i

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: PR615 - RED DESERT

HUNT AREAS: 60-61, 64

PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2019 - 2023 Average	**2024**	**2025 Proposed**
Population:	8,551	7,231	6,914
Harvest:	254	145	230
Hunters:	315	195	270
Hunter Success:	81%	74%	85 %
Active Licenses:	315	195	270
Active License Success:	81%	74%	85 %
Recreation Days:	1,067	772	850
Days Per Animal:	4.2	5.3	3.7
Males per 100 Females	58	54	
Juveniles per 100 Females	50	75	

Population Objective (± 20%) :   15000   (12000 - 18000)

Management Strategy: Special

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -51.8%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 7

Model Date: 05/15/2025

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:	8%	8%
Proposed change in post-season population:	9%	-4%

Population Size - Postseason

Legend: PR615 - POPULATION | Objective Range

Values: 2020: 7650, 2021: 9600, 2022: 10800, 2023: 6156, 2024: 7231
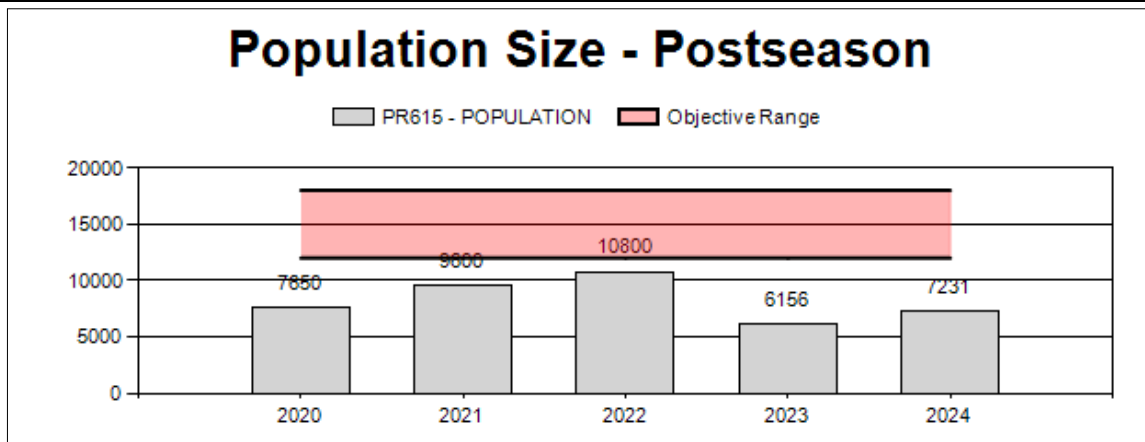
2019 - 2024 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR615 - RED DESERT

Year	Pre Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	8,770	109	601	710	26%	1,335	50%	648	24%	2,693	1,483	8	45	53	± 3	49	± 3	32
2020	7,950	124	670	794	28%	1,431	50%	637	22%	2,862	1,564	9	47	55	± 3	45	± 3	29
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	7,876	103	405	508	23%	945	44%	713	33%	2,166	0	11	43	54	± 4	75	± 5	49

2025 Hunting Seasons
Red Desert Pronghorn (PR615)

| Hunt Area | Type | Archery Dates | | Season Dates | | Quota | Limitations |
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
60	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	50	Any antelope
61	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 12	Sep. 13	Oct. 31	125	Any antelope
64	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	100	Any antelope

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 79% Satisfied, 11% Neutral, 10% 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 2024 increased by 21%. The buck:doe ratio increased slightly from 50:100 in 2023 to 54:100 in 2024, but was still well below the minimum for special management criterion across the herd unit and in Areas 60 and 64; in Area 61, the buck:doe ratio has remained within special management range since 2021, and was 64:100 in 2024. Yearlings increased by ~7%, which was unexpected given the extraordinarily low fawn:doe ratio of 29:100 in 2023. Fawn production was significantly improved in 2024 to 75:100, the highest recorded since 1987. Fawn:doe ratios were similar between Areas 60 and 61 at 72:100, and greatest in Area 64 at 82:100.

Hunter success declined to 74% in 2024, the lowest ever recorded. This is largely attributed to poor hunter success in Area 60 specifically (66% success). Despite reduced hunter success, hunter satisfaction increased to 79%, and dissatisfaction remained relatively stable at 10%. The increase in hunter satisfaction is somewhat surprising given the reduced pronghorn numbers after the most recent harsh winter(s).

Winter severity this year was considered "normal" or "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality or a significant impact to overall population numbers.

With the herd over 50% below objective and still recovering from previous hard winters, no doe/fawn harvest is warranted. Total buck license quotas were reduced by 50% in 2023, and were maintained in the 2024 season. The same quota is used in 2025 for Areas 60 and 64. Due to a sustained buck:doe ratio in Area 61 prior to and following the harsh 2022-23 winter, Type 1 licenses are increased to 125 in an effort to provide more opportunity for hunters. This results in

an expected harvest of ~220 bucks, representing 8% of the estimated pre-hunt buck population. This harvest rate is appropriate given poor hunter success, which is attributed to a dramatic loss of overall pronghorn and a reduced number of larger horned bucks. 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, maintaining a reasonable number of mature bucks in the population while providing opportunity 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.

Management Objective Review
The objective and management strategy for the Red Desert Pronghorn Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2020. The current population is well below objective, largely as a result of several harsh and extreme winters; this herd does however have the potential for growth (barring similar winters), and based on previous estimates has been at or above objective as recently as 2018. Following an internal evaluation, the current objective and special management strategy will be maintained for the next five years.

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, active licenses was selected as the variable 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 well 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 (Appendix A):

	2016	**2020**	**2023**
LT Result	12,285 (CL 8,141 - 16,428)	7,495 (CL 4,574 - 10,415)	6,777 (CL 5,749 - 7,804)
IPM Estimate	10,102 (CL 9,298 - 10,812)	9,146 (CL 8,385 - 9,857)	6,634 (CL 6,012 - 7,301)

The total post-season abundance estimate for 2024 was 7,231 pronghorn (CL 6,203-8,133), which aligns with the most recent LT estimate, as well as manager and stakeholder perceptions that this herd suffered significant losses following several harsh winters. This model predicts a herd size 52% below objective.

Additional Management Data
Approximately 9% percent of the buck harvest was checked and measured in 2024. Average horn length increased slightly from 12.1" in 2023 to 13.1" in 2024. The longest horn measured in 2024 was 15.9" compared to 15.2" the year before (Figure 1). In 2024, 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.
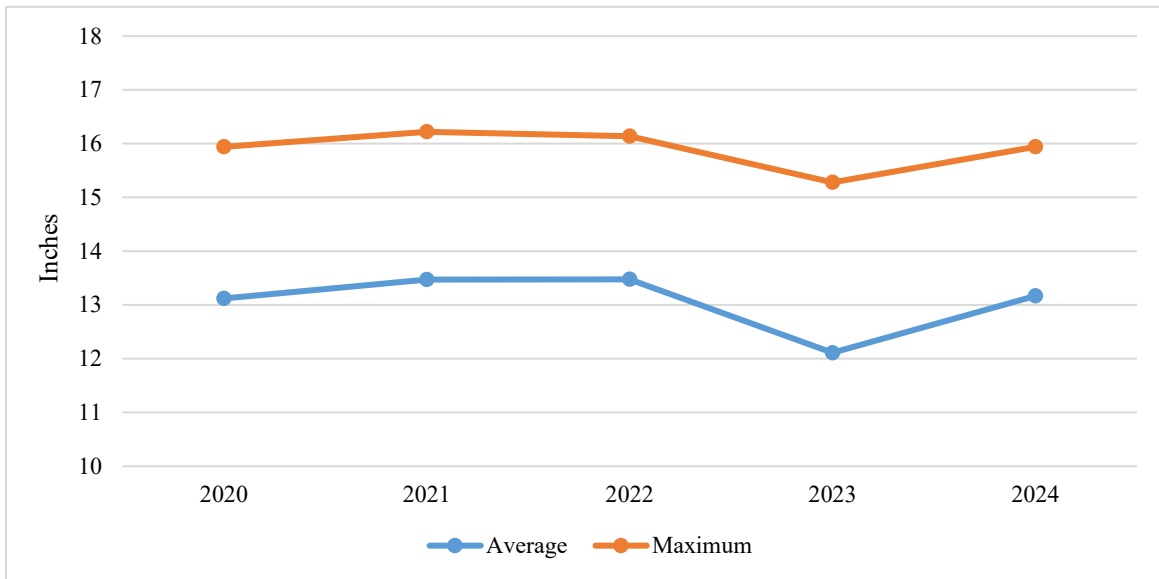
Figure 2. Horn lengths of harvested bucks checked from the Red Desert Pronghorn Herd compared to statewide harvest checks in 2024.
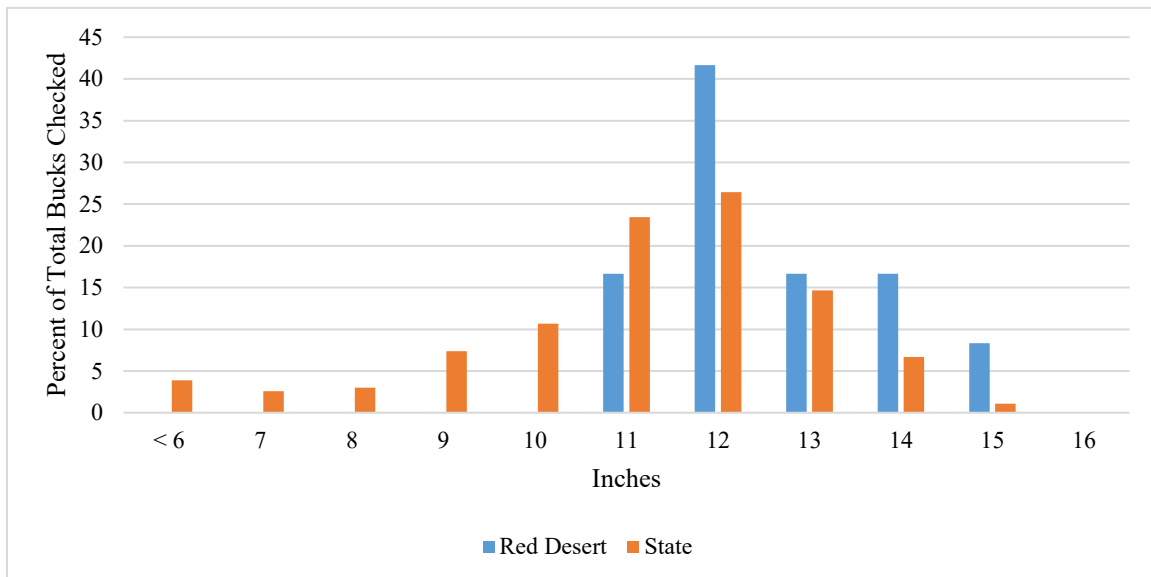
Appendix A. PR615 Line Transect Results

2023 PR615 - RED DESERT Pronghorn Line-Transect Summary

Survey Dates:	6/6/2024 – 6/7/2024
Survey Cost:	$4,461.00
Flight Service:	WYOMING AERO PHOTO (Jamie Burgess, Pilot)
Aircraft:	CESSNA 182
Observers:	Stan Harter (primary observer), Ashley Umphlett (training)

Weather Conditions:

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

Transect Limits:	108° 42' to 107° 18'
Transect Direction:	North/South
Transect Interval (Minutes of Longitude):	4
Transect Length: (Mi.):	1,200
Transect Altitude (AGL):	300 ft.

Occupied Habitat (mi^2):	3,380
Density Estimate (Animals/mi^2 with Confidence Intervals):	2.01 (1.72 - 2.33)
Population Estimate (with Confidence Intervals):	6,777 (5,824 - 7,886)

Red Desert Antelope (PR615)
Line Transect Survey

Legend

- Pronghorn Antelope Detections
- Flown Transects
- Antelope Hunt Area Boundaries
- Red Desert Herd Unit Boundary

0   3   6   12 Miles

GRANITE MOUNTAIN

GREEN MOUNTAINS

10026 ft

GREAT DIVIDE BASIN

LOPE HILLS

Rawlins

Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Manage
USFWS, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, ©
contributors, and the GIS US

WYOMING GAME & FISH DEPARTMENT

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn   PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: PR630 - IRON SPRINGS

HUNT AREAS: 52, 56, 108   PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2019 - 2023 Average	**2024**	**2025 Proposed**
Population:	7,208	4,855	4,634
Harvest:	555	170	170
Hunters:	589	197	197
Hunter Success:	94%	86%	86%
Active Licenses:	672	197	197
Active License Success:	83%	86%	86%
Recreation Days:	2,083	615	615
Days Per Animal:	3.8	3.6	3.6
Males per 100 Females	50	51	
Juveniles per 100 Females	42	77	

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

Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-59.5%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	5
Model Date:	2/12/2024

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:	12%	12%
Proposed change in post-season population:	9%	-5%

Population Size - Postseason

PR630 - POPULATION   Objective Range

2020: 6975
2021: 7400
2022: 6265
2023: 3750
2024: 4855
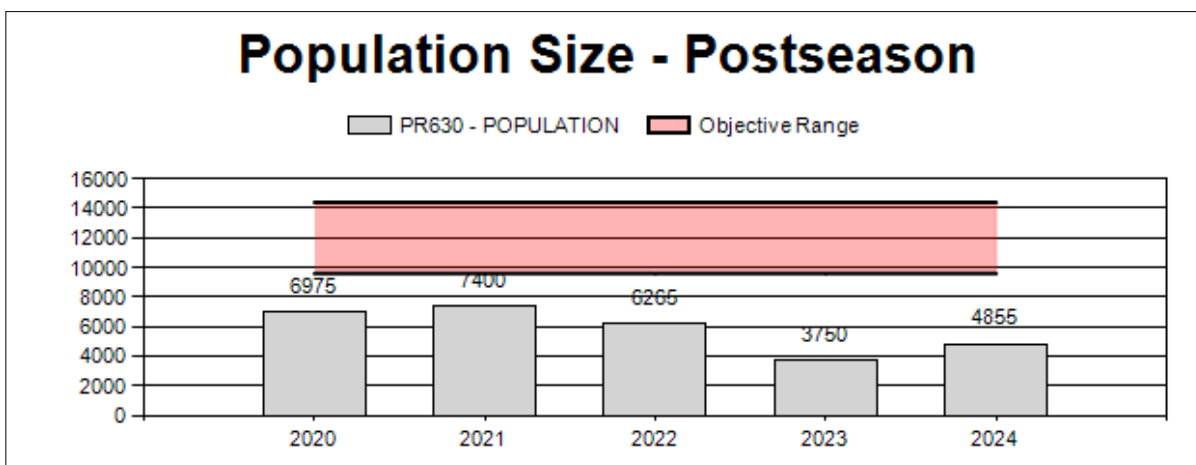
2019 - 2024 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR630 - IRON SPRINGS

Year	Pre Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	12,650	131	641	772	26%	1,594	55%	558	19%	2,924	0	8	40	48	± 3	35	± 2	24
2020	7,820	52	410	462	26%	945	52%	393	22%	1,800	0	6	43	49	± 4	42	± 4	28
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 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	75	Any antelope
52	2	Aug. 15	Sep. 15	Sep. 16	Nov. 14	75	Any antelope valid south of North Spring Creek
56	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	25	Any antelope
108	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	25	Any antelope

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 80% Satisfied, 17% Neutral, 3% 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 increased slightly in 2024, but was still only 30% of the sample collected in 2018. An increase in sample size was noted in Areas 52 and 56 (despite lack of access to the majority of the hunt area), but sample size decreased in Area 108, yielding another all-time low. For the herd as a whole, the buck:doe ratio remained at 51:100, and is within the recreation management criteria. In Area 52 specifically, the buck:doe ratio was 67:100 in the northern, more accessible portion of the hunt area, as compared to 37:100 in the southern portion. This indicates that Type 2 licenses directing pressure to the southern portion of the area where there is large blocks of private (often irrigated) land has been largely successful in reducing an inflated buck:doe ratio. The fawn:doe ratio increased across all three hunt areas, and was 77:100 for the herd unit.

Hunter success increased to 86% in 2024. Buck hunters in the southern portion of Area 52 had higher success (96%) than those with Type 1 licenses (70%), despite greater access in the northern portion of the area. In 2024, hunter effort was the greatest in Area 108 at 7.9 days/harvest, which was an increase from 6.1 days/harvest in 2023. For the entire herd unit, effort increased only slightly from 3.5 days/harvest in 2023 to 3.6 days/harvest in 2024. Hunter satisfaction increased slightly to 80%, and concurrently, dissatisfaction decreased to 3%.

Winter severity in 2023-24 and 2024-25 were considered "normal" or "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality or a significant impact to overall population. With the herd almost 60% below objective and still recovering from previous harsh winters, no doe/fawn harvest is warranted. Total license quotas were cut by 50 in 2024, and the same quota is used in

2025. Expected harvest in 2025 is ~170 bucks, representing ~12% of the pre-hunt buck population. Given the less than ideal Type 1 harvest in Area 52 specifically (an area that generally provides the majority of harvest across the herd unit), as well as a 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 2020. The current population is well below objective, largely as a result of several harsh and extreme winters; this herd does however have the potential for growth (barring similar winters), and based on previous estimates has been at or above objective as recently as 2019. Following an internal evaluation, the current objective and recreational management strategy will be maintained for the next five years.

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, days / harvest was selected as the variable most predictably related to annual harvest. With these settings, the observed data included 25 years of harvest and ratio data, along with abundance estimates from five 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 well with observed data for this herd. IPM estimates also aligned with confidence intervals for four of five LT estimates, including the most recent surveys from 2021 and 2017:

	2017	**2021**
LT Result	13,381 (CL 9,623 - 17,138)	5,338 (CL 3,687 - 6,988)
IPM Estimate	13,218 (CL 12,175 - 14,164)	7,104 (CL 6,434 - 7,742)

The total post-season abundance estimate for 2024 was 4,855 pronghorn (CL 3,729-5,707), and agrees with perceptions of managers and stakeholders that the herd was significantly impacted by previous harsh winters. This model predicts a herd size 59.5% below objective.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: PR631 - WIND RIVER

HUNT AREAS: 84

PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Hunter Satisfaction Percent	85%	88%	89%
Landowner Satisfaction Percent	0%	0%	0%
Harvest:	128	148	150
Hunters:	137	157	162
Hunter Success:	93%	94%	93 %
Active Licenses:	166	163	165
Active License Success:	77%	91%	91 %
Recreation Days:	766	600	575
Days Per Animal:	6.0	4.1	3.8
Males per 100 Females:	41	36	
Juveniles per 100 Females	44	60	

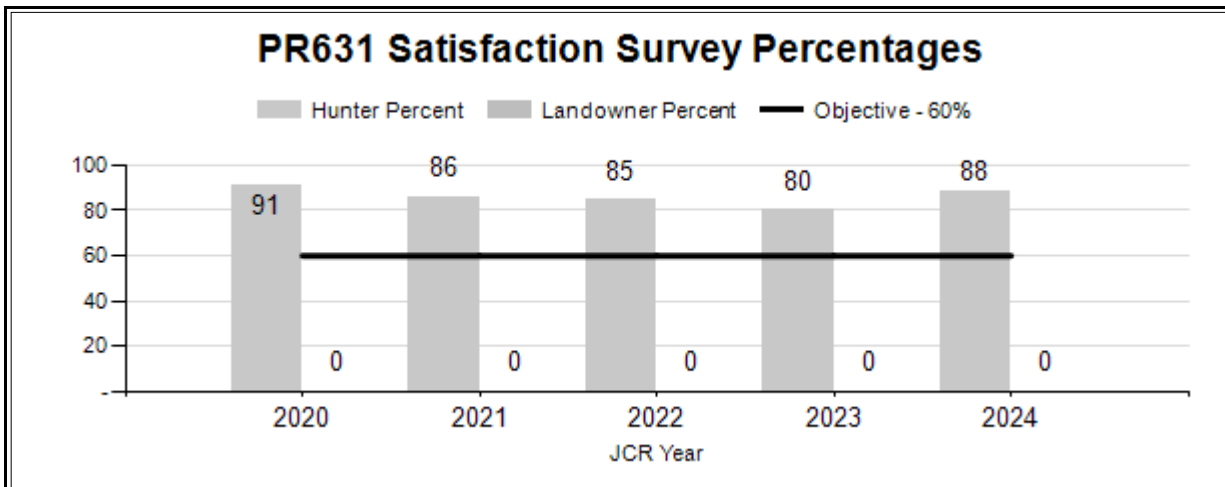|	
Satisfaction Based Objective	60%
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	N/A%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	11

PR631 Satisfaction Survey Percentages

2019 - 2024 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR631 - WIND RIVER

Year	Pre Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	0	6	36	42	15%	159	58%	73	27%	274	0	4	23	26	± 0	46	± 0	36
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 Hunting Seasons
Wind River Antelope
(PR631)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
84	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	150	Any antelope
84	6	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	25	Doe or fawn

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 88% Satisfied, 9% Neutral, 3% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
The hunting season in area 84 has remained unchanged for the past several years, however in 2024 we increased the Type 1 licenses and reduced the Type 6 licenses. Anecdotal evidence indicates the population has fluctuated year to year based on environmental factors. This 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 are small and vary year to year. In addition, there is believed to be a high rate of interchange with the Wind River Reservation. These factors preclude modeling the population. Instead the herd has a hunter satisfaction objective with the goal to have 60% of hunters satisfied. This goal has been met over the past ten years with an average of 86% since 2015.

While classification sample sizes have fluctuated over the years the total number of antelope classified has remained relatively stable the last five years. In 2023 the buck:doe ratios were 65:100, entering into the range for special management and reinforcing the 2024 increase of Type 1 licenses. However, in 2024 the buck:doe ratio decreased to 29:100. Fawn production had declined in past years with 36:100 in 2023, the lowest in the last five years, and 39:100 in 2022; inversely, in 2024 the fawn:doe ratio almost doubled to 60:100. In 2024 hunter success for both the Type 1 and Type 6 licenses (90% & 95%, respectively) increased from 2023 (78% & 70%, respectively).

While the buck:doe ratio declined in 2024, fawn recruitment, hunter success, and hunter satisfaction increased. Given the improvement in recruitment, hunter success, and hunter satisfaction there are no changes to the 2025 hunting season.

