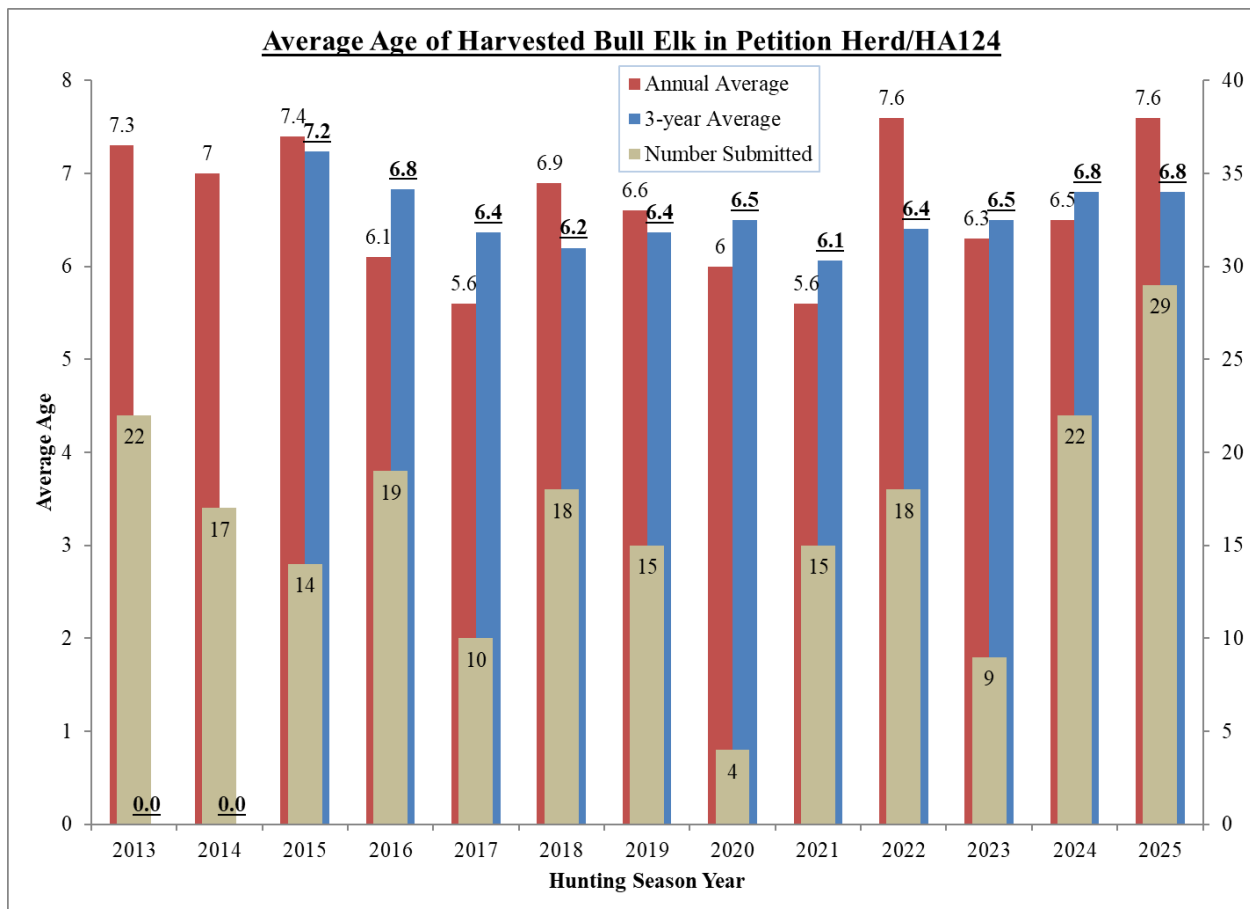
Harvest Data

In the Petition Elk Herd (HA124), managers increased the Type 1 license quota for 2025 by 43% from 70 to 100, and the Type 4 and 6 license quotas by 60%. Success (and satisfaction) remained high at 84%, 77%, and 80% for Type 1, 4, and 6 licenses, respectively. This success resulted in

