2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

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

HERD: PR615 - RED DESERT

HUNT AREAS: 60-61, 64

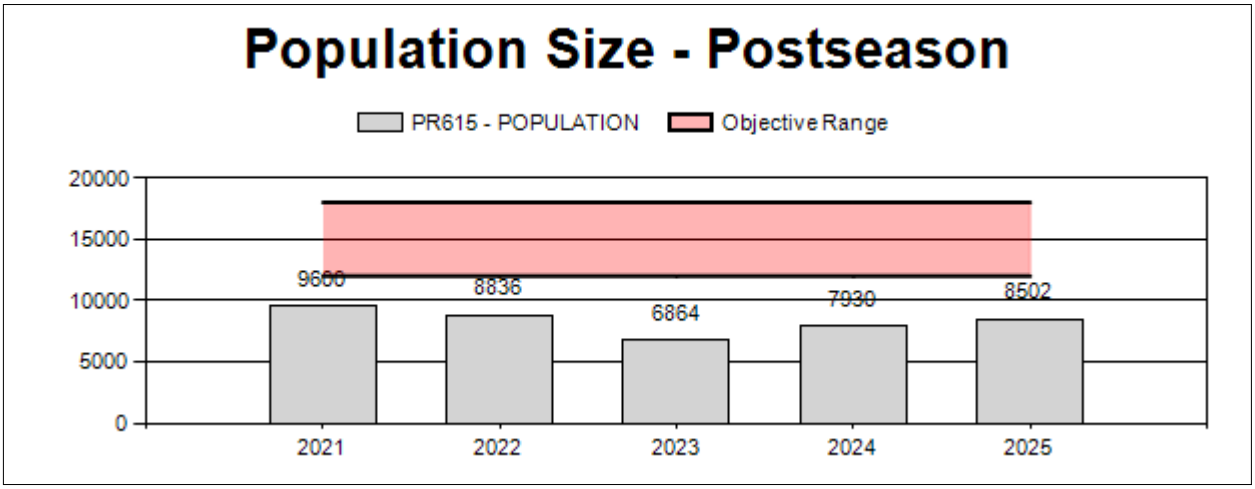
PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Population:	8,176	8,502	8,411
Harvest:	242	229	307
Hunters:	302	260	370
Hunter Success:	80%	88%	83%
Active Licenses:	302	260	370
Active License Success:	80%	88%	83%
Recreation Days:	1,039	1,025	1,350
Days Per Animal:	4.3	4.5	4.4
Males per 100 Females	58	64	
Juveniles per 100 Females	54	58	

Population Objective (± 20%):	15000	(12000 - 18000)
Management Strategy:	Special	
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-43.3%	
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	8	
Model Date:	02/20/2026	

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	9%	12%
Proposed change in post-season population:	7%	-1%



2021 - 2025 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR615 - RED DESERT

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Pre Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2021	9,900	87	637	724	28%	1,176	46%	660	26%	2,560	1,923	7	54	62	± 4	56	± 4	35
2022	11,350	136	596	732	29%	1,049	42%	730	29%	2,511	0	13	57	70	± 5	70	± 5	41
2023	6,817	96	405	501	28%	994	56%	293	16%	1,788	0	10	41	50	± 4	29	± 3	20
2024	9,900	103	405	508	23%	945	44%	713	33%	2,166	0	11	43	54	± 4	75	± 5	49
2025	9,459	136	414	550	29%	859	45%	498	26%	1,907	0	16	48	64	± 5	58	± 5	35

2026 Hunting Seasons
Red Desert Pronghorn (PR615)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
60	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	125	Any antelope
61	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	125	Any antelope
64	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	150	Any antelope

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 85% Satisfied, 12% Neutral, 3% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

This herd experienced two consecutive severe winters in 2018-19 and 2019-20, and then an extraordinarily severe winter in 2022-23 consisting of constant sub-zero temperatures, high winds, and record snowfall, ultimately causing significant mortality. These losses, compounded with near-record low fawn crops from 2018-2020 and again in 2023, caused this population to decline well below objective.

Classification sample size in 2025 decreased by 12%. The buck:doe ratio increased from 54:100 in 2024 to 64:100 in 2025, which is well within the range for special management; buck ratios increased significantly in Area 60 and 61 to 73:100 and 79:100 respectively, while Area 64 remained somewhat stable at 51:100. This increase in buck ratios can be partly attributed to the 45% increase in yearling bucks, which was unsurprising given the high fawn:doe ratio of 75:100 in 2024. Fawn production declined to 58:100 in 2025; however, declines across the herd unit and Hunt Areas 60 and 64 may be attributed to an increased number of does counted than in previous years, some of which were likely yearlings without fawns at side.

Hunter success increased to 88% in 2025, the highest recorded since 2018. Success increased across all three hunt areas, with Area 60 having the highest success at 95%. Hunter satisfaction increased to 85%, while dissatisfaction fell to 3%. This increase in satisfaction is unsurprising given increased success and growing population numbers after the most recent harsh winter(s).

Precipitation was near normal in 2025, but was drier than average through the growing season, and was followed by above average precipitation in August-October, especially near Wamsutter and Jeffrey City. Following a warm and snow free fall, winter 2025-26 has been at or near the warmest and driest winter on record in more than five years. Temperatures have been well above average, and precipitation amounts through late-February 2026 are well below average in the Wamsutter, Jeffrey City, and Rawlins area. As such, winter severity this year was considered "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality. However, there is growing concern about how dry conditions will impact habitat conditions into the spring. Without substantial improvement in precipitation through the remainder of winter and into the upcoming growing season to replenish soil moisture and provide a boost to vegetation green up, there will likely be significant negative impacts to pronghorn during and after parturition. This would likely lead to reduced pronghorn numbers entering the 2026 hunting season.

With the herd nearly 45% below objective and still recovering from previous hard winters, no doe / fawn harvest is warranted. Total buck license quotas were reduced across the herd unit following the harsh 2022-23 winter, and were maintained in following years. Due to a sustained buck:doe ratio in Area 61, Type 1 licenses were increased to 125 in an effort to provide more opportunity for hunters; the same quota is maintained in 2026. As a result of increased success and increased (Area 60) or sustained (Area 64) buck ratios, Type 1 licenses for the 2026 season were increased in Areas 60 and 64 to 125 and 175, respectively, to appropriately provide more hunting opportunity in 2026. This results in an expected harvest of ~310 bucks, representing 12% of the estimated pre-hunt buck population. This harvest rate is appropriate given current buck numbers and quality of bucks on the landscape. This herd has a reputation for exceptional bucks, and it would appear that hunter satisfaction is tied more to buck quality than simple hunter success. As such, providing opportunity while maintaining a reasonable number of mature bucks in the population is important; given the likelihood that there are three age classes of bucks missing from this population (as a result of the 2022-23 winter), the bucks currently on the ground need to persist for several years until this herd recovers. Season dates were adjusted to reflect a start date on the third Saturday of the month across the herd unit.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the Red Desert Pronghorn Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2025. Managers are currently evaluating special and recreational management strategies for pronghorn; following an external survey evaluating hunter attitudes towards management strategies, managers will reevaluate the use of the special management strategy within this herd unit.

Population Modeling

Managers chose to model this herd using the default structure for pronghorn, i.e. constant adult survival, time-varying reproduction and juvenile survival. Based on visual comparison of effort variables, licenses, days / harvest, and recreation days were all selected as variables most predictably related to annual harvest. With these settings, the observed data for the IPM included 25 years of harvest and ratio data, along with abundance estimates from seven LT surveys. IPM convergence was slightly less than optimal, with some Rhat values greater than 1.1. Despite this, simulated fawn and buck ratios aligned with observed data for this herd. IPM abundance estimates also aligned with confidence limits for five of seven LT estimates, including the most recent surveys from 2016, 2020, and 2023 (Table 1). The total post-season abundance estimate for 2025 was 8,502 pronghorn (CL 7,104-9,704), which aligns with the most recent LT estimate, as well as manager and stakeholder perceptions that this herd is slowly growing after suffering significant losses following several harsh winters. This model predicts a herd size 43.3% below objective, and is considered a fair representation of population in this herd unit.

Table 1. Line-transect estimates for the Red Desert Pronghorn Herd, 2016, 2020, and 2023.

	2016	**2020**	**2023**
LT Result	12,285 (CL 8,142 - 16,428)	7,495 (CL 5,071 - 11,079)	6,777 (CL 5,824 - 7,886)
IPM Estimate	8,650 (CL 7,855 - 9,623)	8,946 (CL 8,078 - 9,797)	6,864 (CL 6,129 - 7,558)

Additional Management Data

Approximately 7% percent of the buck harvest was checked and measured in 2025. Average horn length increased slightly from 13.1" in 2024 to 13.8" in 2025. The longest horn measured in 2025 was 15.3" compared to 15.9" the year before (Figure 1). In 2025, the longest buck came from Area 61. As expected with "special" management, opportunity to harvest larger bucks was considerably better in this herd than what hunters enjoyed on average statewide (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Average and maximum horn lengths of harvested bucks checked from the Red Desert Pronghorn Herd.

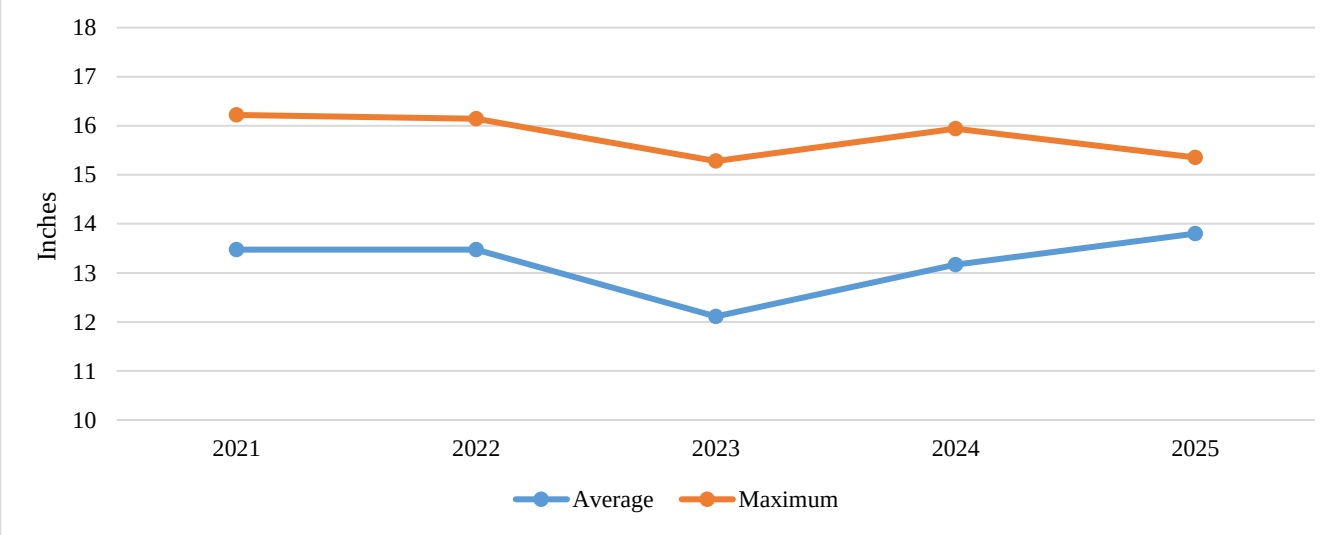
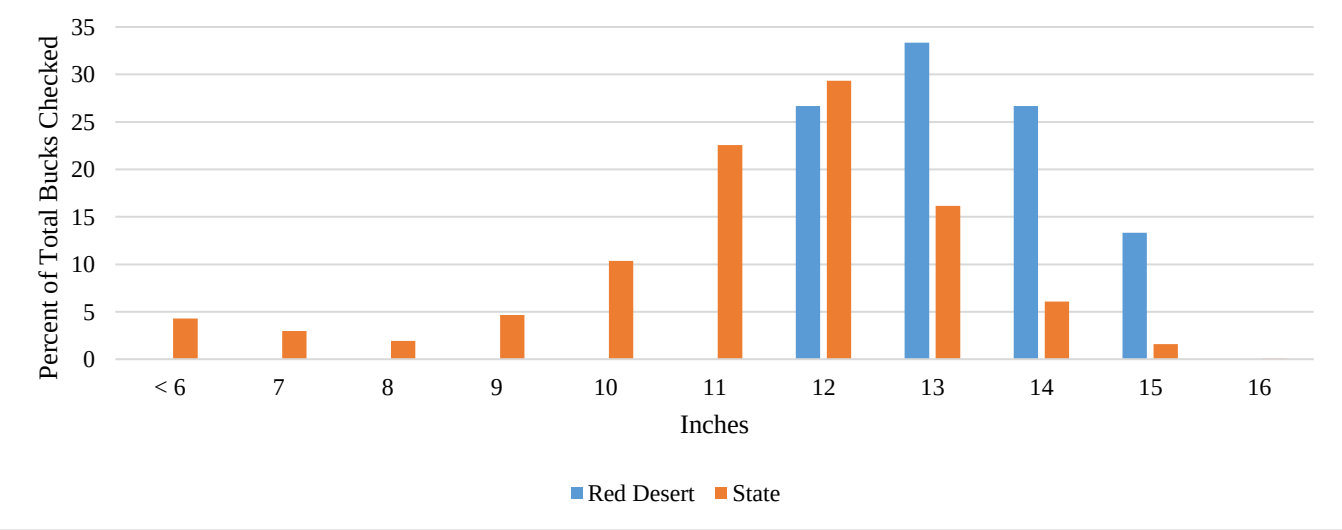


Figure 2. Horn lengths of harvested bucks checked from the Red Desert Pronghorn Herd compared to statewide harvest checks in 2025.



2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

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

HERD: PR630 - IRON SPRINGS

HUNT AREAS: 52, 56, 108

PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Population:	6,750	6,197	5,491
Harvest:	404	156	320
Hunters:	441	180	350
Hunter Success:	92%	87%	91%
Active Licenses:	498	180	365
Active License Success:	81%	87%	88%
Recreation Days:	1,586	591	1,216
Days Per Animal:	3.9	3.8	3.8
Males per 100 Females	51	66	
Juveniles per 100 Females	51	79	

Population Objective (± 20%): 12000 (9600 - 14400)

Management Strategy: Recreational

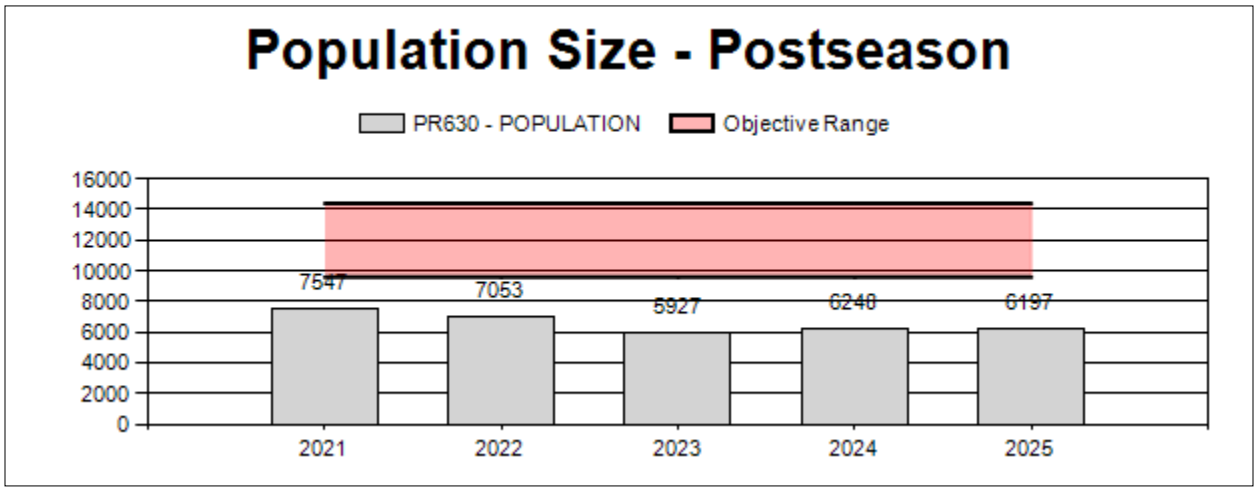
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -48.4%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 6

Model Date: 04/01/2026

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0.6%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	9%	19%
Proposed change in post-season population:	0%	-11%



2021 - 2025 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR630 - IRON SPRINGS

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Pre Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2021	7,900	72	257	329	24%	690	50%	356	26%	1,375	0	10	37	48	± 5	52	± 5	35
2022	6,900	86	241	327	27%	557	46%	336	28%	1,220	0	15	43	59	± 6	60	± 6	38
2023	4,267	104	202	306	27%	600	54%	211	19%	1,117	0	17	34	51	± 5	35	± 4	23
2024	5,577	92	163	255	22%	504	44%	389	34%	1,148	0	18	32	51	± 6	77	± 8	51
2025	7,043	154	156	310	27%	470	41%	369	32%	1,149	0	33	33	66	± 7	79	± 8	47

2026 Hunting Seasons
Iron Springs Pronghorn (PR630)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
52	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 15	Sep. 16	Oct. 31	125	Any antelope
52	2	Aug. 15	Sep. 15	Sep. 16	Nov. 14	150	Any antelope valid south of North Spring Creek
56	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	25	Any antelope
108	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	75	Any antelope
108	7	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Nov. 30	25	Doe or fawn valid south of the Bridger Pass Road (B.L.M. Road 3301), east of the Continental Divide and north of the Miller Hill Road (Carbon County Road 505W)

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 89% Satisfied, 10% Neutral, 2% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
Classification and harvest data indicate this herd suffered heavy losses during the 2019-20 and the 2022-23 winter, which consisted of constant sub-zero temperatures, high winds, and record snowfall, ultimately causing significant mortality. As a result of these losses, in combination with record low fawn production in 2023 (35:100), the population has not yet recovered and is well below objective.

Classification sample size remained stable in 2025, and was still only 30% of the sample collected in 2018. Sample sizes decreased in Areas 52 and 56, but increased significantly in Area 108. For the herd as a whole, the buck:doe ratio increased from 51:100 in 2024 to 66:100 in 2025, which is above the designated range for recreational management. However, increased buck ratios can be partly attributed to an 83% increase in yearling bucks, which was unsurprising given the high fawn:doe ratio of 77:100 in 2024. While the fawn:doe ratio increased across the herd unit in 2025 to 79:100 does, this increase is largely attributed to the increase in Area 52 alone, which was 88:100 in 2025. Areas 56 and 108 experienced a decline in fawn ratios, likely as a result of limited access for classification purposes as well as the perception that many of the does counted were likely yearlings without fawns at side.

Hunter success increased slightly to 87% in 2025. Buck hunters in the southern portion of Area 52 had higher success (89%) than those with Type 1 licenses (85%), despite greater access in the northern portion of the area. In 2025, hunter success was lowest in Area 56 at 71%, a dramatic decrease from the 100% in 2024; hunter effort was also the greatest in Area 56 at 10.2 days/harvest. Limited success and increased hunter effort in Area 56 may be because of the checker-boarded land ownership and a lack of access. Success in Area 108 remained high at 92% in both 2024 and 2025. For the entire herd unit, effort increased only slightly from 3.6 days/harvest in 2024 to 3.8 days/harvest in 2025. Hunter satisfaction increased significantly to 89%, with less hunters feeling neutral or dissatisfied with their experience.

Precipitation was near normal in 2025, but was drier than average through the growing season. Following a warm and snow free fall, winter 2025-26 has been at or near the warmest and driest winter on record in more than five years. Temperatures have been well above average, and precipitation amounts through late-February 2026 are well below average in the Rawlins and Saratoga areas. As such, winter severity this year was considered "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality. However, there is growing concern about how dry conditions will impact habitat conditions into the spring. Without substantial improvement in precipitation through the remainder of winter and into the upcoming growing season to replenish soil moisture and provide a boost to vegetation green up, there will likely be significant negative impacts to pronghorn during and after parturition. This would likely lead to reduced pronghorn numbers entering the 2026 hunting season.

For the past 20 years buck harvests from Area 52 have been separated between the Type 1 and Type 2 licenses, with the Type 2s valid only in the southern portion of the hunt area. These licenses direct hunting pressure to a major portion of the area with large blocks of private land, often irrigated, which is difficult to access and typically has a greater supply of bucks. While this Type 2 license strategy has been successful, the southern portion still has the majority of the bucks in the area, at 85:100, compared to 61:100 in the more accessible northern portion. However, increases in ratios in the southern part of the unit may be attributed to the fact that less does were classified in that area than in past years.

As a result of maintained Type 1 success and strong buck ratios, quotas are increased by 50 each in Areas 52 and 108. Additionally, Type 2 licenses in Area 52 are increased by 75 in an effort to take advantage of localized increases in pronghorn numbers, especially in the southern portion of the area. Although the herd is still well below objective and recovering from previous harsh winters, 25 Type 7 licenses in Area 108 are issued in 2026 to address damage and range condition concerns. Area 56 license quotas remain the same, as a result of very limited access and moderate success. Expected harvest in 2026 is ~300 bucks, representing ~19% of the pre-hunt buck population. Given the significant population reduction due to previous harsh winters and checker-boarded land ownership / lack of access, this harvest rate is appropriate.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the Iron Springs Pronghorn Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2025, and will not be reviewed again until 2030.

Population Modeling

Managers chose to model this herd using the default structure for pronghorn, i.e. constant adult survival, time-varying reproduction and juvenile survival. Based on visual comparison of effort variables, licenses, days / harvest, and recreation days were all selected as variables most predictably related to annual harvest. In an effort to produce better Rhat values, a truncated version utilizing nine years of harvest and ratio data, as well as three LT estimates, was selected for the IPM. IPM convergence was good, with most Rhat values around 1.1. Additionally, simulated fawn and buck ratios aligned well with observed data for this herd. IPM estimates also aligned with confidence intervals for all three LT estimates (Table 1), including the most recent surveys from 2024 (Appendix A). The total post-season abundance estimate for 2025 was 6,197 pronghorn (CL 5,059-7,453), which aligns with the most recent LT estimate, as well as manager and stakeholder perceptions that this herd is slowly growing after being significantly impacted by previous

harsh winters. This model predicts a herd size 48.4% below objective, and is considered a fair representation of population in this herd unit.

Table 1. Line-transect estimates for the Iron Springs Pronghorn Herd, 2017, 2021, and 2024.

	2017	**2021**	**2024**
LT Result	13,381 (CL 9,624 - 17,138)	5,338 (CL 3,688 - 6,988)	5,110 (CL 4,379 - 6,513)
IPM Estimate	10,841 (CL 9,463 - 12,462)	7,547 (CL 6,800 - 8,639)	6,248 (CL 5,405 - 7,241)

Appendix A. PR630 Line Transect Results

2024 PR630 – IRON SPRINGS Pronghorn Line-Transect Summary

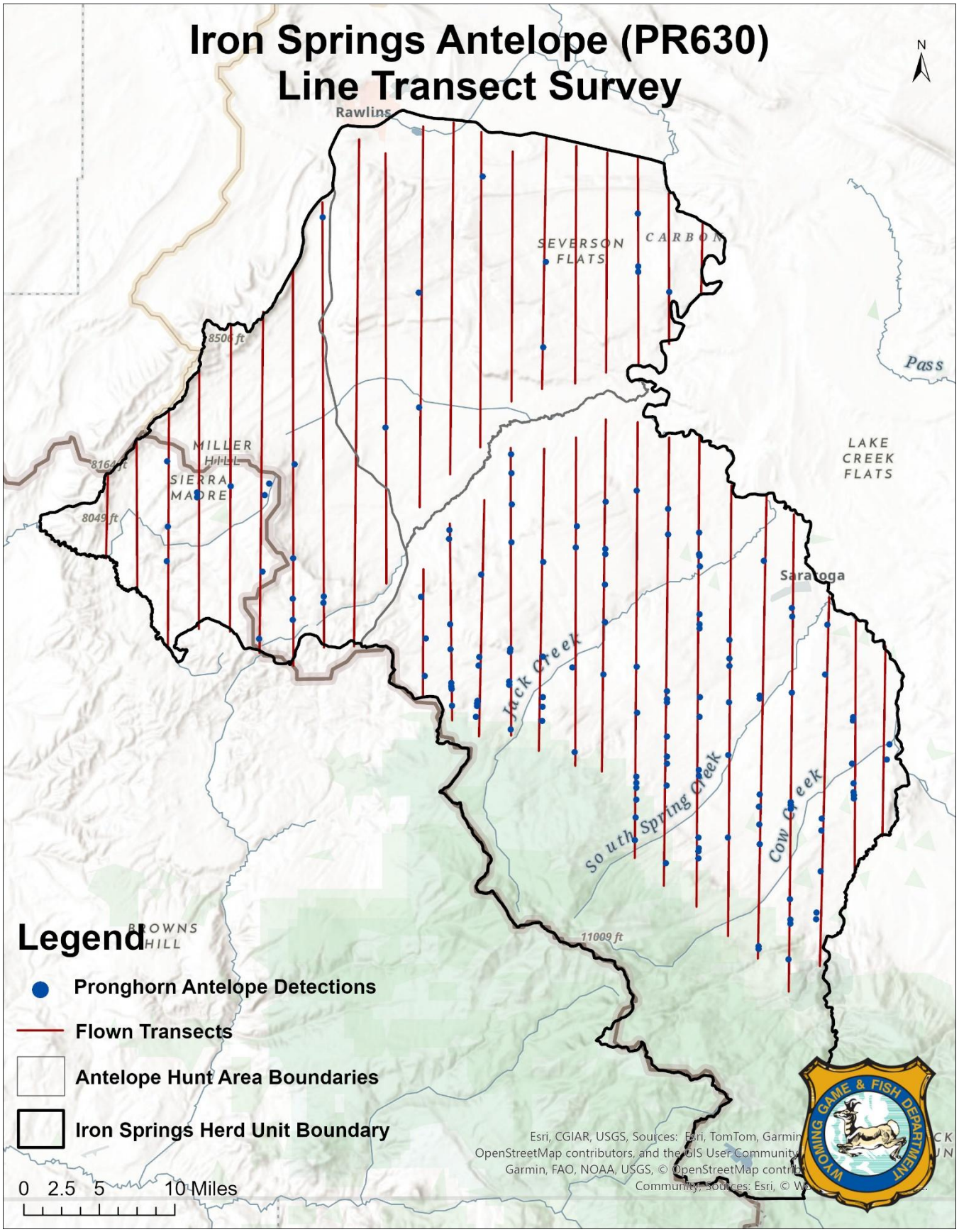
Survey Dates:	5/28/2025 – 5/29/2025
Survey Cost:	$3,295.50
Flight Service:	WYOMING AERO PHOTO (Jamie Burgess, Pilot)
Aircraft:	CESSNA 182
Observers:	Ashley Umphlett (primary observer)

Weather Conditions:

Temperature (Degrees Fahrenheit):	~60°
Cloud Cover (%):	0
Wind Speed (MPH):	0 – 15

Transect Limits:	107° 28' to 106° 44'
Transect Direction:	North/South
Transect Interval (Minutes of Longitude):	2
Transect Length: (Mi.):	548
Transect Altitude (AGL):	300 ft.

Occupied Habitat (mi^2):	899
Density Estimate (Animals/mi^2 with Confidence Intervals):	5.68 (4.87 - 7.24)
Population Estimate (with Confidence Intervals):	5,110 (4,379 – 6,513)


Iron Springs Antelope (PR630)
Line Transect Survey
N
Rawlins
SEVERSON FLATS
CARBON
Pass
LAKE CREEK FLATS
MILLER HILL
SIERRA MADRE
8506 ft
8164 ft
8049 ft
Saratoga
Jack Creek
South Spring Creek
Cow Creek
BROWNS HILL
11009 ft
Legend
Pronghorn Antelope Detections
Flown Transects
Antelope Hunt Area Boundaries
Iron Springs Herd Unit Boundary
0 2.5 5 10 Miles
WYOMING GAME & FISH DEPARTMENT
Esri, CGIAR, USGS, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin
OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community
Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contri
Community, Sources: Esri, © W

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

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

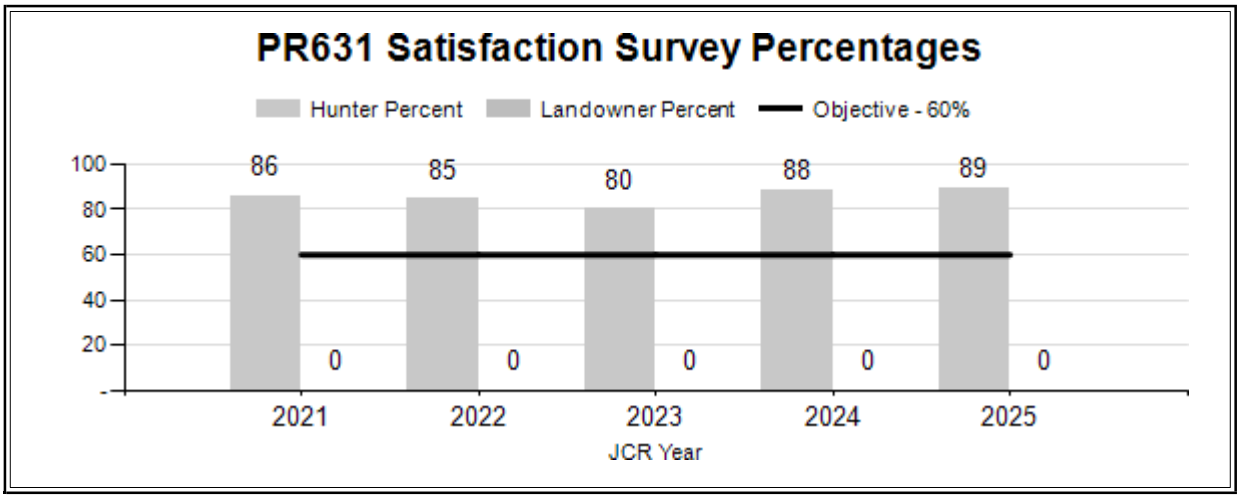
HERD: PR631 - WIND RIVER

HUNT AREAS: 84

PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Hunter Satisfaction Percent	86%	89%	90%
Landowner Satisfaction Percent	0%	0%	0%
Harvest:	135	123	113
Hunters:	142	148	132
Hunter Success:	95%	83%	86%
Active Licenses:	166	159	140
Active License Success:	81%	77%	81 %
Recreation Days:	732	727	645
Days Per Animal:	5.4	5.9	5.7
Males per 100 Females:	44	24	
Juveniles per 100 Females	47	48	

Satisfaction Based Objective	60%
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	N/A%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	12



2020 - 2025 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR631 - WIND RIVER

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Pre Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	0	15	29	44	26%	82	49%	43	25%	169	0	18	35	54	± 0	52	± 0	34
2021	0	15	33	48	19%	136	53%	72	28%	256	0	11	24	35	± 0	53	± 0	39
2022	0	21	37	58	21%	161	57%	62	22%	281	0	13	23	36	± 0	39	± 0	28
2023	0	19	62	81	32%	125	50%	45	18%	251	0	15	50	65	± 0	36	± 0	22
2024	0	7	32	39	18%	109	51%	65	31%	213	0	6	29	36	± 0	60	± 0	44
2025	0	20	15	35	14%	147	58%	70	28%	252	0	14	10	24	± 0	48	± 0	38

2026 Hunting Seasons
Wind River Antelope
(PR631)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
84	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	150	Any antelope
84	2	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	50	Any antelope
84	6	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	25	Doe or fawn

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 89% Satisfied, 12 % Neutral, 0% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

The Wind River Antelope Herd inhabits mountain foothill areas throughout much of the summer and fall including isolated parks in conifer covered areas. Given the terrain inhabited by many of the antelope in the herd, classification sampling is difficult and sample sizes vary year to year. In addition, there is believed to be a high rate of interchange with the Wind River Reservation. Anecdotal evidence indicates the population has fluctuated year to year based on environmental factors affecting their distribution. These factors preclude modeling the population. Instead, the herd has a hunter satisfaction objective with the goal to have at least 60% of hunters satisfied. This goal was met with 89% of hunters satisfied with their hunt and no hunters that were surveyed were dissatisfied in 2025.