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.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn   PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: PR632 - BEAVER RIM

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

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	18,897	21,626	22,493
Harvest:	1,494	848	850
Hunters:	1,607	958	935
Hunter Success:	93%	89%	91%
Active Licenses:	1,722	973	940
Active License Success:	87%	87%	90%
Recreation Days:	4,666	2,938	3,000
Days Per Animal:	3.1	3.5	3.5
Males per 100 Females	50	51	
Juveniles per 100 Females	47	66	

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:	10
Model Date:	2/14/2025

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:	16%	16%
Proposed change in post-season population:	+15%	+4%

Population Size - Postseason

Legend: ▨ PR632 - POPULATION   ▭ Objective Range

Values by year: 18009 (2019), 18341 (2020), 19135 (2021), 20189 (2022), 18812 (2023), 21626 (2024)
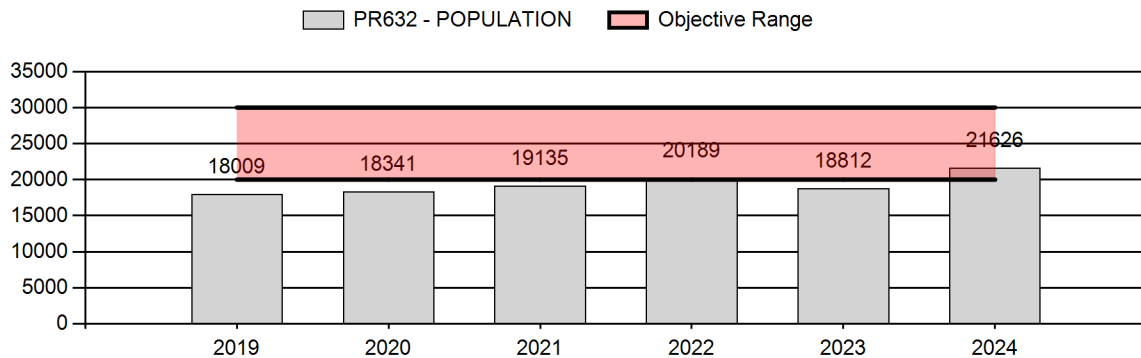
2019 - 2024 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR632 - BEAVER RIM

Year	Pre Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	0	554	2,106	2,660	25%	5,290	51%	2,487	24%	10,437	1,511	10	40	50	± 2	47	± 1	31
2020	0	306	1,543	1,849	29%	3,178	50%	1,377	22%	6,404	1,851	10	49	58	± 2	43	± 2	27
2021	0	199	1,578	1,777	25%	3,671	51%	1,697	24%	7,145	0	5	43	48	± 2	46	± 2	31
2022	0	343	1,066	1,409	23%	3,000	48%	1,800	29%	6,209	0	11	36	47	± 2	60	± 3	41
2023	0	416	1,202	1,618	25%	3,501	53%	1,478	22%	6,597	0	12	34	46	± 2	42	± 2	29
2024	23,494	273	1,040	1,313	23%	2,591	46%	1,709	30%	5,613	0	11	40	51	± 2	66	± 3	44

2025 Hunting Seasons
Beaver Rim Pronghorn (PR632)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
65	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	100	Any antelope
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. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	100	Any antelope
67	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	175	Any antelope
68	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	200	Any antelope
69	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 14	Sep. 15	Oct. 31	75	Any antelope
74	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	150	Any antelope
106	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	100	Any antelope

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 84.3% Satisfied, 10.6% Neutral, 5.1% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
The Beaver Rim Pronghorn herd has experienced fluctuations over the past 20 years that have been influenced by weather extremes. Most recently, the severe winter of 2022-23 significantly affected fawn survival and subsequent recruitment. This did not differ greatly from the effects of drought experienced in 2020 and declines in fawn survival and yearling buck recruitment that followed. The population is growing after both of these weather extremes. The Integrated Population Model (IPM) for Beaver Rim Pronghorn shows an increase of 15% in 2024 to 21,626 pronghorn, placing the population 13.5% below objective (25,000). According to the IPM model, this herd unit is projected to increase by 4% to a post-season population of around 22,500 pronghorn in 2025.

Pre-season ground classification surveys were completed in August and September 2024, with the lowest sample size (5,613) since 2004. These surveys showed the fawn/doe ratio increased to 66J/100F and the total buck/doe ratio also rose to 51M/100F in 2024. This was only the second time in the last six years the fawn/doe ratio was above 60J/100F and was 40% above the previous 5-year average. The increase in the buck/doe ratio is encouraging, but it remained 15% below the lower end of the special management range of 60-70 M/100F. The yearling buck/doe ratio of 11YM/100F in 2024 was just below the 2023 ratio, which was surprising since the 2023 fawn/doe ratio was the lowest in 20 years. Increases in both age and sex ratios are exaggerated by counting 910 fewer adult does than in the 2023 survey. However, the number of fawns observed increased by 16% in 2024, which would indicate this herd is recovering from the impacts of the severe winter in 2022-23.

A total of 848 pronghorn were harvested in 2024, with minimal doe/fawn harvest occurring primarily in limited portions of Hunt Areas 65 and 66 for hayfield damage prevention. For the first time, the 2024 harvest report also includes surveys sent to a portion of the 72 hunters who participated in the Governor's One Shot Antelope Hunt (including Past Shooters) with licenses issued in addition to the standard quota in regulations. In addition to those licenses, there were other licenses issued above the regulation quota, placing the total number of licenses sold at 998 vs. the quota of 900 set by the Commission. Hunter participation as indicated by the percentage of active licenses compared to total licenses sold was only 87% in 2023, but returned to near normal in 2024. Active license success in 2024 was 87% and equaled the previous 5-year and long term average. The 2025 hunting season remains conservative with no change in license numbers, as this population continues to recover following the winter of 2022-23, for buck/doe ratios to increase toward the special management range, and for the population to remain near objective. Given, continued poor fawn productivity, doe/fawn harvest will remain low, continuing with Hunt Area 65 Type 7 licenses to continue addressing localized damage concerns and with minor doe/fawn harvest with Type 1 licenses. The other 6 hunt areas will not have doe/fawn licenses, as the population is 13.5% below objective. Until this population continues to recover from the winter of 2022-2023, the total buck/doe ratio is expected to remain below the low end of the special management criteria, with model projections showing a modest increase to 52M/100F in 2025.

The Beaver Rim pronghorn herd unit received above average precipitation in 2022 and 2023, and the much needed extra precipitation was beneficial to habitat growth following a few years of drought. However, 2024 was much drier than average, especially through the growing season. Following a warm and almost snow free early fall, most areas received a good amount of snow in late-October, which mostly melted in November. Then January 2025 snows fell with above average amounts in the Lander area and near average in Jeffrey City, and was again followed by a warm spell in early February that melted the snow off almost entirely at lower elevations allowing pronghorn to range widely and has kept key vegetation available to pronghorn throughout the majority of their winter ranges. Snowpack in the Wind River Mountains is at or above average in late-February, but precipitation will be needed throughout the upcoming growing season to replenish soil moisture and provide a boost to vegetation green up in pronghorn habitat. Winter 2024-25 mortality has likely minimal in most of the Beaver Rim herd unit.

In 2025, no changes were made to Type 1 license quotas in all 7 hunt areas in response to lower buck/doe ratios, and expected low yearling buck recruitment. The IPM model projects the 2025 hunting season should result in buck harvest about 16% of the pre-season bucks. The IPM model indicates buck harvest has averaged 16% of the males ≥1 year old over the last 3 years. Doe/fawn licenses remain only to address localized damage concerns in localized portions of Hunt Areas 65 and 66, with no Type 7 quota change in 2025.

Management Objective Review
The objective and management strategy for the Beaver Rim Pronghorn Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2015. For the 2025 objective review, the current objective and special management strategy will be maintained for the next five years following an internal evaluation.

Population Modeling

The post-season abundance estimate of 21,626 pronghorn in 2024 (CL = 19,663 to 23,593) is 13.5% below objective (25,000). The IPM model was run from 2017 through 2026 with maximum iterations, burn-in rate, and thinning rates, and produces Rhat values of 1.03 for the point estimate and 1.1 for the upper confidence interval, both of which indicate convergence is likely in the IPM. A line-transect (LT) survey conducted in June 2024 at the end of biological year 2023 produced an end-of-year estimate of 20,053 pronghorn (CL = 18,364 to 21,897) via a "pooled" analysis using a newer hierarchical version of the distance-sampling statistical model available in Program R package unmarked, which combined data from multiple LT surveys, while still allowing for a density estimate specific to the Beaver Rim herd unit. The pooled analysis results were quite different from single herd analysis conducted by the Science, Research, and Analytical (SRA) section using Program R and the traditional Program Distance analysis conducted by Lander Region personnel. The pooled analysis 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. While this is not normally acceptable, it is the best result derived from several attempts to run the model for varying durations. It also seems reasonable, since this population has faced weather extremes of drought in 4 of the last 7 years as well as the severe winter of 2022-2023.

The abundance estimates in the IPM for Beaver Rim pronghorn track reasonably well with end-of-bioyear abundance estimates falling within or near the confidence intervals for the line-transect (LT) estimate in 2020, but just below the estimate in 2023. The post-season abundance estimates also reflect observed trends through recent years.

End-of-Bioyear Abundance	2020	2023
LT Estimate	16,761 (CL 12,692 - 20,830)	20,053 (CL 18,289 - 21,817)
IPM Estimate	17,194 (CL 15,999 - 18,615)	17,309 (CL 15,978 - 18,626)

According to the IPM model, this herd unit is projected to increase by 4% to a post-season population of around 22,500 pronghorn in 2025.

2023 PR632 - BEAVER RIM Pronghorn Line-Transect Summary

Survey Dates: 6/2/2024 - 6/4/2024

Survey Cost: $ 5,992.50

Flight Service: WYOMING AERO PHOTO (Jamie Burgess, Pilot)

Aircraft: CESSNA 182

Observers: Stan Harter, Zach Gregory

Weather Conditions:

Temperature (Degrees Fahrenheit): ~60º

Cloud Cover (%): 0

Wind Speed (MPH): 0 - 15

Transect Limits: -108º 46.5' to -106º 41.5'

Transect Direction: North/South

Transect Interval (Minutes of Longitude): 4

Transect Length: (Mi.): 1,100

Transect Altitude (AGL): 300 ft.

Occupied Habitat (mi²): 3,670

Density Estimate (Animals/mi² with Confidence Intervals): 5.46 (5.00 - 5.97)

Population Estimate (with Confidence Intervals): 20,053 (18,364 - 21,897)

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: PR634 - BADWATER

HUNT AREAS: 75

PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

	2019 - 2023 Average	**2024**	**2025 Proposed**
Population:	3,888	2,785	2,788
Harvest:	519	226	215
Hunters:	543	251	245
Hunter Success:	96%	90%	88%
Active Licenses:	586	266	235
Active License Success:	89%	85%	91%
Recreation Days:	1,543	738	645
Days Per Animal:	3.0	3.3	3
Males per 100 Females	55	54	
Juveniles per 100 Females	51	56	

Population Objective (± 20%) : 3000 (2400 - 3600)

Management Strategy: Recreational

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -7.2%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 2

Model Date: 02/06/2025

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

	JCR Year	**Proposed**
Females ≥ 1 year old:	6%	0%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	19%	19%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-2%	0%

Population Size - Postseason

Legend: PR634 - POPULATION, Objective Range

Year	Population
2020	4993
2021	4048
2022	3473
2023	2844
2024	2785
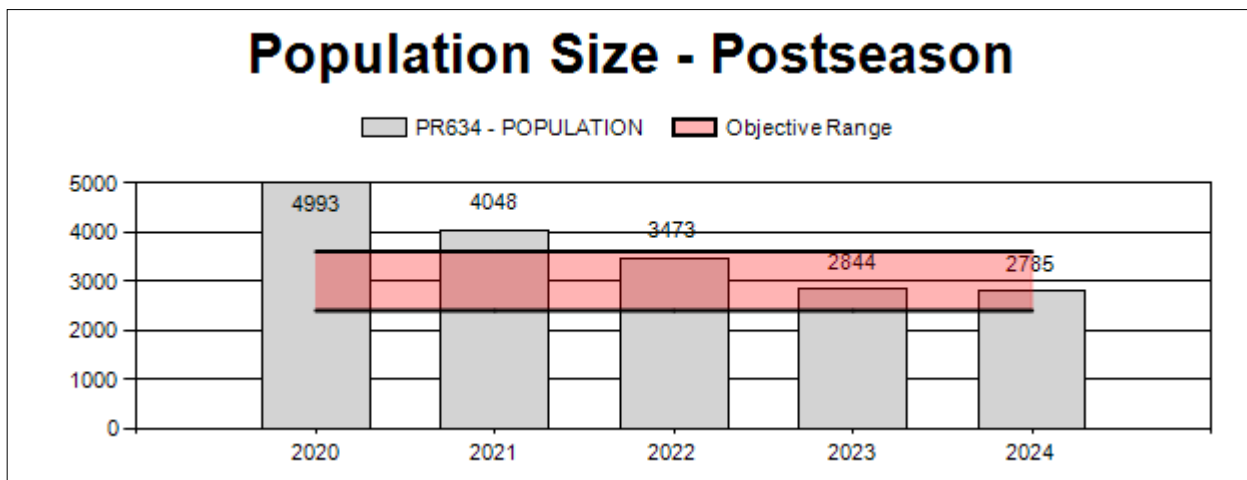
2019 - 2024 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR634 - BADWATER

Year	Pre Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	5,212	95	222	317	28%	541	48%	276	24%	1,134	1,489	18	41	59	± 6	51	± 5	32
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 Hunting Seasons Badwater
Antelope (PR634)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
75	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	250	Any antelope

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 88% Satisfied, 9% Neutral, 3% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
The Badwater Antelope herd has been slowly declining toward its objective for the last four years mainly due to increased harvest and low fawn recruitment but has stabilized near the objective of 3,000 pronghorn the last two years. The 2022- 2023 winter was quite harsh with continual sub-zero temperatures and record amounts of snowfall. While we did see an increase in the yearling buck:doe ratio the following year, fawn recruitment declined from the previous year. In 2024 the fawn ratio increased slightly to 56:100 from 43:100 in 2023 and is above the five year average of 51:100. The overall buck:doe ratio decreased slightly in 2024 to 54:100 from 57:100 in 2023 but identical to the five year average (54:100). The Type 1 harvest success in 2024 was 85%, similar to the previous two years (86% & 85%, respectively). Hunter's effort with the Type 1 license increased slightly from 2.9 days/harvest in 2023 to 3.4 in 2024, similar to the five year average (3.2 days/harvest). Despite a slight increase in hunter effort, hunters were still able to find a buck to harvest in a reasonable amount of time. The population model predicts another year of decline putting this herd slightly below the objective of 3,000 pronghorn. The model also predicts a harvest of 19% of the preseason bucks with a three year average of 19%. Given this population is likely to decline in 2025 as a result of continued poor fawn production, this level of harvest seems appropriate to maintain current buck numbers and hunter success which has been moderate at 85% on average the past 3 years. Therefore, there are no changes to the Type 1 licenses. The Type 6 licenses, however, have been eliminated to moderate the decline in the population in response to poor fawn recruitment. This should stabilize the population within ±20% of the objective.

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 total postseason population estimate for 2024 was 2,785 (CL = 2,092 – 3,307) pronghorn. This represents about a 2% 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 decline slightly in 2025 but remain within 20% of the objective of 3,000 pronghorn.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: PR635 - PROJECT

HUNT AREAS: 97, 117

PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Hunter Satisfaction Percent	86%	88%	90%
Landowner Satisfaction Percent	59%	60%	60%
Harvest:	348	95	110
Hunters:	339	110	120
Hunter Success:	103%	86%	92%
Active Licenses:	409	119	125
Active License Success:	85%	80%	88%
Recreation Days:	1,382	356	420
Days Per Animal:	4.0	3.7	3.8
Males per 100 Females:	30	37	
Juveniles per 100 Females	37	38	

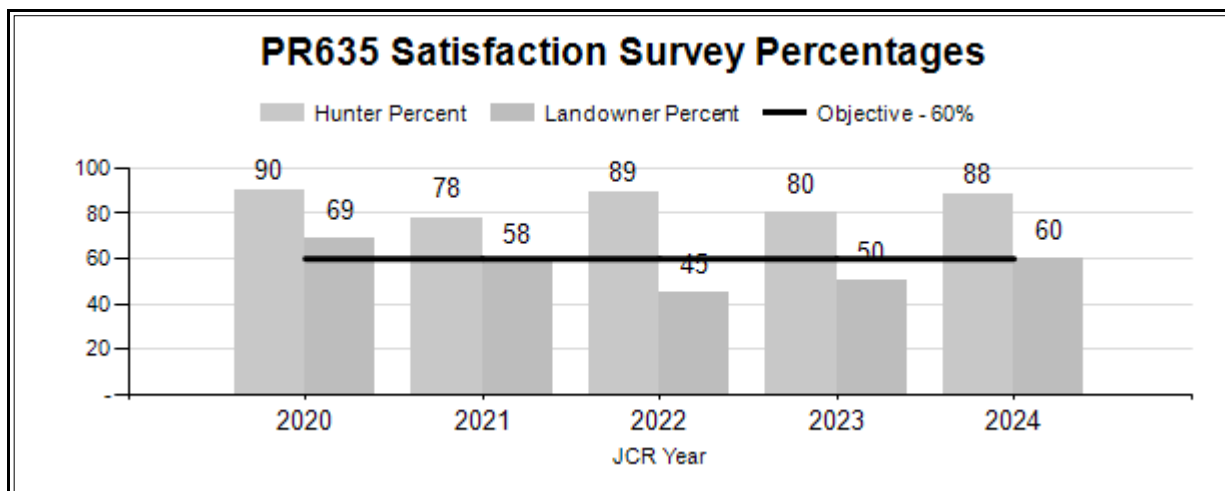|	
Satisfaction Based Objective	60%
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	14%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	6

PR635 Satisfaction Survey Percentages

Hunter Percent ■ Landowner Percent — Objective - 60%

JCR Year	Hunter Percent	Landowner Percent
2020	90	69
2021	78	58
2022	89	45
2023	80	50
2024	88	60

2019 - 2024 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR635 - PROJECT

Year	Pre Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	0	20	34	54	19%	165	59%	63	22%	282	0	12	21	33	± 0	38	± 0	29
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 Hunting Seasons
Project Antelope (PR635)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
97, 117	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	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

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 88% Satisfied, 9% Neutral, 3% Dissatisfied
2024 Landowner Satisfaction: 60% Good # of Ant, 40% Too many Ant, 0% Too few Ant

2025 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 2023-24 winter was notably more mild, antelope numbers have not yet rebounded. The total number of antelope classified in 2024 (119) was the lowest in the last five years. Fawn recruitment was again well below the number needed to stabilize or grow this herd at 38:100. However, we did see a substantial increase in the yearling buck:doe ratio at 12:100 compared to 4:100 in 2023, indicating good survival of the previous year's fawns. Adult buck:doe similarly saw an increase in 2024 at 25:100, much increased from the previous two years (12:100 & 11:100, respectively). The low classification sample size does reflect hunter's comments and field personnel observations that overall antelope numbers are down. Hunter success also saw a significant decrease in 2024 to 80%, the lowest in the last five years. Days/harvest also increased from 2.3 in 2023 to 3.7 in 2024.

The satisfaction objective was set in 2013 and personnel have been collecting landowner satisfaction data since 2014. Hunter satisfaction increased from 80% in 2023 to 88% in 2024, right in line with the five year average (86%).Landowner satisfaction slightly increased in 2024 with 60% indicating there were a good number of antelope and 40% believed there were too many.

Given the increase in hunter satisfaction, hunter comments, as well as the buck:doe ratio, opportunity still exists for hunters to harvest an antelope with reasonable success in 2025. Therefore, there are no changes to the 2025 hunting season with the exception of a slight increase in the Type 7 licenses to address damage concerns.

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.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: PR636 - NORTH FERRIS

HUNT AREAS: 63

PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	4,066	2,704	2,438
Harvest:	396	74	74
Hunters:	473	97	97
Hunter Success:	84%	76%	76%
Active Licenses:	500	97	97
Active License Success:	79%	76%	76%
Recreation Days:	1,303	218	218
Days Per Animal:	3.3	2.9	2.9
Males per 100 Females	60	61	
Juveniles per 100 Females	54	69	

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

Management Strategy: Recreational

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -45.9%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 5
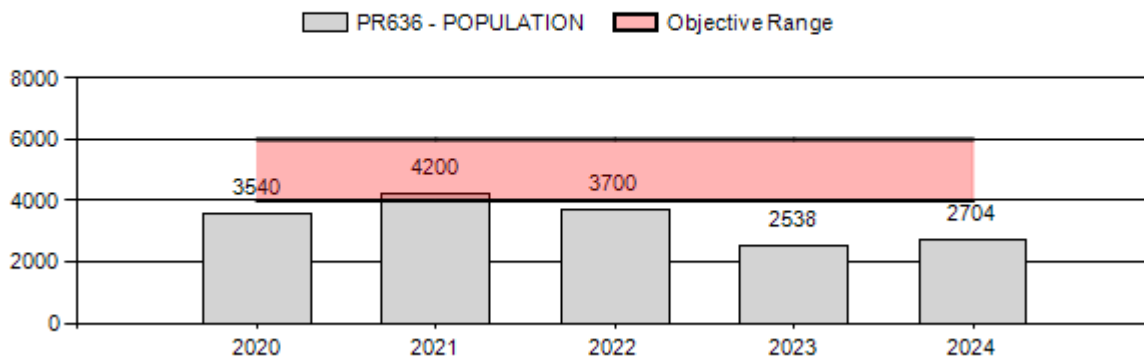
Model Date: 2/13/2025

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:	15%	15%
Proposed change in post-season population:	2%	-10%

Population Size - Postseason

2019 - 2024 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR636 - NORTH FERRIS

| Year | Pre Pop | MALES | | | | FEMALES | | JUVENILES | | Tot Cls | Cls Obj | Males to 100 Females | | | | Young to | | |
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	7,050	154	478	632	29%	996	45%	584	26%	2,212	1,827	15	48	63	± 4	59	± 4	36
2020	4,240	32	365	397	36%	543	49%	177	16%	1,117	1,691	6	67	73	± 7	33	± 4	19
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 Hunting Seasons
North Ferris Pronghorn (PR636)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
63	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	50	Any antelope
63	2	Aug. 15	Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Oct. 31	50	Any antelope valid east of Buzzard Road (Natrona County Road 410-Carbon County Road 497)

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 85% Satisfied, 11% Neutral, 4% 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, with a fawn:doe ratio of 36:100 in 2020, and 37:100 in 2023. As a result, the population has declined to 45% below objective.

Classification sample size has declined significantly in recent years, and the 2024 classification sample size was the lowest since 2005. Conditions during the 2022-23 winter were presumed to be less severe in the western portion of Area 63; however this was not the case, resulting in higher harvest than expected and consequently a significant decline in the buck ratio in 2023 to 33:100. The buck:doe ratio in 2024 increased greatly to 61:100; however, less females were classified than in previous years. Fawn production increased significantly in 2024, bringing the fawn:doe ratio to 69:100, which is similar to ratios observed before the harsh winters.

Hunter success decreased from 81% in 2023 to 76% in 2024. However, hunter effort decreased substantially to 2.9 days per animals, back to average levels seen prior to the harsh 2022-23 winter. Despite reduced hunter success, satisfaction increased slightly to 85%, and dissatisfaction decreased to 4%.

Winter severity this year was considered "normal" or "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality or a significant impact to current population numbers.

With the herd so far below objective, no doe/fawn harvest is warranted. In 2024, total license quotas were reduced by 50%, partly due to public concern. The same quota is used in 2025, resulting in an expected harvest of ~74 bucks. While the projected harvest of bucks is 15% of the pre-hunt buck population, the percentage of bucks harvested on public lands will be much 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). As such, this harvest rate is appropriate given low population numbers, lack of access, and hunter success.