the highest bull and cow/calf harvest documented in the Petition Herd. This estimated harvest did not include the 38 antlerless elk harvested in the Chapter 34 hunt along the Little Snake River on private land. Between the late Type 4, Type 6, and Chapter 34 harvest, 44% of antlerless harvest occurred in the southeast corner of the Herd in 2025. Managers also observed relatively high pressure (and presumably harvest) in the northwest corner of the Herd, since many of the license holders were from nearby in Rock Springs. The proportion of Type 1 landowner licenses in HA124 has been historically high, but the increase to that license type in 2025 reduced that proportion to 32%. Prevailing comments in the hunter survey included: hunters very pleased with the opportunity, hunters having difficulty in finding desirable bulls to harvest, hunters observing of large numbers of younger bulls, and high numbers of feral horses were noted by some. As expected, a few hunters commented expressing disagreement with the later beginning date for Type 4 and 6 seasons; however, these license holders still maintained over 3 months of opportunity and success was not reduced because of the date shift.

Average Age of Harvested Bull Elk

With more licenses added to the Type 1 quota for 2025, more teeth were submitted by hunters from harvested bull elk than in the past; however, biased sample sizes were a concern. With only 3 of 33 landowner license holders participating in tooth submission (versus 27 of 69 for all others), the 2025 average was likely biased low, as landowners have historically harvested older age class bulls. Nevertheless, the average age of bulls harvested in this herd for 2025 was 7.6 (range 3.5-13.5) from 30 samples. The current 3-year average for Type 1 licenses was also still excellent at 6.8, which is slightly exceeding the objective of 6.5. Interestingly, only one bull was aged at 3.5 years old and none were 4.5. These age classes would have been calves and yearlings during the severe winter of 2023 and likely the most susceptible to mortality during that time. While not uncommon to have only a few of these ages represented on an annual basis, having essentially none is unprecedented and likely indicative that these age classes are missing across the herd as well.



Auxiliary Hunting Seasons

Due to the elk use along the Little Snake River, one authorization for auxiliary elk harvest in this herd unit under the Chapter 34 Regulation occurred during this hunting season. In total, a minimum of 38 elk (37 cows and 1 calf) were reported harvested under this authorization. This total was in addition to totals reported in the harvest survey, in particular the estimated 27 cow elk and 4 calf elk harvested on the Type 6 license that overlapped much of the same area. Details are as follows:

- Limited to private lands south of the Poison Buttes Road (Carbon County Road 700) within Carbon County
- 5 participating landowners
- Season Dates: July 25, 2025 through January 31, 2026
- 83 Auxiliary licenses issued out of 100 authorized
- Minimum harvest = 38 elk (37 cows and 1 calf reported)

Population estimates

The post-season model estimate for the Petition Herd was 1,830, which was slightly below the objective of 2,000. While this estimate seemed reasonable, it must come with some caveats. First, managers were still working on the functionality of using the integrated population model in elk and some uncertainty follows, as was indicated by model diagnostics. Second, because the population objective was new for Petition Herd, only harvest data and the singular aerial imagery

population estimate were used in this modeling exercise. No representative age and sex ratio have been collected for the herd to date; however, anecdotal observations led managers to believe bull ratios were high. Finally, the “proposed harvest rates” are only educated guesses since no ratio data were available to inform them.

Due to the large size of the Petition Herd, and the relatively low density of elk found there, traditional methods for collecting on-the-ground elk abundance data have not been cost effective. To estimate elk density in this instance, WGFD decided to use a contractor to collect aerial imagery from a fixed wing aircraft and count elk within the collected images. Images were collected in late February 2025, and about 10% of the land area of the Petition Herd was sampled. Managers observed 293 unique elk contained within the images and estimated the number of elk that were missed. That count was extrapolated to the entire Petition Herd, resulting in an estimate of 2,800 elk (95% confidence interval: 1,000-5,000). Secondarily, from late October to late November 2024, WGFD contributed to an ongoing BLM-sponsored infrared feral horse count via fixed wing aircraft to have them also count elk across most of the Petition Herd (2,243 of 2,870 square miles, or about 78% of the Herd). The contractor viewed this count as a census, meaning they believed no elk were missed; however, calculating a confidence interval for the estimate was not possible. The contractor observed 1,872 elk in the portion of the Petition Herd that was flown. Assuming the elk density there was the same as the area that was not flown, an estimate of about 2,400 total elk in the Petition Herd was the result. WGFD does not have the dedicated funding to repeat the infrared method in future, but the estimate does provide a timely point of comparison for the aerial imagery method.