The variability in classification sample size hinders modelling this population with confidence. Regardless, in 2025 the overall buck ratio was 24:100 with the adult male ratio 10:100 a decrease from 2024 (36:100). Fawn production had declined in past years with 36:100 in 2023 however, it rebounded in 2024 with 60:100, and 48:100 in 2025. In 2025 hunter success for both the Type 1 and Type 6 licenses (78% & 72%, respectively) decreased from 2024 (90% & 95%, respectively) but similar to 2023 (78% & 70%, respectively). Days/harvest also increased for both the Type 1 & 6. The Type 1 increased from 4.2 days/harvest in 2024 to 5.7 in 2025. The time for Type 6 for hunters to harvest a doe or fawn more than doubled with 7.3 days/harvest in 2025 compared to 3.2 days/harvest in 2024.

While buck ratios have declined the last two years, variability in the demographic data is such that inference of the herd from this dataset may be unreliable with no perceivable trends. Given the high hunter satisfaction and hunter comments, managers believe there is more opportunity available for hunters. To accommodate the increase in licenses while limiting hunter crowding, we issued 50 Type 2 licenses with a staggered opening date from the Type 1 license to minimize hunter crowding. The Type 1 and 6 licenses remained the same.

Management Objective Review

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

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

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

HERD: PR632 - BEAVER RIM

HUNT AREAS: 65-69, 74, 106
PREPARED BY: STAN HARTER

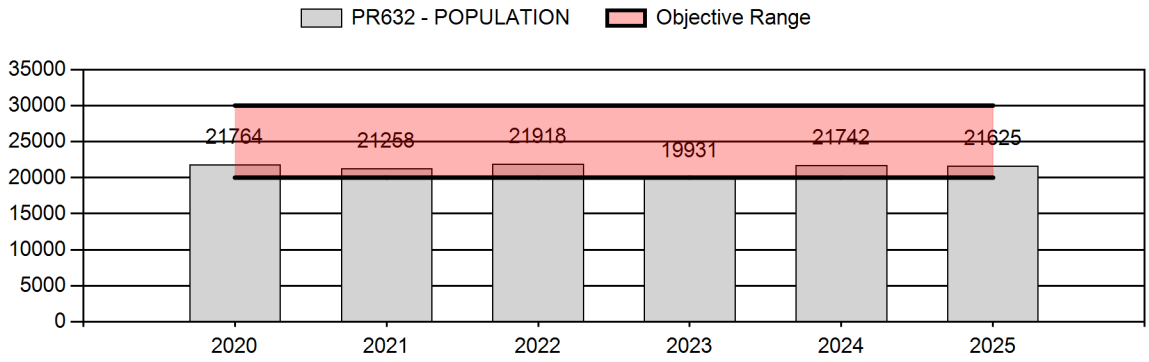
	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Population:	21,323	21,625	22,511
Harvest:	1,221	854	1,085
Hunters:	1,342	974	1,200
Hunter Success:	91%	88%	90 %
Active Licenses:	1,401	983	1,250
Active License Success:	87%	87%	87 %
Recreation Days:	3,857	3,048	4,000
Days Per Animal:	3.2	3.6	3.7
Males per 100 Females	50	54	
Juveniles per 100 Females	51	52	

Population Objective (± 20%) :	25000 (20000 - 30000)
Management Strategy:	Special
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-13.5%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	1
Model Date:	3/2/2026

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	1%	1%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	15%	15%
Proposed change in post-season population:	+1%	+4%

Population Size - Postseason



2020 - 2025 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR632 - BEAVER RIM

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Pre Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	24,302	306	1,543	1,849	29%	3,178	50%	1,377	22%	6,404	1,851	10	49	58	± 2	43	± 2	27
2021	23,690	199	1,578	1,777	25%	3,671	51%	1,697	24%	7,145	1,403	5	43	48	± 2	46	± 2	31
2022	25,987	343	1,066	1,409	23%	3,000	48%	1,800	29%	6,209	1,987	11	36	47	± 2	60	± 3	41
2023	21,116	416	1,202	1,618	25%	3,501	53%	1,478	22%	6,597	1,284	12	34	46	± 2	42	± 2	29
2024	23,494	273	1,040	1,313	23%	2,591	46%	1,709	30%	5,613	2,320	11	40	51	± 2	66	± 3	44
2025	24,090	426	1,014	1,440	26%	2,674	49%	1,378	25%	5,492	1,620	16	38	54	± 3	52	± 2	33

2026 Hunting Seasons
Beaver Rim Pronghorn (PR632)

Hunt		Archery Dates		Season Dates			
Area	Type	Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes	Quota	Limitations
65	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	100	Any antelope
65	6	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	25	Doe or fawn
65	7	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 1	Nov. 7	50	Doe or fawn valid north of the Little Popo Agie River; also valid in Area 66 west of the Little Popo Agie River
66	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	100	Any antelope
67	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	200	Any antelope
67	6	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	25	Doe or fawn
68	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	250	Any antelope
68	6	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	25	Doe or fawn
69	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 14	Sep. 15	Oct. 31	100	Any antelope
69	6	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	25	Doe or fawn
74	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	150	Any antelope
106	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	125	Any antelope
106	6	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	25	Doe or fawn

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 85.2% Satisfied, 10.0% Neutral, 4.8% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

The Beaver Rim Pronghorn Herd Unit has experienced fluctuations over 20 years, primarily influenced by weather extremes. Most recently, the severe winter of 2022-23 significantly affected fawn survival and subsequent recruitment. This was similar to the effects of recent dry years in 2018, 2020, 2021, and 2024, and declines in fawn survival and yearling buck recruitment that followed. The population is growing slightly after both of these weather extremes. The Integrated Population Model (IPM) for Beaver Rim Pronghorn shows an increase of 1% in 2025 to 21,625 pronghorn, placing the population 13.5% below objective (25,000). According to the IPM, this herd is projected to increase by 4% to a post-season population of around 22,511 pronghorn in 2026.

Pre-season ground classification surveys were completed in August and September 2025, and for the second year in a row resulted in the lowest sample size (5,613) since 2004, and was 49% lower than the highest sample size of 10,850 observed in 2018. The 2025 surveys showed the fawn/doe ratio fell to 52J/100F and the total buck/doe ratio rose to 54M/100F. The increase in the buck/doe ratio is encouraging, yet it remained 10% below the lower end of the special management range of 60-70 M/100F. The yearling buck/doe ratio of 16YM/100F in 2025 was the best since 2018 and followed a good fawn/doe ratio observed in 2024.

A total of 854 pronghorn were harvested in 2025, with doe harvest occurring primarily in limited portions of hunt areas 65 and 66 with Type 7 licenses for hayfield damage prevention. The 2025 harvest report also includes surveys sent to a sample of the hunters who participated in the Governor's One-Shot Antelope Hunt (including Past Shooters) with licenses issued in addition to the regulation quota of 900 set by the Commission. Active license success in 2025 was 87% and equaled the previous 5-year and long-term average. Hunters averaged 3.6 days/harvest in 2025, the highest since 2016 and tied the second highest rate since 2004.

The 2026 hunting season remains conservative, but with a few increases in license numbers. Although the population estimate is below objective (but within the ±20 range), we are introducing Type 6 licenses in 5 hunt areas primarily in response to the extremely dry conditions being experienced to date in winter 2025-2026 and likely similar conditions leading into spring and summer. Also, while this population is below objective, it is growing and even with projected doe/fawn harvest will continue to do so and perhaps reach objective in the next one or two years. We are also continuing with Hunt Area 65 Type 7 licenses to keep addressing localized damage concerns, and a small amount doe/fawn harvest occurs with Type 1 licenses. The total buck/doe ratio is expected to remain below the range for special management criteria, with model projections showing a decrease to 50M/100F in 2026. Regardless, we are adding a total of 125 Type 1 licenses across 4 hunt areas for 2026 to keep buck harvest rates at 15% of the number of pre-season bucks available.

Precipitation was near normal in 2025, but was drier than average through the growing season, and was followed by above average precipitation in August and September, especially in the Jeffrey City area. Following a warm and snow free fall, winter 2025-2026 was at or near the warmest and driest winter on record since 1895. Temperatures were well above average with numerous record high temperatures set from November 2025 through late-February 2026 and again in mid-May. Some rain and snow events occurred in May 2026, but snowfall amounts through May 19, 2026 are still about 56% below average in Lander, 80-90% below average in Jeffrey City, and about 52% below average in Riverton. As such, winter severity this year was considered "mild," and likely did not result in much winter mortality. There was essentially no snow cover throughout winter 2025-26 in this herd unit and pronghorn have the ability to range widely across winter ranges throughout the entire winter and precipitation improved in May. Yet, there is growing concern about how this will affect habitat conditions into the remainder of spring and summer. Without substantial improvement in precipitation into the growing season to replenish soil moisture and provide a boost to vegetation growth, there will likely be significant negative impacts to pronghorn during and after parturition. This would likely lead to reduced pronghorn numbers entering the 2026 hunting season.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the Beaver Rim Pronghorn Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2025, and will be reviewed again in 2030.

Population Modeling

The post-season abundance estimate of 21,625 pronghorn in 2025 (CL = 19,854–23,347) is 13.5% below objective (25,000). The IPM was run from 2010 through 2027 with maximum iterations and burn-in rates, and produces Rhat values of 1.05 for the point estimate and 1.09 for the upper confidence interval, both of which indicate convergence is likely in the IPM. A line-transect (LT) survey conducted in June 2024 produced an end-of-year estimate of 20,053 pronghorn (CL= 18,364–21,897) via a "pooled" analysis. This pooled estimate better matched population trends following drought and severe winter, and also provided much tighter confidence intervals. Even still, the end-of-year abundance estimate produced by the IPM falls just below the confidence interval of the LT estimate derived from the pooled analysis. This is not normally acceptable considering LT estimates were once used to "anchor" the population model. Regardless, the abundance estimates track reasonably well with end-of-bioyear abundance estimates falling within or near the confidence intervals for the line-transect (LT) estimates in 2010, 2013, 2016, and 2020 (Table 1). This IPM seems reasonable given it reflects population response to drought in 4 of the last 7 years, as well as the severe winter of 2022-2023.

Table 1. Line-transect and IPM estimates for the Beaver Rim Pronghorn Herd Unit, 2010-2023.

End-of-Bioyear Abundance	2010	2013	2016	2020	2023
LT Estimate	19,965	16,521	19,398	16,761	20,053
	(CL 14,551 - 25,379)	(CL 13,075 - 19,967)	(CL 14,798 - 23,998)	(CL 12,692 - 20,830)	(CL 18,289 - 21,817)
IPM Estimate	17,518	17,806	21,309	19,926	18,201
	(CL 16,139 - 18,806)	(CL 16,363 - 19,048)	(CL 19,620 - 22,754)	(CL 18,346 - 21,274)	(CL 16,817 - 19,426)

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

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

HERD: PR634 - BADWATER

HUNT AREAS: 75
PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

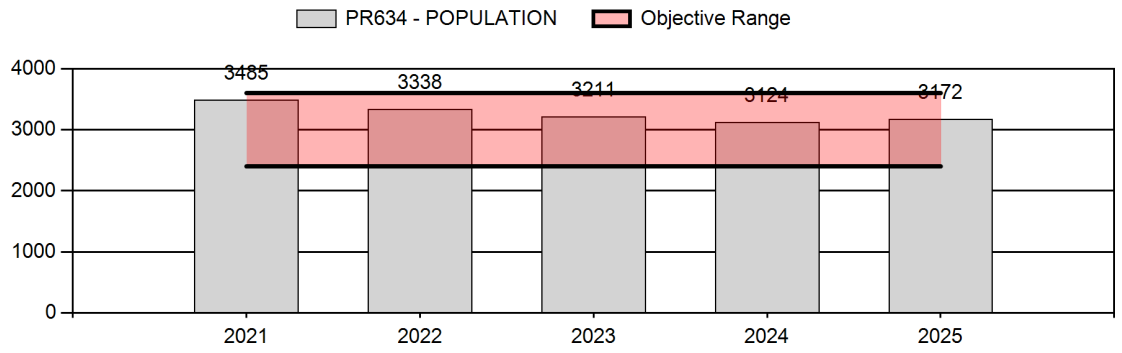
	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Population:	3,630	3,172	3,396
Harvest:	381	203	265
Hunters:	400	225	285
Hunter Success:	95%	90%	93 %
Active Licenses:	432	225	285
Active License Success:	88%	90%	93 %
Recreation Days:	1,113	512	645
Days Per Animal:	2.9	2.5	2.4
Males per 100 Females	53	53	
Juveniles per 100 Females	52	45	

Population Objective (± 20%) :	3000 (2400 - 3600)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	6%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	23
Model Date:	2/27/2026

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	2%	1%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	18%	25%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-3%	7%

Population Size - Postseason



2020 - 2025 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR634 - BADWATER

Year	Pre Pop		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
			Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	Tot %Cls		Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	4,849	14	109	123	23%	263	50%	139	26%	525	1,268	5	41	47	± 8	53	± 9	36
2021	4,235	23	130	153	32%	236	49%	95	20%	484	0	10	55	65	± 10	40	± 8	24
2022	4,393	20	81	101	21%	226	48%	147	31%	474	0	9	36	45	± 8	65	± 11	45
2023	3,977	55	66	121	28%	212	50%	92	22%	425	0	26	31	57	± 10	43	± 8	28
2024	3,269	51	157	208	26%	387	48%	215	27%	810	0	13	41	54	± 7	56	± 7	36
2025	3,589	28	183	211	27%	398	51%	179	23%	788	0	7	46	53	± 0	45	± 0	29

2026 Hunting Seasons
Badwater Antelope (PR634)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
75	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	275	Any antelope
75	6	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	25	Doe or fawn

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 90% Satisfied, 6% Neutral, 4% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
The Badwater Antelope herd has been slowly declining toward its objective of 3,000 pronghorn since 2019, however, it began to stabilize starting in 2023. In 2025 we eliminated the Type 6 doe/fawn licenses in an effort to moderate the decline in the herd and stabilize the population within the ±20% of the objective. The last two winters have been fairly mild with reasonable precipitation throughout the spring, leading to decent vegetation growth. However, the dry summer in 2025 led to the Red Canyon Fire which burned into the northern portion, roughly 5%, of the herd unit. While it's too early to realize what impacts this has on the Badwater Antelope Herd, we do anticipate the spread of cheat grass throughout the area will increase in following years.

There was a slight increase in the number of adult bucks observed in 2025 compared to 2024 (46:100 & 41:100, respectively). Conversely, the yearling buck ratios decreased by almost half (13:100 in 2024, 7:100 in 2025). Overall, the buck:doe ratio in 2025 (53:100) was similar to 2024 (54:100) and the 5-year average (55:100). While the overall buck:doe ratio held steady, fawn recruitment saw a decline with a fawn:doe ratio of 45:100 in 2025, down from 56:100 in 2024. The 5-year average fawn:doe ratio is 50:100. The Type 1 harvest success in 2025 was 90%, slightly higher than the previous two years (85% & 86%, respectively). Hunter's effort with the Type 1 license saw a decrease from 3.4 days/harvest in 2024 to 2.5 in 2025, lower than the 5-year average of 3.1 days/harvest. The population model predicts this herd is slightly above objective and projects that it will continue to slightly increase in the future. The model also predicts a harvest of 25% of the preseason bucks with a 3-year average of 19%. Given the good buck:doe ratio the past several years and to attain close to a 25% harvest of bucks, we will be increasing Type 1 licenses for the 2026 hunting season. With the predicted increase in the population, doe/fawn licenses are warranted to continue to manage this herd to the objective by harvesting does and offer more opportunity for hunters.

Management Objective Review
The objective and management strategy for the Badwater Antelope Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2023, and will not be reviewed again until 2028.

Population Modeling

The postseason population estimate after the 2025 season was 3,172 (CL = 2,715 – 3,664) pronghorn. This represents about a 3% decrease from the previous year. The model fits well based on Rhat values and simulation of demographic ratios, but does not fit well with several LT estimates. Regardless, estimates indicate this herd may increase slightly in 2026 but remain within 20% of the objective of 3,000 pronghorn. Overall, this model provides reasonable estimates and trends.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

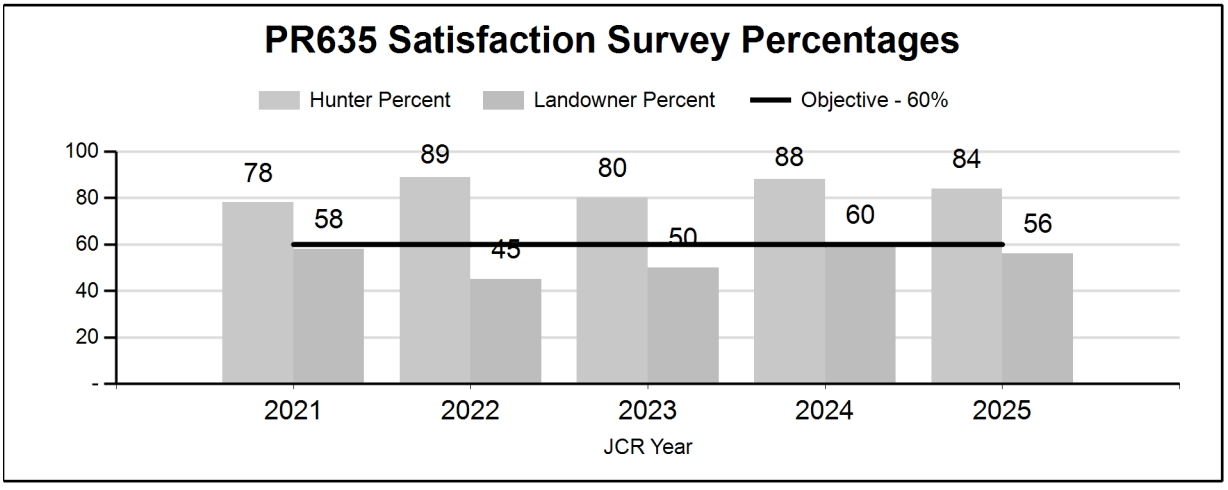
SPECIES: Pronghorn
HERD: PR635 - PROJECT
HUNT AREAS: 97, 117

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

PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Hunter Satisfaction Percent	85%	84%	89%
Landowner Satisfaction Percent	55%	56%	60%
Harvest:	257	127	121
Hunters:	249	129	132
Hunter Success:	103%	98%	92 %
Active Licenses:	300	144	147
Active License Success:	86%	88%	82 %
Recreation Days:	1,048	369	347
Days Per Animal:	4.1	2.9	2.9
Males per 100 Females:	30	37	
Juveniles per 100 Females	37	46	

Satisfaction Based Objective	60%
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	10%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	7



2020 - 2025 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR635 - PROJECT

			MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Pre Pop		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	Tot %	Cls Obj	Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	0	17	37	54	21%	157	61%	47	18%	258	0	11	24	34	± 0	30	± 0	22
2021	0	6	42	48	28%	98	56%	28	16%	174	0	6	43	49	± 0	29	± 0	19
2022	0	1	12	13	8%	96	62%	47	30%	156	0	1	12	14	± 0	49	± 0	43
2023	0	4	11	15	9%	101	62%	46	28%	162	0	4	11	15	± 0	46	± 0	40
2024	0	8	17	25	21%	68	57%	26	22%	119	0	12	25	37	± 0	38	± 0	28
2025	0	8	26	34	20%	93	55%	43	25%	170	0	9	28	37	± 0	46	± 0	34

2026 Hunting Seasons
Project Antelope (PR635)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
97, 117	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	75	Any antelope
97, 117	2			Aug. 15	Oct. 31	25	Any antelope valid in Area 97 south of U.S. Highway 26 or Wyoming Highway 134 and east of Eight Mile Road, and in all of Area 117
97, 117	7			Aug. 15	Oct. 31	50	Doe or fawn valid in Area 97 south of U.S. Highway 26 or Wyoming Highway 134 and east of Eight Mile Road, and in all of Area 117

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 84% Satisfied, 8% Neutral, 8% Dissatisfied
2025 Landowner Satisfaction: 56% Good #, 28% Too many, 16% Too few

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
This herd unit is managed based on a hunter/landowner satisfaction objective. Mixed landownership within the Wind River Reservation (WRR) precludes the collection of good demographic data and population modeling. The 2022-23 winter was extremely harsh causing noted mortality. While the 23-24 & 24-25 winters were quite mild, antelope numbers have not yet rebounded. The total number of antelope classified in 2024 (119) was the lowest in the last five years and in 2025 it was 170. Fawn recruitment increased from 38:100 in 2024 to 46:100 in 2025, similar to the 5-year average of 41:100. In 2025, the total buck:doe ratio was the same as the previous year at 37:100 and is significantly higher to that observed in 2022 & 2023 (14:100 & 15:100, respectively). The yearling buck:doe ratio was 9:100 in 2025, slightly lower than 12:100 in 2024 but still a reasonable level that shows decent fawn survival. Comparatively, the yearling buck:doe ratios in 2022 & 2023 were 1:100 & 4:100, respectively. While the increase in the buck:doe ratio is encouraging, it is within the lower portion of the minimum number of bucks for a recreationally managed herd. Overall hunter success increased from 80% in 2024 to 88% in 2025. Days/harvest decreased from 3.7 in 2024 to 2.9 in 2025.

The satisfaction objective was set in 2013 and personnel have been collecting landowner satisfaction data since 2014. Hunter satisfaction slightly decreased from 88% in 2024 to 84% in 2025, right in line with the five-year average (84%). Landowner satisfaction slightly decreased in 2025 with 56% (60% in 2024) indicating there were a good number of antelope.

While this herd seems to be recovering and satisfaction metrics are within or near objective, buck ratios are still at a level that does not warrant an increase in Type 1 licenses, therefore the 2026 hunting season will remain unchanged.

Management Objective Review
The objective and management strategy for the Project Antelope Herd was last evaluated in 2023, and will not be reviewed again until 2028.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

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

HERD: PR636 - NORTH FERRIS

HUNT AREAS: 63

PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Population:	3,902	2,566	2,493
Harvest:	279	71	128
Hunters:	344	92	163
Hunter Success:	81%	77%	79%
Active Licenses:	361	92	163
Active License Success:	77%	77%	79%
Recreation Days:	988	299	448
Days Per Animal:	3.5	4.2	3.5
Males per 100 Females	58	63	
Juveniles per 100 Females	53	58	

Population Objective (± 20%) : 5000 (4000 - 6000)

Management Strategy: Recreational

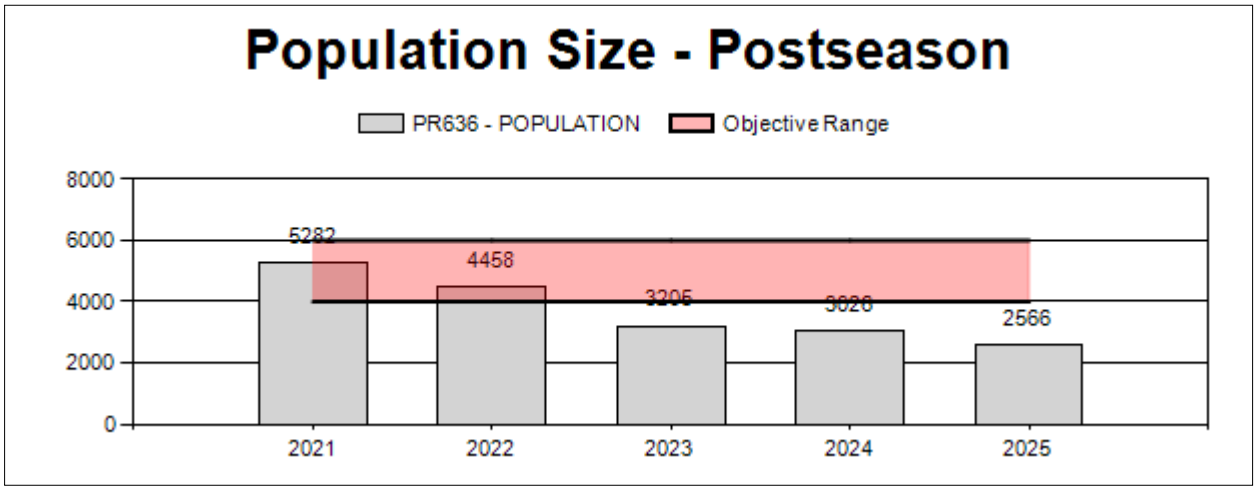
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -48.7%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 6

Model Date: 02/27/2026

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	14%	24%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-15%	-3%



2021 - 2025 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR636 - NORTH FERRIS

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Pre Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2021	4,475	21	215	236	26%	381	42%	281	31%	898	1,692	6	56	62	± 8	74	± 9	46
2022	4,000	80	111	191	24%	369	45%	252	31%	812	0	22	30	52	± 7	68	± 8	45
2023	3,005	42	74	116	19%	352	59%	130	22%	598	0	12	21	33	± 5	37	± 6	28
2024	2,949	26	123	149	26%	246	44%	170	30%	565	0	11	50	61	± 9	69	± 10	43
2025	3,124	70	145	215	29%	341	45%	197	26%	753	0	21	43	63	± 8	58	± 7	35

2026 Hunting Seasons
North Ferris Pronghorn (PR636)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
63	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	100	Any antelope
63	2	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	75	Any antelope valid east of Buzzard Road (Natrona County Road 410-Carbon County Road 497)

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 79% Satisfied, 14% Neutral, 7% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
This herd suffered heavy losses during the 2019-20 winter and then again in the 2022-23 winter, which consisted of constant sub-zero temperatures, high winds, and record snowfall. In addition to significant winter mortality, the herd experienced extremely low fawn crops the following springs, and as a result, the population has declined to 47% below objective.

Classification sample size in 2025 increased by 33%, the most counted since prior to the harsh 2022-23 winter. The buck:doe ratio increased slightly from 61:100 in 2024 to 63:100 in 2025, which is above the designated range for recreational management. However, sustained buck ratios can be partly attributed to a 90% increase in yearling bucks, which was unsurprising given the high fawn:doe ratio of 69:100 in 2024. Fawn production declined to 58:100 in 2025; however, declines across the herd unit may be attributed to an increased number of does counted, some of which were likely yearlings without fawns at side.

Hunter success remained relatively stable, going from 76% in 2024 to 77% in 2025, while hunter effort increased from 2.9 days per animal in 2024 to 4.2 days per animal in 2025. Hunter satisfaction decreased to 79%, and dissatisfaction increased slightly to 7%, which was unsurprising given increased hunter effort.

Precipitation was near normal in 2025, but was drier than average through the growing season, and was followed by above average precipitation in August and September, especially near the Seminoe Mountains. Following a warm and snow free fall, winter 2025-26 has been at or near the warmest and driest winter on record in more than five years. Temperatures have been well above average, and precipitation amounts through late-February 2026 are well below average in the Seminoe and Rawlins area. As such, winter severity this year was considered "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality. However, there is growing concern about how this will impact habitat conditions into the spring. Without substantial improvement in precipitation through the remainder of winter and into the upcoming growing season to replenish soil moisture and provide a boost to vegetation green up, there will likely be significant negative impacts to pronghorn during and after parturition. This would likely lead to reduced pronghorn numbers entering the 2026 hunting season.

With the herd so far below objective, no doe/fawn harvest is warranted. Following the harsh 2022-23 winters and public concern, total license quotas were reduced by 50% in 2024 and maintained in 2025. As a result of sustained buck ratios and maintained success, Type 1 and 2 licenses in 2026 are increased to 100 and 75, respectively, in an effort to provide more opportunity for hunters. This results in an expected harvest of ~128 bucks, which is 24% of the estimated pre-hunt buck population. The percentage of bucks harvested on public lands will likely be higher due to a large proportion of antelope in this area being on or behind private lands on Sand, Bear, and Deweese Creeks (leaving them unavailable to most hunters). Managers are working with landowners in the area to secure access in an effort to provide hunters more opportunity.

Management Objective Review

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

Population Modeling

Managers chose to model this herd using the default structure for pronghorn, i.e. constant adult survival, time-varying reproduction and juvenile survival. Based on visual comparison of effort variables, recreation days, days/harvest, and licenses were selected as the variables most predictably related to annual harvest. In an effort to produce better Rhat values, a truncated version utilizing nine years of harvest and ratio data, as well as two LT estimates, was selected for the IPM. IPM convergence was still slightly less than optimal, with some Rhat values departing from 1.1. Despite this, simulated fawn and buck ratios aligned with observed data for this herd. IPM abundance estimates also aligned with confidence limits for both the 2018 and 2022 LT estimates (Table 1). The total post-season abundance estimate for 2025 was 2,566 pronghorn (CL 1,622-3,697), which aligns with perceptions of managers and stakeholders that the herd was significantly impacted by previous harsh winters and unintended overharvest of bucks. This model predicts a herd size 48.7% below objective, and is considered a fair representation of this population.

Table 1. Line-transect estimates for the North Ferris Pronghorn Herd Unit, 2018 and 2022.

	2018	**2022**
LT Result	8,389 (CL 6,035 - 10,743)	2,692 (CL 1,474 - 4,018)
IPM Estimate	6,637 (CL 5,049 - 7,975)	4,458 (CL 3,267 - 5,779)

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

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

HERD: PR637 - SOUTH FERRIS

HUNT AREAS: 62

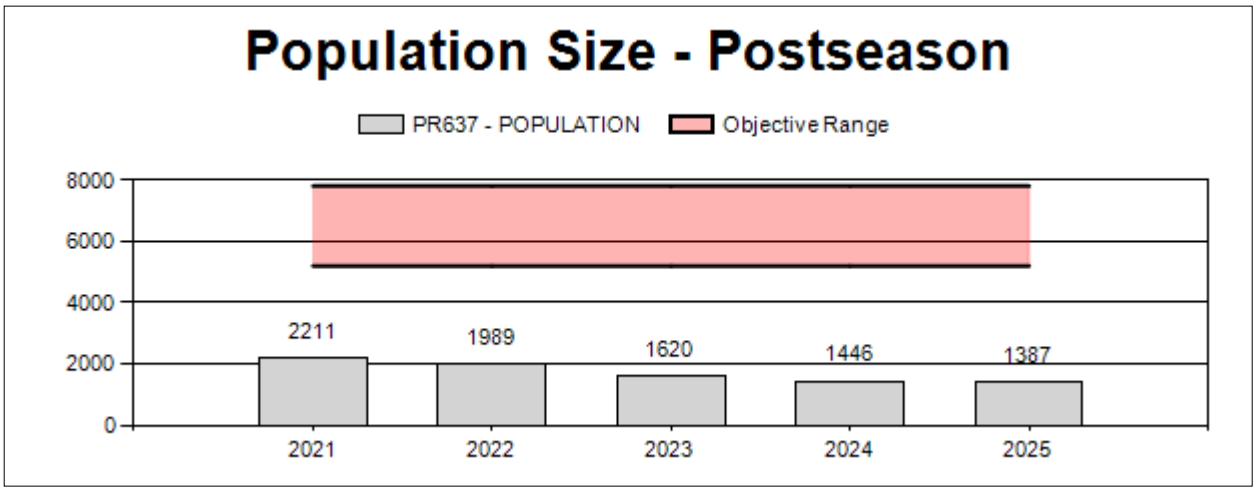
PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Population:	1,965	1,387	1,221
Harvest:	51	19	78
Hunters:	65	24	97
Hunter Success:	78%	79%	80%
Active Licenses:	65	24	97
Active License Success:	78%	79%	80%
Recreation Days:	219	56	374
Days Per Animal:	4.3	2.9	4.8
Males per 100 Females	58	91	
Juveniles per 100 Females	38	56	

Population Objective (± 20%):	6500 (5200 - 7800)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-78.7%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	7
Model Date:	02/26/2026

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	10%	22%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-4%	-12%



2021 - 2025 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR637 - SOUTH FERRIS

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Pre Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2021	3,240	22	179	201	34%	313	52%	86	14%	600	0	7	57	64	± 9	27	± 5	17
2022	1,600	40	130	170	27%	286	46%	164	26%	620	0	14	45	59	± 7	57	± 7	36
2023	1,541	56	117	173	32%	281	52%	91	17%	545	0	20	42	62	± 8	32	± 5	20
2024	1,713	57	148	205	25%	399	48%	221	27%	825	0	14	37	51	± 5	55	± 6	37
2025	1,544	72	108	180	37%	197	40%	111	23%	488	0	37	55	91	± 13	56	± 9	29

2026 Hunting Seasons
South Ferris Pronghorn (PR637)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
62	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	50	Any antelope
62	2	Aug. 15	Sep. 18	Sep. 19	Oct. 31	50	Any antelope valid east of the Continental Divide and north of Wise Dugout Draw

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 92% Satisfied, 8% Neutral, 0% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

This herd experienced two consecutive severe winters in 2018-19 and 2019-20, and then an extraordinarily severe winter in 2022-23 consisting of constant sub-zero temperatures, high winds, and record snowfall, ultimately causing significant mortality. These losses, combined with exceptionally poor fawn crops from 2019-2021 and again in 2023, caused the population to decline to over 75% below objective.