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, days/harvest was selected as the variable most predictably related to annual harvest. In an effort to produce better Rhat values, a truncated version utilizing eight 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 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 both the 2018 and 2022 LT estimates:

	2018	**2022**
LT Result	8,389 (CL 6,035 - 10,742)	2,692 (CL 1,098 - 4,285)
IPM Estimate	7,924 (CL 6,628 - 9,034)	3,798 (CL 3,025 - 4,601)

The total post-season abundance estimate for 2024 was 2,704 pronghorn (CL 2,079-3,510), 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 45.9% below objective.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Pronghorn

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: PR637 - SOUTH FERRIS

HUNT AREAS: 62

PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2019 - 2023 Average	**2024**	**2025 Proposed**
Population:	2,591	1,545	1,453
Harvest:	75	16	16
Hunters:	94	24	24
Hunter Success:	80%	67%	67%
Active Licenses:	96	24	24
Active License Success:	78%	67%	67%
Recreation Days:	286	111	111
Days Per Animal:	3.8	6.9	6.9
Males per 100 Females	61	51	
Juveniles per 100 Females	31	55	

Population Objective (± 20%) : 6500 (5200 - 7800)

Management Strategy: Recreational

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -76.2%

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

Model Date: 2/13/2025

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:	7%	7%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-2%	-6%

Population Size - Postseason
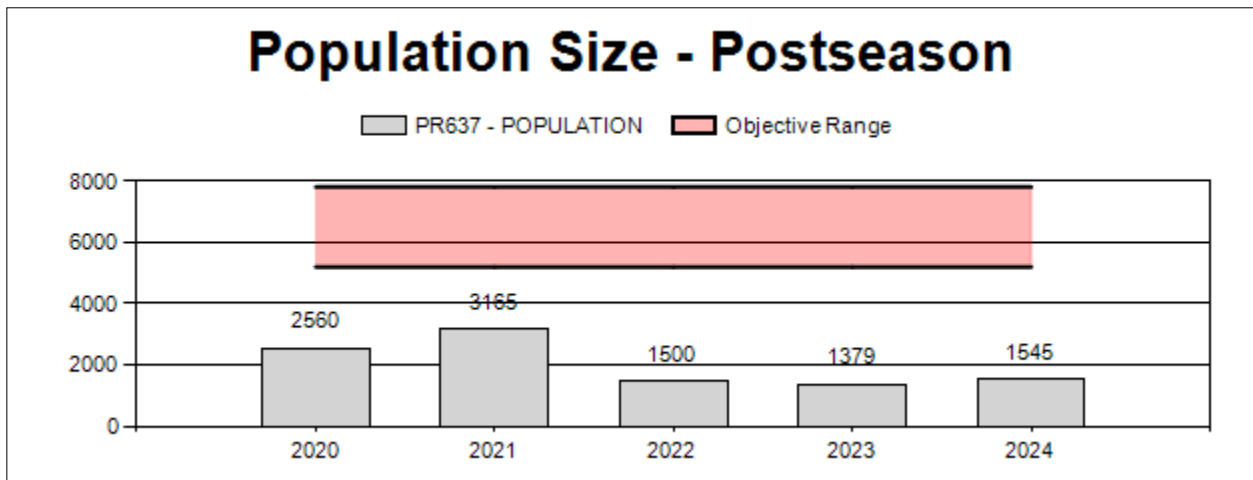
2019 - 2024 Preseason Classification Summary

for Pronghorn Herd PR637 - SOUTH FERRIS

Year	Pre Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	4,500	38	325	363	34%	560	52%	154	14%	1,077	1,496	7	58	65	± 6	28	± 4	17
2020	2,635	15	249	264	31%	481	57%	98	12%	843	1,001	3	52	55	± 6	20	± 3	13
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 Hunting Seasons
South Ferris Pronghorn (PR637)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
62	1	Aug. 15	Sep. 12	Sep. 13	Oct. 31	25	Any antelope

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 82% Satisfied, 18% 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 in 2024 increased by 50%. The buck:doe ratio decreased from 62:100 in 2023 to 51:100 in 2024, but is still well within the recreational range. The yearling buck:doe ratio decreased by ~30% in 2024 to 14:100, which is expected given low fawn ratios in 2023 (32:100) and expected recruitment following the harsh winter. Fawn production was significantly improved in 2024 to 55:100.

Hunter success and effort remained stagnant in 2024, which was as expected given the significant population decline. With far fewer antelope to choose from, hunter success remained at 67% and days/animal harvested was seven days. Despite low hunter success and greater effort, hunter satisfaction increased sharply to 82% (up 22%). A greater number of hunters reported they felt "neutral" about their hunting experience at 18%, which drove hunter dissatisfaction down to 0%.

Winter severity this year was considered "normal" or "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality or a significant impact to overall population numbers.

With the herd so far below objective, doe/fawn harvest is once again not warranted. Total license quotas remain the same in 2025 at a minimum of 25, with an expected harvest of ~16 bucks. While the buck ratio increased in 2024, and the projected harvest only represents seven percent of the estimated pre-hunt buck population, more than half of the hunt area is unavailable to almost all hunters and ratios collected from the herd as a whole do not represent what is available for harvest. Consequently, the percentage of bucks harvested on public lands will be much higher due to checker-boarded land ownership. Extremely low fawn:doe ratios observed in previous years indicate that it will be several years before recruitment can replace any bucks that are harvested, and the current supply of bucks needs to last longer than normal. Harvest needs to remain extremely conservative until herd size and productivity reach more normal levels.

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 was selected as the variable most predictably related to annual harvest. In an effort to product better Rhat values, a truncated version utilizing 15 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:

	2012	**2015**	**2018**	**2022**
LT Result	4,610 (CL 2,655 - 6,564)	5,482 (CL 3,094 - 7,869)	2,967 (CL 1,575 - 4,358)	1,469 (CL 516 - 2,421)
IPM Estimate	3,542 (CL 2,912 - 4,254)	3,687 (CL 2,999 - 4,411)	3,317 (CL 2,654 - 3,986)	1,972 (CL 1,492 - 2537)

The total post-season abundance estimate for 2024 was 1,545 pronghorn (CL 1,098-1,453), 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 76.2% below objective.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: MD642 - DUBOIS

HUNT AREAS: 128, 148

PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

	2019 - 2023 Average	**2024**	**2025 Proposed**
Population:	3,141	4,502	4,586
Harvest:	344	311	311
Hunters:	1,039	1,073	1,020
Hunter Success:	33%	29%	30 %
Active Licenses:	1,054	1,073	1,015
Active License Success:	33%	29%	31 %
Recreation Days:	5,717	5,986	5,625
Days Per Animal:	16.6	19.2	18.1
Males per 100 Females	28	31	
Juveniles per 100 Females	57	67	

Population Objective (± 20%)   8000 (6400 - 9600)

Management Strategy: Recreational

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -43.7%

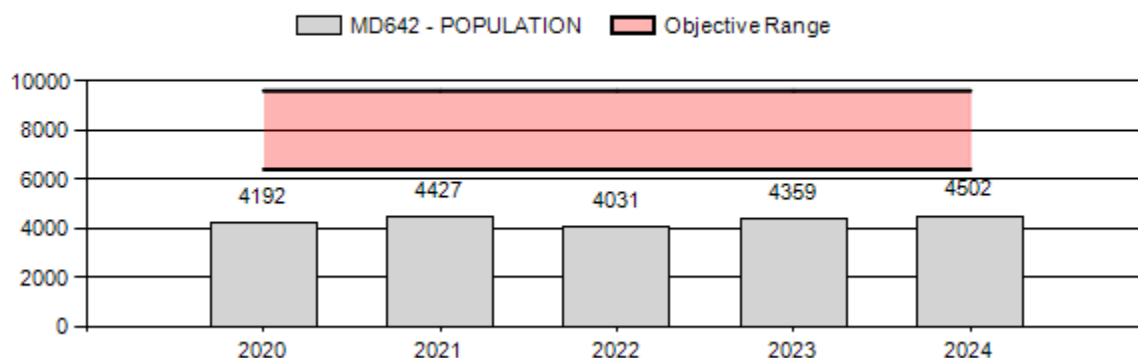Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 14

Model Date: 02/12/2025

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:	33%	33%
Proposed change in post-season population:	3%	2%

Population Size - Postseason

2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD642 - DUBOIS

Year	Post Pop	MALES							FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	2+ Cls 1	2+ Cls 2	2+ Cls 3	2+ UnCls	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Cls	Obj	Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	4,180	66	42	51	6	0	165	12%	830	60%	396	28%	1,391	0	8	12	20	± 2	48	± 3	40
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	4,427	60	62	79	11	0	212	15%	686	50%	482	35%	1,380	0	9	22	31	± 3	70	± 4	54
2022	4,031	74	67	75	7	0	223	17%	729	55%	371	28%	1,323	0	10	20	31	± 2	51	± 3	39
2023	4,359	67	72	76	7	0	222	16%	697	51%	450	33%	1,369	0	10	22	32	± 3	65	± 4	49
2024	4,502	53	42	58	10	0	163	16%	526	50%	354	34%	1,043	0	10	21	31	± 3	67	± 5	51

2025 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. 15		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer
128	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Nov. 1	Nov. 20	50	Any 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
148	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 14	Sep. 15	Oct. 25		Antlered mule deer or any white-tailed deer

2025 Region L nonresident quota: 200

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 51% Satisfied, 23% Neutral, 26% Dissatisfied

2025 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 4,302 and 4,502 in 2024. Herd demographics also indicate the population is relatively stable over the past five years with an average fawn:doe ratio of 61:100. Fawn production in 2024 slightly increased from 65:100 in 2023 to 67:100. The buck:doe ratio in the herd unit has been extraordinarily stable the last five years and in 2024 the buck:doe ratio was 31:100 which is slightly higher than the five year average of 30:100. The yearling buck:doe ratio in 2024 was 10:100 and marginally higher than the five year average (9:100). Hunter success decreased in 2024 (29%) compared to 2023 (37%) and correspondingly the days/harvest increased from 15 in 2023 up to 19 in 2024. 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. The 2024 hunting season was unseasonably warm and dry with no significant weather events that triggered mule deer migration. Additionally, the Pack Trail fire closed down a large portion of area 128 that is popular for front country hunters, displacing them to other areas leading to some overcrowding complaints. The 2025 mule deer hunting seasons in both areas 128 and 148 will remain unchanged from the 2024 seasons. 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 2024 (31:100) has exceeded the maximum recommendation of 29:100. While the observed buck:doe

ratio (31:100) exceeds the recreation maximum (29:100), the general license season construct is appropriate because historically this herd has been within the parameters of recreational management.

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 62% in 2024, slightly higher than the 55% in 2023. The Type 3 licenses saw a slight increase in success at 64% compared to 59% in 2023. There will be no changes for the Type 3 or 8 licenses in 2025.

In 2023, Type 1 licenses were reduced to alleviate hunter crowding and improve hunters' experience for this highly sought after late-season mule deer hunt. Based on personnel observations and many hunter comments, this decrease did resolve hunter crowding and complaints. As a result, Type 1 licenses will remain the same as in 2024.

Management Objective Review
The objective and management strategy for the Dubois Mule Deer Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2020. For the 2025 (5-year) objective review, the current population objective (8,000) and recreational strategy will be maintained for the next five years following an internal evaluation.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring and Management
The Dubois Mule Deer Herd was prioritized for sampling in 2023 and will continue through 2025. The five-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). It is important to note that with small sample sizes prevalence rates are not precise and result in wider confidence intervals. 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. Once a minimum sample size of 200 has been reached a more accurate interpretation of the prevalence rate and its effect on this herd may be concluded. 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, 2020-2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (n) – Hunter Harvest Only			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2020	0% (n=14)	0% (1)	0% (3)	6.2
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
2020-2024	7% (3-13%, n=140)	0% (24)	0% (23)	8.9

*Prioritized sampling began

Population Modeling

The total postseason population estimate for 2024 was 4,502 (CL=3,830-5,133) mule deer. This represents about a 3% increase (~143 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. This particular model's Rhat values are close to 1, indicating a good fit and tracks reasonable well with perceived trends. The estimated ratios (both age and sex) seem to track fairly well with the observed ratios. Future abundance estimates, such as a sightability survey scheduled for 2025, will greatly improve the power of the model.

Based on substantial migration data and subsequent analyses, we are proposing to realign the herd unit boundary that will exclude hunt area 148 and incorporate both hunt area 156 and the northern portion of hunt area 146. This change will more accurately capture data that better represents the Dubois Mule Deer Herd and its management objectives.

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 currently seeking 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.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer

HERD: MD643 - PROJECT

HUNT AREAS: 157, 170-171

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Hunter Satisfaction Percent	62%	72%	80%
Landowner Satisfaction Percent	27%	60%	60%
Harvest:	214	73	85
Hunters:	427	146	125
Hunter Success:	50%	50%	68%
Active Licenses:	466	186	150
Active License Success:	46%	39%	57 %
Recreation Days:	1,689	926	850
Days Per Animal:	7.9	12.7	10
Males per 100 Females:	25	41	
Juveniles per 100 Females	54	48	

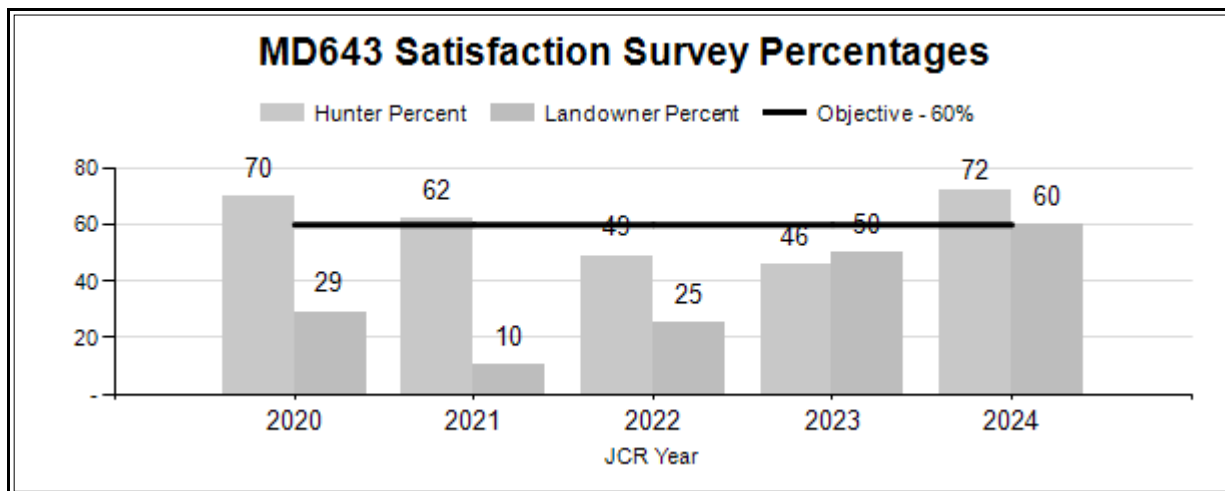|	
Satisfaction Based Objective	60%
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	6%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	1

MD643 Satisfaction Survey Percentages

Hunter Percent · Landowner Percent · Objective - 60%

JCR Year	Hunter Percent	Landowner Percent
2020	70	29
2021	62	10
2022	49	25
2023	46	50
2024	72	60

2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD643 - PROJECT

		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	Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2020	0	13	29	11	0	0	53	16%	180	55%	92	28%	325	0	7	22	29	± 0	51	± 0	39
2021	0	10	7	11	0	0	28	10%	161	58%	87	32%	276	0	6	11	17	± 0	54	± 0	46
2022	0	8	9	4	0	0	21	10%	117	57%	67	33%	205	0	7	11	18	± 0	57	± 0	49
2023	0	9	3	4	0	10	26	25%	50	49%	26	25%	102	0	18	34	52	± 0	52	± 0	34
2024	0	2	10	4	2	0	18	22%	44	53%	21	25%	83	0	5	36	41	± 0	48	± 0	34

| 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. 10	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

2025 Region L nonresident quota: 200 licenses

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 72% Satisfied, 13% Neutral, 15% Dissatisfied
2024 Landowner Satisfaction: 60% Good # of MD, 0% Too many MD, 40% Too few MD

2025 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 from 2018 (81%) to an understandably low of 46% in 2023. Hunter satisfaction increased to 72% in 2024 even with the decline in deer numbers based on personnel observations, hunter/landowner comments, and harvest statistics. In 2023, given the low deer density, we reduced license numbers in an attempt to increase hunter satisfaction and success while continuing to manage for CWD by maintaining low deer densities. This approach seemed to work as we see an increase in hunter satisfaction in 2024. All landowners surveyed in 2024 felt that mule deer numbers were either too low or about right.

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 continual high rates of CWD, deer migration data indicating movement in and out of the herd unit (Figure 1), as well as the limited number of licenses available to harvest a buck mule deer, we are removing the Type 1 licenses in area 157 and replacing them with a general license. Concurrently the number of Type 3, 6 & 8 licenses will be increased. Transitioning to a general

license in hunt area 157 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 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 increased licenses and extended the 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 current 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.

The general license in deer area 157 will be added to deer non-resident Region L. Given the number of general license hunters expected in area 157 is low, managers are not increasing the nonresident quota in this region.

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 are developing a proposal to change from a landowner/hunter satisfaction objective to a CWD prevalence rate of 5%. This proposal is currently under review.
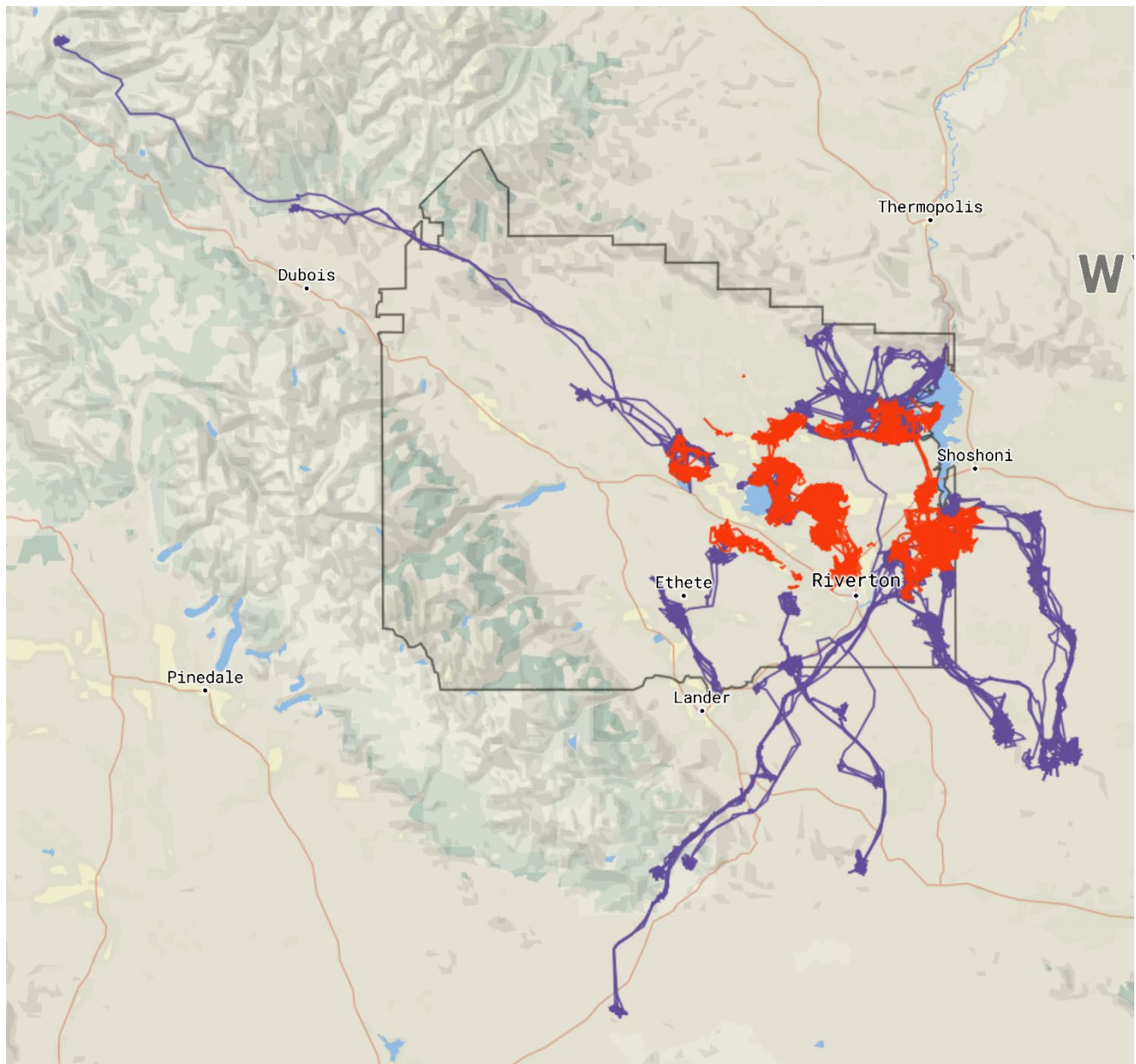
Figure 1. Collar data showing deer movements to surrounding populations. Red lines indicate non-migratory deer and purple indicate migratory.
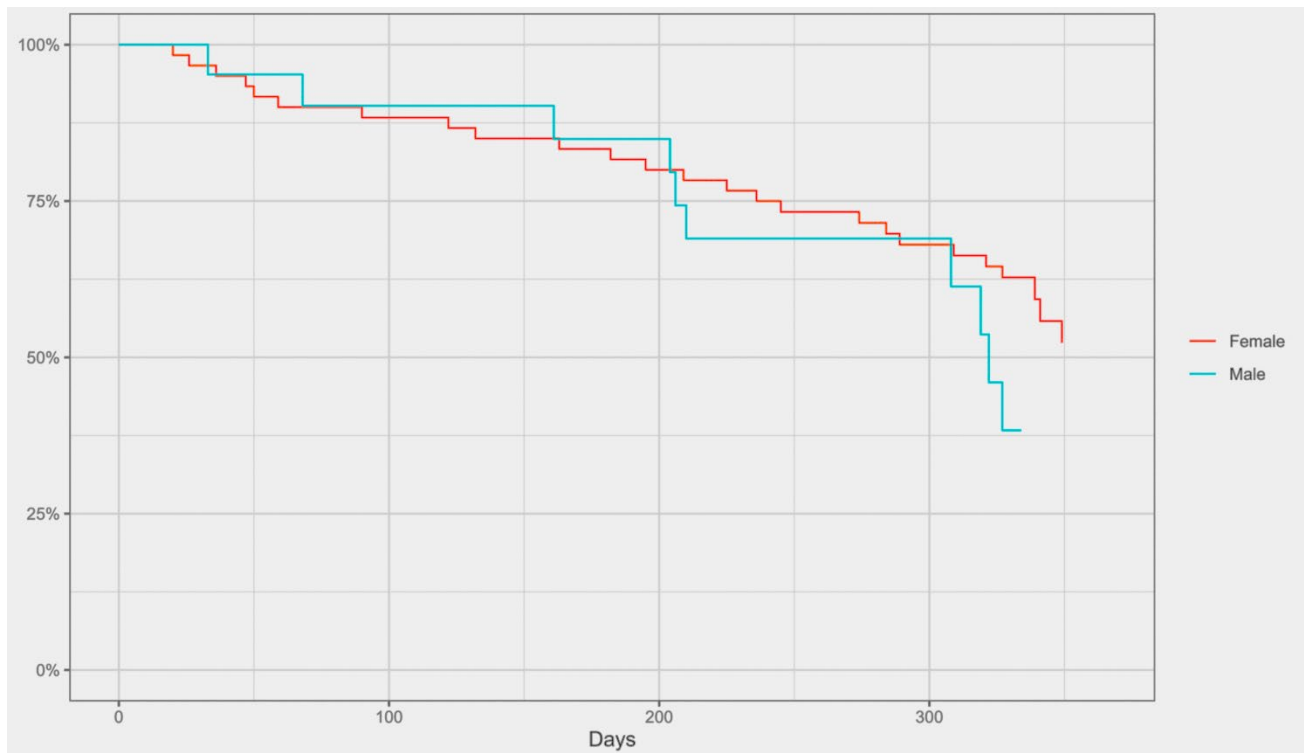
Figure 2. Annual survival rate of 81 collared deer (21 bucks, 60 does) in the Project herd.