2026 Hunting Season

No changes occurred to the Type 1 license quota of 100 in 2026. Due to the size of and relatively low elk density across the herd unit, changes in numbers, distribution, and age and sex ratios of elk were not estimable. Assuming reasonable calf and bull ratios and a population of 2,000 elk, managers felt maintaining current levels of Type 1 bull harvest would maintain the current average age objective of 6.5 years old. High success, regardless of license quotas, will remain a trend in this open-habitat elk herd that hunts more like a pronghorn herd. In addition, concern arose from the “missing” 3.5- and 4.5-year-old bulls from the harvest, which indicated a potential issue in future years with meeting the average age of harvest objective.

Despite some reluctance stemming from concerns in the Type 1 discussion above, managers added 50 Type 2 licenses valid for only antlered elk with four points or less on either antler. Five points or less was considered, however managers were concerned about hunters selecting for older five-point bulls. This selection by hunters would defeat the purpose of providing additional opportunity without negatively affecting the average age of harvested bulls on the Type 1 license. Early in the hunting season, these licenses would help address damage concerns arising from bachelor groups of bulls arriving on irrigated lands along the Little Snake River. Later in the season, the Type 2 licenses would provide for some additional bull opportunity to address bull to cow ratios that were presumed to be high.

Despite the modeled estimate being below the population objective in 2025, the two on-the-ground estimates for the herd produced numbers exceeding objective. Based on field observations, managers also tended to believe elk densities were on the higher end. Managers

also continued to be concerned about limited resources in the herd due to perpetual drought along with its overlap with two under-objective mule deer herds (South Rock Springs and Baggs) and one under-objective pronghorn herd (Bitter Creek). To address these concerns, managers increased Type 4 licenses from 150 to 200. Managers also increased the Type 6 quota from 50 to 75 to continue to address landowner concerns and to reduce the number of elk co-inhabiting crucial winter ranges with mule deer.

Other Considerations

Precipitation during the growing season in 2025 was below average, which led to poor range conditions that could have contributed negatively to calf production, although no ratio data were collected. Petition Herd winter ranges received below average snowfall in winter 2025-26, and warm temperatures kept the snow depths very low.

Despite a round up in 2025 that removed nearly 1,700 feral horses in and around the Adobe Town HMA, numbers appeared high and hunters commented accordingly. Feral horses continued to be observed immediately adjacent to Highway 789, with a couple having attempted to cross recently. These feral horses affected elk distribution and populations through exclusion from water and other resources and habitat degradation, and effectively reduced the carrying capacity of all wildlife across this area.

Management Objective Review

After a significant data collection effort and considerable public, landowner, and other stakeholder collaboration, the current objective and management strategy for the Petition Elk Herd was approved in 2025. That strategy is scheduled to be reviewed next in 2030. Although, since data were still limiting (in both types and confidence intervals) when the objective was set in 2025, managers may choose to review it sooner if pertinent data is acquired before then.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Monitoring and Management

The Petition Herd has limited CWD prevalence data available due to extremely low harvest, and no CWD management actions have occurred. Eighteen samples have been collected from 2021-2025, and CWD was not detected during that time.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Moose

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: MO415 - UINTA

HUNT AREAS: 27, 35, 44, 901-902

PREPARED BY: JEFF SHORT

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Population:		N/A	N/A
Harvest:	19	21	15
Hunters:	20	21	15
Hunter Success:	95%	100%	100%
Active Licenses:	20	21	15
Active License Success:	95%	100%	100%
Recreation Days:	222	229	175
Days Per Animal:	11.7	10.9	10

Limited Opportunity Objective:

5-year median age of > 4 years for harvested moose

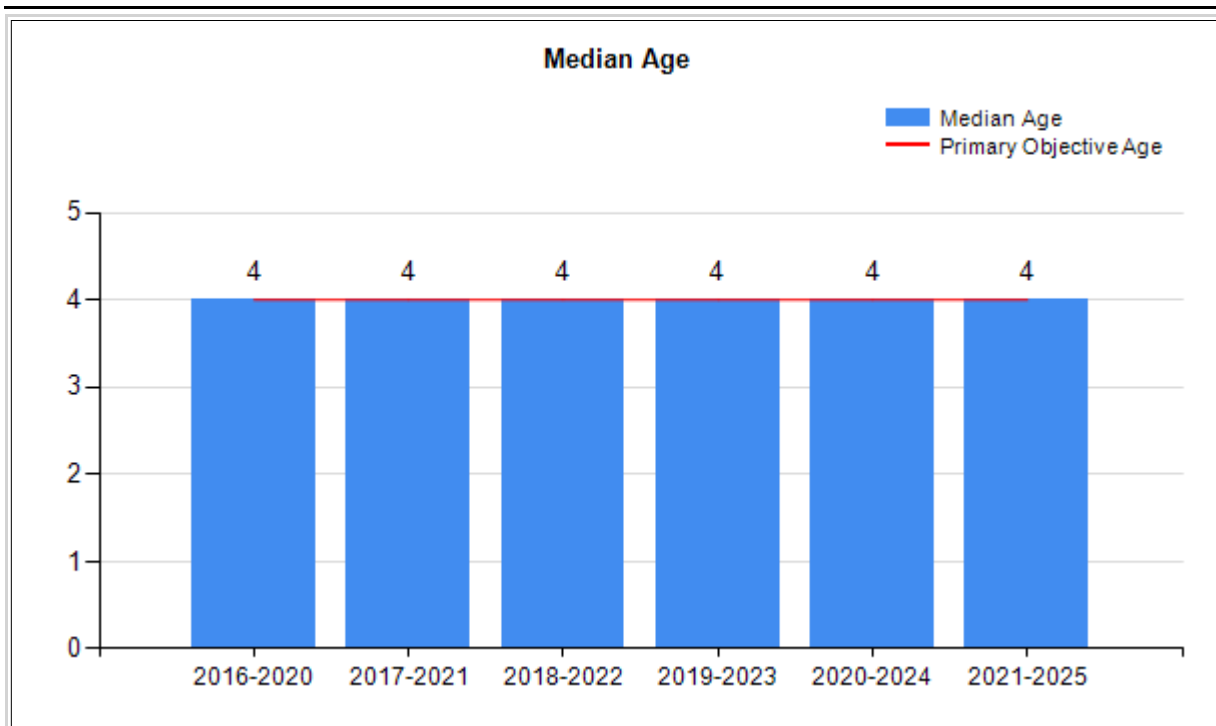
5-year average of <= 10 days/animal to harvest