Classification sample size decreased significantly in 2025, and was the lowest recorded in the history of this herd. The buck:doe ratio increased from 51:100 in 2024 to 91:100 in 2025, which is well above the designated range for recreational management. However, increased buck ratios can be partly attributed to a 164% increase in yearling bucks, which was unsurprising given an increased fawn:doe ratio of 55:100 in 2024. Fawn production remained relatively stable in 2025 at 56:100, likely due to the decreased classification sample size in conjunction with the perception that many does counted were yearlings without fawns. Additionally, 60% of the nearly 500 antelope counted and classified were found in the eastern, checkerboarded portion of the herd unit, with a buck:doe ratio of 138:100 in the same area.

Hunter success increased from 67% in 2024 to 79% in 2025, while hunter effort decreased in the same time frame, from 6.9 days to 2.9 days, respectively. Improvements in success and effort were unexpected given the significant population decline in recent years. Hunter satisfaction increased significantly to 92% while dissatisfaction remained at 0%, likely due to the increase in success and decrease in hunter effort.

Precipitation was near normal in 2025, but was drier than average through the growing season, and was followed by above average precipitation in August and September, especially near the Seminoe Mountains. Following a warm and snow free fall, winter 2025-26 has been at or near the warmest and driest winter on record in more than five years. Temperatures have been well above average, and precipitation amounts through late-February 2026 are well below average in the Seminoe and Rawlins area. As such, winter severity this year was considered "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality. However, there is growing concern about how this will impact habitat conditions into the spring. Without substantial improvement in precipitation through the remainder of winter and into the upcoming growing season to replenish soil moisture and provide a boost to vegetation green up, there will likely be significant negative impacts to pronghorn during and after parturition. This would likely lead to reduced pronghorn numbers entering the 2026 hunting season.

With the herd so far below objective, doe/fawn harvest is once again not warranted. As a result of increased buck ratios, increased hunter success, decreased hunter effort, and increased hunter satisfaction, total license quotas needed to be increased in an effort to provide additional opportunity. Accordingly, Type 1 licenses were increased to 50. In an effort to address higher pronghorn densities and buck ratios in the eastern portion of the unit, as well as to relieve some harvest pressure in the more publicly accessible portion of the area, an additional 50 Type 2 licenses were used in 2026. This results in an expected harvest of ~78 bucks, representing 22% of the pre-hunt buck population. However, the percentage of bucks harvested on public lands will likely be much higher, given that more than half of the hunt area is unavailable to almost all hunters as a result of checker-boarded land ownership. Season dates are changed to coincide with neighboring area seasons.

Management Objective Review

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

Population Modeling

Managers chose to model this herd using the default structure for pronghorn, i.e. constant adult survival, time-varying reproduction and juvenile survival. Based on visual comparison of effort variables, licenses, days / harvest, and recreation days were all selected as the variables most predictably related to annual harvest. In an effort to product better Rhat values, a truncated version utilizing 16 years of harvest and ratio data, as well as four LT estimates, was selected for the IPM. IPM convergence was slightly less than optimal, with some Rhat values greater than 1.1. Despite this, simulated fawn and buck ratios aligned well with observed data for this herd. IPM estimates also fell within confidence levels for all four LT estimates used (Table 1). The total post-season abundance estimate for 2025 was 1,387 pronghorn (CL 967-1,957), which aligns with perceptions of managers and stakeholders that the herd was significantly impacted by several consecutive harsh winters and resulting low fawn production. This model predicts a herd size 78.7% below objective, and is considered a fair representation of this population.

Table 1. Line-transect estimates for the South Ferris Pronghorn Herd, 2012, 2015, 2018, and 2022.

	2012	2015	2018	2022
LT Result	4,610 (CL 2,656 - 6,564)	5,482 (CL 3,095 - 7,869)	2,967 (CL 1,575 - 4,359)	1,469 (CL 622 - 2,477)
IPM Estimate	3,693 (CL 3,016 - 4,438)	3,649 (CL 2,901 - 4,500)	3,038 (CL 2,456 - 3,725)	1,989 (CL 1,561 - 2,545)

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer
PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: MD642 - DUBOIS

HUNT AREAS: 128, 156
PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

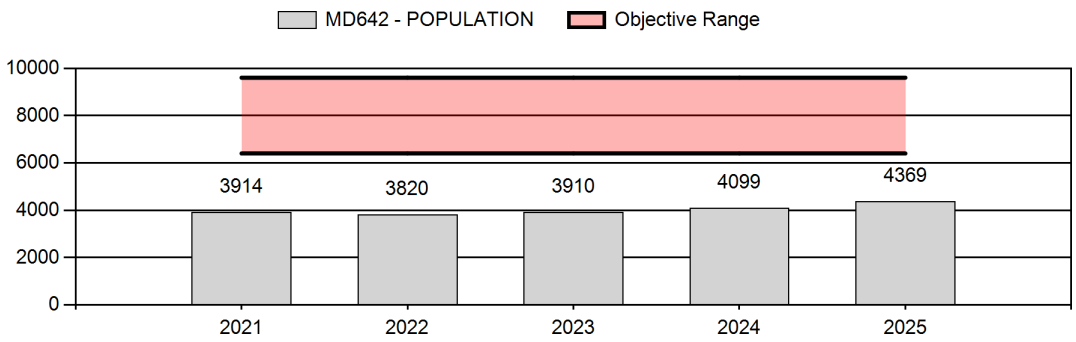
	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Population:	3,987	4,369	4,647
Harvest:	331	386	435
Hunters:	1,051	1,079	1,050
Hunter Success:	31%	36%	41 %
Active Licenses:	1,064	1,079	1,050
Active License Success:	31%	36%	41 %
Recreation Days:	5,865	6,054	5,975
Days Per Animal:	17.7	15.7	13.7
Males per 100 Females	30	31	
Juveniles per 100 Females	61	73	

Population Objective (± 20%) :	8000 (6400 - 9600)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-45.4%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	25
Model Date:	2/19/2026

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	37%	41%
Proposed change in post-season population:	7%	6%

Population Size - Postseason



2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD642 - DUBOIS

		MALES							FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	2+ Cls 1	2+ Cls 2	2+ Cls 3	2+ UnCls	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	4,192	40	60	51	6	0	157	15%	576	56%	299	29%	1,032	800	7	20	27	± 3	52	± 4	41
2021	3,914	60	62	79	11	0	212	15%	686	50%	482	35%	1,380	0	9	22	31	± 3	70	± 4	54
2022	3,820	74	67	75	7	0	223	17%	729	55%	371	28%	1,323	0	10	20	31	± 2	51	± 3	39
2023	3,910	67	72	76	7	0	222	16%	697	51%	450	33%	1,369	0	10	22	32	± 3	65	± 4	49
2024	4,099	53	42	58	10	0	163	16%	526	50%	354	34%	1,043	0	10	21	31	± 3	67	± 5	51
2025	4,369	64	58	69	6	0	197	15%	630	49%	458	36%	1,285	0	10	21	31	± 3	73	± 5	55

2026 Hunting Seasons
Dubois Mule Deer
(MD642)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
128	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 22		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
128	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Nov. 1	Nov. 20	75	Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
128	3	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Nov. 1	Nov. 30	50	Any white-tailed deer
128	8	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	50	Doe or fawn white-tailed deer
	8			Nov. 1	Nov. 30		Unused Type 8 licenses valid on private land
156	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 14	Sep. 15	Oct. 2		Antlered mule deer four (4) points or more on either antler or any white-tailed deer

2026 Region L nonresident quota: 200

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 59% Satisfied, 24% Neutral, 17% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

This herd has been below objective and slowly declining for over a decade. However, since 2020 the population has stabilized with a five-year average postseason population of 4,022 mule deer. In 2025, the estimate was 4,369. Herd demographics also indicate the population is relatively stable over the past five years with an average fawn:doe ratio of 65:100. Fawn production in 2025 increased from 67:100 in 2024 to 73:100. The buck:doe ratio in the herd unit has been extraordinarily stable the last five years and in 2025 the buck:doe ratio was 31:100 which is the same as the five-year average. The yearling buck:doe ratio in 2025 was 10:100 and is also the same as the five-year average. Hunter success saw a reasonable increase in 2025 (36%) compared to 2024 (29%) and correspondingly the days/harvest decreased from 19 in 2024 down to 16 in 2025. Over the last decade, hunter success and satisfaction has varied significantly and is most likely correlated with weather conditions, particularly snowfall during the hunting season, and its effect on harvest success. We received snow fall throughout the 2025 hunting season that was well timed and initiated the mule deer migration, moving deer into 128 making them more accessible to hunters. This led to an increase in hunter harvest and correspondingly increased hunter satisfaction from 51% in 2024 to 59% in 2025. The structure of the general season is strictly intended to direct harvest towards the male segment of this herd and will have no impact on recruitment, survival, nor the overall population. The management strategy for this herd is recreational and the postseason buck:doe ratio in 2025 (31:100) has exceeded the maximum of 29:100.

While this herd has remained stable the last five years, chronic wasting disease (CWD) has increased the last several years (Table. 1). With the increase in CWD, managers are concerned that with the current trajectory, prevalence rates may reach a level that will be difficult to mitigate, resulting in a population decline. Given this concern and the high buck:doe ratio, increased buck harvest is warranted with increased General season length and Type 1 license issuance. Impacts from high rates of CWD have been shown to lower mule deer populations across the state and in particular in the Project Herd that neighbors the Dubois Herd to the south. While we understand that lowering buck:doe ratios will not clear CWD from the herd, it has been recommended as a tool to slow the spread.

Mule deer area 156 will be incorporated into the Dubois Mule Deer Herd Unit for the 2026 hunting season. This hunt area is a general season construct that has had an antler point restriction the previous three years. Similar to hunt area 128, the increase in CWD and high buck:doe ratio warrants an increase in buck harvest in the future.

In 2019, Type 8 licenses were included in hunt area 128 to allow increased harvest of white-tailed does. In 2021, the season dates for these licenses were extended on private land to encourage hunters to harvest white-tailed deer west of Dubois along the Wind River. Hunters with these licenses had a success rate of 15% in 2025, much lower than the 62% in 2024. The Type 3 licenses also saw a large reduction in success in 2025 at 34% compared to 64% in 2024. While both hunters and WGFD personnel noticed a decrease in the number of white-tailed deer (likely due to EHD), specifically in the East Fork drainage where the majority of the harvest occurs, both license types will remain the same in an effort to slow the spread of CWD. White-tailed deer prevalence rates are higher than mule deer prevalence rates and may provide a pathway for continued spread and further contamination. Mule deer and white-tailed deer winter ranges overlap, increasing the risk of transmission from white-tailed deer to mule deer.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the Dubois Mule Deer Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2025, and will not be reviewed again until 2030.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring and Management

The Dubois Mule Deer Herd was prioritized for sampling in 2023 and will continue through 2026. The five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). Given the variability in harvest of mule deer, sample sizes have responded accordingly. This is typical of a migratory deer herd with weather and timing of migration impacting hunter harvest. We acknowledge that the prevalence rate estimates have wide confidence intervals and are based on <200 samples (n=163); it is important to consider its' overall increasing trend. Given the proximity of the Project Mule Deer Herd and the continual increase in CWD prevalence upstream of the Wind River, managers are concerned with the further spread of CWD into the Dubois Mule Deer Herd. To address this concern, we have implemented liberal hunting seasons in both area 157 & 171 in an attempt to lower deer densities and mitigate transmission to the Dubois Mule Deer Herd.

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

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (*n*) – *Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2021	**11% (n=28)**	0% (5)	0% (4)	5.8
2022	**0% (n=19)**	0% (3)	0% (9)	8.2
2023*	**8% (n=48)**	0% (11)	0% (7)	12.8
2024	**10% (n=31)**	0% (4)	0% (0)	10.0
2025	**14% (n=37)**	0% (10)	0% (0)	9.5
2021-2025	**9% (5-15%, n=163)**	0% (33)	0% (20)	9.4

*Prioritized sampling began

Population Modeling

The total postseason population estimate for 2025 was 4,369 (CL=3,972-5,191) mule deer. This represents about a 7% increase (~270 mule deer) from the previous year. The model shows this herd has been slowly declining since the early 2000s but has stabilized the last five years and beginning to slightly increase. This particular model's Rhat values are close to 1, indicating a good fit and tracks reasonably well with perceived trends. The estimated ratios (both age and sex) seem to track fairly well with the observed ratios. Overall, this model provides reasonable estimates and trends in population change.

Additional Management Data

In 2019, funding was acquired to conduct an assessment of U.S. Highway 26 where it runs through the upper Wind River Valley to determine if modifications can be made to decrease the number of deer/vehicle collisions. Mule deer mortality along the highway has been a persistent problem for decades as the highway parallels the herd's spring/fall migration route and bisects the densely populated winter range. The highway assessment was completed in 2021 with the publication of a mitigation strategy document. The department has prioritized this project and is continuing to seek Federal funding to begin construction over the next few years.

In the summer of 2024, the WGF Commission approved the identification of the Upper Wind River Mule Deer Migration Corridor which encompasses the majority of the Dubois Mule Deer Herd. Identifying this corridor will bolster data used to help inform decisions on any improvements or impacts inside the corridor. Furthermore, this substantial amount of data has improved our understanding of current herd unit boundaries and mule deer movement through different hunt areas. Given this new understanding of mule deer movement we will be excluding Mule Deer Hunt Area 148 from the Dubois Mule Deer Herd. Additionally, Mule Deer Hunt Area 146 will be dissolved with the Northwestern portion going into Mule Deer Hunt Area 156. The new Mule Deer Hunt Area 156 will then be incorporated into the Dubois Mule Deer Herd Unit (Fig.1). This change will allow us to better track harvest data and disease that truly reflects mule deer in this herd unit.

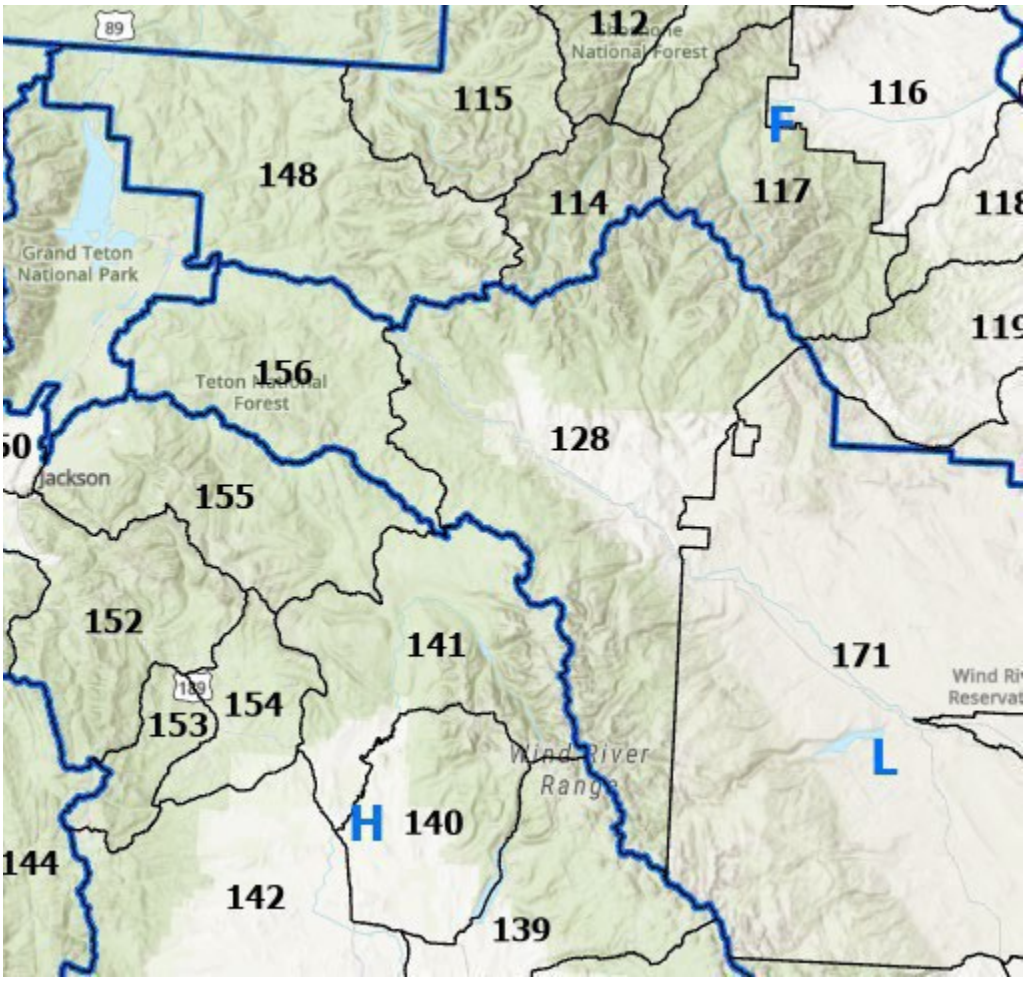


Figure 1. New Dubois Mule Deer Herd Unit that now consists of hunt areas 128 and 156.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

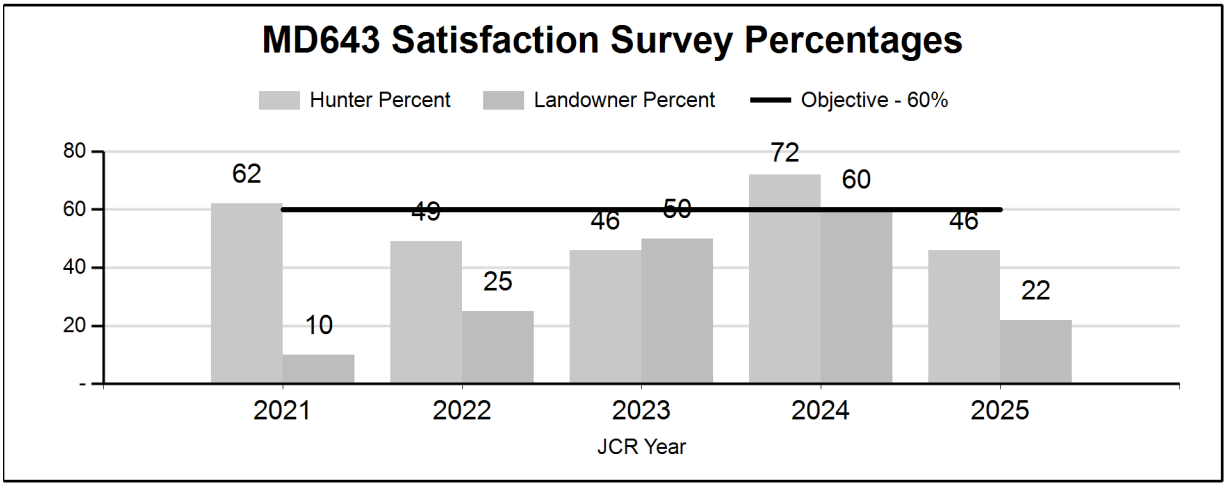
SPECIES: Mule Deer
HERD: MD643 - PROJECT
HUNT AREAS: 157, 171

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

PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Hunter Satisfaction Percent	61%	46%	40%
Landowner Satisfaction Percent	26%	22%	20%
Harvest:	147	184	100
Hunters:	317	493	275
Hunter Success:	46%	37%	36 %
Active Licenses:	353	517	350
Active License Success:	42%	36%	29 %
Recreation Days:	1,339	1,864	900
Days Per Animal:	9.1	10.1	9
Males per 100 Females:	26	0	
Juveniles per 100 Females	53	0	

Satisfaction Based Objective	60%
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	-26%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	1



2026 Hunting Seasons
Project Mule Deer
(MD643)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
157	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31		Any deer
157	3	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Nov. 1	Nov. 30	175	Any white-tailed deer
157	6	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 30	100	Doe or fawn
157	8	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	Unlimited	Doe or fawn white-tailed deer
157	8			Nov. 1	Nov. 30		Doe or fawn white-tailed deer valid on private land
171	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31		Any deer
171	3	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Dec. 31	150	Any white-tailed deer
171	6	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Dec. 31	350	Doe or fawn

2026 Region L nonresident quota: 200 licenses

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 46% Satisfied, 32% Neutral, 22% Dissatisfied
2025 Landowner Satisfaction: 22% Good # of MD, 4% Too many MD, 74% Too few MD

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
This herd unit is managed based on a hunter/landowner satisfaction objective. Mixed landownership within the Wind River Reservation (WRR) precludes the collection of good demographic data and population modeling. The satisfaction objective was set in 2013 and personnel have been collecting landowner satisfaction data since 2014. Since then, hunter satisfaction has consistently been above the objective (60%) threshold; however, it decreased in 2018 (81%) to an understandably low of 46% in 2023. Similarly, 2025 was another year of low satisfaction with 46% of hunters satisfied, however, 32% of hunters were neutral. The level of neutrality may indicate hunters' understanding of the undesirable CWD rates and low number of deer in the unit. The majority of landowners surveyed in 2025 felt that mule deer numbers were too low. In 2024, given the continued high rates of CWD in the area, as well as the documented movements of collared deer outside of the herd unit to surrounding mule deer herds, we changed the hunting season construct to a general area while also increasing doe/fawn licenses.

There is need for continued harvest to further decrease the already low density of deer in an attempt to address extraordinarily high CWD prevalence and its spread within and out of this herd unit. With the continued high rates of CWD, deer migration data indicating movement in and out of the herd unit (Figure 1), we are continuing with a general license construct and increased limited quota doe/fawn mule deer licenses and unlimited doe/fawn white-tailed deer licenses. This harvest strategy is targeted towards both migratory and nonmigratory deer with an emphasis on nonmigratory deer. Continuing with a general license in this herd unit will allow hunters both the flexibility and opportunity to harvest a buck without restraining them to one hunt area. For example, if hunters are unsuccessful in other General hunt areas they would then have the option to harvest a deer in 157 or 171 and vice versa. Continuing to lower deer densities is, at this time, the only tool managers have in attempting to manage CWD. Additionally, given the recent movement data showing deer movement from 157 to surrounding herds (Figure 1), it is necessary to mitigate these movements in an attempt to limit the spread of CWD. CWD prevalence in white-tailed deer in 171 is also trending upwards. In an attempt to lower white-tailed deer densities in this area we are continuing with the increased licenses and extended season dates. This option is imperative in continuing to manage this herd in an attempt to mitigate disease transmission and prevalence rates. This level of harvest pressure, in concert with disease caused mortality (Figure 2), will likely limit population growth and lower already low densities. In the future, managers will need the ability to adapt seasons in order to maintain low deer densities as hunters are becoming disinterested in harvesting a deer that will likely test positive for CWD.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the Project Mule Deer Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2023. Given the recent drastic changes in disease and population dynamics of this herd, managers developed a proposal to change from a landowner/hunter satisfaction objective to a CWD prevalence based objective. This change is being considered.

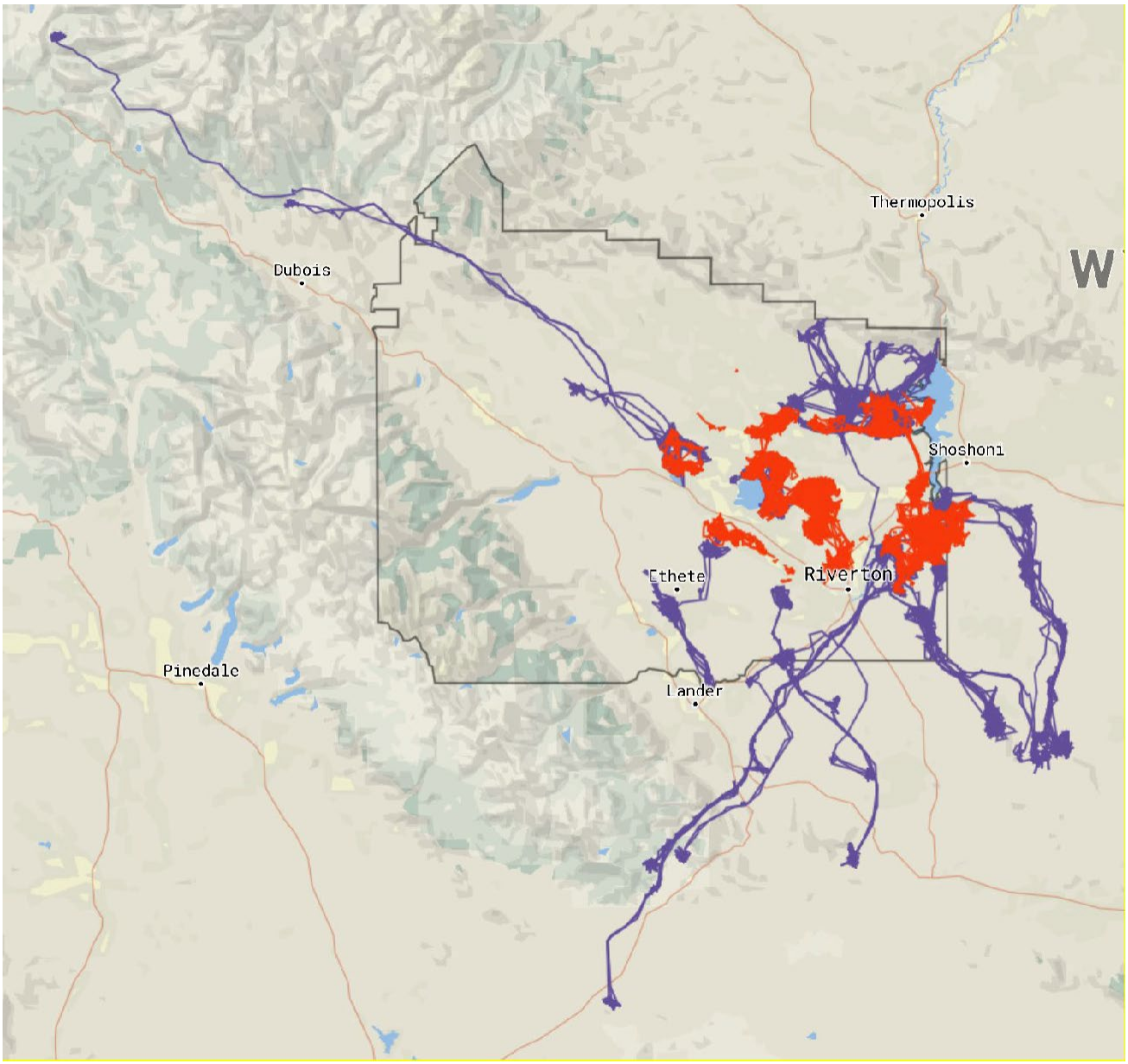


Figure 1. Collar data showing deer movements to surrounding populations. Red lines indicate non-migratory deer and purple indicate migratory.

Chronic Wasting Disease Management

This herd was prioritized for CWD sampling beginning in 2019 and continued through 2022 with mandatory sampling initiated in 2022. The five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). While mandatory sampling did not increase the total number of samples taken, it did increase the percent of adult males harvested that were sampled. This aligns well with the reduced number of deer harvested in a low-density deer herd and provides managers with data to track CWD prevalence. White-tailed deer were also sampled (Table 2), indicating a lower prevalence rate than mule deer.

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

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (*n*) – *Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2021	**75% (n=44)**	20% (5)	26% (39)	31
2022*	**59% (n=54)**	27% (11)	38% (58)	92
2023	**77% (n=17)**	0% (1)	25% (8)	44
2024	**50% (n=20)**	0% (2)	43% (21)	56
2025	**54% (n=54)**	29% (7)	29% (35)	49
2021-2025	**62% (32-69%, n=189)**	23% (26)	33% (161)	45

*Mandatory CWD sampling effort

Table 2. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested white-tailed deer in the Project Mule Deer Herd, 2021-2025.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (*n*) – *Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2021	**26% (n=46)**	0% (8)	18% (40)	19
2022*	**34% (n=108)**	8% (12)	24% (97)	49
2023	**39% (n=54)**	15% (13)	27% (55)	68
2024	**37% (n=91)**	30% (10)	24% (79)	56
2025	**28% (n=83)**	14% (7)	26% (55)	66
2021-2025	**33% (21-38%, n=382)**	14% (50)	24% (326)	43

*Mandatory CWD sampling effort

In early 2023 WGFD, in collaboration with the University of Wyoming, U.S. Geological Survey, and the Eastern Shoshone & Northern Arapaho Tribal Fish and Game Department, implemented a two year CWD

project in the Project Mule Deer herd. This project is multi-faceted and designed to better understand CWD transmission and provide a more targeted management approach. To date, 131 deer have been collared and tested (including 50 captured January 2025) resulting in 111 mule deer (35 male, 76 female) and 20 white-tailed deer (10 male, 10 female) to gather data on movement, survival, and habitat selection. The overall annual survival rate for 2025 (53 deer) is 38%. Males experienced an annual survival rate of 29% and females 44% (Fig. 2). The leading cause of death for collared deer in 2025 was CWD (n=11, 29%). Other causes of death include EHD (n=8, 21%; all white-tailed deer), hunter harvest (n=7, 18%; 4 mule deer (2 bucks, 2 does), 3 white-tailed deer (2 bucks, 1 doe)), illegal harvest (n=1), roadkill (n=1), and predation (n=1, also CWD positive). A sightability survey was conducted in March 2023. The results show an abundance estimate for the entire herd unit (157&171) of 5,956 (CL=4,386 – 7,526). When analyzing the sightablility survey by hunt area, 157 had an abundance estimate of 1,285 (CL= 597 – 1,974), and 171 with 4,670 (CL= 3,250 – 6,090).