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. The impact of such a high rate of prevalence on the population is unknown but it is certainly likely CWD is a contributing factor in the population decline over the past 3 years as depicted in the annual survival rate (Figure 2).

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested mule deer in the Project Mule Deer Herd, 2020-2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (*n*) – *Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2020	**70% (n=46)**	50% (4)	26% (39)	32
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)	21% (43)	56
2020-2024	**66% (33-73%, n=181)**	26% (23)	32% (165)	43

*Mandatory CWD sampling effort

Table 2. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested white-tailed deer in the Project Mule Deer Herd, 2020-2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (*n*) – *Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2020	**25% (n=56)**	0% (6)	22% (36)	18
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
2020-2024	**33% (21-38%, n=355)**	12% (49)	24% (307)	44

*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 will help 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 2024 (81 deer, does not include the 50 recent captures) is 50%. Males experienced an annual survival rate of 38% and females 52% (Fig. 3). 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). This data will help identify possible CWD hot spots that may be artificially concentrating deer thus increasing transmission and prevalence rates and provide a basis for comparisons in population change through time. Identifying these hotspots will allow WGFD and Tribal managers to target harvest pressure, mitigate transmission, and potentially lower CWD prevalence rates.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: MD644 - SOUTH WIND RIVER

HUNT AREAS: 92, 94, 160

PREPARED BY: STAN HARTER

	2019 - 2023 Average	**2024**	**2025 Proposed**
Population:	5,329	4,432	3,482
Harvest:	265	277	277
Hunters:	921	862	900
Hunter Success:	29%	32%	31%
Active Licenses:	926	862	900
Active License Success:	29%	32%	31%
Recreation Days:	3,627	3,881	4,000
Days Per Animal:	13.7	14.0	14.4
Males per 100 Females	27	31	
Juveniles per 100 Females	66	65	

|	
Population Objective (± 20%) :	11000 (8800 - 13200)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-59.7%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	10
Model Date:	2/21/2025

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%	23%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-2%	-21%

Population Size - Postseason
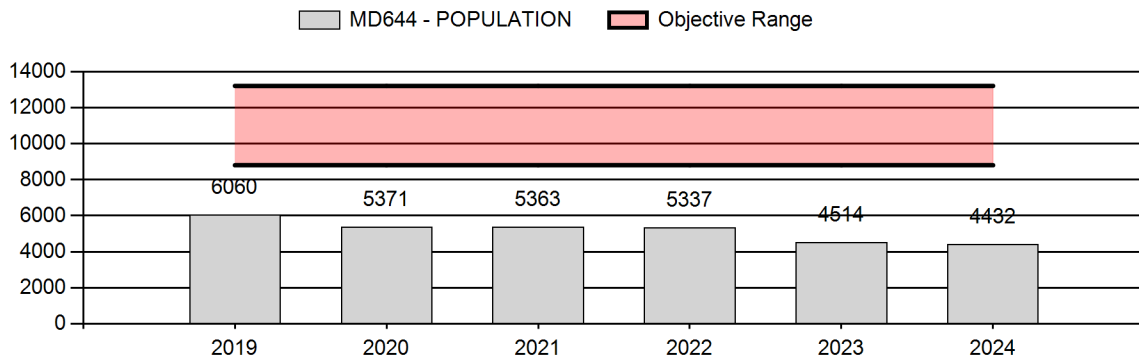
2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD644 - SOUTH WIND RIVER

Year	Post Pop	MALES							FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	2+ Cls 1	2+ Cls 2	2+ Cls 3	2+ UnCls	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	6,060	75	146	73	10	0	304	13%	1,268	56%	690	31%	2,262	853	6	18	24	± 2	54	± 3	44
2020	5,371	72	85	46	4	0	207	12%	891	51%	662	38%	1,760	1,344	8	15	23	± 2	74	± 4	60
2021	5,363	201	139	40	7	0	387	15%	1,223	47%	996	38%	2,606	0	16	15	32	± 2	81	± 3	62
2022	5,337	276	165	67	10	0	518	16%	1,617	49%	1,183	36%	3,318	0	17	15	32	± 1	73	± 2	55
2023	4,514	115	173	48	9	0	345	14%	1,413	57%	715	29%	2,473	0	8	16	24	± 1	51	± 2	41
2024	4,432	117	176	49	2	0	344	16%	1,098	51%	713	33%	2,155	0	11	21	31	± 2	65	± 3	49

2025 Hunting Seasons
South Wind River Mule Deer (MD644)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates Opens	Archery Dates Closes	Season Dates Opens	Season Dates Closes	Quota	Limitations
92	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 20		Antlered mule deer four (4) points or more on either antler or any white-tailed deer
92, 94, 160	3	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 30	100	Any white-tailed deer
92, 94, 160	8	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Nov. 30	150	Doe or fawn white-tailed deer
94	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 20		Antlered mule deer four (4) points or more on either antler or any white-tailed deer
160	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 20		Antlered mule deer four (4) points or more on either antler or any white-tailed deer

2025 Region L Non-Resident Quota: 200

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 44.5% Satisfied, 30.0% Neutral, 25.5% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
Mule deer decline continues in each of the 3 hunt areas in the herd unit. The estimated post-season population in 2024 was 4,400 mule deer and is nearly 60% 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, we kept the "standard" general license season length at 6 days in 2024. 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 reduced to 200 for the 2024 season.

Many deer hunters in 2023 responded to the previous severe winter by choosing not to hunt or in some cases participating in the "Let a Deer Walk Program" where concerned hunters could buy or draw a deer license, then turn the license in to a conservation organization for a prize drawing. This scenario was short-lived as hunter participation during the 2024 hunting season was nearly 40% higher than in 2023, without regard to the continued decline in mule deer. The 2024 season structure was also intended to reduce hunter numbers and mule deer buck harvest from a population still recovering from the severe winter of 2022-23. Overall, 862 hunters harvested 277 mule deer bucks (57% more than in 2023). Hunter success increased to 32% in 2024 (only 3%

better than in 2023), coupled with an increase to 14 days/harvest. Total buck harvest represented 23% of the number of pre-season bucks available.

With favorable flight conditions in December 2024, classification surveys were flown in traditional winter ranges, with 2,155 mule deer observed. The 2024 post-season fawn/doe ratio of 65J/100F was much improved over the 20-year low ratio observed in 2023, and was just below the previous 5-year average. Following the low fawn/doe ratio in 2023 the yearling buck/doe ratio increased to 11YM/100F, indicating antler point restrictions protected a good number of yearling bucks in the 2024 season. Buck harvest was higher in 2024, but the adult buck/doe ratio also increased to 21AM/100F, again related to lower harvest rates during hunting seasons with APRs. All age and sex ratios were also a bit inflated due to the reduced percentage of adult females in the classification sample. The total buck/doe ratio of 31M/100F was 5M/100F above the previous 5-year average.

Although the post-season buck/doe ratio in 2024 was above the "recreational" level for mule deer, we are concerned that lifting or even reducing the APR season structure would severely increase overall harvest that would be unwarranted considering the population is 60% below objective and declining. The 2025 season will be the 6th consecutive year featuring antler point restrictions (APRs) limiting hunters to harvesting mule deer bucks with either 3 or 4 points on either side. This will be the 11th season in 22 years to feature APRs. The current season structure has limited hunter numbers and mule deer buck harvest, but likely places undue pressure on older age class bucks in their "breeding prime". At this time, the continuation of APR seasons is vital to limit hunter numbers and buck mule deer harvest, despite the concerns about how they affect older age classes. Limited quota seasons are essentially the only other option available to limit hunter numbers and harvest, but don't have the support of the majority of deer hunters.

The 2024 season maintained low hunter numbers and mule deer buck harvest as desired. However, with the 2024 post-season abundance estimate being 60% below objective and with projected continued declines, the 2024 season features no changes to prevent over-harvesting mule deer bucks with respect to overall population levels. For 2025, the Region L non-resident quota remains at 200 in response to declining deer numbers. Non-residents only represented 5% of the total number of hunters in 2024. White-tailed deer persist in agricultural areas around Lander, primarily in hunt areas 92 and 160 and appear to have declined after the winter of 2022-23. Following cuts to the Type 8 quota in 2024, the percentage of active licenses improved to 84%, indicating license numbers are close to the right amount relative to access to hunt on private lands where the majority of white-tails occur. Given these circumstances, no change to the Type 3 or Type 8 quotas for white-tailed deer is warranted.

Management Objective Review
The objective and management strategy for the South Wind River Mule Deer Herd Unit was last evaluated and approved in 2020. For the 2025 objective review, the current objective and recreation management strategy will be maintained for the next five years following an internal evaluation.

Mule Deer Initiative Weather and Habitat Information

Weather

Precipitation

Precipitation from October 2023 through September 2024 was well below the 30-year average. Very little winter snow compounded by very little spring precipitation both contributed to what ended up being a dry, hot summer. Precipitation during the growing season (April-June 2024) was also well above the 30-year average (Figure 1). Most of the growing season precipitation fell during May, and much of the summer was extraordinarily dry, which contributed to low vegetative production across the Region. For the South Wind River 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.
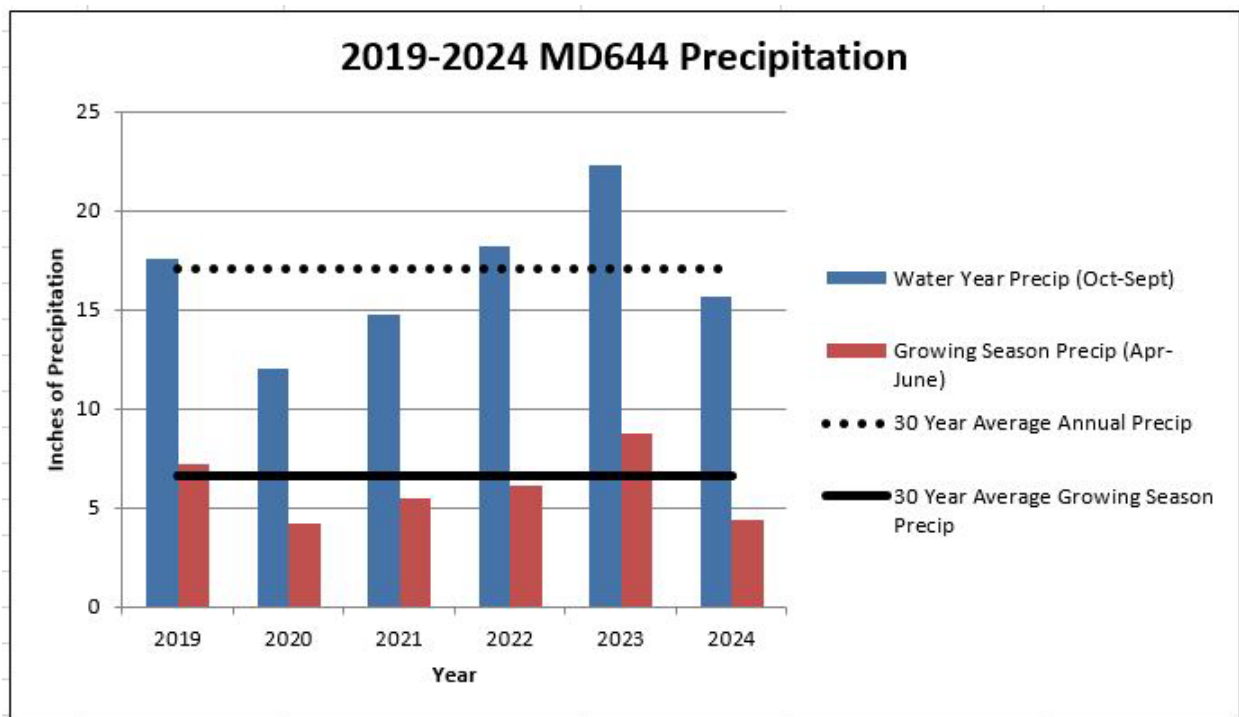

Figure 1. Annual precipitation levels compared to 30-year averages.

Winter Conditions

Meteorological winter 2024-2025 was characterized by less than average snowfall and slightly warmer temperatures than a normal South Wind River winter. Temperatures from November-February averaged 26.87 degrees Fahrenheit which was more than 2 degrees warmer than the 30-year average for this time period in the Lander Area. A total of 23"of snowfall was recorded in Lander from November 1, 2024 through February 28, 2025, which is significantly less than the 43" that fell in the same time period the previous winter, and the 77" that fell in the winter of 2022-2023. The below average snowfall totals combined with above average temperatures for Lander and the surrounding foothills made for a slightly easier winter than on average. After the low

snowfall recorded during the meteorological winter, Lander has received 47.4" of snow, which is 13.7" above the average snowfall after March 1. Many of the snow events since March 1 have been heavy, wet snows, with precipitation totaling 6.39" (2.07" above the average after March 1), along with above average temperatures for March, April, and May. This has resulted in early green-up of vegetation, especially at lower elevations and should bode well for habitat conditions if precipitation remains at or above average through the remainder of the growing season.

Habitat

Precipitation across the herd unit was well below the 3- year average in 2024, which caused grasses and forbs to cure out earlier than normal with many grasses not forming seed heads and many forbs not flowering. The June – September time period was very warm with very little measurable precipitation throughout the summer. One plant species that managed to have an extraordinarily good year for setting seed along the Lander Foothills was antelope bitterbrush. Managers were able to collect large amounts of bitterbrush seed for use in the future to plant along the Lander Foothills.

Significant Events

Habitat enhancements continued across the Herd Unit in 2024. It was the tenth year of aspen enhancement treatments (cut/ pile and lop/scatter of encroaching conifers) within the South Pass area. Sites treated were in the Mill Creek area and several areas along the Loop Road. A total of 246 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 3,422 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 relocation are becoming increasingly popular tools for use in habitat enhancement and restoration across Wyoming. Twenty-seven BDA's on Mill Creek were maintained, and in concert with conifer removal should improve riparian condition and aspen vigor. One nuisance beaver was live trapped in the Crooks Gap area and one in Sinks Canyon, and both were moved to a location in Sinks Canyon where an existing beaver lodge had recently been abandoned.

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 15 acres in cooperation with six landowners along the length of Baldwin Creek, positively benefitting approximated 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 and other management decisions. They convey some insight into the habitat's long-term condition or carrying capacity.

In 2024, 14 RHA's were conducted in the South Wind River Herd Unit totaling 321 assessed acres. Of those acres, 12 acres were in aspen communities, 229 acres were in rangeland, and 80 acres were in riparian corridors. While there were some areas of severe browse within both aspen and rangeland habitats, most of aspen and shrub communities were in the moderate browse category. Most of the sites assessed showed good species diversity, but 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. Browse was moderate in the 2024 assessed stands and attributed to a combination of livestock and wildlife use. The species diversity within aspen communities was 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 2024 appeared to partially meet objectives of healthy, resilient rangelands. Of the six Rangeland RHA's conducted, two 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. Many bitterbrush, sagebrush, serviceberry, and other mixed mountain shrub species preferred by ungulates show a history of severe browse, contributing to clubbed and contorted growth forms. In the last few years, tent caterpillars appeared to have serious impacts to bitterbrush and chokecherry communities. However in 2024, similar to 2023, the number of caterpillars appeared to be much lower. Herbaceous understory species diversity is generally good.

Riparian habitats assessed in 2024 were generally in good condition. Assessments occurred in the vicinity of the Loop Road and also South Pass. A high level of species diversity was found in most of the assessed riparian areas, including many shrub and forb species beneficial to mule deer does during lactation. Willow communities associated with the assessed streams were in good condition with recruitment occurring and browse levels generally low. 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. Two beavers were relocated in 2024 and released in the abandoned beaver ponds near Bruce's Parking Lot in Sinks Canyon.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring and Management
This herd has been 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 2024, 52 mule deer and 41 white-tailed deer were sampled, with CWD detected in 6 adult male mule deer, 3 adult male white-tailed deer, and 1 adult female white-tailed deer. To date, no CWD management actions have occurred.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested mule deer in the South Wind River Mule Deer Herd Unit, 2020-2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD Positive and (n) - *Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2020	**0% (n=14)**	0% (1)	0% (2)	8.9
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% (2)	18.8
2020-2024	**6.9% (n=159)**	0% (11)	0% (5)	14.1

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 the available effort variables, active licenses was 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 estimated 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 estimates of male/female ratios should be above actual observation data. The IPM model was run with maximum iterations, burn-in rate, and thinning rate has an Rhat value of 1.05, which indicates convergence is likely in the IPM.

With these settings the observed data for the IPM included fifteen years of harvest and ratio data along with abundance estimates from sightability surveys completed in mid-winter of bio-years 2014 and 2022. The sightability abundance estimates, however, are 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. Regardless, IPM abundance estimates align fairly well with the most recent sightability estimate done in 2022.

	2014	2022
Sightability Survey	8,517 (CL 8,017 -9,017)	5,532 (CL 4,012 -7,050)
IPM Estimate	7,821 (CL 7,383 - 8,272)	5,337 (CL 4,733 - 5,914)

The bio-year 2024 post-season IPM abundance estimate was 4,432 mule deer (CL = 3,879 -5,013). This is an 18% decline from the post-season 2023 IPM estimate, and is 60% below objective (11,000). Despite the improved age and sex ratios observed in 2024 and anticipating harvest to remain steady in 2024, the IPM projects the South Wind River mule deer herd will decline to a 2025 post-season population of around 3,500 mule deer (68% below objective).

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer   PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: MD646 - SWEETWATER

HUNT AREAS: 96-97   PREPARED BY: STAN HARTER

	2019 - 2023 Average	**2024**	**2025 Proposed**
Population:	3,180	3,023	2,584
Harvest:	182	244	244
Hunters:	580	564	575
Hunter Success:	31%	43%	42 %
Active Licenses:	580	564	575
Active License Success:	31%	43%	42 %
Recreation Days:	2,212	2,114	2,200
Days Per Animal:	12.2	8.7	9.0
Males per 100 Females	20	20	
Juveniles per 100 Females	70	71	

|	
Population Objective (± 20%) :	4500 (3600 - 5400)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	-32.8%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	10
Model Date:	2/21/2025

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:	32%	32%
Proposed change in post-season population:	+3%	-15%

Population Size - Postseason
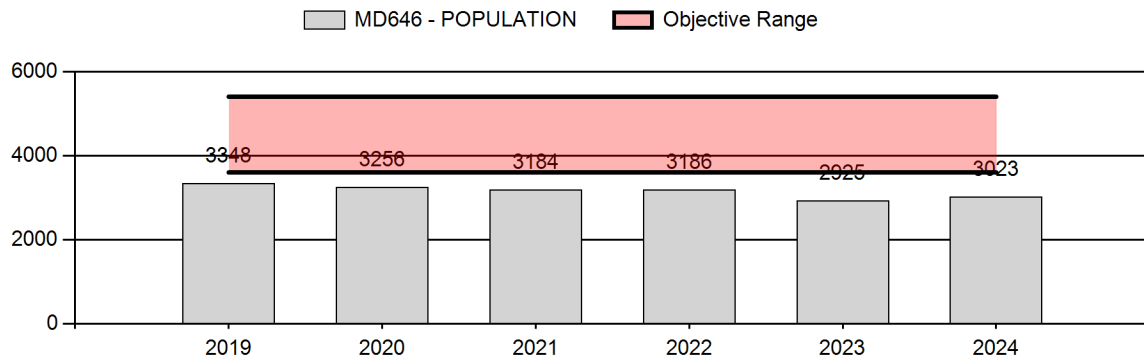
2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD646 - SWEETWATER

Year	Post Pop	MALES							FEMALES		JUVENILES				Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	2+ Cls 1	2+ Cls 2	2+ Cls 3	2+ UnCls	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	3,348	54	99	44	2	0	199	10%	1,075	54%	709	36%	1,983	973	5	13	19	± 1	66	± 3	56
2020	3,256	51	58	16	0	0	125	10%	613	50%	489	40%	1,227	1,246	8	12	20	± 2	80	± 5	66
2021	3,184	39	17	10	0	0	66	9%	393	51%	306	40%	765	0	10	7	17	± 2	78	± 7	67
2022	3,186	76	38	14	4	0	132	10%	628	49%	520	41%	1,280	0	12	9	21	± 2	83	± 5	68
2023	2,925	61	84	18	2	0	165	13%	719	58%	366	29%	1,250	0	8	14	23	± 2	51	± 3	41
2024	3,023	46	61	19	0	0	126	10%	645	52%	458	37%	1,229	0	7	12	20	± 2	71	± 4	59

2025 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 four (4) points or more on either antler or any white-tailed deer
97	Gen	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 15	Oct. 20		Antlered mule deer four (4) points or more on either antler or any white-tailed deer

2025 Region Q Non-Resident Quota: 75

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 46.4% Satisfied, 28.8% Neutral, 24.8% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
Mule deer decline continues in the Sweetwater mule deer herd unit. The estimated post-season population in 2024 was just over 3,000 mule deer and is 33% 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, we kept the "standard" general license season length at 6 days in 2024. 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 Q non-resident quota was reduced to 75 for the 2024 season, and the 70 active non-residents comprised 12% of the total number of hunters.

With favorable flight conditions in December 2024, classification surveys were flown in hunt areas 96 and 97, with 1,229 mule deer observed. The 2024 post-season fawn/doe ratio of 71J/100F was much improved over the long-term low ratio observed in 2023, and was just above the previous 5-year average. Following the low fawn/doe ratio in 2023 the yearling buck/doe ratio dropped to 7YM/100F. With higher buck harvest in 2024, the adult buck/doe ratio dropped to 12AM/100F. The total buck/doe ratio dropped to 20M/100F and equals the previous 5-year average. Despite reduced buck harvest during the last 5 years of conservative hunting seasons with antler point restrictions, buck/doe ratios have not increased, especially with generally good fawn/doe ratios which should have led to higher yearling buck recruitment and population growth.