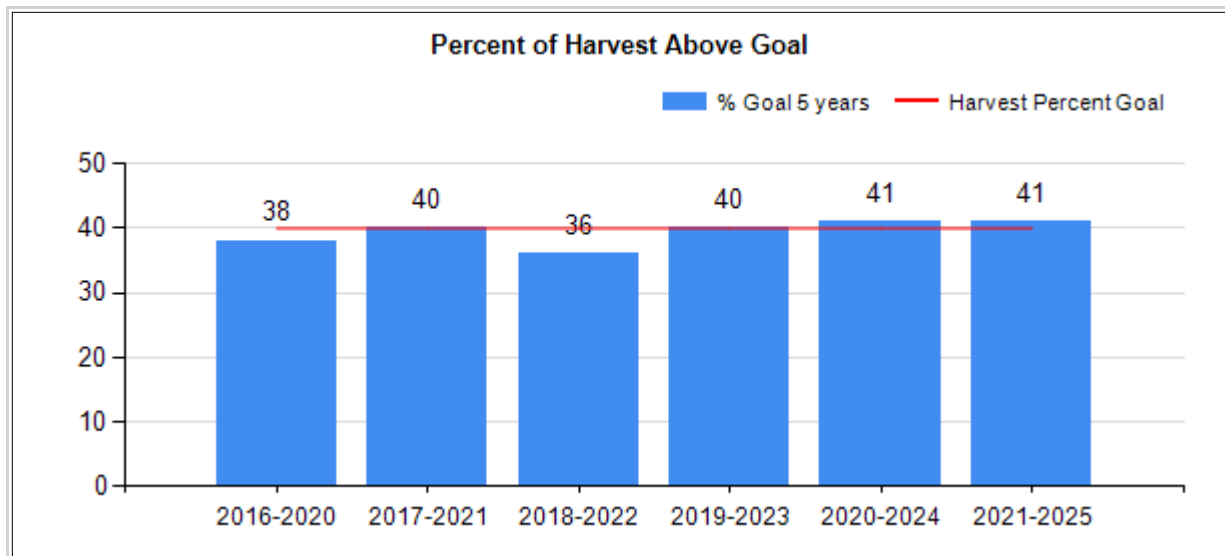
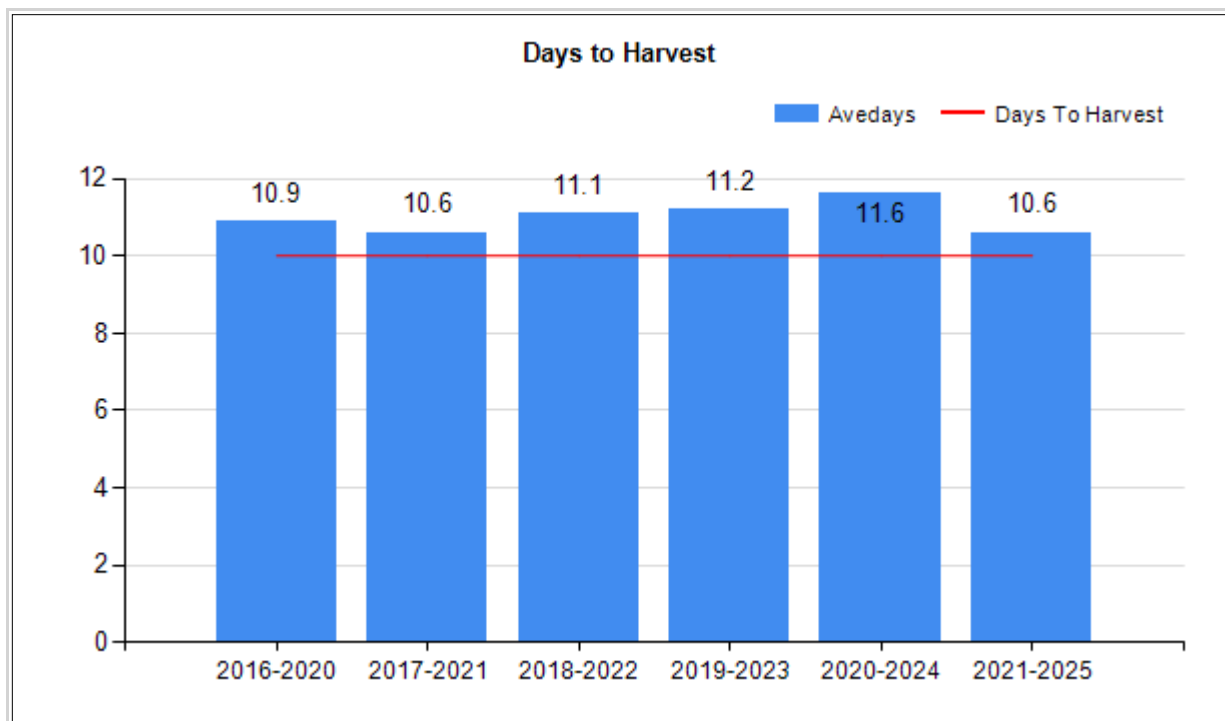
Secondary Objective:

5-year average of 40% of harvested moose are > 5 years of age

Management Strategy:

Special





2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Moose Herd MO415 - UINTA

Year	Post Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ying	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	0	1	3	4	40%	5	50%	1	10%	10	0	20	60	80	± 0	20	± 0	11
2021	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2022	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2023	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2024	0	0	96	96	34%	130	46%	55	20%	281	0	0	74	74	± 0	42	± 0	24
2025	0	0	0	6	29%	11	52%	4	19%	21	0	0	0	55	± 0	36	± 0	24

2026 HUNTING SEASONS
Uinta Moose Herd Unit (MO415)

Hunt Area	Hunt Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
27	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 20	12	Antlered moose
35	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 20	3	Antlered moose

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: NA

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

The Uinta Moose Herd has a limited opportunity type objective. The objective is based on harvest data and has two parts. The primary objective is to have a median age of Harvest ≥ 4 years and have an average days per harvest of ≤ 10 days. The secondary objective is to have 40% of the male harvest ≥ 5 years of age. For these objectives we use 5-year averages for better sample sizes.

Based on recent field observations and hunter complaints about bull quality, we feel that moose harvest should be reduced slightly. Hunters are having high success rates but are having a difficult time finding mature bulls in this herd unit. Since these are once in a lifetime licenses, many hunters are harvesting young bulls just to fill the tag. We are just at objective for the median age of harvest with a the 5-year average (2021-2025) at 4 years old. We are not meeting our average days to harvest objective with the 5-year average (2021-2025) at 10.6. We are just barely at objective for the secondary objective criteria of percent of harvested moose that are greater than or equal to five years of age. The current 5-year average (2021-2025) is 41% percent of harvested moose that are greater than or equal to five years of age. Average age of harvest and antler spread dropped in 2025 and are at 4.3 years and 35.7 inches respectively.