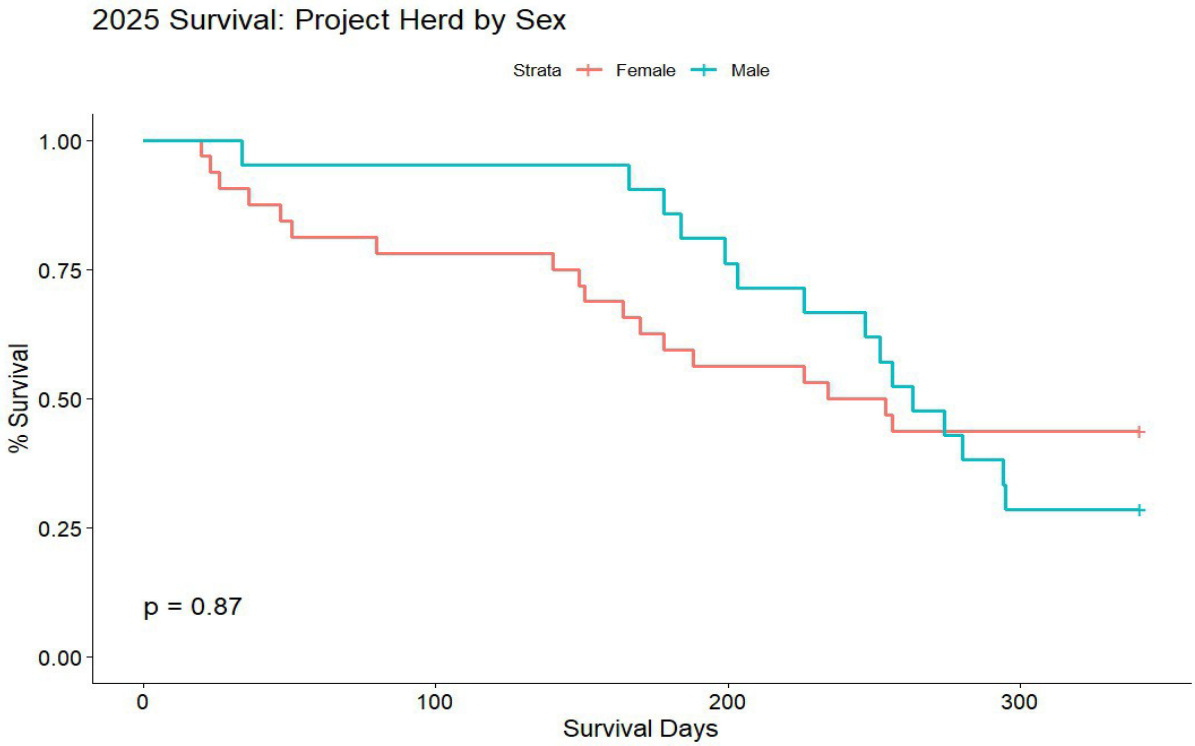


Figure 2. 2025 annual survival rate of 53 collared deer in the Project herd.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer | PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: MD644 - SOUTH WIND RIVER

HUNT AREAS: 92, 94, 160 | PREPARED BY: STAN HARTER

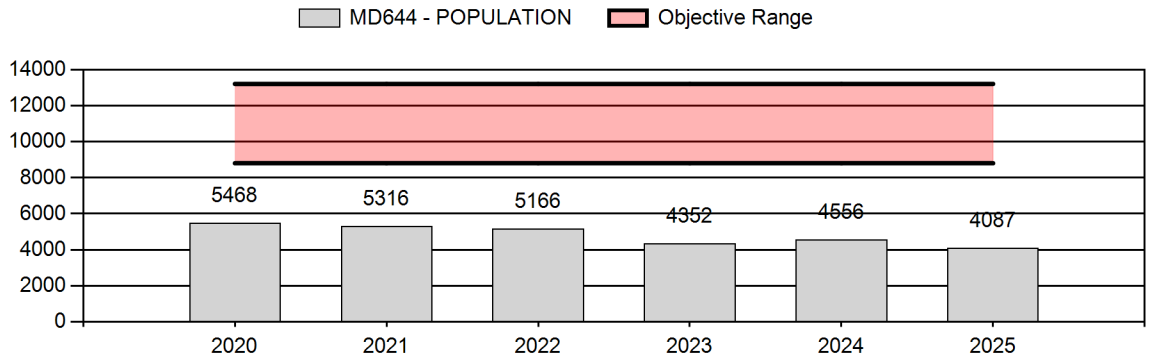
	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Population:	4,972	4,087	4,539
Harvest:	233	191	400
Hunters:	847	798	1,200
Hunter Success:	28%	24%	33%
Active Licenses:	851	799	1,200
Active License Success:	27%	24%	33%
Recreation Days:	3,483	3,611	6,000
Days Per Animal:	14.9	18.9	15
Males per 100 Females	29	30	
Juveniles per 100 Females	68	64	

Population Objective (± 20%) :	11000 (8800 - 13200)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-62.8%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	10
Model Date:	2/17/2026

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	23%	44%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-10%	+11%

Population Size - Postseason



2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD644 - SOUTH WIND RIVER

		MALES							FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	2+ Cls 1	2+ Cls 2	2+ Cls 3	2+ UnCls	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	5,468	72	85	46	4	0	207	12%	891	51%	662	38%	1,760	1,344	8	15	23	± 2	74	± 4	60
2021	5,316	201	139	40	7	0	387	15%	1,223	47%	996	38%	2,606	0	16	15	32	± 2	81	± 3	62
2022	5,166	276	165	67	10	0	518	16%	1,617	49%	1,183	36%	3,318	0	17	15	32	± 1	73	± 2	55
2023	4,352	115	173	48	9	0	345	14%	1,413	57%	715	29%	2,473	0	8	16	24	± 1	51	± 2	41
2024	4,556	117	176	49	2	0	344	16%	1,098	51%	713	33%	2,155	0	11	21	31	± 2	65	± 3	49
2025	4,087	130	159	48	6	0	343	16%	1,131	52%	719	33%	2,193	0	11	19	30	± 2	64	± 3	49

2026 Hunting Seasons
South Wind River Mule Deer (MD644)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
92	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 20		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
92, 94, 160	3	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 30	50	Any white-tailed deer
92, 94, 160	8	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 30	50	Doe or fawn white-tailed deer
94	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 20		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
160	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 20		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer

2026 Region L Non-Resident Quota: 200

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 42.9% Satisfied, 32.9% Neutral, 24.5% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

The decline in mule deer numbers continues in the South Wind River Mule Deer Herd Unit. The severe winter of 2022-23 significantly affected fawn survival and subsequent recruitment. This population has also suffered from the effects of recent dry periods and declines in fawn survival and subsequent yearling buck recruitment. Most of the rapid habitat assessments (RHAs) completed in the last few years have revealed conditions of old, decadent shrubs with heavy browsing that limits the forage value to mule deer. The estimated post-season population in 2025 was 4,087 mule deer and is nearly 63% below objective. Due to an overall declining mule deer population and concerns about the high number of hunters in the herd unit with respect to the number of available buck mule deer, the general license season length was 6 days in 2025. Along with the shorter season, we maintained the antler point restrictions (APR) to only allow antlered mule deer with 4 points or more on either antler to be harvested. The Region L non-resident quota was 200 for the 2025 season.

The 2025 season structure was intended to minimize hunter numbers and mule deer buck harvest from a population still impacted from the severe winter of 2022-23. Just fewer than 800 hunters harvested 192 mule deer bucks in 2025. Hunter success increased to 24% in 2025 (the 3rd lowest success rate since 1994) and was coupled with an increase to 18.9 days/harvest (the 4th highest rate since 1994). Total buck harvest represented 23% of the number of pre-season bucks available.

With favorable flight conditions in December 2025, classification surveys were flown in traditional winter ranges, with 2,193 mule deer observed (the 3rd lowest sample size since 2004). The 2025 post-season observed fawn/doe ratio of 64J/100F was just below the ratio of 65J/100F observed in 2024, and was 6% lower than the previous 5-year average. The yearling buck/doe ratio was stable at 11YM/100F, which

indicates antler point restrictions protected a good number of yearling bucks in the 2025 season. Buck harvest was lower in 2025, but the adult buck/doe ratio decreased to 19AM/100F. The total buck/ doe ratio of 30M/100F was 1M/100F above the previous 5-year average.

Antler point restrictions (APRs) in the last six hunting seasons (2020-2025) were successful in lessening hunter crowding and reduced the harvest of mule deer bucks to a level compatible with lower mule deer numbers. However, this may have come at a cost as the prevalence of CWD has increased during this same time period. Given what has happened in other mule deer populations we are changed hunting seasons to increase harvest on bucks in an attempt to curtail the impact of CWD in this herd unit. In addition, observed buck/doe ratios have exceeded the threshold of bucks in this recreation herd.

After six deer hunting seasons (2020-2025) featuring APRs, we are removing those restrictions in 2026. This is a multi-purpose action, with several likely benefits.

- It will allow hunters to harvest mature bucks that may not have been legal in recent years, with large bucks having only 2 or 3 points on either antler reported by hunters more often each year.
- Eliminate illegal (intentional or accidental) harvest of bucks that didn't have enough points.
- Focus management in an attempt to minimize spread of CWD by harvesting more mature bucks, which are more likely to have the disease.
- In a relatively small way relieve some browsing pressure on shrub communities that are, as stated above, old and decadent and provide limited forage to mule deer.

Removing APRs for all the reasons above will probably reduce buck/doe ratios substantially and possibly (perhaps likely) to levels below the normal recreational management range. This could be exacerbated if APRs are not lifted in other parts of the state in 2026, leading to an influx of hunters from other regions. If that happens, we are strongly recommending a limited quota season structure be put in place in this herd to better manage hunter numbers and at the same time optimize buck harvest to allow for recreation opportunity and to address CWD concerns.

For 2026, the Region L non-resident quota remains at 200. Non-residents only represented 6% of the total number of hunters in 2025. White-tailed deer are mostly in agricultural areas around Lander, primarily in hunt areas 92 and 160, and experienced fairly heavy losses to epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) in fall 2025. In response to those losses, decreased Type 3 and Type 8 quotas for white-tailed deer are considered necessary in 2026.

Mule Deer Initiative Weather and Habitat Information

Weather

Precipitation

Precipitation from October 2024 through September 2025 was just below the 30-year average in South Wind River Mule Deer Herd Unit, with the precipitation during the growing season (April-June 2025) being farther below the 30-year average (Figure 1). Most of the growing season precipitation fell during May, and was followed by a very dry summer, all contributing to minimal vegetative production across the herd unit. This information is based on 9 weather stations located throughout the herd unit and is generated from the PRISM (Parameter-elevation Relationships on Independent Slopes Model) dataset developed by Oregon State University.

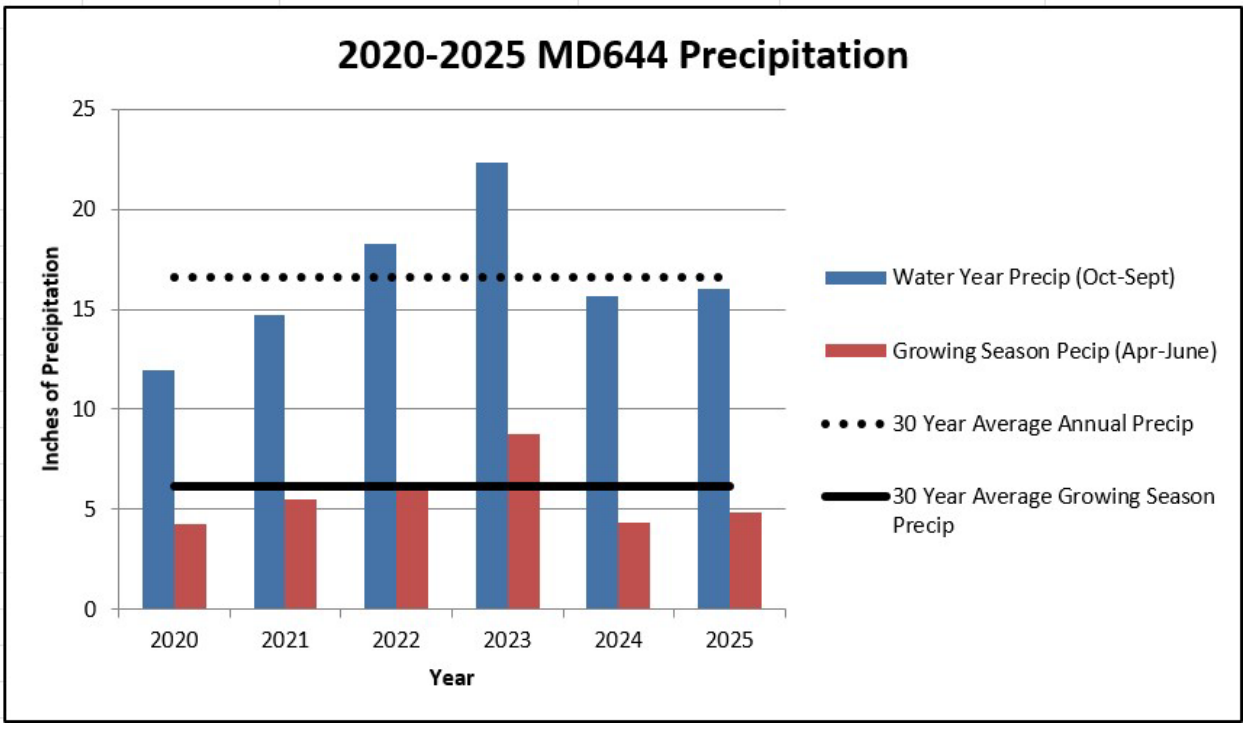


Figure 1. Annual precipitation levels compared to 30-year averages.

Winter Conditions

Meteorological winter 2025-2026 had almost no snowfall and drastically warmer temperatures than a "normal" South Wind River winter, resulting in the warmest and driest winter on record. Temperatures from November-February averaged 37ºF which was more than 13 degrees warmer than the 30-year average for this time period. A total of 8.2" of snowfall was recorded in Lander from November 1, 2025 through February 28, 2026, which is 85% less than the 53" typical for a Lander winter. As such, winter severity this year was considered "mild," and likely did not result in much winter mortality. Some spring rain and snowfall events have helped, especially in May, but the total snowfall through May 20, 2026 remains 56% below average and calendar year 2026 precipitation to date is 33% below average. Extreme drought is currently being projected for the summer of 2026. Natural water sources in many areas are already dry and more will likely follow suit throughout the remainder of spring and summer. Wildfire forecasts are also indicating extreme fire danger is likely without significant improvement in precipitation during the growing season.

Habitat

The summer weather from June to September was very warm with very little measurable precipitation. Overall precipitation across the herd unit was below the 30-year average in 2025, which caused grasses and forbs to mature earlier than normal with many grasses not forming seed heads, and overall production was low. Shrub conditions continued to decline in many areas due to long-term drought and heavy utilization.

There was essentially no snow cover throughout winter 2025-26 in this herd unit and mule deer had the ability to range widely across winter ranges throughout the entire winter and precipitation improved in May. Yet, there is growing concern about how this will affect habitat conditions into the remainder of spring and summer. Without substantial improvement in precipitation into the growing season to replenish soil moisture and provide a boost to vegetation growth, there will likely be significant negative impacts to mule deer during and after parturition. This would likely lead to reduced numbers entering the 2026 hunting season.

Significant Events

Habitat enhancements continued across the South Wind River Mule Deer Herd Unit in 2025. It was the eleventh year of aspen enhancement treatments (cut/ pile and lop/scatter of encroaching conifers) within the South Pass area. Sites treated were in the Neff Park area. A total of 99 acres of aspen were treated to remove encroaching conifers and improve aspen regeneration. This work was done and is ongoing as part of the WGFD's Mule Deer Initiative. Since 2015, a total of 3,521 acres have been treated on South Pass in cooperation with USFS- Shoshone National Forest, BLM, Wyoming State Forestry, and private landowners.

Beaver Dam Analogues (BDAs), and beaver relocations are becoming increasingly popular tools for use in habitat enhancement and restoration across Wyoming. Twenty-seven BDAs on Mill Creek were maintained, and in concert with conifer removal should improve riparian condition and aspen vigor. Three nuisance beavers were live trapped in the Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge in coordination with the USFWS, and were relocated to Slate Creek where an existing beaver lodge had been abandoned.

In 2024, WGFD and the BLM initiated the Red Canyon juniper project to treat lightly encroached, deeper soiled, mixed mountain shrub habitats by mechanically removing juniper. This work is meant to reduce competition for resources for preferred mule deer forage species like antelope bitterbrush and sagebrush. More than 400 acres have been treated to date on BLM managed lands and 35 acres on The Nature Conservancy properties. This work is planned to expand in the vicinity of Red Canyon over the next 3-5 years.

The Popo Agie Weed Management Association initiated a Russian olive removal project in Squaw Creek and Baldwin Creek, both tributaries of the Popo Agie River, in an effort to improve riparian vegetation for mule deer. This project is on-going, and treatment occurred on approximately 6 canopy acres in cooperation with seven landowners along the length of Baldwin Creek, positively benefitting approximately 200 acres of riparian habitat. This work will continue for the next 3-5 years.

Rapid Habitat Assessments

In 2015, WGFD personnel initiated the Rapid Habitat Assessment (RHA) methodology to survey and assess important mule deer habitats. This method was developed to capture large-scale habitat quality metrics to better understand the condition of vegetation communities important to mule deer. RHAs provide a standardized habitat assessment conducted across the landscape. These assessments and resulting analyses are intended to provide a basis for mule deer population objective evaluation and other management decisions. They convey some insight into the habitat's long-term condition or carrying capacity. A total of 110 RHAs have been completed from 2015-2025 in the South Wind River Mule Deer Herd Unit, comprised of 37 Aspen, 29 Rangeland, 39 Riparian, and 5 Special assessments.

In 2025, 15 RHAs were conducted in the South Wind River Herd Unit totaling 237 acres assessed. Of those acres, 127 acres were in aspen communities, 72 acres were in rangeland, 24 acres were in riparian corridors, and 14 acres were conducted in wet meadows. While there were some areas of severe browse within both aspen and rangeland habitats, most aspen and shrub communities were in the moderate browse category. Most of the sites assessed showed good species diversity, with the exception of the Aspen RHAs conducted in the 3 proposed treatment units in Neff Park which had low species diversity and moderate browse levels. Production appeared to be below normal given the low precipitation for the year. Riparian areas show some impacts from erosion and bank trampling, but woody vegetation in the assessed riparian acres were in good condition and had moderate levels of recruitment.

Where habitat treatments or wildfires have not reset succession, aspen communities across the herd unit exhibit mid- to late-seral stages with moderate age class diversity. Aspen assessments were focused on the Limestone Mountain area in 2025. Browse was moderate to severe (with 29-61% of stems less than 6' tall exhibiting some evidence of browse), with browse attributed to a combination of livestock and wildlife use. The species diversity within these aspen communities is good across most of the herd unit, and is generally lowest in stands with higher levels of conifer encroachment, which causes drying of the sites.

Shrub communities assessed in 2025 appeared to partially meet objectives of healthy, resilient rangelands. The two Rangeland RHAs conducted showed late-seral shrub classification, which indicates older more decadent shrubs with decreased age-class diversity. This is often consistent with lack of disturbance, such as fire or mechanical treatments. Herbaceous understory species diversity is good, with very little presence of invasive species in the areas assessed- Limestone Mountain and near Strawberry Creek.

Riparian habitats assessments in 2025 were conducted in the Limestone Mountain area, and on Rock Creek and Strawberry Creek on South Pass. The Limestone Mountain riparian areas are in functioning condition with high species diversity, very little erosion, and low browse on woody species. Relict and active beaver activity is present along most of the stream corridors, and it would be good to see more beaver colonies in these systems. In the Strawberry Creek and Rock Creek riparian areas, heavy grazing pressure is affecting species diversity and contributing to significant bank erosion in some places. The livestock use on herbaceous forage was significantly different between Strawberry Creek and Rock Creek. Cattle were present during the assessment on Rock Creek, while Strawberry Creek had yet to be grazed for the season.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the South Wind River Mule Deer Herd Unit was last evaluated and approved in 2025, and was not scheduled to be reviewed again in 2030. However, since this population does not appear capable of reaching the current population objective of 11,000. an objective review prior to 2030 is appropriate to consider a reduction closer to current levels.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring and Management

This herd was prioritized as a CWD focal herd beginning in 2023. The five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). In 2025, 34 mule deer bucks and 19 white-tailed deer (11 adult bucks, 7 does, and 1 yearling buck) were sampled, with CWD detected in 4 adult male mule deer and 2 adult male white-tailed deer. To date, no CWD management actions have occurred, but we will be implementing changes in 2026 in an attempt to lower buck numbers and perhaps limit the spread of CWD in the South Wind River mule deer herd unit as described below. CWD prevalence increasing is likely accurate, however it should be recognized that sample sizes are small within any given year

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) prevalence rates in the South Wind River herd unit are much lower than in the Project herd unit near Riverton, but have been increasing in the last 5 years (from 0% in 2021 to 11.8% in 2025, with a 5-year average of 8.4% in the same time span) and with CWD prevalence rates between 50% and 77% in the Project herd unit in the last 5 years, we are taking steps to minimize risk of increasing prevalence rates here. White-tailed deer adult bucks have also experienced CWD prevalence rate of 11.8% since 2021, with annual rates ranging from 0% in 2023 to 18.2% in 2021 and 2025. CWD prevalence rates in adult female white-tailed deer averaged 4.2% since 2021 and were as high as 12.5% in 2023. Some mule deer collared in the Project herd unit near Riverton demonstrate migration into the South Wind River mule deer herd unit, triggering an increased concern about the spread of CWD as a result of that migration.

Given the proximity of the Project Mule Deer Herd and the continued increase in CWD prevalence, as well as the recently documented migration south from that herd unit, managers are concerned with the further spread of CWD into the South Wind River Mule Deer Herd. To address this concern, we have implemented liberal hunting seasons in both areas 157 and 171 in an attempt to lower deer densities and mitigate transmission to the South Wind River mule deer herd.

Given the recent changes in disease and population dynamics of this herd, management in this herd unit is intended to provide recreation management opportunity and attempt to reduce CWD prevalence rate. Increasing harvest on the segment of the population that is most likely to be CWD positive may result in reduced disease prevalence and subsequent transmission. This requires a significant increase over the current male harvest level. According to CWD management guidelines from the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA), at minimum, agencies should consider an increase over the current buck harvest. Modeling suggests a buck harvest level of ≥30% may be most effective to reduce prevalence. Reducing the number of mule deer bucks currently seems to be the only tool managers have in attempting to manage CWD in mule deer. The IPM for the South Wind River herd unit indicated the 2025 hunting season harvested 22.5% of the ≥ 1 year old bucks available pre-season. Although difficult to predict how many bucks will be harvested in 2026 with the removal of APRs, we used an estimated harvest of 400 bucks, which would be about 44.4% of the ≥ 1 year old bucks available pre-season.

Focused CWD management to reduce the number of mature bucks will likely not be popular with many hunters, but will be much better than losing those bucks and more to CWD, along with the probable result of a lower population due to CWD.

We will increase CWD surveillance efforts in hunt areas 92, 94, and 160 for both mule deer and white-tailed deer to better monitor estimated prevalence rates.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested mule deer in the South Wind River Herd Unit, 2021-2025.

Year(s)	Percent CWD Positive and (n) - *Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2021	**0% (n=20)**	0% (1)	0% (1)	9.1
2022	**8.7% (n=23)**	0% (1)	0% (0)	7.7
2023	**6.0% (n=50)**	0% (2)	0% (0)	28.4
2024	**11.5% (n=52)**	0% (6)	0% (0)	18.8
2025	**11.8% (n=34)**	0% (0)	0% (2)	17.8
2021-2025	**8.4% (n=179)**	0% (10)	0% (3)	15.4

Population Modeling

Managers chose to model this herd using the default structure for mule deer, i.e. time-varying reproduction and juvenile survival, with constant adult survival. Based on visual comparison of the available effort variables, active licenses were selected by managers as the variable most predictably related to annual harvest. The post-season abundance estimates reflect observed trends and fluctuations appear accurate based on field observations in classification and harvest data. The IPM simulated buck/doe ratios follow the trend of observed buck/doe ratios through the life of the IPM, but have several estimated ratios below observed values. Ideally, all model simulations of male/female ratios should be above actual observation data. The IPM model was run from 2010 through 2027 with maximum iterations and burn-in rates and has an Rhat value of 1.04, which indicates convergence is likely in the IPM. The model is considered a reasonable proximation of the population change in this herd.

With these settings the observed data for the IPM included sixteen years of harvest and ratio data along with abundance estimates from sightability surveys completed in mid-winter of bio-years 2014 and 2022 (Table 2). The sightability abundance estimates, however, are above the post-season estimates, which is contradictory due to the timing of the sightability survey being conducted nearly 4 months after the hunting season. Regardless, IPM abundance estimates align fairly well with the most recent sightability estimate done in 2022, although the IPM estimates should be higher than the mid-winter sightability estimates.

Table 2. Sightability and IPM population estimates.

	2014	2022
Sightability Survey	8,517 (CL 8,017 -9,017)	5,532 (CL 4,012 -7,050)
IPM Estimate	7,690 (CL 7,253 - 8,154)	5,116 (CL 4,609 - 5,777)

The bio-year 2025 post-season IPM abundance estimate was 4,087 mule deer (CL = 3,557-4,696). This is a 10% decline from the post-season 2024 IPM estimate, and is 62.8% below objective (11,000). With the age and sex ratios observed in 2025 and expected increase of buck harvest 2026, the IPM projects the South Wind River mule deer herd will increase 11% to a 2026 post-season population of just more than 4,500 mule deer (59% below objective).

In 2027, the Department may be moving to a multi-year season setting process and we will likely engage the public to garner support for a limited quota season structure to allow management of hunter numbers and to optimize desired or needed buck harvest for the reasons outlined above. Although this will be a change, proposed quotas would likely be similar to the average number of hunters experienced during the last 6 years of APRs (but not include an APR restriction). Initial season structure would also likely have all 3 hunt areas combined, similar to the current seasons for white-tailed deer (hunters would be allowed to hunt in all three hunt areas with the same license - 92, 94, 160). Longer seasons would also likely be possible, with initial ideas being to restore the 8-day season these hunt areas provided in the past, with potential for longer seasons.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer
PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: MD646 - SWEETWATER

HUNT AREAS: 96-97
PREPARED BY: STAN HARTER

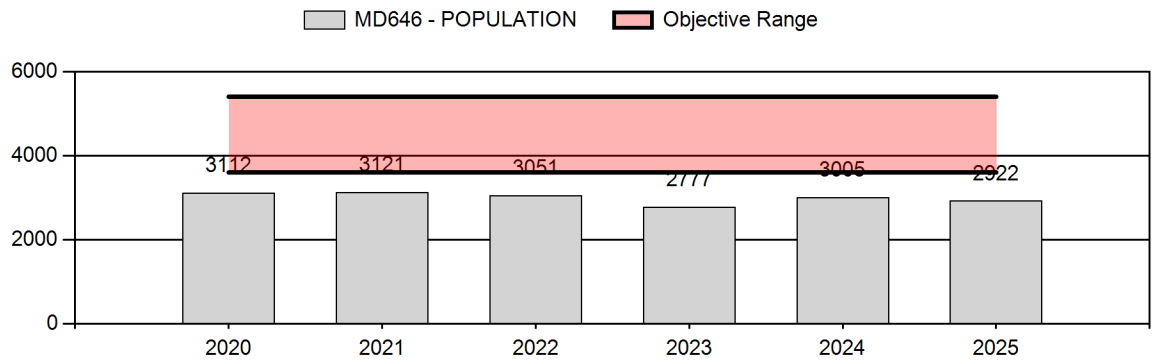
	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Population:	3,013	2,922	3,181
Harvest:	174	193	350
Hunters:	548	548	700
Hunter Success:	32%	35%	50 %
Active Licenses:	548	548	700
Active License Success:	32%	35%	50 %
Recreation Days:	2,166	2,262	3,500
Days Per Animal:	12.4	11.7	10
Males per 100 Females	20	26	
Juveniles per 100 Females	71	62	

Population Objective (± 20%) :	4500 (3600 - 5400)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-35.1%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	10
Model Date:	2/18/2026

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	31%	62%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-3%	+8%

Population Size - Postseason



2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD646 - SWEETWATER

		MALES							FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	2+ Cls 1	2+ Cls 2	2+ Cls 3	2+ UnCls	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	3,112	51	58	16	0	0	125	10%	613	50%	489	40%	1,227	1,246	8	12	20	± 2	80	± 5	66
2021	3,121	39	17	10	0	0	66	9%	393	51%	306	40%	765	0	10	7	17	± 2	78	± 7	67
2022	3,051	76	38	14	4	0	132	10%	628	49%	520	41%	1,280	0	12	9	21	± 2	83	± 5	68
2023	2,777	61	84	18	2	0	165	13%	719	58%	366	29%	1,250	0	8	14	23	± 2	51	± 3	41
2024	3,005	46	61	19	0	0	126	10%	645	52%	458	37%	1,229	0	7	12	20	± 2	71	± 4	59
2025	2,922	87	88	20	2	0	197	14%	766	53%	473	33%	1,436	0	11	14	26	± 2	62	± 3	49

2026 Hunting Seasons
Sweetwater Mule Deer (MD646)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
96	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 20		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
97	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 20		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer

2026 Region Q Non-Resident Quota: 75

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 50.5% Satisfied, 30.0% Neutral, 19.4% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

Mule deer numbers have declined over the last 20 or more years the Sweetwater Mule Deer Herd Unit. The severe winter of 2022-23 significantly affected fawn survival and subsequent recruitment. This population has also suffered from the effects of recent dry periods and declines in fawn survival and subsequent yearling buck recruitment. Most of the rapid habitat assessments (RHAs) completed in the last few years have revealed conditions of old, decadent shrub communities with heavy browsing that limits the forage value to mule deer. The estimated post-season population in 2025 was just over 2,900 mule deer and is 35% below objective.

Due to an overall declining mule deer population and concerns about the high number of hunters in the herd unit with respect to the number of available buck mule deer, the general license season length was 6 days in 2025. Along with a short season, we maintained antler point restrictions (APRs) to allow only antlered mule deer with 4 points or more on either antler to be harvested. The Region Q non-resident quota was 75 for the 2025 season, and the 72 active non-residents that hunted in areas 96 or 97 comprised 13% of the total number of hunters in these areas.

In 2025, 548 hunters harvested 193 mule deer. The number of hunters was identical to the previous 5-year average (all with APRs), and hunter success (35%) was slightly above the previous 5-year average of 32%, with days/harvest (11.7) slightly lower than the previous 5-year average (12.4). Total buck harvest represented 31.2% of the number of pre-season bucks available.

With favorable flight conditions in December 2025, classification surveys were flown in hunt areas 96 and 97, with 1,436 mule deer observed. The 2025 post-season fawn/doe ratio of 62J/100F was 14% below the previous 5-year average. The yearling buck/doe ratio rose to 11YM/100F. With less buck harvest in 2025, the adult buck/doe ratio also rose to 14AM/100F. The total buck/doe ratio reached the highest level since 2011 at 26M/100F and was 30% above the previous 5-year average. The total buck/doe ratio in 2025 was in the middle of the “recreational” management range for mule deer herd units.

Antler point restrictions (APRs) in the last six hunting seasons (2020-2025) were successful in lessening hunter crowding and reduced the harvest of mule deer bucks to a level compatible with lower mule deer numbers. However, this may have come at a cost, as prevalence of chronic wasting disease (CWD) has

increased during this same time period. Considering what has happened in other mule deer populations, we are changing seasons to increase harvest on bucks in an attempt to curtail the impact of CWD in this herd unit. It has been thought the historical high level of buck harvest as a percentage of preseason bucks in this herd unit could explain why this herd has maintained a relatively low occurrence of CWD.

After six deer hunting seasons (2020-2025) featuring APRs, we are removing those restrictions in 2026. This is a multi-purpose action, with several likely benefits.

- It will allow hunters to harvest mature bucks that may not have been legal in recent years, with larger bucks with only 2 or 3 points on either antler are reported by hunters more often each year.
- Eliminate illegal (intentional or accidental) harvest of bucks that didn't have enough points.
- Focus management in an attempt to minimize spread of CWD by harvesting more mature bucks, which are more likely to have the disease.
- In a relatively small way relieve some browsing pressure on shrub communities that are, as stated above, old and decadent and provide limited forage to mule deer.

Removing APRs for all the reasons above will probably reduce buck/doe ratios substantially and possibly (perhaps likely) to levels below normal recreational management range. This could be exacerbated if APRs are not lifted in other parts of the state in 2026, leading to an influx of hunters from other regions. If that happens, we are strongly recommending a limited quota season structure be put in place in this herd to better manage hunter numbers and, at the same time, optimize buck harvest to allow for recreation opportunity, address CWD concerns, and relieve some shrub browsing that may perhaps provide more forage and resources to does and fawns.