The total buck/doe ratio in 2024 was at the low end of the "recreational" management range for mule deer herd units. We are concerned that lifting or even reducing the APR season structure would greatly increase overall harvest that would be unwarranted considering the population is 33% below objective. The 2025 season will be the 6th consecutive year featuring antler point restrictions (APRs) limiting hunters to harvesting mule deer bucks with either 3 or 4 points on either side. This will be the 11th season in 22 years to feature APRs. The current season structure has limited hunter numbers and mule deer buck harvest, but likely places undue pressure on older age class bucks in their "breeding prime". At this time, we believe the continuation of APR seasons is vital to limit hunter numbers and buck mule deer harvest, despite the concerns about how they affect the older age classes. Limited quota seasons are essentially the only other option available to limit hunter numbers and harvest, but don't have the support of the majority of deer hunters.

Many deer hunters in 2023 responded to the previous severe winter by choosing not to hunt or in some cases participating in the "Let a Deer Walk Program" where concerned hunters could buy or draw a deer license, then turn the license in to a conservation organization for a prize drawing. This scenario was short-lived as hunter participation during the 2024 hunting season was nearly 80% higher than in 2023, without regard to the continued decline in mule deer. The 2024 season structure was also intended to reduce hunter numbers and mule deer buck harvest from a population still recovering from the severe winter of 2022-23. Overall, 564 hunters harvested 244 mule deer bucks (nearly 4 times more than in 2023). Hunter success more than doubled from 20% in 2023 to 43% in 2024, coupled with a big reduction to 8.7 days/harvest. Total buck harvest represented 32% of the number of pre-season bucks available.

With the 2024 post-season abundance estimate being 33% below objective and projected to decline, the 2025 season remains at 6 days in length and the limitation of "Antlered mule deer four (4) points or more either antler or any white-tailed deer" to prevent over-harvesting mule deer bucks with respect to overall population levels. The Region Q non-resident quota will continue at 75 for the 2025 season to keep non-resident hunter presence at or below 20%.

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 being offered in hunt area 97 for 2025. General license deer hunters will still be allowed to harvest any white-tailed deer.

Management Objective Review
The objective and management strategy for the Sweetwater Mule Deer Herd Unit was last evaluated and approved in 2020. For the 2025 objective review, the current objective and recreation management strategy will be maintained for the next five years following an internal evaluation.

Mule Deer Initiative Weather and Habitat Information

<u>**Weather**</u>

Precipitation

Precipitation from October 2023 through September 2024 was well below the 30-year average. Winter snows usually contribute the majority of the annual precipitation, but last winter was characterized by less than normal snowfall. In 2024, the majority of the precipitation fell in May, but it only amounted to just over 1.5" of rainfall, and the rest of the spring was much drier than normal. This contributed to well below average growing season precipitation (April-June 2024 (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. For the Sweetwater Herd Unit, precipitation information is based on 1 weather station located near Jeffrey City, WY.
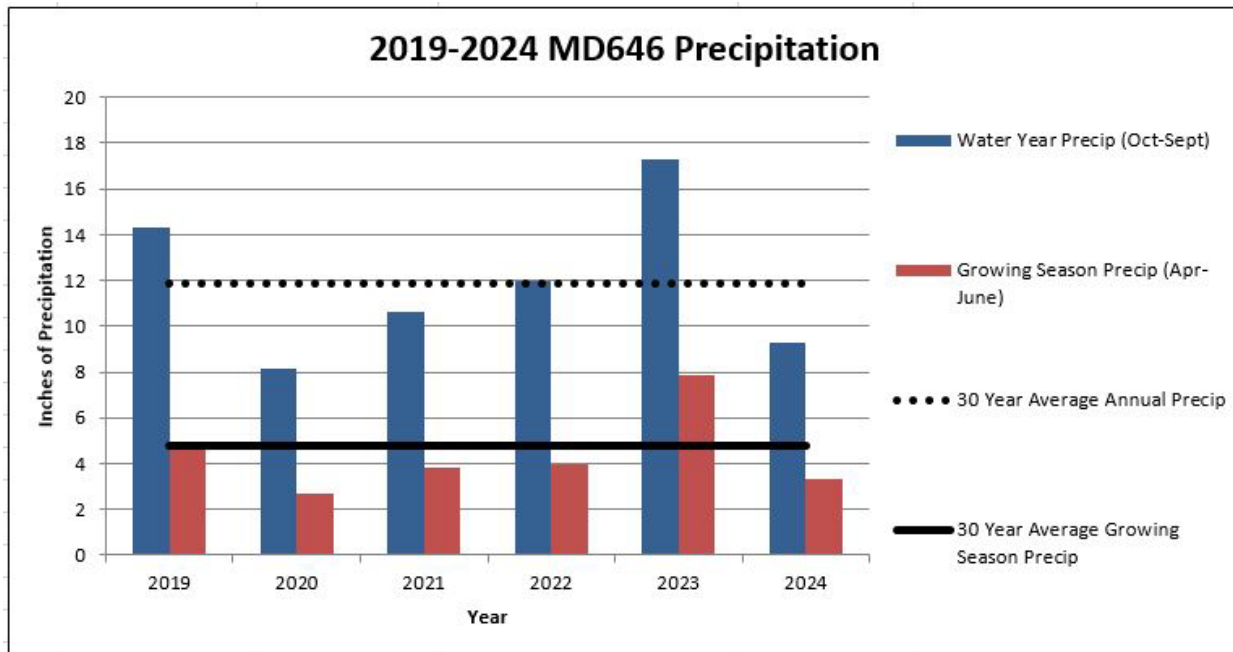
Figure 1. Annual precipitation levels compared to 30-year averages.

Winter Conditions

The 2024-2025 meteorological winter was characterized by less than average snowfall amounts, with only 4.7" recorded in January at Jeffrey City (no snow recorded in December 2024 or February 2025). Temperatures were also warmer than normal and coupled with the slightly less than normal snowfall levels from October 1, 2024 through March 31, 2025 made for a relatively mild winter. Average temperatures were nearly 2.5 degrees warmer than average for the November-February time period in the Jeffrey City area. As usual, high winds were common across the herd unit. After the low snowfall recorded during the meteorological winter, Jeffrey City has received 29.7" of snow (data is missing for May 2025), which is 10" above the average snowfall after March 1, with precipitation totaling 2.13" (equal to average after March 1 – again with data missing for May 2025), along with above average temperatures for March and April 2025. This has resulted in early green-up of vegetation, especially at lower elevations and should bode well for habitat conditions if precipitation remains at or above average through the remainder of the growing season.

Habitat

Growing season precipitation was well below average for the 2024 season with only 3.4" of precipitation occurring between April-June, compared to a 30 year average of nearly 5". This lack of precipitation likely contributed to poor herbaceous forage production. Temperatures throughout summer 2024 were warmer than average across the Sweetwater Herd Unit. 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.

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. Fencing projects to protect riparian areas are working, but additional fencing on the landscape is a concern. Three riparian protection projects were initiated in 2023 on Willow Creek, the Sweetwater River, and Diamond Springs. West Diamond Spring was fenced in 2024, and Middle Diamond Spring will be protected in 2025. Phase I of the Sweetwater River fencing project was completed in 2024, and funding is being applied for to initiate Phase II for 2025, along with significant river restoration in partnership with Ducks Unlimited using NAWCA funding.

Also in 2024, more than 200 acres of aspen enhancement were completed on the north side of Green Mountain by cutting conifers to reduce competition and induce aspen sprouting. An additional 200 acres are planned for 2025, in the Rabbit 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 objectives and inform other management decisions. They convey some insight into the habitat's long-term condition.

From 2015-2024, 160 RHA's were conducted across the herd unit, mostly in the vicinity of Green Mountain, which is an important area for wildlife. In 2024, 10 RHA's were conducted, in riparian and rangeland habitats, across a varied 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 and riparian shrubs. Most of the RHA's 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 2024 RHA's, 3 were riparian encompassing 35 acres and 7 were in rangeland/ shrub habitats encompassing 90 acres. Assessed shrubs exhibited a downward trend based mostly on their 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. The BLM feral horse gathers have decreased the number of horses substantially, which should help with 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, particularly 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 expected for a healthy aspen stand. The Green Mountain Aspen and Riparian Enhancement Project is addressing these concerns by conducting large scale conifer removal and treatment.

Riparian areas assessed in 2024 were in relatively good condition. On the east end of Green Mountain, many streams are being re-colonized by beaver, and appear to be holding water later into the year, and showing greater willow and herbaceous vigor. Removal of encroaching conifers from private lands along Willow Creek, combined with the presence of beaver should improve the habitat conditions for mule deer. The riparian areas on Big Camp Creek were in good condition with Phase I conifer encroachment, and high diversity of native shrubs. The riparian area in the Sweetwater Rocks near Picnic Creek is in poor condition with Phase III conifer encroachment and high levels of invasive species. The landowner is in the process of removing conifers from Picnic Creek for use in river restoration projects on the Sweetwater River. The East Fork of Middle Cottonwood Creek is also in good condition and has an active beaver colony. Shrub diversity is good, and bank erosion is low overall. Due to the high water levels from beaver ponds, encroached conifers are drowned out.

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring and Management
Mandatory CWD sampling was implemented in 2021 to increase sample sizes from areas with historically low levels of CWD samples. The 5-year annual and average prevalence estimates, sample sizes, and percent of harvest sampled for CWD are presented below (Table 1). In 2024, 16 adult mule deer bucks were tested and CWD was detected in 2 of them. 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 in this herd unit.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested mule deer in the Sweetwater Mule Deer Herd Unit, 2020-2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD Positive and (n) - *Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2020	**2.6% (n=76)**	0% (4)	0% (5)	40.4
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% (2)	0% (0)	2.5
2020-2024	**4.3% (n=255)**	0% (10)	0% (12)	29.5

*Mandatory CWD Sampling Effort

Population Modeling
The bio-year 2024 post-season IPM abundance estimate was 3,023 mule deer (CL = 2,546 to 3,497). This is a 3% increase from the post-season 2023 estimate, and is 33 % below objective (4,500). The IPM model was run with maximum iterations, burn-in rate, and thinning rate and has a Rhat value of 1.03, indicating the IPM has found a suitable solution. The IPM estimated buck/doe ratios follow the trend of observed buck/doe ratios through the life of the IPM, but have a few estimated ratios below observed values. Ideally, all model estimates 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.

With these settings the observed data for the IPM included twelve years of harvest and ratio data along with a mid-winter abundance estimate from a sightability survey conducted in bio-year 2023. The mid-winter abundance estimate of 2,999 mule deer (CI = 2,428 – 3,570) produced by the sightability survey is 2% 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 and the difference is only 74 deer.

	Bio-Year 2023
Sightability Survey	2,999 (CL 2,428 - 3,570)
IPM Estimate	2,925 (CL 2,504 - 3,497)

The IPM projects the Sweetwater mule deer herd will decline to a 2025 post-season population of around 2,600 mule deer (42% below objective). Total buck harvest is projected to again equal 32% of the number of pre-season bucks available.

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. Collars placed on fawns are programmed to drop each July 10, since juvenile collars are too small to allow for mule deer to grow into adulthood without the collars strangling them. In addition, in January 2025, collars were programmed to drop off of adults surviving since December 2022 near the end of their battery life. So, 100 new collars or solar charged ear tag transmitters are deployed each winter and new adult collars are deployed each winter to keep the number of "tagged" adults at the beginning number (80 Does and 30 Bucks). Adult collars deployed in December 2024 should last through March 2028.

Survival data were entered into the IPM for bio-year 2022 as follows: AM – 0.56, AF – 0.74, JM – 0.32, JF – 0.37; and for bio-year 2023: AM – 0.73, AF – 0.84, JM – 0.47, JF – 0.51. From December 22, 2022 to May 12, 2025, there have been a total of 204 non-capture related mortalities and 23 capture-related mortalities. The demographics of those mortalities follows: 64 juvenile male, 66 juvenile female, 45 adult female, 29 adult male. A principal part of the focal herd project is to attempt to identify cause of death whenever possible. A breakdown of mortality causes as of May 12, 2025 is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Cause of death in Sweetwater Mule Deer focal monitoring project (Dec. 2022 – May 2025).

Confirmed or suspected coyote predation	59
Confirmed or suspected mountain lion predation	27
Confirmed or suspected bobcat predation	6
Predation Unknown	3
Disease and/or Exposure	15
Hunter Harvest	8
Wounding Loss	1
Roadkill	4
Unknown	81
Capture Related	23
Total	**227**

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer

HERD: MD647 - FERRIS

HUNT AREAS: 87

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	1,509	1,092	1,067
Harvest:	66	31	30
Hunters:	84	45	40
Hunter Success:	79%	69%	75%
Active Licenses:	84	45	40
Active License Success:	79%	69%	75%
Recreation Days:	473	220	215
Days Per Animal:	7.2	7.1	7.2
Males per 100 Females	45	45	
Juveniles per 100 Females	70	74	

Population Objective (± 20%) : 3700 (2960 - 4440)

Management Strategy: Special

Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: -70.5%

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

Model Date: 3/18/2025

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%	16%
Proposed change in post-season population:	3%	-2%

Population Size - Postseason

Legend: MD647 - POPULATION, Objective Range

Year	Population
2020	1450
2021	1660
2022	1600
2023	884
2024	1092
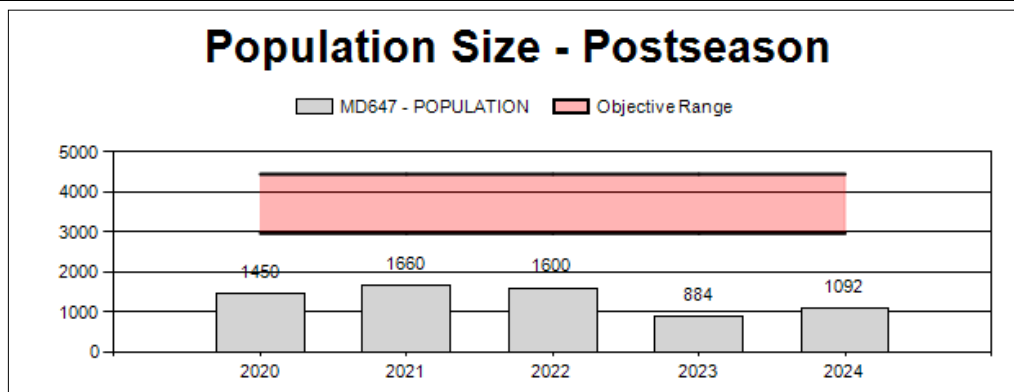
2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD647 - FERRIS

Year	Post Pop	MALES							FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	2+ Cls 1	2+ Cls 2	2+ Cls 3	2+ UnCls	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	1,950	32	84	95	5	0	216	22%	434	45%	312	32%	962	0	7	42	50	± 4	72	± 5	48
2020	1,450	34	60	68	7	0	169	18%	462	50%	298	32%	929	0	7	29	37	± 3	65	± 4	47
2021	1,660	23	6	20	0	0	49	21%	102	45%	77	34%	228	0	23	25	48	± 10	75	± 14	51
2022	1,600	58	57	74	9	0	198	24%	355	42%	284	34%	837	0	16	39	56	± 4	80	± 6	51
2023	884	13	32	26	1	0	72	18%	207	52%	120	30%	399	0	6	29	35	± 5	58	± 6	43
2024	1,092	20	73	44	7	0	144	20%	322	46%	238	34%	704	0	6	39	45	± 3	74	± 5	51

2025 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

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 85% Satisfied, 5% Neutral, 10% 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 70% below objective.

Classification data was collected from a helicopter again this year. The buck:doe ratio increased from 35:100 in 2023 to 45:100 in 2024. 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. Additionally, the proportion of Class III bucks has been steadily declining since these data were first collected in 2015, and continued to do so in 2024, with Class III bucks representing only 5% of all bucks classified. Fawn:doe ratios improved significantly from 58:100 in 2023 to 74:100 in 2024.

Hunter success dropped to 69%, the lowest in over twenty years; however, average days hunted per deer harvested remained relatively stable. Despite the lowered success, hunter satisfaction was the highest in the state at 85%, and hunter dissatisfaction decreased to 10%, with more hunters indicating they were "neutral" about their experience.

Winter severity this year was considered "normal" or "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality or a significant impact to overall population numbers.

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 were reduced in 2023 to 50, a quota that remained in 2024. The quota again remains at 50 licenses in 2025, with an expected harvest of ~30 bucks, representing 16% of the estimated pre-hunt buck population. 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. Given the high proportion of younger, smaller Class I and II bucks, and limited access throughout the hunt

area, it is appropriate to maintain low harvest 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.

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.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested mule deer in the Ferris Mule Deer Herd, 2020-2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and *(n) - Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2020	**20% (n=5)**	0% (1)	0% (0)	7.2
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
2020-2024	**30% (9-54%, n=20)**	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, active licenses was selected as the variable most predictably related to annual harvest. The observed data for the IPM included 25 years of harvest and ratio data, along with an abundance estimate from a "sightability' survey conducted in February, 2025. 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:

	2018
Abundance Estimate	1,568 (CL 1,198 - 1,937)
IPM Estimate	1,092 (CL 876 - 1,367)

The total post-season abundance estimate for 2024 was 1,092 deer (CL 876-1,367). While this estimate aligns with perceptions of managers and stakeholders that the herd was significantly impacted by previous harsh winter losses, it is lower than expected given deer numbers observed and data analysis from the "sightability" survey performed in February 2025.

Additional Management Data

In February 2025, Department personnel conducted a "sightability" survey for the Ferris Mule Deer Herd. The herd unit (Area 87) was divided into 560 subunits that were then stratified into "high" and "low" designations depending on the probability of seeing deer during winter months; "other" designations were restricted to areas where deer were not expected to be seen. A total of 197 subunits were then randomly selected for survey, and included 85% of "high" probability subunits and 30% of "low" probability subunits. Subunits were subsequently extensively surveyed by helicopter, and flights took place from February 13-17, during which one day (February 16) was deemed unfit for flight due to weather; additionally, one selected subunit (located in the farthest northeast corner of the herd unit) was unable to be flown due to weather / wind. A total of 28.2 hours were spent in the helicopter, at a cost of $32,545 for the entire survey (including flight time, mileage, and per diem for flight crew). A total of 890 deer were counted within 196 flown subunits (Figure 1). After taking into account covariates such as group size and activity of counted deer, as well as vegetation and snow cover where deer were found, data was extrapolated across the entire herd unit. This resulted in an overall abundance estimate of 1,568 deer.

Figure 1. Ferris sightability survey map with recorded deer observations in selected subunits.
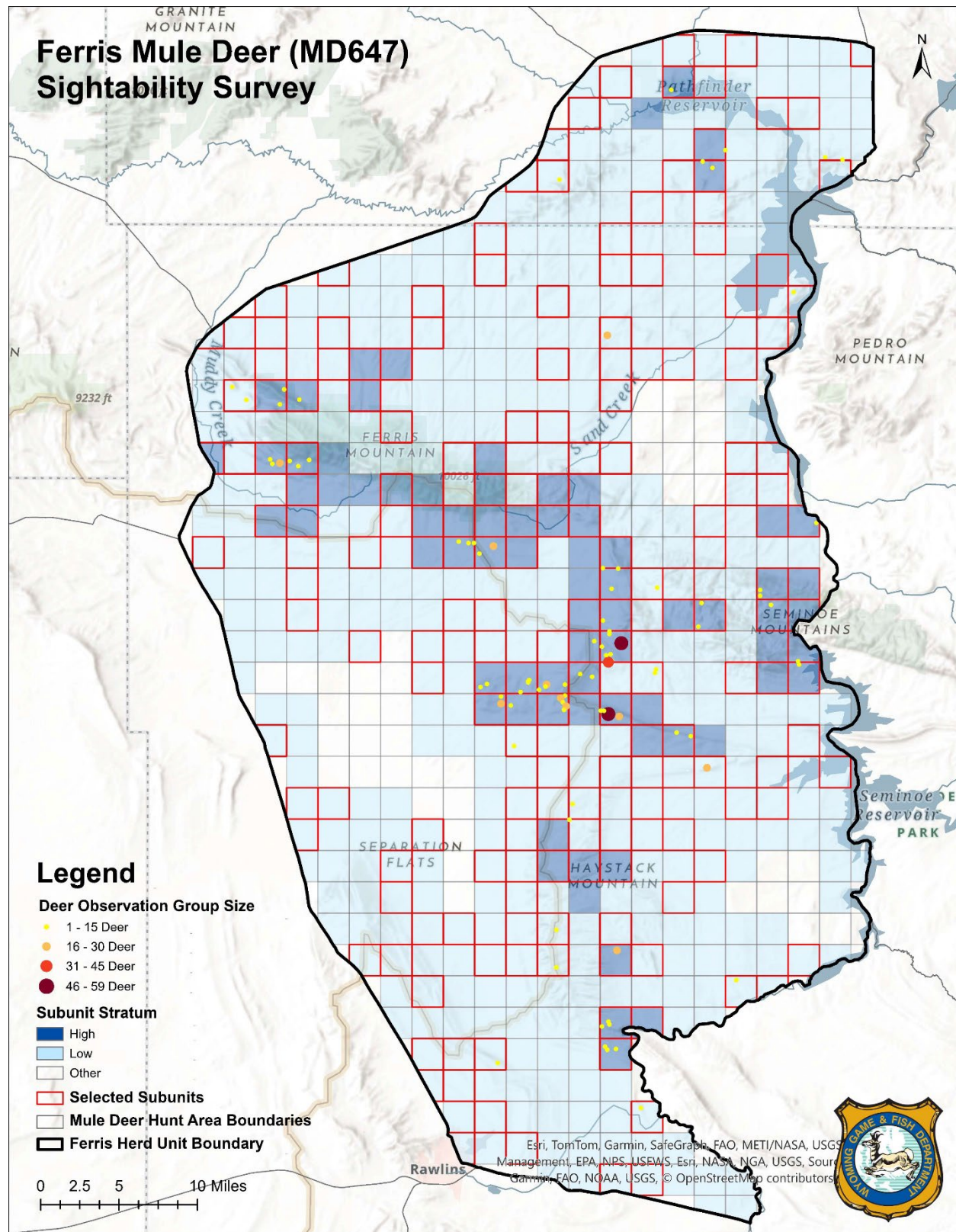
Additionally, antler measurements were collected on ten percent of the reported harvest in 2024. Average antler spread increased significantly from 19" in 2023 to 23.8" in 2024. The maximum spread in 2024 was 27.5", near the 5-year average (Figure 2). Three bucks were checked in 2024: only one buck checked was Class III, while the other two were 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 3).