Hunt Area 44 has been hunted in conjunction with Hunt Area 33 in recent years. The hunt was listed as 33,44 Type 1 in the Lincoln Moose Herd. The hunt was good for any moose, except cow moose with calf at side. For the 2026 hunting season we will remove the HA33,44 Type 1 license. Reductions in moose numbers have led to a situation where there are no longer sufficient numbers of moose in HA 33 to support a hunting season and there are not enough moose in Hunt Area 44 for it to have a stand-alone hunt.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the Uinta Moose Herd was last evaluated in 2024, and will not be reviewed again until 2029.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Moose

PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: MO417 - LINCOLN

HUNT AREAS: 26, 33, 36, 40

PREPARED BY: JEFF SHORT

	<u>2020 - 2024 Average</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026 Proposed</u>
Population:	598	719	769
Harvest:	55	58	57
Hunters:	56	60	60
Hunter Success:	98%	97%	95%
Active Licenses:	56	60	60
Active License Success:	98%	97%	95%
Recreation Days:	407	512	520
Days Per Animal:	7.4	8.8	9.1
Males per 100 Females	78	70	
Juveniles per 100 Females	48	51	

Population Objective ($\pm 20\%$) : 1000 (800 - 1200)

Management Strategy: Special

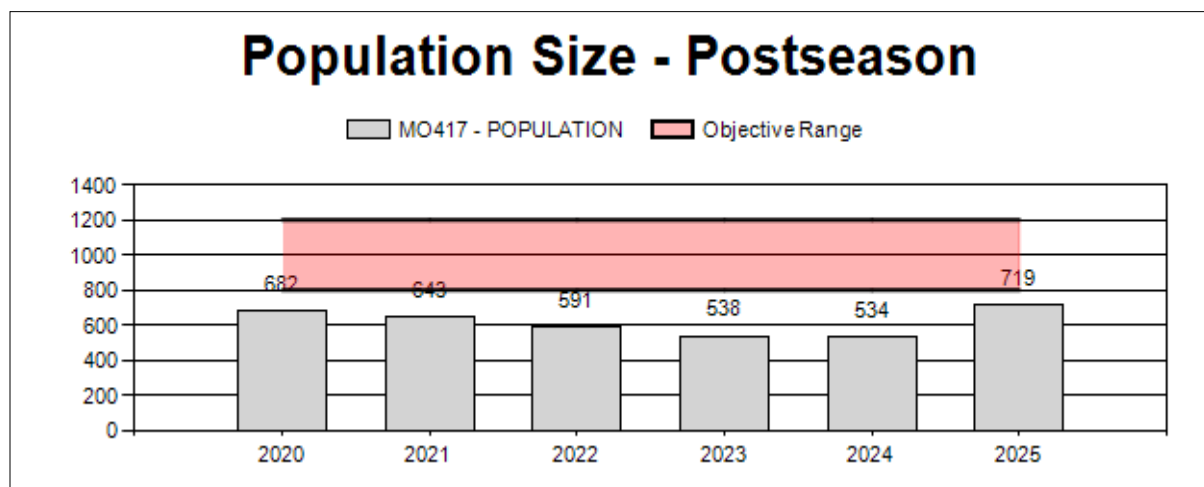
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -28.1%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 12

Model Date: 2/20/2026

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

	<u>JCR Year</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Females ≥ 1 year old:	1.9%	2.2%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	29%	25%
Proposed change in post-season population:	6%	7%



2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Moose Herd MO417 - LINCOLN

Year	Post Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ying	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	682	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2021	643	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2022	591	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2023	538	0	85	85	34%	113	46%	49	20%	247	0	0	75	75	± 10	43	± 7	25
2024	534	0	0	48	35%	57	41%	33	24%	138	0	0	0	84	± 18	58	± 14	31
2025	719	0	0	30	32%	43	45%	22	23%	95	0	0	0	70	± 20	51	± 16	30