For 2026, the Region Q non-resident quota remains at 75. White-tailed deer numbers remain considerably lower than in previous years, especially following winter 2022-23, so no Type 3 and Type 8 licenses are offered in hunt area 97 for 2026, the same as in 2025. General license deer hunters will still be allowed to harvest any white-tailed deer.

Mule Deer Initiative Weather and Habitat Information

Weather

Precipitation

Precipitation from October 2024 through September 2025 was equal to the 30-year average in the Sweetwater Mule Deer Herd Unit. Winter snows usually contribute the majority of the annual precipitation in this herd unit, but the last 2 winters were characterized with less than normal snowfall. In 2025, the majority of spring precipitation fell in May, with only 1.7", and the remainder of the spring was very dry, leading to below average growing season precipitation (April-June 2025) as shown in Figure 1. Temperatures through the summer (June-September) were about average to slightly above average for the area. This precipitation information is generated from the PRISM (Parameter-elevation Relationships on Independent Slopes Model) dataset developed by Oregon State University, and is based on 1 weather station located near Jeffrey City, WY.

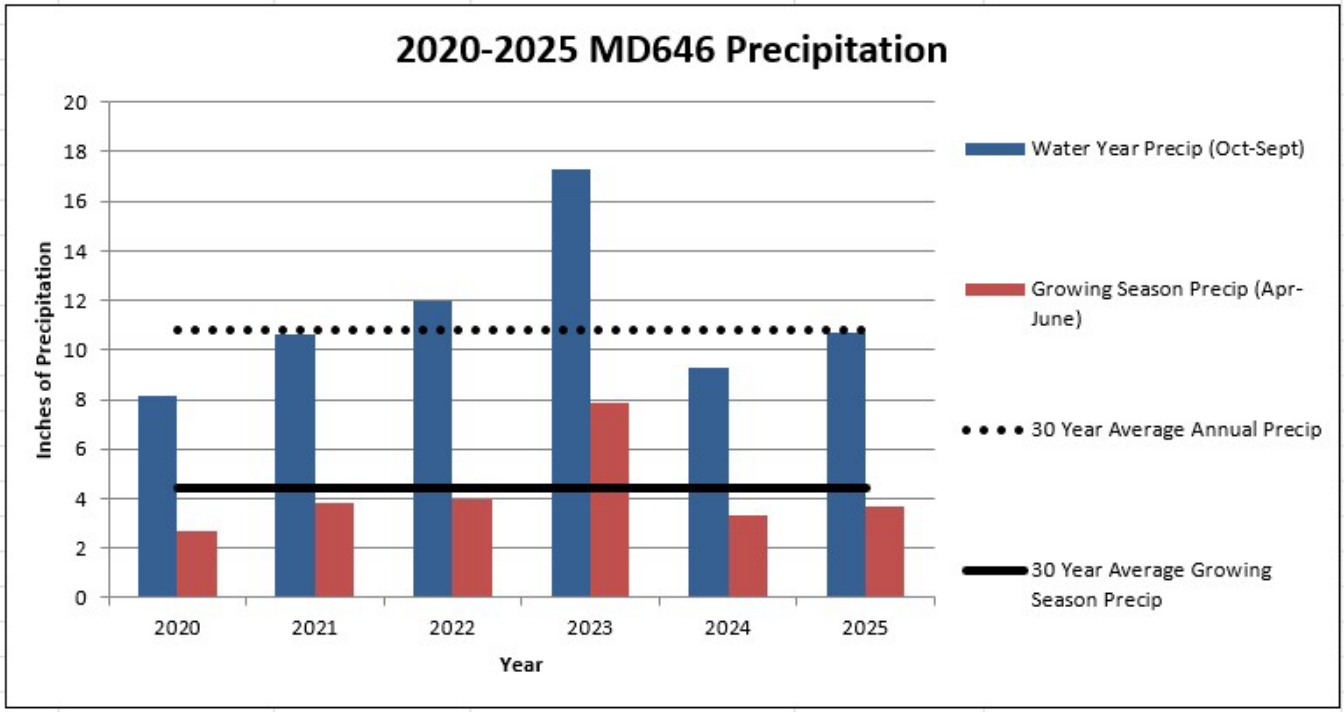


Figure 1. Annual precipitation levels compared to 30-year averages.

Winter Conditions

The 2025-2026 meteorological winter was characterized by drastically less than average snowfall amounts, with only 5.3" recorded from November-March at Jeffrey City. Temperatures were also more than 10 degrees warmer on average than in a typical winter. As such, winter severity this year was considered "mild," and likely did not result in much winter mortality. As usual, high winds were common across the herd unit. Some spring rain and snowfall events have helped, especially in May, but the total snowfall through May 20, 2026 and calendar year 2026 precipitation to date are about 80% below average although actual data for April and May have not yet been recorded. Extreme drought is currently being projected for the summer of 2026. Natural water sources in many areas are already dry and more will likely follow suit throughout the remainder of spring and summer. Wildfire forecasts are also indicating extreme fire danger is likely without significant improvement in precipitation during the growing season.

Habitat

The summer weather was very warm with very little measurable precipitation, until some heavy rains occurred in late-August into September. Overall precipitation across the herd unit was below the 30-year average in 2025, which caused grasses and forbs to mature earlier than normal with many grasses not forming seed heads, and overall production was low. Shrub conditions continued to decline in many areas due to long-term drought and heavy utilization. Hot and dry conditions make water resources even more important. Flourishing beaver colonies on Green Mountain and protected springs on Beaver Rim help provide water and green forage for wildlife throughout the summer.

There was essentially no snow cover throughout winter 2025-26 in this herd unit and mule deer had the ability to range widely across winter ranges throughout the entire winter and precipitation improved in May. Yet, there is growing concern about how this will affect habitat conditions into the remainder of

spring and summer. Without substantial improvement in precipitation into the growing season to replenish soil moisture and provide a boost to vegetation growth, there will likely be significant negative impacts to mule deer during and after parturition. This would likely lead to reduced numbers entering the 2026 hunting season.

Significant Events

Habitat enhancements implemented within the Sweetwater Mule Deer Herd Unit were focused on protecting riparian habitats from significant overuse by livestock and feral horses. While there is little support to increase the amount of fencing on the landscape, the reduced resilience of the streams and springs within the Sweetwater area is troubling. Projects are focused on protecting riparian areas, but also attempt to result in a net loss of total fencing on the landscape. Three riparian protection projects were initiated in 2023 on Willow Creek, the Sweetwater River, and Diamond Springs. Middle Diamond Spring was fenced in 2025, and East Diamond Spring and Owl Hills Spring will be protected in 2026. Phase I of the Sweetwater River fencing project was completed in 2024, and funding is being applied for to initiate Phase II for 2026, along with significant river restoration in partnership with Ducks Unlimited using NAWCA funding.

Also in 2025, more than 500 acres of aspen enhancements were completed on the east side of Green Mountain, along Rabbit Creek, by cutting conifers to reduce competition for bitterbrush and induce aspen sprouting. An additional 400 acres are planned for 2026, in the Willow Creek drainage.

Rapid Habitat Assessments

In 2015, WGFD personnel initiated the Rapid Habitat Assessment (RHA) methodology to survey and assess important mule deer habitats. This method was developed to capture large-scale habitat quality metrics to better understand the condition of vegetation communities important to mule deer. RHAs provide a standardized habitat assessment conducted across the landscape. These assessments and resulting analyses are intended to provide a basis for mule deer population objective evaluation and other management decisions. They convey some insight into the habitat's long-term condition or carrying capacity. From 2015-2025, 173 RHAs (77 Aspen, 60 Rangeland, 28 Riparian, 8 Special) were conducted across the herd unit, mostly in the vicinity of Green Mountain, which is an important area for wildlife.

In 2025, RHAs were conducted across a diverse area of the Herd Unit. As is consistent across the herd unit, these showed late-seral vegetation communities, with moderate to high browse levels on sagebrush species, aspen, and riparian shrubs. Most of the RHAs showed relatively high species diversity. Invasive species appear to be less of a problem in the Sweetwater Herd Unit when compared with much of the rest of the Lander Region. Of the 2025 RHAs, 1 was in aspen for 114 acres, 2 were riparian for 3 acres, 6 were in rangeland/shrub habitats for 91 acres and 1 was in a wet meadow for 3 acres. The majority of these were exhibiting a downward trend based mostly on the late seral condition and continued heavy browse levels. Feral horse populations in the Sweetwater Herd Unit likely contribute to the excessive use on many herbaceous and woody forage species. Previous BLM feral horse gathers decreased the number of horses and some improvement in vegetation followed, but horse populations have increased recently. Another gather is tentatively planned for fall 2026, which should help with aspen, shrub, and herbaceous forage vigor moving forward.

Aspen communities in the Sweetwater Mule Deer Herd Unit are typically in very late seral condition, exhibiting high levels of drying due to conifer encroachment. This results in decreased sprouting of young

aspen suckers, and those that do sprout are at increased risk of browse by livestock, feral horses and wildlife, mostly elk. Severe browse levels on aspen suckers is drastically reducing the number of trees surviving to grow above 6 feet tall and above browse height. Species diversity of understory herbaceous forage plants is also lower than in what would be a healthy aspen stand. The Green Mountain Aspen and Riparian Enhancement Project is working to address these concerns by conducting large scale conifer removal and treatment.

Rangeland and shrub habitats assessed across the Sweetwater Herd Unit were classified as being in a declining condition according to 2025 rangeland assessments which occurred in the vicinities of Black Mountain and on the south side of Green and Crooks Mountains. More than 80% of the shrublands assessed did not meet objectives of healthy and resilient rangelands. Species diversity was low in the areas assessed with moderate to severe hedging on key shrub species. The Sweetwater Mule Deer Herd does seem to have less invasive species issues than other areas of the Lander Region, at this time. The RHAs conducted in shrub communities showed lower than normal grass and forb production, which would be expected in a low precipitation year.

Riparian areas assessed in 2025 were on both the north and south sides of Green Mountain. The East Fork of West Cottonwood Creek is in good condition, largely thanks to a healthy beaver population. It has good species diversity, little erosion, and no presence of invasive species. While Crooks Creek, on the south side of Green Mountain exhibits low species diversity, presence of invasive species, and moderate to severe browse levels on woody species, in the area assessed. It will be interesting to see which streams continue to hold water on a year like this year, given the extreme drought projections. Beaver colonies present on the east and north sides of Green Mountain should help maintain flows in Willow and Cottonwood Creeks.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the Sweetwater Mule Deer Herd Unit was last evaluated and approved in 2025, and was not scheduled to be reviewed again in 2030. However, since this population does not appear capable of reaching the current population objective of 4,500, an objective review prior to 2030 is appropriate to consider a reduction closer to current levels.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring and Management

CWD sampling was mandatory in 2021 to increase sample sizes from these areas due to historically low levels of CWD samples. However, testing has not been mandatory in the last 4 hunting seasons, leading to much lower annual sample sizes. The 5-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). In 2025, 16 adult mule deer bucks were tested and CWD was detected in 1 of them (6.2%). No white-tailed deer from hunt areas 96 or 97 have been tested for CWD since 2021. To date, no CWD management actions have occurred, but we will be implementing changes in 2026 in an attempt to lower buck numbers and perhaps limit the spread of CWD in the Sweetwater Mule Deer Herd Unit as described below.

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) prevalence rates in the Sweetwater Mule Deer Herd Unit are much lower than in the Project herd unit near Riverton. However, prevalence rates in the Sweetwater herd have been increasing in the last 5 years (from 6.1% in 2021 to 12.5% in 2024, with a 5-year average of 5.1% in the same time span). With CWD prevalence rates between 50% and 77% in the Project herd unit in the last 5 years, and averaging 8.4% over the last 5 years in the South Wind River herd unit to the west, we are

taking steps to minimize risk of increasing prevalence rates here. Some mule deer collared in the Project herd unit near Riverton demonstrate migration to Beaver Rim near the northwest boundary of hunt area 97, triggering an increased concern about the spread of CWD as a result of that migration.

Considering the proximity of the Project Mule Deer Herd and the continued increase in CWD prevalence, as well as the recently documented migration southeast from that herd unit, managers are concerned with the further spread of CWD into the Sweetwater Mule Deer Herd. To address this concern, liberal hunting seasons have been implemented in both areas 157 and 171 in an attempt to lower deer densities and mitigate transmission to the Sweetwater mule deer herd.

With the recent changes in disease and population dynamics of this herd, managers intend to manage this herd unit to provide recreation management opportunity and attempt to reduce CWD prevalence rate. Increasing harvest on the segment of the population that is most likely to be CWD positive may result in reduced disease prevalence and subsequent transmission. This requires a significant increase over the current male harvest level. According to CWD management guidelines from the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA), at minimum, agencies should consider an increase over the current buck harvest. Modeling suggests a buck harvest level of ≥30% may be most effective to reduce prevalence. Reducing the number of mule deer bucks currently seems to be the only tool managers have in attempting to manage CWD in mule deer. The IPM for the Sweetwater herd unit indicated the 2025 hunting season harvested 31.2% of the ≥ 1 year old bucks available pre-season. Although difficult to predict how many bucks will be harvested in 2026 with the removal of APRs, we used an estimated harvest of 350 bucks, which would be about 62% of the ≥ 1 year old bucks available pre-season.

Although APRs in the last six hunting seasons (2020-2025) in the face of declining mule deer numbers were successful in lessening hunter crowding and reduced the harvest of mule deer bucks to a level in concert with those lower mule deer numbers, we believe this has contributed, at least in part, to the increase in CWD prevalence in the Sweetwater mule deer herd unit. Focused CWD management to reduce the number of mature bucks will likely not be popular with many hunters, but will be much better than losing those bucks and more to CWD, along with the probable result of a lower population due to CWD.

We will increase CWD surveillance efforts in hunt areas 96 and 97 to increase sample size and better monitor estimated prevalence over the next several years.

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

Year(s)	Percent CWD Positive and (n) - *Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2021	**6.1% (n=115)**	0% (4)	0% (7)	68
2022	**0% (n=45)**	0% (2)	0% (0)	22.4
2023	**0% (n=3)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	4.8
2024	**12.5% (n=16)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	2.5
2025	**6.3% (n=16)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	8.3
2021-2025	**5.1% (n=195)**	0% (6)	0% (7)	22.4

Population Modeling

The bio-year 2025 post-season IPM abundance estimate was 2,922 mule deer (CL = 2,399-3,524). This is a 3% decrease from the post-season 2024 estimate, and is 35.1% below objective (4,500). The IPM model was run from biological year 2015-2027, with maximum iterations and burn-in rate, and has a Rhat value of 1.01, indicating the IPM has found a suitable solution. The IPM's estimated fawn/doe ratios generally follow the trend of observed fawn/doe ratios through the life of the IPM, but some estimated ratios do not match observed values. Ideally, all model estimates of juvenile/female ratios should be nearly identical to actual observation data when sample sizes are reached or exceeded as they are for most years in this population. The IPM's simulated buck/doe ratios also mostly follow the trend of observed buck/doe ratios through the life of the IPM, but some simulated ratios do not match well with observed values. Ideally, all model simulations of male/female ratios should be above actual observation data. The post-season abundance estimates reflect observed trends through the years and fluctuations appear appropriate based on field observations and classification and harvest data. This model is considered a reasonable proximation of the population change in this herd.

With these settings the observed data for the IPM included eleven years of harvest and ratio data along with a mid-winter abundance estimate from a sightability survey conducted in bio-year 2023 (Table 2). The estimate produced by the sightability survey is 7.4% above the post-season estimate, which is contradictory due to the timing of the sightability survey being conducted nearly 4 months after the hunting season. The harvest and ratio data in the IPM suggest that the sightability estimate is a little too high. That said, there is a lot of overlap in the confidence intervals of the two estimates.

Table 2. Sightability and IPM population estimates.

	Bio-Year 2023
Sightability Survey	2,999 (CL 2,428 - 3,570)
IPM Estimate	2,777 (CL 2,390 - 3,202)

The IPM projects the Sweetwater mule deer herd will increase 9% to a 2026 post-season population of around 3,200 mule deer, which would be 29% below the current objective. Total buck harvest is projected to increase to about 62% of the number of pre-season bucks available.

In 2027, the Department may be moving to a multi-year season setting process and we will likely engage the public to garner support for a limited quota season structure to allow management of hunter numbers and to optimize desired or needed buck harvest for the reasons outlined above. Although this will be a change, proposed quotas would likely be similar to the average number of hunters experienced during the last 6 years of APRs, but not include an APR restriction. Initial season structure would also likely have both hunt areas combined with adjacent hunt area 98 (hunters would be allowed to hunt in all three hunt areas with the same license - 96, 97, 98). Longer seasons would also likely be possible, with initial ideas being to restore the 8 day seasons these hunt areas provided in the past, with potential for longer seasons.

Additional Management Data

The Sweetwater mule deer herd unit was chosen in 2022 as one of 5 "Focal" herds across Wyoming. To begin monitoring efforts in this herd, 210 mule deer were captured and outfitted with GPS transmitters in December 2022 (100 Fawns, 80 Does, and 30 Bucks). Following a 2-week period when mortalities are considered to be capture related, survival rates were quite variable between adult males and females and between juvenile males and females (Table 3). Beginning in 2026, collars placed on fawns are programmed to drop each November, since juvenile collars are too small to allow for mule deer to grow into adulthood without the collars strangling them. In addition, each January, collars nearing the end of their battery life (roughly 2.5 years) are programmed to drop off of adults. So, 100 new juvenile collars are deployed each winter alongside new adult collars to keep the number of "tagged" adults at the beginning number (80 Does and 30 Bucks). Adult collars deployed in December 2025 should last through July 2028.

Table 3. Survival data entered into the Sweetwater Mule Deer IPM.

	2022	2023	2024
Adult Male	0.56	0.73	0.64
Adult Female	0.74	0.84	0.78
Juvenile Male	0.32	0.47	0.47
Juvenile Female	0.37	0.51	0.51

From December 22, 2022 to February 24, 2026, there were a total of 255 non-capture related mortalities. The demographics of those mortalities are as follows: 82 juvenile male, 73 juvenile female, 61 adult female, 39 adult male. A principal part of the focal herd project is to attempt to identify cause of death whenever possible. The rates of juvenile mortality from known and suspected predation seems likely to be limiting recruitment and population growth in this herd unit. A breakdown of mortality causes is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Cause of death in Sweetwater Mule Deer focal monitoring project (Dec. 2022 – Feb. 2026).

Cause of Mortality	Number
Confirmed or suspected coyote predation	81
Confirmed or suspected mountain lion predation	31
Confirmed or suspected bobcat predation	6
Predation Unknown	5
Disease and/or Exposure	16
Hunter Harvest	16
Wounding Loss	2
Roadkill	7
Unknown	91
Total Mortalities	255

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer

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

HERD: MD647 - FERRIS

HUNT AREAS: 87

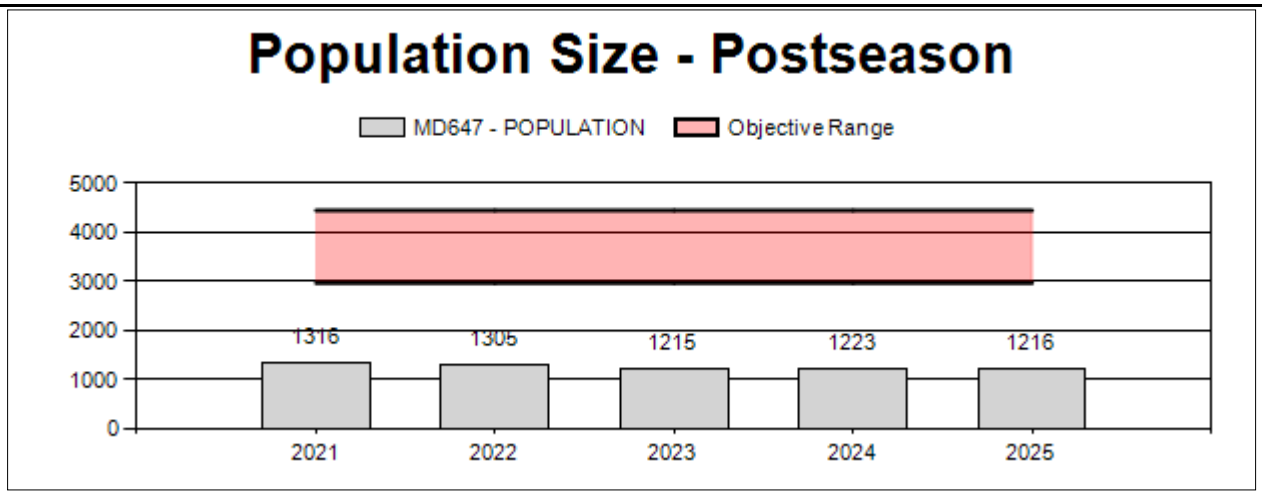
PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Population:	1,302	1,216	1,381
Harvest:	50	43	61
Hunters:	65	46	70
Hunter Success:	77%	93%	87%
Active Licenses:	65	46	70
Active License Success:	77%	93%	87%
Recreation Days:	378	301	430
Days Per Animal:	7.6	7	7.0
Males per 100 Females	44	44	
Juveniles per 100 Females	70	66	

Population Objective (± 20%):	3700 (2960 - 4440)
Management Strategy:	Special
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-67.1%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	7
Model Date:	02/21/2026

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	16%	17%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-2%	14%



2021 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD647 - FERRIS

		MALES							FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	2+ Cls 1	2+ Cls 2	2+ Cls 3	2+ UnCls	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2021	1,316	23	6	20	0	0	49	21%	102	45%	77	34%	228	0	23	25	48	± 10	75	± 13	51
2022	1,305	58	57	74	9	0	198	24%	355	42%	284	34%	837	0	16	39	56	± 4	80	± 5	51
2023	1,215	13	32	26	1	0	72	18%	207	52%	120	30%	399	0	6	29	35	± 5	58	± 7	43
2024	1,223	20	73	44	7	0	144	20%	322	46%	238	34%	704	0	6	39	45	± 4	74	± 5	51
2025	1,216	45	35	51	14	0	145	21%	331	48%	219	32%	695	0	14	30	44	± 4	66	± 5	46

2026 Hunting Seasons
Ferris Mule Deer (MD647)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
87	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31	50	Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
87	2	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31	25	Antlered mule deer three (3) points or less on either antler or any white-tailed deer

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

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

The size of this herd increased in 2017 and 2018 (following six years of low numbers), a result of improved precipitation, extensive habitat treatments, and increased predator control. However, the herd then experienced two consecutive severe winters in 2018-19 and 2019-20, and an extraordinarily severe winter in 2022-23 consisting of constant sub-zero temperatures, high winds, and record snowfall, ultimately causing significant mortality. These losses, combined with poor fawn crops in springs following the harsh winters, resulted in the population dropping 67% below objective.

Classification data was collected from a helicopter again this year. The buck:doe ratio remained relatively stable at 44:100 in 2025. However, observed buck:doe ratios reported for this herd are inflated by major portions of the herd unit being unavailable to most hunters and remaining essentially un-hunted, and do not reflect proportionally available bucks on hunter accessible portions of the herd unit. The proportion of Class III bucks increased to 10% of all bucks classified in 2025, despite steady declines observed since these data were first collected in 2015. However, many of these Class III bucks were found to be large two and three points. Additionally, yearling buck ratios increased by 133% and represented 31% of the bucks classified, which was unsurprising given the high fawn:doe ratio of 74:100 in 2024. Fawn production declined to 66:100 in 2025; however, declines may be attributed to an increased yearling ratio, meaning that many of the does counted were likely yearlings without fawns.

Hunter success increased drastically to 93%, the highest in over thirty years. Average days hunted per deer harvested remained relatively stable at 7. Satisfaction was the highest in the state for the second year, at 85%, likely as a result of increased hunter success and maintained effort. Hunter dissatisfaction decreased to 5%, with more hunters indicating they were “neutral” about their experience.

Precipitation was near normal in 2025, but was drier than average through the growing season, and was followed by above average precipitation in August and September, especially near the Seminoe Mountains. Following a warm and snow free fall, winter 2025-26 has been at or near the warmest and driest winter on record in more than five years. Temperatures have been well above average, and precipitation amounts through late-February 2026 are well below average in the Seminoe and Rawlins area. As such, winter severity this year was considered "mild," and is not expected to result in above-

average winter mortality. However, there is growing concern about how this will impact habitat conditions into the spring. Without substantial improvement in precipitation through the remainder of winter and into the upcoming growing season to replenish soil moisture and provide a boost to vegetation green up, there will likely be significant negative impacts to deer during and after parturition. This would likely lead to reduced deer numbers entering the 2026 hunting season.

With the herd so far below objective, no doe/fawn harvest is warranted. Following severe winter losses and poor fawn survival and recruitment in previous years, licenses remained low to allow the herd to recover while still offering opportunity. With this herd in special management, hunters expect better opportunities to see and harvest larger bucks than available in neighboring, general license, more productive herds. Harvest pressure on mature males should be kept low in an effort to provide hunters with the older, bigger-antlered Class III bucks that they expect, especially in those portions of the hunt area that are publicly accessible. For that reason, the quota for Type 1 licenses remained at 50 in 2026.

Concerns regarding the quality of bucks seen during hunting season has continued to grow, with many noting younger bucks, or mature bucks that have only three points or less. During classification counts, managers observed 145 total bucks: 55% (80 bucks) of those bucks were yearlings or Class I, 35% (51 bucks) were Class II, and only 10% (14 bucks) were Class III. Of the 14 bucks classified as Class III, many were noted as being large two or three points. The high proportion of younger, smaller bucks, and larger bucks that will likely never grow into 4-points, are underutilized by hunters in this special herd unit. As such, managers utilized 25 Type 2 licenses in 2026 that will run simultaneously with the Type 1 season. Harvest on Type 2 licenses will be restricted to bucks that are three (3) points or less on either antler (or any white-tailed deer), which will focus harvest on the high proportion of younger bucks, as well as older bucks with less points observed during classification counts and noted by hunters. Furthermore, the Type 2 license provides additional hunter opportunity without increasing harvest pressure on those bucks (> 3 points) sought by more discerning Type 1 license holders.

With both Type 1 and 2 licenses available in 2026, there is an expected harvest of ~61 bucks, representing 17% of the estimated pre-hunt buck population.

Management Objective Review

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

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring & Management

The Ferris Mule Deer 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 its small size and low harvest rate.

However, the Ferris Mule Deer Herd (Area 87) will be prioritized for mandatory CWD sampling in 2026. By implementing mandatory sampling, managers will be able to increase the sample size collected from this area, which historically has had low levels of samples collected and presumably low CWD prevalence. Additionally, mandatory sampling will provide tooth samples so that managers can determine the age of animals harvested on Type 1 and 2 licenses.

Managers will utilize signs, business cards, increased days of check station operation, and direct mailing to increase CWD samples returned. Letters will be mailed directly to license holders prior to season start dates with information and instructions on CWD testing and sample submission; letters will include contact information for area personnel, check station schedules, etc. Managers will also coordinate with Education & Information personnel to increase communication of information related to mandatory sampling, such as through the use of press releases.

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

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and *(n)* - *Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2021	**0% (n=3)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	4.8
2022	**50% (n=8)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	16
2023	**50% (n=2)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	5.1
2024	**0% (n=2)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	6.9
2025	**0% (n=1)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	2.3
2020-2025	**31% (8-59%, n=16)**	0% (1)	0% (0)	8

Population Modeling

Managers chose to model this herd using the default structure for mule deer, i.e. constant adult survival, time-varying reproduction and juvenile survival. Based on visual comparison of effort variables, days/harvest and active licenses were selected as the variables most predictably related to annual harvest. In an effort to produce better Rhat values, a truncated version utilizing 11 years of harvest and ratio data, along with an abundance estimate from a sightability survey conducted in 2025, was selected for the IPM. IPM convergence was good, with most Rhat values around 1.1. Simulated fawn and buck ratios aligned with observed data for this herd. IPM abundance estimates are conservative, but aligned with confidence limits for the survey performed in 2025 (Table 2). The total post-season abundance estimate for 2025 was 1,216 deer (CL 853-1,619), which aligns with the most recent sightability estimate, as well as manager and stakeholder perceptions that this herd is slowly growing after suffering significant losses following several harsh winters. This model predicts a herd size 67.1% below objective and is considered a fair representation of this population.

Table 2. Sightability and IPM abundance estimates, 2024.

	2024
Abundance Estimate	1,568 (CL 1,198 - 1,938)
IPM Estimate	1,223 (CL 876 - 1,579)

Additional Management Data

Antler measurements were collected on nine percent of the reported harvest in 2025. Average antler spread increased 23.8" in 2024 to 25.44" in 2025. The maximum spread in 2025 was 28.25" (Figure 1). Four bucks were checked in 2025; three bucks checked were Class III, while the remaining buck was Class II. As expected for a herd in 'special' management, Area 87 offered better hunting for wide, mature bucks than was available on the statewide average (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Average and maximum antler spread of harvested mule deer checked from the Ferris Mule Deer Herd.

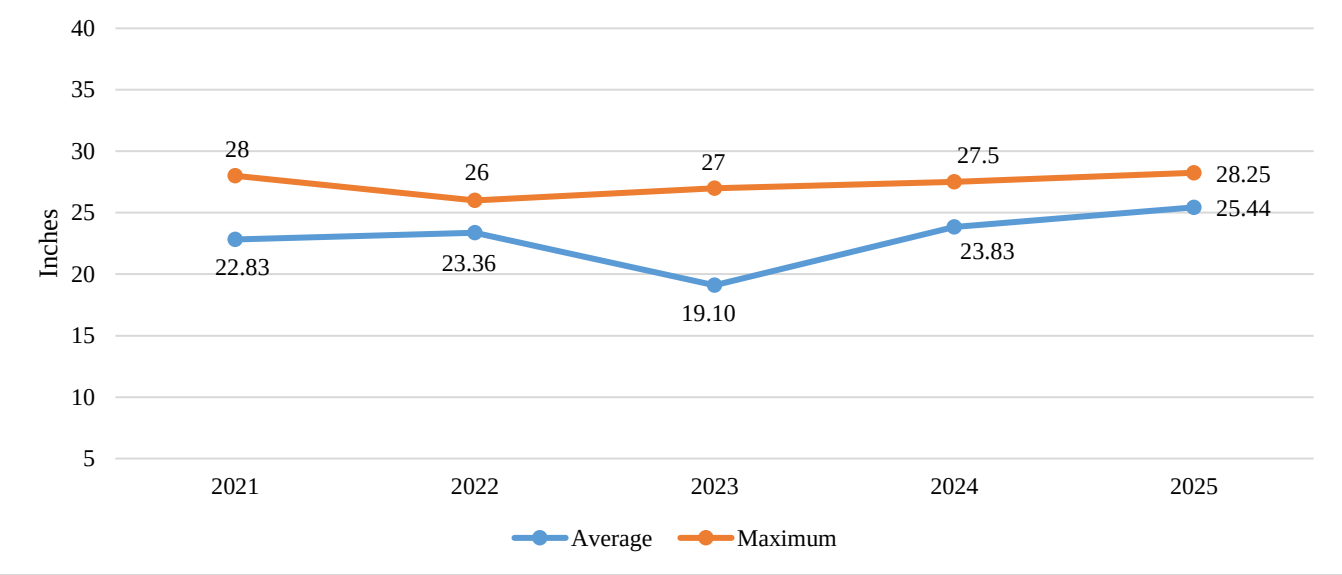
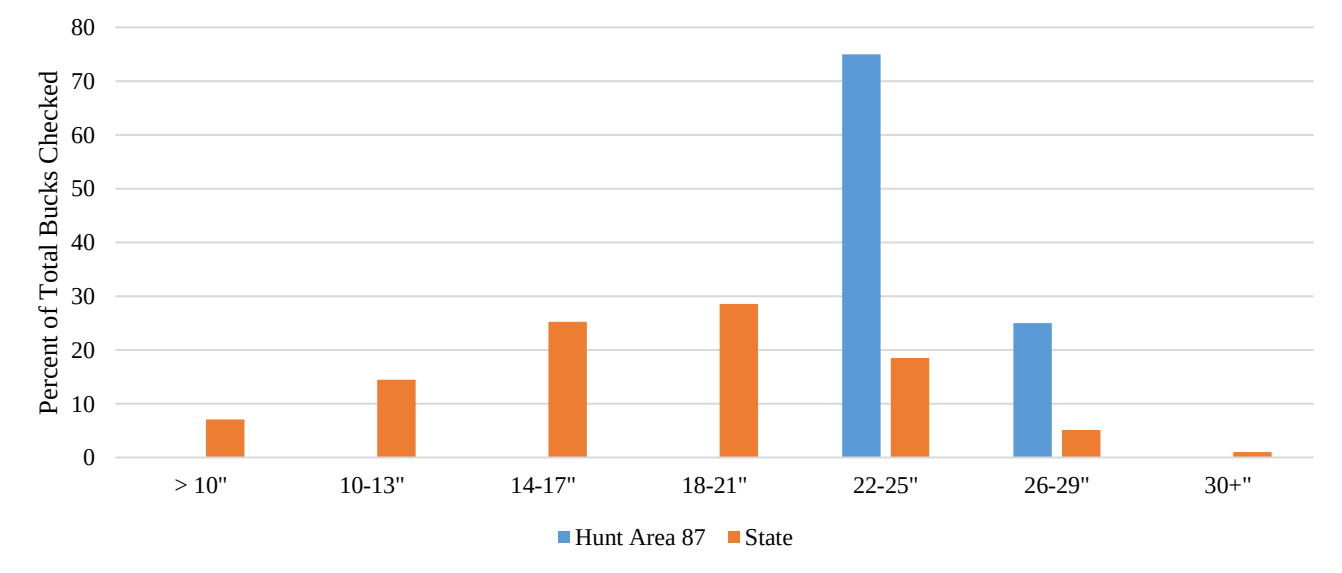


Figure 2. Antler spread of harvested mule deer bucks checked from the Ferris Mule Deer Herd compared to statewide harvest checks in 2025.