Figure 2. Average and maximum antler spread of harvested mule deer checked from the Ferris Mule Deer Herd.
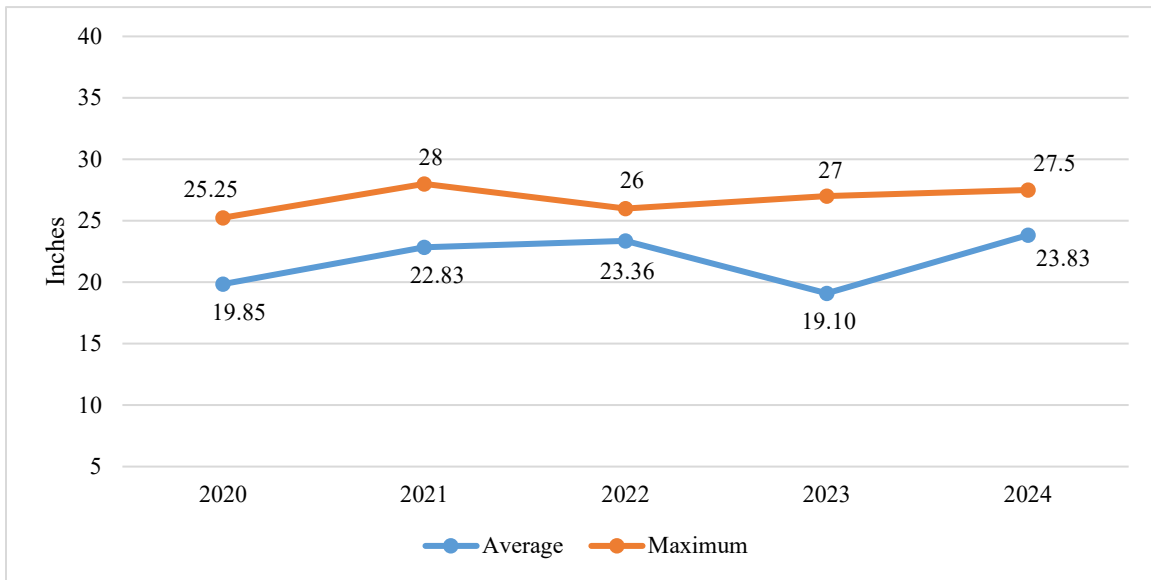
Figure 3. Antler spread of harvested mule deer bucks checked from the Ferris Mule Deer Herd compared to statewide harvest checks in 2024.
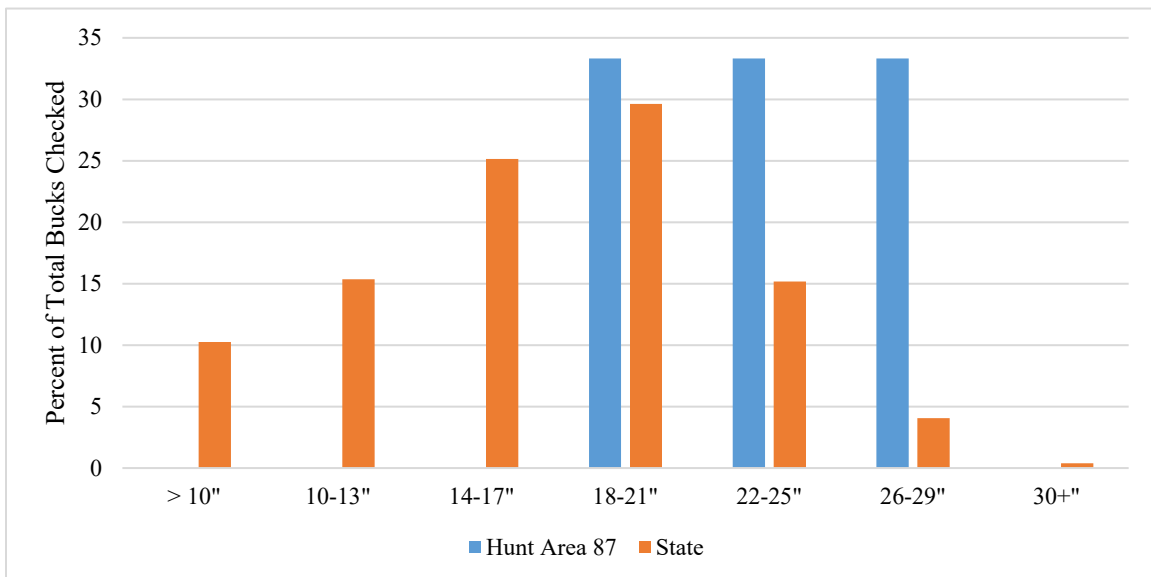
2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: MD648 - BEAVER RIM

HUNT AREAS: 90

PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	239	N/A	N/A
Harvest:	40	27	38
Hunters:	59	49	49
Hunter Success:	68%	55%	78 %
Active Licenses:	59	49	49
Active License Success:	68%	55%	78 %
Recreation Days:	423	318	375
Days Per Animal:	10.6	11.8	9.9
Males per 100 Females	39	96	
Juveniles per 100 Females	59	77	

Population Objective (± 20%) :   2600 (2080 - 3120)

Management Strategy:	Special
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	N/A%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	14
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%

2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Mule Deer Herd MD648 - BEAVER RIM

Year	Post Pop	MALES							FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	2+ Cls 1	2+ Cls 2	2+ Cls 3	2+ UnCls	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	1,195	2	9	22	5	0	38	18%	118	57%	51	25%	207	444	2	31	32	± 7	43	± 8	33
2020	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	± 0	0	± 0	0
2021	0	5	5	9	0	0	19	16%	64	53%	38	31%	121	0	8	22	30	± 0	59	± 0	46
2022	0	1	1	4	1	0	7	22%	16	50%	9	28%	32	0	6	38	44	± 0	56	± 0	39
2023	0	22	21	10	5	0	58	23%	113	44%	84	33%	255	0	19	32	51	± 0	74	± 0	49
2024	0	9	24	8	4	0	45	35%	47	37%	36	28%	128	0	19	77	96	± 0	77	± 0	39

2025 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

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 81% Satisfied, 12% Neutral, 7% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
For the past two decades area 90 has been managed for trophy mule deer 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. The winter of 2022-2023 was quite harsh, however, the amount of moisture received during 2023 resulted in good vegetation production compared to past years. No significant mortality events were detected during the winter of 22-23. Drier conditions in 2024 resulted in likely poorer vegetation production than the previous year; however, classification data indicates good fawn recruitment.

Classification surveys in 2024 resulted in fewer number of deer classified (128) compared to the previous year (255). This may be contributed to the mild winter at the time of the survey, allowing deer to be distributed over a wider area than what is usually observed in early December. While the sample size is lower than preferred, the results indicate a similar fawn:doe ratio of 77:100 compared to 76:100 in 2023. Both the yearling buck:doe ratio and the adult buck:doe ratio significantly increased in 2024 and was the highest it's been in the past five years. However, based on the low sample size this needs to be interpreted with caution and may not reflect true ratios. Regardless, the adult buck:doe ratios was 77:100 and the yearling buck:doe ratio was 19:100.

Hunter satisfaction increased to 81% in 2024 compared to 61% in 2023. Conversely, hunter success declined from 84% in 2023 to 55% in 2024, the lowest it has been in the previous five years. Similarly days/harvest increased in 2024 to 11.8 compared to 7.5 in 2023. With the improvements in hunter satisfaction, hunter comments indicating the availability of mature bucks, and a population that is stable at best, there are no changes to the 2025 season.

Management Objective Review
The objective and management strategy for the Beaver Rim Mule Deer Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2020. For the 2025 (5-year) objective review, the current population objective and special strategy will be maintained for the next five years following an internal evaluation.

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, 2020-2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (n) – *Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2020	**0% (n=3)**	0% (0)	0% (0)	6.3
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
2020-2024	**0% (0-17%, n=20)**	0% (1)	0% (0)	11.4

Population Modeling

Given the low density of deer in this area, the amount of demographic data collected precludes managers from running a population model that results in a reasonable fit of the limited data available for this herd.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Mule Deer

HERD: MD650 - CHAIN LAKES

HUNT AREAS: 98

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Hunter Satisfaction Percent	49%	64%	57%
Landowner Satisfaction Percent	n/a	0%	35%
Harvest:	23	5	5
Hunters:	72	38	40
Hunter Success:	32%	13%	12%
Active Licenses:	72	38	40
Active License Success:	32%	13%	12%
Recreation Days:	222	132	130
Days Per Animal:	9.7	26.4	26
Males per 100 Females:	0	0	
Juveniles per 100 Females	0	0	

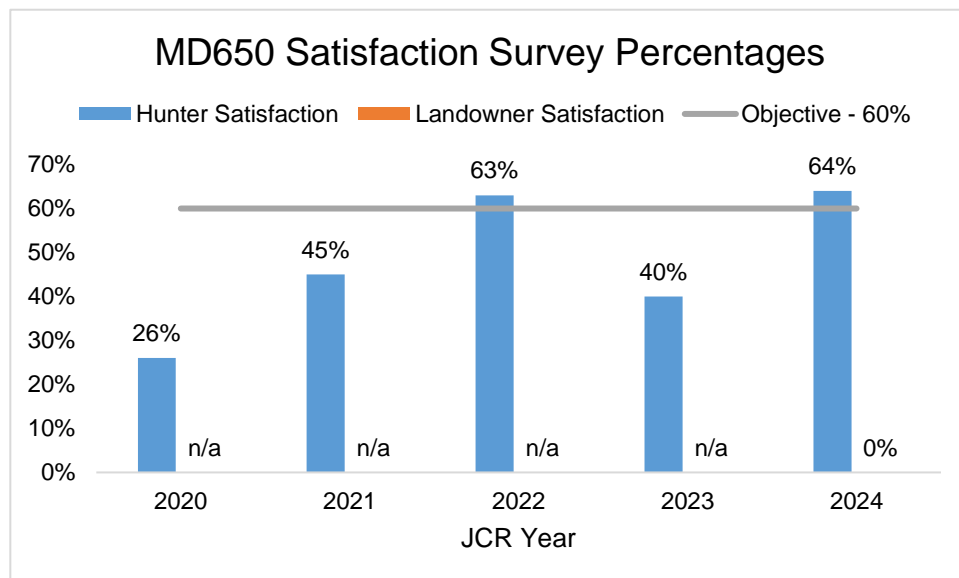|	
Satisfaction Based Objective	60%
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	N/A%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	6

MD650 Satisfaction Survey Percentages

Legend: Hunter Satisfaction, Landowner Satisfaction, Objective - 60%

- 2020: 26%, n/a
- 2021: 45%, n/a
- 2022: 63%, n/a
- 2023: 40%, n/a
- 2024: 64%, 0%

JCR Year

2025 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 four (4) points or more on either antler or any white-tailed deer, archery or muzzle-loading firearms only

2025 Region Q nonresident quota: 75 licenses

2024 Landowner Satisfaction: 0% Satisfied, 0% Neutral, 100% Dissatisfied
2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 64% Satisfied, 27% Neutral, 9% 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 in 2023. In 2024, attempts to contact five landowners over the phone were made. Of the three landowners that responded, all were less than satisfied with deer numbers and the hunt the previous fall, and all expressed concern over what the winter of 2022-23 had done to the herd. Conversely, hunter satisfaction increased significantly from 40% in 2023 to 64% in 2024. There were no hunters that expressed they were just unsatisfied; rather, the 10% reporting dissatisfaction were "very dissatisfied." Regardless, deer densities are (and always have been) low in this herd unit and explains, in part, landowner and some hunter dissatisfaction.

Hunter success decreased to 13% in 2024, the lowest recorded in almost 20 years. Effort (days/animal) increased to 26 days, the highest it has been in the last 10 years. Overall hunter numbers also dropped to another 25-year low.

After the 2022-23 severe winter, which consisted of constant sub-zero temperatures, high winds, and record snowfall, mule deer numbers certainly declined significantly and remain low, as indicated by the harvest statistics. Winter severity this year was considered "normal" or "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality or a significant impact to overall population numbers.

While antler point restrictions may not significantly affect harvest in this primitive weapon hunt area, they are necessary to prevent sharp increases in hunter numbers in this area when the rest of Region Q has antler point restrictions. With Areas 96 and 97 continuing with a 4-point antler restriction in 2025, the same is being used in Area 98, with no changes in season dates.

Management Objective Review
The objective and management strategy for the Chain Lakes Mule Deer Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2020. 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, and objectives based on population size cannot be quantitatively evaluated. However, IPM estimates for this herd may be plausible, and would likely be better with increased data collection, including a "sightability" estimate. If data collection can be increased and IPMs continue to provide reasonable estimates over the next several years, a return to a population size objective may be appropriate. Until then, the current use of a hunter/landowner satisfaction objective is the only viable way to evaluate herd size. Following an internal evaluation, the current objective and management strategy will be maintained for the next five years.

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.

During 2019 and 2020, 55 urban mule deer were removed from the city of Rawlins in the southeast corner of the herd unit under Chapter 56 permits, and six of these tested positive for CWD. None of the 22 deer removed from Rawlins under Chapter 56 in 2021 tested positive for CWD. Discussions between managers and stakeholders are intended to take place in 2025 to discuss future urban mule deer removal for CWD management purposes.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested mule deer in the Chain Lakes Mule Deer Herd, 2020-2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and *(n) - Hunter Harvest Only*			Percent of Harvested Adult Males Sampled
	Adult Males (CI = 95%)	Yearling Males	Adult Females	
2020	**0% (n=4)**	0% (0)	10.3% (29)	12.5
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
2020-2024	**0% (0-46%, n=6)**	0% (0)	7.5% (40)	6.7

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, licenses was 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 25 years of harvest data only. IPM convergence was less than optimal, with Rhat values slightly 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 2024 was 289 (CL 146-586), which puts the herd approximately

45% below the historic objective of 500 deer.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: EL635 - WIGGINS FORK

HUNT AREAS: 67-69, 127

PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Trend Count:	6,906	6,388	6,100
Harvest:	1,028	868	1,100
Hunters:	2,518	2,553	2,550
Hunter Success:	41%	34%	43 %
Active Licenses:	2,688	3,110	2,950
Active License Success	38%	28%	37 %
Recreation Days:	17,543	26,294	22,250
Days Per Animal:	17.1	30.3	20.2
Males per 100 Females:	22	16	
Juveniles per 100 Females	20	18	

Trend Based Objective (± 20%)	5,500 (4400 - 6600)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	16%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	7

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%	0%

EL635 Trend Count

Three Year Trend Count Average (May include counts for 1-3 years)
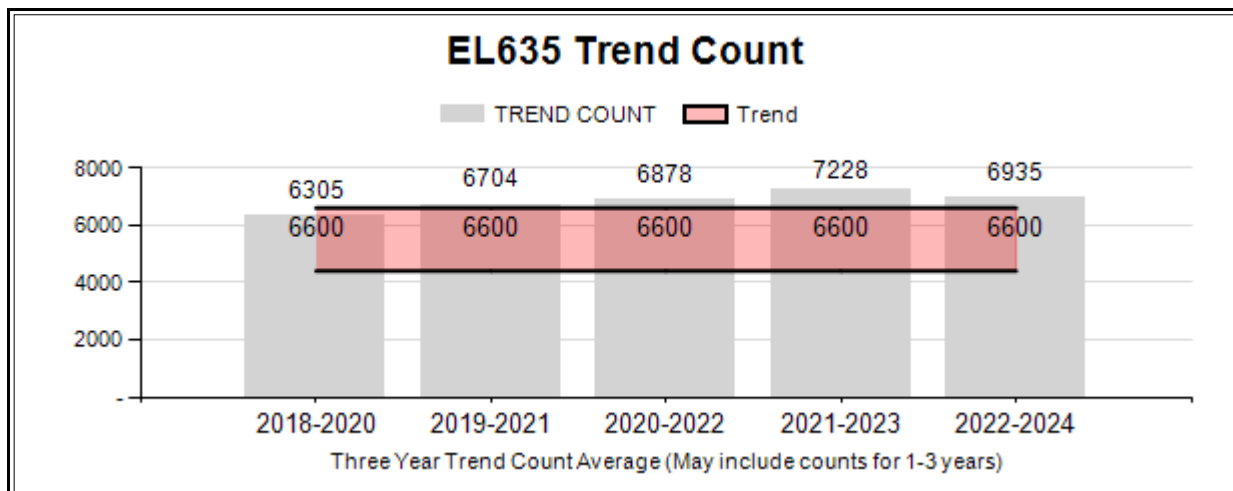
2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL635 - WIGGINS FORK

Year	Post Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	0	204	253	457	13%	2,492	71%	558	16%	3,507	0	8	10	18	± 0	22	± 0	19
2020	0	138	249	387	14%	1,917	71%	414	15%	2,718	0	7	13	20	± 0	22	± 0	18
2021	0	107	344	451	14%	2,294	72%	462	14%	3,207	0	5	15	20	± 0	20	± 0	17
2022	0	160	368	528	16%	2,243	69%	475	15%	3,246	0	7	16	24	± 0	21	± 0	17
2023	0	133	408	541	21%	1,814	69%	284	11%	2,639	0	7	22	30	± 0	16	± 0	12
2024	0	84	182	266	12%	1,644	75%	293	13%	2,203	0	5	11	16	± 0	18	± 0	15

2025 Hunting Seasons
Wiggins Fork Elk (EL635)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates Opens	Closes	Season Dates Opens	Closes	Quota	Limitations
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	400	Antlerless elk
67	6	Sep. 15	Sep. 30	Dec. 1	Dec. 31	450	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	Oct. 15	Oct. 31	450	Cow or calf
67	7			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, 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	100	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	50	Cow or calf
127	Gen			Aug. 1	Oct. 31		Any elk
127	Gen			Nov. 1	Jan. 31		Antlerless elk

Western Region Nonresident Quota: 2775

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 47% Satisfied, 26% Neutral, 27% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

Personnel counted a total of 6,388 elk during the January 2025 trend count. This was 1,131 fewer elk than was counted in 2024, but 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 decrease in elk was found in the South Dubois segment (Hunt areas 68 & 69) with 547, compared to the previous year of 1,824 elk, and below the objective of 1,100 for that sub-population. Fewer elk were observed in the East Fork sub-herd (2,212) compared to the previous year (2,533) and is at the objective of 2,200 elk for that sub-herd. Conversely, more elk were counted in the Dunoir/Spring Mountain sub-herd in 2024 (3,629) compared to the previous year (3,168) and well above the 2,200 objective. The recent 3-year average of the trend count for the entire herd slightly decreased to 6,935 elk, and is 16% 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 based on field observations and hunter comments. The harvest survey confirmed fewer elk harvested in 2024. Hunter success declined from 49% in 2023 to 34% in 2024. Area 67 saw the largest decline in hunter success for the herd unit of 25% in 2024 compared to 50% in 2023; specifically, the 67 Type 4 license success dropped from 71% in 2023 to 35% in 2024. Similarly both the 67 Type 6 and 7 license success decreased in 2024 (21% & 29%) compared to 2023 (44% & 38%), respectively. The Type 4, 6, and 7 licenses in area 67 are structured to increase antlerless harvest on the Dunoir/Spring Mountain segment with Type 6 license pressure focused exclusively on this segment. While harvest was well below expectations, managers do not believe an increase in license issuance or further extending the season is warranted as this may overcrowd an already limited area which could result in a decrease in harvest. This herd's migration and hunter harvest is driven mainly by weather and snowfall. Given this, there will be no changes to the 2025 hunting season as the number of licenses and season dates provide adequate opportunity for hunters during a typical late season hunt. 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.
Given the increased elk damage in area 127, we will be increasing the regular season dates to August 1 – October 31.

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=279) over the last five years has provided a more confident estimate of CWD prevalence (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 2025.

Table 1. CWD prevalence for hunter-harvested elk in the Wiggins Fork Elk Herd, 2020 – 2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and (*n*) – *Hunter Harvest Only*	Percent of Harvested Adult Elk Sampled
	All Adult Elk (CI = 95%)	
2020	**3% (n=29)**	2.7
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
2020-2024	**1% (0.4-3.6%, n=279)**	5.9

*Prioritized sampling began in 2021.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

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

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

PREPARED BY: STAN HARTER

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Trend Count:	3,207	2,204	2,500
Harvest:	687	880	900
Hunters:	1,777	1,989	2,000
Hunter Success:	39%	44%	45%
Active Licenses:	1,857	2,161	2,200
Active License Success	37%	41%	41%
Recreation Days:	12,837	16,117	16,500
Days Per Animal:	18.7	18.3	18.3
Males per 100 Females:	28	29	
Juveniles per 100 Females	31	22	

Trend Based Objective (± 20%)	2,600 (2080 - 3120)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	-15.2%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	2

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%

EL637 Trend Count

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

2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL637 - SOUTH WIND RIVER

Year	Post Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	0	232	251	483	14%	2,228	66%	652	19%	3,363	0	10	11	22	± 0	29	± 0	24
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 Hunting Seasons
South Wind River Elk (EL 637)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates Opens	Archery Dates Closes	Season Dates Opens	Season Dates 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	Oct. 31	75	Antlerless elk
25	5			Nov. 1	Nov. 10		Antlerless elk valid north of the Sweetwater River
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	25	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

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 63.8% Satisfied, 21.6.1% Neutral, 14.6% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
The South Wind River elk herd unit has a mid-winter trend count objective of 2,600 elk. The 2024 trend count/classification surveys flown in January and February 2025 and when pooled with ground count of elk just west of Lander and around Cyclone Rim in February 2025, produced a trend count of 2,204 elk. The latest 3-year average trend count of 2,619 elk is at objective. Since 345 elk observed in the Cyclone Rim area were too distant to classify, the classification sample of 1,859 elk differs from the trend count total. The calf/cow ratio of 22J/100F for the herd unit is 30% below the previous 5-year average. The total bull/cow ratio of 29M/100F in 2024 is just above the

previous 5-year average, but was 37% lower than the record high ratio observed in 2022 when deep snow forced most elk into the open.

The total harvest reported in the 2024 elk harvest survey in the South Wind River elk herd unit increased by 58 with 880 total elk harvested, with overall 41% hunter success. Hunter satisfaction percentages were similar to that reported in 2023, but there were numerous complaints from hunters during the 2024 season and in harvest survey comments about too many hunters. This is due, in part, to increased quotas in 2024 and off-road vehicles chasing elk, mostly in hunt area 25. Hunter crowding complaints were also heard in hunt area 28 during the general license season, which had the 5th highest number of hunters since 2004.

Hunter success was 68% in hunt area 25 for Type 1 (also valid in hunt area 27) and was the lowest in the last 3 seasons and had higher days/elk harvested. Furthermore, with more than double the number of Type 1 hunters who reported hunting in hunt area 27, their success was only 17% and required 53 days/harvest. Type 1 and 4 hunters are allowed access throughout all of hunt area 25 for the entire season, while Type 5 hunters are 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.

We continued utilizing Chapter 34 auxiliary management hunts from December 2024 through February 2025 to provide "on-demand" harvest of elk in portions of areas 25, 28 and 127. As of February 26, 2025, at least 35 antlerless elk have been taken via these hunts in response to landowner concerns about elk presence in cattle feeding areas within a few miles of Lander from Willow Creek to the North Fork Popo Agie and to reduce the potential for brucellosis transmission from elk to cattle, however slight the risk. Mild conditions in winter 2024-25 have allowed elk to be more scattered away from damage prone areas, resulting in lower harvest this winter than in 2023-24, in spite of more than 400 elk remaining in these areas. All elk harvested with Chapter 34 and Chapter 56 permits were tested for brucellosis and CWD. To date, none have tested positive for brucellosis or CWD, with a few results still pending. Although some of the Chapter 34 harvest occurred in hunt areas 25 and 127, these elk were part of a group that originate from hunt area 28. Elk harvested with the Chapter 34 auxiliary management hunts are not included in harvest totals in the 2024 elk harvest survey or in the JCR database. These harvests bring the total number of elk taken in the South Wind River herd unit to at least 915 (the highest since 1994). These Chapter 34 hunts are designed to reduce damage on private lands and will continue through March 1, 2025 and will likely be used each winter for the foreseeable future.