2026 HUNTING SEASONS
Lincoln Moose Herd Unit (MO417)

Hunt	Hunt	Archery Dates		Season Dates			
Area	Type	Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes	Quota	Limitations
26	1	Aug. 15	Aug. 31				Antlered moose; Valid on private irrigated land within the LaBarge Creek Drainage
26	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	40	Antlered moose valid in entire area
26	4	Aug. 15	Aug. 31				Antlerless moose, except cow moose with calf at side; valid on private irrigated land within the LaBarge Creek Drainage
26	4	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	5	Antlerless moose, except cow moose with calf at side; valid on private irrigated land
36	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	5	Antlered moose
40	1	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	3	Antlered moose
40	4	Sept. 1	Sept. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	3	Antlerless moose, except cow moose with calf at side

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: NA

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

Harvest data is collected on a voluntary basis for moose. The data collected includes tooth age and antler spread data. As the check is voluntary, data is not complete. Harvest data from 33, 36 and 40 does not provide much information about individual hunt areas given the low sample sizes. Harvest from Area 26 results in a good sample size due to higher license numbers. Total herd unit harvested bull age data suggests an average age of harvest of 4.7 years old for 2025. Average antler spread was 39.03” and percent male harvest ≥ 5 years was 52% for 2025.

Harvest opportunity has been much more limited in this herd unit over the past 15+ years. In the late 2000s we dramatically reduced the number of licenses due to a population crash related to habitat issues and the parasite *Elaeophora schneiderii*. Since then, populations have stabilized and started to grow slowly. Hunts have very good success rates. Hunt Area 26 is considered a quality moose hunt with potential for trophy animals. Area 26 has ample public access and a variety of places to hunt moose. Hunts in areas 33, 36 and 40 are considered good hunts with good success rates but require more time to find moose. This is due to the areas having low numbers of moose spread out over large areas. Public access can be more challenging in these areas but access to moose hunting is available. Those areas are not typically considered trophy areas but mature animals do exist and are harvested occasionally.

In 2022 we added a type 4 hunt in Area 26 to address problem moose on private agricultural lands. In 2024 we added an Aug. 15 to Sept. 30 archery only portion on the type 1 and type 4 hunts in order to deal with specific damage problems occurring in the LaBarge Creek Drainage. We also offer a type 4 hunt in Area 40 to address problem moose and overall moose numbers on agricultural lands.

A significant change for the 2026 hunting season will be the removal of the HA33,44 Type 1, and HA33 Type 4 license types. Starting in 2020, both Type 1 and Type 4 licenses were issued in Hunt Area 33 to address habitat concerns with moose browsing on cottonwood regeneration along the Green River. Since that time, reductions in moose numbers have led to a situation where there are no longer sufficient numbers of moose along this part of the Green River to support a hunting season in HA 33.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the Lincoln Moose Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2021. For the 2026 (5-year) objective review, the current objective and management strategy will be maintained for the next five years following an internal evaluation, and will not be reviewed again until 2031.

Aerial surveys

Helicopter based aerial population estimation surveys are intended to be conducted every three years in Hunt Area 26 concurrent with West Green River Elk surveys if budgets allow. Classification data is also collected during these flights. Areas 33, 36 and 40 are not flown due to the large geographic area and very low moose densities. The joint elk and moose survey was last flown in January 2020. Total numbers of moose seen were 404. The Idaho sightability model was used to estimate a total population for the area flown. That estimate was 547 moose with a standard error of 6.63. Unfortunately, we have not had budget capacity to fly this survey since and it is well overdue. We were able to collect good moose classification data during the Wyoming Range mule deer sightability survey in February of 2024. That sample size was 225 animals and showed a good bull:cow ratio of 68:100 and a very good cow:calf ratio of 46:100. We also collected moose classification data with a helicopter post hunting season 2024 in Hunt Area 26. Ratios were higher than in 2023 with 84 bulls per 100 cows and 58 calves per 100 cows. Sample size was 138 animals. We will fly another sightability survey when money is available and will have more information at that time. Lack of recent data is likely reducing our ability to provide hunter opportunity.

Modeling

There is a new Integrated Population Model (IPM) available for moose. It appears to function in this herd unit. This is likely due to the past availability of sightability based aerial survey population estimates. The model is showing population growth since our last aerial survey which matches with our field observations and hunter comments. However, it has been six years since the last aerial survey was conducted. Due to this, confidence intervals on model estimates are getting wide and we have only moderate confidence in the model at this time. Model estimated sex ratios are significantly different from observed in recent years but classification data collection has been reduced due to budgets and variance has increased.