2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer
PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: MD648 - BEAVER RIM

HUNT AREAS: 90
PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

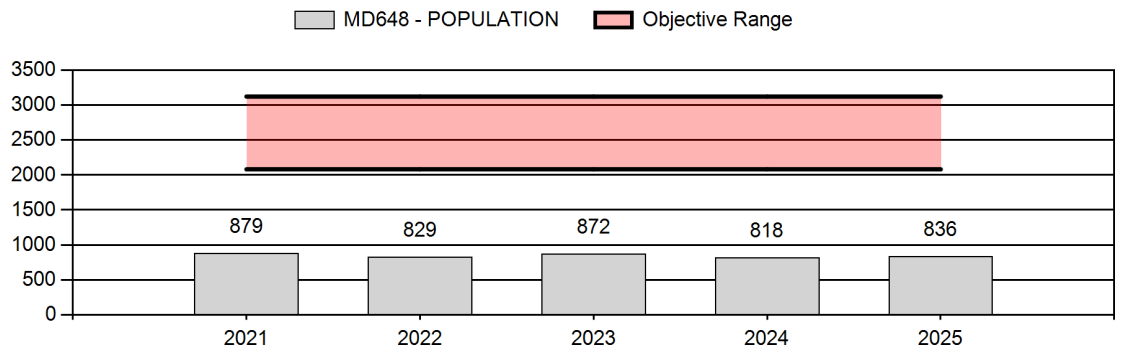
	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Population:	680	836	948
Harvest:	36	25	25
Hunters:	55	45	45
Hunter Success:	65%	56%	56 %
Active Licenses:	55	45	45
Active License Success:	65%	56%	56 %
Recreation Days:	408	226	215
Days Per Animal:	11.3	9.0	8.6
Males per 100 Females	54	31	
Juveniles per 100 Females	70	74	

Population Objective (± 20%) :	2600 (2080 - 3120)
Management Strategy:	Special
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-67.8%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	25
Model Date:	2/10/2026

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	13%	9%
Proposed change in post-season population:	2%	13%

Population Size - Postseason



2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD648 - BEAVER RIM

		MALES							FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	2+ Cls 1	2+ Cls 2	2+ Cls 3	2+ UnCls	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	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	0	± 0	0
2021	879	5	5	9	0	0	19	16%	64	53%	38	31%	121	0	8	22	30	± 9	59	± 14	46
2022	829	1	1	4	1	0	7	22%	16	50%	9	28%	32	0	6	38	44	± 25	56	± 29	39
2023	872	22	21	10	5	0	58	23%	113	44%	84	33%	255	0	19	32	51	± 9	74	± 12	49
2024	818	9	24	8	4	0	45	35%	47	37%	36	28%	128	0	19	77	96	± 24	77	± 20	39
2025	836	6	5	9	0	0	20	15%	65	49%	48	36%	133	0	9	22	31	± 9	74	± 17	56

2026 Hunting Seasons
Beaver Rim Mule Deer (MD648)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
90	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	50	Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 63% Satisfied, 12% Neutral, 25% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

For the past two decades area 90 has been managed as a "special" mule deer herd unit with limited licenses issued. License issuance has varied between 50 and 150 over the past 20 years. In recent years, the small number of licenses issued and subsequent harvest has had little impact on the overall deer population. That said, the population has been below objective for over 10 years. Given low deer densities and no recent population growth, the hunt season in area 90 has been structured to provide a high-quality experience for a limited number of hunters.

Despite limited buck harvest in the herd unit for a number of years, indications are the population declined over the past several years. 2025 started out with excellent moisture in the spring providing good vegetation growth. However, through summer and fall, conditions dried out with little precipitation. This has persisted into the winter with very mild temperatures and little to no snow accumulation.

Classification surveys in 2025 resulted in a similar number of deer classified (133) compared to the previous year (128). This may be attributed to the mild winter at the time of the survey with deer distributed over a wider area than what has been observed in the past. While the sample size is lower than preferred, the results indicate a similar fawn:doe ratio of 74:100 compared to 77:100 in 2024 and higher than the five-year average (68:100). The adult buck:doe ratios were 22:100 and the yearling buck:doe ratio was 9:100. In early February 2026, WGFD personnel flew a sightability survey resulting in a population estimate of 784 (95% CI, 530-1,460). This estimate seems reasonable. The wide confidence intervals are likely due to the lack of snow and low deer density.

Hunter satisfaction decreased to 63% in 2025 compared to 81% in 2024. Hunter success essentially remained the same in 2025 with 56% success compared to 55% in 2024. While success was similar, days/harvest decreased in 2025 to 9 compared to 11.8 in 2024 and much improved compared to the five-year average (10.9).

While this herd is a low-density mule deer area, we still see buck:doe ratios within the parameters for special management with an overall buck:doe ratio of 31:100 observed in 2025. Additionally, hunter success has been very reasonable the last five years with an average of 65%. While hunter satisfaction decreased, hunter success was good and similar to previous years and is also well within historical range. Days/harvest also improved and is much improved when compared to the previous five years. Given the buck:doe ratio, combined with harvest statistics, the 2026 hunting season will remain the same.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the Beaver Rim Mule Deer Herd was last evaluated

and approved in 2025, and will not be reviewed again until 2030.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring and Management

The Beaver Rim Mule Deer 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 (Table1). This herd has not been prioritized for CWD surveillance because of the low deer density and the limited number of harvests each year.

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

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (*n*) – *Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2021	**0% (n=7)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	17
2022	**0% (n=4)**	0% (1)	0% (0)	12.5
2023	**0% (n=2)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	6.5
2024	**0% (n=4)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	16
2025	**0%(n=2)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	8
2021-2025	**0% (0-17%, n=19)**	0% (1)	0% (0)	12.3

Population Modeling

The total postseason population estimate for 2025 was 836 (CL=625-1,094) mule deer. This represents about a 2% increase (~18 mule deer) from the previous year. The model shows this herd has been relatively stable for a couple of decades; however, this model needs to be interpreted with caution as some of the data that feeds it is based on small sample sizes. While the sightability estimate aligns well, it also needs to be interpreted carefully as the extremely mild and open winter may have decreased the density of mule deer congregating on winter range as well as lowered observers' ability to detect mule deer. Additionally, anecdotal observations from hunters and department personnel indicate that this herd was much more robust in the past than it is today.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer

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

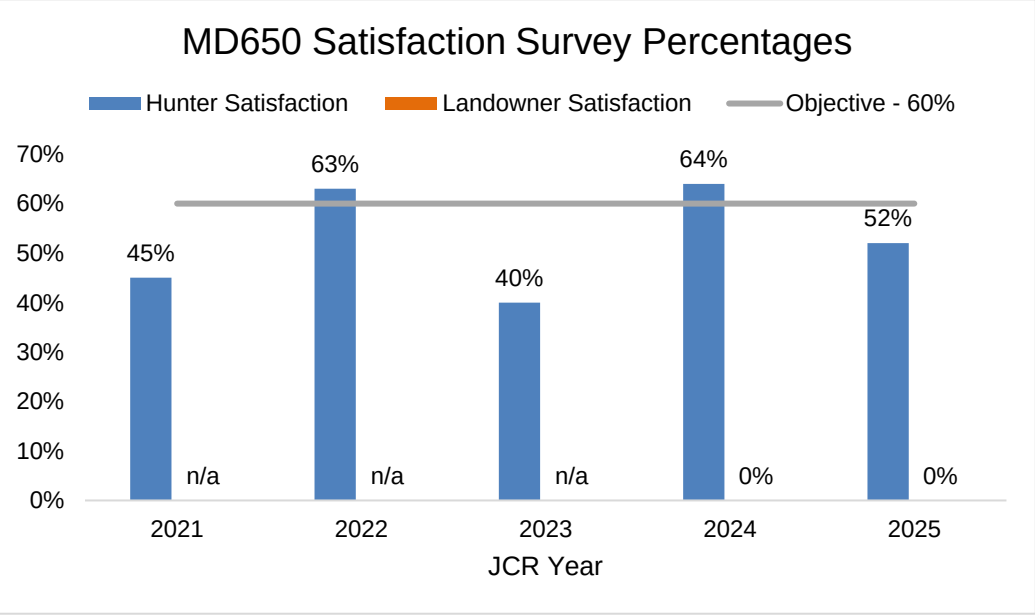
HERD: MD650 - CHAIN LAKES

HUNT AREAS: 98

PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Hunter Satisfaction Percent	45%	52%	57%
Landowner Satisfaction Percent	40%	0%	40%
Harvest:	18	23	25
Hunters:	64	76	90
Hunter Success:	28%	30%	28 %
Active Licenses:	64	75	90
Active License Success:	28%	31%	28 %
Recreation Days:	201	342	325
Days Per Animal:	11.2	14.9	13
Males per 100 Females:	0	0	
Juveniles per 100 Females	0	0	

Satisfaction Based Objective	60%
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	N/A%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	7



2026 Hunting Seasons
Chain Lakes Mule Deer (MD650)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
98	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 20		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer, archery or muzzle-loading firearms only

2026 Region Q nonresident quota: 75 licenses

2025 Landowner Satisfaction: 0% Satisfied, 0% Neutral, 100% Dissatisfied
2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 52% Satisfied, 32% Neutral, 16% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
With the adoption of a hunter/landowner satisfaction objective for this herd, efforts are made to personally query major landowners on their satisfaction with deer numbers each year; this was not done from 2021-2023. In 2025, attempts to contact five landowners over the phone were made. All five landowners expressed that they were less than satisfied with deer numbers and the hunt the previous fall. However, some expressed that they believe numbers and quality of bucks are increasing slowly following the harsh 2022-23 winter. Hunter satisfaction decreased from 64% in 2024 to 52% in 2025. Likewise, more hunters expressed feeling neutral or dissatisfied with their experience. Deer densities are (and always have been) low in this herd unit and explains, in part, landowner and some hunter dissatisfaction.

Despite increased dissatisfaction, hunter success increased to 30% in 2025, while effort (days/animal) decreased to 15 days, indicating some population recovery. Overall hunter numbers returned to levels seen prior to the harsh 2022-23 winter.

Precipitation was near normal in 2025, but was drier than average through the growing season, and was followed by above average precipitation in August-October, especially near Wamsutter and Jeffrey City. Following a warm and snow free fall, winter 2025-26 has been at or near the warmest and driest winter on record in more than five years. Temperatures have been well above average, and precipitation amounts through late-February 2026 are well below average in the Wamsutter, Jeffrey City, and Rawlins area. As such, winter severity this year was considered "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality. However, there is growing concern about how dry conditions will impact habitat conditions into the spring. Without substantial improvement in precipitation through the remainder of winter and into the upcoming growing season to replenish soil moisture and provide a boost to vegetation green up, there will likely be significant negative impacts to mule deer during and after parturition. This would likely lead to reduced deer numbers entering the 2026 hunting season.

In the past, antler point restrictions (APRs) in Area 98 have been used and removed in concert with the Sweetwater Mule Deer herd (Areas 96 and 97) to avoid undesirable hunter distribution and concentration. After multiple seasons featuring APRs, managers removed those restrictions in 2026. Lifting this restriction would allow hunters to harvest mature bucks that may not have been legal in

recent years, while simultaneously eliminating illegal (intentional or accidental) harvest of bucks without enough points. Primitive weapon restrictions remained in place in an effort to prevent sharp increases in hunter numbers, and season dates remained the same.

Management Objective Review
The objective and management strategy for the Chain Lakes Mule Deer Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2025, and will not be reviewed again until 2030.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring & Management
The Chain Lakes Mule Deer Herd has limited CWD prevalence data available. 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 its small size and low harvest rate.

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

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and *(n)* - *Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2021	**0% (n=2)**	0% (0)	0% (11)	14.3
2022	**0% (n=0)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	0
2023	**0% (n=0)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	0
2024	**0% (n=0)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	0
2025	**0% (n=0)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	0
2020-2025	**0% (0-84%, n=2)**	0% (0)	0% (11)	2.5

Population Modeling
Dispersal of these deer in small bands across hundreds of square miles of sagebrush makes both aerial and ground classifications prohibitively expensive and inefficient. Without estimates of herd ratios, herd size cannot be reliably modeled at this point in time; however, IPM estimates for this herd may be plausible, and would likely be better with increased data collection, including a sightability estimate.

Until increased data collection can be achieved, managers chose to model this herd using the default structure for mule deer, i.e. constant adult survival, time-varying reproduction and juvenile survival. Based on visual comparison of effort variables, licenses were selected as the variable most predictably related to annual harvest. With no independent estimates of herd size nor any classification data, the observed data for the IPM included 26 years of harvest data only. IPM convergence was less than optimal, with Rhat values greater than 1.1. Without having the data necessary to determine fawn:doe and buck:doe ratios across time, the reliability and predictability of the IPM cannot be judged. The total post-season abundance estimate for 2025 was 313 (CL 168-561), which puts the herd approximately 40% below the historic objective of 500 deer.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk
HERD: EL635 - WIGGINS FORK
HUNT AREAS: 67-69, 127

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

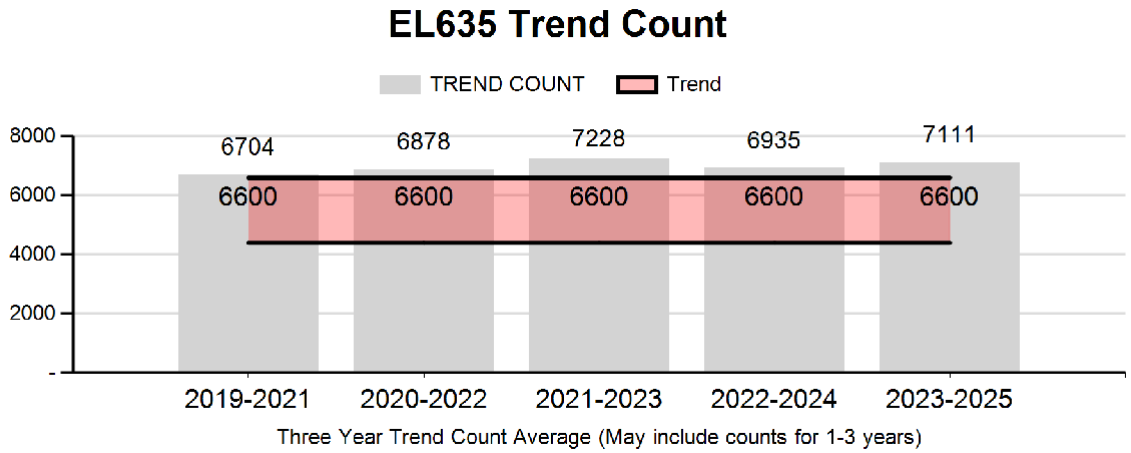
PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Trend Count:	6,908	7,425	6,925
Harvest:	1,031	1,328	1,527
Hunters:	2,582	2,909	3,000
Hunter Success:	40%	46%	51 %
Active Licenses:	2,846	3,268	3,150
Active License Success	36%	41%	48 %
Recreation Days:	20,046	25,601	25,950
Days Per Animal:	19.4	19.3	17.0
Males per 100 Females:	22	22	
Juveniles per 100 Females	19	24	

Trend Based Objective (± 20%)	5,500 (4400 - 6600)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	35%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	8

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
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%



2026 Hunting Seasons
Wiggins Fork Elk (EL635)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
67	Gen	Sep. 15	Sep. 30				Any elk
67	Gen			Oct. 1	Oct. 10		Antlered elk
67	Gen			Oct. 11	Oct. 31		Antlered elk, spikes excluded
67	4	Sep. 15	Sep. 30	Nov. 1	Dec. 31	450	Antlerless elk
67	6	Sep. 15	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31	500	Cow or calf
67	6			Nov. 1	Nov. 30		Cow or calf valid west of the Wiggins Fork and west of the East Fork downstream from the confluence with the Wiggins Fork
67	7	Sep. 15	Sep. 30	Dec. 1	Dec. 31	600	Cow or calf valid west of the Wiggins Fork and west of the East Fork downstream from the confluence with the Wiggins Fork
67, 68, 69	9			Sep. 1	Sep. 30	150	Any elk, archery only
68	Gen	Sep. 15	Sep. 30				Any elk
68	Gen			Oct. 1	Oct. 10		Antlered elk
68	Gen			Oct. 11	Oct. 31		Antlered elk, spikes excluded
68	6	Sep. 15	Sep. 30	Nov. 1	Nov. 30	150	Cow or calf
69	Gen	Sep. 15	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31		Any elk
69	6	Sep. 15	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 30	75	Cow or calf
127	Gen			Aug. 1	Oct. 31		Any elk
127	Gen			Nov. 1	Jan. 31		Antlerless elk

Western Region Nonresident Quota: 2775

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 68% Satisfied, 18% Neutral, 14% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

Personnel counted a total of 7,425 elk during the January 2026 trend count. This was 1,037 more elk than was counted in 2025, and still well above the objective of 5,500. This herd has three established sub-populations based on migratory movements and winter range use. A big portion of the increase in elk from the previous year was found in the South Dubois segment (Hunt areas 68 & 69) with 1,541, compared to the previous year of 547 elk, and slightly above the objective of 1,100 for that sub-population. Similarly, there were more elk counted in the Dunoir/Spring Mountain sub-herd in 2025 (3,719) compared to the previous year (3,629) and well above the objective of 2,200. Fewer elk were observed in the East Fork sub-herd (2,165) compared to the previous year (2,212) and is at the objective of 2,200 elk. The recent running 3-year average for the entire herd increased to 7,111 elk, and is 35% above objective.

Given this herd is over objective, managers increased late season license issuance and extended season dates in 2024 in an attempt to increase harvest. Despite both of these changes, the weather was extremely mild during the November and December hunting season limiting the harvest of elk. The 2025 hunting season improved with weather events early in the season and continued during the later hunting seasons. However, the weather did turn somewhat mild during the month of November and early December, limiting elk movement and slowing harvest. Hunter success for the herd unit increased from 34% in 2024 to 46% in 2025. Area 67 overall saw a large increase in success with 38% in 2025 compared to 25% in 2024; specifically, the 67 Type 4 license success increased from 35% in 2024 to 52% in 2025. Similarly, both the 67 Type 6 and 7 license success increased in 2025 (39% & 36%) compared to 2024 (21% & 29%), respectively. The Type 6 and 7 licenses in area 67 are structured to increase antlerless harvest on the Dunoir/Spring Mountain segment with Type 7 license pressure focused exclusively on this segment. Both areas 68 and 69 saw an increase in success during the antlerless season in 2025 (60% & 72%, respectively) compared to 2024 (41% & 50%, respectively). While the 2025 harvest did improve from the previous year, it is still well below expectations and managers believe an increase in licenses is warranted given the continual increase in elk numbers. We also understand increasing licenses may increase overcrowding concerns, reducing hunt quality. However, winter range utilization data shows this herd's winter range has been over grazed by elk for several years, coupled with drought conditions, the landscape could reach levels of degradation that could take years to recover from. Access to elk on private land refuges is a major management concern hindering both the 67 Type 6 and 7 license effectiveness. We will continue to work with landowners in an attempt to increase access to private lands that will help disperse elk onto accessible public lands and facilitate an increase in harvest.

Management Objective Review

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

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring and Management

The Wiggins Fork elk herd was prioritized for CWD sampling from 2021-2022. The five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). The large sample size (n=294) collected the last five years has resulted in a CWD prevalence of 1%. The higher than average CWD prevalence in 2024 may be a result of very few

samples taken. The five-year average prevalence indicates CWD is likely not a significant driver of this population and no CWD management actions are proposed for 2026.

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

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (*n*) – *Hunter Harvest Only*	Percent of Harvested Adult Elk Sampled
	All Adult Elk (CI = 95%)	
2021*	**1% (n=83)**	9.3
2022	**1% (n=101)**	11.1
2023	**0% (n=47)**	4.4
2024	**5.3% (n=19)**	2.3
2025	**0% (n=44)**	3.6
2021-2025	**1% (0.2-3.0%, n=294)**	6.0

*Prioritized sampling began in 2021.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk
HERD: EL637 - SOUTH WIND RIVER
HUNT AREAS: 25, 27-28, 99

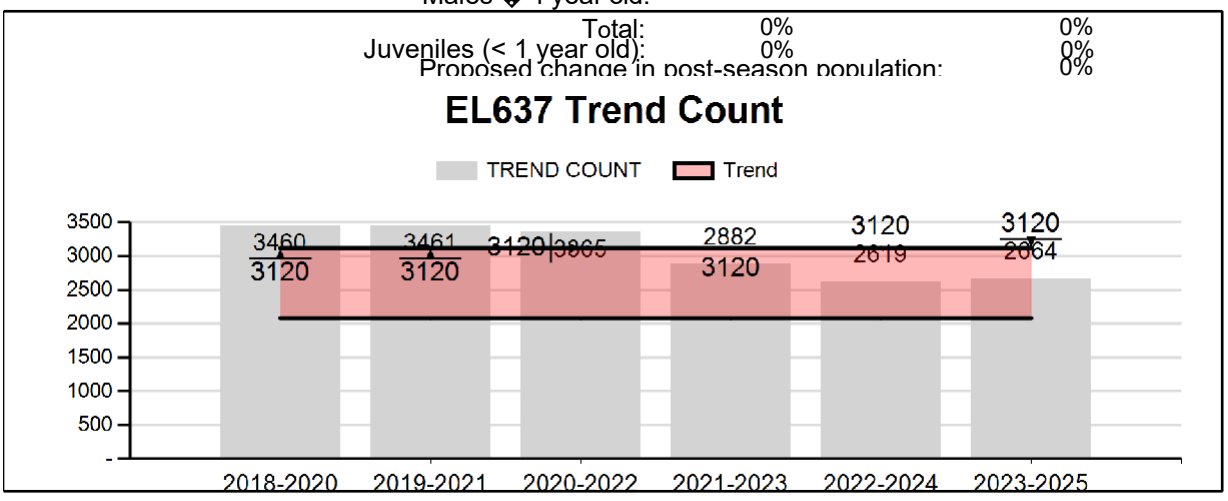
PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026
PREPARED BY: STAN HARTER

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Trend Count:	2,957	3,301	3,000
Harvest:	751	848	850
Hunters:	1,830	2,005	2,000
Hunter Success:	41%	42%	42 %
Active Licenses:	1,931	2,124	2,100
Active License Success	39%	40%	40 %
Recreation Days:	13,755	14,842	14,500
Days Per Animal:	18.3	17.5	17.1
Males per 100 Females:	30	26	
Juveniles per 100 Females	30	19	

Trend Based Objective (± 20%)	2,600 (2080 - 3120)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	27%
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):

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



Three Year Trend Count Average (May include counts for 1-3 years)

2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL637 - SOUTH WIND RIVER

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	0	182	240	422	11%	2,622	69%	736	19%	3,780	0	7	9	16	± 0	28	± 0	24
2021	0	219	370	589	23%	1,477	57%	510	20%	2,576	0	15	25	40	± 0	35	± 0	25
2022	0	234	538	772	26%	1,690	56%	546	18%	3,008	0	14	32	46	± 0	32	± 0	22
2023	0	128	302	430	17%	1,524	61%	532	21%	2,486	0	8	20	28	± 0	35	± 0	27
2024	0	101	256	357	19%	1,232	66%	270	15%	1,859	0	8	21	29	± 0	22	± 0	17
2025	0	246	345	591	18%	2,268	69%	442	13%	3,301	0	11	15	26	± 0	19	± 0	15

2026 Hunting Seasons
South Wind River Elk (EL 637)

Hunt		Archery Dates		Season Dates			
Area	Type	Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes	Quota	Limitations
25, 27	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	200	Any elk
25	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 11	Oct. 31	100	Antlerless elk
25	5	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 21	Nov. 10	75	Antlerless elk
25	6	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Nov. 1	Nov. 20	100	Cow or calf valid north of the Sweetwater River
25	7			Aug. 15	Sep. 30	35	Cow or calf, valid on or within one-half (1/2) mile of private land adjoining the Sweetwater River in Area 25 and Area 100 west of the Three Forks-Atlantic City Road (Fremont County Road 512 and B.L.M. Road 2317)
27	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 20	75	Antlerless elk
28	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 14		Any elk
28	Gen			Oct. 15	Oct. 22		Antlerless elk
28	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Nov. 1	Nov. 20	175	Antlerless elk
99	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	150	Any elk
99	1			Nov. 1	Nov. 20		Antlerless elk
99	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 20	175	Antlerless elk

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 63.1% Satisfied, 21.2% Neutral, 15.6% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

The South Wind River Elk Herd Unit has a mid-winter trend count objective of 2,600 elk. The 2025 trend count/classification surveys flown in January and February 2026 produced a trend count of 3,301 elk. The latest 3-year average of trend counts was 2,664 elk and is at objective. Classification data collected during the trend count showed a calf/cow ratio of 19J/100F that is 37% below the previous 5-year average. The total bull/cow ratio of 26M/100F is 13% lower than the previous 5-year average and 43% lower than the record high bull/cow ratio observed in 2022 when deep snow forced most elk into open habitats. No population model (IPM) is currently available for South Wind River Elk.

The 2025 elk harvest survey indicated that 2,005 hunters harvested 848 elk in the South Wind River Elk Herd Unit, with overall 42% hunter success. Hunter satisfaction percentages were similar to that reported in previous years, but again there were numerous complaints from hunters heard in the field and posted in the harvest survey comments, about too many hunters, access issues, and unethical/illegal off-road vehicle use.

Hunter success was 62% for hunters that reported hunting in hunt area 25 for Type 1 (also valid in hunt area 27) and was the lowest in the last 4 seasons. Combined with the number of Type 1 hunters who reported hunting in hunt area 27, whose success was only 27%, the overall success for the area 25/27 Type 1 license was only 53%. That, along with continued crowding concerns in parts of areas 25 and 27, there is no change for the Type 1 quota in 2026. Type 1 and 4 hunters were allowed access throughout all of hunt area 25 for the entire season, while Type 5 hunters were restricted for the latter half of their season to hunting north of the Sweetwater River where access is more limited by private lands but more elk have been observed in recent years.

Season structure intended to increase antlerless elk harvest continued to work reasonably well again in 2025 despite a warm, open hunting season that resulted in a decrease in antlerless harvest from the 2024 season. Recent trend counts have been near objective with some individual counts above the objective range, and with average calf recruitment, continued aggressive female harvest is needed to limit growth and manage appropriately. Considering the substantial number of complaints about increased hunter crowding in area 25 "hotspots" and in area 27, no changes are being made to the quota for most license types in 2026. We are simplifying the limitation for area 25 Type 5 licenses in 2026, by making them valid in all of area 25. This will reduce pressure on Type 6 hunters in November, who will still be restricted to the portion of area 25 north of the Sweetwater River. To combat a growing number of elk causing damage on hayfields adjacent to the Sweetwater River where it forms the boundary between hunt areas 25 and 100, a new Type 7 season was implemented in 2025, valid on and within one-half (1/2) mile of private lands adjoining the Sweetwater River upstream (west) of the Three Forks Road. This license was very successful, and landowners are requesting higher harvest in 2026 (hunter success in 2025 was 100% according to the harvest survey, but at least one hunter is known to have not harvested an elk with the Type 7 license). To avoid overwhelming the landowners in this small area, an increase of 10 licenses is being offered in 2026. Hunter harvest from the "regular" hunting seasons and the Chapter 34 hunts should continue aggressive antlerless elk harvest in 2026 and curtail population growth keeping this herd near objective.

Chapter 34 Harvest Reporting from December 1, 2025 – March 1, 2026

We continued utilizing Chapter 34 auxiliary management hunts from December 2025 through February 2026 to provide "on-demand" harvest of elk in portions of areas 25, 28 and 127. When the season ended on March 1, 2026, 9 antlerless elk had been taken via these hunts in response to landowner concerns about elk presence in cattle feeding areas mostly near the North Fork Popo Agie River, and to reduce the potential for brucellosis transmission from elk to cattle, however slight the risk. Winter 2025-2026 was one of the warmest and least snowy winters on record, allowing elk to be more scattered away from damage prone areas, resulting in fewer damage concerns and lower harvest this winter. All elk harvested with Chapter 34 permits were tested for brucellosis and CWD, but those test results are not yet available for elk harvested in winter 2025-26. These harvests bring the total number of elk taken in the herd unit to at least 857.

These Chapter 34 hunts are designed to reduce damage on private lands and will continue through March 1, 2026 and will likely be used each winter for the foreseeable future. To help manage Chapter 34 hunts as well as Area 28 General and Type 4 hunters in the area near the North Fork Popo Agie, we will be taking steps toward changing the boundary between hunt areas 25 & 28 boundary near Lander from U.S. highway 287 to Wyoming highway 789 for the 2027-29 seasons.

- **Auxiliary Chapter 34 Hunt 1 – Elk Hunt Area 28**
  - Season Dates: December 1, 2025 – January 31, 2026
  - 45 Auxiliary licenses issued
  - Total harvest = 5 elk

- **Auxiliary Chapter 34 Hunt 2 – Elk Hunt Area 28**
  - Season Dates: February 1, 2026 – March 1, 2026
  - 40 Auxiliary licenses remained valid from Hunt 1
  - Total harvest = 9 elk

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the South Wind River Elk Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2024, and was not scheduled to be reviewed again until 2029. However, this population is trending toward numbers above the current objective with minimal concerns from landowners more than 10 miles from Lander, so we will be reviewing the objective again in the near future with the potential to adjust the objective appropriate with current elk numbers counted during the winter.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring and Management

To date, CWD has only been detected in one elk from hunt area 28, and no CWD management actions have occurred. South Wind River elk is not a focal CWD surveillance herd. The five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1).

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested elk in the South Wind River Elk Herd Unit, 2021-2025.