Season structure intended to increase antlerless elk harvest continued to work reasonably well in 2024 despite a fairly mild, open hunting season that had one significant snow event in late-October that quickly melted in most low elevations. Recent trend counts have been near objective, but with average calf recruitment, continued aggressive female harvest is needed to limit growth and manage appropriately. The increases of 25 licenses each to the hunt area 25/27 Type 1 and hunt area 25 Type 4 licenses in 2024 only resulted in an increased harvest of 18 elk (17 bulls and 1 cow). 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 existing license types in

2025. 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, we are implementing a new Type 7 season valid on and within one-half (1/2) mile of private lands adjoining the Sweetwater River upstream (west) of the Three Forks Road. Hunter harvest from the "regular" hunting seasons and the Chapter 34 hunts should continue fairly aggressive antlerless elk harvest in 2025 and curtail population growth keeping this herd near objective.

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

Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring and Management
To date, no meaningful CWD prevalence data is available within this herd unit and no CWD management actions have occurred. South Wind River elk is not a focal CWD surveillance herd. CWD was detected in one elk from hunt area 28 for the first time in late 2023. 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, 2020-2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD Positive and (n) - *Hunter Harvest Only*	Percent of Harvested Elk Sampled
	All Elk Tested	
2020	**0% (n=17)**	2.5
2021	**0% (n=28)**	4.0
2022	**0% (n=29)**	4.2
2023	**1.3% (n=75)**	8.6
2024	**0% (n=97)**	10.6
2020-2024	**0.4% (n=246)**	6.4

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: EL638 - GREEN MOUNTAIN

HUNT AREAS: 24, 128

PREPARED BY: STAN HARTER

	2019 - 2023 Average	**2024**	**2025 Proposed**
Trend Count:	567	491	500
Harvest:	270	363	350
Hunters:	645	819	800
Hunter Success:	42%	44%	44%
Active Licenses:	651	826	800
Active License Success	41%	44%	44%
Recreation Days:	4,112	4,953	5,000
Days Per Animal:	15.2	13.6	14.3
Males per 100 Females:	35	15	
Juveniles per 100 Females	30	25	

Trend Based Objective (± 20%)	500 (400 - 600)
Management Strategy:	Recreational
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	-1.8%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	5

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%

EL638 Trend Count

Three Year Trend Count Average (May include counts for 1-3 years)
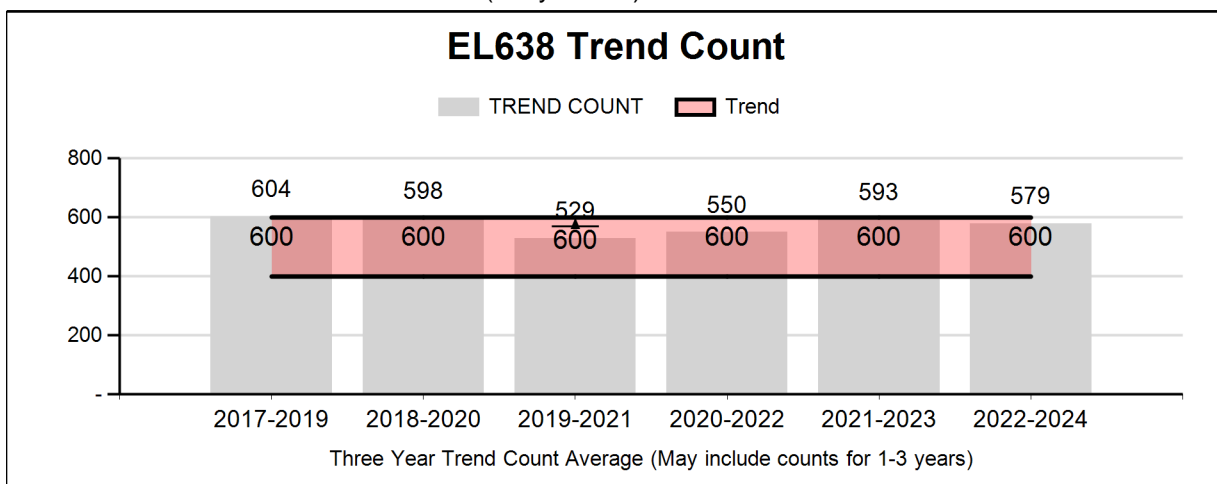
2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL638 - GREEN MOUNTAIN

Year	Post Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	0	33	97	130	27%	259	53%	99	20%	488	0	13	37	50	± 0	38	± 0	25
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 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

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 63.4% Satisfied, 18.1% Neutral, 18.5% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
The Green Mountain elk herd unit has a mid-winter trend count objective of 500 elk. The 2024 trend count/classification survey was flown on February 18, 2025, and resulted in a count of 491 elk in hunt area 24. The latest 3-year average is 579, placing the population 16% above objective which is based on a 3-year running average trend count, but is within the upper 20% of the objective range. The 2024 calf/cow ratio was 25J/100F (34% below the average of 38J/100F since 2004). The bull/cow ratio of 15M/100F was 55% below the average of 33M/100F since 2004.
The total harvest in 2024 for the Green Mountain herd unit was 363, the most since 1994, an increase of 48 elk over the 2023 harvest. Hunter concerns about elk leaving hunt area 24 and crossing into hunt area 128 were pretty high again in 2024. These concerns were validated as large groups of elk from around 150-200 to nearly 400 elk were intermittently observed along the Sweetwater River and Sweetwater Rocks from September through November.

The overall hunter success of 44% for the entire herd unit was identical to 2023, but success increased substantially in hunt area 24, largely due to an increase in antlerless harvest, especially from hunters with Type 5 licenses whose harvest more than doubled over the 2023 season. Area 24 Type 1 hunters had slightly lower success (69%) in 2024, with slight shifts in the number of bulls and cows harvested. Due to past experience that increases in license issuance negatively affects harvest success and hunter satisfaction, along with the hunter crowding concerns and complaints about lack of quality bulls seen in 2024 and the lowest number of adult bulls classified in hunt area 24 in 10 years, no change is being made to the Type 1 license quota in 2025. We removed the November antlerless elk portion for hunt area 24 Type 1 and Type 4 hunters in 2024 and this seemed to increase harvest success and hunter satisfaction for those with a Type 5 license. Meanwhile, this did not negatively impact Type 1 and Type 4 success, but many of those hunters were unhappy with the change. In addition, complaints continued about hunter crowding and elk leaving hunt area 24 during the 2024 season. More people with hunt area 23 and 24 licenses hunted in hunt area 128 this year, but only 2 cows were reported being killed there. It is likely more hunters

actually harvested elk in area 128 with those limited quota licenses, but did not indicate it in the harvest survey. It also seems unrealistic that 365 general license hunters truly hunted in area 128.

In addition, the Casper Region is continuing to include their hunt area 23 Type 1, Type 4, and Type 6 license limitations to be also valid in the northeastern portion of hunt area 128 with some changes to season dates, to address concerns about elk crossing the Dry Creek Road and into hunt area 128. Allowing hunt area 23 license holders to hunt that portion of 128 will hopefully increase harvest. With these proposed changes and the low calf production this past year, resulting harvest should decrease elk in this herd.

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 is not a focal surveillance herd and no CWD management actions have occurred. 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 Green Mountain Elk Herd Unit, 2020-2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD Positive and (n) - *Hunter Harvest Only*	Percent of Harvested Elk Sampled
	All Elk Tested	
2020	**0% (n=9)**	3.4
2021	**0% (n=14)**	5.3
2022	**0% (n=7)**	2.7
2023	**0% (n=9)**	2.9
2024	**0% (n=2)**	0.6
2020-2024	**0% (n=41)**	2.8

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: EL639 - FERRIS

HUNT AREAS: 22, 111

PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Population:	740	800	750
Harvest:	157	254	325
Hunters:	288	523	625
Hunter Success:	55%	49%	52%
Active Licenses:	312	553	625
Active License Success:	50%	46%	52%
Recreation Days:	2,069	4,118	4,700
Days Per Animal:	13.2	16.2	14.5
Males per 100 Females	56	71	
Juveniles per 100 Females	36	42	

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

Management Strategy:	Special
Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective:	129%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	5
Model Date:	None

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

	JCR Year	Proposed
Females ≥ 1 year old:	20%	20%
Males ≥ 1 year old:	33%	35%
Proposed change in post-season population:	-4%	-6%

Population Size - Postseason

Legend: EL639 - POPULATION, Objective Range

Year	Population
2020	800
2021	700
2022	750
2023	900
2024	800
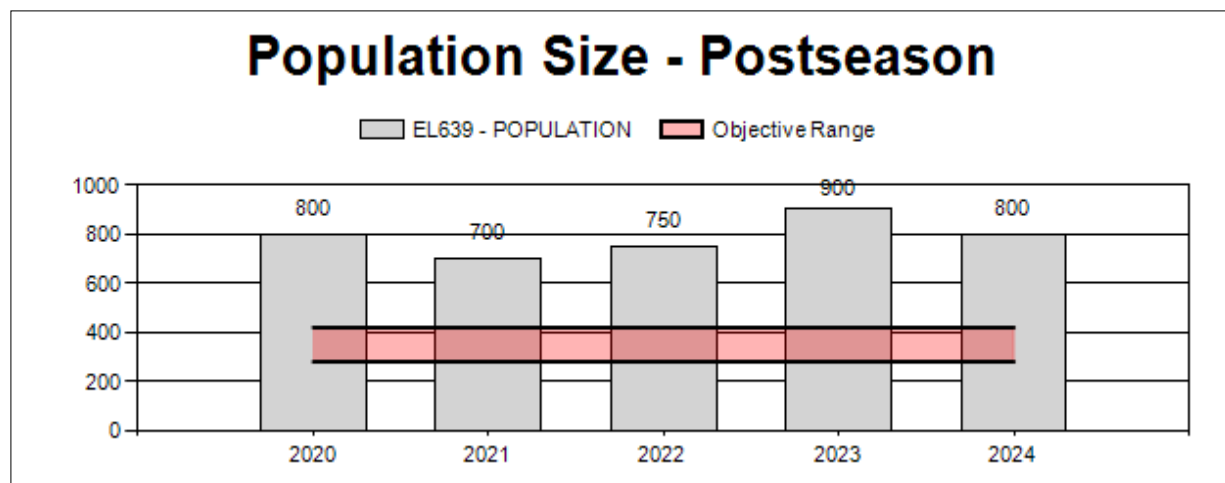
2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Elk Herd EL639 - FERRIS

Year	Post Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	550	26	155	181	38%	234	49%	67	14%	482	0	11	66	77	± 3	29	± 2	16
2020	800	50	176	226	29%	356	46%	199	25%	781	0	14	49	63	± 1	56	± 1	34
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

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates		Season Dates		Quota	Limitations
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
22	1	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 8	Oct. 31	75	Any elk
22	1			Nov. 15	Dec. 15		Any elk; also valid in Area 111
22	1			Dec. 16	Dec. 31		Antlerless elk
22	2			Nov. 1	Nov. 14	25	Antlered elk five (5) points or less on either antler
22	6	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 8	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. 10	Oct. 31	75	Any elk
111	1			Nov. 15	Dec. 15		Any elk; also valid in Area 22
111	1			Dec. 16	Dec. 31		Antlerless elk
111	2			Nov. 1	Nov. 14	25	Antlered elk five (5) points or less on either antler
111	4	Sep. 1	Sep. 30	Oct. 10	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

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 66% Satisfied, 19% Neutral, 15% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
While conditions for this year's trend count were less than ideal with minimal snow cover, a total of 797 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 increased to 71:100 and is the highest since 2018. Calf production increased from 30:100 in 2023 to 42:100. Despite lower calf production last year, the yearling bull ratio

increased to 19:100 in 2024.

Overall hunter success decreased to 49% in 2024, compared to 56% in 2023. The average number of days hunted per elk harvested increased significantly, from 11.8 days in 2023 to 16.2 days in 2024. It is difficult to interpret hunter success rates for Type 1 licenses between these two hunt areas because of the late bull hunt in late November and early December, which allows them to hunt both areas. Higher success reported in Area 111 may include Area 22 licensees who harvested their elk in Area 111. While the intent of this late "any elk" hunt is to increase hunter success and harvest by providing hunters with access to bulls 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 bull harvest for either hunt area. This is likely due to the warm, mild conditions observed throughout the majority of the hunting season and into early winter, allowing elk to delay movement to normal, more accessible winter ranges. Success for Type 6 hunters in Area 22 remained relatively unchanged at 56%, but decreased significantly in Area 111 from 34% to 21%. Type 4 hunters in Area 111 still had more success than those with Type 6 licenses, but success decreased from 38% in 2023 to 31% in 2024.

Hunter satisfaction decreased in Area 22 to 75%, but remained stable in Area 111 at 61%. In the herd unit as a whole, satisfaction dropped slightly to 66%, with a larger percentage of hunters indicating they were "neutral" about their hunt.

The harvest of 128 antlered elk in 2024 was the largest ever taken from this herd, as was the total harvest of 254 elk. 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.

Winter severity in 2023 was mild, with normal temperatures, winds, and minimal snowfall. This may, in part, explain increased recruitment and higher calf production observed in 2024. Winter severity this year was considered "normal" to "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality or a significant impact to overall population numbers.

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. Thus, quotas need to be scaled according to the number of elk actually available for harvest, with the goal of 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, there are no increases in Type 1, 4, or 6 license types in 2025.

Early winter hunts have allowed for harvest of antlerless elk that were on private land and unavailable during October but have moved to winter ranges on public lands. A similar strategy was successfully employed beginning in 2019 for "any elk" seasons for the Type 1 licenses, running in late November and early December. To maintain harvest of surplus antlered elk, the same season is in place in 2025. 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.

With the bull:cow ratio continuing to grow, managers are utilizing 25 Type 2 licenses in each hunt area in 2025 that will run from Nov. 1-Nov. 14. Public concerns regarding the quality of bulls seen during hunting season have continued to grow, with many noting broken antlers and a lack of mature, bigger-antlered bulls. As such, harvest on Type 2 licenses will be restricted to bulls that are five (5) points or less on either antler, which will 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 will allow for continued harvest of elk without increasing overall number of hunters on the landscape at any given time, addressing hunter crowding concerns voiced by hunters and landowners.

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

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, 2020-2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and *(n) - Hunter Harvest Only*	Percent of Harvested Adult Elk Sampled
	All Adult Elk (CI = 95%)	
2020	0% (n=2)	1.3
2021	0% (n=6)	4.0
2022	0% (n=10)	5.5
2023	0% (n=7)	3.4
2024	0% (n=11)	4.3
2020-2024	0% (0-9.7%, n=36)	3.8

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Elk   PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: EL643 - SHAMROCK

HUNT AREAS: 118   PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2019 - 2023 Average	**2024**	**2025 Proposed**
Trend Count:	31	9	0
Harvest:	65	94	100
Hunters:	97	174	165
Hunter Success:	67%	54%	61%
Active Licenses:	104	193	185
Active License Success	62%	49%	54%
Recreation Days:	514	1,289	1,080
Days Per Animal:	7.9	13.7	10.8
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:	-88%
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

	2018-2020	2019-2021	2020-2022	2021-2023	2022-2024
Trend	90	90	90	90	90
TREND COUNT	31	31	31	0	9

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

2025 Hunting Seasons
Shamrock Elk (EL643)

Hunt Area	Type	Archery Dates Opens	Closes	Season Dates Opens	Closes	Quota	Limitations
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	6	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)

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: 45% Satisfied, 19% Neutral, 36% Dissatisfied

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
The most recent end-of-year 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. License quotas remained constant from 2018 through 2021 with 100 licenses available each year, but were increased in 2022 and 2023 to a total of 130 licenses, and again in 2024 to a total of 225 licenses because of high hunter success rates.

In 2024, days / harvest increased dramatically across all license types, and hunter success decreased to 54%, a result of lower success across all license types. Success for Type 1 hunters decreased from 82% in 2023 to 69% in 2024. Success for hunters with Type 4 and Type 6 licenses decreased to 28% and 40%, respectively. Higher success for Type 6 license holders may be attributed to the fact that they have the longest season and the first opportunity to pursue elk with firearms. Likely as a result of increased effort and decreased success, hunter satisfaction also decreased to 45%.

Winter severity this year was considered "normal" to "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality or a significant impact to overall population numbers.

Given increased success in prior years, license issuance in 2024 was increased by 95 total licenses, split between all license types. While increased hunter effort and decreased hunter success across the board may be partly attributed to the warm, mild conditions observed throughout the majority of hunting season and into early winter, there was an increase in public and landowner concern regarding the number of hunters on the landscape as compared to the number of elk available for harvest on public land. As a result, Type 6 licenses are reduced by 25 in 2025 in an effort to address saturation of hunters while still allowing for increased opportunities given previous year's high success. 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, 2020-2024.

Year(s)	Percent CWD-Positive and *(n) - Hunter Harvest Only*	Percent of Harvested Adult Elk Sampled
	All Adult Elk (CI = 95%)	
2020	0% (n=2)	4.5
2021	0% (n=2)	3.5
2022	0% (n=3)	3.8
2023	0% (n=2)	2.2
2024	0% (n=2)	2.1
2020-2024	0% (0-28.5%, n=11)	3.0

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Moose   PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025
HERD: MO620 - LANDER
HUNT AREAS: 2, 30, 39   PREPARED BY: STAN HARTER

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Trend Count:	157	123	150
Harvest:	5	6	5
Hunters:	5	10	5
Hunter Success:	100%	60%	100 %
Active Licenses:	5	10	5
Active License Success	100%	60%	100 %
Recreation Days:	61	99	50
Days Per Animal:	12.2	16.5	10
Males per 100 Females:	70	62	
Juveniles per 100 Females	46	48	

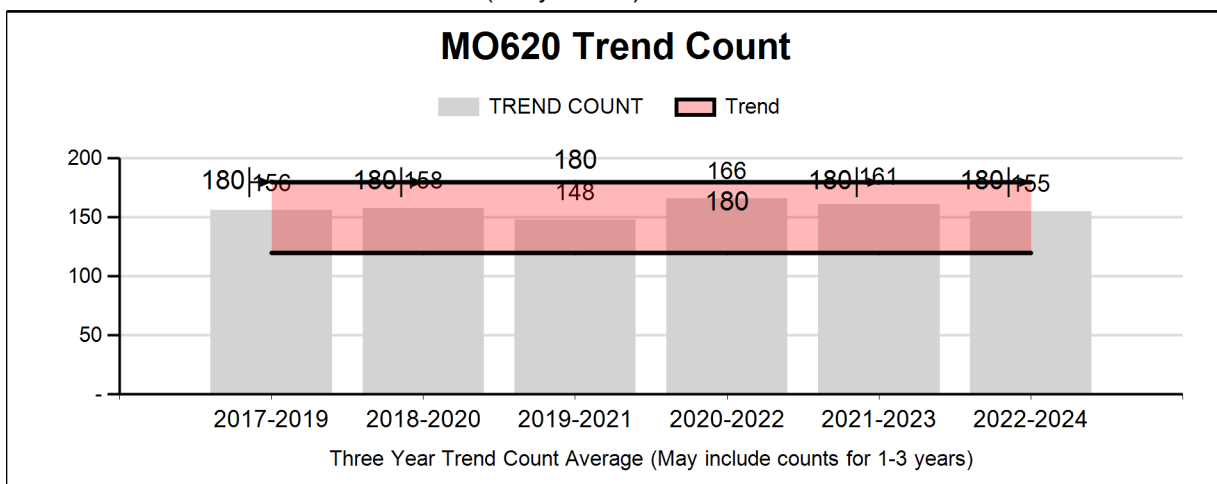|	
Trend Based Objective (± 20%)	150 (120 - 180)
Management Strategy:	Special
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	-18%
Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend:	1

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%

MO620 Trend Count

TREND COUNT   Trend

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

2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Moose Herd MO620 - LANDER

Year	Post Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	0	0	0	50	27%	89	49%	44	24%	183	0	0	0	56	± 0	49	± 0	32
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

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2025 Hunting Seasons
Lander Moose (MO 320)

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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 (4 residents, 1 nonresident)

2024 Hunter Satisfaction: No data available

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
Snow depths were significantly less than average in January 2025 and the mid-winter trend count of 123 moose was also less than the long-term average. The current 3-year trend count average is 155 moose, 3% above the objective of 150 moose.

Classification data revealed a calf/cow ratio of 48J/100F and the bull/cow ratio of 62M/100F. These were slight increases from the previous classification/trend count, and were above long-term averages, although the bull/cow ratio was 11% lower than the previous 5-year average.

Harvest survey results from the 2024 season indicate 60% success for the 10 licenses that were valid in both hunt areas 2 and 30. Only 4 of the 6 successful hunters submitted teeth for aging via cementum annuli, with the average age of harvested bulls of 4.0 years (range 2-5) with an average antler spread of 39.3 inches (range 28" - 48") from the 4 bulls measured. The warm and open hunting season through late-October may have been mainly responsible for the low success rate and an increase in the number of days per bull harvested to 16.5 in 2024.

Hunter success has only been 100% in 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 2 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 actual population decreased. Trend count fluctuations are common in this herd unit, primarily due to greatly varying annual snow conditions as were encountered in the last 3 years.

The 2024 season featured an increase in license quotas following improvement in harvest statistics (success, age, and antler size), but those harvest statistics actually worsened. Therefore, the 2025 season reverts back to 5 Type 1 Antlered moose licenses (4 residents, 1 nonresident) 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. Since there have only been a few moose harvested in hunt area 30 in recent years, and those that are often come from in or near the Willow Creek area at the boundary between the two hunt areas, we will consider combining these hunt areas in 2026 to reduce confusion in regulations, as well as in the 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.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Moose   PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

HERD: MO621 - DUBOIS

HUNT AREAS: 6   PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

	2019 - 2023 Average	**2024**	**2025 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:	55	50	55
Days Per Animal:	11	10	11

Limited Opportunity Objective:

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

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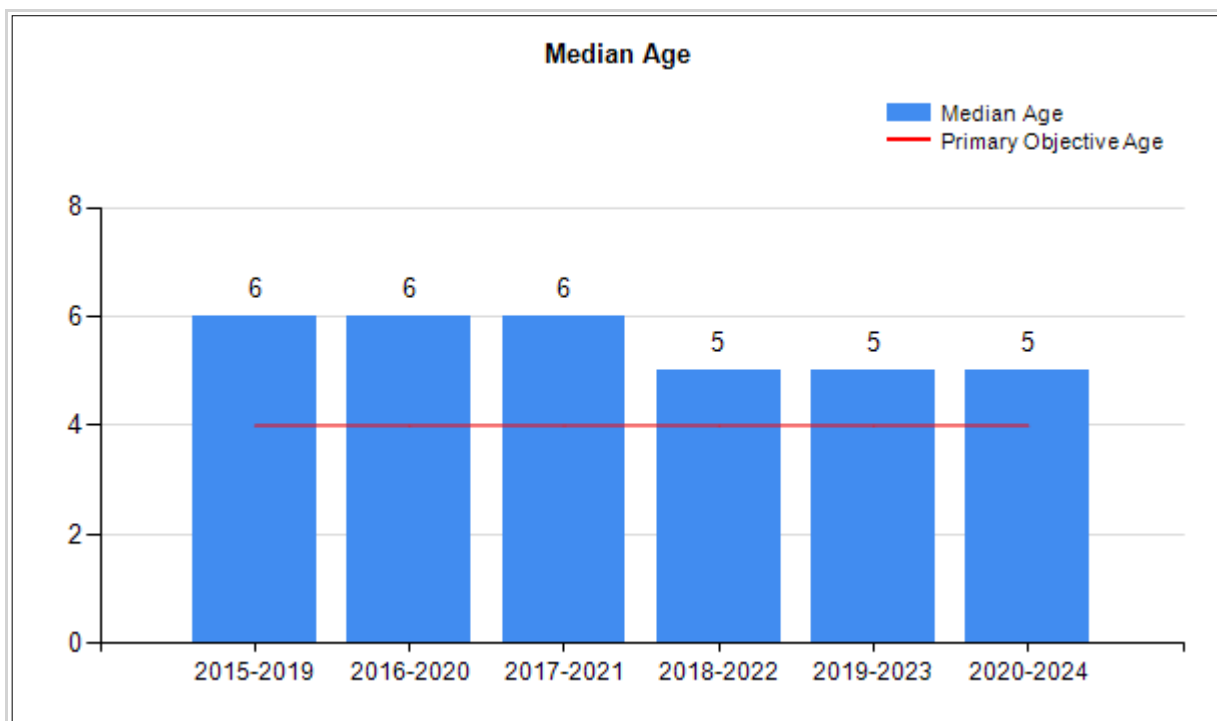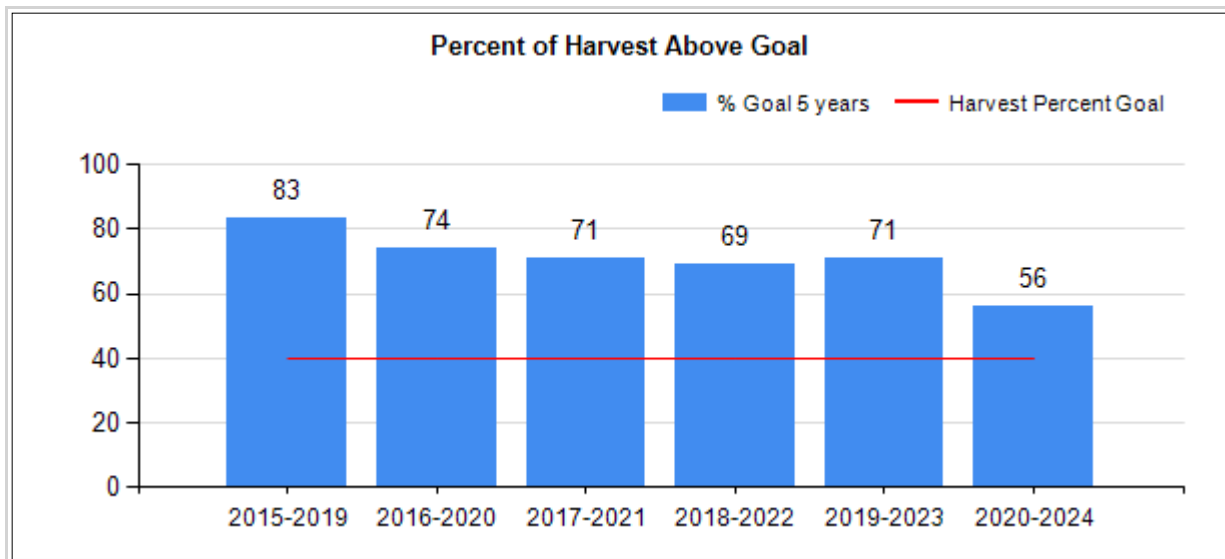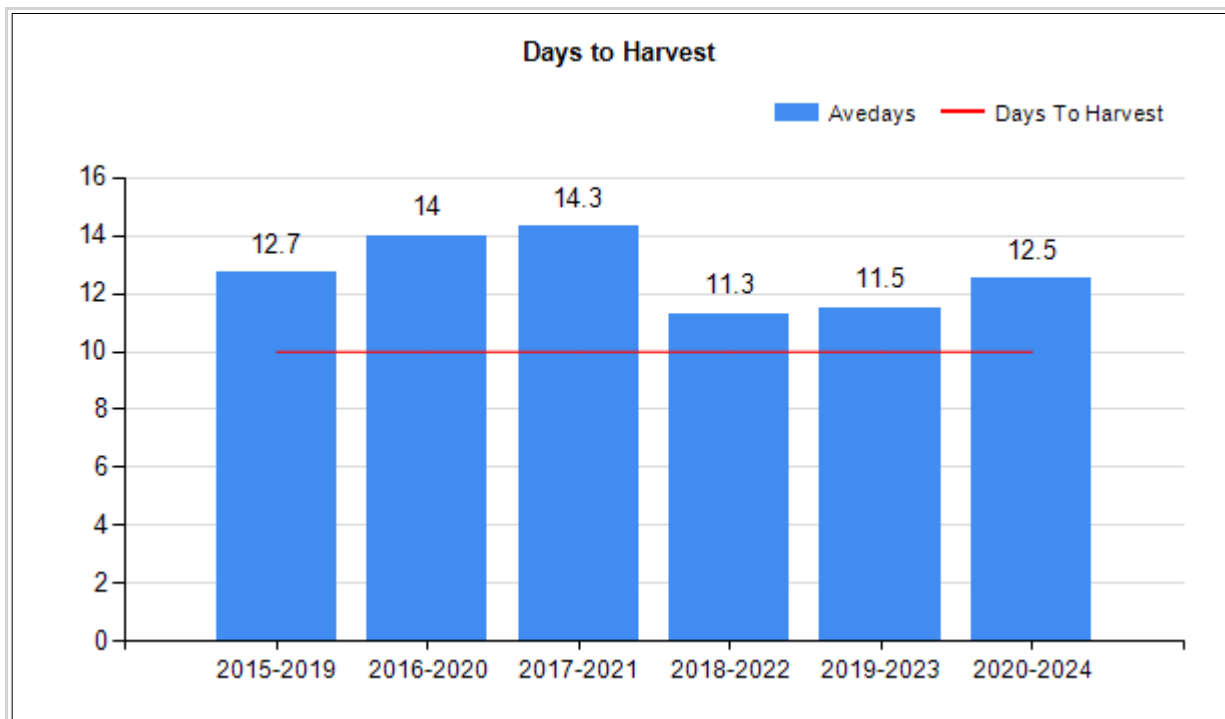
Secondary Objective:

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

Management Strategy: Special

Days to Harvest

	2015-2019	2016-2020	2017-2021	2018-2022	2019-2023	2020-2024
Avedays	12.7	14	14.3	11.3	11.5	12.5

Legend: Avedays, Days To Harvest

Percent of Harvest Above Goal

	2015-2019	2016-2020	2017-2021	2018-2022	2019-2023	2020-2024
% Goal 5 years	83	74	71	69	71	56

Legend: % Goal 5 years, Harvest Percent Goal

2025 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 (5 resident)

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation
The 2025 hunting season remains unchanged from the previous 10 years for this hunt area/herd unit with 5 licenses issued. All 5 licenses will be allocated to resident hunters. Harvest success has been 80-100% each of the last 10 years including 100% in 2024. This indicates hunters are able to find adult bull moose in the area. Only two teeth were submitted for aging and resulted in a median age of 4, which is within the historic range for this herd as well as 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 for harvest for the 2025 hunting season.

Management Objective Review
The objective and management strategy for the Dubois Moose Herd was last evaluated and approved in 2020. For the 2025 (5-year) objective review, the current objective and limited opportunity special strategy will be maintained for the next five years following an internal evaluation.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Bighorn Sheep

HERD: BS609 - WHISKEY MOUNTAIN

HUNT AREAS: 8-10

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025

PREPARED BY: ZACH GREGORY

	2019 - 2023 Average	**2024**	**2025 Proposed**
Population:	0	N/A	N/A
Harvest:	7	8	9
Hunters:	14	12	10
Hunter Success:	50%	67%	90%
Active Licenses:	14	12	10
Active License Success:	50%	67%	90 %
Recreation Days:	122	104	115
Days Per Animal:	17.4	13	12.8
Males per 100 Females	48	42	
Juveniles per 100 Females	33	30	

Population Objective (± 20%) :   1350 (1080 - 1620)

Management Strategy: Special

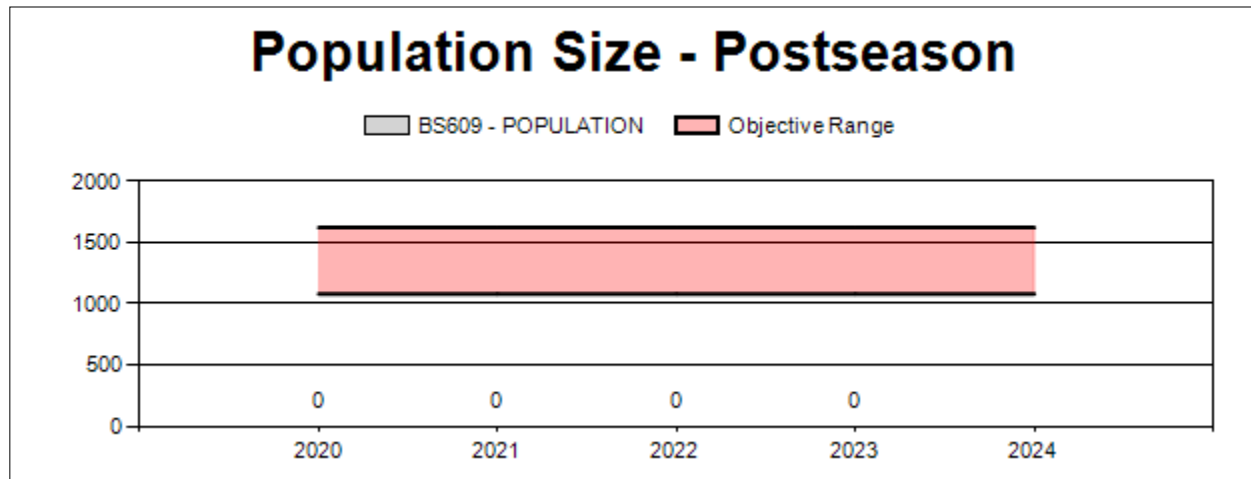Percent population is above (+) or below (-) objective: N/A%

Number of years population has been + or - objective in recent trend: 14

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

2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Bighorn Sheep Herd BS609 - WHISKEY MOUNTAIN

Year	Post Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	0	9	85	94	30%	184	58%	40	13%	318	0	5	46	51	± 0	22	± 0	14
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 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 (2 Resident)
9	1	Aug. 1	Aug. 14	Aug. 15	Oct. 15	5	Any ram (4 Resident; 1 Nonresident)
10	1	Aug. 1	Aug. 14	Aug. 15	Oct. 15	5	Any ram (5 Resident)

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

Since 2018 there has been insufficient demographic data collected in this herd to produce an accurate population estimate. Personnel classified a historically low number of sheep within the herd unit in 2023 with a sample of 200 due, in part, to weather conditions and the inability to fly area 8. Classification flights were not conducted in areas 9 & 10 in 2024 because of the current test and remove project and the impact of helicopter captures causing animal displacement and subsequently decreasing the observability of sheep. We did conduct classification counts from the ground in these areas. Unfortunately, the mild winter has allowed sheep to stay up high making them inaccessible for observation from the ground. However, managers were able to fly area 8 this year. Between ground counts and aerial flights managers were able to classify 185 sheep in the Whiskey Mtn Herd. This is again lower than the 2023 count and the lowest number of sheep classified on record. As a result ratios should be viewed with caution. Regardless, of the sheep counted there were 33 lambs:100 ewes and the last 5-year average is 37:100 while males were 41:100 with a 5-year average of 48:100.

Hunter success in 2024 in areas 8, 9 and 10 was 50%, 40% and 100%, respectively. In area 8, in 2023 all four hunters were unsuccessful and the previous 5 year average (2018-2022) hunter success was 32% indicating and supporting field observations that overall ram numbers and hunter opportunity is low in this area. Hunter success in all of these areas is well within the historic range. It is important to note hunter success in area 9 in 2024 was not reflective of the number of rams available for harvest as most hunters with this license had opportunity to harvest a mature ram. The one ram harvested in Area 8 was 11 years old, and the average age of rams harvested was 6 years in area 9 and 9 years in area 10. This in concert with a good number of rams observed in recent years, is indication there is ample hunting opportunity in areas 9 and 10.

To best accommodate the 90/10 split, the number of licenses has been 5 in each area for a total of 10 the past two years. This allows for one nonresident hunter every year alternating between areas 9 and 10. In 2025, 10 licenses will be available in areas 9 and 10 and the nonresident license will go to area 9. In area 8, 2 licenses (all going to resident hunters) will be issued in 2025 in an effort to maintain some harvest opportunity while providing potential for growth and recruitment of younger rams.

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 are considered "chronic carriers" and are removed. To date, 15 ewes have met this definition as a chronic carrier and all but one 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 last seven years. During 2023-2024 winter classifications, personnel counted 16 adult ewes, 5 lambs, 2 mature rams, 1 yearling ram, and 2 yearling ewes. Additionally in 2024 field personnel observed 7 adult ewes, 3 lambs, 2 rams, 1 yearling ram and 1 yearling ewe. This is again a low sample size but the number of lambs is reassuring as is the number of young animals being recruited into the herd. We are still in the beginning stages of the project, and are not making inferences about this increased number of lambs, but this is an encouraging step forward.

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 chronic carrier is defined as a ewe greater than 3 years old that test positive once. The reasons for using the this 1-strike criteria is twofold: 1) captures are difficult and re-captures to test more than once are nearly impossible; and 2) more aggressive removal of positive animals will hopefully reduce the prevalence of disease and allow for quicker population recovery. Also, fewer capture events will make obtaining wilderness authorization for captures from USFS a bit easier and expedite the expansion of test and remove in all occupied habitats increasing the effectiveness of test and remove. 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. For clarity, any ewe that is 3 years old or younger or has a lamb at its side will not be removed regardless of the test result. We will attempt to retest these ewes to gather more data to assess the efficacy of these criteria with regard to chronic infection and will adapt the criteria, if necessary, as data is gathered. To date, 63 sheep have been tested, collared, and released. Of the 63 sheep tested, 20 tested positive for MOVI (2 being three years old or less and one with a lamb at side); 18 ewes have been removed.

2024 - JCR Evaluation Form

SPECIES: Bighorn Sheep

PERIOD: 6/1/2024 - 5/31/2025
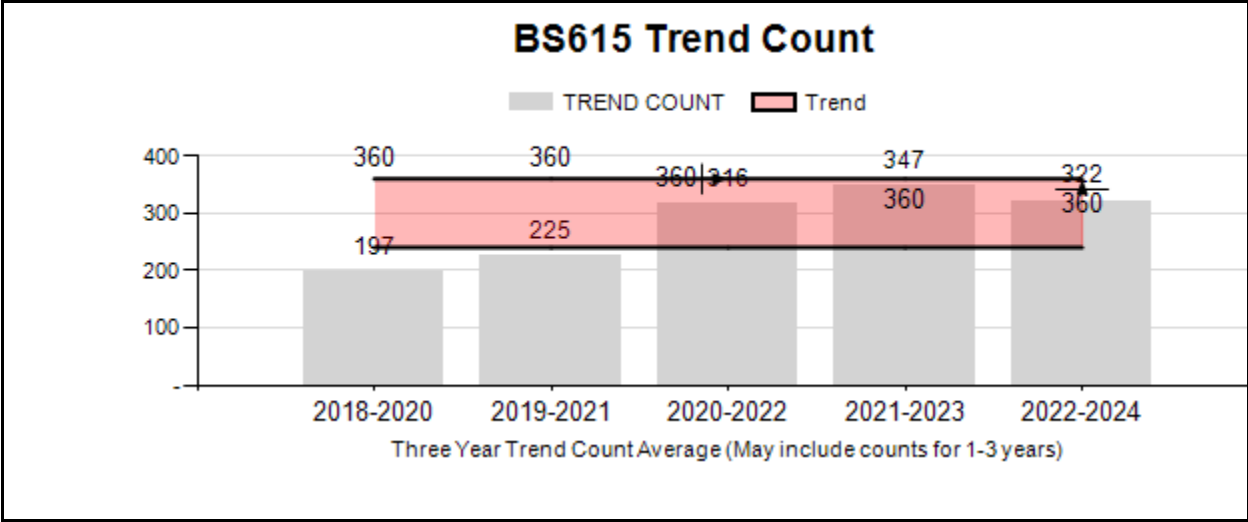
HERD: BS615 - FERRIS-SEMINOE

HUNT AREAS: 17, 26

PREPARED BY: ASHLEY UMPHLETT

	2019 - 2023 Average	2024	2025 Proposed
Trend Count:	290	192	275
Harvest:	12	40	55
Hunters:	12	40	61
Hunter Success:	100%	100%	90%
Active Licenses:	12	40	61
Active License Success	100%	100%	90%
Recreation Days:	70	210	275
Days Per Animal:	5.8	5.2	5
Males per 100 Females:	67	67	
Juveniles per 100 Females	48	48	

Trend Based Objective (± 20%)	300 (240 - 360)
Management Strategy:	Special
Percent population is above (+) or (-) objective:	-36%
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

Legend: TREND COUNT, Trend

Values shown on chart:
- 2018-2020: 360, 197
- 2019-2021: 360, 225
- 2020-2022: 360|316
- 2021-2023: 347, 360
- 2022-2024: 322, 360

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

2019 - 2024 Postseason Classification Summary

for Bighorn Sheep Herd BS615 - FERRIS-SEMINOE

Year	Post Pop	MALES				FEMALES		JUVENILES		Tot Cls	Cls Obj	Males to 100 Females				Young to		
		Ylg	Adult	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%			Ylng	Adult	Total	Conf Int	100 Fem	Conf Int	100 Adult
2019	0	0	32	32	24%	72	53%	31	23%	135	0	0	44	44	± 8	43	± 8	30
2020	0	14	42	56	34%	67	41%	42	25%	165	0	21	63	84	± 0	63	± 0	34
2021	0	0	0	130	32%	181	44%	98	24%	409	0	0	0	72	± 0	54	± 0	32
2022	0	0	134	134	33%	181	44%	94	23%	409	0	0	74	74	± 0	52	± 0	30
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

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| Hunt Area | Type | Archery Dates | | Season Dates | | Quota | Limitations |
		Opens	Closes	Opens	Closes		
17	1	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 1	Oct. 31	8	Any ram (8 residents)
17	2	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 1	Oct. 31	8	Any ram less than three-quarter (3/4) curl (7 residents, 1 nonresident)
17	6	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 15	Oct. 31	30	Ewe or lamb (28 residents, 2 nonresidents)
17	7	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 15	Oct. 31	10	Ewe or lamb valid within the Sand Creek drainage (9 residents, 1 nonresident)
26	1	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 1	Oct. 31	1	Any ram (1 resident)
26	6	Aug. 15	Aug. 31	Sep. 15	Oct. 31	3	Ewe or lamb (2 residents, 1 nonresident)

2025 Management Summary

Hunting Season Evaluation

The winter trend count flown in January 2025 resulted in 192 bighorn sheep counted; the 3-year average is 322 bighorn sheep and is at the upper limit of the objective of 300. As is typical, the majority of these animals (96%) were in the Ferris and Seminoe Mountains in Area 17 and 4% were found in the Bennett Mountains in Area 26. The number of sheep counted in 2024 was lower than in the previous two years and could be attributed the aerial capture of 45 bighorn sheep within the herd unit just prior to conducting this count. This activity likely made the sheep more wary and difficult to detect during the trend count. In addition, conditions were less than optimal, with minimal snow cover and high winds.

Lamb production increased from 35:100 in 2023 to 48:100 in 2024, and is within the normal range expected for this herd. The ram:ewe ratio increased from 57:100 in 2023 to 67:100 in 2024. A total of 60 rams were found during the trend count, compared to 109 rams in 2023. The majority of rams appear to be younger, with a less than ¾ curl ram:ewe ratio of 41:100, and a greater than ¾ curl ram: ewe ratio of 26:100. This is likely the product of exceptional lamb production seen within this herd in most years.

Hunter success was 100% across all four license types across the entire herd unit. Average age of rams harvested with the Type 1 license declined from 7.4 years in 2019 to 7.0 years in 2020, 6.7 years in 2021, 6.6 years in 2022 and remained essentially the same in 2023 and 2024 at 6.4 years. Average age of harvested Type 2 license rams was 3.3 years.

Winter severity this year was considered "normal" or "mild," and is not expected to result in above-average winter mortality or a significant impact to overall population numbers.

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. The utilization of these licenses are continued in 2025, with 8 Type 1 licenses (an increase of 2), and 8 Type 2 licenses (an increase of 4) issued in Area 17. Area 26 will have 1 Type 1 license offered (a reduction of 1); this license will be available to a resident hunter in an effort to meet the 90 resident-10 nonresident split. However, it is important to note that there will also be a carryover license in Area 26 from 2024, which will likely result in the same amount of opportunity / harvest as seen in past years. Type 1 license opportunity in Area 26 remains conservative due to reduced availability of mature rams compared to the rest of the herd. The availability of mature rams in 2025 in Area 26 could be impacted by Department Chapter 56 removals due to commingling and disease transmission concerns in 2023-2024. In 2023, four rams were removed (Chapter 56) and we documented at least two other mature ram mortalities (pick-up head and collared animal mortality). In 2024, three rams were removed (Chapter 56) and we documented at least two other mature ram mortalities (pick-up head and collared animal mortality). Area 26 bighorn sheep have shown a propensity for wandering near domestic allotments; as such, managers may attempt to reduce wandering events in future years by reducing Area 26 ram numbers with increased type 1 quotas and / or the addition of type 2 licenses. 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 2024 draw odds there is a lot of interest both license types. In fact, there were 139 applicants vying for the available Type 2 licenses in 2024 and it took 22 preference points to draw one.

With the population 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 3 Type 6 ewe/lamb licenses are issued in that area. Thirty licenses are 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, 10 Type 7 ewe/lamb licenses are also issued for Area 17, valid only in the Sand Creek drainage.

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 2015. Based on trend count data and observed numbers on the ground, the current population is sitting at or slightly above objective. Maintaining a herd within current objective levels is critical to prevent an overconcentration of bighorn sheep in their current range, which may lead to decreased habitat health and / or increase the likelihood of bighorn sheep dispersing or foraying to ranges that may harbor dangerous pathogens. Following an internal evaluation, the current objective and management strategy will be maintained for the next five years.

Additional Management Data
In January 2025, Department personnel utilized a helicopter crew to locate and capture ~45 bighorn sheep, which were then ferried to a processing site. On site, sheep were sampled for diseases and equipped with GPS collars. 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. GPS data will be used to monitor movements to ensure that sheep do not wander outside of the herd unit and risk transmission of pathogens known to cause diseases from domestic livestock, as well as to evaluate distribution and habitat utilization of bighorn sheep across the herd.