Year(s)	Percent CWD Positive and (n) - *Hunter Harvest Only*	Percent of Harvested Adult Elk Sampled
	All Adult Elk (CI = 95%)	
2021	**0% (n=28)**	5.0
2022	**0% (n=29)**	4.9
2023	**1.3% (n=75)**	12.4
2024	**0% (n=97)**	13.5
2025	**0% (n=74)**	9.7
2021-2025	**0.3% (n=303)**	9.2

Additional Management Data

Lander personnel continue to document elk movements across the boundary between hunt areas 27 and 28 with numerous large groups of elk moving easterly from October through January as seen with trail cameras and from helicopter flights. These elk are following pathways first identified with collared female elk in 2010 and 2011. At least 6 of 30 female elk captured and collared in hunt area 99 moved through hunt area 27 to winter ranges in hunt areas 28 and 25 for at least 2 winters. Other elk from that collar study moved from hunt area 99 to area 98 during the same time periods, and some of the 6 went both ways; east to hunt area 28 and 25 and north to hunt area 98 at different times. An elk trail in hunt area 27 was found across the FS 899 loop between the East Sweetwater and Little Sweetwater in October several years ago indicating movement of significant numbers of elk similar to those documented with collars and cameras. Elk with visual detection collars (vinyl coated canvas) were occasionally observed in the Red Canyon and Limestone Mountain areas of hunt area 28 several winters ago. These collars were placed on elk at the Muddy Creek elk feedground in hunt area 98 for a number of years during brucellosis testing operations. Another collar from this study was found in mid-May 2026 that had been deployed in the Red Canyon area in 2011, with data download pending.

An infrared (IR) flight was conducted in February and March 2025 for BLM to count wild horses in the Red Desert. They also counted nearly 2,300 elk in the southern end of hunt area 25 south of the Sweetwater River– it is suspected many or most of those elk had moved there from area 100.

It is difficult to determine how much these movements influence the number of elk observed in the mid-winter trend count in each of the 4 hunt areas in South Wind River elk herd. It is even more difficult to determine where those elk are typically found during hunting seasons and how much the seasonal distribution shifts affect hunter success in all hunt areas.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

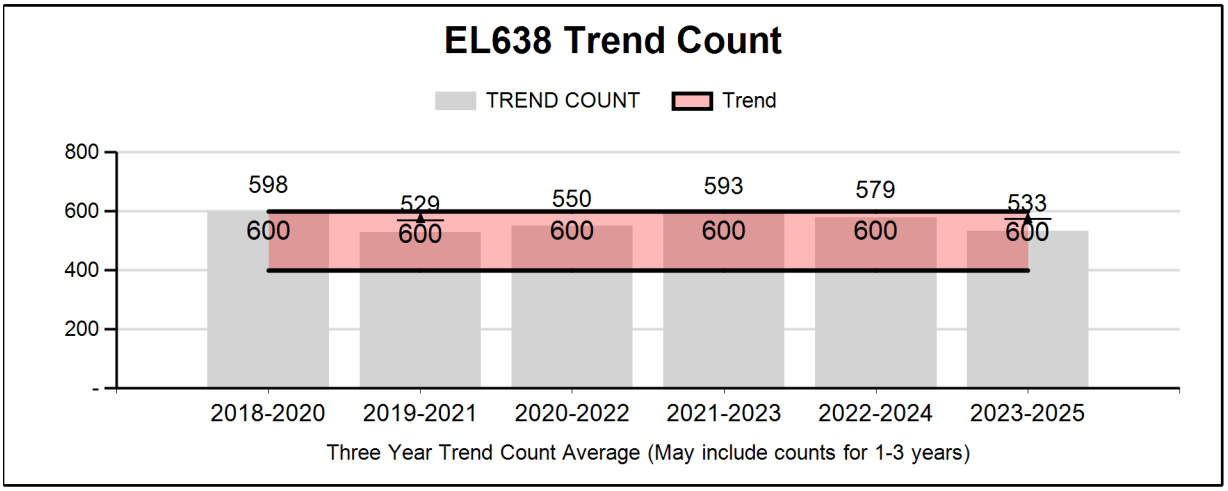
SPECIES: Elk
PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026
HERD: EL638 - GREEN MOUNTAIN
HUNT AREAS: 24, 128
PREPARED BY: STAN HARTER

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Trend Count:	567	414	500
Harvest:	292	325	325
Hunters:	685	789	750
Hunter Success:	43%	41%	43%
Active Licenses:	693	803	750
Active License Success	42%	40%	43 %
Recreation Days:	4,378	5,084	5,000
Days Per Animal:	15.0	15.6	15.4
Males per 100 Females:	29	25	
Juveniles per 100 Females	27	22	

Trend Based Objective (± 20%)	500 (400 - 600)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	-17.2%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	3

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Juveniles (< 1 year old):	0%	0%



2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL638 - GREEN MOUNTAIN

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	0	31	63	94	17%	372	66%	99	18%	565	0	8	17	25	± 0	27	± 0	21
2021	0	56	55	111	21%	322	60%	102	19%	535	0	17	17	34	± 0	32	± 0	24
2022	0	45	110	155	28%	300	54%	96	17%	551	0	15	37	52	± 0	32	± 0	21
2023	0	41	73	114	16%	467	67%	113	16%	694	0	9	16	24	± 0	24	± 0	19
2024	0	35	18	53	11%	351	71%	87	18%	491	0	10	5	15	± 0	25	± 0	22
2025	0	42	28	70	17%	282	68%	62	15%	414	0	15	10	25	± 0	22	± 0	18

2026 Hunting Seasons
Green Mountain Elk (EL638)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
24	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 14	200	Any elk
24	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 14	75	Antlerless elk
24	5	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Nov. 1	Nov. 30	175	Antlerless elk; also valid in Area 128
128	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 7		Any elk
128	Gen			Oct. 8	Oct. 14		Antlerless elk

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 67.0% Satisfied, 20.3% Neutral, 12.7% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

The Green Mountain Elk Herd Unit has a mid-winter trend count objective of 500 elk. The 2025 trend count/classification survey was flown on January 12, 2026, and resulted in a count of 414 elk in hunt area 24. The latest 3-year average is 533, placing the population 6.6% above objective, but within the upper 20% of the objective range. The 2025 calf/cow ratio of 22J/100F was 19% below the previous 5-year average and 41% below the average of 37J/100F since 2004. The bull/cow ratio of 25M/100F was 14% below the previous 5-year average and 24% below the average of 33M/100F since 2004. No population model is currently available for Green Mountain Elk.

The 2025 elk harvest survey indicated that 789 hunters harvested 325 elk in the herd unit, with overall 41% hunter success. Hunter complaints increased again in 2025 about too many hunters/licenses during all 3 seasons in hunt area 24 creating crowded hunting conditions and elk leaving hunt area 24 and crossing into hunt area 128. These complaints were heard during the seasons, as well as in hunter comments via the harvest survey. These concerns were at least partially validated with at least 2 groups of elk (~100 in one and ~400 in the other) intermittently observed along the Sweetwater River and Sweetwater Rocks from September through November.

The overall hunter success of 41% for the entire herd unit was a slight decrease from the previous year, but success decreased for hunt area 24 Type 1 and Type 5 hunters. Area 24 Type 1 hunters had slightly lower success (67%) in 2025, with slight shifts in the number of bulls and cows harvested. It is well understood, based on previous season constructs with higher license issuance, that hunter crowding negatively affects harvest needed to maintain this herd at objective. Therefore, no change is being made to the Type 1 license quota in 2026. In addition, any increase in license issuance negatively affects hunter satisfaction with regard to increased hunter crowding. Finally, there are numerous concerns and complaints about lack of quality bulls seen in 2025, which coincides with the second lowest number of adult bulls classified in hunt area 24 in 10 years. Fewer hunters with hunt area 23 and 24 licenses that were valid in hunt area 128 reported hunting there in 2025 and only 6 cow elk were harvested in area 128.

The Casper Region is continuing to include their hunt area 23 Type 1, Type 4, and Type 6 license limitations to also be valid in hunt area 128 (an expansion in 2026 from a portion of area 128 to the entire area to reduce regulation language which has led to confused hunters). This is to address concerns about elk crossing the Dry Creek Road into hunt area 128. With these proposed changes and the low calf production this past year, resulting harvest should reduce elk numbers in this herd in 2026.

In response to increasing concerns from landowners about general license hunters trespassing on private lands along the Sweetwater River in hunt area 128, as well as elk leaving hunt area 24 over the last few years, we will be taking the appropriate steps to move the north boundary of hunt area 24 to Beaver Rim and the B.L.M. Road 2401 (Beaver Rim Road) starting in the 2027 season. This will be a similar, but not identical, boundary to the one used before the creation of hunt area 128 in the 1990s.

Management Objective Review

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

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring and Management

The Green Mountain elk herd unit is not a focal CWD surveillance herd, and no meaningful prevalence data is available. CWD has not been detected in the Green Mountain elk herd unit and no CWD management actions have occurred. The 5-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1).

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

Year(s)	Percent CWD Positive and (n) - *Hunter Harvest Only*	Percent of Harvested Adult Elk Sampled
	All Adult Elk (CI = 95%)	
2021	**0% (n=14)**	6.4
2022	**0% (n=7)**	3.1
2023	**0% (n=9)**	3.3
2024	**0% (n=2)**	0.6
2025	**0% (n=5)**	1.6
2021-2025	**0% (n=37)**	2.7

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk

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

HERD: EL639 - FERRIS

HUNT AREAS: 22, 111

PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Population:	790	1,025	875
Harvest:	187	288	310
Hunters:	343	536	539
Hunter Success:	55%	54%	58%
Active Licenses:	369	599	588
Active License Success:	51%	48%	53%
Recreation Days:	2,506	4,705	4,340
Days Per Animal:	13.4	16.3	14
Males per 100 Females	56	27	
Juveniles per 100 Females	38	35	

Population Objective (± 20%): 350 (280 - 420)

Management Strategy: Special

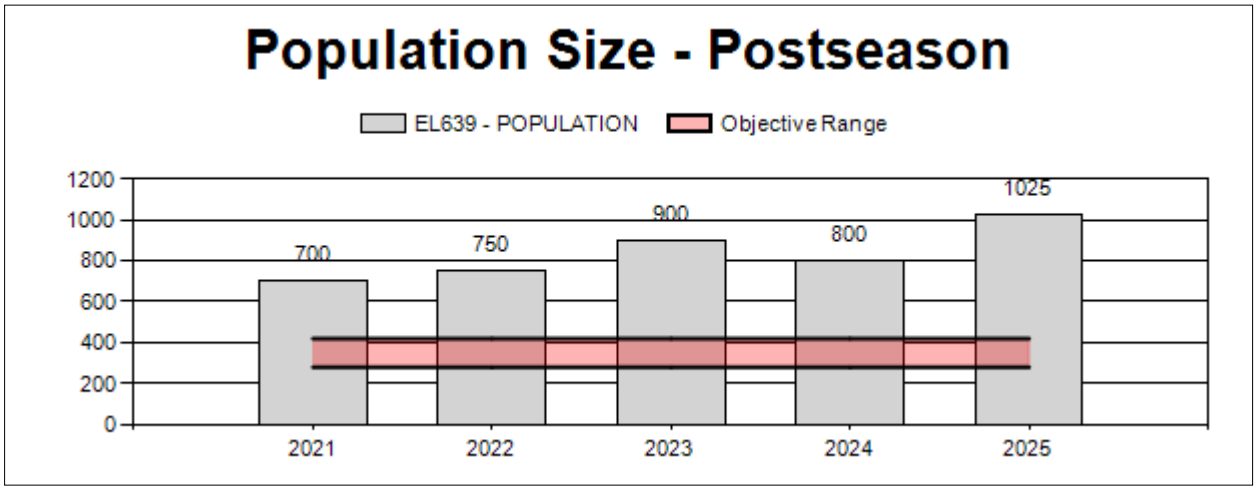
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: 193%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 6

Model Date: None

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	20%	25%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	35%	40%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-6%	-15%



2021 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL639 - FERRIS

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Yling	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2021	700	48	148	196	29%	354	53%	115	17%	665	0	14	42	55	± 1	32	± 1	21
2022	750	56	163	219	29%	401	53%	139	18%	759	0	14	41	55	± 1	35	± 0	22
2023	900	76	145	221	24%	527	58%	159	18%	907	0	14	28	42	± 0	30	± 0	21
2024	800	71	196	267	34%	374	47%	156	20%	797	0	19	52	71	± 0	42	± 0	24
2025	1,025	89	70	159	17%	584	62%	203	21%	946	0	15	12	27	± 1	35	± 1	27

2026 Hunting Seasons
Ferris Elk (EL639)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
22	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	75	Any elk
22	1			Nov. 15	Dec. 15		Antlered elk five (5) points or less on either antler; also valid in Area 111
22	1			Dec. 16	Dec. 31		Antlerless elk
22	2	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31	25	Antlered elk five (5) points or less on either antler
22	6	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31	100	Cow or calf valid in the Muddy Creek Drainage
22	6			Nov. 1	Nov. 14		Cow or calf valid in the entire area
22	6			Nov. 15	Dec. 31		Cow or calf; also valid in Area 111
111	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 31	75	Any elk
111	1			Nov. 15	Dec. 15		Antlered elk five (5) points or less on either antler; also valid in Area 22
111	1			Dec. 16	Dec. 31		Antlerless elk
111	2	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 31	25	Antlered elk five (5) points or less on either antler
111	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Nov. 14	150	Antlerless elk
111	4			Nov. 15	Dec. 31		Antlerless elk; also valid in Area 22
111	6	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Nov. 1	Nov. 14	250	Cow or calf
111	6			Nov. 15	Dec. 31		Cow or calf; also valid in Area 22

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 55% Satisfied, 26% Neutral, 19% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
While conditions for this year's trend count were less than ideal with high winds and minimal snow cover, a total of 946 elk were counted. This is well above the herd objective of 350 elk. As is usual, elk were

distributed similarly to previous years, with the majority of them on lands inaccessible to the hunting public near the Pathfinder Ranch in Area 22 and in the checkerboard in Area 111. The bull:cow ratio decreased to 27:100 and is the lowest recorded since 2018; the yearling bull ratio also decreased to 15:100 in 2025. However, these declines in ratios may be attributed to the fact that some larger bachelor groups were missed during trend count flights as a result of poor flight conditions, rather than a decline in number of bulls on the ground. Calf production decreased from 42:100 in 2024 to 35:100 in 2025.

Overall hunter success increased to 54% in 2025, compared to 49% in 2024. The average number of days hunted per elk harvested remained relatively stable at 16.3 days in 2025. It is difficult to interpret hunter success rates for Type 1, 4, and 6 licenses between these two hunt areas because of the late hunt in November and December, which allows them to hunt both areas. Regardless, the total harvest of 288 elk in 2025 was the largest ever taken from this herd, and harvest totals of antlerless elk increased across both Type 4 and 6 license types in both areas as compared to 2024. However, harvest totals and success for Type 1 licenses decreased in both Area 22 and 111. While the intent of these late hunts is to increase hunter success and harvest by providing hunters with access to elk on winter range that are normally behind locked gates during the regular season, date of harvest reports indicated minimal difference between the early season and late season harvest for either hunt area. This is likely due to the warm, mild conditions observed throughout the majority of the hunting season and winter, allowing elk to delay movement to normal, more accessible winter ranges. Success for Type 2 hunters was significantly higher for hunters in Area 22 as compared to Area 111, with success rates of 52% and 31%, respectively. This may be due to distribution of bulls during the hunting season, with bachelor groups being more readily found on publicly accessible lands in Area 22 than in Area 111.

Hunter satisfaction decreased significantly in Area 22 and Area 111, to 57% and 53%, respectively. In the herd unit as a whole, satisfaction dropped to 55%, with a larger percentage of hunters indicating they were “neutral” or dissatisfied with their hunt.

Precipitation was near normal in 2025, but was drier than average through the growing season, and was followed by above average precipitation in August and September, especially near the Seminoe Mountains. Following a warm and snow free fall, winter 2025-26 has been at or near the warmest and driest winter on record in more than five years. Temperatures have been well above average, and precipitation amounts through late-February 2026 are well below average in the Seminoe and Rawlins area. As such, winter severity this year was considered "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality. However, there is growing concern about how this will impact habitat conditions into the spring. Without substantial improvement in precipitation through the remainder of winter and into the upcoming growing season to replenish soil moisture and provide a boost to vegetation green up, there will likely be significant negative impacts to elk during and after parturition. This would likely lead to reduced elk numbers entering the 2026 hunting season.

Trend count data indicate harvest is successfully controlling elk numbers in the publicly accessible portions of this herd; however, the majority of this herd was unavailable for public harvest due to access limitations on private land, allowing elk to continue to grow and place the herd over objective. With the herd so far above objective, antlerless harvests need to continue. Quotas were increased for all license types in 2024 in an effort to prevent further population growth and address high levels of hunter success; however, more than half the reproductive portion of this herd is unavailable for harvest on private lands or public lands with no access. While managers are working with landowners in the area to secure access

in an effort to provide hunters more opportunity, quotas need to be scaled according to the number of elk actually available for harvest, with the goal of maintaining optimal harvest while retaining reasonable numbers of elk and hunting opportunity on public and accessible private lands. Due to continued limitations in access and public concern regarding hunter saturation in publicly accessible areas and to maintain the high harvest achieved in previous years, there are no increases in Type 1, 2, 4, or 6 license types in 2026.

Early winter hunts were successfully employed beginning in 2019 for "any elk" seasons for the Type 1 licenses, running in late November and early December, in an effort to maintain harvest of surplus antlered elk. However, with this herd in special management, hunters expect better opportunities to see and harvest larger bulls than available in neighboring herds. In an effort to address concerns regarding bull quality, the early winter (Nov. 15-Dec. 15) hunt will be restricted to antlered elk five (5) points or less on either antler. This restriction will aim to maintain harvest of surplus antlered elk, while reducing harvest pressure on mature males in an effort to provide hunters with the older, bigger-antlered bulls they expect, especially in those portions of the herd unit that are publicly accessible. Additionally, in an effort to increase harvest of both antlered and antlerless elk, Type 1, 4, and 6 hunters are all allowed to hunt both areas during the late season, to target elk groups that frequently cross the boundary between Areas 22 and 111 during the winter.

Hunter success for Type 1 licenses exceeded 60% as a consequence of offering the additional early winter hunts. As in past years, consideration was given to separating the late hunt into a separate license type, which might lower hunter success towards the statewide standard. However, weather conditions have prevented hunters from accessing winter ranges occupied by elk during the late hunt in some past years, and it would be considered unfair to restrict hunters to a winter hunt where they may be physically unable to use their license. As a consequence of this second, early winter hunt, success rates for the Type 1 hunters have remained higher than the mandated 60%, despite recent increases in license quotas.

In an effort to standardize season dates and maintain harvest of antlered elk, Type 1 license opening dates shifted across both hunt areas to Oct. 1. Managers continued to utilize a Type 2 license in 2026 to focus harvest on the high proportion of younger bulls noted both by hunters during the season as well as by managers during trend/classification counts. Season dates shifted across both areas to include an archery season from Sep. 1-Sep. 30, and a rifle season that runs from Oct. 15-31, with the aim of addressing concerns about increased pressure during late season hunts while still providing increased opportunity. Area 22-6 and 111-4 license opening dates shifted to Oct. 15; Area 111-6 license dates remain unchanged.

Management Objective Review

This herd has been slated for an objective review in 2026. The Department will develop recommendations for a revised objective in May of 2026 in conjunction with a public review process. This proposed change will be presented to the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission at the September 2026 meeting.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring & Management

The Ferris Elk 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 its small size (in comparison to other herds in the state) and dispersal of harvest over months-long seasons.

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

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and *(n)* - *Hunter Harvest Only*	Percent of Harvested Adult Elk Sampled
	All Adult Elk (CI = 95%)	
2021	0% (n=6)	4.0
2022	0% (n=10)	5.9
2023	0% (n=7)	3.7
2024	0% (n=11)	4.3
2025	0% (n=8)	2.8
2021-2025	0% (0-8.4%, n=42)	4.1

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk

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

HERD: EL643 - SHAMROCK

HUNT AREAS: 118

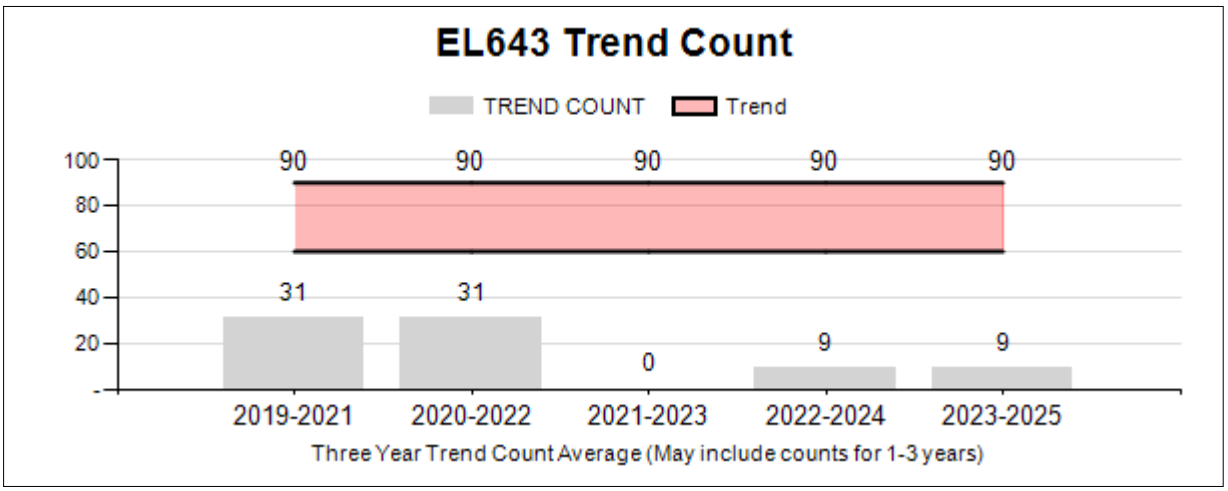
PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Trend Count:	20	0	0
Harvest:	73	112	115
Hunters:	113	176	170
Hunter Success:	65%	64%	68 %
Active Licenses:	122	192	185
Active License Success	60%	58%	62 %
Recreation Days:	645	1,053	1,025
Days Per Animal:	8.8	9.4	8.9
Males per 100 Females:	0	0	
Juveniles per 100 Females	0	0	

Trend Based Objective (± 20%)	75 (60 - 90)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	N/A%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	0

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

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


EL643 Trend Count
TREND COUNT
Trend
100
80
60
40
20
-
90
90
90
90
90
31
31
0
9
9
2019-2021
2020-2022
2021-2023
2022-2024
2023-2025
Three Year Trend Count Average (May include counts for 1-3 years)

2026 Hunting Seasons
Shamrock Elk (EL643)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
118	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 22	Nov. 12	75	Antlered elk
118	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 22	Nov. 30	50	Antlerless elk
118	7	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 30	75	Cow or calf valid south of the Mineral X Road (Sweetwater County Road 63 and B.L.M. Road 3206)

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 47% Satisfied, 24% Neutral, 29% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
The Shamrock Elk herd is managed utilizing a spring trend count objective, which is flown opportunistically every three years in combination with pronghorn line-transect surveys in the same area. The most recent trend count for this herd was flown in June 2024 using the same flight lines as flown in 2021. Only nine elk were found, 23 less than in 2017 and more than 80% below objective.

In 2025, hunter satisfaction rose slightly to 47%, while dissatisfaction fell to 29%, with more hunters reporting feeling neutral about their experience. This decrease in dissatisfaction may be attributed to the dramatic increase in success and decrease in effort for Type 4 and 6 hunters. Success and effort for Type 1 hunters remained relatively stable at 67% and 10.9 days / harvest, respectively.

Precipitation was near normal in 2025, but was drier than average through the growing season, and was followed by above average precipitation in August-October, especially near Wamsutter and Jeffrey City. Following a warm and snow free fall, winter 2025-26 has been at or near the warmest and driest winter on record in more than five years. Temperatures have been well above average, and precipitation amounts through late-February 2026 are well below average in the Wamsutter, Jeffrey City, and Rawlins area. As such, winter severity this year was considered "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality. However, there is growing concern about how dry conditions will impact habitat conditions into the spring. Without substantial improvement in precipitation through the remainder of winter and into the upcoming growing season to replenish soil moisture and provide a boost to vegetation green up, there will likely be significant negative impacts to elk during and after parturition. This would likely lead to reduced elk numbers entering the 2026 hunting season.

Given increased success in prior years, license issuance in 2024 was increased by 95 total licenses, split between all license types. Type 6 licenses were subsequently reduced by 25 in 2025 to address increased hunter effort, decreased hunter success, and public and landowner concern regarding hunter saturation. Although success remained somewhat high in 2025 (for Type 1 licenses specifically), variability in the distribution of elk between hunt areas, as well as between public and private lands within the hunt area, can have a significant impact on success given that elk are not always available for harvest during hunting seasons. As such, quotas remained the same in 2026 in an effort to provide continued opportunity while

avoiding oversaturation of hunters on the landscape given a limited amount of elk available for harvest. Opening dates remain the same for all license types.

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

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring & Management
The Shamrock Elk 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 its small size and low harvest rate.

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

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and *(n)* - *Hunter Harvest Only*	Percent of Harvested Adult Elk Sampled
	All Adult Elk (CI = 95%)	
2021	**0% (n=2)**	3.6
2022	**0% (n=3)**	3.8
2023	**0% (n=2)**	2.6
2024	**0% (n=2)**	2.4
2025	**0% (n=1)**	0.9
2021-2025	**0% (0-30.8%, n=10)**	2.5

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Moose
HERD: MO620 - LANDER
HUNT AREAS: 2, 30, 39

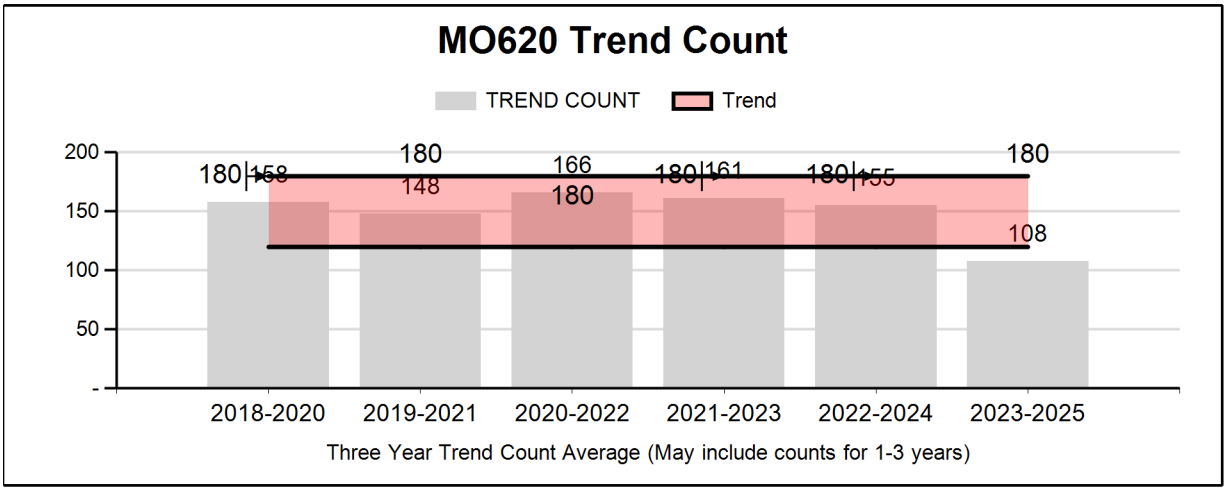
PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026
PREPARED BY: STAN HARTER

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Trend Count:	145	98	150
Harvest:	5	5	5
Hunters:	6	5	5
Hunter Success:	83%	100%	100 %
Active Licenses:	6	5	5
Active License Success	83%	100%	100 %
Recreation Days:	73	43	45
Days Per Animal:	14.6	8.6	9
Males per 100 Females:	72	42	
Juveniles per 100 Females	46	46	

Trend Based Objective (± 20%)	150 (120 - 180)
Management Strategy:	Special
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	-34.7%
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):

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Juveniles (< 1 year old):	0%	0%



2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Moose Herd MO620 - LANDER

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	0	0	0	41	35%	50	42%	27	23%	118	0	0	0	82	± 0	54	± 0	30
2021	0	0	0	49	35%	67	48%	24	17%	140	0	0	0	73	± 0	36	± 0	21
2022	0	0	0	83	35%	105	44%	50	21%	238	0	0	0	79	± 0	48	± 0	27
2023	0	0	0	30	29%	51	50%	22	21%	103	0	0	0	59	± 0	43	± 0	27
2024	0	0	0	36	30%	58	48%	28	23%	122	0	0	0	62	± 0	48	± 0	30
2025	0	0	0	22	22%	52	53%	24	24%	98	0	0	0	42	± 0	46	± 0	32

2026 Hunting Seasons
Lander Moose (MO 620)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
2, 30	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 20	5	Antlered moose

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: No data available

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
Snow depths were significantly less than average in January 2026 and the mid-winter trend count of 98 moose was the lowest since 2016 and far below the long-term average. The current 3-year trend count average is 108 moose, 28% below the objective of 150 moose. Classification data collected during the trend count showed a calf/cow ratio of 46J/100F and the bull/cow ratio of 42M/100F. These were lower than were observed in the previous classification/trend count, with the calf/cow equal to the previous 5-year and long-term averages. However, the bull/cow ratio was 42% lower than the previous 5-year average. No population model (IPM) is currently available for Lander Moose.

Harvest survey results from the 2025 season showed all 5 hunters harvested bull moose with licenses valid in both hunt areas 2 and 30. Four of the 5 successful hunters submitted teeth for aging via cementum annuli, with the average age of harvested bulls of 5.8 years (range 5-6) with an average antler spread of 39.6 inches (range 38.5” – 40.25”) from the 4 bulls measured. The warm and open conditions through the hunting season did not seem to hinder moose hunters in 2025, as the number of days per bull harvested dropped to 8.5 in 2025, a full 6 days less than the previous 5-year average.

Hunter success has been 100% in only 2 of the last 5 seasons, indicating bulls are often difficult to find during the hunting season. Beginning in 2017, the hunting season structure was changed due to concerns about population status, with reductions in quotas that are now valid in both hunt areas. Since then, our trend counts have generally increased, with a record high trend count in January 2023. Our count the last 3 years was much lower, but due to the winter snow conditions being much more open and not forcing moose out of heavier cover, it's doubtful the population actually decreased. Trend count fluctuations are common in this herd unit, primarily because of greatly varying annual snow conditions.

The 2025 season featured a cut in license quotas following poor harvest statistics (success, age, and antler size) in 2024, and those harvest statistics improved in 2025. The 2026 season keeps the quota at 5 Type 1 Antlered moose licenses (5 residents) valid in both hunt areas 2 and 30. With moose now being a once-in-a-lifetime hunt species, there is a strong desire to see harvest statistics (success, age, and antler size) improve or remain consistent with those experienced in 2025.

There have only been a few moose harvested in hunt area 30 in recent years, and there were contradictions in 2025 between harvest locations reported via the tooth aging process and the hunter harvest survey about where moose were harvested in the two hunt areas. There is also no obvious biological reason to keep two hunt areas to manage moose in this herd unit. Therefore, we will take the necessary steps to combine these hunt areas in 2027 to reduce confusion in regulations, the hunter harvest survey, and tooth aging process.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the Lander Moose Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2023, and will not be reviewed again until 2028.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Moose

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

HERD: MO621 - DUBOIS

HUNT AREAS: 6

PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Population:		N/A	N/A
Harvest:	5	5	5
Hunters:	5	5	5
Hunter Success:	100%	100%	100 %
Active Licenses:	5	5	5
Active License Success:	100%	100%	100 %
Recreation Days:	60	34	38
Days Per Animal:	12	6.8	7.6

Limited Opportunity Objective:

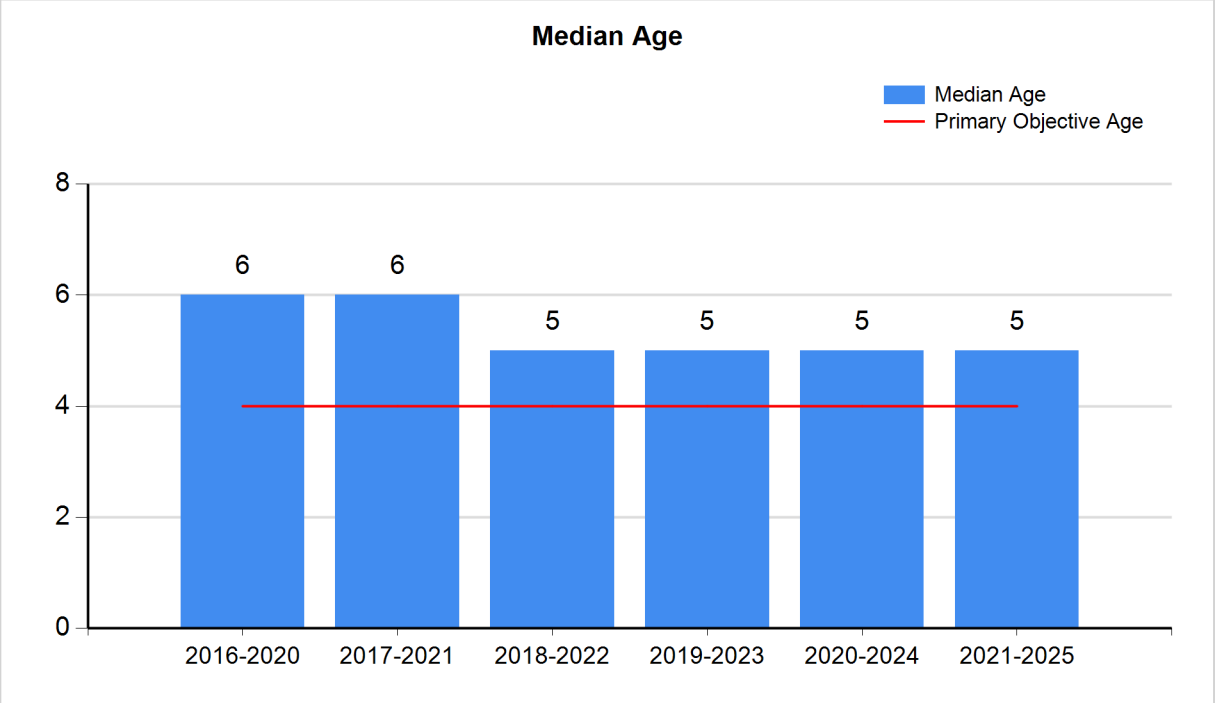
5-year running median age of harvested bulls is > 4 years

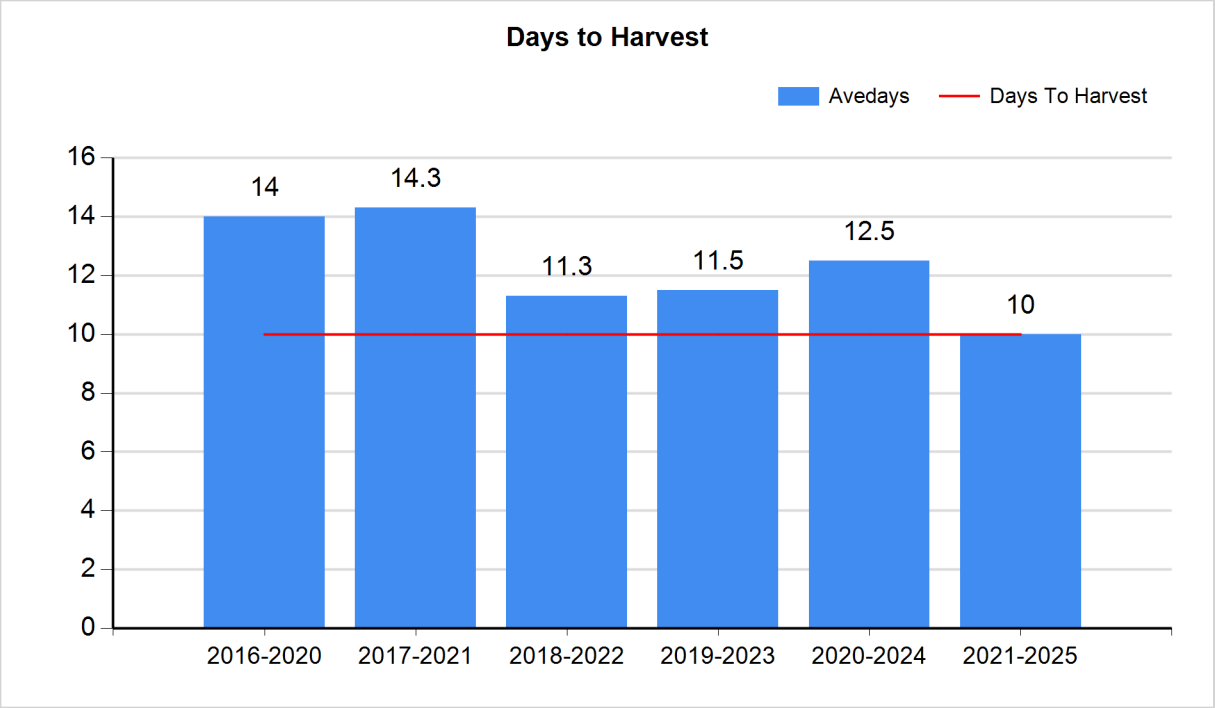
5-year running average of <= 10 days/animal to harvest

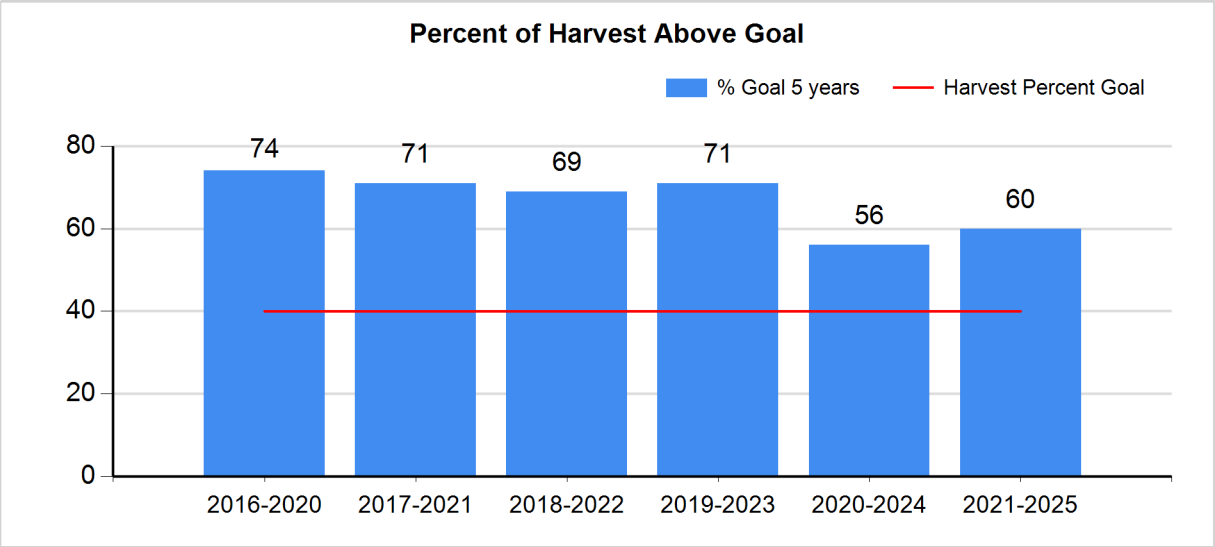
Secondary Objective:

5-year running average 40% of harvested bulls are > 5 years old

Management Strategy: Special




Days to Harvest
Avedays
Days To Harvest
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
14
14.3
11.3
11.5
12.5
10
2016-2020
2017-2021
2018-2022
2019-2023
2020-2024
2021-2025


Percent of Harvest Above Goal
% Goal 5 years
Harvest Percent Goal
80
60
40
20
0
74
71
69
71
56
60
2016-2020
2017-2021
2018-2022
2019-2023
2020-2024
2021-2025

2026 Hunting Seasons
Dubois Moose (MO621)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
6	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 20	5	Antlered moose

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

The 2026 hunting season remains unchanged from the previous 10 years for this hunt area/herd unit with 5 licenses issued. This year 4 licenses will go to residents and 1 to a nonresident. Harvest success has been 80-100% each of the last 10 years including 100% in 2025. This indicates hunters are able to find adult bull moose in the area. In 2025, all five hunters submitted teeth for aging and resulted in a median age of 5, which is within the historic range for this herd as well as above the primary objective. Indications are the population continues to languish well below historical levels in the area with low numbers of moose occupying traditional winter ranges throughout the area. While winter surveys did not reveal any increasing trend in the overall moose numbers, it does show that there is an adequate number of bulls available (87 bulls:100 cows) for harvest for the 2026 hunting season.

Management Objective Review

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

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Bighorn Sheep
PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: BS609 - WHISKEY MOUNTAIN

HUNT AREAS: 8-10
PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

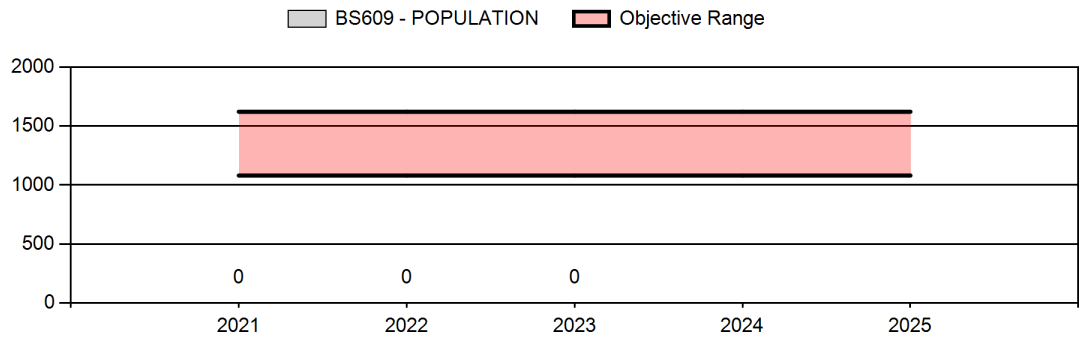
	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Population:	N/A	N/A	N/A
Harvest:	7	6	10
Hunters:	13	10	10
Hunter Success:	54%	60%	100 %
Active Licenses:	13	10	10
Active License Success:	54%	60%	100 %
Recreation Days:	126	88	93
Days Per Animal:	18	14.7	9.3
Males per 100 Females	47	48	
Juveniles per 100 Females	36	40	

Population Objective (± 20%) :	1350 (1080 - 1620)
Management Strategy:	Special
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	N/A%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	15
Model Date:	None

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	0%	0%
Proposed change in post-season population:	0%	0%

Population Size - Postseason



2020 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Bighorn Sheep Herd BS609 - WHISKEY MOUNTAIN

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2020	0	3	47	50	20%	155	62%	45	18%	250	0	2	30	32	± 0	29	± 0	22
2021	0	4	59	63	27%	126	54%	45	19%	234	0	3	47	50	± 0	36	± 0	24
2022	0	9	57	66	29%	116	52%	42	19%	224	0	8	49	57	± 0	36	± 0	23
2023	0	7	45	52	26%	98	49%	50	25%	200	0	7	46	53	± 0	51	± 0	33
2024	0	8	44	52	28%	102	54%	34	18%	188	779	8	43	51	± 0	33	± 0	22
2025	0	1	76	77	21%	215	58%	76	21%	368	0	0	35	36	± 0	35	± 0	26

2026 Hunting Seasons
Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep (BS609)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
8	1	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 1	Oct. 31	2	Any ram
9	1	Aug. 1	Aug. 14	Aug. 15	Oct. 15	5	Any ram
10	1	Aug. 1	Aug. 14	Aug. 15	Oct. 15	5	Any ram

2025 Hunter Satisfaction: 66% Satisfied, 11% Neutral, 22% Dissatisfied

2026 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
Following a large, all-age die-off caused by pneumonia during the winter of 1990/1991 this herd has consistently experienced low lamb production leading to continued population decline. Observations of the bighorn sheep herd over the past 32 years also reveal the persistence of bighorn sheep (lambs and adults) exhibiting nasal discharge, coughing, parasites, sinus tumors, and low body mass. All of these symptoms indicate bighorn sheep in the herd are generally unhealthy, likely subject to environmental stressors and continued exposure to contagious and transmissible pathogens resulting in chronic respiratory disease.

Managers have not collected aerial classification data the last two years in areas 9 & 10 because of the current test and remove project and the subsequent impact of helicopter captures causing animal displacement and decreased observability of sheep. Ground classifications were conducted during this past winter, but the mild winter allowed sheep to stay high making them unobservable. In lieu of traditional classification efforts, an infrared (IR) survey that collected composition data of bighorn sheep in this herd was conducted in February, 2026. This method, using a fixed wing aircraft at high altitude does not impact or disturb sheep while improving data quality. The IR survey resulted in 117 sheep classified in area 9 and 142 in area 10 with lamb:ewe ratios of 34 & 33, respectively. Managers were able to fly area 8 resulting in a lamb:ewe ratio of 40:100 and a ram:ewe ratio of 47:100. Overall, managers classified 368 total sheep in the Whiskey Mountain Herd with a lamb:ewe ratio of 35:100 and a ram:ewe ratio of 35:100. Observed lamb ratios the past five-years have averaged 40:100 and equals the average ratio prior to the pneumonia caused all-aged die-off the winter of 1990/91. It is significantly higher than the average of 23:100 lambs observed during that period from 1991 to 2020. Comments from hunters and outfitters this past fall corroborate this data with increased numbers of young rams observed.

Hunter success in 2025 in areas 9 and 10 was 20% and 100%, respectively. In area 8, both licenses were deferred because of the Dollar Lake Fire. Hunter success in areas 9 & 10 is well within the historic range. It is important to note hunter success in area 9 in 2025 was not reflective of the number of rams available for harvest as hunters with this license had opportunity to harvest a mature ram, but were not physically capable or inexperienced with the area. The one ram harvested in area 9 was 10 years old and the average age of rams harvested in area 10 was the same. This in concert with a good number of rams observed (including numerous younger rams) in recent years indicates there is ample hunting opportunity in areas 9 and 10.

Given past hunter success, increased lamb survival and recruitment (based on classification data and observed increases in young rams), and continued availability of mature rams the 2026 recommended license allocation remains the same as in 2025. To best accommodate the 90/10 split, the number of licenses has been 5 each in areas 9 and 10 for a total of ten licenses the past three years. This allows for one nonresident hunter every year alternating between the two areas. Ten licenses will once again be available in areas 9 and 10 with the nonresident license in area 10. Due to the Dollar Lake Fire in 2025, both license holders in area 8 will carry over their licenses for the 2026 season. For the 2026 draw, area 8 will have 2 licenses available, 1 resident and 1 nonresident.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2023, and will not be reviewed again until 2028.

Population Modelling

Since 2018 there has been insufficient demographic data collected in this herd to produce an accurate population estimate. There is the possibility that if this population starts to grow and we're able to increase classification sample sizes using traditional or new methods (i.e., IR flights), a population model and estimates may become more useful and reliable.

Additional Management Data

In collaboration with the Eastern Shoshone & Northern Arapaho Tribal Fish and Game, the University of Wyoming and WGFD, implemented "test and remove" of bighorn sheep infected with *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (MOVI) in the Red Creek portion of the herd unit in 2021. Bighorn sheep that test positive for MOVI twice within a 14-month period with at least 2 months in between testing were considered "chronic carriers" and were removed. To date, 15 ewes have met this definition as a chronic carrier and all have been removed. Lambing season in 2022 was the first glimpse at reproduction/survival after removing 7 of the chronic carriers resulting in a lamb:ewe ratio of 47:100, which had not been observed for the previous seven years combined. During 2023 winter classifications, personnel counted 16 adult ewes, 5 lambs, 2 mature rams, 1 yearling ram, and 2 yearling ewes. In 2024, 7 adult ewes, 3 lambs, 2 rams, 1 yearling ram and 1 yearling ewe were observed. In 2025 field personnel observed 7 ewes, 1 lamb, 2 yearling rams, and 1 adult ram. The low sample sizes from the last two years of demographic data are likely due to unusually warm and dry weather conditions allowing BHS to stay at higher elevations.

In early February 2024, WGFD expanded test and remove to other sub-herds including Torrey rim, Sheep ridge, Sacagawea ridge, and Dinwoody ridge. While similar to the work being done in Red Creek, a carrier is defined as a ewe greater than 3 years old that test positive once. The reasons for using this 1-strike criteria are twofold: 1) captures are difficult and re-captures to test more than once are nearly impossible; and 2) more aggressive removal of positive animals should reduce the prevalence of disease and allow for quicker population recovery. Also, fewer capture events have made wilderness authorization for captures in the Wilderness easier from the USFS allowing for the expansion of test and remove in all occupied habitats. Recent research indicates younger ewes are more likely to test positive for MOVI but are more likely to clear it, thus the reason for the 3-year-old threshold. Additionally, any ewe with a lamb at its side will not be removed as it is likely these ewes are capable of clearing MOVI as evidenced by recruiting a lamb into the winter. We will attempt to retest these ewes to gather more data to assess the efficacy of

infection and will adapt the criteria, if necessary, as data is gathered. To date, 118 sheep have been tested, collared, and released. Of those, 37 tested positive for MOVI (8 being three years old or less and one with a lamb at side), resulting in 29 ewes removed since the implementation of test and remove.

2025 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Bighorn Sheep
PERIOD: 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026

HERD: BS615 - FERRIS-SEMINOE

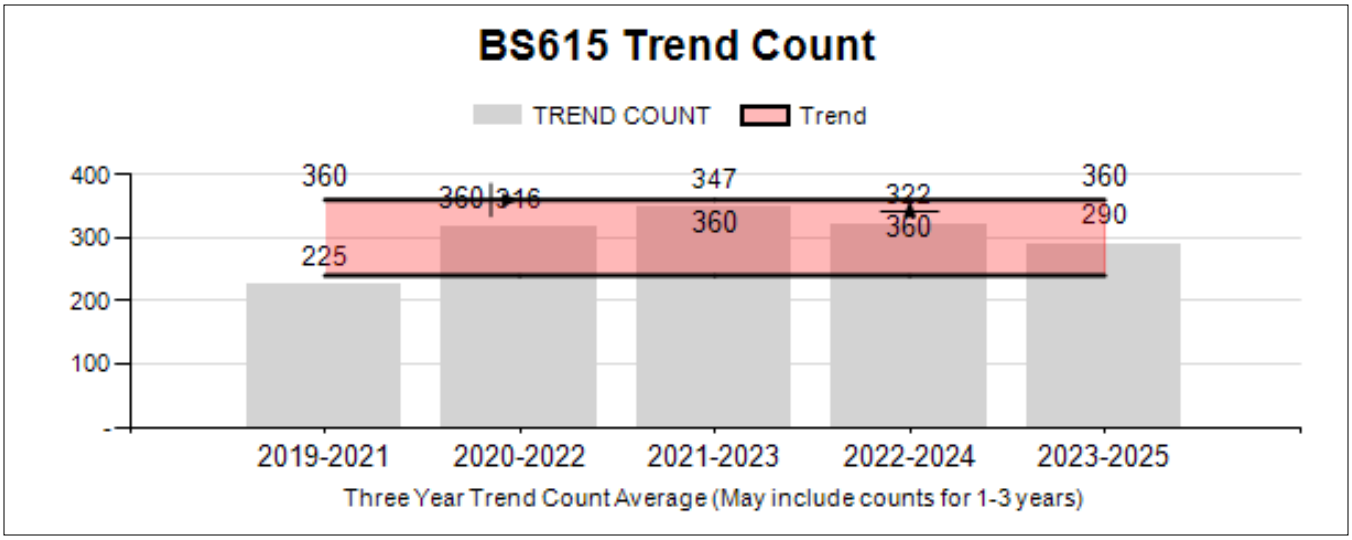
HUNT AREAS: 17, 26
PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2020 - 2024 Average	2025	2026 Proposed
Trend Count:	301	312	325
Harvest:	19	57	75
Hunters:	19	61	79
Hunter Success:	100%	93%	95%
Active Licenses:	19	61	79
Active License Success:	100%	93%	95%
Recreation Days:	107	269	450
Days Per Animal:	5.6	4.7	6
Males per 100 Females:	75	53	
Juveniles per 100 Females	50	54	

Trend Based Objective (± 20%)	300	(240 - 360)
Management Strategy:		Special
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:		4%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:		0

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

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


BS615 Trend Count
TREND COUNT
Trend
400
300
200
100
-
360
225
360
316
347
360
322
360
360
290
2019-2021
2020-2022
2021-2023
2022-2024
2023-2025
Three Year Trend Count Average (May include counts for 1-3 years)

2021 - 2025 Postseason Classification Summary

for Bighorn Sheep Herd BS615 - FERRIS-SEMINOE

		MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
Year	Post Pop	Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2021	0	0	96	96	37%	110	43%	52	20%	258	0	0	87	87	± 0	47	± 0	25
2022	0	0	130	130	32%	181	44%	98	24%	409	0	0	72	72	± 0	54	± 0	32
2023	0	0	109	109	30%	190	52%	66	18%	365	0	0	57	57	± 0	35	± 0	22
2024	0	4	56	60	31%	89	46%	43	22%	192	0	4	63	67	± 0	48	± 0	29
2025	0	15	65	80	26%	151	48%	81	26%	312	0	10	43	53	± 0	54	± 0	35

2026 Hunting Seasons
Ferris-Seminoe Bighorn Sheep (BS615)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
17	1			Sep. 1	Sep. 14	8	Any ram valid within the Sand Creek Drainage
17	1	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 15	Nov. 15		Any ram valid in the entire area
17	2			Sep. 1	Sep. 14	12	Any ram less than three-quarter (3/4) curl within the Sand Creek Drainage
17	2	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 15	Nov. 15		Any ram less than three-quarter (3/4) curl valid in the entire area
17	6	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Oct. 1	Nov. 15	35	Ewe or lamb
17	7	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Oct. 1	Nov. 15	15	Ewe or lamb valid within the Sand Creek drainage
26	1	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 1	Nov. 15	2	Any ram
26	2	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 1	Nov. 15	2	Any ram less than three-quarter (3/4) curl
26	6	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 15	Nov. 15	5	Ewe or lamb

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
The winter trend and classification counts in January 2026 resulted in 312 bighorn sheep counted; the 3-year average is 290 bighorn sheep. As is typical, the majority of these animals (88%) were in the Ferris and Seminoe Mountains in Area 17 and 12% were found in the Bennett Mountains in Area 26. While the number of sheep counted in 2025 was greater than in 2024, trend/classification counts were still lower than expected based on field personnel perceptions and hunter observations. This could be attributed to aerial captures in previous years making sheep more wary and difficult to detect during the trend count. In addition, conditions were less than optimal, with minimal/no snow cover and high winds.

Lamb production increased from 48:100 in 2024 to 54:100 in 2025, and is within the normal range expected for this herd. The ram:ewe ratio decreased from 67:100 in 2024 to 53:100 in 2025; however, managers believe this decrease could be partly attributed to poor flight conditions and the likelihood that some ram groups were missed during classifications, based on comparison of collar locations to where sheep were counted. Additionally, more ewes were counted during classifications than in the previous year, which may have reduced ratios. Despite lower ratios, a total of 80 rams were found during classifications, compared to 60 rams in 2024. The majority of rams appear to be younger, with a less than ¾ curl ram:ewe ratio of 36:100, and a greater than ¾ curl ram: ewe ratio of 17:100. This is likely the product of exceptional lamb production seen within this herd in most years.

Hunter success was 100% across Type 1 and 2 license types the entire herd unit. Type 6 license success was 93% and 100% in Area 17 and 26, respectively, while Type 7 success in Area 17 dropped to 70%. Average age of rams harvested with the Type 1 license remained relatively stable from 2023-2024 at 6.4 years, but increased in 2025 to 7.1 years. Average age of harvested Type 2 license rams was 3.1 years.

Precipitation was near normal in 2025, but was drier than average through the growing season, and was followed by above average precipitation in August and September, especially near the Seminoe Mountains. Following a warm and snow free fall, winter 2025-26 has been at or near the warmest and driest winter on record in more than five years. Temperatures have been well above average, and precipitation amounts through late-February 2026 are well below average in the Seminoe and Rawlins area. As such, winter severity this year was considered "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality. However, there is growing concern about how this will impact habitat conditions into the spring. Without substantial improvement in precipitation through the remainder of winter and into the upcoming growing season to replenish soil moisture and provide a boost to vegetation green up, there will likely be significant negative impacts to sheep during and after parturition. This would likely lead to reduced sheep numbers entering the 2026 hunting season.

License quotas were separated between the two hunt areas for the first time in 2021. In 2024, Type 2 licenses valid for rams less than ¾ curl were issued for the first time to allow continued ram harvest and minimize foraying by primarily younger rams, in an effort to protect this healthy herd from pathogens causing pneumonia. The Type 2 license also created increased hunting opportunity, while decreasing harvest pressure on older aged rams.

In Area 17, the utilization of Type 2 licenses is continued in 2026, with 12 Type 2 licenses (an increase of 4) issued. The number of Type 1 licenses (8) remains the same as in 2025. As a result of easy access to the Seminoe Mountains, the majority of harvest for Type 1 and 2 rams has come from the eastern end of the hunt area. In an effort to focus more harvest in in the Ferris Mountains, an extended season for Type 1 and 2 licenses was put in place. Archery dates will remain the same. Rifle season will begin on the same day as in past years (Sep. 1), but will be limited to the Sand Creek drainage for the first two weeks. The rifle season will then open up to the entire area, and remain open until Nov. 15. Historically, rams from the Ferris Mountains have been observed moving to the Granite Ridge / Sentinel Rocks area of the herd unit during the summer months, moving back to the Ferris Mountains during hunting season and for the winter months. However, recently hunters and field personnel have observed a growing population of sheep staying in the area year-round, likely as a result of a growing population in the Ferris portion of the herd. Increasing harvest pressure in the Ferris Mountains will help maintain the population at or below carrying capacity, thereby reducing the likelihood of forays to areas where sheep may come in contact with disease-causing pathogens. Additionally, any early harvest achieved in the Ferris Mountains may help reduce hunter crowding issues later on in the season.

Area 26 sheep have shown a propensity for wandering near domestic allotments; as such, managers utilized 2 Type 1 and 2 Type 2 licenses in 2026 (an increase of 1 and 2, respectively) to increase male harvest in an effort to reduce wandering events. Managers utilized an extended season for Type 1 and 2 licenses in Area 26, in an effort to provide additional harvest opportunity later. Archery dates will remain the same, while rifle seasons will run from Sep. 1-Nov. 15; licenses will be valid for the entire area during the entirety of the season. License opportunity remains somewhat conservative due to the reduced availability of mature rams as compared to the rest of the herd unit; additionally, the availability of mature rams in 2026 in Area 26 could be impacted by Department Chapter 56 removals due to commingling and

disease transmission concerns in 2023-2025. However, at this point, trend count data show there are ample numbers of young and mature rams across the herd to support these quotas and based on 2025 draw odds there is a lot of interest in both license types. In fact, there were 124 applicants vying for the available Type 2 licenses in 2024 and it took at least 18 preference points to draw one.

With the population slightly above objective and lamb production and survival remaining high, harvest of ewes continues to be necessary. The healthy lamb production and survival seen in this herd is largely due to available suitable habitats for these well adapted bighorn sheep and also to major habitat treatments in the past decade. To maintain the high productivity of this herd, bighorn sheep numbers need to be managed to maintain the range health of those habitats. Additionally, the greatest threat to this herd is the possibility of disease transfer from domestic animals outside the herd unit. To address this threat, it is necessary to keep bighorn sheep numbers at a healthy density to minimize the likelihood of bighorn sheep (both rams and ewes) dispersing or wandering to new ranges where dangerous pathogens could be contracted. To prevent overharvest of the small proportion of the population in Area 26, only five Type 6 ewe/lamb licenses were issued. Thirty-five licenses were available as Type 6 licenses valid for all of Area 17. As a result of the easy access to the Seminoe Mountains, it is expected most of these will be filled near the Seminoe Road at the eastern edge of the area. To ensure that some ewe harvest comes off sheep ranges on the eastern end of the Ferris Mountains, 15 Type 7 ewe/lamb licenses were also issued for Area 17, valid only in the Sand Creek drainage. Archery season dates remain the same for ewe licenses, while rifle dates are adjusted to match season changes in Type 1 and 2 licenses for each respective area.

Increased harvest across all license types is justified given high levels of hunter success, consistent lamb production and recruitment, minimal winter mortality, and a continued effort to prevent disease in the herd. Additionally, there are clearly enough bighorn sheep to support increased harvest for rams and ewes considering trend count data and ratios.

Management Objective Review

The objective and management strategy for the Ferris-Seminoe Bighorn Sheep Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2025, and will not be reviewed again until 2030.

Population Modeling

An exploratory IPM was generated for this herd using the default structure for bighorn sheep, i.e. constant adult survival, time-varying reproduction and juvenile survival. Based on visual comparison of effort variables, days / harvest was selected as the variable most predictably related to annual harvest. The observed data for the IPM included nine years of harvest and ratio data; however, IPM estimates would likely be better with increased data collection, such as a “sightability” estimate. IPM convergence was good, with most Rhat values around 1.1. The total post-season abundance estimate for 2025 was 342 sheep (CL 250-485), which seems reasonable. Further evaluation of the IPM’s usability will continue, especially once a sightability estimate is attained.

Additional Management Data

In January 2026, Department personnel utilized a helicopter crew to locate and capture 9 bighorn sheep. Sheep were sampled for diseases and equipped with GPS collars on site. The majority of collars were allocated to younger rams that are more prone to long-distance forays; however, some older rams and ewes were also collared in an effort to capture movements of the herd as a whole. Managers will attempt to put out an additional ~20 GPS transmitters during the remainder of the 2025-26 capture season,

dependent on weather and helicopter / crew availability. GPS data will be used to monitor movements to ensure that sheep do not wander outside of the herd unit and risk contraction and transmission of pathogens known to cause diseases, as well as to evaluate distribution and habitat utilization of bighorn sheep across the herd. Managers hope to continue monitoring efforts into the future, with funding requests submitted to maintain current monitoring levels into 2027 and beyond.

Additionally, managers are in the process of securing funding to accomplish a focused aerial survey effort using established sightability-correction methods to assess current population size, herd composition, and potential changes in sub-herd distribution. Sightability models offer managers the ability to utilize statistical models to correct for animals missed during aerial counts, allowing for more accurate wildlife population estimates. Following the 2025-26 capture season, approximately 20% of the Ferris-Seminoe population will be monitored using GPS transmitters. As a result of these ongoing monitoring efforts, WGFD wildlife managers and members of the Science, Research, and Analytical Support Unit have recognized the unique opportunity to develop a sightability model specific to Wyoming bighorn sheep and their habitats. Conducting sightability trials utilizing the collars deployed in the Ferris-Seminoe herd would either confirm the validity of using existing models in Wyoming herds, or provide a more applicable alternative to assess population abundance and density. This project will provide updated and more reliable population estimates for the Ferris-Seminoe bighorn sheep herd, ensuring that management decisions (such as those related to license allocation strategies or wandering movements) are based on the best available data. Managers will attempt to conduct the sightability survey and trials in summer 2026.